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CONGRUENCE AND POLITICAL PARTICIPATION – DOES THE DISCREPANCY
BETWEEN THE ELITE’S AND THE PUBLIC’S IDEOLOGY COME AT THE COST
OF REDUCED PARTICIPATION?

by

Balazs Feher-Gavra

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CONGRUENCE AND POLITICAL PARTICIPATION – DOES THE DISCREPANCY
BETWEEN THE ELITE’S AND THE PUBLIC’S IDEOLOGY COME AT THE COST
OF REDUCED PARTICIPATION?

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University of Nebraska, 2017

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Why do some people choose to engage in politics while others opt out? My core thesis is that two features of contemporary politics have a detrimental impact on participation in the electorate. The first of these two features is the discrepancy between the political agenda of the individual (what issues they consider important) and that of the political ruling class. The second stems from work suggesting that the conservative-liberal dimension represents the structure behind the issue stances of the political elite well; but that the same is not quite true for the general population (e.g. Carmines, Ensley, and Wagner 2011). Misrepresented citizens – whose views don’t align with the conservative-liberal dimension – are more likely to turn away from politics to the detriment of the process of democratic representation.

I tested my hypotheses in models of increasing complexity using four preexisting datasets (generally including more representative data and boasting a larger N, providing 20 multivariate models in total) as well as three compiled exclusively for purposes of this dissertation – adding 9 models and a set of highly relevant variables at the cost of representativeness.

The positive role of agenda congruence in predicting participation is not supported by empirical findings, although further analysis of sample characteristics calls into

question the validity of this result and points to an interesting direction for future research. The relationship between ideological congruence and ‘traditional’ means of political engagement (encompassing a range of activities from campaign contributions through contacting officials to participation in boycotts and active support of NGOs) is robust, although ideological congruence appears unrelated to voting and online participation.

These results call for the introduction of ideological incongruence into public as well as scholarly discourse, especially with respect to its negative ramifications regarding political participation and representation.

Dedication

I dedicate this work to the same person I'm fortunate enough to have dedicated my whole life to. Thank you, Alina Feher-Gavra, for helping us and me in a thousand ways. Without you I would be no one and this work would undoubtedly not exist.

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This work would also not have been possible without the knowledge I gained, mostly at UNL but also during previous stages of my academic adventures. As always, the most important elements of the environment have been people. Here is an incomplete list of individuals who more than deserve my gratitude, in order of their appearance in my life: Beata Biro, Istvan Feher, Istvan Kitanics, Mark Kitanics, Agnes Szabo, Mihaly Berkics, Robert Tardos, John R. Hibbing, Kevin B. Smith, Cal Garbin, Frank Gonzalez (who also deserves special thanks for his help with this particular work!), and John Peterson. Another round of thanks goes to the numerous friends, family members, and my forever favorite political science Department's faculty and staff (including Beth Theiss-Morse and Dona-Gene Mitchell, esteemed members of my committee, and Ross Miller, David Csontos as well as Helen Sexton) who have supported me all the way. Thank you!

Table of Contents

CHAPTER 1. LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORY	1
1. Outline.....	4
2. Participation	6
2. 1. Voting	6
2. 2. Traditional forms of political participation.....	7
2. 3. Political participation online	8
3. Agenda (Congruence)	8
4. Ideology	12
4. 1. The Elite’s Ideology.....	12
4. 2. The Public’s Ideology.....	14
4. 3. Ideological Congruence	20
5. Political Interest, Education, Socio-economic Status and Other Variables Associated with Participation	23
CHAPTER 2. HYPOTHESES AND MEASUREMENT.....	29
1. Hypotheses	29
2. Measurement.....	34
3. The Expected Path Model.....	42
CHAPTER 3. RESULTS DERIVED FROM PREEXISTING DATASETS	43
1. ANES 2011	43
1. 1. Variables	43
1. 2. Results.....	46
2. Dimensions of Political Thinking.....	52
2. 1. Variables	53
2. 2. Results.....	55
3. Minnesota Twins Political Dataset	61
3. 1. Variables	61
3. 2. Results.....	65
4. World Values Survey	72
4. 1. Variables	73
4. 2. Results.....	75
CHAPTER 4. RESULTS DERIVED FROM DATASETS SPECIFICALLY DESIGNED FOR THIS DISSERTATION	87
1. Political Science Experimental Participant Pool – Round One	87

1. 1. Variables and Univariate Results.....	88
1. 2. Results.....	93
2. Political Science Experimental Research Pool – Round Two	97
2. 1. Variables	98
2. 2. Results.....	102
3. MTurk	106
3. 1. Variables	107
3. 2. Results.....	111
CHAPTER 5. SUMMARY, DISCUSSION, AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH.....	116
1. Summary and Discussion of Hypothesis Testing	117
2. General Limitations and Directions for Future Research	129
3. Concluding Remarks.....	137
References.....	140
Appendix – The survey as administered to participants of the MTurk sample	153

List of Tables

Table 1..	47
Table 2..	50
Table 3..	56
Table 4..	57
Table 5..	58
Table 6..	59
Table 7..	66
Table 8..	67
Table 9..	73
Table 10..	75
Table 11..	78
Table 12..	81
Table 13..	85
Table 14..	86
Table 15..	93
Table 16..	94
Table 17..	95
Table 18..	102
Table 19..	103
Table 20..	104
Table 21..	111
Table 22..	112
Table 23..	113
Table 24..	117
Table 25..	125

List of Figures

Figure 1	32
Figure 2	42
Figure 3	48
Figure 4	68
Figure 5	69
Figure 6	70
Figure 7	79
Figure 8	83

CHAPTER 1. LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORY

Why do people participate in politics? Or to put it more accurately, why do some people participate in politics while others opt out? And why are these questions important for democracy and political science? It is these broad issues I set out to investigate in my dissertation through the introduction of two previously unstudied variables, agenda congruence and ideological congruence.

My core thesis is that two features of contemporary politics have a detrimental impact on participation in the electorate. The first of these two features is the discrepancy between the political agenda of individual members of the public (what issues they consider important) and that of the political ruling class. I argue that electorate members who feel (not necessarily consciously) that the ruling elite focuses on ‘the wrong issues’, issues they do not attribute high importance to, will be less likely to participate. My second main argument stems from the observation that the conservative-liberal dimension¹ represents the structure behind the issue stances of the political elite quite well but it fails to do so for a substantial segment of the rest of the population. Misrepresented citizens – whose views do not map onto the one conservative-liberal dimension – are more likely to turn away from politics. Most ideology scholars agree that one dimension is far from perfect at capturing the full scope of ideology (Hibbing, Smith, and Alford 2013; Jost, Nosek, and Gosling 2008; Jost et al. 2003). Why do political scientists keep using it, then? There are several reasons, including the dimension’s

¹ For the most part of this dissertation I will use the conservative-liberal and right-left dimensions interchangeably. While I think there are significant differences between the two – at least in some contexts such as Eastern Europe – both represent the highest level dimension of ideology.

simplicity, convenience, and the general agreement that 'it works well enough'.

However, perhaps it only 'works well enough' among those who participate because those for whom it works are more likely to participate.

But why should we care about all this? The simple answer is, participation is vitally important for the process of representation in democracy, which justifies understanding it and its predictors as a worthy endeavor. Political science has uncovered numerous variables associated with various forms of political participation, and yet, we don't seem to be doing a great job of predicting this key variable. An oft-cited article (Plutzer 2002), for example, mentions 32 variables accounting for 31% of the variance in voting. Matsusaka and Palda's (1999) efforts at predicting the same variable using four representative Canadian datasets seem to yield even less encouraging results with the reported R-squared values varying between 3.1% and 14.5%. This suggests that there is a lot of variance to be accounted for with respect to this important behavior that is not captured by currently used variables. Thus, uncovering two new variables that play a significant role in participation is a worthy contribution to the corresponding literature. Based on arguments developed below, I also believe it is possible that these variables contribute significantly more to the prediction of political participation than several others, potentially necessitating a revision of what really drives participation in different segments of the electorate.

My unique contribution is twofold, theoretical and methodological. As far as theory is concerned, my focus will be on addressing congruence, building on existing literature but taking it in two new directions. With respect to agenda congruence, I will take the ideas put forward at a macro level by Jones and Baumgartner (Baumgartner and Jones

1993; Jones and Baumgartner 2004, 2005) and apply them at a micro level. This is particularly important because individual-level incongruence has not been studied before nor its consequences regarding participation (prior literature was concerned with the population's agenda taken as a whole as well as how it relates to representation, necessitating comparison with the elite's agenda as a whole). In the case of ideology, I take two starting points to their conclusion. First, ideologically incongruent citizens participate less. In its original form, this argument was made using two dimensions, economic and social, which leads to the second extension opportunity: the public's ideology is not two- but multidimensional. Taken together, these two arguments necessitate a new way to look at congruence and participation. In later chapters of this dissertation I will advance a framework to facilitate this process.

As far as methods are concerned, I plan to contribute in two ways. First, agenda congruence and ideological congruence will be treated as continuous variables instead of dichotomous ones used to isolate groups. Thus, I will take into account a spectrum rather than just a few discrete categories, resulting in a more complex analysis and realistic picture while building on the strengths of previous scholarship. Second, I will utilize an SEM analytical framework to test all my hypotheses in the same multivariate models, including a number of interaction and mediation effects. This is especially important to see how the relationship between congruence and participation works when studied in a broader context including various other relationships. Both of these approaches represent extensions on prior studies and go beyond current research.

If I show that features of the political arrangement discourage some people from participating and thus distort representation, it will have the potential to serve as a solid

argument for political reform. In other words, my results may contribute to a broader platform advocating change in the current system of democracy. In addition, if there are negative consequences of the current agenda and ideological discrepancies (especially in today's increasingly polarized political climate, see Carmines, Ensley, & Wagner, 2012), the public needs to be aware of their potential repercussions regarding representation. Politics is one of the most important subsystems in society, at times quite literally a matter of life and death. Government today (and democratic representation in general) could certainly benefit from more participation and less apathy. It is possible, however, that the current ideological alignment discourages a significant minority of individuals, many of whom may hold issue positions, but feel like the particular combination of their stance on these issues is not represented by either side of the conservative-liberal spectrum. Thus, in order to have a chance at increasing participation, we may need to change parts of the system itself, which is impossible absent reliable information on what features discourage what forms of participation and how.

1. Outline

The rest of this dissertation will proceed as follows. The first chapter contains my theory and literature review, which I start by discussing my dependent variable, political participation, and the reasons why I chose to study its specific forms, voting, traditional and online. I then introduce my two key independent variables, agenda congruence and ideological congruence. While these are significantly different from each other, my reasoning regarding their relationship with participation is similar. First, I expect those whose agenda (what issues they consider important) is not represented by the political elite to participate less. Second, I posit that there is a key difference in how well the

dominant conservative-liberal dimension represents the structure behind the political views of the elite (very well) and the public (well for some but not for others). As a consequence, individuals whose views do not fit the category tend to participate less.

In order to complete the conceptual picture, I dedicate the end of the first chapter to the discussion of other variables frequently associated with participation. The main focus is on political interest, which I expect to moderate the relationship between both congruences and participation. I also introduce two variables, education and socio-economic status, both of which are expected to perform a double function as controls as well as variables implicated in two sets of supplementary hypotheses.

I present the hypotheses derived from these theoretical considerations in chapter two, followed by a detailed description of the measurement of each variable. In the final, third section of the second chapter I conclude this process by presenting a summary of my analytical framework and the expected path model.

Chapters three and four are centered on results. In the former I use ten, mostly large N datasets that were collected for other projects, mostly by other researchers (with the exception of the Dimensions of Political Thinking dataset represented in section two). In the latter, I test my hypotheses in three datasets specially designed and collected for the purposes of this dissertation. Within each section I proceed from bivariate to complex multivariate models.

Finally, chapter five contains the general discussion of my results as well as my conclusions, the limitations of my approach, and recommendations for future research.

2. Participation

Political participation is my key dependent variable. Taking a broad view (and accounting for as many distinct forms as reasonable) when tackling it is important for two reasons. First, to arrive at as wide theoretical applications as possible. Second, because this is the only way to allow for the possibility of differences in the relationship between participation and my independent variables. Thus, in this section I isolate and briefly discuss three different forms of political participation, voting, traditional or offline, and online participation.

2. 1. Voting

The first form of political participation I study, voting, requires no definition. It is essential for the “one person, one vote” form of democracy and is arguably the most important and direct form of participation. Accordingly, it is one of the most studied (A. N. Campbell et al. 1960; Downs 1957; Fiorina 1981; S. L. Popkin 1991; S. Popkin et al. 1976; Rosenstone and Hansen 1993). It is important to point out, however, that at least half of this literature is concerned with the direction of voting (e.g. Bafumi and Shapiro 2009; Bartels 2000; Kedar 2005; Warwick 2011), in other words how people vote instead of whether or not they vote. Even young Europeans – otherwise prone to alternative forms of participation – recognize voting as the most effective way of influencing high-level decision making (Horvath and Paolini 2014). Relative to other forms of participation, the costs of voting – while dependent on a number of factors such as electoral rules, frequency or socio-economic status – are comparatively low while its general level (i.e. the number of people engaging in voting) is relatively high.

2. 2. Traditional forms of political participation²

Apart from voting, many other forms of participation have been identified and studied (Brady, Verba, and Lehman Schlozman 1995; Lane 1959; Putnam 2000; Rosenstone and Hansen 1993; Schattschneider 1960). This literature emphasizes the role of civic engagement in addition to and beyond voting, which is deemed essential for a functioning democracy. What is common in these behaviors is the objective to achieve political goals or express issue preferences. Furthermore, they are all fundamentally social activities and entail incurring higher costs than voting (more time and/or effort invested). When operationalizing these behaviors, most studies (e.g. Bäck, Teorell, & Westholm, 2011) rely on the framework established by the seminal work of Verba & Nie (1972). The authors distinguished three forms in addition to voting ('modes' in the original language): campaign activity, citizen-initiated contact, and cooperative participation. Subsequent scholarship significantly expanded this scope – see Sabucedo and Arce (1991) for an alternative classification, Kaase (1999) for the use of non-institutional aspects, or van Deth (2001) for a comprehensive overview. This expansion in scope also meant introducing new forms such as more or less violent (occupying space, buildings, etc.) or previously unstudied civic (strikes, membership in voluntary associations, see Bekkers 2005) participation. Alternative forms have been studied across a variety of cultures including South Korea (Ha, Kim, and Jo 2013) and Singapore (Rodan 2009), emphasizing that these modes may work in contexts where voting is hindered, choices are restricted or the context is simply different. Based on these works, I

² As a name, 'offline' may be more justified to contrast these with their subsequent counterparts. However, 'traditional' captures the essence of these forms as they have been available for a long time as opposed to newer avenues that opened with advances in technology.

selected twelve forms to study under the umbrella of traditional participation (see the Appendix for specific details).

2. 3. Political participation online

The Internet has changed virtually every facet of our lives including politics, bringing about political science's prerogative to catch up to this trend and incorporate it into theory. Accordingly, some recent studies (Bakker and de Vreese 2011; Horvath and Paolini 2014; Vissers and Stolle 2014; Zukin et al. 2006) noted the importance of online forms of participation, especially for young citizens. It is important to note that what brings these activities together is the medium through which they take place, not other characteristics. Nevertheless, they share at least two features. They are relatively low cost – after all it takes a few seconds and clicks to share a political video, which is almost insignificant compared with in-person participation. Moreover, these actions share with each other as well as other forms of participation their goal, which is to express political thoughts and/or preferences. Due to their novelty there is little literature and theory to rely on, and no prior data available. Nevertheless, because of their common fundamental goal, I expect them to behave similarly to other forms of participation and be predicted by the same variables.

3. Agenda (Congruence)

For a significant length of time, public opinion research has been dominated by the view that the public's ideology could be represented by people's views on issues of the day (Converse 1964; Inglehart and Klingemann 1976; Nie and Andersen 1974; Wilson and Patterson 1968; Zaller 1992). In recent years, however, some have suggested that concentrating exclusively on issue preferences may put political science at the risk of

missing important relationships. Hibbing and Theiss-Morse (2002) drew attention to what they termed process space and thus highlighted the importance of adding citizens' preferences regarding the 'how' of democracy to studies focusing solely on the 'what'. Further, although not the first to mention its importance (Cobb 1983; Kingdon 1984), it was Baumgartner and Jones (1993; Jones and Baumgartner 2004, 2005) who brought the study of agenda to the forefront of political science research.

But what exactly is agenda and why is it important? The answer to the second part of this question is, because it has the potential to heavily influence the process of representation and the mechanics of democracy. The definition of agenda depends on the specific subject under scrutiny. Jones and Baumgartner (2005) characterize it as the policy issues (preferences) that are important to relevant actors in a polity at a certain point in time. The authors created the Policy Agendas Project, which has collected a vast amount of publicly accessible data on the agenda of five groups: the public, Congress, the Presidency, the Supreme Court, and the news media represented by The New York Times. The specific methodology varies depending on the actor. However, the project works with a unified coding scheme that allows researchers to categorize agenda elements the same way in all cases in order to draw comparisons. Diverse agendas can be measured on a common scale because the importance of an issue is signaled by how often it occurs in various analyzed documents. Take the most important problem (MIP) paradigm, for example. Respondents in large-scale public opinion surveys are asked an open-ended question along the lines of 'In your opinion, what is the most important issue facing the United States (or other polity) today?' The answers are recorded and coded using the universal scheme mentioned above. No doubt in part due to its simplicity, this

item has made its way to numerous large datasets including the World Values Survey and the Barometers (Euro, Latino, Africa).

The extended time frame (most indices are available starting in the 1950s) adds an important dimension to Jones and Baumgartner's efforts in that it allows researchers and interested parties to see how different issues come and go in different groups' agendas. It also has the potential to shed light on the interrelationships among different players and how they affect one another. Two of the authors' key findings are that: 1) the elite's agenda follows that of the public over time (dynamic representation occurs moderated by institutional friction, also see: Bevan and Jennings (2014) and Mortensen (2010)); and 2) the public's agenda is narrower in scope than that of elites; whereas elite members juggle various issues with more or less similar subjective importance, the public's agenda is centered on a small subset of these issues at any given time.

In this dissertation I will use Jones and Baumgartner's framework with an important difference: a shift in focus from the macro to the micro level. Instead of studying the electorate as a whole, I want to see what happens if I home in on each individual's personal agenda instead. This is particularly important because, although embedded in a social context, participation is, at its essence, an individual-level act. Even if it occurs in a group, if we are to study its predictors we need to know whether certain individuals took part or not. Thus, while aggregate-level data were sufficient to connect agenda and representation in past research, I need individual-level theory and data to study agenda congruence and participation. In other words, while Jones and Baumgartner showed how representation works in the case of agenda and aggregate discrepancies (for which their

data were obviously entirely satisfactory), I am interested in how individual differences in this discrepancy affect individual-level participation.

Let us imagine a landscape of all possible political issues. Now let's attach a number between 1 and 5 to each of them where 1 = very unimportant to me (I don't care about it at all) and 5 = extremely important to me (I care about it greatly). The comprehensive aggregate of all these for each member of the electorate is what I term personal agenda. Note that in this framework, everyone has a personal agenda. If one is not at all politically inclined their values for each issue will simply be at or close to 1.

There are two reasons why I will take a broad view of agenda. The first stems from a core question: what is political? An issue considered important by the political elite at any given time? Jones and Baumgartner's own results refute this definition by highlighting the ephemeral nature of agenda. What's political today may not be considered so tomorrow (think of organized crime or alcohol sales in the political landscape of today versus a hundred years ago) and vice versa. My point is, there is nothing inherently 'political' about political issues. Every and any issue that has to do with relations between people may be treated as political, and thus be subject to study. Taking a broad perspective is especially important to account for people with strong feelings about issues that only infrequently surface in mainstream politics.

Second, it is reasonable to assume individual differences regarding citizens' personal agenda. If we think back to the landscape of 1-5 evaluations, it is highly likely that not many people's landscapes are exactly the same. Some may, for instance, attribute a 3 (moderately important) or 4 (important) to organized crime, 1 to abortion, 2 to gay marriage, and 5 to military spending, while others may do the opposite or anything in

between. In order to tackle these differences, I need a broad representation of as many issues as possible.

4. Ideology

Ideological congruence (I_{dc}) is my second key independent variable. Its operational definition is fairly straightforward: how well the conservative-liberal ideological dimension represents the organizing structure behind one's policy preferences. Thus, my focus is on the relationship between the elite's and the public's ideology. A key related argument I make is that there is a difference between the ideological congruence of the political elite and the electorate. Specifically, I argue that the conservative-liberal (C-L) dimension represents the vast majority of the former very well, but that is not the case for the general population, where there are significant individual differences. These differences, in turn, lead to varying levels of ideological congruence. Past research (with one notable exception discussed below) has not explicitly addressed this possibility. I believe, however, that to have a chance at understanding ideological incongruents, we need to see their ideology in relation to that of the ruling elite.

4. 1. The Elite's Ideology

There are several arguments to support the claim that the conservative-liberal dimension adequately represents the structure behind the political elite's views and policy preferences.

In the United States, the dominant two-party system and the close relationship between party affiliation and ideology are two manifestations of the political spectrum's one-dimensional nature. Here, Republicans are – for the most part – ideologically conservative as much as Democrats are liberal, especially since the realignment has

concluded (Abramowitz and Saunders 2013; Levendusky 2009). It is likely that, in accordance with Duverger's Law, one of the driving forces behind this two-pronged separation is the first-past-the-post system (Fey 1997; Riker 1982), although the direction of causality and even the effect itself have been debated outside the U.S. (Dunleavy, Diwakar, and Dunleavy 2008). In most circumstances, it is in the parties' and politicians' best interest to help voters in democratic polities differentiate among different players. At least one cleavage is needed for this purpose. Accordingly, most scholars rely on only one dimension. But why only one?

First, a unidimensional structure adds a useful heuristic and saves electorate members time and effort, which is no small feat in today's world of information overload. It is much easier to know who is for or against gun control, more or less military spending, or pro-choice or pro-life if there are only two major alternatives available. Two solid end-points add predictability to the system. Second, there are historical reasons for the existence of one ruling dimension. The distinction between the parties of tradition and progress goes back to the time of the French Revolution, and allegedly has deeper underpinnings potentially harkening back to the dawn of human civilization (Hibbing, Smith, and Alford 2013; Lakoff 1996; Pinker 2002; Sowell 1987). In most democracies – and even authoritarian systems – the separation of two visions, progressive and conservative is, and has been present for at least the past few centuries.

The system is not perfect as the occasional resurgence of third parties in the U.S. demonstrates. Nevertheless, all the theoretical and empirical evidence and the distinction's high utility for research purposes provide more than enough reason to trust

its explanatory power, at least in the case of political elites,³ especially if we consider the success of expert judgments in using the left-right (C-L) dimension to categorize various political actors across a large number of polities (Castles and Mair 1984; Gabel and Huber 2000; Huber and Inglehart 1995). To indicate the robustness of this approach, it is important to note that this list includes many countries with multi-party systems. Despite some questions raised (Budge 2000; Tavits and Letki 2009), the success of expert judgments is among my strongest arguments for high general ideological congruence in the case of political elites.

4. 2. The Public's Ideology

Although one dimension seems to fit elites, this is a questionable assumption for the public. Two questions that have long intrigued political scientists are: does the electorate have an ideology? And if yes, how is this ideology structured? Since Converse's (1964) seminal article, many have weighed in on this subject (Althaus 2003; Delli Carpini 1997; Kuklinski and Peyton 2007; Taber and Lodge 2006; Zaller 1992) on all sides. While there is no universal consensus, the evidence appears strong enough to assert that the answer is yes, at least for a sizeable subset of the general population. In addition, much of the corresponding research is focused precisely on whether or not the public's views line up along the conservative-liberal dimension. I argue, however, that this approach can potentially miss the point as many members of the electorate may in fact 'have an ideology', only one that does not map onto one dimension. However, this fact should not be used to assert the lack of ideology's existence, as there is at least one

³ The only notable exception being Austria, where the elite's views appear to be structured along two dimensions (economic and social), not one (Dolezal et al. 2013).

alternative way of looking at the same phenomenon: multidimensionality. At the core of my dissertation lies the observation that there may be substantial individual variance regarding this issue. The unidimensional structure may suffice for many, but not all electorate members.

Studying the public's ideology along the conservative-liberal dimension has a certain appeal that should not be ignored. First of all, it is simple. Furthermore (Jost 2006; Jost, Nosek, and Gosling 2008) most people (generally 90% or above) seem consistently able to place themselves along a 7-point conservative-liberal scale. My first problem with this argument is related to the interpretation of the scale points, which relies on the assumption that the scale measures real positions while accounting for their extremity. But if we give it a second thought, how exactly do we know what a 7 means, for instance? Is it an extreme conservative view at moderate intensity? Or extreme intensity? Or does it signal someone who feels very strongly about political issues but is a moderate conservative? Even more important to my point here is the middle of the scale. I claim that at least some of the 4 responses (which are by far the most common of all, from one-third to half of the entire sample in most cases) do not represent real moderate, middle-of-the-road attitudes. Instead we are dealing with a variety of possible answers lumped together because the middle point gives people the opportunity to mask non-placement, lack of attitude, low political interest, or incongruence, not to mention that the use of the scale also assumes that people's preferences line up well along this scale, which is an assumption I suggest treating as an empirical question instead.

For these reasons I hold the opinion that a much better way to measure this dimension is the Wilson-Patterson (Wilson and Patterson 1968) scale, which attempts to

achieve this feat through the use of multiple items. However, once we have enough items, we can empirically test the underlying factor structure instead of just accepting that a one-factor solution is ‘good enough’. As the literature below shows, given enough items a one-dimensional solution is rarely the best representation of the structure underlying the data. Conversely, multidimensional measures allow for the direct study of congruence and its effect on participation.

As an alternative, many scholars (Gerber et al. 2010; Jost et al. 2003 and most notably Carmines, Ensley, and Wagner (2011, 2012a, 2012b)) suggest a two-dimensional approach relying on the social-economic distinction. I view the two-factor structure as superior to its one-factor counterpart, but at the same time insufficient in light of all relevant theoretical and empirical considerations. One argument alone should suffice to corroborate this: the two-factor solution does not represent the empirical reality well if we have enough variables to account for other factors of ideology. Furthermore, despite its popularity (Clagett and Shafer 2010), the economic-social distinction may be misleading. Economic issues are supposed to include “the government’s role in managing the economy and providing for the general welfare, such as taxes, spending on health care, social security, and welfare”; while their social counterparts “deal(s) with cultural, or moral, values including issues like abortion, gay rights, and prayer in public schools” (Carmines, Ensley, and Wagner 2011, p. 332.). My first critique of this distinction has to do with the separation of these issues. If we think of all relevant political issues, can we confidently put each or at least most of them into one of these categories? Let’s take immigration for an example. Where does it belong? It would be relatively easy to make a case for both dimensions, probably meaning that it is economic for some (those who

oppose/support it for their own economic self-interest based on their professional prospects) and social for others (those that focus on the racial, religious, and cultural aspects of the issue) or maybe even both or neither. What about marijuana legalization, military spending and the rest? Part of the problem is the vagueness of the ‘social’ category. The economy is a relatively separate subsystem but on a deeper consideration we cannot help finding that there is no ‘social’; instead it is expected to include all other societal subsystems such as education, bureaucracy, public health, defense, etc. (most of which are intertwined with economic issues anyway).

If the social-economic dimension does not paint an accurate picture of the underlying structure behind the public’s ideology, how many should we replace it with? And what should be included in these new factors? Multiple authors offer a variety of solutions, designed to tap Social Dominance Orientation (Ho et al. 2012; Pratto et al. 1994), attitude toward change, tradition and tolerance (Jost et al. 2003; Schwartz, Caprara, and Vecchione 2010), Right-Wing Authoritarianism (Altemeyer 2006) and others. The number of relevant dimensions ranges between three and six, although it must be noted that most of the corresponding literature appears to cover the same factors – just structured differently. Consequently, I suggest a comprehensive approach with five relatively easily distinguishable factors (as outlined in Feher et al., 2014).

It is logical to start with the *economic* dimension, often referred to as welfare or distribution of resources. Specific related issues include business regulation, differential economic rewards (equality), aid to the disadvantaged (McClosky and Zaller 1984), free enterprise and minimal government involvement in the economy (Schwartz, Caprara, and Vecchione 2010), and also welfare, social security and affirmative action (Jost 2006).

The next four dimensions may be viewed as an extension of the social factor discussed above. Relying on the importance of traditional values in politics, or its flipside, *attitude toward change* has been consistently found to be an important aspect of ideology (Gerber et al. 2010; Goren 2005; Jost 2006; Jost et al. 2003; McClosky and Zaller 1984). These values are usually linked to religion and are strongly tied to endorsement of time-honored social norms in the face of new, permissive lifestyles (Schwartz, Caprara, and Vecchione 2010; Smith et al. 2011).

The third factor I isolate, *intergroup relations*, summarizes several avenues of literature encompassing the role of (blind) patriotism, attitude toward immigrants and foreign military intervention, military spending or defense and aggressive military action against terrorists, and immigration policies (Huddy et al. 2005; Jost 2006; Schwartz, Caprara, and Vecchione 2010; Smith et al. 2011). In addition, there is another aspect of intergroup relations that has been well-studied on its own: Social Dominance Orientation (SDO, Pratto et al. (1994)). Given its relatively narrow scope and close proximity to related issues, I suggest treating it under the umbrella of intergroup relations.

Norms exist in every known society. Individuals who violate these norms have to be punished to avoid (too many) freeriders. The *treatment of rulebreakers* was first proposed to be included in the study of ideology by McClosky and Zaller (1984). The most important underlying concepts are punishment of deviants (Hibbing et al. 2014; Hibbing, Smith, and Alford 2013; Jost et al. 2003; Smith et al. 2011) and the maintenance of law and order (Schwartz, Caprara, and Vecchione 2010), commonly reflected in specific issues such as the death penalty, mandatory minimum sentences, or preference for rehabilitation over harsh punishment.

Finally, attitudes toward the *government's role* (how much power it should have and how actively it ought to wield that power) is a pervasive issue frequently mentioned in US as well as international politics. Goren (2005), Jost, Nosek, and Gosling (2008), Jost (2006), and Smith et al. (2011) all highlight its importance as a factor of ideology. This factor has the potential to be the driving force behind many attitudes including some discussed above, such as welfare or military spending. Going beyond that, however, it can also be expected to carry significance in itself.

The paper containing these arguments offers empirical evidence that a six-factor structure – including a somewhat debatable one that emerged during data analysis, labeled ‘Big Brother’ (government’s ability to monitor and be involved in our day-to-day life) – represents the relationships in the data⁴ in the three cultures studied significantly better than a one- or two-factor solution, provided there are enough variables to extract these factors. Based on these results, it seems likely that the public’s agenda is indeed not unidimensional, opening the door for the empirical study of ideological congruence and raising questions about the elite’s ability to provide thorough representational coverage. Given the significant differences theoretical between these factors, also backed up by empirical evidence, I argue that they should be treated separately.

⁴ The same as used in chapter 3, section 2 of this dissertation.

4. 3. Ideological Congruence

My operationalization of ideological congruence is a direct extension on relevant work by Carmines, Ensley, and Wagner (2011, 2012a, 2012b). Given the importance of their findings and analytical framework for this dissertation, it is warranted to dedicate some space to a quick summary here.

Carmines et al. start off by criticizing the self-identification measure of the conservative-liberal dimension for reasons similar to those discussed above, while also corroborating the idea that the one-dimensional structure is accurate for the elite, but not the public. Their solution to the problem, however, is based on a two-factor solution. Relying on the economic-social separation, they distinguish five ideological groups in the electorate: Liberals, Conservatives, Moderates, Libertarians, and Communitarians. “Moderates are defined as those respondents who are within a one-half of a standard deviation of the origin in any direction” (Carmines, Ensley, and Wagner 2012a, p. 7.), based on factor scores for the two dimensions derived from a CFA of ANES data. Regarding the other four, the labels speak for themselves with Conservatives and Liberals being the consistent categories (scoring in the same direction on both dimensions) and Libertarians and Communitarians representing their inconsistent counterparts.

The authors’ key results support the argument I made above in that the middle category of self-placement is an attractive alternative for many ideologically incongruent respondents. They also find that although the two incongruent groups appear close to moderates based on their self-identification, when it comes to political knowledge and action they are significantly different from them. Another consequence of incongruence pertains to party identification: “[incongruent citizens] do not have partisan attitudes that

benefit a polarized society. Instead, they remain ambivalent, regularly shifting their allegiances between the Republican and Democratic Parties and showing no signs of an overall increase in partisanship [unlike their congruent counterparts]” (Carmines, Ensley, and Wagner 2012b, p. 3.).

Finally, the authors also study the consequences of incongruence regarding participation. From the vantage point of this dissertation, their most important finding is that moderates and ideologically incongruent citizens participate less in activities that correspond to my operationalization of traditional participation. It is important to note, however, that this relationship seems tenuous at best for voting, suggesting a different effect on various forms of the dependent variable. Furthermore, the effect appears to be disproportionately stronger for a particular group of incongruents with no representation (as opposed to the periodically resurfacing Libertarian movement/party):

Communitarians, members of the electorate who prefer a strong federal government and traditional social values. Even though the differences are not great enough to support the ‘dark side of civic engagement’ coined by Fiorina (1999), they are nevertheless substantial.

However, the arguments outlined above fundamentally undermine the two-dimensional solution used by the authors on both theoretical and empirical grounds. Once we accept this fact, we must take the next logical step toward the study of ideological congruence. In practice, this presents a challenge compared to Carmines, Ensley, and Wagner (2011)’s original analysis. Recall their five groups based on two factors (Liberals, Conservatives, Moderates, Libertarians, and Communitarians). If I split my participants into three categories based on each of my six factors along the same lines

(with moderates in the middle and one on either side), it would result in $3^6 - 5 = 724$ groups to analyze. This goes to show that a group-based approach is virtually impossible above a certain number of dimensions. Luckily, there is a robust way to circumvent this problem without sacrificing interpretability, and at the same time moving toward higher level statistical models. The key is constructing one continuous ideological congruence variable relying directly on factor scores, as I will present in the next chapter. While I believe this approach to present a significant improvement, my main point is that this step follows logically from the above presented arguments and is thus necessary.

5. Political Interest, Education, Socio-economic Status and Other Variables Associated with Participation

Discussing a set of other variables commonly associated with political participation is important for two main reasons. First, to populate my multivariate models with appropriate controls. Specifically, it is imperative to see if the relationships I hypothesize regarding my key independent variables are found valid in a multivariate framework. Second, in some cases, such as with political interest, I also expect these variables to have an effect on the relationship between my key independent and dependent variables.

My conceptual understanding of political interest, the most important related variable from the perspective of my hypotheses, encompasses the following related concepts: interest in politics and political issues; the importance of politics in general and in the individual's own life compared to other spheres of life and types of activities; general tendency for interest and involvement outside one's narrow social circles with respect to news, world issues, and politics; and general feeling toward politics. Political interest, has usually not been in the spotlight of political science studies. Two notable exceptions are Boulianne (2011), who found that different media sources may have a different impact on interest; and Torcal and Maldonado (2014), who show that political discussions may actually work against interest, at least in some circumstances. However, the most common practice is to use interest as a control (Bekkers 2005; Mutz 2002).

Since one of its roles will be to serve as a control variable, it is important to draw a clear line between political interest and political participation to avoid circular argumentation. While this may be somewhat blurred in practice (as some might argue that showing interest is a moderate form of political action), in theory it is simple: the

first is passive while the second is active. Analogous to the attitude-behavior distinction in psychology, one represents internal processes while the other is when individuals put them into action in the external world. Previous scholarship (e.g. Parry, Moyser, and Day, 1992) used the same logic for excluding these forms from participation.

Another one of the variables frequently associated with participation is education. In fact, the positive relationship between the two is among the most consistent findings in the literature (A. N. Campbell et al. 1960; Nagler 1991; Nie, Junn, and Stehlik-Barry 1996; Tenn 2005; Verba, Schlozman, and Brady 1995). This rich literature necessitates education's inclusion in models predicting participation, at least as a control. However, recent research (Berinsky and Lenz 2011; Lewis-Beck et al. 2008; Persson 2015) has raised a number of questions about this relationship, such as: How and why does the positive relationship between education and participation come about? Does education have a direct effect or does it work through other variables? What happens in education that leads to an increase in participation? Political knowledge and interest are the most obvious "culprits." Presumably, the more time one spends in the educational system, the higher the chances that one will acquire more knowledge about the social world and the relevant issues within it. Moreover, education has the possibility to turn people toward politics and help them recognize the importance of politics and various issues (at the very least the impact of rising college costs). Some programs, such as political science, sociology or economics, may facilitate this process even more than others. The next avenue is through social networks. The more time individuals spend in education, the more opportunities they have to build networks in general, and politicized ones in particular. Furthermore, through classes and extracurricular activities

(fraternities/sororities, clubs, etc.) they have a higher chance to encounter more people with diverse political views and potentially even get a sense of engagement at the local level (e.g. through involvement in student representation). And lastly, it is possible that education works in tandem with socio-economic status in at least two ways. Higher education leads to an increased chance for obtaining higher SES, a higher-paid and respected job, and in general a higher status in society. At the same time, college – especially in the U.S. – is expensive, giving higher SES people an increased chance of attaining higher degrees and in general spending more time in the education system.

With respect to my main theory, first I want to see if the relationship between congruence and participation holds if I account for education as a control. Furthermore, I will also study the effect of education on participation directly. While not part of the central tenet of this dissertation, the above outlined debate justifies some effort directed at replication and empirical study of the different pathways between education and participation. Moreover, it is important to test if these relationships remain statistically significant after the addition of my key independent variables.

The next variable, socio-economic status, stands out as one of the most widely recognized among predictors that show a positive relationship with participation (Beck and Jennings 1982; A. N. Campbell et al. 1960; Nie, Powell, and Prewitt 1969; Verba and Nie 1972). The original argument (Aldrich 1993) has a distinctive rational choice flavor by relying on a cost-benefit calculation; namely, people with more resources at their disposal have more (time, money, effort) to spare, and this results in more opportunities to engage in politics (Downs 1957). In addition, there may be more at stake for them, both regarding vested interest and potential benefits (they pay more if there is a tax

increase, for example). For reasons similar to those discussed above, I will use this variable both as a control and as a variable of interest in two supplementary hypotheses.

Next I turn to the three essential categories whose priority in perception and cognition is widely accepted in the psychology literature (Contreras, Banaji, and Mitchell 2013; Schneider 2004). Gender is a ‘classic’ control variable almost always included in political science models. In earlier times it would doubtlessly have played a larger role in predicting participation. Even in the United States of 1997, Verba, Burns, and Schlozman found that men participated more in a certain set of activities, more specifically a subset of what I termed traditional participation: contributing to campaigns, belonging to political organizations, and contacting government officials. The authors also isolated four variables expected to mediate this relationship: SES, social networks, political interest, and education. Due to this variable’s rather tangential role to my central point, I will not include it in a hypothesis. I will, however, use it as a control in my multivariate models and allow for the indirect relationships mentioned above. Regarding race and age, the situation is similar: I will only study the effect of these two variables in a more limited scope as controls.

The process of linking individuals to politics occurs through two broadly interpreted channels: social networks and direct contact. Regarding the former, scholars (Banks and Roker 1994; D. E. Campbell 2006; Jennings and Niemi 1981; Kedem and Bar-Lev 1989; Kraut and Lewis 1975; Tedin 1974) have isolated three main environments in which socialization takes place: the family, school, and peer groups, all of which are embedded in the general environment or ‘political culture’ (usually represented by the media). My key takeaway from this literature is the importance of social networks regarding politics.

Directly studied by numerous authors in recent years (D. N. Campbell 2013; Christakis and Fowler 2011; Robert Huckfeldt 2014), it seems networks cannot be ignored as important environments for the transmission of political views, values, and even activities. Specifically, I will use two aspects of networks as controls: the individual's own standing in them (opinion leader versus follower role), and how politicized they are.

The direct link between politics and the individual will be tackled through five related variables: general attitude toward political actors (trust in institutions), partisanship direction and strength, civic duty, and political efficacy. It is important to include these as multivariate controls in order to isolate the independent effect of my key independent variables. Each has been established as an important predictor of participation. The first refers to general attitudes directed at the political system as a whole as well as its specific actors such as politicians, key institutions, and the media. It has been studied by numerous scholars and isolated as an important predictor of participation. Kaase (1999), for example, demonstrates how trust (in institutions as well as its general, interpersonal counterpart purportedly located one step earlier in the causal chain) plays a role in predicting participation in multiple Western European polities. The most common means to measure this concept is as trust in various institutions relevant in a given polity. These institutions inevitably include parties and other partisan ones (such as the Presidency), which points to a connection between this variable and partisanship, the latter shown to have its own impact on participation (A. N. Campbell et al. 1960; Fairdosi and Rogowski 2015; R. Huckfeldt and Sprague 1992). An important distinction here is between the strength and the direction of partisanship. The latter may be more related to the evaluation of some institutions, but partisanship strength appears to be

heritable (Settle, Dawes, and Fowler 2009) and probably plays a stronger role in predicting participation than partisanship direction.

Civic duty – the internalized norm that political participation and voting are every citizen’s duty – was first used as a ‘saving grace’ for rational choice models to explain why people vote despite the alleged irrationality of the act (Blais et al. 2014; Bowler and Donovan 2013; Weinschenk 2014; Zukin et al. 2006). Political efficacy, on the other hand, refers to the perceived impact and importance of the individual’s participation. Not surprisingly, both show a positive relationship with voting and institutional participation (Kenski and Stroud 2006; Moeller et al. 2013), and both have been indicated as important mediators between other variables and participation (Klemmensen et al. 2012; Verhulst 2012).

I use these five political variables as controls in my multivariate models, which raises the potential issue of multicollinearity since most of them are likely to be relatively closely related concepts. I will account for this potential effect by investigating their bivariate relationships and removing some from multivariate models if necessary.

The last variable in this section, religiosity, is easily captured by a few direct items, and has been associated with participation on a number of accounts (D. N. Campbell 2013; Scheufele 2003; Verba, Schlozman, and Brady 1995). This justifies its inclusion as a control, especially since it is conceptually different enough from the above discussed variables not to compete for the same portion of the variance in my dependent variables.

CHAPTER 2. HYPOTHESES AND MEASUREMENT

I start this chapter by introducing the hypotheses derived from the theory presented in chapter one. The next, second section contains a detailed description of how I measure each variable. In the final, third section of chapter two, I conclude by presenting a simplified version of the final path model I expect to corroborate following each multivariate analysis presented in chapters three and four.

1. Hypotheses

I have four sets of hypotheses derived from the theory outlined above. The two sets of core hypotheses are centered on the idea that incongruent citizens (with respect to agenda in Hypotheses 1a-c and ideology in Hypotheses 2a-c) participate less. The second, supplementary set (containing Hypotheses 3 and 4) is designed to replicate well-established relationships between education and socio-economic status and participation to see if they hold in a multivariate framework including congruence as well as various other controls and mediation effects.

I hypothesize a positive linear relationship between agenda congruence and participation (Hypothesis 1a). In other words, I expect that the more well-represented an individual's agenda is by the political elite, the more likely they will be to see a point to participatory acts because they feel there is a higher chance the issues relevant to them will be focused on. To put it another way, even if electorate members are not conscious of any congruence, it is more than possible that elite rhetoric is more likely to speak to congruents than incongruents on significantly more issues, prompting higher participation in the former and lower in the latter. For the same reasons I expect this positive relationship to hold in multivariate models, represented by a positive beta weight (H1b).

What this hypothesis states is that agenda congruence is conceptually different enough from political interest and a set of other variables previously associated with participation to not compete with them for the same portion of the variance in the key dependent variable, participation.

Regarding my expectation for ideological congruence, I hypothesize a positive linear relationship between this variable and participation (Hypothesis 2a). As I argued above, the conservative-liberal dimension represents political elites' ideology quite well. Therefore, I expect that the better it covers that of individuals, the more likely they will be to feel that their voices may be heard in the way they prefer. To put it another way, consider that most candidates' expressed issue preferences align along the conservative-liberal axis. If that is not the case for individuals, said candidates will only reflect agreement with them on a handful of specific issues. It is also possible that they will agree with different candidates on different issues, potentially even to a similar degree. For severely incongruent members, it will be impossible to figure out how to match their preferences to those of elites. Electorate members who find the direction of their issue preferences consistently unrepresented may even lose faith in elites' ability to represent them and turn away from politics. In other words, persistent incongruence may diminish trust in the political system as a whole and lead to lower levels of participation through this avenue (with the moderation of trust in institutions or democracy, for example).

Based on the same logic, I also expect the positive relationship between ideological congruence and participation to hold in multivariate models containing a host of other variables selected based on preceding research (reflected in a positive weight, H2b).

The expected relationship between political interest and both of my key independent variables is equally important. Since my argument is basically the same for both IVs, I will present it here using ideological congruence, with the side note that I expect the same pattern for agenda congruence. First, I will utilize political interest as a control variable to test if there is more to congruence than simple interest. However, beyond competition, I predict cooperation between my key IVs and political interest when predicting participation in the form of a moderation effect. I expect the positive relationship between political interest and participation to differ across levels of congruence, although I expect the relationship to remain positive across all levels. However, the positive relationship between congruence and participation may not always exist. It is possible that at lower levels of interest, congruence does not matter. These individuals have, for some reason, turned away from politics and not much in the way of congruence can change that. At higher level of interest, however, the picture changes. Low congruence leads to individuals' feeling that their own ideology is misrepresented by the political elite (whose members fit into the categories of 'conservative' and 'liberal', while these individuals do not). As a consequence, they will participate in politics to a lesser degree, but not enough to turn the relationship between political interest and participation around. To put it another way, people with high ideological congruence and high political interest will be much more likely to participate in politics than those with low ideological congruence and high political interest. Therefore, I hypothesize a positive interaction between political interest and agenda, as well as ideological congruence when predicting participation in multivariate models (Hypotheses 1c and 2c), as demonstrated in Figure 1.

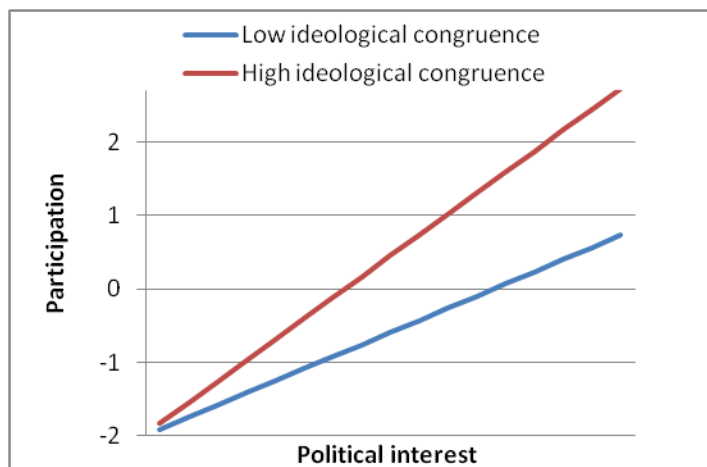


Figure 1. Expected pattern of interaction between ideological congruence and political interest in predicting participation.

As the next and final step in this section, I present the two sets of supplementary hypotheses derived from the theory presented above. Based on the four avenues I outlined in section five of the first chapter with respect to the relationship between education and participation, I expect these variables – political interest (H3b), political knowledge (H3c), social network characteristics (H3d), and socio-economic status (H3e) to fully mediate the relationship between education and participation. I hypothesize full mediation and no direct relationship (H3a) because the literature offers no other ways education may affect participation. This also entails that the null hypothesis in H3a should only stand where I can measure all of these paths, since inability to do so opens the door for an indirect relationship ‘masquerading’ as a direct one. Finally, this use of education should alleviate the criticism raised by Persson (2015), namely that in most cases researchers do not have a clear idea of what exactly they are controlling for when they add this variable to their models.

Although some authors have highlighted other possible moderation effects (Tam Cho, Gimpel, and Wu 2006), the direct relationship between SES and participation seems entrenched in the literature with good reason, leading me to formulate it as Hypothesis

4a. In addition, I will also investigate one mediation effect by testing if SES exerts an influence on participation through political interest. One reason for this is the above mentioned self-interest and resource availability. In addition, most better paid occupations allow and some mandate being informed about matters of the world. My expectation is a positive indirect regression coefficient showing that apart from having an independent effect, SES raises political interest and thus positively impacts participation (H4b).

2. Measurement

In this section I report how the variables detailed above were measured in three datasets specifically designed for this project. Most of them were operationalized in a similar fashion: first by collecting a list of items and then running a series of confirmatory factor analyses. This way each individual variable was assigned a weight based on their contribution to the given factor.⁵ The factor score resulting from CFAs was, in turn, used as a – usually well-behaved and reasonably normal continuous – variable to represent the underlying construct in subsequent analyses. In all confirmatory factor analyses I used maximum likelihood estimation with robust standard errors (MLR) in Mplus. I fix factor variances at 1 and means at 0 while leaving item variances or means unconstrained. As a general rule items were only retained as part of a latent factor if that factor accounted for at least 33% of their total variance (reflected in standardized loadings). When making adjustments to models I used the modification indices and residual covariances provided by the application to determine if certain items should be part of the allocated factor (or the model in the first place). Model fit was assessed through two indices: Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA where values of .06 or below indicate good fit), and the Comparative Fit Index (CFI, considered acceptable with values of .8 or above). These indices do not provide information regarding the accuracy of the factor structure, but they do indicate how well the model fits the data.

⁵ Technically, variables are weighted the other way around, but I regard this phrasing more informative and thus an acceptable simplification.

I included the entire survey in the Appendix. Thus, in the remainder of this section I focus on the selection of specific items and its rationale, as well as the manipulations I used to construct my key variables.

The most commonly used and simplest way to measure voting is self-report, which I also relied on despite some shortcomings,⁶ with the difference of using voting frequency instead of the more common binary item. With respect to other forms of participation, beyond the usual list of institutional forms (campaign participation, rally attendance), I also included some other activities that are traditionally less emphasized in the literature, such as petitions, participation in protests or NGO support. The reason I believe these ought to be counted as participation is their goal, which is the same as that of other forms more closely tied to institutions, namely to have an impact on affairs and/or express political views and preferences. The same reasoning, coupled with the brief theory presented in section 2. 3. of chapter one, led me to include a set of variables tapping online participation.

I used the set of issues represented in the Appendix to tap individuals' political agenda. Regarding the political elite's agenda, the obvious choice of reference point is the Policy Agendas Project. To achieve adequate reliability, I used four separate sets: Congressional bills, roll call votes, State of the Union speeches, and Supreme Court rulings. With respect to the time period, I opted for the duration of the Obama presidency

⁶ One shortcoming of this approach is that people tend to over-report their voting patterns (Bernstein, Chadha, and Montjoy 2001; Silver, Anderson, and Abramson 1986). An alternative is obtaining actual recorded voting data. While at first appealing, however, this approach is not free of its own limitations. Obtaining records costs money, rules out anonymity due to the necessity of matching, and is not a viable option in many countries outside of the U.S. A further complication in the United States is the relatively great mobility of its citizens.

(starting in 2009 with the 11th Congress⁷). I started the process of variable construction by identifying the absolute frequency (number of times mentioned/included) of each issue using a series of relevant functions in Excel. Dividing these frequencies by the total number of relevant responses yielded an indicator of the absolute importance of each subtopic. The next step was converting these percentages to the same scale (1-5) as that used by my participants. Given that there are 220 subtopics, if they were all equally represented, each would receive 0.4545% (1/220) of the coverage of various decision makers. Subsequently, I established the following cutoffs to convert percentages into 1-5 importance ratings: <0.15%=1; 0.15%-0.3%=2; 0.3%-0.6%=3; 0.6%-1%=4; >1%=5. During the conversion I also took into account the differential importance of my specific items within subtopics.⁸

Acknowledging that this measure is not the most intuitive way of capturing the elite's agenda,⁹ I tested its robustness through a comparison with an alternative. This entailed ranking all subcategories by their frequency and applying a quintile split so that instead of arbitrary cutoffs, I assigned 1 to the 1/5 of subcategories least frequently used, 2 to the second quintile and so forth. The next step was simply taking this number for the subcategories relevant to my own list and comparing it with the original measure. The end result corroborates the robustness of the latter: the two correlate at .9 in the case of

⁷ This excluded the New York Times index which only contains data up until 2008.

⁸ Gender and sexual orientation-related discrimination, for example, are both located within subtopic 202. They also cover most of the issues in this subtopic, indicating a reasonably close to 50-50 split between the two specific issues. Climate change, on the other hand, is only one of the many potential issues falling under subtopic 705 which also includes air pollution, water storage-related issues, and noise pollution, among others.

⁹ The credit for this acknowledgment goes to Kevin Smith.

Congressional bills, .97 for roll call votes, .98 for State of the Union addresses, and .95 for Supreme Court cases.

The final step was subtracting the individual's own importance rating for each issue from the corresponding number representing the elite's importance, and averaging out the absolute values of this subtraction across all issues covered. Let me demonstrate this process through the example of illegal immigration. In the Policy Agendas Project codebook, immigration falls under category 900, Immigration and Refugee Issues, along with a host of other related policy areas such as INS enforcement of immigration laws, immigration and education issues for aliens, adjusting visa allocations based on applicant job skills, citizenship issues, expedited citizenship for military service, etc. Category 900 was mentioned 514 times in Congressional bills in the time period covered. This is 1.73% of the 29682 bills coded for policy area. Based on the coding scheme presented above, this results in my assessment of this issue as very important to the political elite, marked by the value of 5. Similarly, it received a 3 for roll call votes, 5 for State of the Union speeches, and 5 for Supreme Court rulings, each based on the corresponding percentages. Considering these numbers, I conclude that this issue has indeed been very important for the political ruling class of the United States since 2009. Consequently, a 5 will represent it in my subsequent calculations, meaning that if an individual marks it as 1 (not at all important), his or her agenda congruence for this particular issue will take the absolute value of $[1-5] = 4$, the lowest possible.

In order to tackle ideological congruence, I used the six-factor structure outlined above as a starting point. Once I arrived at a well-fitting final model, I obtained scores for a second-order factor to approximate participants' 'real ideological positions'. This

number played a key role in the construction of ideological congruence. It is very important to distinguish this second-order factor from the conservative-liberal dimension, especially in light of the arguments outlined above for why we should not take its existence for granted. I will simply call it ideology to emphasize this distinction. In short, it represents whatever way the six factors are tied together in a given polity. In Eastern Europe, for example, welfare items load very differently compared to Western Europe (Tavits and Letki 2009). As we will also see in section four of chapter three, the way individual factor loadings contribute to this second-order ideology factor also varies substantially in different cultures. There may be a degree of overlap, but there is no reason why this should correspond to preconceived ideas of conservative or liberal.

To construct a measure of ideological congruence, first all scores had to be brought to the same scale (while their mean and SD are almost the same and close to 0 and 1, their minimum and maximum usually shows substantial variation), which was achieved through simple arithmetic rescaling. The first step of this was adding their minimum value to every factor score, thus making 0 the new minimum of each. Next, I found the new overall maximum, which was simply the average of the new maximum scores across all ideology factors (in order to minimize deviations due to differences in scale), M . With M established, I was ready to apply the following formula – which contains all manipulations – to obtain the rescaled scores: $(FA + \min) * (M / (\max + \min))$, where FA is the original factor score and \min and \max stand for each factor's original minimum and maximum values.

With the rescaled scores available, the only remaining step was computing ideological congruence. This was done in two steps. First, I took the absolute value of the

difference between each factor score and the second-order ideology factor. Second, I computed the mean of these differences across all factors to obtain my ideological congruence measure.

Let me demonstrate this process and its outcome through an example. For simplicity, all factors will be scored so that higher values represent a 'more conservative' attitude. Congruent Cal filled out the MTurk version of my survey in accordance with his, on average, moderately liberal views. He rebelled in college against his religious upbringing and has come to embrace progressive values with regards to politics. Thus, on the Traditional values factor he scores -1.68. At the same time, he perceives today's international political climate as increasingly hostile and dangerous, requiring the United States to take strong measures to ensure national security. Consequently, his Intergroup relations overall score is .76. His other scores are -3.26 for Economy and welfare, -2.54 for Strong vs. limited government, and -1.23 for 'Big Brother'. Finally, Cal believes in the legal system and in upholding law and order, but values the system's rehabilitation function over its punishment aspect. For this reason, he marked 2 (strongly agree) for the item 'Rehabilitation of criminals should be stressed over punishment'. At the same time, he also thinks running the nation's prisons in too lenient a manner would impede their deterrence function, so he only checked -1 (moderately against) for 'Those serving jail time should be denied any comfort.' His final score on the law and order factor is -.75. The statistical package computed his second-order ideology score as -1.14.

These numbers are, however, not in the same scale. After shifting them up by the minimum of each, the average of their maximum values came to 5.47. After using this number to rescale every score according to the above formula, Congruent Cal's final

ideology score became 2.2. His new factor scores are 1.56 for Traditional values, 2.45 for Intergroup relations, 1.78 for Welfare, 2.01 for Strong central government, 2.17 for Big Brother and 2.12 for Law and order. We can see from these numbers that on some factors Cal's score is very close to his 'actual ideological' position (represented by the second-order factor score), while he deviates from that in a 'conservative' directions for Intergroup relations, and a 'liberal' one for Traditional values and Welfare. The only step left is using these numbers to compute Cal's ideological congruence score. The above formula yields 0.27, indicating very high ideological congruence for Congruent Cal.

Another example is the case of Incongruent Iris. Her rescaled factor scores range from 0 to 6 with an overall second-order ideology score of 3, dead in the middle. She is very traditional-minded and a born-again Christian. She challenged these views in college and decided that they align with her upbringing and represent her preferences after years of intellectual scrutiny. Furthermore, she is a proud American, which is an integral and important part of her personal identity. She is inherently distrustful of outgroups, a feeling heightened by recent terrorist attacks. Therefore, her Traditional values (rescaled) score is 4.5 followed by an Intergroup relations score of 5. At the same time, however, she is a firm believer in a strong government that provides for its people and monitors citizens to keep them safe. Therefore, her scores for Economy and welfare, Strong vs. limited government, and Big Brother are 2, 1.5, and 1.75, respectively. Finally, she is quite middle-of-the-road about how to treat rule-breakers, resulting in a Law and order score of 2.85. The average difference of these scores from her second-order ideology factor score of 3 is 1.23, indicating that Incongruent Iris is, unsurprisingly, very low in ideological congruence.

In order to acquire a qualitative measure of ideological congruence to illustrate my findings, I also included the following question in my own datasets immediately after the conventional self-placement item: “How well do you think this conservative-liberal dimension represents your own political views?” The question was then followed by an open-ended one asking respondents to briefly explain their choice. Their answers will be used to give the results presented in chapter four a little extra ‘qualitative flavor’.

While I believe that my approach described above accurately captures ideological congruence, it does not take into account the moderates vs. everybody else distinction so pivotal to the work of Carmines et al. In order to alleviate this concern, I constructed a separate, ideological intensity variable to serve as a control in multivariate models. This was done by simply aggregating each rescaled factor score’s deviation from its new mean (the idea being that the mean signals the most moderate attitude).

Finally, I measured socio-economic status through a small set of variables, specifically: family’s income category, subjective class membership, and job status. Education was measured using the conventional, single-item approach tapping the level of education obtained. While technically categorical, I followed established practice in treating it as continuous. The degree to which my respondents’ various networks are politicized I tackled with direct items, including the frequency of political discussion in various groups, family’s and peer group’s general attitude (feeling) toward politics in the present as well as in the past, and preference for leadership roles in a variety of networks.

3. The Expected Path Model

We are now in position to outline a simplified sketch of the expected final path models based on the expected relationships described above.

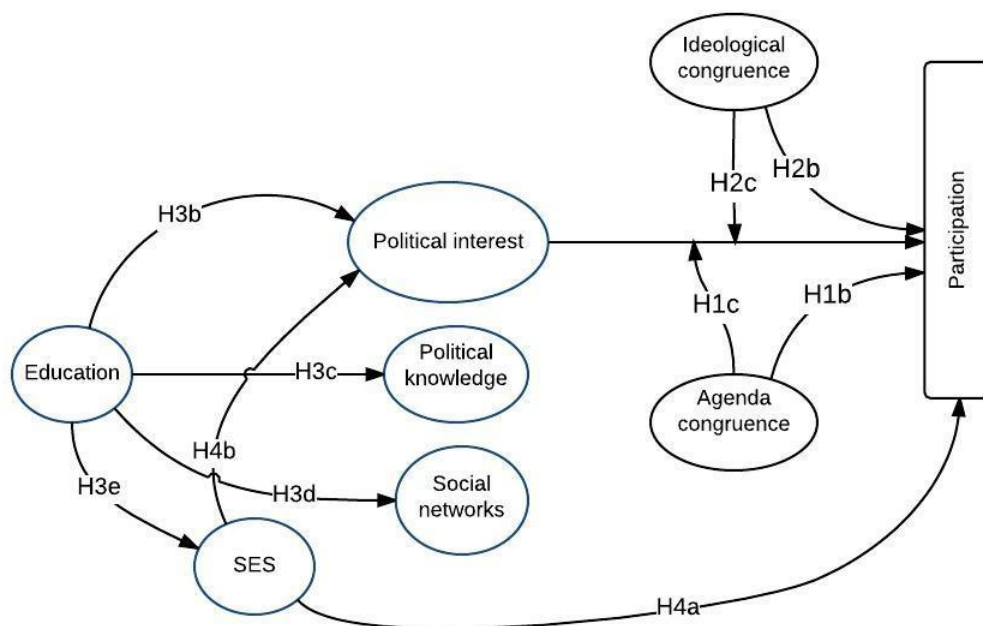


Figure 2 Simplified path diagram of the expected relationships. Direct links to participation are omitted as are controls not implicated in mediation effects.

The right side of Figure 2 presents the four core hypotheses of this dissertation, H1b and H2b pertaining to the direct relationship between the two key independent variables and participation, with H1c and H2c representing their moderating effect on the relationship between political interest and the DV. On the left side we find five supplementary hypotheses related to the effect of education and socio-economic status, complemented by H4a, the latter's expected direct impact. The only hypotheses not included in the figure are the two bivariate ones (H1a and H2a) and the null regarding education's direct effect (H3a). Finally, the list of controls I plan on using is the following: gender, race, age, general attitude toward political actors, partisanship direction and strength, civic duty, political efficacy, and self-reported stress-tolerance.

CHAPTER 3. RESULTS DERIVED FROM PREEXISTING DATASETS

1. ANES 2011

The corresponding section of the official website of the American National Election Studies describes the details of sampling and data collection relevant to the 2011 wave as follows:

The ANES 2010-2012 Evaluations of Government and Society Study (EGSS) is a series of surveys conducted over the Internet in 2010-2012 using samples representative of the national population of adult citizens. Each survey has a separate sample; this is not a panel study. [...] Topics include policy issues, the economy, and attitudes toward and evaluations of President Obama and other political figures. Survey questions for the EGSS came from the public proposal process on the ANES Online Commons. The EGSS 3 data were collected from December 7 to 13, 2011, from 1,262 respondents, with an estimated response rate (AAPOR RR3) of about 2.5 percent. (American National Election Study - 2010-2012 Evaluations of Government and Society Study, 2012).

The resulting sample is representative for region of the United States, age (with a mean of 49.34 (SD=16.64)), race (77.1% White, 8.4% Black, 8.7% Hispanic), education (58.7% had no college degree), and gender (49.7% male). The final N is 1315.

1. 1. Variables

I started the process of variable preparation by running a series of CFAs¹⁰ to obtain my dependent variables for future analyses. The model had good fit with an RMSEA index of .043 (95% between .040-.047) with a virtually 100% chance of its being below .05. The CFI index further corroborated this result at .932. Of the four variables initially

¹⁰ Technically IRP because all of the variables were categorical, mostly binary, thus ruling out CFA. The format of reporting is similar enough.

included to tackle voting behavior, three formed a coherent factor. These three aspects pertain to the two past elections (2008 presidential and 2010 congressional, both binary yes/no items) and the self-reported percentage chance of voting in the then next election. The resulting variable was a well-behaved factor score with a skewness indicator of -.898, signaling that the majority of people in the sample self-report higher than average levels of voting. The second factor taps both aspects of participation. Institutional with items like ["Have you in the past 12 months..."] contacted a government official; given money to a political candidate, issue, or cause; volunteered for an issue or cause. The non-institutional aspect of participation was assessed through responses to two different stems: 1. "Do you actively participate in any of the following types of organizations or groups?", with some answer options being women's groups, non-partisan civic organizations, and groups representing racial/ethnic interests; and 2. "In the past 12 months, have you...", with answers such as attended a community group meeting or worked with others in your community to solve a problem. The final factor had 18 items and a slight positive skew (.438). Voting and participation are correlated at a relatively high level as $r=.587$ ($p<.001$) indicates.

The ANES framework was not designed to target political ideology, which manifests in relatively constrained variable availability. The final model containing all items I found relevant had acceptable fit ($RMSEA = .061$, with virtually no chance for being below .05, $CI_{95} = .058-.065$; $CFI = .906$) and contained five factors capturing a relatively narrow scope of ideology. The first factor deals with the support for private Healthcare and social security (an example item: "Replace Social Security with private retirement accounts that people manage themselves"). The second factor contains seven

items pertaining to several aspects of Taxation in the context of reducing the national deficit: raising taxes on the wealthy, increasing the minimum wage, etc. The third's items correspond to the federal government's Fiscal policy in general (e.g.: "Reduce U.S. federal government spending on everything the government spends money on"). The fourth factor deals with the perceived degree of discrimination ("How much discrimination is there in the United States today against each of the following groups?") against five groups: Blacks, Hispanics, gays and lesbians, women, and Muslims. The final, fifth factor has four items about who is to blame for the situation of Blacks in the United States, themselves or systemic racism ("It's really a matter of some people not trying hard enough"; or "If blacks would only try harder they could be just as well off as whites").

It is worth noting that these factors – three of which deal with economic issues and two with discrimination – provide barely acceptable coverage of ideology while many important elements of the underlying construct remain untapped. It is perhaps a consequence of this that the correlations among these factors are rather low, ranging between .232 and .438 (with one exception being as low as .142). Their loadings on the second-order ideology factor are, however, acceptable between .517-.666 in each case. The ideological congruence measure was computed in the manner outlined in chapter two, using the rescaled version of these factor scores as well as the second-order factor. The resulting variable had a mean of .81 (.35), ranged between 0 and 2.06, and possessed a skewness indicator of .469, showing that values tend toward less incongruence. As described in chapter two, I will follow the example of Carmines, Ensley, and Wagner (2012b) by using the original factor scores as controls in all multivariate models.

Many of the other relevant variables at my disposal needed no manipulation: partisanship, political efficacy, age, sex, and education I simply used in their original form. There were, however, four constructs in the case of which I applied the principles outlined in chapter two and ran CFA models in order to obtain factor scores. The first, Political interest, contained items such as: “How interested are you in politics and public affairs?” and “How often does the subject of politics come up in conversation with friends, family, or how interested are you in politics?” It is telling that these form a coherent factor: contrary to my theory, in this sample with these variables politicized social networks cannot be separated from political interest. The second factor represents an evaluation of the President’s work (“How much is President Obama to blame for the poor economic conditions of the past few years?” or “Do you approve or disapprove of the way Barack Obama is handling each of these issues? (job, energy, etc.)”), which is more likely a measure of partisanship than an evaluation of the institution of the Presidency. And finally, the dataset contained several variables that I collapsed into two factors measuring Socio-economic status and Religiosity.

1. 2. Results

Ideological congruence correlates with voting at a .044 level ($p=.116$), and with participation at $r=.068$ ($p=.015$), lending partial support to Hypothesis 2a. These low correlations do not give rise to high hopes about how ideological congruence will fare in a multivariate analytical framework, a simplified version of which is the next step in this section. As will be the case in all corresponding sections henceforth, both ideological congruence and political interest were entered into the regression centered around their mean.

	Voting			Participation		
	b	β	P	b	β	P
Ideological congruence	.096 (.057)	.043 (.025)	0.087	.155 (.056)	.066 (.024)	0.009
Political interest	.477 (.021)	.541 (.021)	<.001	.548 (.021)	.592 (.019)	<.001
Idc*Polint	.175 (.059)	.073 (.025)	0.003	.205 (.062)	.082 (.025)	0.001
Constant	-.097 (.019)		<.001	.054 (.019)		.004
R ²	29.9% (.022)		<.001	36.1% (.022)		<.001

Table 1. Multivariate regression predicting participation from ideological congruence, political interest, and their interaction.

Ideological congruence is a significant positive conditional predictor of participation, approaching significance even for voting and thus partially confirming H2b. In general, participation goes up by about .1 unit for each unit increase in ideological congruence, controlling for political interest at its mean. Furthermore, Hypothesis 2c is also supported by the significant positive interaction term observed in both models.

To arrive at the final extended path model, I started with a full model containing all predictors for each DV as well as all possible mediation effects (education through political interest, for example). In a series of subsequent steps, I proceeded to eliminate the predictors with the lowest beta weight and highest p value, one at a time. My key variables (in this case only ideological congruence) are exceptions to this rule, the purpose of the whole exercise being to study them and whether they retain significance in a multivariate framework. The same applied to their interaction terms with political

interest but only if they reached significance in the simplified models. Indirect effects have the potential to be significant despite a very low b and beta weight (due to their tiny standard errors), which is why I will only report them if they reach a beta weight of .015.

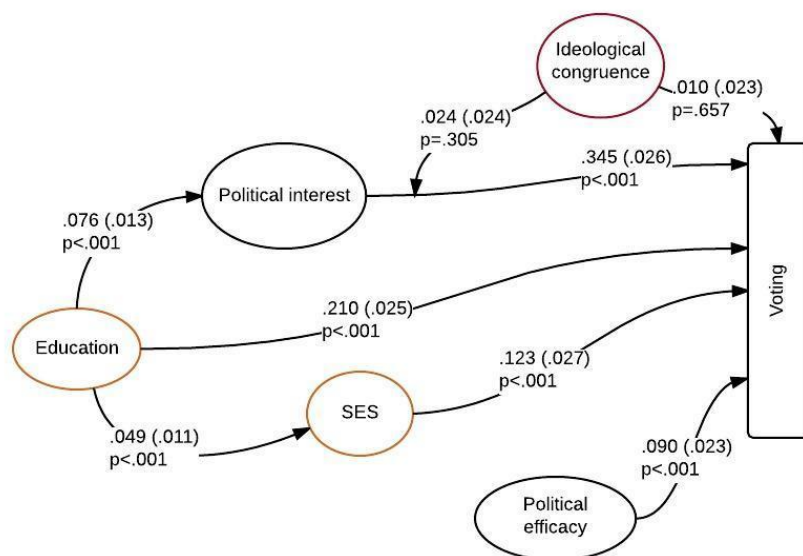


Figure 3. Multivariate regression predicting voting. The arrows toward variables other than voting represent indirect relationships. All displayed weights are standardized (β) followed by their standard error and p value.

As the upper right hand side of Figure 3 indicates, ideological congruence has neither a significant direct conditional effect on voting, nor does it moderate the effect of political interest on the dependent variable. Contrary to the previous (simpler) model, these results refute H2b and H2c. Hypothesis 3a is also disconfirmed by education's significant direct effect. On top of this direct impact, however, education does show an effect on voting moderated by political interest and socio-economic status, supporting H3b and H3e. Regarding socio-economic status, its direct effect supports H4a, but the lack of mediation by political interest ($\beta = .008$, $SE = .010$, $p = .449$) works against H4b. Additionally, the final model contained four other variables of interest outlined in chapter two. Of these, ideological intensity emerged as an independent predictor ($\beta = .075$, $SE =$

.022, $p < .001$), and so did partisanship strength ($\beta = .095$, $.017$, $p < .001$). Finally, two controls not represented in the figure are age, which emerged as a strong significant predictor ($\beta = .240$ (.023), $p < .001$), and gender, which proved non-significant ($\beta = .033$ SE = .022. $p = .137$). The R^2 of this model is formidable and significantly higher compared to its simple interactional counterpart's at 40.3% ($p < .001$).

Table 2 completes this section by presenting the second multivariate regression model with participation as the dependent variable.

IV	Participation		
	b	B	P
Ideological congruence	.093 (.054)	.040 (.023)	.083
Political interest	.384 (.024)	.427 (.024)	<.001
Idc*Polint	.069 (.059)	.029 (.024)	.239
Political efficacy	.056 (.020)	.072 (.025)	.005
Ideological intensity	.279 (.054)	.135 (.026)	<.001
Education	.084 (.011)	.200 (.025)	<.001
SES	.081 (.024)	.086 (.025)	.001
Age	.009 (.001)	.176 (.023)	<.001
Constant	.028 (.025)		.253
R ²	42.1% (.021)		<.001
MEDIATION EFFECTS			
Education --> Political interest	.014 (.004)	.034 (.010)	.001
Education --> SES	.039 (.006)	.094 (.014)	<.001
SES --> Political interest	.009 (.012)	.010 (.013)	.449

Table 2. Multivariate regression predicting institutional and non-institutional participation.¹¹

¹¹ The model also contained gender as a non-significant control ($\beta = .031$, SE = .022, p=.153).

Regarding the core hypotheses, neither ideological congruence nor its interaction with political interest appears to have a significant effect on participation (although the latter approaches significance) when controlling for all other variables in the model at their mean (due to centering, this meant 0 in practice), resulting in the rejection of H2b and H2c. The case of education is different: the independent effect of this variable prompts the rejection of H3a, but the corresponding mediation effects once again confirm H3b and H3e. Conversely, socio-economic status' direct effect confirms H4a, but lack of mediation by political interest refutes H4b. Regarding the variables not implicated in hypotheses, ideological intensity emerges as a significant positive predictor, along with political efficacy and age, the latter sporting the third highest β weight of all variables in the model.

In sum, while some supplementary hypotheses are confirmed based on the ANES data analyzed in this section, those pertaining to my key independent variable, ideological congruence, are rejected in a multivariate framework.

2. Dimensions of Political Thinking

The three connected datasets presented in this section are analogous to those used by Feher et al. (2014). The authors of the conference paper describe the sample and their data gathering efforts as follows:

[...] we administered the online survey to participants in three countries: the U.S., Hungary and Denmark. It contained 72 self-developed items designed to tap [...] dimensions of political ideology. All items were measured by 7-point Likert scales. The only labeled points were the two end points and the middle point: 1 = *strongly disagree*, 4 = *neither agree nor disagree*, 7 = *strongly agree*. (...) In addition to these items the survey also contained the standard Social Dominance Orientation Scale (taken from Ho et al. 2012) and the Right-wing Authoritarianism Scale (Altemeyer 2006). Both the SDO and the RWA items were measured on the same 7-point Likert scale. The survey also contained a standard demographic and general political battery, and included a hidden attention question: “This question is testing to see if you are reading the questions. Please click on five for this question”. [...] The resulting (filtered) sample has 361 American, 161 Hungarian and 168 Danish respondents. The gender distribution is 329 men and 314 women (37 participants refused to answer the gender question). Most of the participants were college students enrolled mainly in introductory Political Science and Psychology classes (mean age: 21.89, SD=5.104). (p. 8.)

I will analyze these data by country for two reasons. First, cultural differences may manifest themselves in numerous ways and at several levels, which can lead to 1. scale items relating to each other differently and thus having differential weights in determining the corresponding factor structure and scores; and 2. factor intercorrelations taking a different shape with regard to ideology. To give a concrete example, the correlation between the Welfare factor and the rest is between .256 and .588 (on average about .45, except with Strong government) in the United States. In Denmark, the relationship is even stronger with a .55 average and a range of correlation coefficients

between .272 and .85. Hungary's case, however, is very different with Welfare only showing a significant correlation with one factor, SDO-E.¹²

2. 1. Variables

The dataset included only one voting (“Did you vote in the most recent election?”) and four participation items, the latter all pertaining to institutional forms: rally attendance, working in a campaign, communicating thoughts to elected officials, and holding political office (all binary items with little variance). The CFA¹³ model based on these variables represents the data very well in all three countries: RMSEA=.043, 0, and .020 (95% between 0 and .122; 0 and .146, 0 and .166; below .05 with a 44.7%, 61.9%, 47.1% chance); and CFI=.994, 1, .998 in the U.S., Hungary, and Denmark, respectively. Participation has a significant positive skew in all three cases (.881 in the U.S., .368 in HU and .241 in DK), indicating low general levels. Considering the coding of the voting variable (1=yes, 2=no with answer option 3=not yet eligible removed from analysis), its own positive skew indicates a level which is moderately high in the U.S. with .526 (62.7% yes, close to real data), but much higher in the case of Hungary (2.422, 88.4% yes) and Denmark (6.631, 97.1% yes). These numbers, especially the latter two, indicate either a very high level of over-reporting or a severely distorted sample with regards to voting. Moreover, the reduced amount of variance foreshadows bad predictive power for the corresponding models.

¹² The reasons for this are outside the scope of this dissertation. Very briefly, I suspect mostly (recent) historical path dependence at play with the right supporting a stronger state controlling welfare, among other societal sub-systems, and the left known for privatization following the regime change in 1990.

¹³ Technically IRP with WLSMV estimation and Theta parameterization for categorical variables. For simplicity's sake, however, I will use the two terms interchangeably.

The correlation between participation and voting is moderately strong in the United States (.302, $p < .001$), barely significant in Hungary (.180, $p = .041$), and not at all in Denmark (-.129, $p = .132$).

In the case of ideological congruence, the final models had acceptable fit in all three cases with RMSEA = .055, .070, and .066 (with a 95% of it being between .052-.058, .065-.075, and .061-.071; the chance of a below .05 value being negligible) and CFI = .791, .714, and .770 respectively in the United States, Hungary, and Denmark. The items left within each factor were notably different, while the factors themselves similar: Intergroup relations, Treatment of rule-breakers, Traditional values, Welfare, Strong central government, 'Big Brother' (government's ability to monitor citizens), SDO-E (equality), and SDO-D (dominance). Factor intercorrelations were between .3 and .8 in most cases with the exception of BB in the U.S. and Denmark, as well as Welfare in Hungary. These were removed from the construction of the second-order ideology factor, whose final loadings all range between .65 and .9.

Ideological congruence was computed in the same way as described in chapter two. The resulting variable's mean was close to .78 ($SD \approx .30$) in all cases, while its skewness showed more variation with .590 in the U.S., .454 in Hungary, and .932 in DK, all indicating relatively low general levels of incongruence.

Unlike those pertaining directly to ideology, other variables relevant to participation were few and far between in this dataset. As controls I had at my disposal age, gender, education (years of schooling in total, open-ended and not necessarily too reliable with many participants entering questionable numbers such as 7), income (a three-category variable of dubious measuring power), church attendance, race (eventually excluded due

to extremely little variance), and partisanship (a simple yes/no question tapping the mere existence of partisan alignment). In addition, the dataset also contained two variables tackling political interest: a direct question and one regarding the frequency of political discussion. The .71 correlation between these two prompted the construction of one overall Political interest factor for subsequent use.¹⁴

2. 2. Results

In the United States, ideological congruence is negatively correlated both with participation ($r=-.164$, $p=.004$) and voting ($r=-.203$, $p<.001$). Hungary's case is different with a positive correlation of $r=.155$ ($p=.062$) for participation and $r=.196$ ($p=.026$) for voting. Ideological congruence in Denmark, on the other hand, shows no relationship with either participation or voting ($r=.016$ and $-.02$; $p=.843$ and $p=.791$, respectively). These results lend partial support to Hypothesis 2a, which is only retained in the case of voting in Hungary (also showing a positive tendency for participation in the same country). Based on this information, the results derived from interacting ideological congruence with political interest to predict voting, presented in Table 3, are somewhat surprising at first glance.

¹⁴ Also meaning that, absent a suitable battery on social networks, I was not able to test H3d.

	United States			Hungary			Denmark		
	B	B	P	b	β	p	b	B	p
Ideological congruence	-.176 (.083)	-.100 (.048)	.035	.160 (.097)	.159 (.092)	.098	.028 (.020)	.074 (.039)	.058
Political interest	.197 (.030)	.326 (.051)	<.001	.058 (.041)	.138 (.094)	.158	-.019 (.022)	-.071 (.074)	.339
Idc*Polint	.128 (.103)	.061 (.050)	.214	.128 (.159)	.099 (.122)	.420	-.049 (.026)	-.115 (.065)	.077
Constant	.091 (.027)		<.001	-.012 (.030)		.694	.014 (.014)		.313
R²	14.0% (.037)		<.001	4% (.039)		.340	.9% (.014)		.536

Table 3. Predicting voting from ideological congruence, political interest, and their interaction.

As expected based on the very low variance in the DV (voting), the explanatory power is very weak in Denmark and fairly weak in Hungary. Considering these numbers, the only surprising result in these countries is that ideological congruence actually approaches significance (as well as the interaction term in Denmark), while political interest remains categorically non-significant. On the other hand, ideological congruence is a significant predictor in the U.S. model but its effect on voting is negative. Moreover, political interest has a significant conditional effect only in this model controlling for ideological congruence at its mean (as usual, all predictors were centered around their mean). Before drawing overarching conclusions and measuring these results against my hypotheses, however, it is imperative to look at them through the lenses of participation, the dependent variable with more variance.

DV	United States			Hungary			Denmark		
	B	β	P	b	β	p	b	β	p
Ideological congruence	-.018 (.118)	-.007 (.049)	.882	.098 (.126)	.045 (.058)	.440	-.001 (.328)	0 (.171)	.998
Political interest	.556 (.030)	.663 (.029)	<.001	.549 (.053)	.615 (.050)	<.001	.798 (.082)	.578 (.053)	<.001
Idc*Polint	-.041 (.117)	-.014 (.040)	.727	-.045 (.158)	-.016 (.056)	.774	.036 (.325)	.017 (.151)	.911
Constant	.277 (.031)		.001	-.007 (.044)		.880	-.566 (.079)		<.001
R ²	44.1% (.038)		<.001	39.0% (.063)		<.001	33.4% (.063)		<.001

Table 4. Predicting participation from ideological congruence, political interest, and their interaction.

The p values in Table 4 indicate a clear pattern: political interest has a significant strong positive conditional effect on participation, but it is the only variable that does so. In light of the likely more informative nature of these findings compared to those pertaining to voting, I reject Hypotheses 2b and 2c.

Based on the results reported above, it is not surprising that the models for voting in Hungary and Denmark had no significant predictors and a very low, non-significant R². Thus, I will limit my corresponding presentation to the United States.

	United States		
	B	β	P
Ideological congruence	-.171 (.089)	-.099 (.052)	.055
Political interest	.173 (.033)	.291 (.055)	<.001
Party (y/n)	-.212 (.059)	-.209 (.059)	<.001
Age	.011 (.006)	.062 (.034)	.057
Gender	.101 (.051)	.107 (.055)	.047
Constant	-.256 (.037)		<.001
R ²	15.1% (.033)		<.001

Table 5. Multivariate regression predicting voting in the United States.

Although the model's R^2 has improved somewhat compared to its simplified counterpart's, it still remains remarkably low. Ideological congruence shows an almost significant negative main effect, while the rest of the variables behave in the expected fashion (partisanship was coded 0=yes, 1=no). I would, however, put much more stock in the results presented in the next table with institutional participation as the dependent variable.

IV	United States			Hungary			Denmark		
	B	β	P	b	β	P	B	β	P
Ideological congruence	.024 (.110)	.010 (.045)	.828	.009 (.166)	.004 (.078)	.959	-.196 (.176)	-.101 (.091)	.267
Political interest	.557 (.031)	.658 (.028)	<.001	.418 (.063)	.500 (.068)	<.001	.733 (.087)	.531 (.060)	<.001
Treatment of rulebreakers	-	-	-	-.150 (.046)	-.334 (.104)	.001	-	-	-
Traditional values	-	-	-	.171 (.029)	.323 (.062)	<.001	-	-	-
Welfare	-	-	-	.136 (.062)	.189 (.086)	.028	-	-	-
Sdo-E	-	-	-	-	-	-	-.075 (.039)	-.175 (.091)	.055
Party (y/n)	-	-	-	-.229 (.100)	-.159 (.071)	.022	-.173 (.100)	-.117 (.068)	.083
Religious intensity	.069 (.033)	.083 (.040)	.035	-	-	-	-	-	-
Age	.007 (.007)	.030 (.030)	.320	.018 (.005)	.237 (.068)	<.001	.010 (.013)	.036 (.050)	.464
Gender	.028 (.053)	.021 (.030)	.593	.141 (.087)	.107 (.065)	.107	-.032 (.100)	-.022 (.068)	.748
Constant	.265 (.041)		<.001	.284 (.127)		.025	-.427 (.13)		.001
R ²	44.8% (.036)			50.6% (.058)			36.3% (.062)		

Table 6. Multivariate regression predicting institutional participation.

The predictive power of the extended Hungarian model shown in Table 6 is especially impressive with the U.S. trailing closely behind and Denmark also producing an acceptable value. Political interest emerges as the clear strongest predictor with participation increasing by about .5 unit for each unit increase in this variable across the board. However, neither ideological congruence nor its interaction with political interest (removed from the models based on the non-significant results presented in section 2.3.)

has a significant effect, resulting in the rejection of H2b and H2c. Most controls exert the predictable impact on participation, although the (only) one significant coefficient in the cases of partisanship, religious intensity and age is somewhat surprising. Also noteworthy is the way ideological factors affect the DV with those supporting group equality participating more in Denmark; and those who support Traditional values as well as Welfare spending, but oppose harsh Treatment of rulebreakers more likely to engage in Hungary.

3. Minnesota Twins Political Dataset

The dataset presented in this section was collected in the framework of the Minnesota Twins Political Survey¹⁵, whose creators reached back to participants of the University of Minnesota Twin Registry (for details, see Johnson et al. 2001) and asked them to complete a detailed survey on political and social issues, values and behaviors. The resulting dataset is publicly available at www.unl.edu/polphyslab, where its collection is described as follows:

Most of the data collection took place between July 24 and December 22, 2008 with a second period conducted from July 13 to October 30, 2009 in order to increase the number of complete twin pairs in the study. All respondents received \$35 for their participation and completion of the survey. The twins in the sample were U.S. adults, born from 1947 to 1956, thus aged between 53 and 61 at the time of data collection. The gender ratio of the sample is 39% male and 61% female. [...] Data collection was implemented by the University of Minnesota. Most participants completed an online survey, but a paper and pencil version was made available during the 2008 data collection for those with limited Internet access. During the second wave of data gathering, all participants completed the paper version. Quartile comparison and t-tests show no significant differences between respondents who took the survey online and on paper. A total of 1349 individuals completed the survey. [...] Twin samples are not representative of the entire adult U.S. population for obvious reasons. However, one of the great advantages of the Minnesota Twins Political Survey is that its participants broadly represent their cohort of U.S. adults on many sociodemographic indicators, with the exception of race (1299 of the 1349 participants were white).

3. 1. Variables

I assessed voting behavior using one item, “Think about all the presidential elections since you were old enough to vote, have you voted in all of them, in most of

¹⁵ I as many others owe a debt of gratitude to those who oversaw this remarkable effort. In their own words: “data employed in this project were collected with the financial support of the National Science Foundation in the form of SES-0721378, PI: John R. Hibbing; Co-PIs: John R. Alford, Lindon J. Eaves, Carolyn L. Funk, Peter K. Hatemi, and Kevin B. Smith, and with the cooperation of the Minnesota Twin Registry at the University of Minnesota, Robert Krueger and Matthew McGue, Directors.

them, some, rarely voted, or never voted?”¹⁶ Even the item selected is heavily skewed with an indicator of -1.816 and 89.9% in the top two categories – most likely due to self-reporting bias – signaling caution for the models where voting is the dependent variable.

Regarding other forms of participation, at my disposal were five of the commonly used yes/no items referring to some aspects of institutional participation. These lined up very well along one factor as signaled by a model RMSEA of .024 (0-.044, with a 98.6% of it being lower than .05) and a CFI of .998. The resulting variable has a skewness of .385, indicating that the average respondent participates moderately little, a characteristic likely to be representative of the general population. Voting and institutional participation show a moderate positive linear relationship ($r=.324$, $p<.001$).

This is the only dataset in chapter three that contains variables pertaining to participants' agenda. For each of the 27 Wilson-Patterson issues, creators of the survey included a simple question: “How strongly do you feel about ...?”; the answer options being very strongly, strongly, and not strongly. While this measure does provide a rating loosely connected to my conceptualization of personal agenda, it does not directly correspond for two reasons. First, it taps ‘strength of feeling’, not subjective importance. While this may seem like a negligible enough difference, I argue that it is potentially substantial as participants may feel personally strongly about certain issues without attributing much societal importance to them. And second, the number of answer options may serve as a limitation regarding congruence: for my purposes a five-point scale is likely to be more powerful. Moreover, two more adjustments to the procedure of the

¹⁶ The other two voting-related items (voting registration and projected voting) were too skewed toward positive values, and the latter had hundreds of missing cases.

construction of agenda congruence described on pages 14-15 were required. Given that data gathering took place in 2008, I used the frequency ratings derived from the Policy Agenda's Project corresponding to the relevant presidential cycle that began in 2001. As a serendipitous side-effect, this also enabled me to use a fifth rating, the New York Times index, which only has data up until 2008. The second adjustment required changing my importance coding scheme from a five-point scale to a three-point one in order to correspond to the importance ratings used in the Minnesota Twins Political Survey. In practice it meant altering the percentages described in chapter two to $<.4$; between $.4-.8$ and $>.8$.¹⁷ The agenda congruence measure this process yielded closely approximates a normal distribution with a mean of .719 (SD=.136, skewness .175).

Ideology was primarily measured with the same 27 issues as described above but with different answer options, asking participants how they felt about them on a simple three-point scale of agree, uncertain, disagree.¹⁸ I combined these with the above described ratings to create 7-point scales for each Wilson-Patterson item where 1 became very strongly disagree, 2 strongly disagree, 3 not strongly disagree, 4 uncertain, and so on. In addition, the dataset contained the Society Works Best index also referenced in *Predisposed* (Hibbing, Smith, and Alford 2013), and the Right-Wing Authoritarianism Index championed by Altemeyer (2006). The final model containing these measures has an RMSEA of .057 (95% between .055 and .058) and a CFI of .806. The five factors extracted are: Xenophobia (feeling thermometers toward five ethnic groups in the U.S.),

¹⁷ In the case of the New York Times index the number of categories was reduced to only 25. Consequently, the thresholds had to be altered. I chose to use $<3\%$, between $3-6\%$, and $>6\%$.

¹⁸ I am not entirely convinced of the validity of this measure for the same reasons I outlined while discussing the conservative-liberal self-placement scale in chapter one.

Traditional values in politics (school prayer, premarital sex, gay marriage, old-fashioned ways are still best), Equality (four items such as: “If wealth were more equal in this country we would have fewer problems”), Welfare (e.g. increased welfare spending), and Protection and strong government (we need a strong leader, stop illegal immigration). The factor intercorrelations range between .286 and .727, making it possible to construct a viable second-order factor, which only contained four factors (excluding Xenophobia) with significant loadings.

The coverage provided by these factors – leaving several important aspects of ideology untapped – raises questions about the validity of a factor-based measure of ideological congruence. Their number also borders on too low, casting further doubt on whether the difference derived from four factors is capable of accurately reflecting the full gamut of ideological incongruence.

Being a dataset designed by and for the purposes of political scientists, it is not surprising that the Minnesota Twins Political Survey boasts a good set of political variables. The full model containing all of these has great fit as indicated by an RMSEA=.048 (.043-.054; 68.4% chance below .05) and a CFI=.942. The factors covered are: trust in institutions, political efficacy, frequency of political discussion in the present and the past, and network homogeneity (four items such as “In general, do you agree or disagree with your family's political beliefs?”). Somewhat unfortunately, political interest was measured using a single item only.

The dataset also contained five questions quizzing respondents about their political knowledge, each with multiple answer options. I recoded these in order to separate correct from incorrect answers. The simplest way to convert the recoded items into one

political knowledge variable was through confirmatory factor analysis.¹⁹ A little over a third (36.9%) of the sample obtained the maximum available score. As a direct result of the construction of this variable, every wrong answer decreased this score by an amount dependent on the item's contribution to the factor (for example, "What is the main duty of the U.S. Congress?" was a substantially easier item than "How much of a majority is required for the U.S. Senate and House to override a presidential veto?").

Common demographic controls were also included in the dataset. Of these, race and age did not show nearly enough variation: 98.6% of the sample was white and age appeared to range between 52.63-62.84. Gender was not very balanced either with only 37.4% of participants being male. On the other hand, religiosity and education all appeared fairly balanced with acceptable variance and skewness indicators under .15. Socio-economic status, however, did not have very good coverage with only two useful items: income (six categories but 22.4% missing) and employment (only three categories: full time, part time, none).

3. 2. Results

Table 7 presents the bivariate relationship between the two participation variables available and both of my key IVs.

	Voting	Participation
Agenda congruence	-.051	-.135**
Ideological congruence	.025	.127**

¹⁹ Technically IRP with WLSMV estimation and Theta parameterization, used interchangeably as above.

Table 7. Linear relationship between ideological congruence, agenda congruence, and participation. ** significant at a .01 level.

Voting is uncorrelated to both congruence measures – possibly due to its low variance. On the other hand, people higher in ideological congruence appear to participate more. The relationship is not strong with $r=.127$, but significant at a $<.001$ level, providing a good foundation for future analyses and lending partial support to H2a. Somewhat surprisingly, however, agenda congruence is negatively related to institutional participation, leading to the rejection of H1a.

Table 8 shows the results of four models obtained by interacting agenda - and ideological congruence with political interest in order to predict both DVs available.

	Voting			Participation		
	b	B	p	b	β	p
Agenda congruence	.203 (.161)	.034 (.027)	.206	-.495 (.137)	-.087 (.024)	<.001
Political interest	.328 (.038)	.287 (.030)	<.001	.530 (.025)	.481 (.021)	<.001
Agc*Polint	.037 (.272)	-.005 (.034)	.891	-.256 (.179)	.033 (.023)	.155
Constant - Model 1	.759 (.022)		.041	.038 (.019)		.041
Model 1 R²		8.2%	<.001		25.1%	<.001
Ideological congruence	.147 (.073)	.061 (.030)	.045	.287 (.059)	.125 (.026)	<.001
Political interest	.336 (.040)	.292 (.031)	<.001	.530 (.026)	.487 (.023)	<.001
Idc*Polint	-.105 (.123)	.032 (.038)	.393	.208 (.076)	.067 (.025)	.006
Constant	-.747 (.023)		<.001	.043 (.020)		.028
Model 2 R²		9%	<.001		25.8%	<.001

Table 8. Predicting voting and institutional participation from agenda congruence, political interest, and their interaction (Model1) as well as ideological congruence, political interest, and their interaction (Model2).

As expected, neither voting model explains much of the variance with R squared values of 8.2% and 9%, while institutional participation fares better at 25.1% and 25.8%. Political interest emerges as the clear strongest predictor in all four models. Agenda congruence appears to have no significant conditional effect on voting (while holding political interest constant at its mean) and a negative effect on institutional participation, while also not moderating the relationship between either DV and political interest. My reservations about the validity of these results notwithstanding, I reject H1b and H1c.

Ideological congruence, however, paints a different picture as it is a significant positive predictor of both voting and participation, leading to the retention of H2b. Hypothesis 2c, on the other hand, is only partially supported by the significance of the interaction term between ideological congruence and political interest in one out of the two cases – although this partial support is rather on the strong side due to the fact that it is significant in the model with participation as the dependent variable. The positive interaction suggests that the effect of political interest is stronger at higher values of ideological congruence as represented in Figure 4.

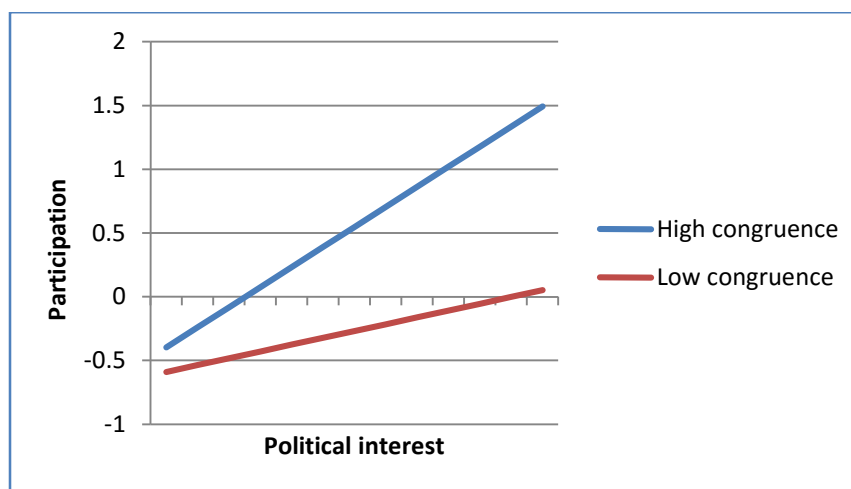


Figure 4. Pattern of interaction between political interest and ideological congruence in predicting institutional participation. The values for high and low congruence represent the upper and lower deciles after centering (-1.52 for low and .48 for high congruence).

As expected, the relationship between political interest and participation remains positive throughout. Its exact strength, however, depends on the value of ideological congruence. At low levels, participation stays below average even for those with high political interest. At high ideological congruence, on the other hand, participation is above average for most levels of political interest and disproportionately so at higher values. This moderation effect in the simple model is consistent with the theory put forward in chapter one.

The multivariate models for both dependent variables were constructed through the above described process of step-by-step variable elimination. The final two show a substantially different picture, which is why I decided to present them separately, starting with voting whose R^2 improved considerably with the addition of variables as the new value of 19.0% signals.

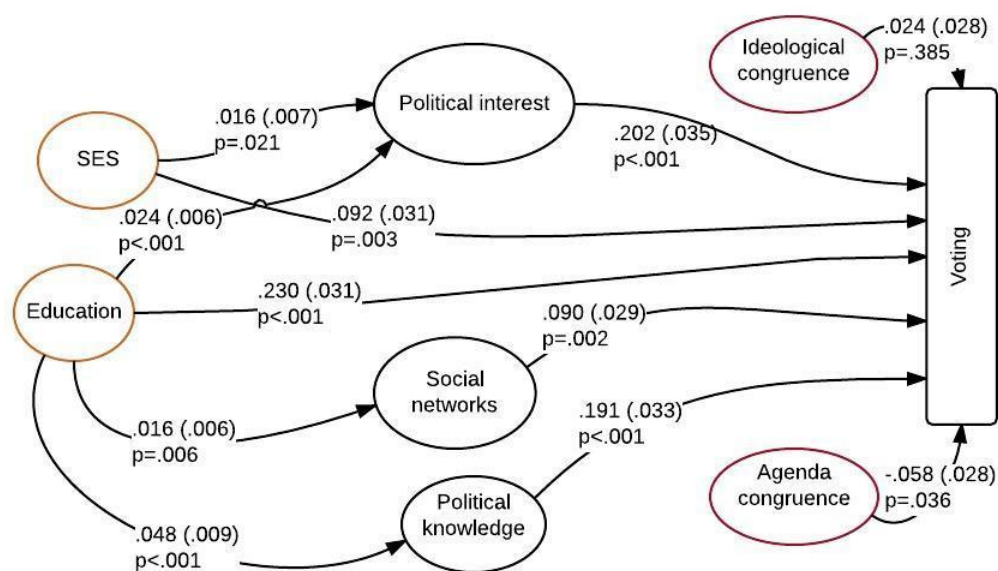


Figure 5. Multivariate regression predicting voting. The arrows toward variables other than voting represent indirect relationships in predicting voting (only paths with a beta above .015 are included). All displayed weights are standardized (β), followed by their standard error and p value.

The relationship between ideological congruence and voting is clearly non-significant, while ideological congruence also does not moderate the relationship between political interest and voting.²⁰ It is noteworthy that agenda congruence remained a significant negative predictor – compared to the simpler model – even after the addition of all these controls and mediation effects.

²⁰ The interaction term was dropped from the analysis due to non-significance in both the complex and the simple models.

Regarding the supplementary hypotheses, all of them (H3b-e and H4a-b) are supported except H3a, rejected due to the significant direct positive relationship between education and voting (the relationship of education mediated by SES is not represented in Figure 5. but significant with $\beta = .010$, $SE=.004$, $p=.011$). The full model also included two non-significant controls. age and gender (although the latter had a significant positive effect moderated by political knowledge $\beta =.036$, $SE= .008$, $p<.001$), as well as religious intensity, which had both a significant direct ($\beta =.139$, $SE= .031$, $p<.001$) effect and one mediated by political knowledge ($\beta = .080$, $SE= .014$, $p<.001$)

The model for participation has also improved and now predicts 35.8% of the total variance in the DV.

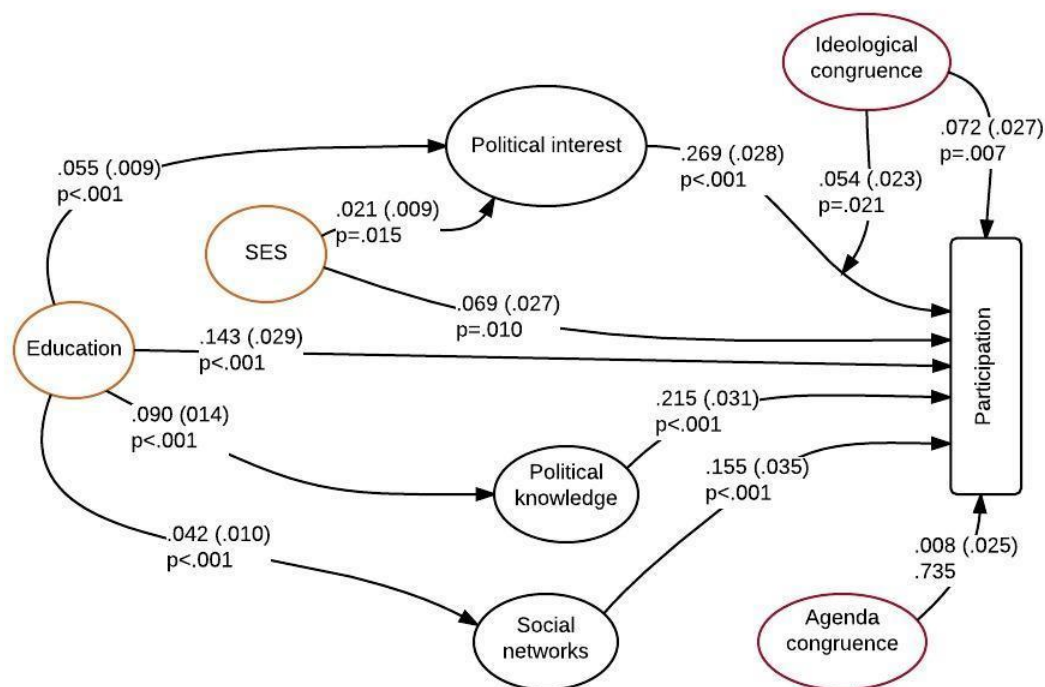


Figure 6. Multivariate regression predicting participation. The arrows toward variables other than the DV represent indirect relationships (only paths with a beta above .015 are shown). All displayed weights are standardized (β), followed by their standard error and p value.

The null result in the case of agenda congruence and its interaction with political interest, coupled with this variable's negative effect in the previous model, lead to the complete rejection of H1b and H1c. Conversely, Hypotheses 2b and 2c receive partial support due to the significant positive direct conditional effect of ideological congruence as well as the interaction term in this model. Similarly to the previous model, education has a statistically significant positive effect on participation mediated by political interest, political knowledge, social networks, and SES, resulting in the retention of H3b-e (the indirect path through socio-economic status is not represented in Figure 6, but significant with $\beta = .007$, $SE = .003$, $p = .017$). Due to this variable's positive direct effect, however, I reject Hypothesis 3a. Finally, both hypotheses concerning socio-economic status (H4a and H4b) are fully supported based on this variable's positive direct effect and that mediated by political interest in both models.

The model also contained two variables not represented in Figure 6. Those with a higher preference for traditional values in politics are more likely to participate: ($\beta = .068$, $SE = .027$, $p = .011$). Moreover, participation increases by .097 standard deviation ($SE = .027$, $p < .001$) for every SD increase in ideological intensity.

4. World Values Survey

I chose the World Values Survey and its Wave 6 in particular for two main reasons: it provides splendid ideological coverage as well as massive cross-cultural comparison potential containing 86274 individuals from 50 countries. As the analysis of the Dimensions of Political Thinking dataset highlighted, there can be important differences across countries or regions in several respects: how items relate to each other during the construction of factors; how factors of ideology relate to one another (thus influencing the ideological congruence variable); and most importantly, how the independent and dependent variables relate to one another. For these reasons, I performed every analytical step by country.²¹ I tested my hypotheses in five contexts: the U.S., Germany, Slovenia, Japan, and South Africa.²² The choice of the United States was motivated by the potential to compare my findings with those derived from other datasets. As neither Denmark nor Hungary was part of Wave 6, I used Germany and Hungary as the closest available proxies. Lastly, I added Japan and South Africa to provide a wide geographical coverage and cross-cultural comparison potential.

All data were collected between 2010-2014, in each country by professional survey organizations conducting face-to-face interviews and aiming for a representative national sample of at least 1000 legal adults. Table 9 shows the key characteristics of the resulting samples in the five countries selected.²³

²¹ While the cultural and political homogeneity of certain countries is definitely debatable and I will be among the first to question the logic and necessity of the nation state, they currently are the fundamental units of politics (with national institutions, parliament, etc.) as well as national elections and other participatory activities.

²² Neither Denmark (nor any other Scandinavian country) nor Hungary was part of Wave 6.

²³For more information see the official WVS website <http://www.worldvaluessurvey.org/WVSContents.jsp?CMSID=FieldworkSampling>, accessed 05/02/2016

	Germany	Japan	Slovenia	South Africa	United States
N	2046	2443	1068	3531	2232
Women%	50.4%	51.8%	57.9%	50%	51.4%
Age (SD)	49.48 (17.71)	50.74 (16.30)	49.5 (17.7)	36.67 (14.14)	48.91 (16.91)
Race	98% White 1.1% Asian .9% Other	Not measured	Not measured	75.4% Black 1.9% White 1.3% Coloured 3.4% Indian	72.3% White 9.7% Black 12.2% Hisp. 5.8% Other

Table 9. Key characteristics of the five samples selected for analysis.

In addition to the variables shown in Table 9, the samples were also representative for education (highest level attained). Based on these characteristics I decided to include race only in the analyses of the samples from South Africa and the United States due to lack of availability in Japan and Slovenia and negligible variance in Germany.

4. 1. Variables

The dataset contained two variables pertaining to two different contexts of voting: in national as well as local elections. Both were frequency variables with three answer options: 1=always, 2=usually, 3=never. The very high correlation between the two (between .897 and .949 in all cases) seemed to indicate that they actually measured the same construct – voting behavior – which is why I chose one of them, national voting. The means and standard deviations of this variable are similar across countries with values between 1.24-1.52 ($SD \approx .71$). Its skewness shows more variation between -1.502 (Germany) and -.797 (South Africa), the relatively high negative values indicating either the usual pattern of overreporting or genuinely high levels of voting.

Participation was only represented by five items, all related to the construct's non-institutional component with activities such as boycott, petition, or strikes. I ran the usual

CFA models per country to construct a non-institutional participation factor. The skewness of its score is slightly negative in Germany and the U.S. (-.102 and -.048, respectively) and tends toward positive in Japan (.367), Slovenia (.165) and South Africa (.346), showing somewhat higher than average participation for the ‘average individual’ in the former two and lower in the latter three while never straying too far from zero. The correlation between voting and participation indicates an interesting pattern: it is wildly significant ($p < .001$) in Germany, Japan, and the United States with $r = .291$, $r = .297$, and $r = .547$, respectively. On the other hand, these two factors appear uncorrelated in both Slovenia ($r = .007$, $p = .851$) and South Africa ($r = .046$, $p = .115$).

I performed the usual manipulation steps (separately in each country) in order to arrive at my measure of ideological congruence. The factor structures of the five models showed significant differences.²⁴ At the same time, the factors of ideology and their meaning was reasonably uniform across the five samples with the seven factors extracted being: General welfare (income equality, state-run healthcare), Economic transgression (justified to steal if hungry), Traditional values (same-sex marriage, abortion), Xenophobia (would not like to have drunks, people of another religion as neighbors), Misogyny (“If a woman earns more money than her husband, it’s almost certain to cause problems”, men make better leaders), Democracy (support for democracy, the desirability of this form of government), and Authoritarianism (obedience to authority and leaders). In all cases, if a factor was not correlated enough with others (based on individual

²⁴ To illustrate these with one example, the items that loaded on the Authoritarianism factor in most samples did not appear to correspond to the same latent construct in the case of South Africa. Instead, some of them teamed up with a few other items to form a new factor, Intergroup relations (war is justifiable, against illegal immigration).

correlations but also a threshold of at least .33 standardized contribution to the second-order factor), it was removed from the computation of ideological congruence.

The resulting ideological congruence variable varied markedly by country, with means (and SDs) of 4.905 (1.699) in Germany, 5.067 (1.705) in Japan, 6.026 (1.833) in Slovenia, 7.589 (2.908) in South Africa, and 4.997 (1.867) in the U.S.; the mean differences being chiefly due to the differences in item and factor numbers. The variable's skewness ranged between .388 and 1.032, these positive values indicating lower than average incongruence for most participants.

With regards to politics, the WVS dataset contained several variables I turned into factors including Political interest and three 'Trust variables' related to different types of institutions: political, non-political (military, police, courts) and the NGO sector. I also constructed factors using a few personal and network-related variables such as Use of traditional (tv, newspaper) as well as non-traditional information sources (email, internet), Religiosity and Socio-economic status (measured with two variables, one direct and one tapping social class identity).

4. 2. Results

Table 10 summarizes the bivariate linear relationship between the lone IV, ideological congruence, and the two dependent variables in each country.

	Germany	Japan	Slovenia	South Africa	United States
Voting (national)	0.171	0.091	-0.030*	-0.038*	0.234
Participation	0.273	0.219	0.221	0.136	0.173

Table 10. Linear relationship between ideological congruence and participation in all five countries. * signifies correlations NOT significant at a .01 level.

The table reveals encouraging results. Participation is positively correlated with ideological congruence at an approximately .2 level across the board (substantially

weaker in South Africa and stronger in Germany). Voting's case is somewhat different with the correlations being reasonably strong in the U.S. and Germany, weak in Japan and non-existent in Slovenia and South Africa. For the most part, these bivariate results are significant and none run in the opposite direction, lending strong partial (almost full) support to Hypothesis 2a. The next step, interacting ideological congruence with participation, will be presented in the usual format, only this time broken down by country.

		Voting			Participation		
		b	β	P	b	B	p
Germany	Ideological congruence	.046 (.009)	.111 (.022)	<.001	.114 (.011)	.222 (.021)	<.001
	Political interest	.286 (.02)	.368 (.028)	<.001	.288 (.023)	.301 (.021)	<.001
	Idc*Polint	-.019 (.012)	-.050 (.027)	.061	.013 (.011)	.026 (.023)	.252
	Constant	.050 (.020)		.725	-.016 (.023)		.925
	R²	14.6% (.016)		<.001	17.1% (.014)		<.001
Japan	Ideological congruence	.024 (.008)	.062 (.02)	.002	.088 (.008)	.194 (.018)	<.001
	Political interest	.293 (.018)	.322 (.019)	<.001	.289 (.019)	.280 (.018)	<.001
	Idc*Polint	-.017 (.010)	-.034 (.019)	.075	.022 (.011)	.036 (.018)	.047
	Constant	-.107 (.016)		<.001	-.006 (.016)		.728
	R²	12.2% (.013)		<.001	12.4% (.012)		<.001
Slovenia	Ideological congruence	-.021 (.011)	-.058 (.029)	.051	.092 (.013)	.2 (.027)	<.001
	Political interest	.177 (.023)	.239 (.03)	<.001	.157 (.028)	.168 (.03)	<.001
	Idc*Polint	.011 (.012)	.027 (.03)	.367	-.01 (.013)	-.021 (.027)	.435
	Constant	.017 (.02)		.413	.061 (.025)		.016
	R²	5.8%% (.015)		<.001	7.7% (.015)		<.001
South Africa	Ideological congruence	-.011 (.005)	-.04 (.017)	.022	.037 (.004)	.132 (.016)	<.001
	Political interest	.118 (.013)	.16 (.017)	<.001	.168 (.013)	.219 (.016)	<.001
	Idc*Polint	.012 (.004)	.046 (.017)	.008	-.01 (.004)	-.036 (.016)	.019

	Constant	-.006 (.013)		.653	.039 (.013)		.003
	R²	2.9% (.006)		.001	6.9% (.008)		<.001
United States	Ideological congruence	.066 (.008)	.159 (.02)	<.001	.047 (.009)	.101 (.02)	<.001
	Political interest	.357 (.016)	.441 (.018)	<.001	.372 (.019)	.407 (.018)	<.001
	Idc*Polint	-.007 (.009)	-.016 (.021)	.453	-.022 (.010)	-.046 (.021)	.026
	Constant	.001 (.015)		.945	.016 (.017)		.348
	R²	24.5% (.017)		.001	19.6% (.016)		<.001

Table 11. Multivariate regression predicting voting and participation from ideological congruence, political interest and their interaction.

The variance predicted by these three variables only is substantially lower compared to the results obtained in previous datasets, with decent values in the United States, Germany and Japan, but low (albeit significant) ones in South Africa and Slovenia. Political interest is the strongest predictor across the board as indicated by its β weight. In most cases with some exceptions (most notably South Africa), ideological congruence is not lagging far behind, having a significant conditional positive effect on both voting and participation, holding political interest constant at its mean. These results almost fully support Hypothesis 2b. The interaction term approaches statistical significance in several cases but only reaches it in four: it is significantly positive when predicting participation in Japan and voting in South Africa, and significantly negative when predicting participation in South Africa and the United States; lending rather weak partial support to H2c.

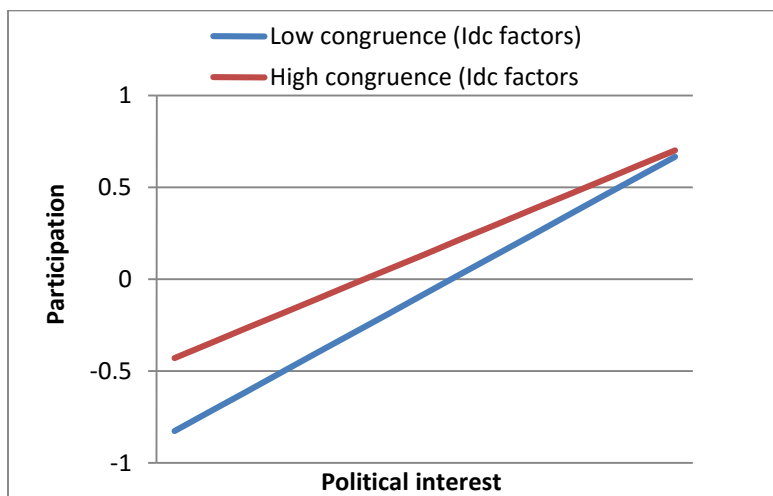


Figure 7. Pattern of interaction between political interest and ideological congruence in predicting participation in the United States. The values of ideological congruence represented approximate the upper and lower deciles (-2.483 for low and 2.217 for high congruence).

The pattern shown in Figure 7 differs from what we observed in Figure 4 in that the two lines appear to converge instead of diverging as values of political interest increase.

As expected, the positive relationship between political interest and participation holds across the board. Its degree also depends on the level of ideological congruence.

However, the difference between those high and low in ideological congruence shrinks at higher values of political interest, as opposed to starting from close and proceeding to move apart. While this result supports part of the original hypothesis (significant moderation), its pattern differs from my initial expectations.

Overall, these results are encouraging with the interaction term showing a 4/10 success rate and ideological congruence retaining its significance in most of these simple models. Its occasional low weight, however, signals caution. The relatively low R^2 s encountered also warn us that there may be many other factors at play, whose effect can only be uncovered in a multivariate framework. I started the process of getting there by employing the customary process of step-by-step elimination to all ten models with the

exception of ideological congruence, the interaction term if found significant in the simple models, and key demographic controls sex, age, education and race where applicable. The outcome was a unique multivariate regression model for both dependent variables in all five countries, each with its own set of predictors, as well as moderation and mediation effects. In order to aid reader comprehension, I will deviate from the norm followed in the rest of this dissertation and present these results in two steps, starting with a summary table of all models, followed by a visual representation of three selected out of the total ten.

	DV	Voting (national)	Participation
Germany	Number of significant direct predictors	9	12
	Idc: β (SE), p, rank	.059 (.025), p=.018, 8 th	.052 (.026), p=.046, 11 th
	R ²	23.6%	31.3%
Japan	Number of significant direct predictors	10	10
	Idc: β (SE), p, rank	.057 (.027), p=.035, 7 th	.101 (.026), p<.001, 4 th
	R ²	21.9%	14.8%
Slovenia	Number of significant direct predictors	5	7
	Idc: β (SE), p, rank	.015 (.032), p=.629	.027 (.029), p=.354
	R ²	14.7%	24.5%
South Africa	Number of significant direct predictors	10	11
	Idc: β (SE), p, rank	-.004 (.018), p=.814	.134 (.017), p<.001, 3 rd
	R ²	20.9%	26.8%
United States	Number of significant direct predictors	8	14
	Idc: β (SE), p, rank	-.009 (.024), p=.721	.059 (.024), p=.014, 10 th
	R ²	35.5%	32.6%

Table 12. Summary of the models predicting voting and non-institutional participation. In the case of ideological congruence, rank indicates the relative strength of its beta weight in the ranking of all significant predictors in the model.

As Table 12 shows, ideological congruence is a significant positive predictor in six out of ten cases while usually ranking toward the lower end, partially corroborating

Hypothesis 2b. The case of voting in South Africa is especially interesting because here ideological congruence has no direct conditional effect but still plays a role by moderating the relationship of political interest on the dependent variable. The interaction between political interest and ideological congruence remains significant in the cases of voting in Japan ($\beta=-.046$, $SE=.021$, $p=.032$) and South Africa ($\beta=.058$, $SE=.017$, $p=.001$), as well as participation in the latter country ($\beta=-.032$, $SE=.015$, $p=.033$); thus lending weak partial support to H2c.

Also notable is the significantly increased general predictive power (if compared to the simple models), which still remains rather low if we compare the model R^2 s to those in other extended path models. I will present three models in more detail: voting in Japan and participation in South Africa and the United States. All three models have a decent R^2 and include a significant effect of ideological congruence, allowing me to show what variables it does not compete with in these countries.

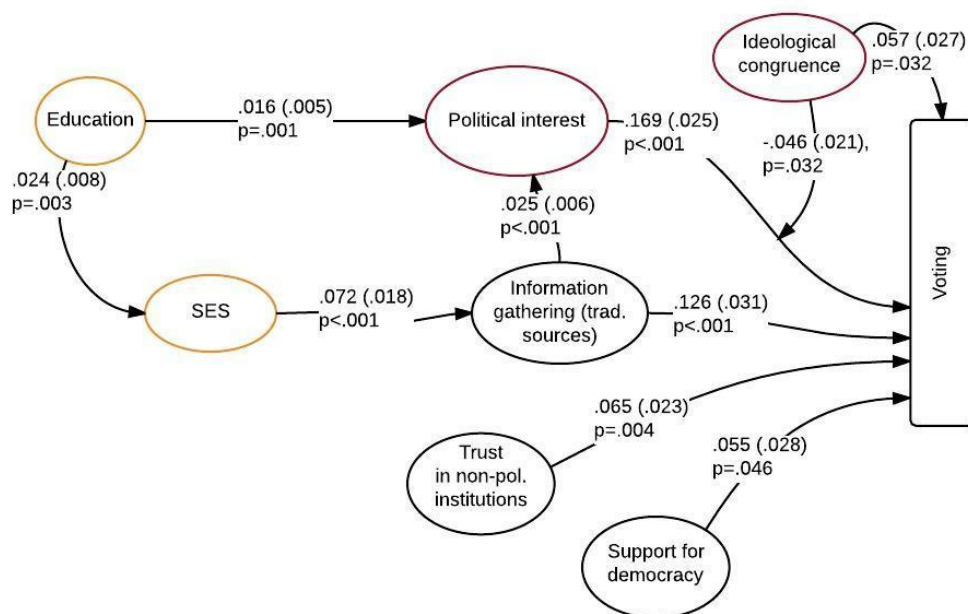


Figure 8. Multivariate regression predicting voting in Japan. The arrows pointed toward variables other than voting represent indirect relationships. All displayed weights are standardized (β), followed by their standard error and p value. The arrow starting from ideological congruence pointed at the arrow representing the relationship between political interest and voting indicates the interaction term.

As we already knew from the previous table, ideological congruence is not only a significant positive direct conditional predictor of voting in Japan, but also moderates the relationship between political interest and the dependent variable, although it does so with a negative coefficient. Regarding the supplementary hypotheses, H3a, H3b and H3e are confirmed by education's (lack of) direct, as well as mediated effects. I was not able to test H3c due to the lack of political knowledge variables in the set. H3d, on the other hand, is rejected for lack of mediation by SES between education and voting. Both hypotheses that include socio-economic status are supported by the variable's direct positive effect (H4a) as well as that mediated by political interest (H4b). In addition to these results, Figure 8 also shows that – not surprisingly – those who have more trust in

political institutions (an important control, see chapter one) and those who support democracy (an ideology factor) are more likely to vote in Japan.

The other two models I present share the dependent variable and both have a large number of predictors involved, leading me to opt for a more comparison-friendly table format instead of a path diagram.

	Participation - South Africa			Participation - United States		
	b	B	p	B	β	P
Political interest	.078 (.013)	.103 (.017)	<.001	.286 (.020)	.314 (.022)	<.001
Ideological congruence	.037 (.005)	.134 (.017)	<.001	.027 (.011)	.059 (.024)	.014
Idc*Polint	-.009 (.004)	-.032 (.015)	.033	.009 (.010)	.017 (.02)	.394
Info gathering (trad sources)	.173 (.017)	.235 (.022)	<.001	.065 (.024)	.074 (.027)	.006
Info gathering (online)	-	-	-	.095 (.021)	.097 (.022)	<.001
Trust in political institutions	.063 (.013)	.087 (.018)	.008	-	-	-
Trust in non-political institutions	-	-	-	-.196 (.056)	-.173 (.048)	<.001
Trust in NGOs	-	-	-	.243 (.033)	.221 (.029)	<.001
Support for democracy	.083 (.015)	.096 (.017)	<.001	.056 (.018)	.134 (.043)	.002
State-run welfare	-	-	-	.051 (.018)	.053 (.018)	.004
Welfare-related transgression justified	-	-	-	.076 (.022)	.084 (.024)	.001
Xenophobia	-	-	-	-.069 (.023)	-.053 (.018)	.003
Authoritarianism	-	-	-	-.053 (.019)	-.118 (.042)	.005

Religiosity	.212 (.014)	.230 (.120)	.056	-	-	-
Gender	-.065 (.026)	-.04 (.016)	.013	-.007 (.034)	-.004 (.02)	.833
SES (possessions)	.212 (.014)	.282 (.018)	<.001	.091 (.026)	.088 (.025)	<.001
Age	-.003 (.001)	-.046 (.017)	.007	0 (.001)	0 (.023)	.996
Education	.012 (.009)	.024 (.018)	.191	.069 (.017)	.096 (.024)	<.001
Black vs White	-.303 (.046)	-.116 (.018)	<.001	-	-	-
Hispanic vs White	-	-	-	-.125 (.061)	-.043 (.021)	.043
Constant	.208 (.047)		<.001	-.020 (.031)		.506
R²	26.8% (.015)		<.001	32.6% (.021)		<.001

Table 13. Multivariate regression models predicting non-institutional participation in South Africa and the United States. All effects included are direct (non-mediated).

H3a is partially supported because education does not have a direct positive conditional effect on participation in the United States, but does in South Africa. H4a, on the other hand, is fully supported by the positive conditional effect of socio-economic status in both countries. Moreover, those who show higher support for democracy in general also demonstrate higher participation levels in both countries, as do those with a higher trust in institutions in South Africa. It is worth noting that ‘liberal’ individuals seem more likely to participate only in the United States, based on a few significant ideology factors.²⁵

²⁵ Here they were not recoded in a uniform fashion. All values in the table are in sync with the statement (those falling on the more ‘liberal’ end of each factor show higher participation).

	Participation - South Africa		Participation - United States	
	b	β	B	B
Education --> Political interest			.031 (.005)	.043 (.007)
Education --> Social networks	-	-	.011 (.003)	.059 (.024)
Education --> SES	.029 (.003)	.060 (.006)	.019 (.006)	.026 (.008)
SES --> Political interest	.011 (.002)	.015 (.003)	.024 (.009)	.023 (.009)
Gender --> Political interest	-.018 (.004)	-.011 (.003)	-.087 (.012)	-.050 (.007)
Gender --> Trust in NGOs	-	-	.022 (.009)	.047 (.01)

Table 14. Selected mediation effects in predicting non-institutional participation in South Africa and the United States, respectively. All effects are significant at a $<.001$ level.

Of the mediation hypotheses I was able to test, H3b and H3d receive partial support thanks to the mediation of political interest and social networks between education and participation in the United States (but not South Africa). H3e and H4b are fully supported due to SES's corresponding mediation, as well as political interest's mediating role of the relationship between SES and participation in both countries. The last three rows of Table 14 represent two additional mediation effects not included in hypotheses. Women's generally lower political interest seems to have a negative effect on their participation in both countries. Conversely, their higher trust in NGOs raises participation in the United States (with no direct effect observed in either case).

CHAPTER 4. RESULTS DERIVED FROM DATASETS SPECIFICALLY DESIGNED FOR THIS DISSERTATION

The goal of this chapter is to clarify the relationships outlined above through the use of three datasets specifically designed for this project – with special regard to agenda and ideological congruence. Development of the survey was based on the variables outlined in chapters one and two, with minor improvements following each subsequent set. I obtained the approval of the Institutional Review Board at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln under the IRB number of 20151015498EP (project ID: 15498, working title: Politics in Focus).

1. Political Science Experimental Participant Pool – Round One

The first wave of data collection took place in the Fall semester of the 2015-2016 academic year, relying on the Political Science Experimental Participant Pool (PSEPP) at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. All respondents were students enrolled in introductory political science classes and were recruited through the Department of Political Science's own system for administering surveys. Respondents received research credit in exchange for their participation. The questionnaire itself was located on the survey platform Qualtrics.

I employed two primary means²⁶ to ensure data quality. First, I included two attention questions (“Please click on 'important' (this is a control question)”; “This question is testing if you are paying attention, please mark "once"), correct response being a necessary condition for continuation in both cases. Second, I used a validation

²⁶ On top of the two presented, the survey also included two self-reported English proficiency items.

option provided by Qualtrics to make sure participants provided a response to all my key variables.²⁷ After removing a few faulty or questionable datapoints (those with duplicate PSEPP numbers, for instance), the resulting final dataset had N=181 cases.

The age of the sample ranges between 18 and 35, concentrated around its mean of 19.66 (SD=2.106). The analyzed final sample contains 71 freshmen, 64 sophomores, with only 26 juniors and 20 seniors in the mix. Age is not the only variable with very little variance compared to that present in the general population: out of the 181 respondents 166 identified themselves as white (91.7%). Gender distribution, on the other hand, was almost balanced with 81 females (44.8%).

1. 1. Variables and Univariate Results

Voting was measured using one item, frequency in recent elections on a five-point scale. The variable has a strong negative skew of -1.042, which, coupled with a mean of 3.99 (SD=1.329), indicates that students in the sample generally reported a very high level of voting. The validity of this measure, however, may be compromised due to a mistake that went unnoticed: I did not add a ‘wasn’t old enough yet’ answer option, meaning those to whom that would have applied in all probability ended up in the ‘none’ category.

Regarding the other forms of participation, the final model has acceptable fit with an RMSEA of .061 (.049-.072, below 0.05 with a 6.1% chance) and a CFI of .889. The first factor contains elements pertaining to both institutional and non-institutional participation. The second factor, online participation summarizes eight items representing

²⁷ In accordance with general IRB regulations and ethical principles, respondents were given the option of discontinuing participation at any time while incurring no penalty.

different aspects of participation in the online environment such as liking political posts or creating politically relevant content. Univariate examination (based on their skewness varying between 1.343 and 1.553) of the resulting factor scores reveals that, in general, members of this sample do not participate much in forms other than voting. The two participation variables are highly correlated with each other at $r=.847$ ($p<.001$), while voting correlates moderately with participation ($r=.241$, $p=.001$) and rather weakly with online participation ($r=.165$, $p=.027$).

Agenda congruence was computed as outlined in chapter two. The resulting variable, tapping the difference between participants' own and the elite's real agenda, ranges between 0-2.35 with a mean of 1.654 ($SD=.298$) and a skewness indicator of .036.

I obtained the ideological factor scores through a series of models relying on modification indices, fit indices, and residual correlations, until I arrived at a well-fitting model with only three factors and an RMSEA of .063 (95% between .046 and .081 with a 1.2% chance of it being below .05), coupled with a CFI of .922. The first factor contains seven items pertaining to Progressive values (media bias, college costs, homelessness). Conversely, the second, Equality factor has only three: racial equality (standardized loading: .768), climate change (.319), and gender equality (.839). The third and final, Welfare and liberties factor summarizes six items such as: increasing welfare spending, abortion, illegal immigration, and same-sex marriage. The factor intercorrelations seem to support (albeit weakly) the viability of a three-factor structure with levels of .39 (progressive values and equality), .424 (equality and welfare), and .410 (progressive values and welfare). Nevertheless, the picture painted by these three factors (one of which has very few variables) is different from the six-factor spread.

The construction of my ideological congruence measure relying on these factor scores followed the pattern described in chapter two: I subtracted their rescaled forms from rescaled second-order scores and took the average of the differences for each participant. The resulting variable is close to normally distributed with a range between 0 and 1.66, and a mean of .606 (SD=.322). It does not appear highly correlated with agenda congruence with $r=.161$ ($p=.030$), indicating little competition for the same portion of the DVs' variance.

Regarding other political constructs, I extracted factor scores using CFA wherever applicable in order to obtain well-behaved and representative aggregate variables. The first of these factors clearly taps Interest in politics (i.e. "How interested are you in politics and public affairs?" or "Politics is boring."). The second, (politicized) Social networks relates to how friends and family, as well as the individual feels about politics. Four items tapping civic duty and efficacy lined up reasonably well ("It is every citizen's duty to vote"/"I'd be more politically engaged but I feel like what I do doesn't make a difference.") to form one, Political efficacy factor. Similarly, income, job status, and economic status formed an SES factor with acceptably high loadings. Moreover, I extracted an additional factor to measure Stress preference ("How much do you enjoy stressful situations?"), a product of four related items. Finally, demographic controls as detailed above – sex, age, year in college, race – were also available.

Before moving on to quantitative results, let me give a few examples to demonstrate a qualitative aspect of ideological incongruence, and to show that it exists in participants' minds, is accessible to conscious awareness, and appears considerably well-reasoned in some cases. The following were responses to the open-ended prompt described in chapter

two, asking participants to explain their choice on the self-reported congruence measure, taken verbatim from the survey and organized by answer category.

1= Very well, I have no difficulty placing myself along the scale and it accurately represents my views:

- I have taken many political identity tests and know my place on the scale.
- I agree with most everything that the conservative part of our society agrees with.
- I was raised by a liberal family in a very conservative state. I've had to battle for my political beliefs my entire life. I know what I'm talking about and I've held my own while being pounded with conservative views.
- Libertarian²⁸

2=Reasonably well:

- Because it somewhat explains why my opinions/beliefs are what they are, but doesn't fully explain them.
- I have some views that are considered liberal, but overall I am more of a conservative person.
- I believe in smaller federal government and more power in the individual states' hands. I am against many of the more radical ideologies and believe in the motto "everything in moderation". However, I am also neutral on many policies or even lean slightly more liberal than conservative on some issues as well.

²⁸ Evidently, what may seem contradictory to political scientists makes sense to at least some of their subjects.

3=Not too well

- Because I am so middle of the road nowadays due to the huge divide in both parties.
- Don't agree entirely with one side in almost all issues.
- Liberalism is at a cross roads in term of economic policies. Many Liberal are going further economically left towards Socialism now than before. I much more prefer to Label myself a Hamiltonian Progressive.
- I feel that when placing a "scale" on what a persons views are on certain topics, it is more complex than simply saying "I am more so a liberal/conservative." It depends on the topics, for example I tend to see both sides of arguments or attempt to and try to see where a middle ground could be met for opposing sides. Many of the issues that we have today, need solving from both liberals and conservatives to an extent.

4= Not at all, the way I think about politics is entirely different.

- I have my own views on certain issues and they fall under the common good for humanity. We as humans have our own right to our lives and I think that my views don't directly fall under a certain category.
- I just don't think that we can label someone and put them into one small category. Personally, I have many different views on a lot of different topics. I am registered as a Republican but I have a lot of Democratic views. I just don't like labeling such broad list of things.
- I think decisions should be made based on facts and empirical data as opposed to sentiment, dogma, and the opinion of uneducated voters.

- This dichotomous dimension only works within our current political system and doesn't leave room for alternate forms of government.

1. 2. Results

	Voting	Participation	Online participation
Agenda congruence	-.071	-.242**	-.257**
Ideological congruence	.003	-.182*	-.187*

Table 15. Linear relationship between agenda congruence, ideological congruence, and participation. * denotes a correlation significant at a .05, and ** at a .01 level.

The bivariate results presented in Table 15 work in a direction opposite to my expectations without exception. The negative findings regarding traditional and online participation are even more surprising than their non-significant counterparts (with respect to voting), especially in light of the results presented in chapter three. Their consistency, leads to the categorical rejection of H1 and H2 and foreshadows corresponding expectations for multivariate hypotheses, the first round of which is summarized in Table 16 below.

	Voting			Participation			Online participation		
	b	β	p	b	β	p	b	β	p
Agenda congruence	.405 (.349)	.091 (.078)	.247	-.518 (.183)	-.164 (.057)	.004	-.564 (.059)	-.178 (.054)	.001
Political interest	.176 (.104)	.127 (.074)	.084	.575 (.056)	.590 (.043)	<.001	.606 (.059)	.619 (.044)	<.001
Agc*Polint	.170 (.318)	.042 (.079)	.594	-.330 (.159)	-.116 (.055)	.035	-.437 (.168)	-.153 (.059)	.009
Constant - Model 1	.007 (.097)		.943	-.013 (.054)		.802	-.018 (.052)		.735
R² - Model 1	2.3% (.023)		.312	41.1% (.051)		<.001	46.3% (.052)		<.001
Ideological congruence	.005 (.295)	.001 (.071)	.987	-.332 (.156)	-.113 (.055)	.033	-.266 (.176)	-.090 (.060)	.130
Political interest	.167 (.107)	.121 (.076)	.117	.585 (.063)	.600 (.043)	<.001	.607 (.064)	.620 (.045)	<.001
Idc*Polint	.133 (.323)	.032 (.077)	.680	.069 (.174)	.023 (.058)	.693	-.162 (.201)	-.055 (.069)	.420
Constant - Model 2	.005 (.099)		.957	.003 (.057)		.964	-.007 (.055)		.904
R² - Model 2	1.4% (.018)		.420	38.5% (.050)		<.001	42.5% (.054)		<.001

Table 16. Multivariate regression predicting participation from agenda congruence, political interest, and their interaction (Model 1) as well as ideological congruence, political interest, and their interaction (Model 2).

In light of previous results, the very low R² of the voting models should come as no surprise. The first key independent variable represented in them, agenda congruence, appears to be a significant conditional negative predictor of participation and online participation with no effect on voting. Furthermore, it moderates the effect of political interest in the same two models as before, but does so with a negative coefficient. Based on these results, I reject both H1b and H1c.²⁹ Ideological congruence only reaches

²⁹ In such cases where there is moderation but the core relationship does not correspond to my expectations, I will not present the interaction.

significance as a conditional predictor (at the mean of political interest) of traditional participation and even there its coefficient is negative, lending no support to H2b.

Moreover, it also does not appear to moderate the relationship between political interest and the three forms of participation tested, resulting in the rejection of H2c as well.

	Voting			Participation			Online participation		
	b	β	p	b	β	p	b	β	p
Agenda congruence	.354 (.362)	.078 (.079)	.329	-.543 (.177)	-.169 (.053)	.001	-.432 (.171)	-.134 (.052)	.010
Ideological congruence	-.013 (.276)	-.003 (.066)	.963	-.180 (.151)	-.061 (.053)	.250	-.493 (.199)	-.167 (.068)	.015
Political interest	.250 (.103)	.181 (.072)	.012	.539 (.053)	.554 (.042)	<.001	.480 (.076)	.491 (.066)	<.001
Agc*Polint	-	-	-	-.381 (.146)	-.135 (.051)	.008	-.512 (.158)	-.180 (.056)	.001
Progressive values	-	-	-	-	-	-	.140 (.049)	.134 (.047)	.005
Civic duty/efficacy	-	-	-	.151 (.065)	.142 (.059)	.016	.117 (.058)	.109 (.054)	.042
Semesters	.149 (.044)	.249 (.074)	.001	-.016 (.026)	-.037 (.061)	.547	.011 (.024)	.027 (.055)	.631
Religiosity	.282 (.098)	.204 (.069)	.003	-	-	-	-	-	-
SES	.052 (.110)	.032 (.069)	.637	-.196 (.063)	-.175 (.053)	.001	-.111 (.066)	-.098 (.056)	.078
Gender	-.170 (.097)	-.083 (.070)	.237	-.046 (.102)	-.024 (.054)	.651	-.032 (.098)	-.017 (.051)	.745
Constant	-.001 (.071)		.985	-.005 (.070)		.941	.086 (.057)		.133
R²	12.8% (.048)		.007	45.7% (.050)		<.001	51.9% (.052)		<.001

Table 17. Multivariate regression predicting all three forms of participation.

The results pertaining to my core hypotheses reveal a similar pattern to that described above. Agenda congruence has no direct main effect on voting and a negative one on the other two dependent variables, (controlling for all other variables at their

mean), leading to the rejection of H1b. The second relevant hypothesis, 1c is also rejected based on the significant but negative interaction between agenda congruence and political interest in predicting traditional and online participation, compounded by no effect on voting. Ideological congruence's case is even simpler: it does not appear to moderate the relationship between political interest and any form of participation, and boasts only one significant main effect on online participation, which runs in the direction opposite to what I hypothesized. Therefore, I reject H2b and H2c. With respect to supplementary hypotheses, H3a is rather strongly supported by no significant main effect of education except in the case of voting. The very same factors may explain the lack of mediation between education and participation by political interest, social networks, and socio-economic status, a result which culminates in the rejection of H3b, H3d and H3e. Furthermore, H4a is completely rejected due to SES' one significant negative effect on participation, and no direct one on the other two variables. Socio-economic status also does not mediate the relationship between political interest and participation (for example, in the case of traditional participation $\beta = -.016$, $SE=.014$, $p=.265$) refuting H4b.

My sample's limitations, as well as those of ideological congruence (recall the issues surrounding the construction of the original variables and the factors alike) still leave open several questions regarding the validity of these results, and make it clear that additional data gathering was warranted. I will present the outcome of this process in section two.

2. Political Science Experimental Research Pool – Round Two

The dataset used in this section is very similar to the previous one with a few notable exceptions. I once again relied on UNL's PSEPP pool, this time in the Spring semester of the 2015-2016 academic year. Respondents were still students in introductory political science classes. The most important and major change regarding the survey was the measurement of ideology. I expanded the list of ideological items to 44 items – the additions having been lifted from the pool of well-functioning items used by Feher et al. (2014) – and modified the item wordings (changing short expressions to complete statements) to aid the interpretation of scale points. In addition, I also added some agenda items and political variables to improve their respective coverage.

After the elimination of responses with too many missing variables and the three participants who admitted that their level of English was not sufficient, the final sample proved rather small with $N=140$. The age of the sample varies between 18 and 35 with the mean being 20.06 ($SD=2.065$). The skewness of 3.534 ($SE=.206$) indicates a very heavy focus on younger individuals as was expected (in fact, 72.7% of the total N were 20 or younger). Correspondingly, the majority were toward the beginning of their college career with 56 freshmen, 41 sophomores and only 22 juniors coupled with 21 seniors. Race showed more variance compared to the previous sample but still quite little overall with 87.1% identifying as white, 5.7% Asian (8 students), 3.6% Black as well as Hispanic, and 1.4% Native American. The gender distribution was acceptable with 37.9% women.

2. 1. Variables

I began the process of variable preparation with a confirmatory factor analysis of all participation-related variables. The final model has reasonably good fit with an RMSEA of .062 (95% between .047-.077 and with a 9.2% chance of being lower than .05) and a CFI of .918. The two factors of traditional and online participation correlate with each other at a comfortable .820 level ($p < .001$), justifying their separate treatment but at the same time signaling their relatedness. The relationship between voting and the two forms of participation is also practically identical to that presented in section one with $r = .261$ ($p = .010$) and $r = .200$ ($p = .018$), respectively. The skewness indicators once again show that most respondents demonstrate remarkably low participation (2.223 for traditional and 1.863 for online) as well as very high voting (-1.558) levels.

The procedure I used to construct the agenda congruence variable was also analogous to that presented in section one. The resulting variable appears close to normally distributed with a $< .6$ skewness indicator. As customary, the construction of the ideological congruence measure started with a series of confirmatory factor analyses on all items available. The results closely approximate those found by Feher et al. (2014) as the final factor structure contains those and only those present in the original article, namely: Intergroup relations, Treatment of rulebreakers, Traditional values, (state-run) Welfare, Strong central government, and 'Big Brother' (government monitoring). The final model's fit is satisfactory with an RMSEA of .066 (95% CIs: .059-.074) and a CFI of .836. The factor intercorrelations are encouraging as they vary between .289-.806. This is also reflected in the loadings of the second-order factor which range between .468 and .943. The final ideological congruence measure has a considerable positive skew (1.211),

indicating relatively low levels of incongruence in the sample. Moreover, as in section one, the survey included an open-ended question asking for explanations immediately following participants' own self-reported congruence measure ("Please briefly explain your choice"). Below is a sample of explanations organized by answer choice – as above, in unedited form.

1= Very well, I have no difficulty placing myself along the scale and it accurately represents my views.

- I am both socially and economically liberal, so the label of liberal fits me well.
- I'm generally socially moderate and fiscally conservative.
- I almost always agree with the typical beliefs for a liberal.
- I find myself viewing things a republican does as well as my views are definitely views of a republican

2=Reasonably well.

- I have a few liberal tendencies, including a belief that same sex marriage should be protected by law, and that while welfare spending should be cut back, I do not favor removing it completely.
- It's easy for me. But I know of moderates who hate this scale.
- I am more liberal on some issues than others. I am more socially liberal than economically liberal.
- I feel that the two party system allows most people, including myself, to find specific positions within the conservative-liberal dimension that go along with their beliefs.

- I think that too much is focused in the wrong area if you conservative you must be against gay-marriage and so forth but to me it doesn't belong in politics.

3=Not too well.

- I identify more as libertarian than conservative, although I believe the term "conservative" used to be representative of the principles of the Founding Fathers, but if they were alive today, I believe they would agree most with the principles of libertarians. I fall between the two categories.
- I don't see the need to be categorized into liberal or conservative. I think that if you believe in something then you should vote that way no matter what side the idea comes from.
- There is more to beliefs than three classifications.
- I have some ideas about fiscal policy that don't exactly align with liberal thinking usually.
- Politics should be viewed as a compass, not a line.
- I may lean Republican in some regards, but I'm not nearly as rule/religion oriented as they are. Criminal justice reform, legalization of marijuana, separation of church and state, equal rights, global warming, there are many different issues I diverge from the status quo on. The title is very misleading.

4= Not at all, the way I think about politics is entirely different)

- Currently, liberals are associated with strong arm, large, overreaching governments, and as a liberal, I identify with the ideals for social and business freedoms, without government intervention.

- I weigh in the pro and cons for both side rather than one
- I consider myself a Theodore Roosevelt-style Progressive Imperialist, having political beliefs that align both with 'conservatives' (I am in favor of a strong foreign policy) and 'liberals' (I also support a fully-developed social democracy).
- I don't really care about politics.
- Politics isn't just a black and white system, I agree with stances on different issues in both parties, and sometimes don't agree with anyone.
- Currently, liberals are associated with strong arm, large, overreaching governments, and as a liberal, I identify with the ideals for social and business freedoms, without government intervention.

Using a host of other relevant variables, I obtained the following additional factors (each within a well-fitting model): Political interest (How interested are you in politics?/Politics is boring), Politicized social networks (How do you think the majority of your family members feel about politics in general?), Political efficacy (I'd be more politically engaged but I feel like what I do doesn't make a difference), Trust in partisan institutions (Please indicate how much you trust the House, Senate, political parties), and Trust in non-partisan institutions (Please indicate how much you trust the police, the military, etc.). In addition to this set, I also have two variables tapping Civic duty (It is every citizen's civic duty to vote./ It is every citizen's civic duty to actively try to influence societal decisions.) at my disposal. On the non-political front I have available a factor tapping Stress tolerance (How much do you enjoy stressful situations/How hard do you try to avoid stressful situations?), Socio-economic status (income and subjective

economic position), Religious attendance, and Religious guidance in everyday life, as well as the usual demographics age, gender, year (as a stand-in for education), and race.

2. 2. Results

	Voting	Participation	Online participation
Agenda congruence	.069	-.278**	-.128
Ideological congruence	.111	-.042	-.186*

Table 18. Linear relationship between agenda congruence, ideological congruence, and participation. *denotes a correlation significant at a .05, and ** at a .01 level.

Voting appears uncorrelated with both congruence variables, although it is worth noting that the correlation with ideological congruence (with $p=.191$) is most likely non-significant due to a power problem. The same can be said regarding the size of the correlation between agenda congruence and online participation ($p=.131$). These power issues notwithstanding, all significant coefficients presented in Table 18 are negative, meaning that the only two significant ones run in the opposite to hypothesized direction, resulting in the rejection of both H1a and H2a.

	Voting			Participation			Online participation		
	b	β	p	b	β	p	b	β	p
Agenda congruence	.342 (.445)	.064 (.084)	.441	-.755 (.238)	-.224 (.060)	.002	-.276 (.244)	-.084 (.074)	.258
Political interest	.527 (.125)	.329 (.076)	<.001	.469 (.082)	.460 (.074)	<.001	.517 (.082)	.518 (.065)	<.001
Agc*Polint	.625 (.507)	.101 (.083)	.218	-.750 (.466)	-.191 (.108)	.077	-.475 (.365)	-.123 (.091)	.193
Constant - Model 1	.007 (.121)		.951	-.009 (.066)		.880	-.006 (.066)		.929
R² - Model 1	12.1% (.056)		.032	33% (.097)		<.001	30.2% (.081)		<.001
Ideological congruence	.818 (.332)	.174 (.072)	.014	.281 (.201)	.094 (.068)	.162	-.066 (.201)	-.022 (.069)	.745
Political interest	.543 (.123)	.339 (.075)	<.001	.482 (.089)	.473 (.072)	<.001	.502 (.077)	.503 (.064)	<.001
Idc*Polint	-.224 (.390)	-.050 (.088)	.566	-.522 (.263)	-.185 (.083)	.026	-.659 (.214)	-.238 (.075)	.001
Constant - Model 2	-.008 (.118)		.943	-.020 (.068)		0.77	-.025 (.064)		.700
R² - Model 2	12.9% (.049)		.008	25.6% (.077)		.001	33.8% (.081)		<.001

Table 19. Multivariate regression predicting the three forms of participation from agenda congruence, political interest, and their interaction (Model 1), as well as ideological congruence, political interest, and their interaction (Model 2).

Agenda congruence retained its significance in this simple multivariate model, disconfirming H1b. Moreover, it does not appear to moderate the relationship between political interest and participation (although it comes reasonably close in traditional participation's case, albeit in the wrong direction), once again refuting H1c. Moving on to ideological congruence, the first observation is that it has a positive conditional effect only on voting, lending weak partial support to H2b and reinforcing the idea that the non-significant bivariate result appeared due to small sample size. Furthermore, ideological congruence also moderates the relationship between political interest and both types of participation, but does so in the wrong direction, refuting H2c. Estimation of the final

models proceeded through the step-by-step elimination of non-significant predictors, with the exception of my key variables and necessary demographic controls age, sex, and race.

	Voting			Participation			Online participation		
	b	β	p	b	β	p	b	β	p
Agenda congruence	1.139 (.441)	.216 (.083)	.010	-.635 (.294)	-.191 (.079)	.031	-.106 (.270)	-.034 (.086)	.694
Ideological congruence	1.009 (.419)	.217 (.090)	.016	.188 (.195)	.064 (.065)	.336	-.119 (.214)	-.043 (.077)	.576
Political interest	.486 (.172)	.303 (.102)	.005	.494 (.102)	.488 (.080)	<.001	.401 (.084)	.419 (.080)	<.001
Idc*Polint	-	-	-	-.512 (.167)	-.184 (.063)	.002	-.854 (.115)	-.324 (.068)	<.001
Ideological intensity	-	-	-	-	-	-	.064 (.019)	.256 (.072)	0.001
Trust in non-political inst.	-.427 (.197)	-.213 (.098)	.030	-.201 (.055)	-.159 (.042)	<.001	-	-	-
Welfare	-	-	-	-	-	-	.151 (.044)	.308 (.082)	.001
Strong central government	-	-	-	.329 (.113)	.365 (.109)	.004	.170 (.089)	.200 (.100)	.046
Ingroup preference	-	-	-	-.102 (.029)	-.297 (.089)	<.001	-	-	-
Social networks	.296 (.143)	.175 (.087)	.039	.130 (.046)	.122 (.046)	.004	-	-	-
Education (year)	.289 (.104)	.206 (.076)	.007	.033 (.054)	.038 (.060)	.536	.098 (.051)	.117 (.061)	.054
SES	-.025 (.118)	-.015 (.069)	.830	-.010 (.086)	-.010 (.080)	.905	.021 (.070)	.021 (.069)	.762
Constant	-.058 (.137)		.670	.012 (.078)		.876	.065 (.075)		.387
R²	27.4% (0.065)		<.001	47.9% (0.073)		<.001	45.5% (0.061)		<.001

Table 20. Multivariate regression predicting all three forms of participation.

The core hypotheses don't fare too well in these models. Agenda congruence has a negative main effect on traditional, and none on online participation. Thus, despite a

somewhat surprising significant positive main effect on voting, I reject Hypothesis 1b. H1c, on the other hand, receives no support since the interaction between agenda congruence and political interest proved non-significant in all models (and was, in fact, excluded based on the nulls presented in the previous table).

Hypothesis 2b's case is similar to that of H1b: although ideological congruence has a positive main effect on voting, it does not on the other two dependent variables, resulting in rejection with minimal support. H2c is also rejected due to negative interaction in two models and none in the third. Moreover, education, shows no direct or mediated effect on any of the DVs. This goes against H3b and H3d and H3e (H3c could not be tested due to lack of political knowledge) and on face value supports H3a. However, once again, I would not put much stock in these results because the only variable available to measure education was year in college. And last but not least, H4a and H4b are disconfirmed due to no direct or mediated effect achieved by socio-economic status.

In addition, Table 20 also contains some interesting results not mentioned in hypotheses. First, we may observe the positive direct effect of ideological intensity on online participation, as well as that of politicized networks on both voting and participation. Second, it appears that those who have less trust in non-political institutions are more likely to vote and engage in traditional means of politics, controlling for all other variables in the model. Third, some ideology factors stood the test of step-by-step elimination and remained in the final models. Those for a state-run welfare system participate more online and so do those who support a strong central government (the latter also being more likely to participate in traditional forms). We could almost call

these participants ‘liberals’... until we observe that several factors are in fact missing, and that ingroup preference works in the opposite direction: those who demonstrate higher values are less likely to participate in traditional forms. And finally, gender emerged as a significant control for online participation ($\beta = -.138$, $SE=.073$, $p=.050$), indicating somewhat less participation in these forms among women.

3. MTurk

In order to validate the results reported in the previous two sections, I reached out to a wider population to acquire a more representative sample. This effort was made possible by the Senning Scholarship granted me by the Department of Political Science at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. With their support I was able to obtain a reasonably large sample ($N = 402$) using Amazon’s Mechanical Turk. The survey I had my new participants fill out was nearly analogous to that used in the previous sections with three differences. First, I added four political knowledge items, attempting to capitalize on their independent predictive power observed in the Minnesota Twins Political dataset, as well as to empirically test Hypothesis 3c. Second, I added items to the three batteries tapping voting, socio-economic status, evaluation of politics. Third, I manipulated some survey mechanics to maximize participant attention and thus the quality of the results obtained. The first attention question on the second page was left in as a warning: if participants got it wrong they were merely gently asked to pay more attention. In later stages, however, I included another attention item and a timer, both on the page containing 25 ideology items. If respondents spent 12 seconds or less on this page or got the attention question wrong, they were redirected to the survey’s end without pay. Of the 487 participants who started taking the survey, 85 either dropped out on their own volition or got caught by

these items. Each participant received 2\$ as remuneration through MTurk's platform, upon successful completion. All MTurk workers filling out the survey were required to have at least 100 previous hits approved with a 90% approval rate or above. They also had to be located in the United States (IP address verified).

The resulting sample's age ranges between 18-69 years (by default MTurk workers have to be legal adults), with a mean of 35.18 (SD=10.23), skewed toward younger age groups (56.1% 34 or younger). All respondents are either native English speakers or reported native-level knowledge of the language. The gender and racial distribution of the sample is acceptable, although not fully representative of the general population with 54.7% males and 82.8% Whites (6.2% Black, 3.7% Latino, 6.7% Asian). The least representative characteristic of the sample is education: 54.1% of participants have at least a Bachelor's degree while 7.7% hold a Master's, both numbers being above their U.S.-wide counterparts. A common criticism held against MTurk samples is that they are liberally skewed. A brief look at their 7-point Conservative-Liberal self-placement confirms this suspicion in the case of the one at hand: 19.7% place themselves in the middle of the scale whereas 54.7% fall on the liberal and only 25.6% on the conservative side. Thus, the sample is not fully representative of the U.S. general population, but substantially more so than the previous two especially regarding participants' age, education, and race.

3. 1. Variables

In order to obtain a better measure of voting, I broke up the first, general voting frequency item into three segments, asking participants if they voted in all, most, some, one, or none of all the Presidential (1); Senate and House (2); and local (3) elections since

they were old enough. As a result, the overall participation model now contained three factors: voting, as well as two kinds of participation, traditional and online. The final model has acceptable fit with RMSEA=.063 (.057-.069, 0% chance) and CFI=.897. Participation correlates with voting at $r=.329$; online participation with voting at $r=.277$; and the two forms of participation with each other at $r=.654$ – somewhat lower compared to previous results but still reasonably high. The three factors' skewness is also in sync with previous findings, being positive for the two participation forms (2.525 for traditional and 1.547 for online), indicating generally low levels in the sample. Voting, on the other hand, has a moderate negative skew at $-.433$, showing that the average participant reported higher than average voting behavior.

The measure of agenda congruence was computed in the same fashion as before. The resulting variable's skewness is $.125$, indicating slightly less than average incongruence for average respondents. Regarding the ideology model, I extracted the same six factors as above, namely: Intergroup relations, Treatment of rulebreakers, Welfare, Traditional values (in politics), Strong central government, and 'Big Brother' (government's monitoring ability). The model had acceptable fit with RMSEA=.066 (CI₉₅: .062-.069), CFI=.842. The second-order factor is a viable indicator of general ideology as evidenced by its loadings, which vary between $.632$ and $.900$ with one exception (BB's standardized loading only reached $.408$). The ideological congruence measure I computed using the usual procedures on these factors scores has the by now common moderate positive skew ($.682$).

As before, I also included the self-reported ideological congruence measure, along with the open-ended question immediately following it. Below is a short selection of the responses, unedited and broken down by answer category.

1= Very well, I have no difficulty placing myself along the scale and it accurately represents my views.

- Because I'm super liberal
- I consider myself liberal on almost all dimensions (social, economic, etc.) so this accurately represents my views.
- It's commonly used

2= Reasonably well.

- Although I'm a bit more conservative economically, I tend to fit within the "liberal" label.
- Labels are good in this sense but one size fits all classifications often are not accurate. Many liberals may be opposed to something that other liberals approve of.

3= Not too well.

- I hold opinions that fit into both 'teams'. Don't feel we should even have them.
- Because I don't recognize them as the the extremes. They don't represent polar opposites, and they don't represent myself.
- There are a lot of positions on the liberal/conservative spectrum that are inconsistent with each other. For example with drug policy conservatives want to keep federal laws on the books instead of letting states make their

own laws which would be more consistent with what they are supposed to believe. So while I have an ideological consistency I don't believe that either party or "liberal/conservative" spectrum reflects that.

- I share opinions with both sides. For example, I support legalizing gay marriage completely (liberal) and I also support the second amendment (conservative). There are slightly more things I have in common with conservatives, so I suppose I lean that way overall.. but if you asked me about each issue specifically I would be all over the place.
- I think about each issue individually based on its merits, not based on a label of conservative or liberal.

4= Not at all, the way I think about politics is entirely different.

- I have a lot of views many people would see as extreme left or extreme right, so I can't really classify my views in one term.
- Frankly, I think one ideology has become as demonstrably useless as the other and we are in desperate need of a more moderate viewpoint capable of understanding that there are valid viewpoints on both sides of the aisle that need not continually devolve into paralyzing polarization.
- I think the labels liberal and conservative have been reduced into meaningless words. They are a means to pigeonhole and marginalize people.
- I'm not entirely sure where I stand politically.

Regarding other relevant variables, I started by computing the usual set of factor scores to represent a number of politically relevant constructs, namely: Political interest, Social networks (how politicized), Political efficacy (including the empirically very

closely related concept of civic duty), Information gathering frequency (traditional and online sources forming a separate factor each), and Trust in partisan as well as non-partisan political institutions. I also used confirmatory factor analysis on the four political knowledge variables included in the survey following their recoding to correct/incorrect dummy-variables in order to obtain a Political knowledge variable. Two additional non-political factors were extracted: Socio-economic status and Religiosity. Finally, sex, education, age, and race (converted into dummies using the majority White as the reference group) were also available to serve as controls in the final path models.

3. 2. Results

	Voting	Participation	Online participation
Agenda congruence	-.034	-0.158**	-0.109**
Ideological congruence	.012	.207**	.053

Table 21. Linear relationship between agenda congruence, ideological congruence, and participation. * denotes a correlation significant at a .05, and ** at a .01 level.

The first row of Table 21 confirms the result found in previous sections: agenda congruence appears, once again, to be negatively correlated with participation (both online and traditional) and not at all with voting; resulting in the rejection of H1a. The findings regarding ideological congruence are, however, different. This time my second key IV is uncorrelated with voting and online participation, but boasts a significant positive linear relationship with traditional participation. This result lends conditional support to H2a.

	Voting			Participation			Online participation		
	b	β	p	b	β	p	b	β	p
Agenda congruence	-.039 (.168)	-.011 (.046)	.819	-.465 (.150)	-.129 (.041)	.002	-.309 (.156)	-.086 (.044)	.048
Political interest	.495 (.041)	.485 (.038)	<.001	.358 (.045)	.358 (.037)	<.001	.501 (.044)	.503 (.038)	<.001
Agc*Polint	-.172 (.151)	-.045 (.040)	.257	-.351 (.149)	-.094 (.038)	.018	-.137 (.198)	-.037 (.053)	.488
Constant - Model 1	-.001 (.043)		.976	-.003 (.044)		.948	-.001 (.041)		.976
R² - Model 1	23.9% (.036)		<.001	16.3% (.035)		<.001	26.7% (.035)		<.001
Ideological congruence	-.024 (.109)	-.010 (.045)	.823	.431 (.092)	.181 (.035)	<.001	.100 (.100)	.042 (.042)	.317
Political interest	.502 (.041)	.492 (.038)	<.001	.369 (.048)	.369 (.039)	<.001	.503 (.045)	.505 (.039)	<.001
Idc*Polint	.125 (.095)	.054 (.041)	.188	.187 (.105)	.083 (.045)	.076	-.006 (.126)	-.003 (.056)	.961
Constant - Model 2	-.001 (.043)		.980	-.002 (.043)		.969	0 (.041)		.998
R² - Model 2	23.9% (.037)		<.001	17.9% (.036)		<.001	25.9% (.038)		<.001

Table 22. Multivariate regression predicting participation from agenda congruence, political interest, and their interaction (Model 1), as well as ideological congruence, political interest, and their interaction (Model 2).

The ideological congruence measure has a conditional positive effect on traditional participation (holding political interest constant at its mean). This result, however, does not hold for the other two dependent variables, indicating partial support for Hypothesis 2b. Hypothesis 2c is completely rejected due to no significant corresponding interaction effects, meaning that ideological congruence does not moderate the relationship between political interest and participation in this sample. Moreover, agenda congruence's predictive 'behavior' is similar to that observed in previous models with a negative conditional effect on traditional and online participation (the latter being weaker at $p=.048$) and none on voting, resulting in the rejection of H1b. Agenda congruence does, however, appear to moderate the relationship between political interest and traditional

participation... but (unsurprisingly) it does so in a negative direction. Coupled with the customary null regarding the other two DVs, I conclude no support for Hypothesis 1c in this dataset.

	Voting			Participation			Online participation		
	b	β	p	b	β	p	b	β	p
Agenda congruence	-.078 (.161)	-.023 (.047)	.628	-.420 (.167)	-.118 (.047)	.012	-.256 (.173)	-.076 (.052)	.140
Ideological congruence	-.215 (.144)	-.094 (.063)	.135	.520 (.119)	.223 (.045)	<.001	.065 (.118)	.029 (.053)	.583
Political interest	.287 (.069)	.298 (.071)	<.001	.287 (.045)	.291 (.045)	<.001	.339 (.053)	.362 (.053)	<.001
Idc*Polint	-	-	-	.166 (.083)	.075 (.036)	.040	-	-	-
Ideological intensity	-	-	-	.045 (.018)	.135 (.050)	.010	.035 (.014)	.109 (.042)	.010
Political efficacy	.247 (.068)	.245 (.069)	<.001	-	-	-	-	-	-
Ingroup preference	-.064 (.028)	-.150 (.065)	.022	-	-	-	-	-	-
Social networks	-	-	-	.069 (.031)	.070 (.031)	.028	-	-	-
Education	.091 (.036)	.108 (.042)	.011	-.024 (.036)	-.028 (.042)	.510	-.061 (.032)	-.082 (.041)	.046
SES	.011 (.048)	.011 (.048)	.813	.162 (.059)	.159 (.053)	.006	.048 (.049)	.050 (.051)	.327
Constant	.017 (.056)		.756	.061 (.062)		.321	.036 (.053)		.497
R²	23.8% (.035)			24.1% (.038)			25.7% (.030)		

Table 23. Multivariate regression predicting all three forms of participation.

In the models presented in Table 23, agenda congruence is either a negative (traditional participation) or a non-significant predictor (the other two dependent variables), disconfirming Hypothesis 1b right off the bat. Hypothesis 1c is in a similar boat because the interaction term was dropped due to non-significance. Regarding

ideological congruence, we may observe only one significant, albeit important result: traditional participation increases by .520 units for each unit increase in ideological congruence, controlling for all other variables in the model at 0 (their mean in most cases). The other two coefficients pertaining to ideological congruence are, however, not statistically significant, resulting in weak partial support for Hypothesis 2b. H2c's case is very similar due to only one significant positive interaction term between ideological congruence and political interest (once again, when predicting traditional participation), indicating weak partial support for this hypothesis.

Regarding the results pertaining to variables other than those included in my key hypotheses, education's direct positive effect on voting, coupled with no effect on traditional participation and negative impact on its online counterpart indicates weak partial support for H3a. Improved data availability also enabled me to test all other parts of Hypothesis 3. However, only one mediation effect proved significant: that of socioeconomic status between education and traditional participation ($\beta = .038$, $SE = .015$, $p = .012$). All the rest were non-significant, leading to the rejection of H3b-e (with weak partial support for H3e). SES's direct impact is only present in the model with traditional participation as the DV, meaning weak partial confirmation for H4a. Hypothesis 4b, on the other hand, is completely rejected due to lack of mediation by political interest between SES and participation. Controls not presented in the table above include gender (non-significant throughout) and age (significant in two models, for voting $\beta = .204$, $SE = .042$, $p < .001$; and online participation $\beta = -.115$, $SE = .037$, $p = .001$). In addition, race was also added to all models in the form of dummy variables, using the most frequent White as the comparison group. These variables produced a significant effect in three

cases only: Asians appear less likely to vote and participate online than Whites; while Hispanics are less likely to participate in traditional forms. Other interesting results include the positive effect of ideological intensity on both traditional and online participation, that of politicized social networks on traditional participation, and that of political efficacy only on voting. And finally, those who favor their own ingroup over outgroups more strongly are less likely to vote, at least in this sample.

CHAPTER 5. SUMMARY, DISCUSSION, AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

This chapter consists of three sections. The first I will dedicate to the summary of the results reported above, starting with an overview and discussion of all hypotheses tested, and followed by a detailed presentation of the hypotheses involving ideological congruence. The second section is centered on two related topics: my dissertation's limitations, and my recommendations along with directions for future research. I will conclude by briefly reviewing the potential ramifications of the results found – especially regarding representation – in an attempt to answer the ‘so what’ question.

1. Summary and Discussion of Hypothesis Testing

H	Variable(s)	Prediction	Testing outcome
1a	Agenda congruence	positive r	Reject
1b	Agenda congruence	positive β	Reject
1c	Agenda congruence * Political interest	positive β	Reject
2a	Ideological congruence	positive r	retain for participation, reject for voting
2b	Ideological congruence	positive β	retain for participation, reject for voting
2c	Ideological congruence * Political interest	positive β	Reject
3a	Education	non-significant β	Reject
3b	Education --> Political interest	positive β	retain (partial support)
3c	Education --> Political knowledge	positive β	retain (partial support)
3d	Education --> Social networks	positive β	retain (partial support)
3e	Education --> SES	positive β	retain (partial support)
4a	Socio-economic status	positive β	retain (partial support)
4b	SES --> Political interest	positive β	Reject

Table 24. Hypothesis testing summary.

For purposes of the following explanation I will rely on simple acronyms to reference the datasets presented in corresponding sections of this dissertation. Most of these simply follow the original names, while ‘Ps1’ and ‘Ps2’ stand for the two rounds using the Political Science Experimental Participant Pool (PSEPP), and ‘Twin’ for the Minnesota Twins Political Survey. Not all datasets were created equal, however, as WVS for example represents five models while Twin, Ps1, Ps2 and MTurk only one; a fact that has to and will be accounted for during the final decision regarding my hypotheses.

H1a: *Positive linear relationship between agenda congruence and political participation.* The testing of this as well as other hypotheses involving agenda congruence was only possible in four datasets, my own three and Twin, findings derived from the latter being of dubious relevance due to the questionable validity of the measure they were based on. In the case of the particular hypothesis, however, this made no difference as I found no support for it (the relationship being either negative or null) in any of the models, resulting in its clear **rejection**.

H1b: *Agenda congruence has a significant positive conditional/main effect in multivariate models predicting political participation.* After H1a it is not surprising that this hypothesis received no support at all (with the exception of voting in the Ps2 sample), prompting its complete **rejection**.

H1c: *Agenda congruence moderates the relationship between political interest and participation in multivariate models (positive β).* Similarly, this hypothesis also received no support in the four datasets where its testing was possible. In some, agenda congruence did moderate the relationship, but with a negative sign (e.g. Twin voting, Ps1 participation and online). Thus, I **reject** it along with the other two.

The rejection of H1a-c raises the question: did I find no corroboration due to faulty theory or bad measurement? And can we draw this conclusion based on the results presented? Starting with theory, there are at least two ways agenda congruence may exert an influence on participation. The first may be termed ‘debilitating agenda incongruence’: if one notices that the ruling elite focuses on, from their perspective, ‘the wrong’ issues, one may decide not to participate. After all, agenda is a form of representation. If I feel like most politicians deal with topics I do not find important, my

incentive to participate is diminished. This is the avenue I built my reasoning around in chapter one.

However, there is another way through what we may call ‘facilitating agenda incongruence’, which can work in the exact opposite direction. The mindset behind it can be summarized as: since the current elite does not represent my agenda, let’s contribute to put someone in office that does. For individuals who accept this line of reasoning and perceive it as a realistic possibility, incongruence may lead to higher, rather than lower, participation. It may have been the case, for example, in the most recent Presidential election where a lot of people felt that Donald Trump (and even Bernie Sanders) was addressing issues the rest of the elite was not.

Lastly, it is possible that the difference between which avenue affects whom is not incidental, but dependent on another variable. My proposed candidate is political interest. To advance this argument, let us first consider the samples where testing of these hypotheses was possible. Above (p. 57-58.) I already noted that Twin results are unreliable for a number of reasons. This leaves Ps1, Ps2 and MTurk. The key question is: was the level of political interest observed in these samples representative of that in the general population? The logical reference point is the U.S. section of the largest N representative sample, WVS. In this sample, 57.3% of participants selected the ‘somewhat interested’ or ‘very interested’ answer options out of the four associated with the political interest item. The skewness of the political interest factor (-0.23) suggests similar, moderately above average levels. In this light the corresponding numbers from the sets presented in chapter four are very telling: 87.3% and -.50 in Ps1, 86.3% and -.33

in Ps2 and 86.3% and -.18 in MTurk, respectively.³⁰ Thus, we can conclude that the interest level in these three datasets is generally much higher than in the general population. But what does it mean for agenda congruence?

For those low in political interest, agenda incongruence may have no effect on participation. If an individual is alienated from politics or completely uninterested in it, they will not be likely to go to a rally or participate in a campaign just because their agenda congruence increases somewhat. For those with moderate, and especially high levels of political interest, the effect may be different. If interest is coupled with feeling like their agenda is not represented, it is possible that they will be prone to facilitating incongruence. And if a candidate comes along who finally offers them the chance to be represented, it is logical that they will be more likely participate in support of that candidate. Thus, it is possible that the facilitating effect of agenda incongruence was simply stronger in the samples I used due to high general levels of political interest. Being a firm believer in the importance of negative results, I would be happy to content myself with having shown where not to look. In this case, however, the negative result potentially reveals an even more interesting pattern, although one that has to be thoroughly tested before being accepted as something other than an artifact.

H2a: *Positive linear relationship between ideological congruence and political participation.*

H2b: *Ideological congruence has a significant positive conditional/main effect in multivariate models predicting political participation.*

³⁰ This also shows that computing factor scores using multiple items helped obtain closer to normal variables than the original single items.

H2c: *Ideological congruence moderates the relationship between political interest and participation in multivariate models (positive β).*

These three are the most important hypotheses of my entire dissertation given that they were tested in every dataset and represent my main contribution to existing scholarship. I will present and discuss them in a separate table below so as to provide more information and a better chance for a sophisticated evaluation and informed judgment. For now, let me just state my final decision, which is to **retain H2a and H2b for participation**, while simultaneously **rejecting** these two for the **other DVs**, and **H2c** altogether.

H3a: *Education has NO significant positive direct main effect in multivariate models predicting political participation.* The hypothesized null result was rather bold considering the well-established and oft-replicated relationship between education and participation outlined in chapter one. My reasoning relied on the theoretical possibility that education only acts through other variables (represented by mediation effects) with no variance left over to be explained by its direct effect once all these have been taken into account. It did receive some support as I found this to be the case when predicting participation in the Ps1, Ps2 and MTurk datasets, as well as online participation in another two. In all the other sets, however, I found a significant positive conditional effect. Thus, the only possible decision is to **reject** H3a and conclude that education does have a direct positive main effect on participation when accounting for mediation effects. I maintain, however, that there are valid reasons not to retract my original reasoning presented in chapter one and accept this result without question. To bring with, recall the original formulation, which entailed that the null hypothesized in H3a should only stand

where I can measure all the indirect paths since inability to do so opens the door for an indirect relationship ‘masquerading’ as a direct one. This was only the case in my own datasets, where the hypothesis was corroborated, although the inherent weakness of this variable (especially in Ps1 and Ps2, consisting entirely of college students) prevents far-reaching conclusions. Nevertheless, the fact that H3a was supported in these sets despite little variance may be taken as an encouraging sign. If it worked in these conditions, full mediation may be more likely to work in more representative datasets, provided that all mediation effects are accounted for. At the very least, we cannot rule out this possibility until it is properly tested and replicated.

The effect of education on political participation is mediated by political interest (H3b), political knowledge (H3c), social networks (H3d) and socioeconomic status (H3e) in multivariate models. **H3b** received support in nine models: ANES voting and participation, Twin voting, as well as in six out of ten WVS models. At the same time, it was rejected in the other four WVS models, Twin participation, and all of my own datasets. However, considering the relative validity of the measure used in these sets and the comparatively low predictive power of the four WVS models where the hypothesis was rejected (signaling potential problems with the DV and/or other relationships), I will **retain H3b** with **partial support**. **Hypothesis 3c** is hard to call due to the absence of political knowledge in most models. In MTurk it received no support at all – a finding perhaps related to no direct impact of political knowledge, which may be connected to the significantly higher than average knowledge level of Turkers, as indicated by the skewness of -1.108 on the factor score and 58% of participants’ correct answers to all four questions. Furthermore, the null result is in stark contrast with the full support this

hypothesis garnered in the Twin dataset. Considering these factors, I decided to **retain** it, albeit **conditionally**. **H3d**'s situation is similar: not tested in most, retained in the Twin dataset but no support in Murk, Ps1 and Ps2. If we take the latter two out of the equation for the reasons outlined above, we are in the same situation as with the previous hypothesis, which prompts the same decision, **conditional retention**. The case with **H3e** is also mixed as a result of full support in ANES and Twin, partial in WVS (seven models) and MTurk (only participation), and none in MTurk voting and online, as well as Twin, Ps1 and Ps2. Because the datasets where it is supported have better general characteristics, my decision is to **conditionally retain** H3e.

H4a: *Socio-economic status has a significant positive direct main effect in multivariate models predicting political participation.* The findings related to this hypothesis are rather mixed with full support in ANES and Twin, partial support in WVS (six models), and MTurk (only participation), and none at all in Ps1 and Ps2. Due to the representativeness and sheer number of those in the first category, my verdict is to **retain** it.

H4b: *The effect of socio-economic status on political participation is mediated by political interest.* This hypothesis received full support in the Twin dataset but no support at all in any of the others where its testing was possible. Hence the only possible decision: **reject**.

Recognizing the importance of H2a-c, I will continue with a second summary table whose main purpose is to provide a sophisticated overview of the corresponding results, while also highlighting some key characteristics of each sample in order to aid interpretation and support the final decision regarding these hypotheses.

Dataset	DV	Idc r	Idc β	Idc * Polint	Final model R ²	N	Sample	
ANES	Voting	.044 (p=.116)	.010 (p=.657)	.024 (p=.305)	40.3%	1315	Representative for age, education, gender, race, U.S. region.	
	Part	.068 (p=.015)	.040 (p=.083)	.029 (p=.239)	42.1%			
DPT - U.S.	Voting	-.203 (p<.001)	-.099 (p=.055)	.061 (p=.214)	15.1%	361	Representative only for gender (mostly white college students in intro level political science courses).	
	Part	-.164 (p=.004)	.010 (p=.828)	-.014 (p=.727)	44.8%			
DPT - H.U.	Voting	.196 (p=.026)	.159 (p=.098)	.099 (p=.422)	4%	161		
	Part	.155 (p=.062)	.004 (p=.959)	-.016 (p=.774)	50.6%			
DPT - D.K.	Voting	-.023 (p=.791)	.074 (p=.058)	-.115 (p=.077)	.9%	168		
	Part	.016 (p=.843)	-.101 (p=.267)	.017 (p=.911)	36.3%			
Twins	Voting	.025 (p=.547)	.024 (p=.385)	.032 (p=.393)	19%	1349		Representative enough for education. Otherwise white, mostly males between 55-63.
	Part	.127 (p<.001)	.072 (p=.007), 7 th	.054 (p=.021), 11 th	35.8%			
WVS - Germany	Voting	.171 (p<.001)	.059 (p=.018), 8 th	-.050 (p=.061)	23.6%	2046	Representative for age, education, gender, region, and race where applicable (no data on race in Japan and Slovenia, very little variance in Germany).	
	Part	.273 (p<.001)	.052 (p=.046), 11 th	.026 (p=.252)	31.3%			
WVS - Japan	Voting	.091 (p<.001)	.057 (p=.035), 7 th	-.034 (p=.075)	21.9%	2443		
	Part	.219 (p<.001)	.101 (p<.001), 4 th	.027 (p=.150)	14.8%			
WVS - Slovenia	Voting	-.030 (p=.320)	.015 (p=.629)	.027 (p=.367)	14.7%	1068		
	Part	.221 (p<.001)	.027 (p=.354)	-.021 (p=.435)	24.5%			

WVS - South Africa	Voting	-.038 (p=.034)	-.004 (p=.814)	.058 (p=.001), 8th	20.9%	3531		
	Part	.136 (p<.001)	.134 (p<.001), 3rd	-.032 (p=.033), 13th	26.8%			
WVS - U. S.	Voting	.234 (p<.001)	-.009 (p=.721)	-.016 (p=.453)	35.5%	2332		
	Part	.173 (p<.001)	.059 (p=.014), 10th	.017 (p=.394)	32.6%			
PSEPP 1	Voting	.003 (p=.965)	-.003 (p=.963)	-.006 (p=.941)	12.7%	181		Representative only for gender (mostly white college students in intro level political science courses at UNL).
	Part	-.182 (p=.023)	-.061 (p=.250)	.055 (p=.313)	45.7%			
	Online	-.187 (p=.020)	-.167 (p=.015)	-.002 (p=.975)	51.9%			
PSEPP 2	Voting	.111 (p=.191)	.217 (p=.016), 2nd	-.030 (p=.672)	27.4%	140	Representative only for gender (mostly white college students in intro level political science courses at UNL).	
	Part	-.042 (p=.312)	.064 (p=.336)	-.184 (p=.002)	47.9%			
	Online	-.186 (p=.027)	-.043 (p=.576)	-.324 (p<.001)	45.5%			
MTurk	Voting	.012 (p=.816)	-.094 (p=.135)	.021 (p=.353)	23.8%	402	Representative for gender, reasonably close for age and race. Very liberal-leaning.	
	Part	.207 (p<.001)	.223 (p<.001), 2nd	.075 (p=.040), 6th	24.1%			
	Online	.053 (p=.290)	.029 (p=.583)	-.005 (p=.943)	25.7%			

Table 25. Summary of the relationship between ideological congruence and participation in each sample, as well as key sample characteristics. The ranks following β weights indicate the particular variable's ranking in the 'pecking order' of significant predictors.

The positive bivariate linear relationship between traditional means of participation and ideological congruence appears reasonably well-established with confirmation in ANES, all WVS models, as well as Twin and MTurk. Hypothesis 2a is, however, rejected

in the three DPT samples (with a negative coefficient in the U.S. and a positive one approaching significance in Hungary), Ps1 and Ps2. At first glance, the multivariate counterparts of these results appear rather mixed: the positive relationship remained significant in Twin (7th strongest predictor), WVS Germany (11th), WVS Japan (4th), WVS U.S. (10th), WVS South Africa (3rd) and MTurk (2nd); but non-significant in an almost equal number of datasets: ANES (despite a favorable bivariate relationship, although it does approach significance here as well), all three DPT sets, WVS Slovenia, Ps1 and Ps2.

Upon closer investigation, these results reveal a curious pattern: the relationship seems to hold in all but one of the representative datasets, and does not in the non-representative ones. Furthermore, as noted in chapter three, while ANES contained a good participation battery, the ideology coverage provided by the items available was suboptimal. DPT's situation was the opposite: here very good ideological coverage was paired with a weak participation battery (limited to four binary items). Ps1 and Ps2 represent special cases in a number of ways. Most notably, they consisted of young and predominantly white, Midwestern college students. Moreover, as I showed on page 111, their level of political interest proved significantly higher than that of the general population. And lastly, their traditional participation was significantly lower as noted in chapter three, most likely due to their age (but perhaps also their position in life). These characteristics call into question the validity of the results derived from the datasets affected, which in turn serves to corroborate the support for Hypothesis 2b confirmed in the case of traditional participation.

Regarding the moderating effect of ideological congruence on the relationship between political interest and traditional participation (H2c), the conclusion is different. This hypothesis is retained only in two models, Twin (11th in the ranking of all predictors) and MTurk (6th). In the rest of the thirteen models run, it was rejected due to a null finding or significant negative relationship (Ps2 and WVS South Africa). Under this weight of empirical evidence, the only logical conclusion is to reject H2c and accept that, overall, ideological congruence does not moderate the relationship between traditional participation and its strongest predictor (political interest).³¹

In the case of voting, the results are clear mostly due to this dependent variable's positive bivariate (linear) relationship with ideological congruence present in only four models: DPT in Hungary and WVS in Germany, Japan, and in the U.S. In the other nine datasets, the null prevailed. Furthermore, only two of the four relationships mentioned above remained significant in multivariate models with all the controls included: WVS Germany (the 8th strongest predictor) and Japan (7th).³² The picture is even clearer with respect to the hypothesized moderation effect as it is confirmed in only one dataset (WVS South Africa). In sum, ideological congruence does not play a role in predicting voting, nor does it moderate the effect of political interest on this key form of participation.

Online participation paints a similarly uncomplicated picture. The corresponding hypotheses were only testable in the three datasets specifically designed for this project. However, it fell through in each of those, with no significant bivariate, multivariate, or

³¹ This conclusion remains the same after accounting for the above described interest effects.

³² Although for fairness's sake I have to mention that an additional model 'caught up', Ps2 (2nd strongest predictor). This result is, however, more than questionable in light of the non-significant corresponding bivariate relationship and the sample's limitations detailed above.

moderating effect in most; coupled with a negative main in Ps1, and a negative moderator effect in Ps1 and Ps2. Taking into account these results it is reasonably safe to conclude that there is no relationship between online participation and ideological congruence.

A potential Achilles' heel of most social scientific investigations is determining the direction of causality. My results and design – lacking the possibility to establish temporal precedence and guarantee the absence of alternative causal explanations – do not allow for direct causal argumentation. It is entirely possible that instead of ideological congruence leading to more frequent (traditional) participatory behavior, those who participate less retroactively report less congruence in order to rationalize their actions. This possibility is particularly realistic with respect to self-reported congruence measures. I do believe, however, that the construction of my factor-based ideological congruence measure alleviates most of these concerns. It is, after all, entirely based on ideology items (seemingly unrelated to congruence) where participants are most likely not in the position to guess how those items will be used to tap a different construct, congruence.

And finally (but still connected to the issue of causality), I have not yet accounted for the fact that feeling misrepresented may work in a direction opposite to what I theorized and similarly to the argument outlined for agenda congruence on page 111. While I maintain that it makes sense to assume that those who do not feel represented by the political system and its various agents choose to participate less in said system, we cannot rule out the possibility that it may have the exact opposite effect on some people. One purpose of political participation is, after all, to change things. If I don't feel represented by current politicians, one thing I can do is work to put someone else in office. If viable, I would expect this line of reasoning to apply more to voting, at least in

certain pluralist polities (where the ‘lesser of two evils’ approach applies more), partially depending on the realistic outcomes. After all, in 2016 Americans did elect arguably the least ideological candidate in recent history. If we found a way to control for this difference in intention, we may be able to gain a better insight into the mechanics of participation and thus a chance to better understand this behavior of key importance.

2. General Limitations and Directions for Future Research

My first recommendation to scholars studying political **participation** is to measure this construct with scales, not binary items. About ten of these variables – if selected appropriately – appear rather easily convertible to a single, well-behaved participation factor, which appears to provide significantly better coverage of the underlying behaviors and thus more believable and higher quality results. I find the same argument – further corroborated by the R^2 of models where this approach was possible – valid in the case of voting: four scaled (1-4 or 1-5) variables seem superior to one binary item.

Furthermore, I advise students of politics pay attention to non-institutional components of participation and include some in your surveys and models. At first, my intention was to treat variables pertaining to these forms as part of a related but conceptually different factor. Empirical reality, however, invalidated this approach: the institutional and non-institutional factors were too closely correlated in most models (with an r above .91 in Ps1, Ps2, and MTurk). However, this does not necessarily indicate no potential, especially if we recall the sample characteristics of these datasets. In the only representative sample where I tested it – ANES – the correlation between institutional and non-institutional forms of participation was .823; strong but not a convincing indicator of too close relatedness. Another relevant clue is the negative

relationship between trust in non-political institutions and participation reported in section two of chapter three. For example, it does not seem too far-fetched to hypothesize that those with high interest and low ideological congruence (or other factors contributing to their relative disappointment in the political establishment) may be more likely to turn to non-institutional forms if they feel that these provide a viable alternative. The strongest specific variable candidates I would consider based on the results presented in this dissertation are: [How often have you in the past 12 months] “donated a significant amount of your time and/or money to a grassroots organization (not aligned with an existing party”, “attended a demonstration or protest”, and “signed a political/social petition”. At the very least, these may help gain broader coverage of participation or aid the quest for uncovering different relationships and underlying predictive structures.

Furthermore, I also recommend adding a few online participation variables. My core hypotheses are not supported work in corresponding models, but their R^2 s are nevertheless encouraging. In these models, online participation items seem to tap an aspect of participation related but not analogous with the above two forms commonly used as dependent variables. Furthermore, they show interesting differences with regards to their predictors and mediation relationships; not to mention the likely increase in importance of these forms as the virtual environment continues to gain more and more ground in politics.

One final fact related to participation that has to be accounted for is that the proportion of variance explained appears to be generally lower in the case of voting compared with other forms of participation. A closer look reveals that the most likely reasons for this were measurement and sample. The former’s faulty nature in Ps1 and Ps2

I discussed in the corresponding sections. In addition, these as well as the other two with a very low R^2 (DPT Hungary and Denmark) were college student samples, three collected at UNL. In representative datasets there does not appear to be a significant difference between the predictive power of voting models compared with the rest.

Regarding **political interest**, my recommendation is simple: always make sure to have a good battery (at least about 4-5 items including a direct measure in addition to subjective evaluation of and feeling toward politics) available and use the resulting factor scores to test mediation effects. This approach has the potential to reveal findings that would otherwise remain hidden from view as several variables seem to act through political interest, occasionally even when in themselves they boast no direct impact on participation.

Scientific fairness compels me to suggest not including **agenda**, or at least not doing so the exact same way I did. Nevertheless, the analysis of my results reveals potentially very interesting avenues for future research. For example, my congruence measure ignored the fact that absolute values cannot reflect: the difference between attributing more or less personal importance to certain issues compared to that perceived by the political elite. This difference may play a role in predicting participation or other political behaviors. Furthermore, we may arrive at intriguing conclusions through tracking the stability of personal agenda through longitudinal studies; or by observing how personal agenda shrinks or expands based on external circumstances with possible consequences regarding congruence (Imagine, for example, what the corresponding results would have looked like during or after the Great Depression, 9/11, or the Second World War with a lot of attention focused on a small set of issues). Still related to agenda

in itself, is it possible that there are groups who think in a 1-factor framework while others consistently consider a certain group of political issues important and others not so much? And perhaps more interestingly, do people with different ideological leanings and/or partisan identities have different agendas?

My suggestions with respect to **ideological congruence** follow a different course of reasoning. Ideology's key role in politically relevant investigations results in its very frequent measurement. I believe that the arguments I put forward in chapter one, further substantiated by the results reported in chapters three and four, lend adequate support to my recommendation to use the 42-item battery reported here to measure this latent variable, as opposed to shorter alternatives (especially simple self-placement). As a related remark (first encountered as a comment by my participants) I suggest considering the inclusion of an additional, 'not sure' answer option for each ideology item. This may help ensure that middle responses reflect real middle-of-the-road (and not simply uncertain) attitudes, potentially increasing the validity and power of this measure. This sidenote aside, a six-factor structure seems to capture ideology much better than any other, in my opinion warranting the extra space necessary to successfully implement this approach. Once all the items are available, constructing an ideological congruence measure the way I outlined in chapter two is a reasonably simple process. We have seen how this variable plays an independent role in predicting traditional participation. Thus, I see no reason not to include ideological congruence in models predicting participation, especially since it is my hope that future scholarship will measure ideology with scales capable of picking up on this construct's complexity. For traditional forms of participation, it is a predictor on its own right. For the other two forms, as of now, I can

only say it may serve as a control, although considering all the above I cannot rule out that replication may find different results with respect to voting and online participation in more representative adult samples. One additional direction for future research is tackling the other side of ideological congruence more directly. Instead of assuming the unidimensionality of the elite's ideology, we could tackle it directly. On the other hand, it would be interesting to see if individuals who perceive the elite as unidimensional participate more or less than others.

Other studied variables, such as education, socio-economic status, age, race, and gender, will likely always be included in relevant surveys regardless of my findings. My modest potential addition to well-established corresponding research avenues is directing more attention to mediation. While the jury is still out on whether political interest, knowledge, social networks and SES indeed mediate the relationship between education and participation, I believe my results create 'reasonable doubt'. It is debatable whether education exerts an influence on participation only through these variables (as signaled by the rejection of H3a), and some mediation effects reached a β considerable enough to warrant further investigation. Moreover, it seems reasonable that individuals' ideological or agenda congruence with elites might increase as education increases and they are introduced to the "popular" or "elite" ways of thinking about issues. This would fit with the idea that people who are more politically knowledgeable tend to be more ideologically extreme. Conversely, one could also make the argument that more education leads people to have the ability to think about issues in a more complex, multidimensional fashion. Based on my results, it is justified to say that these competing hypotheses provide potentially fruitful avenues for future research.

Among **variables not included** but worth considering, those pertaining to different aspects of the political system and environment at large emerge as potentially very important. Previous research has identified several variables in this category associated with various forms of participation. The effect of registration on voter turnout, for instance, has been studied rather extensively (Citrin, Green, and Morris 2014; Jackman and Miller 1995; Rosenstone and Wolfinger 1978) in itself, as well as in combination with other variables such as education (Nagler 1991). Contact from political parties has also been established as an important (positive) predictor of voting and institutional participation both in person (Gerber and Green 2000) and online (Aldrich et al. 2015). Parties' mobilizing effect is a related and potentially important line of research (Robert Huckfeldt and Sprague 1992; Rosenstone and Hansen 1993). Other features of the political environment such as regime type (determining the variety of options available) and form of representation may also be worth taking into account. The general argument regarding the latter is that proportional systems allow for more parties, potentially more cleavages, and thus better representation than their majoritarian counterparts. In the terminology of this dissertation, proportional systems may act to reduce general levels of ideological (or agenda) incongruence. By this logic we could expect participant who agree that a successful and viable third party would be a necessary/useful addition to the political system of the United States to show lower levels of participation. While I was not able to use this variable in this dissertation, its simplicity and presence in many ANES datasets may warrant considerations regarding its inclusion. Nevertheless, whether this phenomenon actually works in practice is, however, widely debated (Bingham Powell 2009; Boix 1999; Clark 2006; Golder and Lloyd 2014; Golder and Stramski 2010;

Louwse 2012). One way to contribute to this debate is theoretically possible by using effective party number (Dunleavy and Boucek 2003; Taagepera and Grofman 1985; or the new version developed by Golosov 2015) as a variable in related models. The problem with this approach is that, as we have seen, different item-to-factor relationships and factor intercorrelations in different polities work against the possibility of direct comparison across substantially diverse regions. Thus it is up to future research to determine the relevance of the institutional constraints regarding the relationships tackled.

Despite the arguably well-established nature of the relationship between personality and political attitudes as well as behavior including participation, I did not include it in my own investigations. The reason was mostly pragmatic: adding a reasonably good personality battery would have pushed the number of items in my own survey beyond acceptable. I also have theoretical qualms with the dominance the Big Five theory of personality has achieved in recent years. Nevertheless, it seems highly likely that in some form, personality matters for politics. The basic picture (Graham, Haidt, and Nosek 2009; Hibbing et al. 2014; Hibbing, Smith, and Alford 2013; Mondak et al. 2010; Schwartz, Caprara, and Vecchione 2010) seems to be that ‘conservatives’ and ‘liberals’ have different moral foundations, personalities and different functioning regarding their core values. Less extensive but still significant literature has addressed the relationship between personality and participation directly (Bekkers 2005; Gallego and Oberski 2012; Gerber et al. 2011; Ha, Kim, and Jo 2013; Vecchione and Caprara 2009; Weinschenk 2014). The results vary by forms of participation studied and personality aspects accounted for. The most robust finding appears to be that Extraversion (and in some

special cases, Emotional Stability and Openness) is positively associated with various forms of participation (and Agreeableness with forms that involve conflict). The nature of this relationship, however, is unclear: some maintain that it works directly (Gallego and Oberski 2012), while others purport that it acts through attitudinal variables – such as political interest, political discussion, or civic duty (Vecchione and Caprara 2009; Weinschenk 2014). Based on this literature and the beta values in the corresponding results sections, I believe that including personality would not have altered the relationships in my hypotheses significantly. Nevertheless, it presents an intriguing direction of future research.

The past decade – roughly since the publication of Alford, Funk, and Hibbing's (2005) seminal article – has brought what could be called a major paradigm shift or at least 'paradigm addition' to political science. One of the serendipitous consequences of the emergence of the Biopolitics movement (although Charney (Charney and English 2012; Charney 2008) may disagree with me here in the unlikely event of ever reading my dissertation) is that no discussion or theory section can now be complete without at least addressing biological variables. A directly relevant subset of the literature has dealt with connecting various biological variables with participation from establishing the heritability of turnout (Fowler, Baker, and Dawes 2008) through connecting participation to specific genes (Fowler and Dawes 2008) to integrating genetic underpinnings into the general conceptual framework of analysis (Klemmensen et al. 2012; Verhulst 2012). Even more to the point, scholars (French et al. 2011; Gruszczyński et al. 2012) appear to have established a direct link between endocrinology and participation. Their research points to a hitherto ignored characteristic of political participation: it is stressful, which

may be differentially true for its different forms (Neiman et al. 2015; Waismel-Manor, Ifergane, and Cohen 2011). This is a very important finding for it holds the promise of illuminating part of the casual pathway between the variables listed above (such as negative evaluations of the political system, for example) and participation. It is possible that the stressfulness of politics keeps people away from some forms of participation through these avenues. The best way to test this effect would no doubt be a direct approach. Another potentially interesting direction for future research would be exploring the mediation effect of ideological congruence on the relationship between stress (measured by baseline cortisol, for example) to predict participation.

And finally, it would be interesting to observe these effects over time. If a party or candidate represents an alternative agenda and/or group of issues, they may bring in a lot of this ‘silent minority’, as some say happened in 2016. As agenda and ideological representation changes in the elite, their relationship with participation may follow suit.

3. Concluding Remarks

So what exactly have we learned? That if we ignore ideological congruence – as well as some interesting moderation and mediation effects – while studying political participation (although not necessarily its online form or voting), we risk missing important elements of the overall picture. Note that, even with the drop observed in models run using more representative data, the final R^2 values presented in Table 25 exceed the 31% reported by Plutzer (2002) and by far those mentioned by Matsusaka and Palda (1999), whose models’ predictive power for turnout does not exceed .207 even after the addition of past turnout.

But why is this important, going beyond the potential theoretical value that has to be verified by the long and unpredictable process of replication and convergence, at the end of which we may still be left with results only interesting to a small group of political scientist? My answer harks back to the same argument I used in chapter one with the important difference that it is now supported by empirical evidence. It seems my results provide strong enough evidence for stating that the discrepancy between the dimensionality of the elite's and the public's ideology (although not agenda) does have a negative effect on political participation. Participation is the cornerstone of the process of democratic representation. If it is unequal (based on SES or issue ownership, see Egan 2013; Schlozman, Verba, and Brady 2013), that poses serious questions regarding the functioning of the polity.

This underscores the importance of disseminating this information (especially if corroborated by future studies) due to social science's role in informing the public. The significance of this role should not be underestimated, empirically based results being the only thing standing in the way of public discourse based on mere speculation. In other words, if the current setup of political ideology has a detrimental impact on participation and thus representation, members of the electorate deserve to and need to know about it! Where they may take this knowledge is outside the scope of this dissertation. One possible avenue is using it as an argument for political reform such as transition toward a different system of representation or an entirely different, more issue-based political arrangement. Ideological congruence alone will obviously not suffice as a strong enough argument for such reform. At the same time, it may highlight an important, potentially systemic shortcoming that is surprising at first, but on deeper examination reveals an

important lesson about the consequences of political ideology – which, as shown, may not always be positive. Whatever course of action follows, however, it will invariably need to rest on solid evidence provided by the corresponding fields of social (in this case probably political) science. It is my hope that in this dissertation I managed to contribute a tiny piece to this evidence.

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Appendix – The survey as administered to participants of the MTurk sample

Politics in Focus - MTurk

Welcome to the Politics in Focus study! By participating you help us enhance our understanding of the public's opinion on political issues, their importance, and their connection to participation. The final goal is to contribute to a better understanding of the functioning of democracy. Thank you for helping us achieve that goal! Before we begin the survey, please read the consent form on the following page and let us know if you agree to participate in the study by clicking either "Yes" or "No" at the bottom of the page. If you agree to participate, all the information collected from you will be completely anonymous and confidential. You may also choose to discontinue the study at any time.

Consent

Do you consent to participate in a research by allowing us to use your data as indicated above?

- Yes
- No

In your own personal opinion, what are the three most important issues or problems in the United States right now?

Click to write Choice 1

Click to write Choice 2

Click to write Choice 3

Below you will find a list of political issues in contemporary America. Please indicate HOW IMPORTANT each one of these issues is TO YOU PERSONALLY. In other words, if it were up to you, how much would we as a society focus on dealing with them? -2 Extremely unimportant; -1 Unimportant; 0 Somewhat important; 1 Important, 2 Extremely important

	-2	-1	0	1	2
1. Marijuana legalization	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2. Racial equality	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
3. Climate change	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
4. Date rape	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
5. Media bias	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
6. The costs of college	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
7. Increasing welfare spending (social welfare)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
8. \${q://QID42/ChoiceTextEntryValue/3}	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
9. Wealth/income inequality	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
10. Internet addiction	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
11. Gun control	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
12. Crime rate/prison population	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
13. \${q://QID42/ChoiceTextEntryValue/1} ³³	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
14. Abortion	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
15. Homelessness	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
16. Fighting terrorism	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
17. \${q://QID42/ChoiceTextEntryValue/2}	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
18. Illegal immigration	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
19. Same-sex marriage	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
20. Government-arranged healthcare	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
21. Gender equality	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
22. Increased military spending	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
23. Obesity	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
24. National debt	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
25. Organic farming research	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
26. Please click one for this control question	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
27. Highway safety and design	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
28. Fraud and abuse in the insurance industry	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
29. Federal government's role in economic development	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
30. Tax code reform and simplification	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

³³ Piped text to indicate the first answer to the open-ended question above.

Below you find a similar list but this time regarding the current POLITICAL ELITE of the United States. How important do you think these issues are for them? How much do you think they CURRENTLY FOCUS on these issues (NOT how much they ought to)? -2 Extremely unimportant (they don't focus on it at all); -1 Unimportant (they don't focus on it); 0 Somewhat important; 1 Important (they focus on it), 2 Extremely important (much focus on it)

	-2	-1	0	1	2
1. Marijuana legalization	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2. Racial equality	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
3. Climate change	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
4. Date rape	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
5. Media bias	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
6. The costs of college	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
7. Increasing welfare spending (social welfare)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
8. \${q://QID42/ChoiceTextEntryValue/3}	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
9. Wealth/income inequality	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
10. Internet addiction	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
11. Gun control	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
12. Crime rate/prison population	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
13. \${q://QID42/ChoiceTextEntryValue/1}	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
14. Abortion	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
15. Homelessness	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
16. Fighting terrorism	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
17. \${q://QID42/ChoiceTextEntryValue/2}	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
18. Illegal immigration	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
19. Same-sex marriage	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
20. Government-arranged healthcare	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
21. Gender equality	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
22. Increased military spending	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
23. Obesity	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
24. National debt	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
25. Organic farming research	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
26. Highway safety and design	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
27. Fraud and abuse in the insurance industry	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
28. Federal government's role in economic development	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
29. Tax code reform and simplification	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Now we would like to ask you a few questions about your political views.

How interested are you in politics and public affairs?

- Not at all interested
- Not very interested
- Somewhat interested
- Very interested

Labels are often misleading but in general, do you see yourself as liberal, conservative or something in between?

- 1- Very Liberal
- 2 - Liberal
- 3 - Leaning Liberal
- 4 - In the middle
- 5 - Leaning Conservative
- 6 - Conservative
- 7 - Very Conservative

How well do you think this conservative-liberal dimension represents your own political views?

- Very well, I have no difficulty placing myself along the scale and it accurately represents my views (1)
- Reasonably well (2)
- Not too well (3)
- Not at all, the way I think about politics is entirely different (4)

Why? Please briefly explain your answer.

How well do you think this conservative-liberal dimension represents the political views of the ruling elite in the United States?

- Very well, I have no difficulty placing politicians along the scale and it represents their views (1)
- Reasonably well (2)
- Not too well (3)
- Not at all, the way politics works is entirely different (4)

Please indicate HOW YOU FEEL about each topic. - 3 Very strongly against it; -2 Strongly against it; -1 Against it; 0 Neutral (don't care); 1 Support it; 2 Strongly support it; 3 Very strongly support it

<p>13. Political leaders and institutions should recognize that the best way to stop crime is to improve social conditions.</p>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<p>14. Because diversity makes us stronger, it is best if people from other countries come to live in ours.</p>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<p>15. Same-sex marriage should be legal.</p>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<p>16. Our leaders should do their best to reduce the current level of wealth/income inequality.</p>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<p>17. Rehabilitation of criminals should be stressed over punishment.</p>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<p>18. Laws should restrict immigration by people who are not willing to adopt our values and language.</p>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

<p>28. International organizations (such as the United Nations) should never be allowed to have a say in the laws of our country.</p>	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
<p>29. Those serving jail time should be denied any comfort.</p>	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
<p>30. Our leaders and political institutions should see to it that every person has a job and a good standard of living.</p>	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
<p>31. Immigration from other countries should be kept to a minimum.</p>	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
<p>32. Political leaders should consult religious leaders for guidance.</p>	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
<p>33. Most (or all) forms of gun control are unacceptable.</p>	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

<p>34. We should just accept the fact that our leaders and political institutions will soon be involved in virtually every facet of our lives.</p>	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
<p>35. Leaders must recognize answers are never clear-cut, either-or.</p>	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
<p>36. Public policies should discourage sex outside of marriage.</p>	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
<p>37. Our leaders and political institutions should recognize that people are ultimately responsible for their own welfare.</p>	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
<p>38. Women should be able to have an abortion whenever they want to.</p>	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
<p>39. Racial equality should be our ideal.</p>	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

40. Leaders should deal with problems swiftly and with little debate.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
41. The government should do its best to eradicate homelessness.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
42. It is best if power is in the hands of a few.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

For each of the following, note how often you did it in the past two years. Have you in the past two years:

Think of all the Presidential elections you were old enough to vote in. How often have you voted in these?

- All elections
- Almost all elections
- A few elections
- Only one election
- None
- Wasn't old enough to vote yet.

Think of all the Congressional and Senate races you were old enough to vote in. How often have you voted in these?

- All elections
- Almost all elections
- A few elections
- Only one election
- None
- Wasn't old enough to vote yet.

Think of all the local races you were old enough to vote in. How often have you voted in these?

- All elections
- Almost all elections
- A few elections
- Only one election
- None
- Wasn't old enough to vote yet.

Do you think you will vote in the 2016 presidential election?

- Definitely
- Probably
- Maybe
- Certainly not

How do you feel about politics in general? In other words, when YOU think of politics, how does that make you feel?

- 3 (very negative)
- 2 (negative)
- 1 (slightly negative)
- 0 (neutral, they don't care)
- 1 (slightly positive)
- 2 (positive)
- 3 (very positive)

How do you think the majority of your FRIENDS feel about politics in general? In other words, when they think of politics, how does that make them feel?

- 3 (very negative)
- 2 (negative)
- 1 (slightly negative)
- 0 (neutral, they don't care)
- 1 (slightly positive)
- 2 (positive)
- 3 (very positive)

How do you think the majority of your FAMILY MEMBERS feel about politics in general? In other words, when they think of politics, how does that make them feel?

- 3 (very negative)
- 2 (negative)
- 1 (slightly negative)
- 0 (neutral, they don't care)
- 1 (slightly positive)
- 2 (positive)
- 3 (very positive)

During the time you were growing up, how often did you and your family members discuss politics and public affairs?

- Never
- Less than once a month
- 1-4 times a month
- 2-4 times a week
- Daily

How often do you have discussions about politics with ...?

	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	All the time
your friends?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
your family members?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
other acquaintances (colleagues, etc.)?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
strangers?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

When it comes to politics, do you and your think alike regarding your policy and party preferences?

	All of them think like me	Most of them think like me	Some of them think like me	Few of them think like me	None of them think like me
your friends?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
your family members?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
other acquaintances (colleagues, etc.)?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Do you consider yourself a Democrat, a Republican, an Independent or something else?

- Democrat (1)
- Independent leaning Democrat (2)
- Independent (3)
- Independent leaning Republican (4)
- Republican (5)
- Other _____

How much do you agree with the following statements?

	Fully agree	Agree	Disagree	Fully disagree
It is every citizen's civic duty to vote.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Politics is boring.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I'd be more politically engaged but I feel like what I do doesn't make a difference.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I feel strongly about politics.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
It is exciting to follow and take part in politics.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
It is every citizen's civic duty to actively try to influence societal decisions.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The political participation of the average individual does not make a difference.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I find it highly entertaining to follow and take part in politics.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Politics is very important to me.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Please indicate how much you trust the following institutions

	Not at all	A little	Somewhat	Quite a bit	Very much
House	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Senate	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Presidency	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Supreme Court	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
IRS	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
State Department	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The Military	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Political Media	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Political Parties	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The Police	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Who has the final responsibility to decide if a law is constitutional or not?

- The President
- Congress
- The Supreme Court
- Another institution

Whose responsibility is it to nominate judges to the Federal Courts?

- The President
- Congress
- The Supreme Court
- Another institution

How much of a majority is required for the U.S. Senate and House to override a presidential veto?

- A bare majority of 50% plus one
- Two-thirds majority (67% more more)
- Three-fourths majority (75% or more)
- Not sure

What is the main duty of the U.S. Congress?

- To write laws
- To administer the President's policies
- To supervise States' governments
- Not sure

In this block please answer some questions about yourself.

Is English your first language?

- yes
- no

Is the level of your English reasonably close or equivalent to that of a native speaker?

- yes
- no

How many close friends do you have? (Drop-down 1-6)

How many people in your life would you call friends or relatively close acquaintances?
(Drop-down 1- more than 10)

Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with each of the following statements.

	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I enjoy taking a leadership role in my peer groups.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I don't like to be in charge but I am a good group member.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I'd rather follow than lead.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I only like to be in charge when I'm absolutely sure I have the necessary knowledge to lead.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am the first one to organize.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am comfortable with a leadership role.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

How satisfied are you with your life in general? (1 Completely dissatisfied – 10 – Completely satisfied)

In general, how happy do you consider yourself?

- Very happy
- Happy
- Not very happy
- Not at all happy

Are you male or female?

- Male
- Female

How old are you (in years)? (18-90).

What race or races do you consider yourself?

- American Indian/Native American
- Asian/Pacific Islander
- African American/Black
- Hispanic/Latino/Latina/Chicano/Chicana
- White/Caucasian
- Other

Do you have any friends or relatives who you know to be gay, lesbian, bisexual, or transgender?

- Yes
- No

How often do you attend religious services?

- Never
- Less than once a week
- Once a week
- 2-3 times a week
- More than 3 times a week

How much do you rely on your religion for guidance in your everyday life?

- Very frequently
- Quite a lot
- Not too much
- Not at all

Please indicate in which category your family annual income currently falls.

- Below \$20,000 (1)
- \$20,000 to \$40,000 (2)
- \$40,001 to \$60,000 (3)
- \$60,001 to \$80,000 (4)
- \$80,001 to \$100,000 (5)
- Over \$100,000 (6)

Economically what do you consider yourself?

- Upper class
- Upper middle class
- Middle class
- Lower middle class
- Lower class

What is the highest level of education you have obtained?

- Some high school
- Graduated high school
- Some college
- Bachelor's degree
- Some graduate school
- Master's degree
- Professional or Doctorate degree

How would you rate job or CURRENT occupation's social recognition (respect, status)?

- Very good
- Good
- Fair
- Poor
- Very Poor

How would you rate your job or CURRENT occupation's pay?

- Very good
- Good
- Fair
- Poor
- Very Poor

How would you describe your personal finances?

- Wealthy
- Comfortable
- Acceptable
- Just getting by
- Poor

It would greatly aid our process of scale development if you could indicate any questions or comments you have regarding the whole survey or any specific part of it. Please do so below:

Thank you for taking part in this study. Your validation code for MTurk is _____. To receive payment for participating, click "Accept HIT" in the Mechanical Turk window, enter this validation code, then click "Submit". Please press on the continue button >>> one more time