**Research question –**

**What is gerontocracy and would there be any increase in mental health if gerontocracy was no longer/less an issue?**

**Explanation of Novelty + gameplan –**

I could not find one article or research question on the second part of my question (would there be an increase in mental health without gerontocracy) therefore my research brings a new question to answer. The only papers on gerontocracy are explaining how gerontocracy is/is not an issue but no one has compared of what life could be without gerontocracy/with a limited gerontocracy.

At first this seemed like a daunting task to find out how you can see the impact of gerontocracy on mental health. However, we can compare different countries/counties with different median ages (both in the total populace and the age of their politicians (both local and by country) for their levels of mental health. To summarise: comparing the effect of gerontocracy on the mental health.

I will be measuring how much gerontocracy there is in a society by seeing how much the wealth is divided over each age group and by seeing the average age of politicians in different places/time periods to gauge how much of a gerontocracy there is in that place

However, there are some variables that we should try to control such as: The culture/geography of different places that is being compared (I won’t compare Lesthoto to Norway); the GDP/wealth of nations (comparing the education and the average health of nations that have massive differences in wealth would not be fair) and finally; the HDI of different places. I will also be comparing the mental health of different places based on the time period.

[1](https://www.politico.com/magazine/story/2019/09/03/america-gerontocracy-problem-politics-old-politicians-trump-biden-sanders-227986/) - just shows that there is a gerontocracy in America – facts like average age of politicians, specific politicians – 23% of the electorate is considered elderly

[2](https://nymag.com/intelligencer/2021/03/gerontocracy-is-hurting-american-democracy.html) - effects of gerontocracy on democracy - ‘People over 50 make up 34% of the US population but 52% of the electorate’

[3](file:///Users/stephenspoerri/Desktop/School%20work/Stats%20course%20NU/7:7:22/3) - Concludes that gerontocracy is bad, however, does not consider a reality without a gerontocracy or compares what life could be without gerontocracy. “Elderly leaders are making decisions for future generations that will have to deal with the consequences of these choices”

**Hypothesis & reasoning –**

I believe that my findings will find that the more of a gerontocracy there is, the worse the mental health there will be. I think this because I believe that the world is shifting towards a more gerontocratic society due to the fact that both Trump and Biden (the last two presidents) were older than any older president before them. Furthermore, I do think that mental health is declining as I know that suicide rates are going up[[1]](#footnote-1) from my previous research in this class. I also know that there is a disproportionate amount of the electorate that are considered elderly (‘People over 50 make up 34% of the US population but 52% of the electorate’) from the sources – ‘[1](https://www.politico.com/magazine/story/2019/09/03/america-gerontocracy-problem-politics-old-politicians-trump-biden-sanders-227986/)’ and ‘[2](https://nymag.com/intelligencer/2021/03/gerontocracy-is-hurting-american-democracy.html)’ which could cause some discontent due to the rulings that they make that the younger population would object to. This was pointed out in the sources ‘[3](file:///Users/stephenspoerri/Desktop/School%20work/Stats%20course%20NU/7:7:22/3)’ where it explained the links between elderly politicians in power and young people’s happiness.

A further reason why I think there will be a correlation between how much of gerontocracy there is in a place and how happy the people are in that place is because of the current distrust in the government being around 20%[[2]](#footnote-2) and on a downward trend which shows that people are distrusting the government at an increasing rate. This supports my hypothesis as it shows that people are getting discontent at the government which would show a direct correlation between mental health and the government.

*Data Sets –*

[federal reserve data](https://www.federalreserve.gov/data.html)  - suicide rates, shows mental health.

Objectivity – Very objective, quantitative data is hard to misinterpret as it is a number value that cannot be changed therefore the data will be impartial

Reputation – comes from the US government therefore the data is unlikely to be biased and therefore would be considered a highly regarded source

Appropriate amount of data – thousands of rows of data, significant amount of data

Relevancy – Gives the exact data for the amount of suicides that happen in the US in a given time period

[age - net worth data](https://sda.berkeley.edu/sdaweb/analysis/?dataset=scfcomb) – for seeing how much of a gerontocracy a place is.

Objectivity – Very objective as it is another set of quantitative data therefore it would be unbiased

Reputation – Comes from UC Berkley which is a reliable research source as it is an extremely good university

Appropriate amount of data – Has over one hundred thousand rows so has an extremely large sample size

Timeliness – Only goes up to 2016 therefore it is not as recent as it could have been however, it stretches almost a 30 year span

*Limitations -*

Even if there is a strong positive correlation between the amount of gerontocracy and people mental health, the data will only support my conclusion. It is almost impossible to isolate a reason why young people are getting more depressed as there is a multitude of different factors that affect mental health. For example- if there is less of a gerontocratic society in a place that gets little sun, there still could be low mental health there due to the lack of sunlight.

**Exploratory Analysis –**

At first I tried to see if the United States of America was a gerontocratic society by mapping different types of wealth against age and I found that the most wealth age group was elderly people (especially people in their late fifties to people in their seventies). This proves that there is a gerontocracy in the United States.

(see next page for data)

<https://github.com/StephenSpoerri/Final-Project>

Chart, scatter chart

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Text

Description automatically generated - [congress age](https://github.com/fivethirtyeight/data/tree/master/congress-age) avg age of US population is 38.1

<https://sda.berkeley.edu/sdaweb/analysis/?dataset=scfcomb> – US data

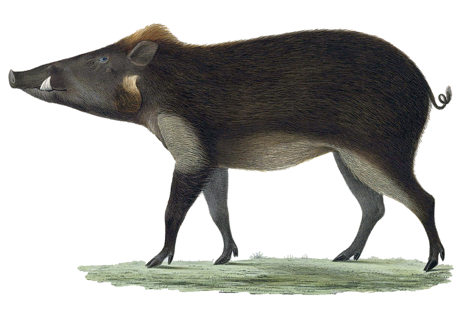
Conceptual visualisation – turn age into weight and what animals are each party

 - median age of president, speaker of the house, majority leader, three democrats leading the polls

 - average age of house of representatives now

 - average age of a US person

Scaled up 2x

 - US person

 - US house of representatives

 - median age of higher up dems

89 - 92 – Chart, scatter chart

Description automatically generated -

95 - 98 - Chart, scatter chart

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Description automatically generated -

07 - 10– Chart, scatter chart

Description automatically generated13 -16 – Chart, scatter chart

Description automatically generated

Words – standard deviation is going upwards – difference between

Age is trending upwards – people are getting older

Chart, line chart

Description automatically generated - graph of all the standard deviation, shows that the rich are getting richer as the difference between peoples net worth are getting larger. This is helpful to prove that America is becoming more gerontocratic as in 1992 there was only a slight difference between the wealthy and the poor and this is when there was only slight wealth inequality between age groups which is shown by the standard deviation of the graph, However, now there is a large standard deviation which shows that the old people are getting more rich and there is now even more of an uneven wealth distribution

Chart, line chart

Description automatically generated - average age of all the senators through each congress. This shows that the average age of senators is getting larger therefore this is proof that America is becoming more gerontocratic as a

1. Chart, bar chart

   Description automatically generated - [federal reserve data](https://www.federalreserve.gov/data.html)   [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. [distrust in the government](https://www.pewresearch.org/politics/2022/06/06/americans-views-of-government-decades-of-distrust-enduring-support-for-its-role/) [↑](#footnote-ref-2)