

ABSTRACT

Civic Engagement: Comparing the Effect of Political Identity and Socioeconomic Status

Rachel E.M. Johnson, M.A.

Mentor: Carson Mencken, Ph.D.

It was noted this past midterm cycle that the Democratic Party was more politically active than their counterparts in the Republican Party. Expanding to civic engagement, will this trend continue? Furthermore, will socioeconomic status be a significant factor when analyzing partisan community involvement? Utilizing ordinary least squares regression models and the American National Election Studies (ANES) 2020 study, it was found overall that socioeconomic status does influence the three identified types of civic engagement and reduces the effect political party affiliation has on civic engagement. Socioeconomic status is found to be a significant factor in predicting civic engagement behaviors especially for members of the Democratic Party.

Civic Engagement: Comparing the Effect of Political Party Affiliation and Socioeconomic Status

by

Rachel E.M. Johnson, B.A., M.A.

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Carson Mencken, Ph.D., Chairperson

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Approved by the Thesis Committee

Carson Mencken, Ph.D., Chairperson

Jeremy Uecker, Ph.D.

Edward C. Polson, Ph.D.

Accepted by the Graduate School

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J. Larry Lyon, Ph.D., Dean

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF FIGURES	vi
LIST OF TABLES.....	vii
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS	viii
DEDICATION	ix
CHAPTER ONE	1
Introduction.....	1
CHAPTER TWO	3
Literature Review	3
Civic Engagement Overview	3
Political Party Affiliation Overview	4
Political Parties and Civic Engagement.....	6
Socioeconomic Status and Civic Engagement.....	8
Socioeconomic Status and Civic Engagement.....	13
Political Party Affiliation and Socioeconomic Status.....	14
Study and Hypotheses.....	16
CHAPTER THREE	19
Methods	19
Overview of Methods	19
Data	19
Measures	20
Analytic Strategy	24
CHAPTER FOUR.....	26
Results.....	26
Overview of Sample	26
Community Involvement	32
Democratic Involvement.....	33
Political Voice.....	34
Karlson–Holm–Breen (KHB) Model.....	38
Interaction Model.....	39

CHAPTER FIVE	42
Conclusion	42
BIBLIOGRAPHY	46

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 4.1. Average Level of Civic Engagement by Political Affiliation.....	34
Figure 4.2. Democratic Involvement Interaction Effect of Education.....	43
Figure 4.3. Political Voice Interaction Effect of Education.....	43

LIST OF TABLES

Table 4.1. Descriptive Statistics: Community Involvement Scale.....	29
Table 4.2. Descriptive Statistics: Democratic Involvement Scale.....	29
Table 4.3. Descriptive Statistics: Political Voice Scale.....	30
Table 4.4. Descriptive Statistics: Community Involvement Other Variables in Models...	31
Table 4.5. Descriptive Statistics: Democratic Involvement Other Variables in Models...	32
Table 4.6. Descriptive Statistics: Political Voice Other Variables in Models.....	33
Table 4.7. Socioeconomic Status's Effect on Civic Engagement.....	38
Table 4.8. Mediation Effect of Socioeconomic Status on Community Involvement.....	41
Table 4.9. Mediation Effect of Socioeconomic Status on Democratic Involvement.....	41
Table 4.10. Mediation Effect of Socioeconomic Status on Political Voice.....	41

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DEDICATION

To Dr. Susan Adams-Johnson and Audie Johnson. Thank you for your continued support and for being exceptional academics and professional role models.

CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

Why does civic engagement matter? Participation in civic engagement is an essential part of democracies (Flanagan & Levine, 2010; Hauser, 2000). Critchlow (2015) noted that many voters appear disenchanted and wait for the next round of elections for new leadership and solutions, and furthermore opportunities are unequally distributed by societal structures such as class and race (Flanagan & Levine, 2010). The purpose of this study is to take two existing trends in the civic engagement literature—political affiliation and socioeconomic status—and compare which has the larger influence on civic engagement. At the time of writing this paper, I have not found a study that evaluates whether political affiliation or socioeconomic status is more influential in gauging civic engagement.

I seek to evaluate whether socioeconomic status has greater influence on civic engagement compared to political party affiliation. This analysis was prompted by a study showing the Democratic Party engaging in more political activities than their counterparts in the Republican Party during the 2018 midterm election cycle (Pew Research Center, 2018). Expanding beyond purely political activism behaviors to civic engagement behaviors—political and non-political actions—does this trend continue regarding political parties and their activism/engagement behaviors? Furthermore, will socioeconomic status be a more influential factor in this discussion? This study shows that socioeconomic status does influence the three identified types of civic engagement

and reduces the effect political party affiliation has on civic engagement. Socioeconomic status is a significant factor for the Democratic Party when predicting civic engagement behaviors.

CHAPTER TWO

Literature Review

Civic Engagement Overview

Civic engagement or civic participation can be broadly defined as collective political and/or non-political efforts with the purpose of community improvement or addressing issues of public concern (Moro, 2010; Checkoway & Aldana, 2013; Ebert & Okamoto, 2013; Delli, 2016; Mencken, Smith, & Tolbert, 2020). More distinctly, civic engagement is a corpus of community or individual behaviors aimed toward influencing the actions of decision-makers in both democratization and the preservation of established democracies (Foley & Edwards, 1996; Checkoway & Aldana, 2012; Koc-Michalska, Lilleker, & Vedel, 2016). Midaugh, et.al. (2012) notes a need for a broader interpretation of civic engagement that focuses on the purpose motivating current institutions and their activities along with emerging institutions that accomplish the same goals. According to ICMA (2011) civic engagement is not: a) the selling of ideas, programs or policies to the public, b) convincing the public to vote a certain way, c) a meeting where the public gather to discuss the same problems or complain and blame others, d) lobbying the elected body, and e) a process where the elected or non-elected staff or council controls the outcome.

Keeter, Zukin, Andolina, and Jenkins (2002) surveyed nineteen core indicators of civic engagement organized under the general categories of civic, electoral, and political voice. Civic behaviors include community problem solving and volunteering activities.

Electoral behaviors are comprised of political participation actions such as regular voting and campaign involvement. Political voice behaviors range from protesting, boycotting products, contacting officials, and signing petitions. Expanding on these core indicators the concept of trust; both in elected officials and community members noted by Putnam (1995; 2000) to be essential for community capital to form, have also been explored in civic engagement literature (NCC, 2008; Mencken, Smith, & Tolbert, 2020). Putnam (2000) notes in his book *Bowling Alone*, the decline of political and organized community life, i.e., civic engagement.

While some scholars claim there is a decline in civic engagement and a disengagement of citizens from political participation (Dalton, 1998; Norris, 1999; Putnam, 2000; Skocpol & Fiorina, 1999), others contend that this notion of decline and the end of civic engagement is a result of the loosely defined barriers that constitute civic engagement leading to it to be overlooked or misidentified (Berger, 2009; Ladd, 1999; Norris, 2002; Schudson, 1996), which sparks the question of who in political parties is civically engaged?

Political Party Affiliation Overview

The concept of party identification as a model of partisan loyalty was introduced in the early 1950s (Campbell, Gurin, & Miller, 1954) and describes the long-term attachment to a chosen political party which in turn influences an individual's political decisions (Campbell, 1960; Miller and Shanks, 1996). Although some scholars have argued that voters principally vote based on policy ideologies, issues, and outcomes, lessening the importance of party affiliation (Bafumi & Shapiro, 2009; Fiorina, 1981; Key, 1966; Miller and Shanks, 1996; Pomper, 1972; Pomper, 1975; Pomper, 1977;

Verba, Nie, & Petrocik, 1976), other scholars note the importance of party affiliation in understanding political decisions in political processes as most individuals rely on partisanship to evaluate complex political issues¹ (Bennett, 1998; Bowler & Donovan, 2000²; Carpini & Keeter, 1996; Converse, 1964; Converse 1966; Craig, Kreppel, & Kane, 2001; Somin, 1998; Lewis-Beck, Norpoth, Jacoby, & Weisberg, 2008; Weisberg & Greene, 2003)

While numerous parties exist within the American political system (FEC, n.d.; Library of Congress, n.d.) this analysis will focus on discussing the largest parties, the Democratic Party and the Republican Party, along with Independent voters since Independent voters can lean towards Democratic or Republican Party ideals and values (Dennis, 1988; Keith, Magleby, Nelson, Orr, & Westlye, 1992; Holbrook & McClurg, 2005; Hong, 2015; Miller, 1991; Miller & Shanks, 1996; Petrocik, 2009).

Ideologically, many members of the Democratic Party³ are liberal and advocate for education, equality, social justice, and other areas of policy reform to strengthen the democracy and promote equality (Abramowitz & Saunders, 2006; Abramowitz, 2010; DNC, 2020; Grigsby, 2009; Hetherington, 2001; Levendusky, 2009; McCarty, Poole, and Rosenthal 2006; Mockabee, 2001; Rhodes, 2015; Sinclair, 2006; Thierault, 2008). The Republican Party⁴ tends to be ideologically conservative and emphasizes economic

¹ Scholars are noted a general lack of understanding towards the general structure of the government and understanding political information or issues (Bennett, 1998; Carpini & Keeter, 1996; Craig, Kreppel, & Kane, 2001; Somin, 1998).

² Bowler and Donovan (2000) noted that the well-educated lean more on their partisan and ideological orientations when deciding how to vote on a wide range of issues.

³ The Democratic Party was founded in 1828 and is the oldest active political party (Witcover, 2003; Micklethwait & Wooldridge, 2004; History.com, 2018a; Janda, Berry, Goldman, Deborah, & Manna, 2021).

⁴ The Republican Party was founded in 1854 in opposition to the expansion of slavery to the western territories (Blumenthal, 2017; History.com, 2018b; RNC, 2021).

growth, protection of rights—granted by the constitution—along with supporting issues of national security and election integrity (Abramowitz & Saunders, 2006; Abramowitz, 2010; Grigsby, 2009; Hetherington, 2001; Levendusky, 2009; McCarty, Poole, and Rosenthal 2006; Mockabee, 2001; Rhodes, 2015; RNC, 2021; Sinclair, 2006; Thierault, 2008).

Independent voters are defined in nuanced ways, but in general they tend to be a voter who identifies as independent and/or focuses on political issues rather than political ideology and/or loyalty or self-identification with a political party (Campbell, 1960; Holbrook & McClurg, 2005; Keith, Magleby, Nelson, Orr, & Westlye, 1992; Key, 1966; De Vries & Tarrance, 1972; Sorauf & Beck, 1988; Wolfinger, 1995; Theiss-Morse, Wagner, Flanigan, & Zingale, 2018). This definition encompasses ‘pure independents’ or those who deny partisanship when asked, but it is important to note that there are independent leaners or independent voters who associate being closer to one party than the other⁵ (Dennis, 1988; Keith, Magleby, Nelson, Orr, & Westlye, 1992; Holbrook & McClurg, 2005; Hong, 2015; Miller, 1991; Miller & Shanks, 1996; Petrocik, 2009; Theiss-Morse, Wagner, Flanigan, & Zingale, 2018).

Political Parties and Civic Engagement

Greene (2004) noted that as an individual’s social identity becomes more tied to their political party, we can expect higher levels of engagement as most partisan activities are group activities⁶. Overall, research has observed that the Democratic Party exhibits

⁵ Independent Republicans & Independent Democrats.

⁶ Greene (2004) mentions volunteering and attending events like rallies and meetings as examples of partisan activities.

more civic engagement behaviors compared to the Republican Party (Heaney, 2016⁷; Okun, 1994⁸; Smith, 2013; Smith, Schlozman, Verba, & Brady, 2009). In Smith's (2013) examination of civic engagement in the digital age, liberal Democrats are more engaged in political activities⁹ than other Democrats alongside moderate and conservative Republicans. This author also noted that both Republicans and Democrats¹⁰ were likely to contact a government official, but Democrats¹¹ are more likely to sign petitions. According to Smith's et.al (2009) study, the likelihood of making an offline political contribution did not differ drastically between Democrats and Republicans¹² and both Republican and Democrats utilize social networking sites^{13 14} for political activity, though Democrats more often engage in political behavior on these sites (Smith, 2013; Smith, Schlozman, Verba, & Brady, 2009). Marquart-Pyatt and Petrzela (2008) mentioned that Republicans communicated more political trust than Democrats and Independents.

⁷ Heaney's (2016) article discussed protesting behaviors at the national conventions and noted that Democrats and Independents protested more than Republicans.

⁸ Okun's (1994) study specifically was researching seniors.

⁹ Attending political meetings, town meetings, school-related meetings, protests, etc. (Smith, 2013).

¹⁰ The author specifies conservative Republicans and liberal Democrats (Smith, 2013).

¹¹ Liberal Democrats (Smith, 2013).

¹² Democrats are more likely to make an online political contribution compared to Republicans (Smith, Schlozman, Verba, & Brady, 2009).

¹³ Smith (2013) notes that conservative Republicans and liberal Democrats are more active overall on social networking sites compared to moderate and liberal Republicans, and moderate and conservative Democrats.

¹⁴ Social networking sites for Democrats and Republicans, as well as non-partisan liberal and conservative users, are avenues these individual's use to become more politically informed and/or to become involved in a political issue (Smith, 2013).

Socioeconomic Status and Civic Engagement

Socioeconomic status overview: theoretical framework. From a theoretical perspective, social stratification has been observed from a two-class system based around those who produce goods in society and those who own the means of production (Kenny, 2014; Lemert, 2018; Tucker, 1978; Marx, 2013). Additionally, a three-component theory¹⁵ has been introduced by Max Weber and focused on the interaction between an individual's class, status, and power in society (Weber, 1921, 1922 [1980]; Weber, 1946; Weber, 1964; Weber, 1978; Conley, 2011; Weber, 2015; Waters & Waters, 2015; Hurst, Gibbon, & Nurse, 2016). Furthermore, social stratification has been tied to a concept of aesthetic or how an individual presents themselves in social spaces thereby developing and maintaining a level of cultural capital that each class level teaches to their subsequent generations (Bourdieu, 1987; Kendall, 2006).

Exploring the three-component theory of stratification further, Weber emphasized two dimensions of power, the possession of power and the implementation of power, which was further explored and categorized into three principal forms—class, status, and power—which embody the power composition in a community (Weber, 1921, 1922 [1980]; Weber, 1946; Weber, 1964; Weber, 1978; Waters & Waters, 2015; Hurst, Gibbon, & Nurse, 2016). Class (*wealth*) is a person's economic situation and focuses on financial/economic assets such as property. Status (*prestige*) is a person's status situation or the degree a person, or the position they hold, is respected or regarded by others. Lastly, power (*party*) is the capacity of groups or organizations to achieve their goals

¹⁵ An individual's class (economic position), status (prestige or honor), and power (ability to oppose resistance) contribute to the larger societal structure in where individuals with similar levels of class, status, and power are grouped creating stratification.

despite opposition (Weber, 1921, 1922 [1980]; Weber, 1946; Weber, 1964; Weber, 1978; Hurst, Gibbon, & Nurse, 2016).

The possession of power emphasizes class and status as it pertains to the capacity to control social resources such as property, capital, respect, and knowledge (Weber, 1921, 1922 [1980]; Weber, 1946; Weber, 1964; Weber, 1978; Lemert 2018). The implementation of power takes many forms and is conceptualized in a variety of ways by Weber with systems of class, status, political power (party), social action, and mobility or shifting class compositions (Weber, 1921, 1922 [1980]; Weber, 1946; Weber, 1964; Weber, 1978; Schumpeter 1951; Hurst, Gibbon, & Nurse, 2016; Lemert 2018).

Investigating the concept of power further, Lukes' (2001) book, *Power: A Radical View*, provides a succinct overview of the many discussions scholars have regarding power. Power can be one-dimensional or the result of conflict between a victor and a loser (Dahl, 1958; Polsby 1964). Power can be two-dimensional or the function of agenda-setting—the excluding or including of certain decisions/interests over others—(Schattschneider 1960; Bachrach & Baratz, 1970). Tilly (1991) includes the concept of resistance to the discussion of power, and notes that Among Tilly's (1991) explanations regarding the lack of, or clearly identifiable, resistance to power, in general resistance to power can be covert and continuous, or too costly to engage with. Tilly (1991) also notes resistance can be impeded by a lack of information or subordination achieves some benefit to those less powerful. Furthermore, Arnstein's (1969) Ladder examines the extent citizens have power in the decision-making process. This illustration arranges power across eight rungs with manipulation at the bottom indicating nonparticipation to citizen control at the top (Arnstein, 1969).

Lukes (2001) specifically introduces a three-dimensional view of power where power lies in the shaping of interests or convincing a person to believe and invest in an interest that is contrary to their actual best interests. Ideology and culture have been discussed as modes with which social stratification is produced (Althusser 1971; Anderson 1977; Bourdieu, 1986; Bourdieu, 1987; Kendall, 2006). Bourdieu (1987) notes that cultural capital is a key component in class stratification as this type of capital is comprised of material and symbolic assets—education, speech style, fashion, etc.—that society considers valuable which in turns affects social mobility as this cultural knowledge denotes status and power within society (Bourdieu, 1986; Mahar, Harker, & Wilkes, 2016; Barker, 2004; Harper-Scott & Samson, 2009; Castree, Kitchin, & Rogers, 2013). Cultural capital¹⁶—in tandem with economic (wealth and assets/property rights) and social capital (social obligations or status/prestige)— can be defined as the combination of material and symbolic goods, that society deems valuable, a person possesses (Bourdieu, 1986; Barker, 2004; Derek, Johnston, Pratt, Watts, & Whatmore, 2009; Harper-Scott & Samson, 2009; Harker, & Wilkes, 2016)

Socioeconomic status overview: definition and review. While the concepts of class, status and power are prevalent in literature and research, this analysis will use socioeconomic status as an exploratory measure of these concepts. Socioeconomic status has often reveled unequal access to resources and highlighted issues regarding privilege, power, and control (APA, 2021). Socioeconomic status is the combined economic and social measure of an individual's economic and social or class standing in relation to

¹⁶ Cultural capital is comprised of three forms: 1) embodied, 2) objectified, and 3) institutionalized (Bourdieu, 1986).

others often categorized by their income, education, and occupation (APA, 2021; Worthy, Lavigne & Romero, 2020). Returning to Weber, class is categorized into four groups: 1) the dominant entrepreneurial and propertied group, 2) the petite or small bourgeoisie, 3) workers with qualifications (middle class) and workers without qualifications (working class) (Weber, 1978; Breen, 2001). However, research has typically divided class into three broad categories: 1) upper class, 2) middle class, and 3) lower/working class¹⁷ (Stearns, 1993; Brown, 2009; Gilbert, 2018).

Thompson and Hickey (2016) breakdown class into five categories, 1) upper class, 2) upper middle class, 3) lower middle class, 4) working class, and 5) lower class. These authors note that in general upper-class households have incomes of \$250,000 or more¹⁸, upper middle households have incomes of \$150,000 to \$250,000^{19 20}, lower middle household incomes range between \$50,000 to \$150,000²¹, working class households make less than \$50,000 each year, lower class households have incomes below the poverty line. Accounting for inflation, in 2020 upper class households have incomes of \$274,000 or higher, upper middle households have incomes of \$164,000 to \$274,000, lower middle household incomes range between \$54,000 to \$164,000, working

¹⁷ Gilbert (2018) refers to these categories as the privileged classes (capitalist—upper—and upper-middle), majority classes (middle and working), and lower classes (working-poor and underclass).

¹⁸ Constitutes 5% of the population, but accounts for over 22% of total income. This group is sub-categories into: 1) families who have had their wealth for many generations (Rockefellers, etc.), 2) families who have achieved great wealth in the past generation or so (Walton Family, Bill Gates, etc.), 3), prominent government officials, CEOs, and celebrities, and 4) millionaires and individuals who exceed \$250,000 or more per year (bank and factory owners, lottery winners, etc.) (Thompson & Hickey, 2016).

¹⁹ Upper middle households also overall have more advanced college degrees (Thompson & Hickey, 2016).

²⁰ There are exceptions to this income range as the authors note college professors make less than \$150,000 but is upper middle class due to their occupational prestige. Furthermore, wealthy small business owners without college degrees also fit into this class status (Thompson & Hickey, 2016).

²¹ This class status still has higher populations of college educated individuals (Thompson & Hickey, 2016).

class households make less than \$54,000 each year²², lower class households have incomes below the poverty line. According to the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation (ASPE) 2020 poverty guidelines, lower economic households have incomes ranging from \$39,999 or lower²³ depending on their household composition (ASPE, 2020).

Gilbert (2018) noted six categories of economic class; the Gilbert-Kahl model of class structure, 1) a capitalist class, 2) a upper-middle/+working rich class, 3) a middle class²⁴, 4) a working class, 5) a working-poor class, and 6) an underclass. Starting from the capitalist class moving to the underclass there is a distinct drop in stability regarding access to resources and consistent employment, and an increase in reliance on government programs (Gilbert, 2018). The United States census bureau separated household income across ten percentiles with \$15,600 at the lowest percentile, \$67,521 at the median and \$273,739 at the highest percentile (Shrider, Kollar, Chen, & Semega, 2021)²⁵.

²² This inflation rate was calculated using the Bureau of Labor Statistics' (n.d.) CPI Inflation Calculator. Thompson and Hickey's original (2016) income ranges—January 2016 compared to December 2020 inflation—were adjusted to reflect 2020 incomes ranges. The data used in the CPI calculator represents changes in the prices of all goods and services purchased for consumption by urban households (BLS, n.d.).

²³ This figure was generated by utilizing the ASPE's (2020) poverty guidelines to generate an average for households with 1-4 or more members. Originally the guidelines organized households ranging from 1-8 members—The guidelines note, "For families/households with more than 8 persons, add \$4,480 for each additional person." (ASPE, 2020).—this range has been collapsed to 1-4 or more members in which the average value for income for household members between four and eight accounts for the income of four or more members. The actual average is \$39,847; however, this figure is adjusted to \$39,999 to reflect the income ranges listed in the ANES 2020 dataset. Therefore, lower economic households have incomes ranging from \$39,999 or lower depending on their household composition.

²⁴ This economic class level has a mixture of white and blue-collar level careers (Gilbert, 2018).

²⁵ See table A-4a, Selected Measures of Household Income Dispersion: 1967 to 2020 (Shrider, Kollar, Chen, & Semega, 2021).

Socioeconomic Status and Civic Engagement

Consequently, it can be assumed based on the theoretical framework surrounding class and socioeconomic status that individuals and/or groups with higher socioeconomic status hold more power and decision-making capacity. Expectedly, regarding socioeconomic status and civic engagement, generally individuals with higher levels of education and income are more civically engaged than their counterparts (Bowler & Donovan, 2000; Bowler & Donovan, 2002²⁶; Gilbert, 2018²⁷; Smith, 2013; Smith, Schlozman, Verba, & Brady, 2009; Tolbert, McNeal, & Smith, 2003²⁸). Socioeconomic status has been noted as a key turnout factor during elections (Theiss-Morse, Wagner, Flanigan, & Zingale, 2018) and members of the upper-middle and upper economic classes are more likely to join civic and charity organizations (Gilbert, 2018). Furthermore, a common model of assessing political participation revolves around how income, education occupation, and resources and civic skills—SES—prescribe political activity (Verba, & Almond, 1963; Verba & Nie, 1972). Individuals with high status—increased educational attainment and social environments that foster political and civic participation—than individuals with lower status are more likely to be engaged with politics (Leighley 1990; Nie, Verba, Brady, Schlozman, & Junn, 1988; Verba, Schlozman, Brady, & Nie, 1993; Brown, 2014).

²⁶ Bowler and Donovan (2002) note an increase in education improves a citizen's perception of their political behavior.

²⁷ Gilbert (2018) notes that the wealthy do not always get what they want, but they have the resources to be persistent and overcome many barriers.

²⁸ Tolbert, McNeal, and Smith (2003) specifically were looking at voting behaviors utilizing data from the American National Election Studies (ANES); data from 1996, 1998, and 2000.

Income and income inequality has been associated with decreases in civic engagement among lower income individuals and although it has been noted that low-income individuals can be civically engaged, they encounter substantial barriers to active engagement (van Holm, 2019; Levin-Waldman²⁹, 2013; McBride, Sherraden, & Pritzker, 2006; Solt, 2008; Stockemer & Scruggs, 2012). Furthermore, education³⁰ has been identified in research as a pivotal source for civic engagement (Berelson, Lazarsfeld, & McPhee, 1954; Campbell, 2009; Campbell, Converse, Miller, & Stokes, 1960; Hauser, 2000; Lazarsfeld, Berelson, & Gaudet, 1944; Miller, Shanks, & Shapiro, 1996; Nie, Junn, & Stehlik-Barry, 1996; Putnam, 1995; Verba & Nie, 1972; Verba, Schlozman, & Brady, 1995; Wolfinger & Rosenstone, 1980) and it has been noted that socioeconomic status affects the attainment of higher education levels (Ellwood & Kane, 2000; Gilbert, 2018; Kane, 2001), and in turn education contributes to the socioeconomic status of individuals³¹ (Grotsky & Jackson, 2009; Halaby, 2003; Hout 1984;).

Political Party Affiliation and Socioeconomic Status

Skocpol and Fiorina (1999) commented that despite how accommodating democracy and civil society has become, the United States might be developing into a system structured by the citizens with the most opportunities and privileges. Scholars have observed that the Republican Party has frequently been connected to the interests of the wealthy and corporate business agendas; conversely, the Democratic Party has

²⁹ Levin-Waldman (2013) notes that autonomy is a central component to democratic society and access to resources increases autonomy. This author notes that civic engagement may be affected by economic resources.

³⁰ Wolfinger and Rosenstone (1980) specifically note that education reduces cognitive barriers and material costs to participating. Other scholars have used this model in their research (Verba, Schlozman, & Brady, 1995; Nie, Junn, & Stehlik-Barry, 1996).

³¹ Education has also been attributed to higher physical and psychological health, among other social outcomes (Cutler & Lleras-Muney, 2006; Lauderdale, 2001; Pallas, 2000; Ross & Mirowsky, 1999).

commonly been seen representing small business owners, the working class and in general the less advantaged (Bastedo & Lodge, 1980; Campbell, Converse, Miller, & Stokes, 1980; Miller, Wlezien, & Hildreth, 1991). Theiss-Morse, Wagner, Flanigan and Zingale (2018) specifically note in their book that individuals who are members of the lower and working economic class tend to identify more with the Democratic Party while members of the upper-middle and upper economic class generally identify with the Republican Party. The middle (lower-middle) stands somewhere between the Democratic and Republican Parties but leans more towards the Democratic Party (Theiss-Morse, Wagner, Flanigan, & Zingale, 2018). Gilbert (2018) also observed that working and lower economic class individuals are more likely to have liberal positions and vote for the Democratic Party, though this relationship is stated to be weak as evidenced by the results of the 2016 elections.

Examining voting patterns in the United States reveals that overall women are voting more Democrat than men, which has been attributed to a large movement of white flight to the Republican Party, especially among white men³² (Box-Steffensmeier, De Boef, & Lin, 2004; Kaufmann & Petrocik, 1999; Kittilson, 2016; Sides, Tesler, & Vavreck, 2017).

Reviewing other racial and ethnic groups, Hispanic women are more likely than Hispanic men to support the Democratic Party, especially among the younger generation (Bejarano, 2014), but both African American men and women support the Democratic Party and there are no notable differences between the genders (Smooth, 2006; Kittilson,

³² Simien (2007) observes that race and gender should not be treated as separate individual aspects of political outcomes.

2016; Sides, Tesler, & Vavreck, 2017) and Asian Americans³³ are shifting more to the Democratic Party over the years (Ramakrishnan & Yeung, 2014). Reviewing the 2012 election, the Pew Research Center (2012) noted that the Democratic Party had a strong base among women, minorities, young people and with the well-educated and less affluent while the Republican Party held a mainly white non-Hispanic base.

Putnam, Campbell and Garrett (2010) noted that two-thirds of participants in the Faith Matters 2006 survey observed that America does not have equal opportunity for all, and a majority supported government involvement regarding poverty and inequality. However, the authors commented later that Democrats are more likely to support antipoverty policy compared to Republicans (Putnam, Campbell, & Garrett, 2010). Referring back to the Democratic and Republican parties' platforms, Democrats typically advocate for education, equality and rights-based issues while Republicans emphasize economic growth, the constitution, and national security (DNC, 2020; RNC, 2021).

Study and Hypotheses

This study will be researching the intersection of political party affiliation and socioeconomic status's effect on civic engagement. Ultimately, why does civic engagement matter? Civic engagement matters because it not only includes social movements such as the women's suffrage movement of the mid-19th century and the civil rights movements of the 1960s, but it also includes volunteering at the local salvation army and going to the quarterly town meeting. Civic engagement encompasses

³³ The authors note that Asian American voters have low party identification, but there is a trend of voting Democrat over Republican (Ramakrishnan & Yeung, 2014).

the entirety of collective action³⁴ and understanding the factors that contribute to engagement is essential to developing and improving citizen participation.

I hypothesize that socioeconomic status is more associated with civic engagement behaviors compared to political party affiliation due to the hierarchy of needs (Maslow, 1943) each individual must meet before engaging in civic engagement. Again, civic engagement aims to improve communities and/or address issues of public concern (Moro, 2010; Checkoway & Aldana, 2013; Ebert & Okamoto, 2013; Delli, 2016; Mencken, Smith, & Tolbert, 2020). Maslow's (1943) theory on human motivation—Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs—originally observed five stages of human motivation: 1) physiological, 2) safety, 3) belonging and love, 4) social needs/self-esteem, and 5) self-actualization. The basic theory proposed by Maslow is that an individual cannot move unto the next stage of motivation (essential for development and growth) until the previous stage is satisfied with the goal being to achieve the highest stage of motivation (Deckers, 2018; Maslow, 1943; Wills, 2014).

An additional sixth stage of self-transcendence³⁵ which encompasses spiritual and altruistic motivations³⁶; motivations that gives oneself to something beyond oneself, was added to this hierarchy of needs (Garcia-Romeu, 2010; Gautam, 2007; James, 2019; Koltko-Rivera, 2006; Maslow & Fadiman, n.d.; Maslow, 1969; Maslow, 1971; Maslow 1996; Maslow, 2013; Wills, 2014). This sixth stage is where I argue civic engagement

³⁴ Within the context of the United States.

³⁵ "...that which motivates, gratifies, and activates the fortunate, developed, self-actualizing person...The fully developed (and very fortunate) human being, working under the best conditions tends to be motivated by values which transcend his self (Maslow & Fadiman, n.d., pg. 2)."

³⁶ Maslow (Maslow & Fadiman, n.d.) referred to Hartman's (1967) discussion on intrinsic values—truth, goodness, beauty, perfection, excellence, simplicity, elegance, etc.—when discussing transcendent or transpersonal motivations.

resides in the hierarchy of needs model and why I hypothesis socioeconomic status is a determining factor in predicting these behaviors. I assert that socioeconomic status applies to the entire hierarchy of needs, but political party affiliation only applies to the higher stages of belonging and love, social needs/self-esteem, and self-actualization.

Other scholars have noted the importance of attaining basic needs as a precursor to civic engagement (James, 2019; Kassimir & Flanagan, 2010; Lombe, Ochumbo, & Norstrand, 2008³⁷). Lower socioeconomic status is attributed with lower access to resources which effects the first two stages of physiological and safety needs. If an individual is more concerned with putting food on their table or focused on finding affordable health care, they will not be civically engaged (or less likely to be civically engaged) than individuals with more resources at their disposable. Utilizing the American National Election Studies (ANES) 2020 study (ANES, 2021) and drawing on past research³⁸ on civic engagement indicators, this analysis will evaluate civic engagement based on community involvement, democratic involvement, and political voice.

³⁷ Kassimir and Flanagan (2010) centered on youth in developing countries and Lombe, Ochumbo, and Norstrand's (2008) study focused specifically on sub-Saharan Africa.

³⁸ See Keeter, Zukin, Andolina, & Jenkins (2002) *The Civic and Political Health of the Nation: A Generational Portrait*, National Conference on Citizenship (NCC) (2008) *2008 Civic Health Index: Beyond the Vote*, and Mencken, Smith, & Tolbert, (2020) *Self-employment and Civic Inclination*.

CHAPTER THREE

Methods

Overview of Methods

Data

This analysis will be utilizing the American National Election Studies¹ (ANES) 2020 Times Series Study. This study is an extension of the series of election studies conducted since 1948. This study was conducted in two waves sampling U.S. eligible voters² including re-interviews with 2016 respondents and post-election surveys with respondents from the General Social Survey (GSS). In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, all interviews were contactless, and a mixed-mode survey design was implemented where all participants were assigned to interview either through self-administered online surveys, live video interviews, or by telephone interviews.

In the first wave there were 8,280 interviews conducted pre-election day starting on August 18, 2020 and continued until election day on November 3, 2020. On November 8, 2020, the second wave had 7,449 follow-up interviews and lasted until January 4, 2021. Since the key variables of interest from this dataset were collected in the post-election survey the sample size for this analysis is 7,449. Since this analysis is mainly using the post-election³ dataset, the full sample post-election weight will be

¹ ANES is a collaboration of Stanford University and the University of Michigan, with funding by the National Science Foundation (ANES, 2021).

² The target population are non-institutional U.S. citizens aged 18 (at time of recruitment) or older living in the 50 US states or the District of Columbia (ANES, 2021).

applied. Furthermore, to account for sampling errors the full sample post-election weight's corresponding variance stratum and variance unit will be used for a multiple ordinary least squares' regression analysis. An additional Karlson–Holm–Breen (KHB) analysis will be conducted, but this analysis only uses sample post-election weight. Lastly, since both of the major parties emphasize aspects of socioeconomic status in their platforms⁴, this study will test for an interaction effect⁵ between socioeconomic status (income and education) and political party affiliation on civic engagement.

Measures

After reviewing the data collected in the ANES 2020 study, twenty-seven civic engagement indicators have been identified ranging across the three categories of civic engagement: 1) community involvement, 2) democratic involvement, and 3) political voice; see table 3 located in the appendix. Examples of community involvement indicators include whether respondents have worked with others to solve a community problem or issue and whether they volunteer or donate money to organizations. Democratic involvement can include whether respondents attend political meetings, try to persuade others to vote on certain issues, and putting up a campaign sign. Political voice varies from discussing politics with others and posting political comments online to contacting elected officials and buying or boycotting products for political reasons.

³ Many of demographic variables were collected in the pre-election survey. The post-election weight is designed for the full pre- and post-election dataset.

⁴ Democrats emphasize education and Republicans emphasize economy issues (DNC, 2020; RNC, 2021).

⁵ There is an interaction effect when a variable will have a different effect on the dependent variable, depending on the level of some other third variable (The Institute for Statistics Education, 2022).

With the exception of buying or boycotting products for political reasons, all the civic engagement indicators are coded as binary variable where Yes=1 or No=0. Buying or boycotting products was originally measured how often the respondent's bought or boycotted products. This variable was coded as: 1) Never, 2) Once in a while, 3) About half the time, 4) Most of the time, and 5) All the time. This variable was recoded into a binary variable where No=0 and Yes=1. All the other civic engagement indicators were recoded where No=0 and Yes=1.

Most of these binary variables were actions/behaviors that occurred within the last twelve months, the following variables occurred at some point in the respondent's life: a) attending online/in-person political meetings/rallies/etc., b) persuading others on voting for/against a candidate, c) wearing/posting a political button/sign/bumper sticker, d) contributing money to a candidate/party, e) contributing to another group that supported or opposed candidates, f) do any other work for a party/candidate, g) discussing politics with family/friends, h) displaying an American Flag, and i) choosing to buy products made in America.

Each of the three categories of civic engagement were utilized to develop three civic engagement scales: 1) community involvement scale, 2) democratic involvement scale, and 3) political voice scale. The motivation behind the creation of these scales is to reduce the number of missing cases, and to measure the intensity of involvement in civic engagement across the three identified types. Currently, there are no pre-existing civic engagement scales that specify whether the type of civic engagement is community involvement, democratic involvement, or political voice. Furthermore, other civic engagement scales structure the scale around specific populations or compares civic

engagement behaviors with other behaviors such as faith (Nicotera, Altschul, Schneider-Munoz, & Webman, 2010; Droege & Ferrari, 2012; Akın, Usta, & Akın, 2014).

The community involvement scale ranges from zero to five with zero indicating no involvement and five representing the maximum level of involvement. Both the democratic involvement and political voice scales have zero as the lowest value specifying no involvement, but these scales extend up to nine and thirteen respectively. A nine on the democratic scale represents the maximum level of involvement as does a thirteen on the political voice scale.

The key independent variables of interest are political party affiliation and socioeconomic status which will be measured by income and education. For this analysis, political party affiliation will use the ANES' (2020) measure for party identification which asked respondents whether they generally viewed themselves as a Democrat, Republican, Independent or other. This measure categorized respondents into seven groups: 1) Strong Democrat, 2) Not very strong Democrat, 3) Independent-Democrat, 4) Independent, 5) Independent-Republican, 6) Not very strong Republican, and 7) Strong Republican. Utilizing this variable, this analysis has simplified the categories to Democrat, Republican, and Independent.

Income was calculated from the total combined income⁶ of all family members, fifteen or older, within the household in the past twelve months. Alternately, if the respondent does not have family members living in their household who earn income, their total income from the past twelve months was recorded. The total income of this

⁶ For this study income included, "money from jobs, net income from business, farm or rent, pensions, dividends, interest, Social Security payments, and any other money income received by members of your family who are 15 years of age or older (ANES, 2020, pg. 249)."

sample ranged from under \$9,999 to \$250,000 or more earned in the past twelve months. This analysis uses the pre-post summary income variable which lists the full range of incomes recorded in this study.

Education was measured by asking the respondents what the highest level of school or highest degree they have completed. This analysis selected the ANES' (2020) respondent five category level of education variable since this variable summarizes the range of level of school/degrees earned to: 1) Less than high school credential, 2) High school credential, 3) Some post-high school, no bachelor's degree, 4) Bachelor's degree, and 5) Graduate degree.

The principal controls variables applied in this analysis include the respondent's: a) sex/gender, b) age, c) race/ethnicity, d) religious service attendance, e) marital status, f) job status, g) length of residence in their community, h) the number of children in the respondent's household, and i) the region the respondent lives in. Sex/gender is a binary variable and originally was coded as Male=1 and Female=2; this variable was recoded as Male=0 and Female=1. Age (in years) was originally coded as 18, 19, 20,...80 or older but has been collapsed into six categories: 1) 18-25 years old, 2) 26-35 years old, 3) 36-45 years old, 4) 46-55 years old, 5) 56-64 years old, and 6) 65 and older.

Race/ethnicity is the respondents' self-identified race/ethnicity and is categorized as: 1) White, non-Hispanic, 2) Black, non-Hispanic, 3) Hispanic, 4) Asian or Native Hawaiian/other Pacific Islander, non-Hispanic alone, 5) Native American/Alaska Native or other race, non-Hispanic alone, and 6) Multiple races, non-Hispanic. The religious service attendance variable combines two separate attendance variables collected in this dataset into a single measure of frequency a respondent attends a religious service in a

year. This variable is coded as: 1) never, 2) a few times a year, 3) once or twice a month, 4) almost every week, 5) once a week, and 6) more than once a week.

Marital status was coded as: 1) Married: spouse present, 2) Widowed, 3) Divorced, 4) Separated, and 5) Never married. Job status is measured the respondent's occupation status as: 1) working now (if also retired, disabled, homemaker or student, working 20 or more hours/week), 2) temporarily laid off, 4) unemployed, 5) retired (if also working, working less than 20 hours/week), 6) permanently disabled (if also working, working less 20 hours/week), 7) R homemaker (if also working, working less than 20 hours/week), and 8) student (if also working, working less than 20 hours/week).

Length of residence in their community was measured in years and ranged from 0 (less than one year) to forty or more years. This variable was recoded as: 1) less than 12 months, 2) 1-5 years, 3) 6-10 years, 4) 11-15 years, 5) 16-20 years, 6) 21-25 years, 7) 26-30 years, 8) 31-35 years, 9) 36-39 years, and 10) 40 or more years. The number of children in the respondent's household is coded as: 1) no children, 2) one child, 3) two children, 4) three children, 5) four or more children. The region the respondent lives in was coded as: 1) Northeast, 2) Midwest, 3) South, and 4) West.

Analytic Strategy

I, in two models, will conduct a multiple ordinary least squares regression for each scale. Each scale will be analyzed in a first model evaluating the effect political party affiliation has on each scale. In a second model, socioeconomic status (income and education) will be added to assess by controlling for socioeconomic status. A third model will evaluate the significance of the effect of incorporating socioeconomic status into the ordinary least squares regression using the Karlson–Holm–Breen (KHB)

method⁷. The KHB method divides the total effect of a variable into a separate direct and indirect or spurious effect⁸. For ordinary least squares regression models, KHB compares the estimated coefficient of a key variable of interest between a reduced model with a full model with a control variable(s) and a reduced model without a control variable(s). The difference between the two models' estimated coefficients of the key variable shows how much the control variable(s) affect the key variable (Breen, Karlson, & Holm, 2013; Breen, Bernt Karlson, & Holm, 2021; Greene & Hensher, 2010; Karlson & Holm, 2011; Karlson, Holm, & Breen, 2012; Kohler, Karlson, & Holm, 2011; Kohler & Karlson, n.d.). For ordinary least squares regression models, interaction effects test whether a variable will have a different effect on the dependent variable, depending on the level of some other third variable (The Institute for Statistics Education, 2022).

⁷ The KHB method compares the estimated coefficients between two nested non-linear probability models (Breen, Karlson, & Holm, 2010; Karlson, Holm, & Breen, 2011).

⁸ "If the control variable is hypothesized to be a consequence of the key-variable, the difference will be commonly termed as the indirect effect; if the control variable is the hypothesized to be a cause of the key-variable, the difference is termed the spurious effect (Kohler & Karlson, n.d.)."

CHAPTER FOUR

Results

Overview of Sample

For this analysis, three scales were created; these scales are the dependent variables used in the ordinary least squares' regression models, Karlson–Holm–Breen (KHB) analyses, and the interaction model. For community involvement, the final sample size is 3,170 and the mean is 1.644 with a standard deviation of 1.419, see table 4.1. Democratic involvement has a final sample size of 3,173 and the mean is 2.138 with a standard deviation of 1.654, see table 4.2. Political voice has a final sample size of 3,147 and a mean of 4.404 with a standard deviation of 2.392, see table 4.3.

Regarding the key independent variables, political affiliation has a mean of 2.133 and a standard deviation of 0.942 for both community involvement and democratic involvement. Political voice has a mean 2.132 for political affiliation but a standard deviation of 0.942. Total family income has a mean of 11.772 for community involvement and a standard deviation of 6.683. Total family income for democratic involvement has a mean of 11.765 and a standard deviation of 6.681. For political voice, income has a mean of 11.777 and a standard deviation of 6.673. Educational attainment has a mean of 3.402 and a standard deviation of 1.091, while both democratic involvement and political voice have means of 3.400 and standard deviations of 1.090. Table 4.4, table 4.5, and table 4.6 lists the remaining descriptive statistics for the remaining control variables used in this analysis.

Table 4.1.

Descriptive Statistics: Community Involvement Scale

Variables	N	Mean	(SD)
Community Involvement Scale ^a	3,170	1.644	(1.419)
0	814		
1	857		
2	675		
3	412		
4	290		
5	122		

a- 0 = No Involvement, 5 = Maximum Involvement

Table 4.2.

Descriptive Statistics: Democratic Involvement Scale

Variables	N	Mean	(SD)
Democratic involvement Scale ^a	3,173	2.138	(1.654)
0	230		
1	1,220		
2	800		
3	357		
4	220		
5	168		
6	104		
7	49		
8	20		
9	5		

a- 0 = No Involvement, 9 = Maximum Involvement

Table 4.3.

Descriptive Statistics: Political Voice Scale

Variables	N	Mean	(SD)
Political Voice Scale ^a	3,147	4.404	(2.392)
0	68		
1	225		
2	413		
3	536		
4	534		
5	467		
6	322		
7	222		
8	149		
9	110		
10	62		
11	30		
12	6		
13	3		

a- 0 = No Involvement, 13 = Maximum Involvement

Reviewing the sample of respondents as a whole, 42 percent of respondents are Republican. 47 percent identify as Democrat and 12 percent identify as Independent. Figure 4.1 shows the average level of civic engagement of the sample by political party. Across the three types of civic engagement 47 percent of Republicans are civically while 53 percent of Republicans are not involved civically. 31 percent of Democrats are civically engaged while 69 percent of Democrats are not engaging in civic engagement behaviors. Similarly for Independents, 31 percent of Independent voters are engaged in civic engagement behaviors while 69 percent of Independent voters are not involved civically.

Table 4.4.

Descriptive Statistics: Community Involvement Other Variables in Models

Variables	N	Mean	(SD)
Political Affiliation	3,170	2.133	(.942)
Democrat	1,222		
Independent	304		
Republican	1,644		
Total (family) income^a	3,170	11.772	(6.683)
Educational Attainment^b	3,170	3.402	(1.091)
Sex/Gender	3,170	.562	(.496)
Male	1,389		
Female	1,781		
Age^c	3,170	4.260	(1.587)
Race/Ethnicity	3,170	1.613	(1.200)
White	2,271		
Black	366		
Hispanic	275		
Asian or Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	100		
Native American/Alaska Native	62		
Multiple races	96		
Attendance to Religious Service^d	3,170	3.648	(1.411)
Marital Status	3,170	2.146	(1.549)
Married	1,826		
Widowed	256		
Divorced	462		
Separated	51		
Never Married	575		
Job Status	3,170	2.284	(1.751)
Working now	1,947		
Temp. laid off	84		
Unemployed	35		
Retired	748		
Permanently disabled	137		
Homemaker	190		
Student	29		
Length of residence (years)	3,170	5.562	(3.009)
Community Type	3,170	2.698	(1.033)
Rural area	492		
Small Town	837		
Suburb	977		
City	864		
Children in Household (Under 18)	3,170	1.661	(1.084)
Region	3,170	2.632	(.943)
Northeast	469		
Midwest	799		
South	1,332		
West	570		

a-category 11 = \$60,000-64,999

b-category 3 = some college

c-age has been collapsed into 6 categories: category 4 = 46-55 years old

d- category 3 = once or twice a month

Table 4.5.

Descriptive Statistics: Democratic Involvement Other Variables in Models

Variables	N	Mean	(SD)
Political Affiliation	3,173	2.133	(.942)
Democrat	1,224		
Independent	304		
Republican	1,645		
Total (family) income^a	3,173	11.765	(6.681)
Educational Attainment^b	3,173	3.400	(1.090)
Sex/Gender	3,173	.562	(.496)
Male	1,390		
Female	1,783		
Age^c	3,173	4.261	(1.587)
Race/Ethnicity	3,173	1.614	(1.201)
White	2,273		
Black	366		
Hispanic	275		
Asian or Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	101		
Native American/Alaska Native	62		
Multiple races	96		
Attendance to Religious Service^d	3,173	3.649	(1.411)
Marital Status	3,173	2.147	(1.549)
Married	1,825		
Widowed	258		
Divorced	463		
Separated	51		
Never Married	576		
Job Status	3,173	2.285	(1.750)
Working now	1,94		
Temp. laid off	84		
Unemployed	35		
Retired	751		
Permanently disabled	138		
Homemaker	189		
Student	29		
Length of residence (years)	3,173	5.561	(3.009)
Community Type	3,173	2.697	(1.033)
Rural area	494		
Small Town	838		
Suburb	976		
City	865		
Children in Household (Under 18)	3,173	1.661	(1.084)
Region	3,173	2.632	(.942)
Northeast	469		
Midwest	800		
South	1,334		
West	570		

a-category 11 = \$60,000-64,999

b-category 3 = some college

c-age has been collapsed into 6 categories: category 4 = 46-55 years old

d- category 3 = once or twice a month

Table 4.6.

Descriptive Statistics: Political Voice Other Variables in Models

Variables	N	Mean	(SD)
Political Affiliation	3,147	2.132	(.942)
Democrat	1,215		
Independent	301		
Republican	1,631		
Total (family) income^a	3,147	11.777	(6.673)
Educational Attainment^b	3,147	3.400	(1.090)
Sex/Gender	3,147	.561	(.496)
Male	1,380		
Female	1,767		
Age^c	3,147	4.264	(1.586)
Race/Ethnicity	3,147	1.611	(1.200)
White	2,259		
Black	362		
Hispanic	271		
Asian or Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	98		
Native American/Alaska Native	61		
Multiple races	96		
Attendance to Religious Service^d	3,147	3.643	(1.412)
Marital Status	3,147	2.144	(1.547)
Married	1,813		
Widowed	257		
Divorced	457		
Separated	51		
Never Married	569		
Job Status	3,147	2.284	(1.749)
Working now	1,932		
Temp. laid off	82		
Unemployed	35		
Retired	748		
Permanently disabled	134		
Homemaker	187		
Student	29		
Length of residence (years)	3,147	5.565	(3.008)
Community Type	3,147	2.695	(1.033)
Rural area	491		
Small Town	833		
Suburb	969		
City	854		
Children in Household (Under 18)	3,147	1.656	(1.080)
Region	3,147	2.634	(.942)
Northeast	462		
Midwest	797		
South	1,319		
West	569		

a-category 11 = \$60,000-64,999

b-category 3 = some college

c-age has been collapsed into 6 categories: category 4 = 46-55 years old

d- category 3 = once or twice a month

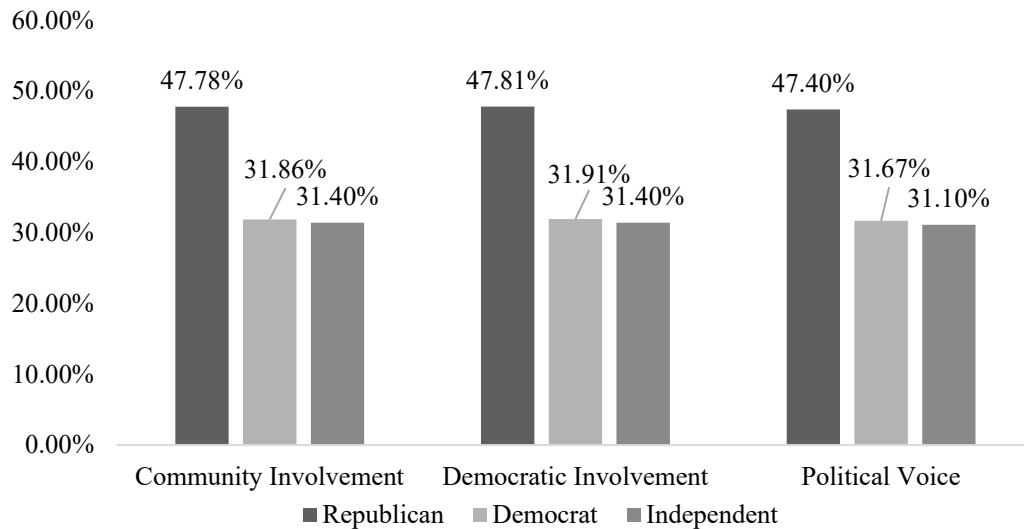


Figure 4.1. Average Level of Civic Engagement by Political Affiliation.

The hypothesis for this analysis was that political party affiliation loses importance in predicting civic engagement when accounting for socioeconomic status. Across the three scales, socioeconomic status does influence the significance of political party affiliation for the community involvement and political voice scales; see table 4.7. While the political party affiliation does not lose significance for democratic involvement and only partially loses significance for political voice, socioeconomic status does reduce the impact of political party affiliation for these other two types of civic engagement.

Community Involvement

In model 1, political affiliation indicates to be significant when predicting community involvement behaviors. Members of the Democratic Party have 0.221 higher engagement in community involvement compared to members of the Republican Party. Independents have 0.216 lower engagement in community involvement than Republicans. However, in model 2 after accounting for socioeconomic status, political

affiliation loses significance in predicting community involvement. Democrats experienced a 43 percent reduction in the effect of being a member and engaging in community involvement behaviors after including socioeconomic status. Independents experienced a 32 percent reduction in the effect on not engaging in community involvement and being a member of this party.

Socioeconomic status is extremely significant for community involvement; both income and educational attainment have a p-value of less than 0.001. Each unit increase in income is associated with a 0.020 unit increase in community involvement. Each unit increase in educational attainment corresponds to a 0.338 unit increase in community involvement. Reviewing the R-squared in model 1 indicates that the model explains the variation around the mean as the R-squared value 0.160 for this model is above 0.07, indicated a strong effect size. Yet, in model 2, the R-squared value increases to 0.244 signifying that the socioeconomic status model better fits the observations. Furthermore, an increment to r-square F-Test (Pedhazer, 1982) shows that adding in socioeconomic status significantly increases the variance explained in all models.

Democratic Involvement

In both models, political affiliation maintains its very significant p-values at less than 0.01 for Democrats and its extremely significant p-value at less than 0.001 for Independents. However, socioeconomic status does reduce the effect political affiliation has on democratic involvement. Identifying as a Democrat experienced an 18 percent reduction in its effect on democratic involvement, but model 2 still indicates that Democrats have 0.253 higher engagement in democratic involvement compared to Republicans. Being an Independent voter had an 8 percent reduction in its effect on

democratic involvement and model 2 shows that Independents have 0.596 lower engagement in democratic involvement compared to Republicans. As with community involvement, socioeconomic status is significant for democratic involvement. Income has a p-value of less than 0.01 and a one unit increase in income is associated with a 0.022 unit increase in democratic involvement. Educational attainment has a p-value at less than 0.001 and a one unit increase in education is associated with a 0.184 unit increase in democratic involvement. The R-squared for model 1 is 0.112 which indicates a strong effect size initially, but this effect size is increased further to 0.136 after incorporating socioeconomic status. Additionally, an increment to r-square F-Test (Pedhazer, 1982) shows that adding in socioeconomic status significantly increases the variance explained in all models.

Political Voice

In both models, political affiliation is only significant for Independents and is extremely significant with p-values at less than 0.001. Independents in model 1 have 0.973 lower engagement in political voice compared to Republicans, but this effect is reduced 10 percent in model 2 with Independents having 0.876 lower engagement in political voice behaviors compared to Republicans. Similar to the other types of civic engagement, socioeconomic status is significant for political voice. Income has a p-value of less than 0.01 and a one unit increase in income is associated with a 0.037 unit increase in political voice. Educational attainment has a p-value at less than 0.001 and a one unit increase in education is associated with a 0.375 unit increase in political voice. The R-squared for model 1 is 0.122 which indicates a strong effect size initially, but this effect size is increased further to 0.164 after incorporating socioeconomic status.

Moreover, an increment to r-square F-Test (Pedhazer, 1982) shows that adding in socioeconomic status significantly increases the variance explained in all models.

Table 4.7.

Socioeconomic Status's Effect on Civic Engagement

Variables	Community Involvement				Democratic Involvement				Political Voice			
	Model 1		Model 2		Model 1		Model 2		Model 1		Model 2	
	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>
Political Affiliation												
Democrat	.221*	(.083)	.126	(.080)	.308**	(.097)	.253**	(.093)	.001	(.143)	-.106	(.140)
Independent	-.216*	(.103)	-.147	(.100)	-.650***	(.108)	-.596***	(.105)	-.973***	(.187)	-.876***	(.170)
Total (family) income	.	.	.020***	(.005)	.	.	.022**	(.007)	.	.	.037**	(.012)
Educational Attainment	.	.	.338***	(.024)	.	.	.184***	(.043)	.	.	.375***	(.057)
Sex (Female)	.083	(.062)	.052	(.060)	-.095	(.080)	-.102	(.081)	-.122	(.106)	-.145	(.104)
Age	.044	(.030)	.040	(.028)	.120***	(.031)	.118***	(.032)	.112*	(.050)	.110*	(.048)
Race/Ethnicity												
Black	-.590***	(.095)	.385***	(.085)	-.438***	(.104)	-.299**	(.102)	1.232***	(.222)	-.969***	(.218)
Hispanic	-.689***	(.096)	.469***	(.090)	-.415**	(.141)	-.285*	(.138)	-.955***	(.197)	-.692**	(.199)
Asian or Native												
Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	-.614**	(.198)	-.625**	(.183)	-.399***	(.114)	-.411**	(.123)	1.341***	(.317)	1.352***	(.309)
Native American/Alaska												
Native	-.104	(.199)	.028	(.231)	-.430*	(.193)	-.322†	(.176)	-.523	(.318)	-.332	(.304)
Multiple races	-.126	(.158)	-.095	(.153)	-.336*	(.166)	-.318†	(.166)	-.094	(.293)	-.055	(.294)
Religious Service Attendance												
Attendance	.239***	(.021)	.230***	(.021)	.017	(.027)	.014	(.026)	.042	(.047)	.035	(.044)
Marital Status												
Widowed	-.283*	(.112)	-.057	(.117)	-.275†	(.147)	-.109	(.145)	-.802***	(.213)	-.483*	(.213)
Divorced	-.365***	(.092)	-.231**	(.083)	-.226†	(.132)	-.109	(.121)	-.422*	(.174)	-.211	(.160)
Separated	-.504*	(.208)	-.140	(.182)	-.640**	(.218)	-.377†	(.199)	-.943*	(.372)	-.451	(.365)
Never Married	-.310**	(.097)	-.121	(.085)	-.229†	(.127)	-.086	(.134)	-.283	(.194)	-.020	(.186)
Job Status												
Temporarily laid off	-.244†	(.128)	-.058	(.131)	.090	(.152)	.242	(.163)	.363	(.377)	.650	(.392)
Unemployed	-.365	(.228)	-.017	(.202)	-.135	(.238)	.102	(.247)	-.795†	(.462)	-.339	(.451)
Retired	-.041	(.076)	.052	(.070)	.259*	(.112)	.338**	(.113)	.090	(.131)	.231	(.149)
Permanently disabled	-.252†	(.132)	.009	(.130)	.042	(.180)	.224	(.176)	-.177	(.276)	.186	(.274)
Homemaker	-.129	(.129)	.040	(.120)	-.234	(.146)	-.124	(.144)	-.360†	(.207)	-.142	(.190)

(continued)

Variables	Community Involvement				Democratic Involvement				Political Voice			
	Model 1		Model 2		Model 1		Model 2		Model 1		Model 2	
	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>
Student	-.253	(.250)	-.109	(.222)	-.119	(.239)	-.046	(.232)	-.627	(.424)	-.467	(.390)
Length of residence (years)	.002	(.011)	.016	(.011)	-.004	(.013)	.004	(.013)	-.024	(.024)	-.008	(.023)
Community Type												
Small Town	-.010	(.087)	-.046	(.079)	-.323**	(.107)	-.343**	(.105)	-.476*	(.187)	-.512**	(.182)
Suburb	.321**	(.097)	.119	(.096)	-.120	(.091)	-.251**	(.092)	-.227	(.210)	-.480*	(.217)
City	.203*	(.090)	.122	(.084)	-.243*	(.112)	-.284*	(.111)	-.430*	(.198)	-.512**	(.188)
Children in Household (Under 18)												
	.054†	(.029)	.042	(.031)	-.079*	(.033)	-.083*	(.036)	-.045	(.050)	-.055	(.048)
Region												
Midwest	-.005	(.105)	.038	(.091)	-.138	(.095)	-.104	(.095)	-.128	(.173)	-.071	(.161)
South	-.038	(.105)	.018	(.090)	-.044	(.106)	.003	(.109)	-.042	(.155)	.036	(.153)
West	.204†	(.110)	.185†	(.095)	.317*	(.135)	.303*	(.129)	.452†	(.240)	.419†	(.222)
Constant	.444†	(.239)	.938***	(.222)	2.000***	(.230)	1.047**	(.315)	4.735***	(.357)	2.912***	(.387)
R-squared	.160		.244		.112		.136		.122		.164	
	(N = 3,170)				(N = 3,173)				(N = 3,147)			

Robust standard errors in parentheses

*** p<0.001, ** p<0.01, * p<0.05, + p<0.1

Karlson–Holm–Breen (KHB) Model

Model 3 consisted of a Karlson–Holm–Breen (KHB) analysis—see table 4.8, table 4.9, and table 4.10—and showed for Democrats that socioeconomic status (SES) is an extremely significant (p-value less than 0.001) mediator for civic engagement regarding the total indirect effect. For Independent voters, SES is a significant mediator (p-value less than 0.05) for democratic involvement and marginally significant (p-value less than 0.10) for community involvement and political voice regarding the total indirect effect. Reviewing the indirect effect of income and educational attainment specifically, for Democrats educational attainment is the only significant mediator across the three civic engagement scales and this effect is very significant with p-values of less than 0.01. Conversely, for Independents, income is the only significant mediator with p-values of less than 0.05 across the three scales.

Further investigating this effect shows that for Democrats, community involvement is explained 2.7 percent by income and 40.3 percent by educational attainment. For democratic involvement is explained 1.9 percent by income and 15.9 percent by education for Democrats. For Democrats engaged with political voice, there is no specific mediation effect from income or educational attainment. Moving to Independents, 14.8 percent and 17.1 percent of community involvement is explained by income and education, respectively. For democratic involvement, 5.4 percent is explained by income and 3.1 percent is explained by educational attainment for Independents. Lastly, for Independents engaged with political voice, 5.9 percent is explained by income and 4.1 percent is explained by education.

Table 4.8.

Mediation Effect of Socioeconomic Status on Community Involvement

Interaction Effects	Democrat		Independent	
	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>
Total effect	.221***	(.064)	-.216*	(.094)
Total Direct effect	.126†	(.065)	-.147	(.095)
Total Indirect effect	.095*	(.040)	-.069†	(.041)
Indirect effect	.006	(.006)	-.032*	(.013)
	Income			
Indirect effect	.089**	(.023)	-.037	(.028)
	Education			
(N = 3,170)				
Robust standard errors in parentheses				
*** p<0.001, ** p<0.01, * p<0.05, + p<0.1				

Table 4.9.

Mediation Effect of Socioeconomic Status on Democratic Involvement

Interaction Effects	Democrat		Independent	
	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>
Total effect	.308***	(.087)	-.650***	(.108)
Total Direct effect	.253**	(.087)	-.596***	(.109)
Total Indirect effect	.055*	(.027)	-.055*	(.028)
Indirect effect	.006	(.007)	-.035*	(.016)
	Income			
Indirect effect	.049**	(.016)	-.020	(.016)
	Education			
(N = 3,173)				
Robust standard errors in parentheses				
*** p<0.001, ** p<0.01, * p<0.05, + p<0.1				

Table 4.10.

Mediation Effect of Socioeconomic Status on Political Voice

Interaction Effects	Democrat		Independent	
	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>
Total effect	.001	(.128)	-.973***	(.181)
Total Direct effect	-.106	(.127)	-.876***	(.181)
Total Indirect effect	.107*	(.051)	-.097†	(.052)
Indirect effect	.011	(.012)	-.057*	(.026)
	Income			
Indirect effect	.095**	(.028)	-.040	(.032)
	Education			
(N = 3,147)				
Robust standard errors in parentheses				
*** p<0.001, ** p<0.01, * p<0.05, + p<0.1				

Interaction Model

For this analysis, an interaction model was conducted to assess whether the three types of civic engagement explored here are affected by changes in socioeconomic status (income and educational attainment). The motivation behind testing for an interaction effect stems from the major parties' platforms; Democrats emphasize education and Republicans emphasize economy issues (DNC, 2020; RNC, 2021). There is a significant interaction between educational attainment and democratic involvement and political voice¹. There is a positive association between engaging in democratic involvement and being a Democrat or an Independent voter, depending on the level of education the individual achieves, see figure 4.2. As education increases for Democrats and Independents, so does democratic involvement behaviors. There is no significant education interaction effect for Republicans.

For political voice, there is also a positive association between increases in education for Democrats or Independents and engaging in this type of civic engagement, see figure 4.3. Again, as education increases for Democrats and Independents, so does political voice. For Republicans, once again there is no significant interaction between increases in education and political voice behaviors.

¹ There was no significant interaction between socioeconomic status and community involvement.

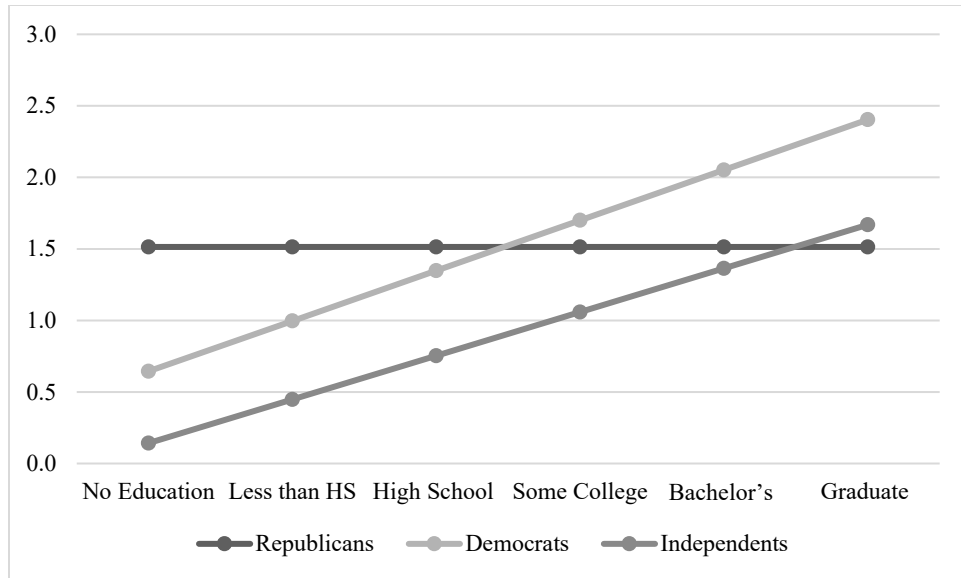


Figure 4.2. Democratic Involvement Interaction Effect of Education.

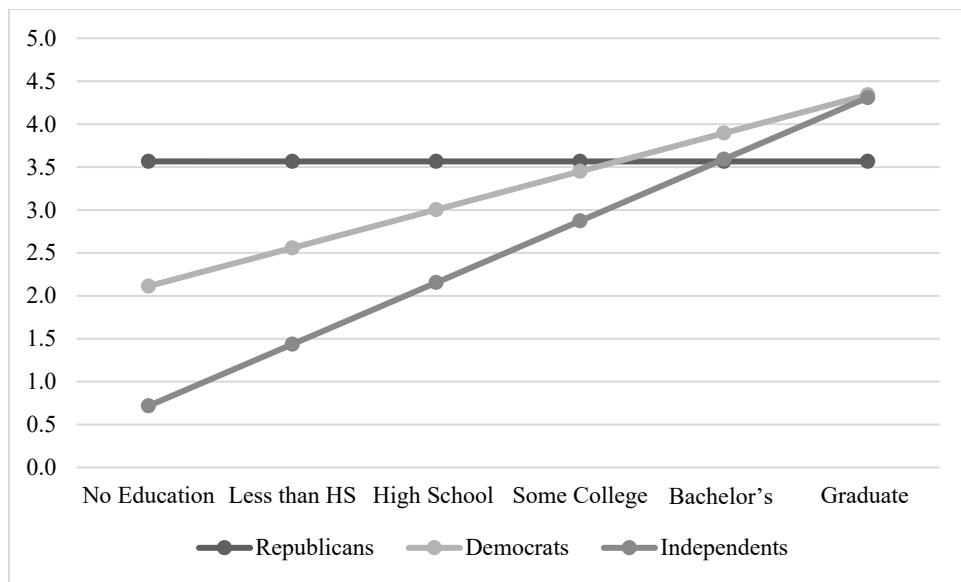


Figure 4.3. Political Voice Interaction Effect of Education.

CHAPTER FIVE

Conclusion

Why does civic engagement matter? Expanding upon the existing definition of civic engagement to develop three distinct scales to reveal how socioeconomic status influences civic engagement within three separate types of civic engagement: community involvement, democratic involvement, and political voice. I hypothesized that political party affiliation will lose importance in affecting civic engagement after controlling for socioeconomic status. Overall, socioeconomic status does reduce the impact of political affiliation for the community involvement¹, democratic involvement and political voice scales indicating its importance as a facilitator of civic engagement. However, this effect only affects members of the Democratic Party and overall, Democrats are more civically engaged than Republicans. Interestingly, referring back the average levels of civic engagement across political parties (see figure 4.1), Republicans were initially more civically engaged than Democrats. But after accounting for socioeconomic status, among several other control variables, this effect switches to where Democrats are now more involved civically than Republicans; which aligns with other studies' findings (Pew Research Center, 2012; Heaney, 2016; Okun, 1994; Smith, 2013; Smith, Schlozman, Verba, & Brady, 2009).

Race/ethnicity is significant for community involvement, democratic involvement, and political voice. Specifically for respondents of Black, Hispanic, and

¹ After accounting for socioeconomic status, political party affiliation loses significance.

Asian or Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander (ANHPI), Native American/Alaska Native and respondents of Multiple Races². All of these racial/ethnic groups have lower engagement across all three types compared to White respondents. Which is interesting because the Democratic Party has a strong base among minorities, but Democrats are observed in other research to exhibit more civic engagement behaviors compared to the Republicans (Pew Research Center, 2012; Heaney, 2016; Okun, 1994; Smith, 2013; Smith, Schlozman, Verba, & Brady, 2009; Smooth, 2006; Kittilson, 2016; Sides, Tesler, & Vavreck, 2017; Bejarano, 2014).

Model 3 was conducted to evaluate the significance of socioeconomic status as a mediator. Education is very significant for Democrats, but income is not significant for this political party overall. Furthermore, regarding political voice, there was no specific mediation effect from income or educational attainment for Democrats. For Independents only income was a significant mediator for civic engagement and this mediation effect was present across the three civic engagement scales. There is a significant interaction effect between educational attainment and two of the three types of civic engagement: democratic involvement and political voice. As education increases for Democrats, so does democratic involvement and political voice engagement. This result should be explored further especially looking into the racial/ethnic distribution of the Democratic Party and educational attainment. There was no significant interaction between increases of education for Republicans and these two types of civic engagement.

² Being Native American/Alaska Native and of Multiple Races was only significant for democratic involvement.

The purpose of this study was to take the two existing trends of political affiliation and socioeconomic status within civic engagement literature and evaluate which has the larger effect on civic engagement. This analysis indicates that socioeconomic status has the larger effect on civic engagement for Democrats, especially regarding educational attainment. As with all research there are limitations for this study. The scope of this project limits further exploration into other significant factors such as race/ethnicity. Additionally, the American National Election Studies (ANES) 2020 Times Series Study doesn't measure all of the identified civic engagement indicators noted in research³. It is possible that the participants of the ANES (2020) study may be engaged in these other avenues of civic engagement not measured in this dataset. Additionally, this study pertains to the United States and was not explored from a global perspective. Lastly, limitations with the ANES (2020) study prevented exploration into cultural motivations behind civic engagement behaviors.

Regarding future research, studies on civic engagement should consider and determine which factors hold more influence in predicting these behaviors. While political party affiliation did not completely lose significance in predicting democratic involvement and political voice behaviors, its effect was reduced after accounting for socioeconomic status. Consequently, even if future research seeks to evaluate the political party system's effect on civic engagement, it is important to consider that these factors are not in a silo and measures like socioeconomic status may hold significant influence.

³ See Keeter et.al, 2002 article.

Furthermore, scholars should consider separating the different types of civic engagement as different factors to better represent how individuals are civically engaged. Engagement varied by type and the significant factors contributing to engagement were inconsistent depending on whether community involvement, democratic involvement, or political voice were being analyzed. For instance, age was not significant for community involvement, but was significant for democratic and political voice. Also, since educational attainment has a significant interaction effect for Democrats engaged in democratic involvement and political voice behaviors, this effect should be explored further to evaluate this relationship more in-depth. Finally, future research should evaluate the motivations behind civically engaged Republicans. Regarding 2020, socioeconomic status was not a significant factor behind civic engagement for Republicans. Potentially, there are more cultural motivations behind civic engagement for Republicans compared to Democrats.

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