Informed or Overwhelmed?

Disentangling the Effects of Cognitive Ability and Information on Public Opinion*

Adam R. Panish†

September 15, 2024

Abstract

Received wisdom in political science holds that informed citizens are better able to develop coherent, stable policy preferences. However, past research fails to differentiate between the effects of information and cognitive ability. I show that, for people with low levels of ability, consuming more political information predicts lower levels of ideological constraint and response stability. This effect is driven by relatively technical issues, suggesting that attempts to inform the electorate may backfire by overwhelming some voters. More broadly, these results suggest that an increasingly saturated information environment may exacerbate, rather than ameliorate, differences in political sophistication.

*Earlier versions of this research were presented at the 2023 ISPP annual meeting in Montréal and the 2023 APSA annual meeting in Los Angeles. I thank Yanna Krupnikov and her Fall 2022 Public Opinion class for their helpful suggestions, and Matthew Barnfield for his feedback on a previous draft of this paper. I am particularly indebted to Stanley Feldman for his thoughtful advice and guidance.

†PhD Candidate, Department of Political Science, Stony Brook University. adam.panish@stonybrook.edu

1 Introduction

> It is undeniably important to improve our knowledge of the dynamics of evaluation, in cases where we may assume that certain raw materials are given. Yet it seems of equal importance to understand the consequences of initial differences in these raw materials, whether they involve cognitive capacity or background of political lore.
>
> Campbell et al. 1960, 255

For over half a century, research has shown that politically informed citizens are more likely to hold stable and ideologically consistent attitudes on public policy (Ansolabehere, Rodden, and Snyder 2008; Converse 1964; Freeder, Lenz, and Turney 2019; Kalmoe 2020). Political scientists often interpret this relationship in causal terms, arguing that knowledge of politics breeds conviction and coherence in one's beliefs (Althaus 1998, 2003; Alvarez 1997; Arnold 2012; Bartels 1996; Delli Carpini and Keeter 1996; Zaller 1992). In this view, an uninformed citizenry will struggle to translate its interests and values into votes, giving free reign to demagogues who bypass issues and prey on emotions (Barber and Pope 2019; Dahl 1989; Delli Carpini and Keeter 1996). Some scholars go so far as to argue that, without high levels of political knowledge, democracy is unsustainable (Somin 2013; Brennan 2016).

In making these arguments, political scientists tend to take for granted that information is the active ingredient that causes political knowledge to correlate with opinion quality. However, there is reason to doubt this assumption. Decades of research in cognitive psychology has shown that people differ in their cognitive abilities, and that these differences crystallize in early adolescence and persist across the lifespan (Breit et al. 2024; Neisser et al. 1996). Consistent with this principle, cognitive skills in adolescence predict people's acquisition of political knowledge in later life independently of whether they attend college (Highton 2009; Rasmussen 2016b). Similarly, lab experiments find that cognitive ability predicts people's ability to encode and organize novel political information above and beyond prior engagement

with politics (Lodge and Hamill 1986; Hamill, Lodge, and Blake 1985). Thus, despite decades of research, we have little idea to what extent the active ingredient in political knowledges scales is actually information—or to what extent it might be cognitive ability.

Building on these findings, I propose a model of information effects on public opinion that explicitly accounts for cognitive ability. I argue that qualities like attitude stability and ideological coherence are better understood, not as outcomes of being politically informed, but as products of an interaction between the specific facts, arguments, and ideas that a person encounters and their ability to parse semantic information. All else equal, people with more cognitive skills should find it easier to track whether novel arguments accord with their existing beliefs and commitments; for them, information consumption should encourage the formation of coherent and stable preferences. In contrast, people low in cognitive ability may struggle to make sense of the political rhetoric that they encounter, absorbing talking points from different sources while failing to note contradictions and gravitating to whatever appeals are most salient at a given moment; for them, information consumption may overwhelm and confuse rather than clarify, leading to preferences that are less coherent and less stable.

I test these predictions in three nationally representative US panels. Among Americans with high levels of verbal ability, I replicate the classic finding that the politically informed hold attitudes that are more constrained by left-right ideology and more stable over time. But among Americans with low levels of verbal ability, I find the opposite—for them, information consumption is often negatively related to constraint and stability. Moreover, this pattern holds across a wide range of strategies for measuring information consumption. To probe whether these effects are driven by the cognitive demands of attitude formation, I conduct two additional tests. First, I show that information backfire among low-ability respondents occurs for attitudes in a relatively technical and unintuitive issue domain—size of government—but not in an intuitive and emotionally charged issue domain—social policy. Second, I show that the moderating effect of verbal ability cannot be explained by demographics, education, income, party identification, partisan extremity, psychological motivations, or the specific print, television, radio, and online media that people consume. While these analyses are far from dispositive and cannot tell us whether or not relationships are causal, they help to rule out alternative explanations and provide context for judging the plausibility of my model (Spirling and Stewart 2024).

The implications of these findings are sobering. They suggest that an increasingly saturated information environment will exacerbate, rather than ameliorate, differences in the quality of opinions held by the most and least politically sophis-

ticated members of the American public. These findings challenge the widespread view that information alone explains individual differences in attitude structure and stability, while also uncovering an additional mechanism by which the growth of mass media may have increased inequalities in political sophistication (Prior 2007).

2 Cognition, Information, and Political Sophistication

Are all people capable of developing firmly held, well-considered opinions about public policy? Observers have debated this question, in one form or another, for thousands of years. Critics of direct democracy, like the Socrates of Plato's Republic and the Irish political theorist Edmund Burke, insist that most people are too fickle to render coherent judgements about politics. Even the architects of the American Constitution take a somewhat pessimistic view of citizen competence. In a famous passage, James Madison argues that elevating mass publics to the intellectual and moral level necessary for direct democracy is a fool's errand. He instead advocates a representative system that will "refine and enlarge the public views, by passing them through the medium of a chosen body of citizens, whose wisdom may best discern the true interest of their country" (Madison 1987[1788], 126). While scholars have occasionally espoused Madisonian views on citizen competence (e.g., Lippmann 1922; Luskin 1990; Schumpeter 1942), most take for granted that rational deliberation is within reach of anyone who decides to seek out a steady diet of political information (e.g., Dahl 1989; Delli Carpini and Keeter 1996; Nie, Verba, and Petrocik 1979). Thus, while political scientists often fret about the public's lack of civic skills, the field has largely accepted the premise that most people could become politically sophisticated if they put in the work.[1]

Does knowing more about politics have large, salutary effects on political behavior? It is certainly true that citizens who score higher on political knowledge scales demonstrate sounder political reasoning in a variety of contexts. They are more likely to hold attitudes and cast votes that are consistent with their material interests and values (Delli Carpini and Keeter 1996; Zaller 1992); they are better at learning and applying decision-making rules when choosing among political candidates (Lau, Andersen, and Redlawsk 2008; Lau and Redlawsk 2001; Sniderman, Brody, and Tetlock

[1]In fairness, a growing number of political scientists argue that factual knowledge is overrated as a prerequisite for good citizenship (Boudreau 2009; Lupia 2016; Kraft 2024; Goren 2013) However, in contrast to the present argument, these scholars maintain that voters can make relatively optimal decisions while expending few cognitive resources.

1991); they are better at spotting and discounting false information even when it flatters their biases (Vegetti and Mancosu 2020); they engage in a broader and more effective information search before arriving at a decision (Bernhard and Freeder 2020; Lau and Redlawsk 2006; Singh and Roy 2014); and they make better use of the information that they encounter (Funk 1997; Gilens 2001; Lau and Redlawsk 2006). Given these findings, it is no wonder that many political scientists view knowledge as "an instrumental good that helps to enlighten one's self-interest and to translate it into effective political action" (Delli Carpini and Keeter 1996, 218) and believe that knowledge disparities cause "systematically different vote choices by citizens in otherwise similar political circumstances" (Bartels 1996, 202).

Yet, this causal story is not necessarily the correct one. Just because people who know more facts about politics exhibit better reasoning skills does not mean that learning those facts caused them to become better thinkers. Instead, political knowledge may be in part a reflection of pre-existing differences in cognitive skill. Several lines of evidence support this view. For one, people who do well on political knowledge tests tend to have high levels of cognitive ability even after accounting for differences in education, media consumption, and political interest (Harvey and Harvey 1970; Hamill and Lodge 1986; Hamill, Lodge, and Blake 1985; Highton 2009; Neuman 1986; Neuman, Just, and Crigler 1992; Nie, Junn, and Stehlik-Barry 1996; Rasmussen 2016b).[2] Another line of evidence emerges from research on the dimensionality of political knowledge. Burnett and McCubbins (2020) show that people with more political knowledge also know more about shopping, sports, popular culture, geography, economics, and the rules of the road. Moreover, they find that a single latent factor explains over 80% of the variance in knowledge across domains, suggesting that political knowledge is largely a measure of general learning propensity rather than anything specific to politics. In another measurement study, Pietryka and MacIntosh (2013) find that the residualized covariances among political knowledge items are negligible, implying that an underlying latent variable causes people to accumulate political knowledge (see Bollen and Ting 2000). Lastly, several experiments have found that people who score low on political knowledge scales struggle to use relevant facts to inform their decisions even when the information is provided to them (Gilens 2001; Rahn, Aldrich, and Borgida 1994; Rahn and Cramer 1996). Together, these findings raise the likelihood that political knowledge is confounded

[2]Indeed, education's effect on political knowledge appears to be negligible (Weinschenk and Dawes 2019; Weinschenk et al. 2023). Yet, Arceneaux, Johnson, and Maes (2012) find that political knowledge and educational attainment share a large common genetic component that only weakly overlaps with political interest, suggesting that a heritable underlying trait influences both political knowledge and educational attainment.

with pre-political cognitive skills, calling into question the meaning of these scales' tendency to predict political sophistication.

3 The Role of Verbal Ability

One cognitive skill in particular has been found to correlate with and predict the same host of outcomes as political knowledge scales: *verbal ability*, which captures a person's aptitude for understanding, retaining, and reasoning about semantic (as opposed to mechanical or spatial) information (Wechsler 1958). High levels of verbal ability appear to reflect both greater working memory capacity and ease of memory retrieval, allowing people to rapidly interpret and encode semantic information while freeing up resources for effortful cognition (Hunt 1978; Perfetti 1985). Experimental studies find that people with high levels of verbal ability are better able to comprehend and recall political information, often outstripping the combined effects of topic-specific interest and knowledge (Eckhardt, Wood, and Jacobvitz 1991; Lodge and Hamill 1986; Neuman, Just, and Crigler 1992). Graber (1984, 195) reports similar results in a qualitative study of news consumption, noting that participants with "greater language facility and better ability to articulate ideas" excelled at processing and retrieving political information encountered in the media, while "panelists at lower intelligence levels omitted more stories from processing and had more difficulty in retrieving complex information." Other studies find that respondents with higher levels of verbal ability are less susceptible to question order effects (Krosnick and Alwin 1987) and are more likely to update their attitudes when the information on which those attitudes were based is shown to be false (Brydges, Gignac, and Ecker 2018; De keersmaecker and Roets 2017; McIlhiney et al. 2023). These results are consistent with the idea that verbal ability facilitates automatic, low-level components of political information processing such as parsing and storing information in long-term memory and updating cognitive representations.

Verbal ability also appears to facilitate more effortful, high-level forms of political cognition—namely, the ability to use ideology as a descriptive and inferential tool (Converse 1964). Hamill and Lodge find that verbal ability is a powerful predictor of people's ability to map issue positions onto abstractions like liberal versus conservative, surpassing the effects of political interest, education, media consumption, income, and participation (Hamill, Lodge, and Blake 1985; Hamill and Lodge 1986). Similarly, Kinder and Kalmoe (2017, 172n6) show that verbal ability predicts people's ability to place themselves on an ideological continuum net of controls for knowledge, participation, and education. As one would expect given their grasp of how abstractions map onto concrete political phenomena, people with higher levels

of verbal ability are also more likely to identify with the party that represents their issue positions and ideology (Ganzach 2018; Gooch 2015; Rasmussen 2016a).

4 A Model of Ability and Information Effects on Public Opinion

What does it mean for the claim that political knowledge is an "instrumental good" that many of its purported effects can be explained, in part, by domain-general reasoning ability? Clearly, people need to have some contextual knowledge about politics to form policy preferences; verbal ability cannot make up for political ignorance. Rather than generating political sophistication from scratch, verbal ability appears to shape how effectively people process conflicting signals. Zaller (1992) shows that politically sophisticated individuals are better able to identify and reject arguments that conflict with their values, principles, interests, and group attachments, leaving them with more highly structured and stable belief systems. Meanwhile, people who are less sophisticated but who persist in attending to politics tend to "fill up their minds with large stores of only partially consistent ideas, arguments, and considerations," leaving them with attitudes that are more unstable and incoherent than if they had received no information at all (Zaller 1992, 36). Similarly, Lau and Redlawsk (2006, 220) argue that "at least in politics, more information does not always result in better decisions—Evidently, additional information beyond cognitive capacity often confuses voters (or tires them out?) and actually lowers the probability of a correct value-maximizing decision."

Take, for example, the roughly 30% of Americans who hold policy positions that are at odds with their stated ideological convictions (Claassen, Tucker, and Smith 2015; Ellis and Stimson 2012). Given that "[p]aying attention to the news is one of the hallmarks of an informed and engaged citizen," one might expect this group to be less attentive to political media than their peers (Ellis and Stimson 2012, 167). In fact, Ellis and Stimson show that, among Americans with middling levels of political knowledge, those who read or watch the news often are more likely to report inconsistent beliefs. Ellis and Stimson attribute their findings to the fact that American media regularly broadcast two contradictory messages: first, that social safety net programs are both desirable and compatible with Americans' ethos of hard work and self-reliance; and second, that liberals give a free pass to criminals, reward deadbeats, and disrespect traditional ways of life. Given this media environment, Ellis and Stimson argue that "exposure to political news may not help—and may even hinder—the ability of citizens to align their own operational and symbolic beliefs"

(2012, 167-68).

The idea that encountering more political information can make people less politically sophisticated may seem counter-intuitive. However, research on how the mind allocates cognitive resources suggests that lower verbal ability can force a trade-off between memorization and comprehension that can make it difficult to learn effectively when information is abundant. Cognitive psychologists argue that the mind draws on a limited pool of attention to parse incoming signals and form long-term memories, placing these two processes in conflict (Popov et al. 2019; Popov and Reder 2020). Because people with higher levels of verbal ability possess greater working memory capacity, they are better equipped to engage in effortful processing while also encoding semantic information in long-term memory (Frischkorn, Wilhelm, and Oberauer 2022; Hunt 1978; Perfetti 1985). By contrast, people with lower levels of verbal ability more often face a tradeoff—remember many facts without having thought particularly hard about what they mean, or ignore much of what you've heard and focus on understanding the implications of a few things at a time.

Research on voter decision-making provides direct evidence that too much information can impair political cognition for those low in political knowledge even as it helps the knowledgeable. In a series of experiments, Rahn and colleagues vary whether information about political candidates is presented at higher or lower levels of complexity (Rahn, Aldrich, and Borgida 1994; Rahn and Cramer 1996). They find that conveying information at a greater level of complexity helped people with high levels of political knowledge and hindered people with low levels of political knowledge. Conveying information in a simpler format muted these differences, leading Rahn and Cramer (1996, 198) to conclude that low knowledge subjects "suffered overload in the more complex environment." Moreover, these authors note that alternative moderators such as interest, participation, and newspaper reading all fail to produce the focal interaction, "suggesting that the effects of political sophistication in [their] results are based on the cognitive ability component of this construct, as would be expected by a limited capacity framework" (Rahn and Cramer 1996, 206).

Lau and colleagues apply a self-guided version of this paradigm, allowing subjects to browse information in a simulated campaign environment before casting their votes for fictional candidates (see Andersen, Redlawsk, and Lau 2019). Subjects are then scored on the "correctness" of their vote—that is, whether they chose the candidate whose policy positions align with their own. Using this paradigm, Lau and Redlawsk (2001; 2006) compare the quality of the vote choices made by people with higher and lower levels of political knowledge, conditional on how much and what type of information they viewed. As expected, subjects who scored high on political knowledge scales—and who were, therefore, likely high in verbal ability—

benefitted from consuming more information. However, subjects who scored low on political knowledge scales were less likely to vote correctly when they consumed more information. In another study, Kleinberg and Lau (2021) examine the effects of telling people that they can look up political facts later rather than having to remember them. They find that subjects who were told they could look up facts later viewed less information but remembered more and made better decisions, consistent with the idea that "extra information (beyond one's cognitive capacity to handle it) actually hurts decision making—that is, bad (excess) information crowding out good (processible)—by confusing voters and making them less likely to remember crucial information" (Lau and Redlawsk 2006, 212).

While Rahn, Lau, and colleagues' results were obtained in simulated campaign environments, quantitative analyses confirm that television and print media present more information than people can process and do so at a level of complexity that makes it difficult to fully interpret (Graber 2004; Neuman, Just, and Crigler 1992). As a result, people with lower levels of verbal ability may come away from each newscast or article with a more contradictory mix of considerations in mind than they had going in. When asked to give their opinions on policy, the mix of considerations that they pull from the top of their head will be more numerous but less coherent than a person with similar verbal ability who simply ignored the news (Zaller 1992; Zaller and Feldman 1992). Meanwhile, high ability individuals will take advantage of additional information to identify the policy positions that best represent their interests and values. These predictions yield my first hypothesis:

> **Hypothesis 1 ("Opposite Effects"):** Greater information consumption will correspond to increased constraint and stability among people with high levels of verbal ability and decreased constraint and stability among people with low levels of verbal ability.

Another implication of this theory is that the backfire effect proposed in Hypothesis 1 should be small or absent for policies that are highly salient and hence require less cognitive skill to evaluate. Social issues like same-sex marriage, abortion, and transgender rights are likely candidates because they tend to trigger rapid "gut-level" emotional responses regardless of people's level of political expertise (Hetherington and Weiler 2009, 2018; Johnston, Lavine, and Federico 2017; Johnston and Wronski 2015). These gut-level responses should, in turn, diminish the role played by cognitive processing in turning information into attitudes. Using same-sex marriage as an example, Johnston and Wronski explain that "the key referent for the issue of gay marriage (i.e., homosexuality) is inseparable from the policy itself, and the activation of feelings and beliefs related to moral traditionalism is unlikely to require much

political knowledge" (2015, 37). Indeed, Johnston and colleagues have demonstrated that politically disengaged people often possess strong intuitions about issues like homosexuality and abortion but not economic policy (Johnston, Lavine, and Federico 2017; Johnston and Wronski 2015).

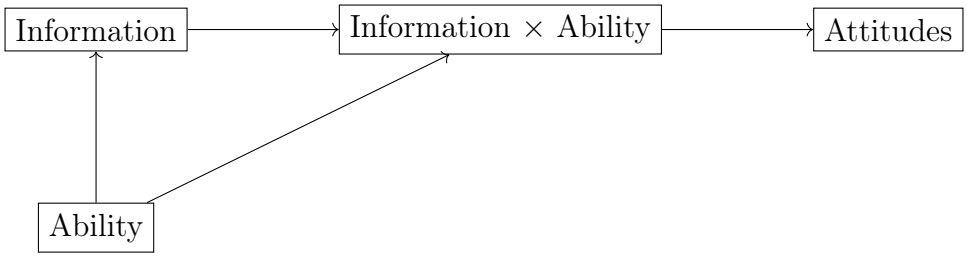
In contrast, debates over economic policies like spending, taxes, and regulation tend not to inspire much conviction beyond the most knowledgeable and ideological parts of the electorate (Carmines and Stimson 1980; Pollock, Lilie, and Vittes 1993). Here, verbal ability should play a decisive role. For example, Neuman, Just, and Crigler (1992) show that verbal ability has no bearing on how effectively people learn about emotionally charged topics like drug abuse and AIDS. However, when it comes to issues "that involved technical information—Star Wars [a proposed missile defense system] and the stock market crash—subjects with high cognitive skills and low attention learned significantly more than those with low cognitive skill and high attention, even though the two groups had scored about the same before the news exposure" (Neuman, Just, and Crigler 1992, 105-6). These predictions yield my second hypothesis:

> **Hypothesis 2 ("Domain Difficulty"):** The negative effect of information consumption at low levels of verbal ability proposed in Hypothesis 1 should appear for economic issues but not social issues.

Before moving on, it is important to note that my theory rests on the assumption that cognitive ability is exogenous to information consumption (see Fig. 1). This is not to deny the evidence that reading during childhood promotes cognitive development (Ritchie, Bates, and Plomin 2015). Rather, my argument is specifically that the kind of media exposure that people rely on for political information—reading the newspaper, browsing political blogs, watching cable news, receiving second-hand reports from friends and family—does not affect verbal ability in adulthood. In Appendix B, I test this assumption using three General Social Survey (GSS) panel studies. Results from a random intercepts cross-lagged panel model show that verbal ability is highly stable over a 4-year period and is unrelated to changes in how often people read the newspaper, providing strong support for exogeneity (Table B1 Hamaker, Kuiper, and Grasman 2015).

Lastly, I note that my model does not assume that the information that people consume is exogenous to their level of ability (see Fig. 1). Therefore, if some proxy measure of information consumption (e.g., self-reported attention to politics in the media) has different effects at different levels of verbal ability, it could be that the higher ability respondents are simply paying attention to different, more politically informative, media. While plausible, this concern is not borne out in my analyses.

Figure 1: A Model of Ability and Information Effects on Public Opinion



Using detailed data on where people get their political news, I show in a later section that verbal ability continues to moderate the effects of information consumption even when controlling for the moderating effects of media diet.

5 Data and Methods

5.1 Data

My data consist of three American National Election Studies (ANES) panels spanning 2008-2010, 2012-2013, and 2016-2020, respectively. The first sample was recruited as part of the ANES 2008-2009 Panel Study, which consists of a telephone recruitment interview and demographic data collection in November 2007, followed by 21 internet-based surveys from January 2008 through September 2009 (DeBell, Krosnick, and Lupia 2010). Participants were interviewed again in June 2010 as part of the 2010 Panel Recontact Survey (DeBell et al. 2010). The 2008-2010 sample consists of two cohorts recruited via random digit dialing in November 2007 and the summer of 2008, respectively. I focus only on the first cohort, who completed all key independent variables. The recruitment interview for this cohort yielded data for 2,360 respondents; in subsequent waves, the number of respondents fluctuated between 1,108 and 1,623, with 856 completing the 2010 survey. The second sample is drawn from the ANES 2012 Time Series study (ANES 2014). Participants were recruited using a combination of address-based sampling and random digit dialing, yielding 2,054 face-to-face interviews and 3,860 internet-based interviews conducted in the months before and after the 2012 presidential election. Of the internet-based sample, 1,563 were re-interviewed in July 2013 as part of the 2013 Internet Recontact Study (ANES 2013). The third sample is drawn from the ANES 2016 Time Series study (ANES 2019). Participants were recruited via address-based sampling, yielding 1,180 face-to-face interviews and 3,090 internet-based interviews conducted

before and after the 2016 presidential election. Of the combined face-to-face and internet-based samples, 2,839 were re-interviewed as part of the ANES 2020 Time Series Study (ANES 2021).

5.2 Dependent Variables

To measure *ideological constraint*, I use all items administered in the 2008-2009 Panel Study, 2012 Time Series, and 2016 Times Series that ask respondents to place themselves on a policy debate on which the Democratic and Republican parties hold stable, principled disagreements. Following this criterion, I exclude questions about defense spending, crime spending, reducing the budget deficit by taxing the wealthy, international trade, and civil liberties from my constraint indices (see Appendix D). I first re-scale each item to range from 0 to 1, where low scores indicate more liberal/left-wing positions and high scores indicate more conservative/right-wing positions. Respondents who refused to answer an item or said "don't know" are coded as missing, and respondents who replied "I haven't thought much about this" when prompted are assigned to the midpoint of the scale.[3] I then calculate the standard deviation of respondent's policy attitudes across all items (Barton and Parsons 1977). Lastly, I reverse and rescale the resulting measure to range from 0 (least constrained) to 1 (most constrained).

To measure *attitude stability*, I use all policy items that were fielded two or more times in a panel (see Appendix D). After recoding all items as described above, I take the standard deviation of responses to the same item across time (Elder and O'Brian 2022). I then average, reverse, and re-scale these standard deviations to create an individual-level stability index that ranges from 0 (least stable) to 1 (most stable). For both constraint and stability, respondents who answered fewer than 90% of the selected policy items are coded as missing. The remaining respondents are only scored on the items that they answered. I use a more lenient threshold of 50% for calculating stability in the 2008-2010 panel to accommodate high levels of wave non-response (see Appendix E).

A potential objection to treating response stability as a sign of firmly-held attitudes is that most policy items were asked only twice, meaning that we cannot be certain whether change represents vacillation or genuine opinion change. While this represents a limitation of the current study, existing evidence suggests that the vast majority of change observed in public opinion surveys is random rather than durable.

[3]In contrast to "don't know" responses and refusals, "haven't thought much about this" was directly elicited on a subset of questions in the 2016 and 2020 ANES. This option typically drew a large number of responses, making it impractical to code the responses as missing.

Hill and Kriesi (2001) analyze attitudes toward six environmental regulations in a four-wave, nationally representative Swiss panel. They place the proportion of citizens moving from one stably held opinion to another at between 2% and 8% over a 2-year period, depending on the issue. Similarly, Feldman's (1989) analysis of a five-wave panel reveals virtually no durable change in Americans' issue positions in the months leading up to the 1976 US presidential election.

5.3 Independent Variables

To measure *verbal ability*, I use two versions of Wordsum, a short vocabulary test developed for use in public opinion surveys (Thorndike 1942; Thorndike and Gallup 1944; see Malhotra, Krosnick, and Haertel 2007). A 10-item version of the test was included in the ANES 2012 and 2016 Time Series studies. A 14-item version developed by Cor, Haertel, Krosnick, and Malhotra (2012) was fielded in the eighth wave of the ANES 2008-2009 Panel Study. Both versions consist of items that ask respondents to indicate which of five words is closest in meaning to a target word (e.g., "beast: 1. afraid 2. words 3. large 4. animal 5. separate 6. don't know"). To achieve a correct answer, respondents must either know or infer the meanings of the words and weigh their relative similarities. I assign 0's to incorrect and "don't know" responses and 1's to correct responses. I then average the scores to create an additive scale ranging from 0 (lowest ability) to 1 (highest ability).

Despite its brevity and simplicity, studies report consistently high correlations between Wordsum and tests of verbal ability, abstract reasoning, math ability, and general intelligence ($r \approx .45$-$.85$; Hagen and Thorndike 1955; Huang and DeSimone 2021; Huang and Hauser 1998; Miner 1957, 1961). However, much of the evidence for Wordsum's breadth and convergent validity hinges on data that is now at least seventy years old, and some have speculated that the test's validity has decayed as its vocabulary words have gone out of use (Wilson and Gove 1999). In Appendix A, I address this concern by testing Wordsum's convergent validity in the 1987 and 1994 GSS samples, which were administered Wordsum and abstract reasoning tests taken from the Sixteen Personality Factor Questionnaire (16PF; Cattell, Eber, and Tatsuoka 1970) and the Wechsler Adult Intelligence Scale-revised (WAIS-R; Wechsler 1981), respectively. Using structural equation modeling to correct for measurement error, I find that Wordsum and abstract reasoning ability correlate at .63 in the 1987 GSS and .68 in the 1994 GSS (see Tables A1 and A2). The strength of these disattenuated correlations suggests that, as recently as the 1990s, Wordsum retained its ability to measure a broad ability domain that includes abstract reasoning.

The task of measuring *information consumption* is less straightforward. Political

scientists have long sought to identify the best method for measuring the amount of political information that people encounter, with mixed results (Bartels 1993; Dilliplane, Goldman, and Mutz 2013; Price and Zaller 1993; Prior 2009a,b, 2013). Given this lack of consensus, I opt to test my hypotheses across six commonly used information consumption proxies. These are shown with example items in Table 1. I measure each proxy by creating an equally weighted composite of its items and rescaling this composite to range from 0 to 1 (for items see Appendix D).[4] While most of these measures are self-explanatory, two require clarification. Candidate-issue placement knowledge is measured by assigning one point to respondents who place the Democratic candidate to the left of the Republican candidate on a given issue and zero points to all others, including those who do not know one or both candidates' stances (Delli Carpini and Keeter 1993; Freeder, Lenz, and Turney 2019; Zaller 1992). General political knowledge is measured using a variety of multiple choice and open-ended factual questions about political figures and institutions. Correct responses receive one point and both incorrect and "don't know" responses receive zero points (Brown and Pope 2021; Luskin and Bullock 2011). For items where the option is available, partially correct responses receive half a point (DeBell 2013).

The information proxies in Table 1 can be divided into two broad types—self-reports and objective tests. Among the self-reports, a further distinction can be made between subjective evaluations and frequency estimates. Items tapping political interest, while not measures of information consumption *per se*, are highly correlated with exposure to political information and boast excellent reliability (Prior 2007, 2019). The same is true of items tapping attention to politics in the media, which have the added benefit of asking directly about political information consumption (Prior 2019). The primary drawback of these items is their use of ambiguous response options such as "very," "somewhat," and "not much." In contrast, media consumption frequency and political discussion frequency items ask about a concrete quantity—the number of days in a week that something occurred—but exhibit high levels of measurement error (Bartels 1993; Konitzer et al. 2021; Morey and Eveland Jr. 2016; Price and Zaller 1993; Prior 2009a,b). Faced with a choice between vaguely categorized evaluations and error-prone frequency estimates, some have recommended eschewing self-reports altogether in favor of objective tests (Price and Zaller 1993; Zaller 1990). However, the objective tests have their own mixture of pros and cons. On the positive side, they display high levels of reliability and criterion validity (Delli Carpini

[4]Because the "interest in politics and public affairs" item was not asked of approximately one third of respondents in 2012 and one fifth of respondents in 2016, I take the average of the non-missing items for each respondent. All results are robust to the exclusion of respondents who were not administered this item.

Table 1: Information Consumption Proxy Measures

Item Type	Example Items (2016 ANES)	Measurement Properties
Self-Reports		
Subjective Assessments		
Political Interest	"Some people don't pay much attention to political campaigns. How about you? Would you say that you have been very much interested, somewhat interested or not much interested in the political campaigns so far this year?"	+ Reliable + Not Confounded \w Ability – Vague Metric ("very", "somewhat", etc.)
Attention to Politics in the Media	"How much attention do you pay to news about national politics on TV, radio, printed newspapers, or the Internet?"	
Frequency Estimates		
Media Consumption Frequency	"During a typical week, how many days do you watch, read, or listen to news on TV, radio, printed newspapers, or the Internet, not including sports?"	– Unreliable + Not Confounded \w Ability
Political Discussion Frequency	"How many days in the past week did you talk about politics with family or friends?"	+ Concrete Metric (# Days per Week)
Objective Tests		
Candidate-Issue Placement Knowledge	"Some people feel the government in Washington should see to it that every person has a job and a good standard of living. Others think the government should just let each person get ahead on their own. Where would you place [Hillary Clinton / Donald Trump] on this issue?"	+ Reliable – Confounded \w Ability + Concrete Metric (Correct vs. Incorrect)
General Political Knowledge	"For how many years is a United States Senator elected? That is, how many years are there in one full term of office for a U.S. Senator?"	

Note: Each item type is categorized under its respective measurement properties based on reliability, confounding with ability, and whether the metric is concrete or vague.

and Keeter 1993; Pietryka and MacIntosh 2013; Price and Zaller 1993; Zaller 1990). On the negative side, both issue placement and general political knowledge are confounded with verbal ability (Hamill, Lodge, and Blake 1985; Highton 2009; Neuman, Just, and Crigler 1992; Rasmussen 2016b).

In this context, self-reports possess an important quality that makes them valuable, if noisy and subjective, information consumption proxies: On average, it takes no more cognitive skill to pick "very interested" or "7 days" than it does to pick "not much interested" or "0 days," whereas it does take more cognitive skill to answer a knowledge question correctly than it does to answer it incorrectly. Therefore, only self-reports allow us to assess how likely a person is to consume political information without selecting on their ability to store and retrieve memories and hence select-

ing on verbal ability. In Appendix C, I demonstrate this by using exploratory Item Response Theory models to scale the information proxy and Wordsum items in the 2012 and 2016 ANES.[5] As shown in Fig. 2, the self-report items load primarily on latent factors defined by the amount of attention that people pay to politics in the media. In contrast, the objective test items load heavily on latent factors defined by verbal ability and load only modestly on the media attention factors. Also noteworthy is the fact that the frequency estimate items do not load as highly on the media attention factors as the subjective assessment items. This is consistent with evidence that these items are prone to measurement error (Bartels 1993; Price and Zaller 1993).

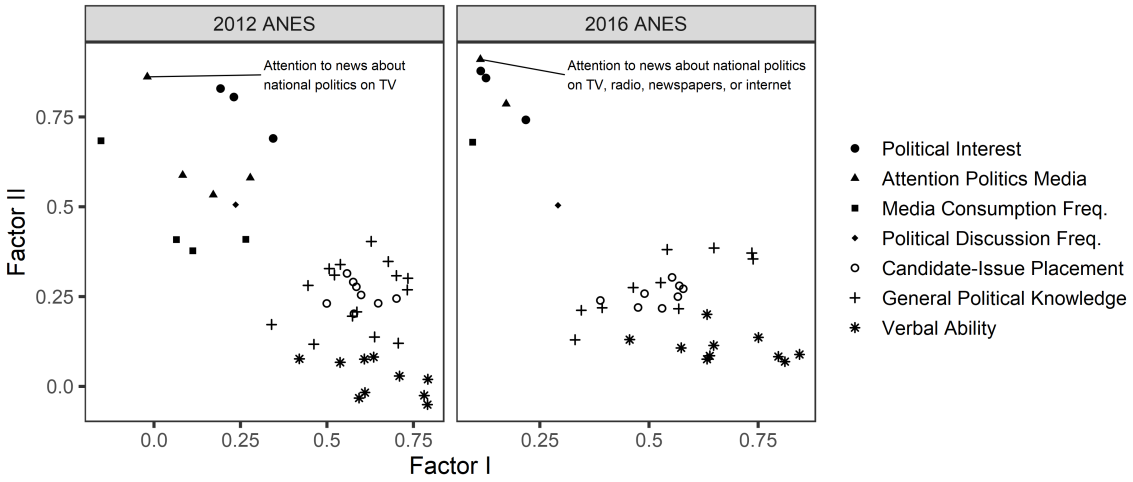


Figure 2: Scaling Information Consumption and Verbal Ability Items

Note: Results are discrimination parameters from exploratory multidimensional IRT models estimated via Expectation-Maximization algorithm. Difficulty parameters are estimated but not shown. Results are varimax rotated to produce two orthogonal latent factors. Model output is in Appendix C.

Given that objective tests appear to be confounded with verbal ability, models that use them will effectively be interacting verbal ability (as measured by Wordsum) with itself (as measured by the objective tests). This should bias my results in a predictable way: Because respondents with low Wordsum scores and high knowledge scores will tend to be higher in underlying ability than those with low Wordsum

[5] I do not include the 2008-2009 Panel Study in this analysis because the items are scattered across waves.

and low knowledge scores, the marginal effect of information at low levels of verbal ability will be biased upward. Similarly, if frequency estimates are especially affected by random measurement error, then models that use them should tend to yield attenuated estimates of information effects. Therefore, I expect self-reports to deliver the strongest confirmation of Hypothesis 1.

5.4 Do Information Effects Depend on Verbal Ability?

According to Hypothesis 1, the relationship between political information consumption and attitude quality should be positive for respondents with high levels of verbal ability and negative for respondents with low levels of verbal ability. To test this hypothesis, I begin by estimating thirty-six linear regressions—one for each combination of a dependent variable and an information proxy in each of my three samples. To summarize these results, I also estimate twelve models pooling across samples using hierarchical linear regression. The focal independent variables in each regression are verbal ability, one of the six information proxies, and an ability-information interaction term. Each regression also includes a set of demographic control variables—age, gender, race, education, and income—measured in the first wave of each panel. All variables except for age are scaled to range from 0 to 1. I present the focal interactions from each model in Table 2 and report the full results in Appendix F.1.

Table 2: Verbally Ability Moderates the Relationship Between Information Consumption and Attitudes

	DV: Constraint				DV: Stability			
Ability ×	2008-10	2012-13	2016-20	Pooled	2008-10	2012-13	2016-20	Pooled
Political Interest	**.62** (.12)	**.18** (.03)	**.29** (.04)	**.24** (.02)	.15 (.10)	.07 (.07)	**.11** (.04)	**.09** (.03)
Attention Pol. Media	**.35** (.12)	**.17** (.04)	**.30** (.04)	**.21** (.02)	.04 (.09)	**.16** (.08)	**.14** (.04)	**.12** (.03)
News Frequency	**.37** (.13)	**.12** (.04)	**.13** (.03)	**.12** (.02)	**.26** (.11)	−.04 (.08)	.03 (.04)	.02 (.03)
Discussion Frequency	**.34** (.10)	**.18** (.03)	**.22** (.02)	**.19** (.02)	.01 (.08)	.09 (.07)	.05 (.03)	.04 (.03)
Issue Placement	**.34** (.10)	**.27** (.03)	**.22** (.03)	**.21** (.02)	.08 (.08)	−**.21** (.08)	−.04 (.04)	−**.07** (.03)
Political Knowledge	**.47** (.10)	**.17** (.04)	**.24** (.04)	**.22** (.02)	.07 (.08)	−**.35** (.09)	−.03 (.04)	−**.10** (.04)

Note: Entries are unstandardized regression coefficients with standard errors in parentheses. Bolded coefficients are statistically significant at the $p < .05$ level. For full results and alternative specifications see Tables F1 and F16.

All twenty-four of the constraint models yield interaction terms are positive and statistically significant, providing strong initial support for Hypothesis 1. The models predicting stability, meanwhile, offer only partial support. Among the eighteen stability models estimated on individual panels, four interactions are positive and statistically significant—political interest in 2016-2020, attention to politics in the

media in 2012-2013 and 2016-2020, and news consumption frequency in 2008-2010. Of the six stability models estimated on the pooled samples, two interactions are positive and statistically significant—political interest and attention to politics in the media. Contrary to Hypothesis 1, there are also several statistically significant interactions whose coefficients are negative—specifically, the interactions for candidate-issue placement knowledge and general political knowledge in 2012-2013 and in the pooled samples.

To further interpret these results, Table 3 reports marginal effects from the pooled models at the fifth and ninety-fifth percentiles of verbal ability, and Fig. 3 visualizes these marginal effects across the entire range of verbal ability. Looking first at the results from the constraint models, I find strong confirmation of Hypothesis 1. At the ninety-fifth percentile of verbal ability, all marginal effects are positive and significant. Here, moving from the lowest to the highest level of an information proxy is associated, on average, with a thirteen-percentage point increase in constraint. But at the fifth percentile of verbal ability, all of the marginal effects are significantly negative with the exception of general political knowledge, which is small and non-significant. Here, moving from the lowest to the highest level of an information proxy is associated, on average, with a roughly six-percentage point decrease in ideological constraint.

Table 3: Effects of Information Proxies by Verbal Ability Percentile (Pooled Models)

	DV: Constraint		DV: Stability	
Ability Percentile:	5th	95th	5th	95th
Political Interest	−**.08** (.01)	**.11** (.01)	−.02 (.02)	**.05** (.01)
Attention Pol. Media	−**.08** (.01)	**.09** (.01)	−**.05** (.02)	**.05** (.01)
News Frequency	−**.05** (.01)	**.05** (.01)	.01 (.02)	.02 (.01)
Discussion Frequency	−**.07** (.01)	**.08** (.01)	.00 (.02)	**.03** (.01)
Issue Placement	−**.04** (.01)	**.13** (.01)	**.11** (.02)	**.05** (.01)
Political Knowledge	.01 (.01)	**.19** (.01)	**.13** (.02)	**.05** (.01)

Note: Entries are unstandardized regression coefficients with standard errors in parentheses. Bolded coefficients are statistically significant at the $p < .05$ level.

Turning next to the stability results, I find partial confirmation of Hypothesis 1, but only in models using self-report proxies. The marginal effect of attention to politics in the media is significantly positive at the ninety-fifth percentile of verbal ability and significantly negative at the fifth percentile of verbal ability, mirroring the results for constraint. The marginal effects of two other self-report proxies—political interest and political discussion frequency—are significantly positive at high levels of

verbal ability and non-significant at low levels of verbal ability. News consumption frequency is not a significant predictor of stability at either level of verbal ability. Lastly, the marginal effects of candidate-issue placement knowledge and general political knowledge are positively and significantly related to stability at high levels of verbal ability, as expected. Contrary to expectations, however, these effects are even larger at lower levels of verbal ability.

While the stability results are only partly consistent with Hypothesis 1, it is worth noting that this may reflect differences in bias and reliability among the information proxies outlined in Table 1. The proxies that yielded positive interactions in the pooled stability models were both subjective assessments, which are highly reliable and not confounded with verbal ability (Prior 2019). In contrast, both objective tests yielded negative interactions in the pooled stability models. As demonstrated in Fig. 2, the objective test items pick up heavily on latent verbal ability, potentially exaggerating the marginal effect of information among those with low Wordsum scores. Meanwhile, the two frequency estimates yielded smaller and non-significant interactions in the pooled stability models, potentially because they are measured with more error than the other proxies (Bartels 1993).

5.5 Is Ability More Important in Less Intuitive Policy Domains?

The above results show that, among people with low levels of verbal ability, consuming more political information often corresponds to lower levels of constraint and stability. According to Hypothesis 2, these negative relationships should disappear when we look exclusively at attitudes towards social issues like same-sex marriage and abortion. This is because these issues tap directly into gut-level intuitions about social change and autonomy, making information pertaining to them easier for people to process (Hetherington and Weiler 2009, 2018; Johnston, Lavine, and Federico 2017; Johnston and Wronski 2015). Meanwhile, these negative relationships should hold when we look only at issues like government spending and taxation that do not resonate as strongly with people's intuitions and therefore require more thought (Neuman, Just, and Crigler 1992; Pollock, Lilie, and Vittes 1993).

To test this hypothesis, I first calculate domain-specific measures of constraint and stability. I follow work that identifies two core dimensions of political ideology in the American public: social policy—having to do with the tension between traditional religious morality and bodily autonomy—and size of government—having to do with the amount of spending and taxation undertaken in service of the welfare state (Ellis and Stimson 2012; McClosky and Zaller 1984). The 2008-2010 panel does not have

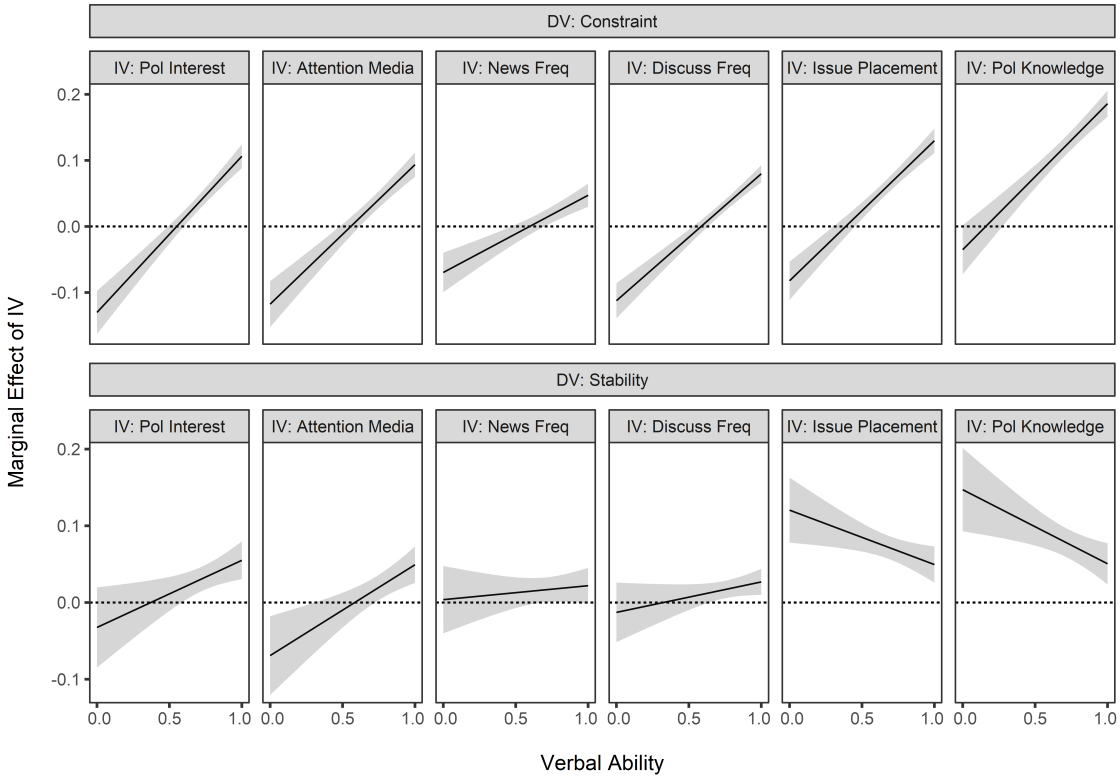


Figure 3: The Relationship Between Information Consumption and Attitudes Depends on Verbal Ability.

Note: Plot lines are marginal effects with 95% confidence intervals from Pooled models (Table 2).

enough items to estimate social policy constraint, and the 2012-2013 panel does not have enough repeated items to estimate stability for either domain. Therefore, I focus on the 2016-2020 panel. Table 4 shows the items assigned to each domain and their average stabilities. Reassuringly, the social policy items are generally more stable than the size of government items, as would be expected if social issues were generally easier for citizens to evaluate.

Using these domain-specific measures of constraint and stability, I estimate a series of linear regressions with the same sets of independent variables as those reported in Table 2. I show the focal interactions in Table 5 and report the full results in Appendix F.2. As predicted, verbal ability is a more consistent moderator in the size-of-government models than in the social policy models. In the models predicting constraint, all six size-of-government models yield significant positive interactions,

Table 4: Domain-Specific Constraint and Stability Items

Social Policy		Size of Government	
Item	Stability	Item	Stability
Same-Sex Adoption	.87 (.33)	School Spending	.83 (.27)
Same-Sex Marriage	.85 (.28)	Raise Taxes on the Rich	.81 (.28)
Same-Sex Job Discrimination	.84 (.28)	Social Security Spending	.81 (.27)
Abortion	.84 (.25)	Guaranteed Jobs & Standard of Living	.80 (.21)
Transgender Bathroom	.81 (.26)	Increase Government Services	.80 (.19)
Deny Services to Gays	.78 (.28)	Government Equalize Incomes	.79 (.23)
		Healthcare Spending	.79 (.22)
		Health Insurance Mandate	.78 (.26)
		Public Health Insurance	.78 (.22)
		Spending on Poor	.77 (.29)
		Welfare Spending	.75 (.30)

Note: Entries are mean item stabilities with standard deviations in parentheses.

compared to only three social policy models. And in the models predicting stability, three size-of-government models yield significant positive interactions, compared to zero social policy models. As before, the subjective evaluation proxies deliver the strongest results, followed by the discussion frequency proxy.

Table 5: Domain-Specific Results in the 2016-2020 Panel

	DV: Constraint		DV: Stability	
Ability x	Social Policy	Size of Gov.	Social Policy	Size of Gov.
Political Interest	**.19** (.08)	**.29** (.05)	.03 (.06)	**.18** (.04)
Attention Pol. Media	**.22** (.09)	**.33** (.05)	.11 (.06)	**.17** (.05)
News Frequency	.11 (.07)	**.10** (.04)	.00 (.05)	.02 (.04)
Discussion Frequency	**.20** (.06)	**.18** (.03)	.02 (.04)	**.08** (.03)
Issue Placement	−.04 (.08)	**.24** (.04)	−.10 (.05)	.04 (.04)
Political Knowledge	.06 (.09)	**.25** (.05)	−.07 (.06)	.06 (.04)

Note: Entries are unstandardized regression coefficients with standard errors in parentheses. Bolded coefficients are statistically significant at the $p < .05$ level. For full results and alternative specifications see Tables F17 and F24.

Next, I report the marginal effect of each information proxy at the fifth and ninety-fifth percentiles of verbal ability in Table Table 6 and plot these marginal effects across the entire range of verbal ability in Fig. 4. As expected, nearly all of the marginal effects estimated at the ninety-fifth ability percentile are positive and

statistically significant. Notably, for people with high levels of verbal ability, information consumption predicts constraint and stability to roughly the same extent for social attitudes and size-of-government attitudes. This can be seen clearly in Fig. 4, where the marginal effects mostly overlap at high levels of ability. In contrast, clear differences between the policy domains emerge at low levels of ability. At the fifth ability percentile, all of the social policy marginal effects are either non-significant or positive, while the size-of-government marginal effects are often significantly negative. In the size-of-government models, the average effect of moving from the lowest to the highest level of an information proxy for low ability respondents is a six-percentage point reduction in constraint and a four-percentage point reduction in stability. This pattern is most visible for the subjective evaluation proxies.

Table 6: Marginal Effects of Information Proxies by Verbal Ability Percentile and Policy Domain in the 2016-2020 Panel

	DV: Constraint				DV: Stability			
	Social Policy		Size of Gov.		Social Policy		Size of Gov.	
Ability Percentile:	5th	95th	5th	95th	5th	95th	5th	95th
Political Interest	−.01 (.04)	**.14** (.03)	**−.08** (.02)	**.16** (.02)	.03 (.03)	**.06** (.02)	**−.05** (.02)	**.10** (.02)
Attention Pol. Media	.00 (.05)	**.18** (.04)	**−.11** (.03)	**.15** (.02)	−.02 (.03)	**.07** (.02)	**−.06** (.03)	**.08** (.02)
News Frequency	.02 (.04)	**.10** (.03)	−.04 (.02)	**.04** (.02)	.04 (.03)	.04 (.02)	.01 (.02)	**.03** (.02)
Discussion Frequency	−.04 (.03)	**.12** (.02)	**−.06** (.02)	**.08** (.01)	.03 (.02)	**.05** (.01)	−.02 (.02)	**.04** (.01)
Issue Placement	**.12** (.04)	**.09** (.03)	**−.05** (.02)	**.14** (.02)	**.14** (.03)	**.06** (.02)	**.05** (.02)	**.09** (.02)
Political Knowledge	.08 (.05)	**.13** (.04)	−.03 (.03)	**.17** (.02)	**.12** (.03)	**.06** (.02)	.03 (.03)	**.08** (.02)

Note: Entries are unstandardized regression coefficients with standard errors in parentheses. Bolded coefficients are statistically significant at the $p < .05$ level.

In short, when people with low levels of verbal ability consume more political information, their economic attitudes tend to be more scattered and unstable, whereas their social attitudes are no less structured or stable than those of their inattentive peers. Given that size-of-government is the more technical and unintuitive issue domain, these results are consistent with the idea that people with low levels of verbal ability may be overwhelmed or confused by political information. Of course, there are other plausible explanations for these results, and my interpretation should not be taken as a claim that I have identified a causal effect of issue difficulty. Rather, the purpose of this analysis is to increase the descriptive information available for judging the plausibility of my theory (Spirling and Stewart 2024).

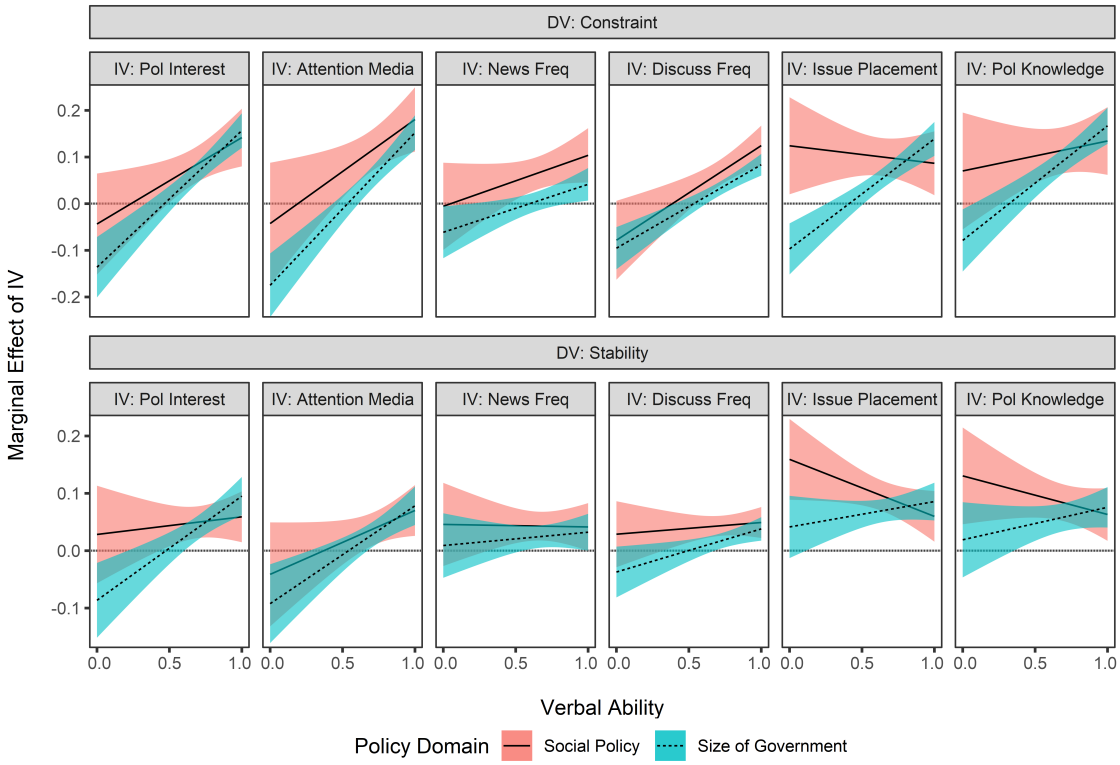


Figure 4: The Moderating Effect of Verbal Ability Differs by Policy Domain

Note: Plot lines are marginal effects with 95% confidence intervals from the 2016-2020 models reported in Table 5.

Table 7: Operationalizing Alternative Explanations

	2008-2010	2012-2013	2016-2020
Demographic			
Age	✓	✓	✓
Gender	✓	✓	✓
Race	✓	✓	✓
Socioeconomic			
Education	✓	✓	✓
Income	✓	✓	✓
Political			
Party ID	✓	✓	✓
Party ID Extremity	✓	✓	✓
Psychological			
Need for Cognition	✓	✓	
Need for Affect		✓	
Need to Evaluate	✓	✓	✓
Media Selection			
Fox News Viewership		✓	✓
MSNBC Viewership		✓	✓
Talk Radio Listenership		✓	✓
NPR Listenership		✓	✓
Newspaper Readership		✓	✓

Note: This table shows how the potential confounders are operationalized across different years. A checkmark (✓) indicates that the variable is included in that sample.

5.6 Addressing Alternative Explanations

As with any cross-sectional analysis, it is possible that my results are biased by the omission of confounding variables. Verbal ability is correlated with age, gender, racial identity, educational attainment, and income (Cor et al. 2012; Huang and Hauser 1998; Strenze 2007); therefore, it could be capturing demographic or socioeconomic group differences in the incentives and opportunities that lead people to adopt ideologically consistent postures (Coppock and Green 2022; Groenendyk, Kimbrough, and Pickup 2023; White, Laird, and Allen 2014). Democrats and more opinionated people also tend to score higher on verbal ability (Mazur 2023; Shoots-Reinhard et al. 2021), raising the possibility that verbal ability is capturing partisan differences in elite messaging and coalition structure (Grossmann and Hopkins 2015;

Lelkes and Sniderman 2016) or partisan identity strength (Huddy, Mason, and Aarøe 2015). Similarly, three psychological traits that are plausibly correlated with verbal ability—motivations to engage in effortful cognition, experience strong emotions, and render firm judgements—have been shown to moderate the relationship between information consumption and attitudes, and therefore represent potential confounds (Arceneaux and Vander Wielen 2013; Federico and Schneider 2007; Holbrook 2006; Lee 2021).[6]

Table 8: Controlling for Potential Confounders Fails to Eliminate Focal Interactions

	DV: Constraint			DV: Stability		
	No Controls	Controlling for Direct Effects	Controlling for Interactions	No Controls	Controlling for Direct Effects	Controlling for Interactions
2008-10 Panel						
Interest	**.65** (.12)	**.65** (.15)	**.69** (.17)	.15 (.10)	−.01 (.12)	−.08 (.14)
Attention	**.40** (.12)	**.31** (.16)	**.38** (.18)	.03 (.09)	−.10 (.13)	−.03 (.15)
News Freq	**.39** (.14)	**.33** (.16)	.30 (.19)	**.25** (.11)	.25 (.13)	**.41** (.15)
Discuss Freq	**.37** (.10)	**.42** (.13)	**.47** (.15)	.02 (.08)	−.03 (.10)	−.01 (.12)
Placement	**.37** (.10)	**.25** (.12)	.17 (.13)	.09 (.08)	.09 (.09)	.15 (.11)
Knowledge	**.53** (.10)	**.39** (.12)	**.43** (.15)	.07 (.08)	.07 (.11)	.08 (.12)
2012-13 Panel						
Interest	**.20** (.03)	**.16** (.06)	.08 (.07)	.07 (.07)	.04 (.07)	.06 (.08)
Attention	**.20** (.03)	**.19** (.06)	.10 (.08)	**.21** (.08)	.14 (.08)	**.20** (.09)
News Freq	**.14** (.03)	.10 (.07)	.00 (.08)	.03 (.08)	−.05 (.08)	.09 (.10)
Discuss Freq	**.20** (.03)	**.20** (.06)	**.17** (.07)	.09 (.07)	.09 (.07)	.16 (.09)
Placement	**.28** (.03)	**.26** (.06)	**.24** (.07)	−**.19** (.07)	−**.24** (.08)	−i̇3 (.09)
Knowledge	**.21** (.03)	**.16** (.08)	.12 (.09)	−**.35** (.09)	−**.38** (.09)	−**.24** (.11)
2016-20 Panel						
Interest	**.30** (.04)	**.23** (.04)	**.17** (.04)	**.10** (.04)	.07 (.04)	.07 (.05)
Attention	**.31** (.04)	**.23** (.04)	**.17** (.04)	**.13** (.04)	**.12** (.04)	**.11** (.05)
News Freq	**.13** (.03)	**.07** (.03)	.06 (.04)	.01 (.04)	.02 (.04)	.03 (.04)
Discuss Freq	**.21** (.02)	**.16** (.02)	**.16** (.03)	.04 (.03)	.00 (.03)	−.01 (.03)
Placement	**.24** (.03)	**.16** (.03)	**.16** (.03)	−0̇5 (.03)	−**.10** (.04)	−.04 (.04)
Knowledge	**.27** (.03)	**.18** (.04)	**.15** (.04)	−.01 (.04)	−.05 (.04)	−.02 (.05)

Note: Entries are unstandardized regression coefficients with standard errors in parentheses. Bolded coefficients are statistically significant at the $p < .05$ level. For full results see Tables F25 and F33.

Lastly, people with higher verbal ability tend to read the newspaper more often, watch television less (Glenn 1994; Neuman, Just, and Crigler 1992), and seek out news sources that reflect their political biases (Shoots-Reinhard et al. 2021). Thus, verbal ability may be a mere proxy for whether a person consumes "high-brow" media like National Public Radio (NPR)—media that carries "the rich diet of national and

[6]Unfortunately, the ANES only includes a two-item measure of the Need for Cognition. As Bakker and Lelkes (2018) show, this measure tends to provide underestimates of interaction effects.

international news necessary to create political awareness"—or "low-brow" media like conservative talk radio (Zaller 1992, 34). Along these lines, Claassen, Tucker, and Smith (2015) find that regular Fox News viewers are more likely to incorrectly label liberal policy positions as conservative, even after controlling for political knowledge and education.

Table 7 shows the availability of items used to operationalize these potential confounding variables. Using these measures, I re-estimate the sample-specific models reported in Table 2 under three different specifications—(1) only the focal independent variables and their interaction; (2) with the controls listed in Table 7; and (3) with the controls and their pairwise interactions with the information proxy. In Table 8, I report the interactions between verbal ability and information consumption from each of these models. The full results are in Appendix F.3. With the interaction controls added, seven of the twenty-four ability-information interactions predicting constraint become non-significant. However, most of these coefficients remain roughly the same size. Among the stability models, only the political interest interaction in 2016-2020 becomes non-significant, and even here the coefficient only shrinks by about thirty percent. Because my data is cross-sectional, no combination of controls can demonstrate that the focal regression coefficients represent causal effects. However, the fact that verbal ability continues to moderate the effects of the information proxies when controlling for potential confounders makes it less likely that these effects can be explained by alternative pathways.

5.7 Conclusion

> [E]ven under a more facilitative regime, the combination of limited cognitive resources and competing attentional demands may keep politics a minority pursuit, as it seems to have been even in ancient Athens
>
> Luskin 1990, 353

Observers have long noted that, in America, mass public and political elite share a secular faith: the belief that the greatest and most essential function of government is to ensure equal voice in the political process (Arendt 1963; Tocqueville 2002[1835-1840]). With the advent of public opinion polling, we can now see just how far America falls short of this ideal in practice. Most citizens—particularly those with

less money and education—do not have the influence on political outcomes that they theoretically could (Gilens 2012; Schlozman, Verba, and Brady 2012). Pessimistic accounts like Luskin's, quoted above, view this as a regrettable but probably inevitable feature of mass politics.

At first glance, my results appear to vindicate Luskin's conclusion. Across three nationally representative panels, I find that Americans with low levels of verbal ability report attitudes that are less structured and less stable when they consume more political information. Thus, contrary to a widely accepted view in political science, these results suggest exposure to information tends to benefit citizens who are already skilled at parsing it while hindering those who already struggle to keep up. This dynamic may explain why the cheap and abundant learning opportunities afforded by mass media have failed to level the playing field between political experts and political novices (Kinder and Kalmoe 2017; Luskin 1990). Far from closing gaps in political fluency, an increasingly saturated political media environment appears to have left the less politically sophisticated "blown about by whatever current of information manages to develop the greatest intensity" (Zaller 1992, 311).

So, was Luskin right? On the one hand, my results concur with studies by Graber (1984) and others which show that the media environment places a prohibitive cognitive load on citizens, making information processing skills important for determining who develops firmly held, ideologically structured attitudes. To the extent that politics will always be somewhat cognitively demanding, a limited version of Luskin's claim may be true—not everybody will have the ability or the inclination to participate meaningfully in mass politics. On the other hand, this does not mean that greater equality of voice is unattainable. As scholars like Prior (2014), Rahn, Aldrich, and Borgida (1994), and Neuman, Just, and Crigler (1992) have shown, presenting information in a more digestible format can greatly diminish differences in learning and competency between political experts and political novices. Therefore, my results speak less to the feasibility of universal political participation than to the consequences of increasing the quantity of available political information without attending to its quality. Not only will this not bring us closer to achieving equality of voice—it may distance us from it (cf. Prior 2007).

I also find that verbal ability conditions the effects of information consumption to a greater extent for economic attitudes than social attitudes, consistent with the idea that verbal ability helps people form attitudes on issues that are less intrinsically polarizing. However, it is important to stress that this evidence is only suggestive, not dispositive. More fine-grained research designs are necessary to infer what is happening inside people's heads, and experiments are necessary to demonstrate a causal effect of information on attitudes. In this vein, a handful of studies have

used treatments such as priming ideology and encouraging subjects to stop and think before answering to induce constraint and stability (Fiske, Kinder, and Larter 1983; Judd and Downing 1990; Keating and Bergan 2017; Lavine, Thomsen, and Gonzales 1997; Milburn 1987; Zaller and Feldman 1992). These treatments effects are consistently stronger among the politically knowledgeable, but researchers have yet to investigate how much of this is due to prior knowledge and how much is due to cognitive skill.

Overall, my results point to a fundamental weakness in the way that political scientists study information effects in cross-sectional data. For decades, the norm has been to use political knowledge scales as measures of information-holding. Following this approach, many have predicted that major changes in political behavior and policy outcomes would result if the electorate were fully informed (Althaus 1998, 2003; Alvarez 1997; Arnold 2012; Bartels 1996; Delli Carpini and Keeter 1996). Yet, the existence of "initial differences [in] raw materials" makes it difficult to say whether information is the active ingredient that gives political knowledge scales their predictive power (Campbell et al. 1960, 255). Without research designs that can discern the unique effects of information and cognitive ability, we will be left without a clear understanding of how either influences political behavior.

References

Althaus, Scott L. 1998. "Information Effects in Collective Preferences". *The American Political Science Review* 92 (3): 545–558.

Althaus, Scott L. 2003. *Collective preferences in democratic politics: Opinion surveys and the will of the people.* New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.

Alvarez, R. Michael. 1997. *Information and Elections.* Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press.

Andersen, David J., David P. Redlawsk, and Richard R. Lau. 2019. "The Dynamic Process Tracing Environment (DPTE) as a Tool for Studying Political Communication". *Political Communication* 36 (2): 303–314.

ANES. 2013. *ANES 2013 Internet Recontact Study [dataset and documentation].* Ann Arbor, MI and Palo Alto, CA: Stanford University and the University of Michigan. https://electionstudies.org/data-center/anes-2013-internet-recontact-study/.

ANES. 2014. *ANES 2012 Time Series Study [dataset and documentation].* Ann Arbor, MI and Palo Alto, CA: Stanford University and the University of Michigan. https://electionstudies.org/data-center/2012-time-series-study/.

ANES. 2019. *ANES 2016 Time Series Study [dataset and documentation].* Ann Arbor, MI and Palo Alto, CA: Stanford University and the University of Michigan. https://electionstudies.org/data-center/2016-time-series-study/.

ANES. 2021. *ANES 2020 Time Series Study [dataset and documentation].* Ann Arbor, MI and Palo Alto, CA: Stanford University and the University of Michigan. https://electionstudies.org/data-center/2020-time-series-study/.

Ansolabehere, Stephen, Jonathan Rodden, and James M. Snyder. 2008. "The Strength of Issues: Using Multiple Measures to Gauge Preference Stability, Ideological Constraint, and Issue Voting". *American Political Science Review* 102 (2): 215–232.

Arceneaux, Kevin, Martine Johnson, and Hermine H. Maes. 2012. "The genetic basis of political sophistication". *Twin Research and Human Genetics* 15 (1): 34–41.

Arceneaux, Kevin and Ryan J. Vander Wielen. 2013. "The Effects of Need for Cognition and Need for Affect on Partisan Evaluations". *Political Psychology* 34 (1): 23–42.

Arendt, Hannah. 1963. *On Revolution.* New York, NY: Viking.

Arnold, Jason Ross. 2012. "The electoral consequences of voter ignorance". *Electoral Studies* 31 (4): 796–815.

Bakker, Bert N. and Yphtach Lelkes. 2018. "Selling Ourselves Short? How Abbreviated Measures of Personality Change the Way We Think about Personality and Politics". *The Journal of Politics* 80 (4): 1311–1325.

Barber, Michael and Jeremy C. Pope. 2019. "Does Party Trump Ideology? Disentangling Party and Ideology in America". *American Political Science Review* 113 (1): 38–54.

Bartels, Larry M. 1993. "Messages Received: The Political Impact of Media Exposure". *The American Political Science Review* 87 (2): 267–285.

Bartels, Larry M. 1996. "Uninformed Votes: Information Effects in Presidential Elections". *American Journal of Political Science* 40 (1): 194–230.

Barton, Allen H. and R. Wayne Parsons. 1977. "Measuring belief system structure". *Public Opinion Quarterly* 41 (2): 159–180.

Bernhard, Rachel and Sean Freeder. 2020. "The More You Know: Voter Heuristics and the Information Search". *Political Behavior* 42 (2): 603–623.

Bollen, Kenneth A. and Kwok-fai Ting. 2000. "A tetrad test for causal indicators". *Psychological Methods* 5 (1): 3–22.

Boudreau, Cheryl. 2009. "Closing the Gap: When Do Cues Eliminate Differences between Sophisticated and Unsophisticated Citizens?". *The Journal of Politics* 71 (3): 964–976.

Breit, Moritz, Vsevolod Scherrer, Elliot M. Tucker-Drob, and Franzis Preckel. 2024. "The stability of cognitive abilities: A meta-analytic review of longitudinal studies". *Psychological Bulletin* 150 (4): 399–439.

Brennan, Jason. 2016. *Against Democracy*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Brown, Adam R. and Jeremy C. Pope. 2021. "Mechanical Turk and the "Don't Know" Option". *PS: Political Science & Politics* 54 (3): 416–420.

Brydges, Christopher R., Gilles E. Gignac, and Ullrich K. H. Ecker. 2018. "Working memory capacity, short-term memory capacity, and the continued influence effect: A latent-variable analysis". *Intelligence* 69 : 117–122.

Burnett, Craig M. and Mathew D. McCubbins. 2020. "Is political knowledge unique?". *Political Science Research and Methods* 8 (1): 188–195.

Campbell, Angus, Philip E. Converse, Warren E. Miller, and Donald E. Stokes. 1960. *The American Voter*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

Carmines, Edward G. and James A. Stimson. 1980. "The Two Faces of Issue Voting". *The American Political Science Review* 74 (1): 78–91.

Cattell, Raymond B., Herbert W. Eber, and Maurice M. Tatsuoka. 1970. *Handbook for the Sixteen Personality Factor Questionnaire (16PF)*. Champaign, IL: Institute for Personality & Ability Testing.

Claassen, Christopher, Patrick Tucker, and Steven S. Smith. 2015. "Ideological Labels in America". *Political Behavior* 37 (2): 253–278. Publisher: Springer.

Converse, Philip E. 1964. "The nature of belief systems in mass publics". In D. E. Apter (Ed.), *Ideology and Discontent*, pp. 206–261. New York: The Free Press.

Coppock, Alexander and Donald P. Green. 2022. "Do Belief Systems Exhibit Dynamic Constraint?". *The Journal of Politics* 84 (2): 725–738.

Cor, M. Ken, Edward Haertel, Jon A. Krosnick, and Neil Malhotra. 2012. "Improving ability measurement in surveys by following the principles of IRT: The Wordsum Vocabulary Test in the General Social Survey". *Social Science Research* 41 (5): 1003–1016.

Dahl, Robert A. 1989. *Democracy and its critics*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.

De keersmaecker, Jonas and Arne Roets. 2017. "'Fake news': Incorrect, but hard to correct. The role of cognitive ability on the impact of false information on social impressions". *Intelligence* 65 : 107–110.

DeBell, Matthew. 2013. "Harder Than It Looks: Coding Political Knowledge on the ANES". *Political Analysis* 21 (4): 393–406.

DeBell, Matthew, Vincent Hutchings, Simon Jackman, and Gary Segura. 2010. *ANES 2010 Panel Recontact Survey [dataset and documentation]*. Ann Arbor, MI and Palo Alto, CA: Stanford University and the University of Michigan.

DeBell, Matthew, John A. Krosnick, and Arthur Lupia. 2010. *2008-2009 ANES Panel Study [dataset and documentation]*. Ann Arbor, MI and Palo Alto, CA: Stanford University and the University of Michigan.

Delli Carpini, Michael X. and Scott Keeter. 1993. "Measuring Political Knowledge: Putting First Things First". *American Journal of Political Science* 37 (4): 1179–1206.

Delli Carpini, Michael X. and Scott Keeter. 1996. *What Americans Know about Politics and why it Matters*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.

Dilliplane, Susanna, Seth K. Goldman, and Diana C. Mutz. 2013. "Televised Exposure to Politics: New Measures for a Fragmented Media Environment". *American Journal of Political Science* 57 (1): 236–248.

Eckhardt, Beverly B., Mary R. Wood, and Robin Smith Jacobvitz. 1991. "Verbal Ability and Prior Knowledge: Contributions to Adults' Comprehension of Television". *Communication Research* 18 (5): 636–649.

Elder, Elizabeth Mitchell and Neil A. O'Brian. 2022. "Social Groups as the Source of Political Belief Systems: Fresh Evidence on an Old Theory". *American Political Science Review* 116 (4): 1407–1424.

Ellis, Christopher and James A. Stimson. 2012. *Ideology in America*. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.

Federico, Christopher M. and Monica C. Schneider. 2007. "Political expertise and the use of ideology: Moderating effects of evaluative motivation". *Public Opinion Quarterly* 71 (2): 221–252.

Feldman, Stanley. 1989. "Measuring Issue Preferences: The Problem of Response Instability". *Political Analysis* 1 : 25–60.

Fiske, Susan T., Donald R. Kinder, and W. Michael Larter. 1983. "The novice and the expert: Knowledge-based strategies in political cognition". *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology* 19 (4): 381–400.

Freeder, Sean, Gabriel S. Lenz, and Shad Turney. 2019. "The Importance of Knowing "What Goes with What": Reinterpreting the Evidence on Policy Attitude Stability". *The Journal of Politics* 81 (1): 274–290.

Frischkorn, Gidon T., Oliver Wilhelm, and Klaus Oberauer. 2022. "Process-oriented intelligence research: A review from the cognitive perspective". *Intelligence* 94 : 101681.

Funk, Carolyn L. 1997. "Implications of Political Expertise in Candidate Trait Evaluations". *Political Research Quarterly* 50 (3): 675–697.

Ganzach, Yoav. 2018. "Intelligence and the rationality of political preferences". *Intelligence* 69 : 59–70.

Gilens, Martin. 2001. "Political Ignorance and Collective Policy Preferences". *The American Political Science Review* 95 (2): 379–396.

Gilens, Martin. 2012. *Affluence and Influence: Economic Inequality and Political Power in America*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Glenn, Norval D. 1994. "Television Watching, Newspaper Reading, and Cohort Differences in Verbal Ability". *Sociology of Education* 67 (3): 216–230.

Gooch, Andrew. 2015. "Measurements of cognitive skill by survey mode: Marginal differences and scaling similarities". *Research & Politics* 2 (3): 2053168015590681.

Goren, Paul. 2013. *On voter competence*. On voter competence. New York, NY, US: Oxford University Press.

Graber, Doris A. 1984. *Processing the News: How People Tame the Information Tide*. New York, NY: Longman.

Graber, Doris A. 2004. "Mediated Politics and Citizenship in the Twenty-First Century". *Annual Review of Psychology* 55 (1): 545–571.

Groenendyk, Eric, Erik O. Kimbrough, and Mark Pickup. 2023. "How Norms Shape the Nature of Belief Systems in Mass Publics". *American Journal of Political Science* 67 (3): 623–638.

Grossmann, Matt and David A. Hopkins. 2015. "Ideological Republicans and Group Interest Democrats: The Asymmetry of American Party Politics". *Perspectives on Politics* 13 (1): 119–139.

Hagen, Elizabeth P. and Robert L. Thorndike. 1955. "Normative test data for adult males obtained by house-to-house testing". *Journal of Educational Psychology* 46 (4): 207–216.

Hamaker, Ellen L., Rebecca M. Kuiper, and Raoul P. P. P. Grasman. 2015. "A critique of the cross-lagged panel model". *Psychological Methods* 20 (1): 102–116.

Hamill, Ruth and Milton Lodge. 1986. "Cognitive Consequences of Political Sophistication". In R. R. Lau and D. O. Sears (Eds.), *Political Cognition: The 19th Annual Carnegie Symposium on Cognition*, pp. 69–93. Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Hamill, Ruth, Milton Lodge, and Frederick Blake. 1985. "The Breadth, Depth, and Utility of Class, Partisan, and Ideological Schemata". *American Journal of Political Science* 29 (4): 850–870.

Harvey, S. K. and T. G. Harvey. 1970. "Adolescent Political Outlooks: The Effects of Intelligence as an Independent Variable". *Midwest Journal of Political Science* 14 (4): 565–595.

Hetherington, Marc J. and Jonathan D. Weiler. 2009. *Authoritarianism and Polarization in American Politics*. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.

Hetherington, Marc J. and Jonathan D. Weiler. 2018. *Prius Or Pickup? How the Answers to Four Simple Questions Explain America's Great Divide*. HarperCollins.

Highton, Benjamin. 2009. "Revisiting the relationship between educational attainment and political sophistication". *The Journal of Politics* 71 (4): 1564–1576.

Hill, Jennifer L. and Hanspeter Kriesi. 2001. "An Extension and Test of Converse's "Black-and-White" Model of Response Stability". *The American Political Science Review* 95 (2): 397–413.

Holbrook, Thomas M. 2006. "Cognitive Style and Political Learning in the 2000 U.S. Presidential Campaign". *Political Research Quarterly* 59 (3): 343–352.

Huang, Jason L. and Justin A. DeSimone. 2021. "Insufficient Effort Responding as a Potential Confound between Survey Measures and Objective Tests". *Journal of Business and Psychology* 36 (5): 807–828.

Huang, Min-Hsiung and Robert Hauser. 1998. "Trends in Black-White test-score differentials: II. The WORDSUM vocabulary test". In *The rising curve: Long-term gains in IQ and related measures*, pp. 303–332. Washington, DC, US: American Psychological Association.

Huddy, Leonie, Lilliana Mason, and Lene Aarøe. 2015. "Expressive Partisanship: Campaign Involvement, Political Emotion, and Partisan Identity". *American Political Science Review* 109 (1): 1–17.

Hunt, Earl. 1978. "Mechanics of verbal ability". *Psychological Review* 85 (2): 109–130.

Johnston, Christopher D., Howard G. Lavine, and Christopher M. Federico. 2017. *Open versus Closed: Personality, Identity, and the Politics of Redistribution*. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.

Johnston, Christopher D. and Julie Wronski. 2015. "Personality Dispositions and Political Preferences Across Hard and Easy Issues". *Political Psychology* 36 (1): 35–53.

Judd, Charles M. and James W. Downing. 1990. "Political expertise and the development of attitude consistency". *Social Cognition* 8 (1): 104–124.

Kalmoe, Nathan P. 2020. "Uses and Abuses of Ideology in Political Psychology". *Political Psychology* 41 (4): 771–793.

Keating, David M. and Daniel E. Bergan. 2017. "Mapping Political Attitudes: The Impact of Concept Mapping on Ideological Constraint". *Communication Studies* 68 (4): 439–454.

Kinder, Donald R. and Nathan P. Kalmoe. 2017. *Neither Liberal nor Conservative: Ideological Innocence in the American Public*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

Kleinberg, Mona S. and Richard R. Lau. 2021. "Googling Politics: How Offloading Affects Voting and Political Knowledge". *Political Psychology* 42 (1): 93–110.

Konitzer, Tobias, Jennifer Allen, Stephanie Eckman, Baird Howland, Markus Mobius, David Rothschild, and Duncan J Watts. 2021. "Comparing Estimates of News Consumption from Survey and Passively Collected Behavioral Data". *Public Opinion Quarterly* 85 (S1): 347–370.

Kraft, Patrick W. 2024. "Women Also Know Stuff: Challenging the Gender Gap in Political Sophistication". *American Political Science Review* 118 (2): 903–921.

Krosnick, Jon A. and Duane F. Alwin. 1987. "An Evaluation of a Cognitive Theory of Response-Order Effects in Survey Measurement". *The Public Opinion Quarterly* 51 (2): 201–219.

Lau, Richard R., David J. Andersen, and David P. Redlawsk. 2008. "An Exploration of Correct Voting in Recent U.S. Presidential Elections". *American Journal of Political Science* 52 (2): 395–411.

Lau, Richard R. and David P. Redlawsk. 2001. "Advantages and Disadvantages of Cognitive Heuristics in Political Decision Making". *American Journal of Political Science* 45 (4): 951–971.

Lau, Richard R. and David P. Redlawsk. 2006. *How voters decide: Information processing during election campaigns*. How voters decide: Information processing during election campaigns. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.

Lavine, Howard, Cynthia J. Thomsen, and Marti Hope Gonzales. 1997. "The development of interattitudinal consistency: The shared-consequences model". *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 72 (4): 735–749.

Lee, Heysung. 2021. ""Easy" and "hard" issues: Attitude extremity and a role of the need to evaluate". *Social Science Quarterly* 102 (6): 2930–2941.

Lelkes, Yphtach and Paul M. Sniderman. 2016. "The Ideological Asymmetry of the American Party System". *British Journal of Political Science* 46 (4): 825–844.

Lippmann, Walter. 1922. *Public opinion*. Public opinion. Oxford, England: Harcourt, Brace.

Lodge, Milton and Ruth Hamill. 1986. "A Partisan Schema for Political Information Processing". *The American Political Science Review* 80 (2): 505–520.

Lupia, Arthur. 2016. *Uninformed: Why People Know So Little about Politics and what We Can Do about it*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Luskin, Robert C. 1990. "Explaining Political Sophistication". *Political Behavior* 12 (4): 331–361.

Luskin, Robert C. and John G. Bullock. 2011. ""Don't Know" Means "Don't Know": DK Responses and the Public's Level of Political Knowledge". *The Journal of Politics* 73 (2): 547–557.

Madison, James. 1987[1788]. "Number Ten: The Same Subject Continued". In I. Kramnick (Ed.), *The Federalist Papers*, pp. 122–128. London, UK: Penguin.

Malhotra, Neil, John A. Krosnick, and Edward Haertel. 2007. "The psychometric properties of the GSS Wordsum vocabulary test". Technical Report 11, National Opinion Research Center, Chicago, IL.

Mazur, Allan. 2023. "Religious Changes and Intelligence Differences between White Democrats and Republicans: 1974-2018".

McClosky, Herbert and John Zaller. 1984. *The American Ethos: Public Attitudes toward Capitalism and Democracy*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

McIlhiney, Paul, Gilles E. Gignac, Ullrich K. H. Ecker, Briana L. Kennedy, and Michael Weinborn. 2023. "Executive function and the continued influence of misinformation: A latent-variable analysis". *PLOS ONE* 18 (4): e0283951.

Milburn, Michael A. 1987. "Ideological self-schemata and schematically induced attitude consistency". *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology* 23 (5): 383–398.

Miner, John B. 1957. *Intelligence in the United States: A Survey–with Conclusions for Manpower Utilization in Education and Employment*. New York, NY: Springer.

Miner, John B. 1961. "On the use of a short vocabulary test to measure general intelligence". *Journal of Educational Psychology* 52 (3): 157–160.

Morey, Alyssa C. and William P. Eveland Jr. 2016. "Measures of Political Talk Frequency: Assessing Reliability and Meaning". *Communication Methods and Measures* 10 (1): 51–68.

Neisser, Ulric, Gwyneth Boodoo, Thomas J. Bouchard Jr., A. Wade Boykin, Nathan Brody, Stephen J. Ceci, Diane F. Halpern, John C. Loehlin, Robert Perloff, Robert J. Sternberg, and Susana Urbina. 1996. "Intelligence: Knowns and unknowns". *American Psychologist* 51 (2): 77–101.

Neuman, W. Russell. 1986. *The Paradox of Mass Politics: Knowledge and Opinion in the American Electorate*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Neuman, W. Russell, Marion R. Just, and Ann N. Crigler. 1992. *Common Knowledge: News and the Construction of Political Meaning*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

Nie, Norman H., Jane Junn, and Kenneth Stehlik-Barry. 1996. *Education and Democratic Citizenship in America*. University of Chicago Press.

Nie, Norman H., Sidney Verba, and John R. Petrocik. 1979. *The Changing American Voter: Enlarged Edition* (2 ed.). Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Perfetti, Charles A. 1985. *Reading ability*. Reading ability. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Pietryka, Matthew T. and Randall C. MacIntosh. 2013. "An Analysis of ANES Items and Their Use in the Construction of Political Knowledge Scales". *Political Analysis* 21 (4): 407–429.

Pollock, Philip H., Stuart A. Lilie, and M. Elliot Vittes. 1993. "Hard Issues, Core Values and Vertical Constraint: The Case of Nuclear Power". *British Journal of Political Science* 23 (1): 29–50.

Popov, Vencislav, Ivan Marevic, Jan Rummel, and Lynne M. Reder. 2019. "Forgetting Is a Feature, Not a Bug: Intentionally Forgetting Some Things Helps Us Remember Others by Freeing Up Working Memory Resources". *Psychological Science* 30 (9): 1303–1317.

Popov, Vencislav and Lynne M. Reder. 2020. "Frequency effects on memory: A resource-limited theory.". *Psychological Review* 127 (1): 1–46.

Price, Vincent and John Zaller. 1993. "Who Gets the News? Alternative Measures of News Reception and Their Implications for Research". *The Public Opinion Quarterly* 57 (2): 133–164.

Prior, Markus. 2007. *Post-Broadcast Democracy: How Media Choice Increases Inequality in Political Involvement and Polarizes Elections*. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.

Prior, Markus. 2009a. "The Immensely Inflated News Audience: Assessing Bias in Self-Reported News Exposure". *Public Opinion Quarterly* 73 (1): 130–143.

Prior, Markus. 2009b. "Improving Media Effects Research through Better Measurement of News Exposure". *The Journal of Politics* 71 (3): 893–908.

Prior, Markus. 2013. "The Challenge of Measuring Media Exposure: Reply to Dilliplane, Goldman, and Mutz". *Political Communication* 30 (4): 620–634.

Prior, Markus. 2014. "Visual political knowledge: A different road to competence?". *The Journal of Politics* 76 (1): 41–57.

Prior, Markus. 2019. *Hooked: How Politics Captures People's Interest*. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.

Rahn, Wendy M., John H. Aldrich, and Eugene Borgida. 1994. "Individual and Contextual Variations in Political Candidate Appraisal". *American Political Science Review* 88 (1): 193–199.

Rahn, Wendy M. and Katherine J. Cramer. 1996. "Activation and application of political party stereotypes: The role of television". *Political Communication* 13 (2): 195–212.

Rasmussen, Stig Hebbelstrup Rye. 2016a. "Cognitive Ability Rivals the Effect of Political Sophistication on Ideological Voting". *Political Research Quarterly* 69 (4): 773–787.

Rasmussen, Stig Hebbelstrup Rye. 2016b. "Education or Personality Traits and Intelligence as Determinants of Political Knowledge?". *Political Studies* 64 (4): 1036–1054.

Ritchie, Stuart J., Timothy C. Bates, and Robert Plomin. 2015. "Does Learning to Read Improve Intelligence? A Longitudinal Multivariate Analysis in Identical Twins From Age 7 to 16". *Child Development* 86 (1): 23–36.

Schlozman, Kay Lehman, Sidney Verba, and Henry E. Brady. 2012. *The Unheavenly Chorus: Unequal Political Voice and the Broken Promise of American Democracy.* Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Schumpeter, Joseph A. 1942. *Capitalism, Socialism, and Democracy.* New York, NY and London, UK: Harper.

Shoots-Reinhard, Brittany, Raleigh Goodwin, Pär Bjälkebring, David M. Markowitz, Michael C. Silverstein, and Ellen Peters. 2021. "Ability-related political polarization in the COVID-19 pandemic". *Intelligence* 88 : 101580.

Singh, Shane P. and Jason Roy. 2014. "Political knowledge, the decision calculus, and proximity voting". *Electoral Studies* 34 : 89–99.

Sniderman, Paul M., Richard A. Brody, and Philip E. Tetlock. 1991. *Reasoning and choice: Explorations in political psychology.* New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.

Somin, Ilya. 2013. *Democracy and Political Ignorance: Why Smaller Government Is Smarter, Second Edition.* Stanford University Press.

Spirling, Arthur and Brandon M Stewart. 2024. "What Good is a Regression? Inference to the Best Explanation and the Practice of Political Science Research". *The Journal of Politics*.

Strenze, Tarmo. 2007. "Intelligence and socioeconomic success: A meta-analytic review of longitudinal research". *Intelligence* 35 (5): 401–426.

Thorndike, Robert L. 1942. "Two screening tests of verbal intelligence". *Journal of Applied Psychology* 26 (2): 128–135.

Thorndike, Robert L. and George H. Gallup. 1944. "Verbal intelligence of the American adult". *Journal of General Psychology* 30 : 75–85.

Tocqueville, Alexis de. 2002[1835-1840]. *Democracy in America.* Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

Vegetti, Federico and Moreno Mancosu. 2020. "The Impact of Political Sophistication and Motivated Reasoning on Misinformation". *Political Communication* 37 (5): 678–695.

Wechsler, David. 1958. *The measurement and appraisal of adult intelligence* (4 ed.). The measurement and appraisal of adult intelligence, 4th ed. Baltimore, MD, US: Williams & Wilkins.

Wechsler, David. 1981. *WAIS-R Manual: Wechsler Adult Intelligence Scale-revised.* New York, NY: Psychological Corporation.

Weinschenk, Aaron C. and Christopher T. Dawes. 2019. "The Effect of Education on Political Knowledge: Evidence From Monozygotic Twins". *American Politics Research* 47 (3): 530–548.

Weinschenk, Aaron C., Christopher T. Dawes, Stig Hebbelstrup Rye Rasmussen, and Robert Klemmensen. 2023. "The relationship between education and political knowledge: evidence from discordant Danish twins". *Journal of Elections, Public Opinion and Parties* 33 (1): 105–117.

White, Ismail K., Chryl N. Laird, and Troy D. Allen. 2014. "Selling Out? The Politics of Navigating Conflicts between Racial Group Interest and Self-interest". *American Political Science Review* 108 (4): 783–800.

Wilson, James A. and Walter R. Gove. 1999. "The Intercohort Decline in Verbal Ability: Does it Exist?". *American Sociological Review* 64 (2): 253–266.

Zaller, John. 1990. "Political awareness, elite opinion leadership, and the mass survey response". *Social Cognition* 8 (1): 125–153.

Zaller, John. 1992. *The Nature and Origins of Mass Opinion.* New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.

Zaller, John and Stanley Feldman. 1992. "A Simple Theory of the Survey Response: Answering Questions versus Revealing Preferences". *American Journal of Political Science* 36 (3): 579–616.

Online Appendix for Informed or Overwhelmed

Disentangling the Effects of Cognitive Ability and Information on Public Opinion

Contents

A Testing the Convergent Validity of Wordsum: The 1987 & 1994 GSS

Political scientists have used Wordsum extensively in recent years (e.g., Brady, Verba, and Schlozman 1995; Enns and Kellstedt 2008; Erikson, MacKuen, and Stimson 2001; Gooch 2015; Gooch and Vavreck 2019; Johnston 2018; Kraft 2018, 2024; Lelkes and Weiss 2015; Motta 2016, 2018; Nie, Junn, and Stehlik-Barry 1996; Prior 2009b; Schlozman, Burns, and Verba 1994; Stenner 2005; Verba, Burns, and Schlozman 1997; Verba, Schlozman, and Brady 1995). However, the sources often cited for the claim that Wordsum correlates with general cognitive ability, Alwin (1991) and Wolfle (1980), do not actually present original evidence to that effect. Alwin references Miner's (1957) national surveys and Wolfle references unpublished data from Thorndike (1967) that, based on the reported coefficients and descriptions of the sample, appears to be the same data that Miner (1961) attributes to Lorge (1957). This means that much of the evidence for Wordsum's breadth and convergent validity hinges on data that is now at least seventy years old (Hagen and Thorndike 1955; Miner 1957, 1961; Lorge 1957, as cited in Miner 1961; but see Huang and DeSimone 2021, Huang and Hauser 1998).

Given that words can become obsolete over time, Wordsum may not be as valid an indicator of verbal ability as it was during the 1950s (Wilson and Gove 1999). To address this possibility, I assess the 10-item Wordsum test's convergent validity in the 1987 and 1994 GSS samples. The 1987 sample completed Wordsum as part of the main GSS interview. A few months later, they completed thirteen items tapping verbal, logical, and numeric reasoning abilities (e.g., "'woman' is to 'child' as 'cat' is to ... 1. kitten 2. dog 3. boy") as part of a follow-up study conducted by James Gibson (Gibson 1991). The Reasoning items are drawn from Form B of the Sixteen Personality Factor Questionnaire (16PF; Cattell, Eber, and Tatsuoka 1970), which has been shown to correlate highly with both verbal and general cognitive ability (Abel and Brown 1998; Conn and Rieke 1994). The 1994 GSS sample completed both the 10-item Wordsum test and eight items taken from the Similarities subtest of the Wechsler Adult Intelligence Scale-revised (WAIS-R; Wechsler 1981). The Similarities items ask respondents to identify a category to which two things belong (e.g., "In what way are an orange and a banana alike?") and are designed to measure abstract thinking abilities (Wechsler 1958, 131). When I calculate people's ability scores by averaging the items from each test, their correlations with Wordsum are modest $-.44$ for 16PF Reasoning and .47 for WAIS-R Similarities. However, when I use structural equation modeling to adjust for measurement error, I recover correlations of .63 for Wordsum and 16PF Reasoning and .68 for Wordsum and WAIS-R Similarities. The

Table A1: Two Factor CFA of Wordsum and 16PF Reasoning

Covariances	r	Cov (SE)
$\eta_{\text{wordsum}} \leftrightarrow \eta_{\text{reasoning}}$	.63***	.28 (.02)
$x_3 \leftrightarrow x_8$	.28***	.17 (.03)
$x_7 \leftrightarrow x_8$	.31***	.20 (.03)
$x_4 \leftrightarrow x_9$	.43***	.12 (.03)
$x_2 \leftrightarrow x_{10}$	-3.82***	−.40 (.05)
$x_4 \leftrightarrow x_{10}$	-2.11***	−.29 (.05)
$x_5 \leftrightarrow x_{10}$	-1.08***	−.22 (.04)
$x_6 \leftrightarrow x_{10}$	−.88***	−.18 (.04)
$y_8 \leftrightarrow y_{13}$	.27***	.21 (.05)
$y_{10} \leftrightarrow y_{12}$	.22***	.19 (.04)
Factor Loadings	β	b (SE)
η_{wordsum}		
x_1	.69	1.00
x_2	.96***	1.38 (.04)
x_3	.61***	.88 (.05)
x_4	.93***	1.34 (.04)
x_5	.84***	1.21 (.04)
x_6	.84***	1.21 (.04)
x_7	.55***	.79 (.04)
x_8	.65***	.94 (.05)
x_9	.66***	.95 (.04)
x_{10}	.93***	1.34 (.06)
$\eta_{\text{reasoning}}$		
y_1	.64	1.00
y_2	.58***	1.00 (.08)
y_3	.42***	.69 (.07)
y_4	.13*	.23 (.08)
y_5	.59***	.96 (.08)
y_6	.14**	.16 (.07)
y_7	.20**	.31 (.09)
y_8	.53***	.71 (.08)
y_9	.71***	1.09 (.08)
y_{10}	.08	.17 (.07)
y_{11}	.60***	1.02 (.08)
y_{12}	.51***	.78 (.07)
y_{13}	.42***	.58 (.08)
Observations	1,820	
Robust χ^2/df	549/220	
Robust CFI	.904	
Robust TLI	.890	
Robust RMSEA (90% CI)	.073 (.059, .086)	
SRMR	.062	

Note: Model estimated using diagonally weighted least squares with pairwise deletion.

Table A2: Two Factor CFA of Wordsum and WAIS-R Similarities

Covariances	r	Cov (SE)
$\eta_{\text{wordsum}} \leftrightarrow \eta_{\text{similarities}}$	.68***	.31 (.02)
$x_3 \leftrightarrow x_7$	.20***	.13 (.03)
$x_3 \leftrightarrow x_8$	.34***	.23 (.03)
$x_3 \leftrightarrow x_{10}$	.28***	.18 (.03)
$x_4 \leftrightarrow x_9$	.56***	.15 (.03)
$x_6 \leftrightarrow y_4$	.31***	.13 (.02)
$x_7 \leftrightarrow x_8$	.38***	.25 (.03)
$x_{10} \leftrightarrow x_7$	.35***	.22 (.03)
$x_{10} \leftrightarrow x_8$	.44***	.29 (.03)
$x_{10} \leftrightarrow y_7$	.22***	.13 (.03)
$y_1 \leftrightarrow y_2$	.52***	.36 (.03)
$y_5 \leftrightarrow y_1$	.26***	.18 (.03)
$y_5 \leftrightarrow y_2$	.38***	.28 (.03)
$y_5 \leftrightarrow y_6$	.15***	.12 (.02)
$y_6 \leftrightarrow y_8$	.19***	.15 (.03)
Factor Loadings	β	b (SE)
η_{wordsum}		
x_1	.75	1.00
x_2	.95***	1.27 (.04)
x_3	.58***	.78 (.04)
x_4	.94***	1.25 (.04)
x_5	.85***	1.13 (.03)
x_6	.86***	1.14 (.03)
x_7	.60***	.79 (.04)
x_8	.55***	.73 (.04)
x_9	.63***	.84 (.04)
x_{10}	.62***	.82 (.05)
$\eta_{\text{similarities}}$		
y_1	.61	1.00
y_2	.50***	.81 (.04)
y_3	.64***	1.05 (.06)
y_4	.59***	.97 (.06)
y_5	.52***	.86 (.05)
y_6	.38***	.62 (.05)
y_7	.67***	1.10 (.07)
y_8	.47***	.76 (.06)
Observations	2,992	
Robust χ^2/df	340/120	
Robust CFI	.925	
Robust TLI	.904	
Robust RMSEA (90% CI)	.085 (.072, .097)	
SRMR	.045	

Note: Model estimated using diagonally weighted least squares with pairwise deletion.

strength of these disattenuated correlations suggests that, as recently as the 1990s, Wordsum retained its ability to measure a broad ability domain that includes abstract reasoning.

There are 1,224 complete cases in the 1987 sample and 1,977 complete cases in the 1994 sample. However, the weighted least squares estimator is able to use partial responses to inform estimation rather than relying on list-wise deletion. Therefore, the number of cases used to fit the structural equation models is 1,820 in the 1987 sample and 2,992 in the 1994 sample.

B Testing the Exogeneity of Wordsum: The 2006, 2008, & 2010 GSS Panels

The General Social Survey fielded three separate nationally representative panel studies beginning in 2006, 2008, and 2010, respectively. Each survey was fielded three times at two-year intervals. At each time point, subjects reported how many days per week they read the newspaper, if at all, and completed the Wordsum test. Using these data, we can test whether shocks in one variable precede similar shocks in the other variable. To do this, I estimate a Random Intercept Cross-Lagged Panel Model (RI-CLPM; Hamaker, Kuiper, and Grasman 2015). While panel designs fall well short of randomized experiments for demonstrating causality, they represent a hard test of my argument for exogeneity. Specifically, the RI-CLPM allows us to ask the following questions: (1) "If a person reads the newspaper more often than they usually do at time_t, is their verbal ability better than it usually is at time_{t+1}?" and (2) "If a person's verbal ability is better than it usually is at time_t, do they read the newspaper more often than they usually do at time_{t+1}?" Table B1 displays the results. None of the cross-lagged effects are statistically significant, showing that the answer to both of the questions above is no.

Table B1: RI-CLPM of Verbal Ability and Newspaper Reading

	β	b (SE)
Cross-Lagged Effects		
$\text{reading}_1 \rightarrow \text{ability}_2$	−.02	−.00 (.01)
$\text{reading}_2 \rightarrow \text{ability}_3$	−.03	−.00 (.01)
$\text{ability}_1 \rightarrow \text{reading}_2$	.03	.20 (.30)
$\text{ability}_2 \rightarrow \text{reading}_3$	−.02	−.18 (.28)
Autoregressive Effects		
$\text{reading}_1 \rightarrow \text{reading}_2$	.14**	.15 (.06)
$\text{reading}_2 \rightarrow \text{reading}_3$	.25***	.26 (.04)
$\text{ability}_1 \rightarrow \text{ability}_2$	−.02	−.02 (.05)
$\text{ability}_2 \rightarrow \text{ability}_3$	−.03	−.03 (.06)
Panel Effects		
2008-2012 $\rightarrow \text{RI}_{\text{reading}}$	−.04*	−.11 (.05)
2008-2012 $\rightarrow \text{RI}_{\text{ability}}$	.01	.00 (.01)
2010-2014 $\rightarrow \text{RI}_{\text{reading}}$	−.10***	−.26 (.05)
2010-2014 $\rightarrow \text{RI}_{\text{ability}}$	.02	.01 (.01)
	r	Cov (SE)
Covariances		
$\text{reading}_1 \leftrightarrow \text{ability}_1$	.06	.01 (.01)
$\text{reading}_2 \leftrightarrow \text{ability}_2$	−.02	−.00 (.01)
$\text{reading}_3 \leftrightarrow \text{ability}_3$	−.00	−.00 (.00)
$\text{RI}_{\text{reading}} \leftrightarrow \text{RI}_{\text{ability}}$	.23***	.05 (.01)
Observations	6,067	
Robust χ^2/df	18/9	
Robust CFI	.999	
Robust TLI	.996	
Robust RMSEA (90% CI)	.021 (.007, .034)	
SRMR	.008	

Note: Model estimated using full-information maximum likelihood.

C Disentangling Ability and Information: The 2012 & 2016 ANES

Table C1: Discrimination Parameters from Multidimensional IRT Models

	2012 ANES		2016 ANES	
	I	II	I	II
Wordsum item 1	**.79**	.02	.80	.08
Wordsum item 2	**.79**	−.05	**.81**	.07
Wordsum item 3	**.71**	.03	**.75**	.14
Wordsum item 4	**.78**	−.03	**.84**	.09
Wordsum item 5	**.42**	.08	**.46**	.13
Wordsum item 6	**.54**	.07	**.57**	.11
Wordsum item 7	**.61**	−.02	**.63**	.08
Wordsum item 8	**.59**	−.03	**.64**	.08
Wordsum item 9	**.63**	**.08**	**.63**	**.20**
Wordsum item 10	**.61**	.08	**.65**	.11
Knowledge: Biden Job/Office	**.73**	**.30**	**.74**	**.37**
Knowledge: Boehner Job/Office	**.63**	**.40**		
Knowledge: Cameron Job/Office	**.73**	.27		
Knowledge: Budget Deficit Size	**.71**	.12		
Knowledge: House Majority Party	**.54**	**.34**	**.46**	.28
Knowledge: Medicare Definition	**.46**	.12		
Knowledge: Merkel Job/Office			**.65**	**.39**
Knowledge: President Term Number	**.64**	.14		
Knowledge: Putin Job/Office			**.74**	**.35**
Knowledge: Roberts Job/Office	**.70**	**.31**	**.53**	.29
Knowledge: Ryan Job/Office			**.54**	**.38**
Knowledge: House Runner Up	**.51**	**.33**		
Knowledge: Senate Majority Party	**.52**	**.31**	**.34**	.21
Knowledge: Senate Term Length	**.59**	.21	**.57**	.22
Knowledge: Federal Spending	**.34**	.17	**.33**	.13
Knowledge: Treasury Secretary	**.68**	**.35**		
Knowledge: UN Secretary General	**.57**	.20		
Knowledge: Unemployment Rate	**.45**	.28	**.39**	.22
Placement: Abortion	**.58**	.20	**.47**	**.22**
Placement: Defense Spending	**.59**	.28	**.39**	.24
Placement: Environment v. Jobs	**.56**	**.31**	**.55**	**.30**
Placement: Government Aid to Blacks	**.50**	.23	**.53**	.22
Placement: Government Healthcare	**.65**	.23	**.57**	.28
Placement: Guaranteed Jobs	**.60**	.25	**.57**	.25
Placement: Liberal-Conservative	**.70**	.24	**.58**	.27
Placement: Spending and Services	**.58**	.29	**.49**	.26
Interest in Following Campaigns	.19	**.83**	.11	**.88**
Interest in Politics and Public Affairs	**.34**	**.69**	.22	**.74**
How Closely Follow Politics in Media			.17	**.79**
Attention to National Politics on Internet	.28	**.58**		
Attention to National Politics in Paper	.08	**.59**		
Attention to National Politics on Radio	.17	**.53**		
Attention to National Politics on TV	−.02	**.86**		
Attention to Politics and Elections	.23	**.81**	.13	**.86**
Attention to National Politics in the Media			.11	**.91**
Frequency: Consume News on Internet	.27	**.41**		
Frequency: Read News in the Paper	.06	**.41**		
Frequency: Listen to News on Radio	.11	**.38**		
Frequency: Watch National News on TV	−.15	**.68**		
Frequency: Consume News in any Medium			.10	**.68**
Frequency: Talk Politics w/ Family or Friends	.24	.50	.29	.50
Sum of Squared Loadings	6.38	13.01	5.75	10.13
Observations	5,914		4,270	
Log-likelihood	-188825.2		-90548.5	
AIC	378016.4		181355.0	
BIC	379239.8		182175.4	
SABIC	378658.3		181765.5	

Note: Entries are discrimination parameters from exploratory multidimensional IRT models estimated via Expectation-Maximization (EM). Difficulty parameters are estimated but not shown. Results are varimax rotated to produce two orthogonal latent factors. Parameters > 0.30 are bolded.

D ANES Items

Table D1: ANES Items Used to Measure Constraint and Stability

	08-09$_t$	08-09$_{t+1}$	08-09$_{t+2}$	2010	2012	2013	2016	2020
Abortion	w1p1	w10p1			abortpre_4point		V161232	V201336
Abort Ban Amendment	w11n13_a	w13n13						
Marijuana Legality					pot_legal		V162179	
Gay Job Discrimination					gayrt_discstd_x	gayrt_discrev_x	V161229x	V201414x
Gays in Military					gayrt_milstd_x	gayrt_milrev_x		
Same-Sex Adoption					gayrt_adopt		V161230	V201415
Same-Sex Marriage					gayrt_marry		V161231	V201416
Deny Services to Gays							V161227x	V201408x
Transgender Bathroom							V162179	V201411x
Keep Handgun in Home	w11n9_a	w13n9						
Concealed Carry Permit	w11n11_a	w13n11						
Easier/Harder to Buy Gun					gun_control	C5_W1	V161187	V202337
Death Penalty					penalty_favopp_x		V161233x	V201345x
Let Undocumented Work	w1p22	w10p22						
Undocumented Citizenship	w1p25	w10p25						
Immigration Level					immigpo_level		V162157	V202232
Illegal Immigration Policy					immig_policy		V161192	V201417
Give Illegals Citizenship					immig_citizen			
Check Immigration Status					immig_checks			
Birthright Citizenship							V161194x	V201420x
Children Brought Illegally							V161195x	V201423x
Build Wall with Mexico							V161196x	V201426x
Admit Syrian Refugees							V161214x	
Prefer Hiring and Promotion					aapost_hire_x		V162238x	V202252x
Aff Action at Workplace	w11n15_a	w13n17			aa_work_x			
Aff Action at Universities	w9qr1	w13n15			aa_uni_x		V161204x	
Ensure Fair Jobs for Blacks	w9zb1	w11zb1	w17x1		fairjob_opin_x			
Gov Assistance to Blacks					aidblack_self		V161198	V201258
Social Security Income Tax	w11n3_a	w13n3						
Social Security Tax Rate	w11n5_a	w13n5						
Social Security Spending					fedspend_ss		V161205	V201300
Privatize Social Security	w11n1_a	w13n1						
Childcare Spending					fedspend_child			
School Spending					fedspend_schools		V161206	V201303
Welfare Spending					fedspend_welfare		V161209	V201312
Spending on Poor					fedspend_poor		V161211	V201318
Gov Services and Spending	w11x1	w13za1		f1y1	spsrvpr_ssself		V161178	V201246
Taxes on the Rich	w1p4	w10p4		f1z1	milln_milltax_x		V162140	V202325
Pay for Senior Prescriptions	w1p10	w10p10						
Healthcare Spending	w1p13	w10p13					V162193x	V202380x
Gov Guarantee Jobs					guarpr_self		V161189	V201255
Gov Equalize Incomes	w2q1	w11t1	w13t1	f1zc1	cses_govtact		V162276	V202426
Private v Public Insurance					inspre_self		V161184	V201252
Health Insurance Mandate					health_2010hcr_x		V161114x	V202328x
Minimum Wage							V162192	V202377
Mandate Parental Leave							V161226x	V201405x
Reduce Budget Deficit					budget_deficit_x		V162139	V202321
Deficit Reduction Import					budget_defimp	C5_X1		
Tax Rich to Reduce Deficit					budget_rdef250k	C5_X3		
Gov Regulate Business	w11x7	w13za7			govrole_regbus		V162186	V202256
Bank Bailout					tarp_favopp_x			
Gov Regulate Banks							V162180x	
Regulate Emissions	w9zb1	w10s9						
Regulate Fuel Economy	w2p11	w10s11						
Raise Taxes on Fuel	w2p13	w10s13		f1zb4				
Environmental Regulation					envjob_self		V161201	V201262
Spending on Environment					fedspend_enviro		V161212	V201323x
Offshore Drilling					envir_drill			
Allow Fracking							V161223	
Gov Action Rising Temp							V161225x	V201401
Outsourcing Jobs					outsource_enc_x		V162177	
Limit Imports					imports_limit		V162152a	V202229
Free Trade							V162176	V202361x
Deny Trial	w1p16	w10p16						
Wiretap Warrant	w1p19	w10p19						
Defense Spending					defsppr_self	C5_V1	V161181	V201249
Crime Spending							V161208	V201309

Note: Only root items shown. In cases where respondents viewed one of two versions of an item, responses were pooled. All ANES 2008-2009 Panel Study items are from the wave indicated by the number following the "w" at the beginning of the item name. Items that do not begin with "w" followed by a number are from the November 2007 recruitment interview.

Table D2: ANES Items Used to Construct Information Consumption Proxies

	2008-2009 Panel Study	2012 Time Series	2016 Time Series
Political Interest			
Interest in Politics and Pub Affairs	rqpol	paprofile_interestpolit	V162256
Attention to Politics and Elections		interest_attention	V161003
Interest in Political Information	w1k1; w9h1; w10h1; w11h1		
Interest in Following Campaigns		interest_following	V161004
Attention to Politics in the Media			
Attend to Politics News on TV	w19f5	prmedia_attvnews	
Attend to Politics News on Radio	w19f6	prmedia_atrdnews	
Attend to Politics News on Internet	w19f7	prmedia_atinews	
Attend to Politics News in Paper	w19f8	prmedia_atpprnews	
Attend to Politics News in Media			V161009
Follow Politics in News Media			V162257
Attend to Politics News on TV	w19f5	prmedia_attvnews	
Media Use Frequency			
Consume News on Internet	w1h3; w9f3; w10f3	prmedia_wkinews	
Read News in the Paper	w1h4; w9f4; w10f4	prmedia_wkpaprnws	
Listen to News on Radio	w1h2; w9f2; w10f2	prmedia_wkrdnws	
Watch National News on TV	w1h1; w9f1; w10f1	prmedia_wktvnws	
Consume News in any Medium			V161008
Political Discussion Frequency			
Talk Politics w/ Family or Friends	w1k2; w9h2; w10h2; w11h2	discuss_disc	
Candidate-Issue Placement Knowledge			
Abortion		abort_dpc4; abort_rpc4	V162181; V162182
Affirmative Action	w9qr3_a; w9qr5_a		
Allow Immigrants Work	w6pb22; w6pj22		
Defense Spending		defsppr_dpc; defsppr_rpc	V161182; V161183
Detention without Trial	w6pb16; w6pj16		
Environment v. Jobs		envjob_dpc; envjob_rpc	V161202; V161203
Government Aid to Blacks		aidblack_dpc; aidblack_rpc	V161199; V161200
Government Healthcare		inspre_dpc; inspre_rpc	V161185; V161186
Gov Pay for Prescriptions	w6pb10; w6pj10		
Guaranteed Jobs		guarpr_dpc; guarpr_rpc	V161190; V161191
Healthcare Spending	w6pb13; w6pj13		
Immigrants Become Citizens	w6pb25; w6pj25		
Liberal-Conservative	w6h5; w6h9	libcpre_dpc; libcpre_rpc	V161128; V161129
Raise Taxes Middle Class	w6pb7; w6pj7		
Raise Taxes Rich	w6pb4; w6pj4		
Same-Sex Marriage	w6pb1; w6pj1		
Spending and Services		spsrvpr_ssdpc; spsrvpr_ssrpc	V161179; V161180
Warrantless Surveillance	w6pb19; w6pj19		
General Political Knowledge			
Biden Job/Office		ofcrec_vp_correct	V162072
Boehner Job/Office		ofcrec_speaker_correct	
Cameron Job/Office		ofcrec_pmuk_correct	
Budget Deficit Size		preknow_sizedef	
House Majority Party		knowl_housemaj	V161515
House Term Length	w2u5		
Medicare Definition		preknow_medicare	
Merkel Job/Office			V162074a
President Term Number	w2u2	preknow_prestimes	
Putin Job/Office			V162075a
Roberts Job/Office		ofcrec_cj_correct	V162076a
Ryan Job/Office			V162073b
House Runner Up		cses_poliinfthree	
Senate Majority Party		knowl_senmaj	V161516
Senate Term Length	w2u3	preknow_senterm	V161513
Senators per State	w2u4		
Order of Succession	w2u6		
Federal Spending		preknow_leastsp	V161514
Treasury Secretary		cses_poliinfone	
UN Secretary General		cses_poliinffour	
Unemployment Rate		cses_polinftwo	V162137
Veto Override	w2u7		

Note: Only root items shown.

Table D3: ANES Items Used to Construct Media Source Measures

	2012 Times Series	2016 Time Series
Fox News		
The Five	medsrc_tvprog_21	
Fox Report	medsrc_tvprog_22	
Hannity	medsrc_tvprog_25	V161370
Huckabee	medsrc_tvprog_26	
The Kelly File		V161372
O'Reilly Factor	medsrc_tvprog_36	V161409
On the Record with Greta Van Susteren	medsrc_tvprog_37	
Special Report with Bret Baier	medsrc_tvprog_41	
foxnews.com	medsrc_websites_05	V161452
MSNBC		
All In with Chris Hayes		V161365
Chris Matthews	medsrc_tvprog_13	V161386
The Rachel Maddow Show		V161393
msnbc.msn.com	medsrc_websites_10	
Newspapers		
New York Times	medsrc_printnews_01	V161469
www.nytimes.com	medsrc_inetnews_01	V161482
nytimes.com	medsrc_websites_11	V161451
Washington Post	medsrc_printnews_04	V161472
www.washingtonpost.com	medsrc_inetnews_04	V161485
washingtonpost.com	medsrc_websites_14	V161454
Wall Street Journal	medsrc_printnews_03	V161471
online.wsj.com	medsrc_inetnews_03	V161484
Conservative Talk Radio		
The Bill Handel Show		V161441
The Dave Ramsey Show	medsrc_radio_02	
The Glenn Beck Program	medsrc_radio_05	V161433
The Hugh Hewitt Show		V161437
The Laura Ingraham Show	medsrc_radio_06	
The Mark Levin Show	medsrc_radio_07	V161434
The Mike Gallagher Show		V161440
The Rush Limbaugh Show	medsrc_radio_11	V161428
The Savage Nation (Michael Savage)	medsrc_radio_12	V161435
The Schnitt Show (Todd Schnitt)		V161442
The Sean Hannity Show	medsrc_radio_13	V161430
National Public Radio (NPR)		
All Things Considered	medsrc_radio_01	V161431
Fresh Air	medsrc_radio_04	V161436
Marketplace		V161432
Morning Edition	medsrc_radio_08	V161429
Talk of the Nation	medsrc_radio_14	

Note: Only root items shown.

E Dependent Variables

When constructing stability indices, I attempted to include every available policy item that was fielded twice in a panel. In most cases I was able to accomplish this without dropping many observations by excluding respondents who did not answer more than 10% of the policy items and scoring the remaining respondents only on the items that they answered. When calculating stability in the 2008-10 panel, this was not feasible. As the top right panel in Fig. E1 demonstrates, not a single respondent answered every item twice. This is to be expected given that the items are scattered across more than 20 panel waves. As indicated by the vertical red line, I include respondents who are missing data for up to 12 of the 24 items used to calculate stability. This allows me to retain most observations.

Figure E2 shows the bivariate relationship between constraint and stability in each sample. These results confirm that ideologically constrained attitudes are, on average, more firmly held (Converse 1964). Notably, the strength of this relationship appears to correspond to the time elapsed between interviews; it is strongest in the 2016-20 panel with an elapsed time of 48 months (r = .50), intermediate in the 2008-10 panel with an elapsed time of up to 30 months (r = .29) and weakest in the 2012-13 panel with an elapsed time of 9 months (r = .10). On the other hand, these differences could be due to measurement error—the 2012-13 stability index consists of only four items, compared to 24 items in 2008-10 and 37 items in 2016-20.

Table E1: Policies Used for DVs

	2008-2010	2012-2013	2016-2020
Abortion	C	C	✓
Abortion Ban	✓		
Aff Action Hiring Promotion		C	✓
Aff Action Universities	✓	C	C
Aff Action Workplace	✓	C	
Assistance to Blacks		C	✓
Bank Bailout		C	
Birthright Citizenship			✓
Border Wall			✓
Budget Deficit		C	✓
Childcare Spending		C	
Children Brought Illegally			✓
Concealed Carry	✓		
Death Penalty		C	✓
Deficit Importance		✓	
Deny Services to Gays			✓
Environmental Regulation		C	✓
Equalize Incomes	✓[4]	C	✓
Fair Jobs for Blacks	✓[3]	C	
Fracking			C
Fuel Tax	✓[3]		
Gay Hiring Discrimination		C	✓
Gays in Military		C	
Gov Action Rising Temp		✓	
Guarantee Jobs		C	✓
Handgun in Home	✓		
Harder to Buy Gun		✓	✓
Healthcare Spending	✓		✓
Immigration Level		C	✓
Immigration Policy		C	✓
Immigration Status		C	
Insurance Mandate		C	✓
Marijuana		C	C
Minimum Wage			✓
Offshore Drilling		C	
Parental Leave			✓
Privatize Social Security	✓		
Public Insurance		C	✓
Regulate Banks			C
Regulate Business	✓	C	✓
Regulate Emissions	✓		
Regulate Fuel Economy	✓		
Same-Sex Adoption		C	✓
Same-Sex Marriage		C	✓
School Spending		C	✓
Senior Prescriptions	✓		
Social Security Income Tax	✓		
Social Security Spending		C	✓
Social Security Tax Rate	✓		
Spending on Environment		C	✓
Spending on Poor		C	✓
Syrian Refugees		C	
Tax High Incomes	✓[3]	C	✓
Transgender Bathroom		✓	
Undocumented Citizenship	✓	C	
Undocumented Work	✓		
Welfare Spending		C	✓
Ideologically Ambiguous Items			
Crime Spending			S
Defense Spending		S	S
Deny Trial	S		
Free Trade			S
Limit Imports			S
Outsourcing Jobs			S
Tax Rich Reduce Deficit		S	
Wiretap Warrant	S		

Note: ✓= Used to estimate DVs. C = Only used to estimate constraint. S = Only used to estimate stability. $^{no.}$ = # of waves used for stability, if > 2.

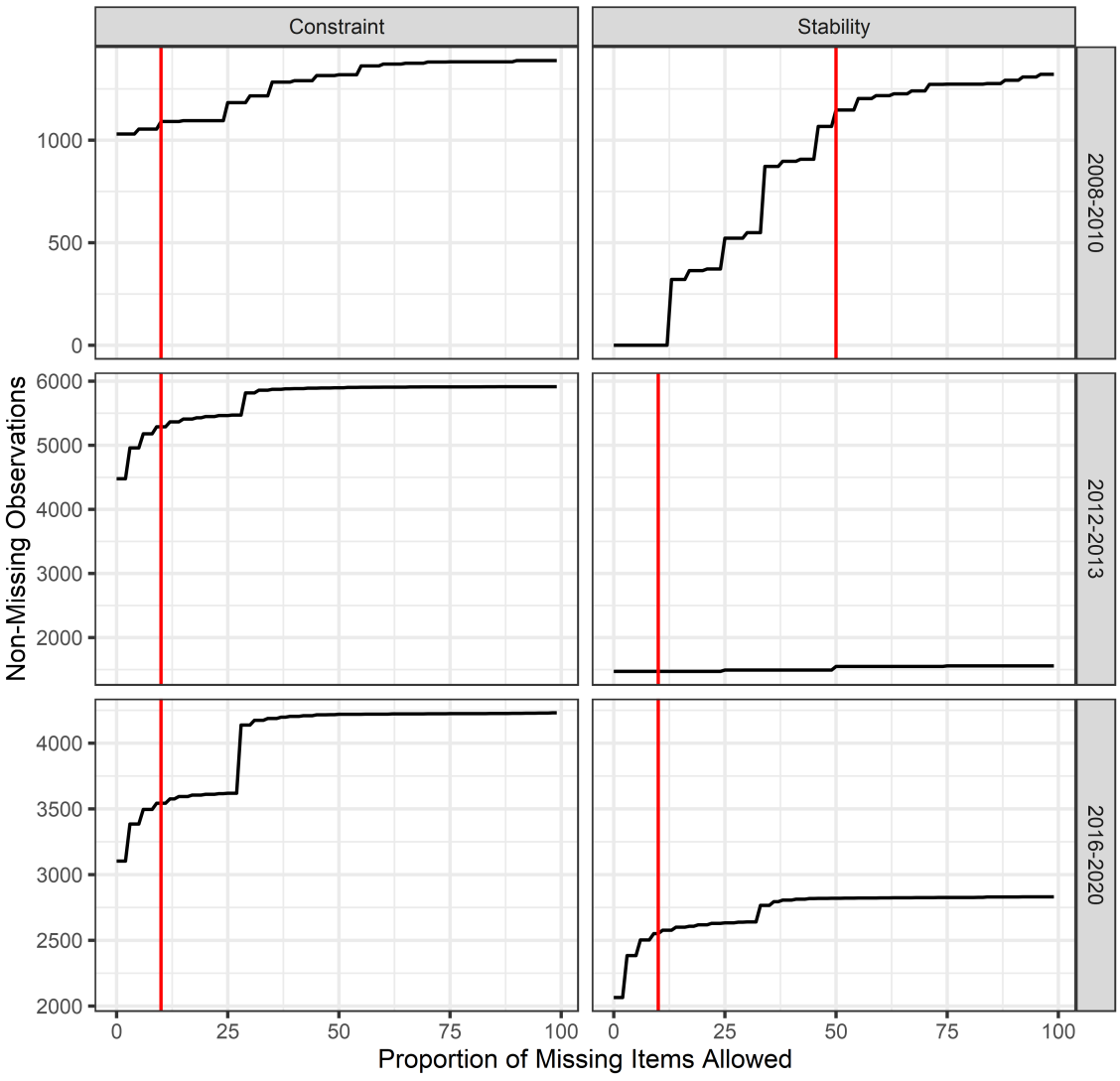


Figure E1: Sample Size as a Function of Missing Items Allowed in DVs

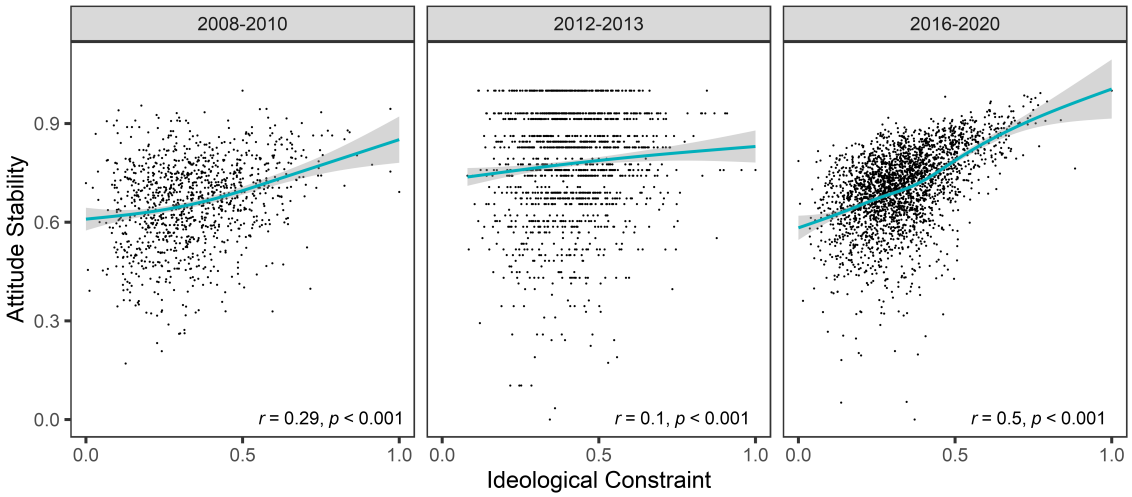


Figure E2: Bivariate Relationships Between Constraint and Stability

F Regression Output and Alternative Specifications

F.1 Models Reported in Table 2 and Alternative Specifications

Table F1: 2008/2009 Constraint Models from Table 2

	DV: Constraint					
	Interest	Attent Media	Media Freq	Discuss Freq	Placement	Pol Know
Info Proxy	−.50 (.09)***	−.25 (.09)**	−.28 (.11)**	−.26 (.08)***	−.27 (.07)***	−.26 (.08)***
Verbal Ability	−.25 (.08)**	−.01 (.06)	−.07 (.08)	−.03 (.05)	−.01 (.05)	−.18 (.06)**
Info Proxy × Verbal Ability	.62 (.12)***	.35 (.12)**	.37 (.13)**	.34 (.10)***	.34 (.10)***	.47 (.10)***
Age	.00 (.00)**	.00 (.00)**	.00 (.00)**	.00 (.00)**	.00 (.00)***	.00 (.00)***
Male	.00 (.01)	.00 (.01)	.00 (.01)	.00 (.01)	.00 (.01)	−.01 (.01)
Black	.00 (.02)	−.01 (.02)	−.02 (.02)	−.01 (.02)	−.01 (.02)	−.01 (.02)
Hispanic	.03 (.02)	.04 (.03)	.02 (.02)	.03 (.02)	.00 (.02)	.02 (.02)
Other race	.03 (.03)	.05 (.03)	.03 (.03)	.04 (.03)	.05 (.03)	.04 (.03)
Bachelor's degree	.04 (.01)***	.05 (.01)***	.04 (.01)***	.04 (.01)***	.04 (.01)**	.04 (.01)**
Advanced degree	.08 (.01)***	.08 (.01)***	.08 (.01)***	.08 (.01)***	.07 (.01)***	.06 (.01)***
Income	−.03 (.03)	−.06 (.03)*	−.04 (.03)	−.04 (.03)	−.05 (.03)	−.05 (.02)
(Intercept)	.59 (.06)***	.41 (.05)***	.46 (.06)***	.43 (.04)***	.43 (.04)***	.50 (.05)***
Observations	1025	962	1026	1029	983	1080
R-squared	.10	.09	.08	.09	.08	.11
Adjusted R-squared	.09	.08	.07	.08	.07	.10

Note: Table shows unstandardized regression coefficients with standard errors in parentheses.
* p < .05, ** p < .01, *** p < .001

Table F2: 2012 Constraint Models from Table 2

	DV: Constraint					
	Interest	Attent Media	Media Freq	Discuss Freq	Placement	Pol Know
Info Proxy	−.09 (.02)***	−.09 (.03)***	−.08 (.03)**	−.10 (.02)***	−.10 (.02)***	.02 (.03)
Verbal Ability	.03 (.02)	.02 (.02)	.03 (.02)	.04 (.01)***	−.13 (.02)***	−.05 (.02)*
Info Proxy × Verbal Ability	.18 (.03)***	.17 (.04)***	.12 (.04)**	.18 (.03)***	.27 (.03)***	.17 (.04)***
Age	.00 (.00)*	.00 (.00)**	.00 (.00)***	.00 (.00)**	.00 (.00)***	.00 (.00)
Male	.01 (.00)*	.01 (.00)*	.01 (.00)**	.01 (.00)**	.01 (.00)*	.00 (.00)
Black	−.01 (.01)	−.01 (.01)	−.01 (.01)	−.01 (.01)	−.01 (.01)	−.01 (.01)
Hispanic	−.01 (.01)	−.01 (.01)	−.01 (.01)	−.01 (.01)	.00 (.01)	.00 (.01)
Asian	.00 (.02)	.00 (.02)	.00 (.02)	.00 (.02)	.00 (.02)	.00 (.02)
Other race	−.02 (.01)*	−.02 (.01)	−.02 (.01)	−.02 (.01)*	−.02 (.01)*	.01 (.01)
Bachelor's degree	.02 (.01)***	.02 (.01)***	.02 (.01)***	.02 (.01)***	.02 (.01)***	.01 (.01)*
Advanced degree	.03 (.01)***	.03 (.01)***	.04 (.01)***	.03 (.01)***	.03 (.01)***	.02 (.01)***
Income	.00 (.01)	−.01 (.01)	−.01 (.01)	.00 (.01)	−.01 (.01)	−.02 (.01)*
(Intercept)	.36 (.01)***	.34 (.01)***	.33 (.01)***	.32 (.01)***	.38 (.02)***	.34 (.01)***
Observations	4803	4625	4629	4802	4802	4805
R-squared	.07	.06	.06	.07	.09	.10
Adjusted R-squared	.07	.06	.06	.07	.08	.10

Note: Table shows unstandardized regression coefficients with standard errors in parentheses.
* p < .05, ** p < .01, *** p < .001

Table F3: 2016 Constraint Models from Table 2

	DV: Constraint					
	Interest	Attent Media	Media Freq	Discuss Freq	Placement	Pol Know
Info Proxy	−.15 (.03)***	−.16 (.03)***	−.07 (.02)**	−.12 (.02)***	−.07 (.02)**	−.06 (.03)*
Verbal Ability	−.08 (.03)***	−.07 (.02)**	.00 (.03)	.01 (.01)	−.07 (.02)**	−.06 (.02)**
Info Proxy × Verbal Ability	.29 (.04)***	.30 (.04)***	.13 (.03)***	.22 (.02)***	.22 (.03)***	.24 (.04)***
Age	.00 (.00)***	.00 (.00)***	.00 (.00)***	.00 (.00)***	.00 (.00)***	.00 (.00)***
Male	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)	−.01 (.00)*
Black	.00 (.01)	.00 (.01)	.00 (.01)	.00 (.01)	.00 (.01)	.00 (.01)
Hispanic	.00 (.01)	.00 (.01)	.00 (.01)	.00 (.01)	.00 (.01)	.00 (.01)
Asian	.01 (.02)	.01 (.02)	.01 (.02)	.01 (.02)	.01 (.02)	.01 (.02)
Other race	.01 (.02)	.01 (.02)	.01 (.02)	.01 (.02)	.01 (.02)	.01 (.02)
Bachelor's degree	.03 (.01)***	.03 (.01)***	.03 (.01)***	.03 (.01)***	.03 (.01)***	.03 (.01)***
Advanced degree	.07 (.01)***	.07 (.01)***	.07 (.01)***	.07 (.01)***	.07 (.01)***	.07 (.01)***
Income	.00 (.01)	.00 (.01)	.00 (.01)	.00 (.01)	.00 (.01)	−.01 (.01)
(Intercept)	.37 (.02)***	.36 (.02)***	.32 (.02)***	.31 (.02)***	.32 (.02)***	.33 (.02)***
Observations	3339	3336	3339	3337	3339	3334
R-squared	.14	.14	.12	.14	.14	.15
Adjusted R-squared	.14	.13	.12	.14	.14	.15

Note: Table shows unstandardized regression coefficients with standard errors in parentheses.
* p < .05, ** p < .01, *** p < .001

Table F4: Pooled Constraint Models from Table 2

	DV: Constraint					
	Interest	Attent Media	Media Freq	Discuss Freq	Placement	Pol Know
Info Proxy	−.13 (.02)***	−.12 (.02)***	−.07 (.02)***	−.11 (.01)***	−.08 (.01)***	−.04 (.02)
Verbal Ability	−.05 (.02)***	.00 (.01)	.03 (.01)	.03 (.01)***	−.07 (.02)***	−.06 (.01)***
Info Proxy × Verbal Ability	.24 (.02)***	.21 (.02)***	.12 (.02)***	.19 (.02)***	.21 (.02)***	.22 (.02)***
Age	.00 (.00)***	.00 (.00)**	.00 (.00)*	.00 (.00)*	.00 (.00)*	.00 (.00)***
Male	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)	−.01 (.00)*
Black	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)
Hispanic	−.01 (.00)	−.01 (.00)	−.01 (.00)	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)
Asian	.00 (.01)	.00 (.01)	.00 (.01)	.00 (.01)	.00 (.01)	.00 (.01)
Other race	−.01 (.01)	.00 (.01)	.00 (.01)	.00 (.01)	.00 (.01)	.00 (.01)
Bachelor's degree	.03 (.00)***	.03 (.00)***	.03 (.00)***	.03 (.00)***	.03 (.00)***	.02 (.00)***
Advanced degree	.05 (.00)***	.05 (.00)***	.06 (.00)***	.05 (.00)***	.05 (.00)***	.04 (.00)***
Income	.00 (.01)	−.01 (.01)	−.01 (.01)	.00 (.01)	−.01 (.01)	−.01 (.01)**
(Intercept)	.36 (.02)***	.34 (.02)***	.32 (.02)***	.31 (.02)***	.35 (.02)***	.34 (.02)***
Random Effects						
σ^2	.02	.02	.02	.02	.02	.02
$\tau_{00\ \text{Sample}}$	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
ICC	.07	.08	.07	.08	.06	.07
N_{Sample}	.03	.03	.03	.03	.03	.03
Observations	9167	8923	8994	9168	9124	9219
Marginal R^2 / Conditional R^2	.08 / .14	.07 / .15	.07 / .14	.08 / .15	.09 / .14	.10 / .17

Note: Table shows unstandardized regression coefficients with standard errors in parentheses.
* p < .05, ** p < .01, *** p < .001

Table F5: 2008-2010 Stability Models from Table 2

	DV: Stability					
	Interest	Attent Media	Media Freq	Discuss Freq	Placement	Pol Know
Info Proxy	−.07 (.07)	.01 (.07)	−.20 (.08)*	.03 (.06)	−.02 (.06)	.03 (.06)
Verbal Ability	.07 (.06)	−.14 (.04)**	.04 (.06)	−.16 (.04)***	−.12 (.04)**	−.10 (.05)
Info Proxy × Verbal Ability	.15 (.10)	.04 (.09)	.26 (.11)*	.01 (.08)	.08 (.08)	.07 (.08)
Age	.00 (.00)*	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)**	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)
Male	.02 (.01)*	.02 (.01)*	.02 (.01)*	.02 (.01)**	.02 (.01)**	.01 (.01)
Black	.00 (.02)	−.01 (.02)	.01 (.02)	.00 (.02)	.00 (.02)	.01 (.02)
Hispanic	−.05 (.02)**	−.06 (.02)**	−.05 (.02)**	−.05 (.02)*	−.05 (.02)*	−.05 (.02)*
Other race	−.05 (.02)*	−.04 (.02)	−.05 (.02)*	−.05 (.02)*	−.06 (.02)**	−.04 (.02)
Bachelor's degree	.00 (.01)	.01 (.01)	.01 (.01)	.00 (.01)	.00 (.01)	.00 (.01)
Advanced degree	.01 (.01)	.01 (.01)	.01 (.01)	.01 (.01)	.01 (.01)	.01 (.01)
Income	.01 (.02)	.00 (.02)	.01 (.02)	.00 (.02)	.00 (.02)	.00 (.02)
(Intercept)	.60 (.05)***	.56 (.04)***	.65 (.05)***	.55 (.03)***	.57 (.03)***	.56 (.04)***
Observations	1061	1045	1061	1064	1023	1052
R-squared	.09	.08	.09	.09	.09	.10
Adjusted R-squared	.08	.07	.08	.08	.08	.09

Note: Table shows unstandardized regression coefficients with standard errors in parentheses.
* p < .05, ** p < .01, *** p < .001

Table F6: 2012-2013 Stability Models from Table 2

	DV: Stability					
	Interest	Attent Media	Media Freq	Discuss Freq	Placement	Pol Know
Info Proxy	−.06 (.06)	−.15 (.06)*	.00 (.06)	−.10 (.06)	.19 (.05)***	.31 (.07)***
Verbal Ability	.10 (.05)*	−.08 (.04)*	.16 (.05)***	−.12 (.03)***	−.28 (.06)***	−.32 (.06)***
Info Proxy × Verbal Ability	.07 (.07)	.16 (.08)*	−.04 (.08)	.09 (.07)	−.21 (.08)**	−.35 (.09)***
Age	.00 (.00)***	.00 (.00)***	.00 (.00)***	.00 (.00)***	.00 (.00)***	.00 (.00)***
Male	.00 (.01)	.00 (.01)	.00 (.01)	.00 (.01)	.00 (.01)	−.01 (.01)
Black	−.02 (.01)	−.01 (.01)	−.02 (.01)	−.01 (.01)	−.02 (.01)	−.02 (.01)
Hispanic	.01 (.01)	.01 (.01)	.01 (.01)	.01 (.01)	.01 (.01)	.01 (.01)
Asian	−.11 (.05)*	−.11 (.05)*	−.11 (.05)*	−.11 (.05)*	−.11 (.05)*	−.12 (.05)**
Other race	.00 (.02)	.00 (.02)	.00 (.02)	.00 (.02)	.00 (.02)	.00 (.02)
Bachelor's degree	.01 (.01)	.01 (.01)	.02 (.01)	.02 (.01)	.01 (.01)	.01 (.01)
Advanced degree	.03 (.01)*	.03 (.01)*	.03 (.01)*	.03 (.01)*	.03 (.01)*	.03 (.01)*
Income	.01 (.02)	.01 (.02)	.02 (.02)	.02 (.02)	.01 (.02)	.01 (.02)
(Intercept)	.62 (.04)***	.64 (.03)***	.57 (.04)***	.59 (.02)***	.47 (.04)***	.44 (.04)***
Observations	1410	1411	1412	1411	1412	1412
R-squared	.09	.09	.09	.09	.10	.10
Adjusted R-squared	.08	.08	.08	.08	.09	.09

Note: Table shows unstandardized regression coefficients with standard errors in parentheses.
* p < .05, ** p < .01, *** p < .001

Table F7: 2016-2020 Stability Models from Table 2

	DV: Stability					
	Interest	Attent Media	Media Freq	Discuss Freq	Placement	Pol Know
Info Proxy	−.02 (.03)	−.06 (.03)	.02 (.03)	−.01 (.02)	.13 (.03)***	.11 (.03)***
Verbal Ability	.05 (.03)	−.03 (.03)	.10 (.03)**	−.09 (.02)***	−.12 (.03)***	−.10 (.02)***
Info Proxy × Verbal Ability	.11 (.04)**	.14 (.04)***	.03 (.04)	.05 (.03)	.04 (.04)	.03 (.04)
Age	.00 (.00)**	.00 (.00)**	.00 (.00)*	.00 (.00)***	.00 (.00)***	.00 (.00)**
Male	−.01 (.00)**	−.01 (.00)**	−.01 (.00)*	−.01 (.00)	−.01 (.00)**	−.02 (.00)***
Black	−.02 (.01)**	−.02 (.01)*	−.02 (.01)*	−.02 (.01)*	−.02 (.01)*	−.02 (.01)*
Hispanic	−.02 (.01)*	−.02 (.01)*	−.02 (.01)*	−.02 (.01)*	−.01 (.01)	−.02 (.01)*
Asian	−.02 (.01)	−.03 (.01)*	−.03 (.01)*	−.03 (.01)*	−.02 (.01)	−.03 (.01)*
Other race	.01 (.01)	.01 (.01)	.01 (.01)	.01 (.01)	.01 (.01)	.01 (.01)
Bachelor's degree	−.02 (.01)***	−.02 (.01)***	−.03 (.01)***	−.02 (.01)***	−.02 (.01)***	−.02 (.01)***
Advanced degree	−.04 (.01)***	−.04 (.01)***	−.04 (.01)***	−.04 (.01)***	−.04 (.01)***	−.04 (.01)***
Income	−.03 (.01)**	−.03 (.01)**	−.03 (.01)**	−.03 (.01)**	−.02 (.01)	−.02 (.01)*
(Intercept)	−.59 (.02)***	−.61 (.02)***	−.56 (.02)***	−.57 (.01)***	−.50 (.02)***	−.54 (.02)***
Observations	2407	2404	2407	2404	2407	2404
R-squared	.18	.18	.18	.17	.21	.19
Adjusted R-squared	.18	.17	.17	.17	.20	.19

Note: Table shows unstandardized regression coefficients with standard errors in parentheses.
* p < .05, ** p < .01, *** p < .001

Table F8: Pooled Stability Models from Table 2

	DV: Stability					
	Interest	Attent Media	Media Freq	Discuss Freq	Placement	Pol Know
Info Proxy	−.03 (.03)	−.07 (.03)**	.00 (.02)	−.01 (.02)	.12 (.02)***	.15 (.03)***
Verbal Ability	.08 (.02)**	.07 (.02)***	.12 (.02)***	.12 (.01)***	.16 (.02)***	.16 (.02)***
Info Proxy × Verbal Ability	.09 (.03)*	.12 (.03)***	.02 (.03)	.04 (.03)	−.07 (.03)*	−.10 (.04)**
Age	.00 (.00)***	.00 (.00)***	.00 (.00)***	.00 (.00)***	.00 (.00)***	.00 (.00)***
Male	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)	−.01 (.00)	−.01 (.00)*
Black	−.02 (.01)*	−.02 (.01)*	−.02 (.01)*	−.02 (.01)*	−.02 (.01)*	−.01 (.01)*
Hispanic	−.02 (.01)*	−.02 (.01)*	−.02 (.01)*	−.01 (.01)*	.01 (.01)	.01 (.01)
Asian	−.04 (.01)**	−.04 (.01)**	−.04 (.01)**	−.04 (.01)**	−.03 (.01)*	−.04 (.01)**
Other race	−.01 (.01)	−.01 (.01)	−.01 (.01)	−.01 (.01)	−.01 (.01)	.00 (.01)
Bachelor's degree	.02 (.00)***	.02 (.00)***	.02 (.00)***	.02 (.00)***	.01 (.00)**	.01 (.00)**
Advanced degree	.03 (.01)***	.03 (.01)***	.03 (.01)***	.03 (.01)***	.03 (.01)***	.03 (.01)***
Income	.02 (.01)**	.02 (.01)**	.02 (.01)**	.02 (.01)**	.01 (.01)	.01 (.01)
(Intercept)	.59 (.04)***	.60 (.04)***	.57 (.04)***	.57 (.04)***	.51 (.03)***	.51 (.04)***
Random Effects						
σ^2	.02	.02	.02	.02	.02	.02
$\tau_{00\ \text{Sample}}$	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
ICC	.19	.19	.19	.19	.13	.19
N_{Sample}	.03	.03	.03	.03	.03	.03
Observations	4878	4860	4880	4879	4842	4868
Marginal R^2 / Conditional R^2	.09 / .26	.09 / .26	.09 / .26	.09 / .27	.11 / .23	.10 / .27

Note: Table shows unstandardized regression coefficients with standard errors in parentheses.
* p < .05, ** p < .01, *** p < .001

Table F9: Fully Interacted 2008/2009 Constraint Models

	DV: Constraint					
	Interest	Attention	Media Freq	Discuss Freq	Placement	Pol Know
Info Proxy	−.49 (.12)***	−.26 (.13)	−.51 (.14)***	−.25 (.11)*	−.35 (.10)***	−.22 (.11)*
Verbal Ability	−.28 (.09)**	−.04 (.06)	−.03 (.09)	−.02 (.06)	.03 (.05)	−.21 (.07)**
Info Proxy × Verbal Ability	.66 (.14)***	.44 (.14)**	.30 (.15)	.33 (.11)**	.25 (.11)*	.51 (.11)***
Age	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)***	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)**	.00 (.00)
Male	−.05 (.03)	−.05 (.02)*	−.03 (.03)	−.06 (.02)**	.02 (.02)	−.02 (.03)
Black	.17 (.07)*	.02 (.04)	.06 (.06)	.06 (.04)	.02 (.04)	.04 (.05)
Hispanic	−.24 (.08)**	−.08 (.05)	−.04 (.07)	−.08 (.05)	−.07 (.05)	−.05 (.06)
Other race	.10 (.07)	.05 (.06)	.07 (.08)	.02 (.05)	.04 (.05)	.13 (.07)
Bachelor's degree	.03 (.04)	.05 (.03)	.07 (.04)	.04 (.03)	.00 (.03)	.05 (.04)
Advanced degree	.08 (.05)	.08 (.03)*	.09 (.04)*	.04 (.03)	.05 (.03)	.06 (.04)
Income	.01 (.08)	−.04 (.05)	−.07 (.07)	−.03 (.05)	−.09 (.05)	.01 (.07)
Info Proxy × Age	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)*	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)
Info Proxy × Male	.07 (.05)	.12 (.05)**	.05 (.05)	.11 (.04)**	−.05 (.04)	.02 (.04)
Info Proxy × Black	−.24 (.09)**	−.06 (.08)	−.14 (.10)	−.13 (.07)	.02 (.08)	−.10 (.08)
Info Proxy × Hispanic	.39 (.11)***	.33 (.11)**	.12 (.12)	.22 (.09)*	.18 (.10)	.12 (.10)
Info Proxy × Other race	.13 (.12)	.01 (.13)	.09 (.16)	.04 (.11)	.21 (.10)*	.14 (.10)
Info Proxy × Bachelor's degree	.01 (.06)	.00 (.06)	.05 (.06)	.01 (.05)	.10 (.05)*	.02 (.06)
Info Proxy × Advanced degree	.00 (.07)	.00 (.06)	.02 (.07)	.05 (.05)	.05 (.05)	.01 (.06)
Info Proxy × Income	.06 (.11)	.03 (.11)	.06 (.12)	.01 (.09)	.09 (.09)	.08 (.09)
(Intercept)	.59 (.08)***	.42 (.06)***	.57 (.08)***	.42 (.05)***	.46 (.05)***	.47 (.07)***
N	1025	962	1026	1029	983	1080
R-squared	.12	.10	.10	.11	.09	.11
Adjusted R-squared	.10	.09	.08	.09	.08	.10

Note: Table shows unstandardized regression coefficients with standard errors in parentheses.
* p < .05, ** p < .01, *** p < .001

Table F10: Fully Interacted 2012 Constraint Models

	DV: Constraint					
	Interest	Attention	Media Freq	Discuss Freq	Placement	Pol Know
Info Proxy	−.10 (.03)**	−.09 (.04)*	−.15 (.04)***	−.11 (.03)***	−.16 (.03)***	−.04 (.04)
Verbal Ability	.02 (.02)	.04 (.02)*	.05 (.02)*	.06 (.01)***	.07 (.03)**	.01 (.02)
Info Proxy × Verbal Ability	.10 (.03)**	.12 (.04)**	.07 (.04)	.13 (.03)***	.19 (.03)***	.10 (.04)*
Age	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)***	.00 (.00)***
Male	.00 (.01)	.01 (.01)	.00 (.01)	.01 (.00)	.00 (.01)	−.01 (.01)
Black	.03 (.01)*	.00 (.01)	.01 (.01)	.00 (.01)	.01 (.02)	.01 (.01)
Hispanic	.04 (.01)**	.02 (.01)*	.02 (.01)*	.00 (.01)	.05 (.01)***	.05 (.01)***
Asian	.02 (.03)	.01 (.03)	.01 (.03)	.00 (.02)	.08 (.04)	.05 (.04)
Other race	.02 (.02)	.02 (.02)	.01 (.02)	.02 (.01)	.04 (.03)	.03 (.02)
Bachelor's degree	.01 (.01)	.03 (.01)**	.04 (.01)***	.02 (.01)**	.00 (.02)	.00 (.02)
Advanced degree	.00 (.02)	.03 (.01)*	.06 (.02)***	.03 (.01)***	−.03 (.03)	.01 (.02)
Income	−.01 (.02)	−.03 (.01)*	−.05 (.02)**	−.01 (.01)	−.01 (.02)	−.01 (.02)
Info Proxy × Age	.00 (.00)**	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)**	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)***	.00 (.00)***
Info Proxy × Male	.02 (.01)	.00 (.02)	.02 (.02)	.00 (.01)	.01 (.01)	.02 (.02)
Info Proxy × Black	−.06 (.02)**	−.02 (.02)	.01 (.03)	−.03 (.02)	−.02 (.02)	.02 (.03)
Info Proxy × Hispanic	−.08 (.02)***	−.09 (.02)***	−.07 (.02)**	−.04 (.02)*	−.08 (.02)***	−.11 (.02)***
Info Proxy × Asian	.04 (.05)	.04 (.07)	.03 (.06)	.02 (.06)	.11 (.06)	.10 (.06)
Info Proxy × Other race	.01 (.03)	.00 (.04)	.01 (.04)	.02 (.03)	.02 (.04)	.04 (.05)
Info Proxy × Bachelor's degree	.02 (.02)	.02 (.02)	−.04 (.02)*	.02 (.02)	.02 (.02)	.02 (.02)
Info Proxy × Advanced degree	.05 (.02)*	.00 (.03)	−.05 (.03)	.01 (.02)	.07 (.03)*	.01 (.03)
Info Proxy × Income	.00 (.03)	.04 (.03)	.09 (.03)**	.03 (.02)	.00 (.03)	.01 (.03)
(Intercept)	.36 (.02)***	.34 (.02)***	.36 (.02)***	.32 (.01)***	.43 (.02)***	.37 (.02)***
N	4803	4625	4629	4802	4802	4805
R-squared	.08	.07	.07	.07	.10	.11
Adjusted R-squared	.08	.06	.06	.07	.09	.11

Note: Table shows unstandardized regression coefficients with standard errors in parentheses.
* p < .05, ** p < .01, *** p < .001

Table F11: Fully Interacted 2016 Constraint Models

	DV: Constraint					
	Interest	Attention	Media Freq	Discuss Freq	Placement	Pol Know
Info Proxy	−.12 (.04)***	−.15 (.04)***	−.07 (.03)*	−.11 (.03)***	.06 (.03)	−.07 (.04)
Verbal Ability	−.05 (.03)	−.04 (.03)	.02 (.03)	.01 (.02)	−.08 (.03)**	−.05 (.03)
Info Proxy × Verbal Ability	.24 (.04)***	.24 (.04)***	.11 (.04)**	.21 (.03)***	.23 (.04)***	.22 (.04)***
Age	.00 (.00)**	.00 (.00)**	.00 (.00)**	.00 (.00)***	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)***
Male	.01 (.01)	−.02 (.01)	−.01 (.01)	−.01 (.01)	.01 (.01)	−.01 (.01)
Black	.03 (.02)	.03 (.02)	.00 (.02)	.01 (.01)	−.03 (.02)	.01 (.02)
Hispanic	.02 (.02)	.02 (.02)	.01 (.02)	.00 (.01)	.01 (.02)	.04 (.02)*
Asian	.04 (.03)	.07 (.03)*	.02 (.03)	.01 (.02)	.01 (.03)	.00 (.04)
Other race	.04 (.03)	.03 (.03)	.02 (.03)	.00 (.02)	.02 (.03)	.01 (.03)
Bachelor's degree	.03 (.02)	.04 (.02)*	.03 (.02)	.03 (.01)**	.03 (.02)	.05 (.02)***
Advanced degree	.02 (.02)	.04 (.02)	.01 (.02)	.06 (.01)***	.02 (.02)	.01 (.02)
Income	.01 (.02)	.01 (.02)	.03 (.02)	.01 (.01)	.02 (.02)	.01 (.02)
Info Proxy × Age	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)*
Info Proxy × Male	.01 (.02)	.02 (.02)	.01 (.02)	.01 (.01)	−.02 (.02)	.00 (.02)
Info Proxy × Black	−.05 (.03)	−.05 (.03)	.01 (.03)	−.02 (.02)	.05 (.03)	.02 (.03)
Info Proxy × Hispanic	−.04 (.03)	−.04 (.03)	−.02 (.02)	−.01 (.02)	−.01 (.03)	−.08 (.03)**
Info Proxy × Asian	.05 (.05)	−.11 (.06)	.02 (.04)	.00 (.03)	.03 (.04)	.01 (.05)
Info Proxy × Other race	−.06 (.04)	−.05 (.04)	.02 (.04)	.01 (.03)	.04 (.04)	.02 (.04)
Info Proxy × Bachelor's degree	.01 (.02)	−.01 (.02)	.01 (.02)	.01 (.01)	.00 (.02)	−.04 (.02)
Info Proxy × Advanced degree	.07 (.03)*	.05 (.03)	.07 (.03)**	.02 (.02)	.05 (.03)	.07 (.03)*
Info Proxy × Income	−.01 (.03)	.03 (.03)	−.03 (.03)	−.02 (.02)	−.03 (.03)	−.04 (.03)
(Intercept)	.35 (.02)***	.36 (.02)***	.32 (.03)***	.31 (.01)***	.31 (.02)***	.33 (.02)***
N	3339	3336	3339	3337	3339	3334
R-squared	.14	.14	.12	.14	.15	.16
Adjusted R-squared	.14	.14	.12	.14	.14	.16

Note: Table shows unstandardized regression coefficients with standard errors in parentheses.
* p < .05, ** p < .01, *** p < .001

Table F12: Fully Interacted Pooled Constraint Models

	DV: Constraint					
	Interest	Attention	Media Freq	Discuss Freq	Placement	Pol Know
Info Proxy	−.12 (.02)***	−.08 (.03)**	−.06 (.02)**	−.08 (.02)***	−.12 (.02)***	−.05 (.03)*
Verbal Ability	−.02 (.02)	.01 (.01)	.04 (.02)**	.04 (.01)***	−.05 (.02)**	−.05 (.02)**
Info Proxy × Verbal Ability	.18 (.03)***	.18 (.03)***	.09 (.02)***	.17 (.02)***	.18 (.02)***	.20 (.03)***
Age	.00 (.00)**	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)***	.00 (.00)***
Male	−.01 (.01)	.00 (.01)	.00 (.01)	.00 (.00)	.00 (.01)	−.01 (.01)
Black	.03 (.01)**	.00 (.01)	−.01 (.01)	.00 (.01)	−.01 (.01)	−.01 (.01)
Hispanic	.02 (.01)*	.01 (.01)	.01 (.01)	.00 (.01)	.03 (.01)*	.04 (.01)***
Asian	.03 (.02)	.03 (.02)	.00 (.02)	.00 (.01)	.01 (.03)	.02 (.03)
Other race	.01 (.02)	.00 (.01)	.00 (.01)	−.01 (.01)	−.02 (.02)	.00 (.02)
Bachelor's degree	.02 (.01)	.03 (.01)***	.03 (.01)***	.02 (.01)***	.02 (.01)	.03 (.01)*
Advanced degree	.01 (.01)	.03 (.01)***	.03 (.01)**	.04 (.01)***	.04 (.01)**	.01 (.01)
Income	.01 (.01)	−.02 (.01)*	−.02 (.01)*	.00 (.01)	.00 (.01)	.01 (.01)
Info Proxy × Age	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)*	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)*	.00 (.00)***	.00 (.00)**
Info Proxy × Male	.02 (.01)	.01 (.01)	.01 (.01)	.01 (.01)	.00 (.01)	.00 (.01)
Info Proxy × Black	−.06 (.02)**	−.01 (.02)	.01 (.02)	−.02 (.01)	.01 (.02)	.03 (.02)
Info Proxy × Hispanic	−.05 (.02)**	−.04 (.02)*	−.03 (.02)	−.01 (.01)	−.04 (.01)**	−.08 (.02)***
Info Proxy × Asian	−.04 (.04)	−.06 (.04)	−.01 (.03)	.01 (.03)	−.01 (.03)	−.02 (.04)
Info Proxy × Other race	−.03 (.03)	−.01 (.03)	.00 (.02)	.01 (.02)	.02 (.02)	.01 (.03)
Info Proxy × Bachelor's degree	.02 (.01)	.00 (.01)	.00 (.01)	.02 (.01)	.01 (.01)	−.01 (.02)
Info Proxy × Advanced degree	.06 (.02)**	.04 (.02)*	.04 (.02)*	.03 (.01)**	.01 (.02)	.04 (.02)*
Info Proxy × Income	−.01 (.02)	.03 (.02)	.03 (.02)	.00 (.02)	.01 (.02)	−.04 (.02)
(Intercept)	.35 (.03)***	.32 (.03)***	.32 (.03)***	.30 (.02)***	.38 (.02)***	.35 (.03)***
Random Effects						
σ^2	.02	.02	.02	.02	.02	.02
$\tau_{00\ \text{Sample}}$	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
ICC	.07	.08	.07	.08	.06	.07
N_{Sample}	.03	.03	.03	.03	.03	.03
Observations	9167	8923	8994	9168	9124	9219
Marginal R^2 / Conditional R^2	.08 / .14	.08 / .15	.07 / .14	.08 / .16	.09 / .14	.11 / .17

Note: Table shows unstandardized regression coefficients with standard errors in parentheses.
* p < .05, ** p < .01, *** p < .001

Table F13: Fully Interacted 2008-2010 Stability Models

	DV: Stability					
	Interest	Attention	Media Freq	Discuss Freq	Placement	Pol Know
Info Proxy	−.16 (.10)	−.20 (.10)	−.32 (.11)**	.01 (.08)	−.17 (.08)*	−.03 (.09)
Verbal Ability	.08 (.07)	.11 (.05)*	.00 (.07)	.14 (.05)**	.14 (.04)***	.08 (.06)
Info Proxy × Verbal Ability	.15 (.11)	.12 (.10)	.33 (.12)**	.05 (.09)	.03 (.09)	.10 (.09)
Age	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)**	.00 (.00)
Male	−.02 (.03)	−.03 (.02)	−.05 (.02)*	.00 (.02)	.03 (.02)*	−.03 (.02)
Black	−.02 (.05)	−.02 (.03)	−.03 (.05)	−.01 (.03)	.00 (.03)	.01 (.04)
Hispanic	−.19 (.06)**	−.20 (.04)***	−.20 (.05)***	−.12 (.04)**	−.10 (.04)*	−.17 (.05)***
Other race	.02 (.06)	−.03 (.05)	−.03 (.06)	.00 (.04)	−.06 (.04)	−.12 (.07)
Bachelor's degree	.00 (.03)	.04 (.02)	.06 (.03)*	.02 (.02)	.02 (.02)	.00 (.03)
Advanced degree	.02 (.04)	.04 (.02)	.02 (.03)	.00 (.02)	.02 (.02)	.00 (.04)
Income	−.04 (.06)	−.06 (.04)	−.04 (.05)	−.01 (.04)	−.05 (.04)	.07 (.06)
Info Proxy × Age	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)*	.00 (.00)
Info Proxy × Male	.07 (.04)	.11 (.03)**	.12 (.04)**	.05 (.03)	−.02 (.03)	.06 (.03)
Info Proxy × Black	.03 (.07)	.05 (.07)	.06 (.08)	.02 (.06)	−.01 (.06)	.00 (.06)
Info Proxy × Hispanic	.21 (.09)*	.37 (.08)***	.28 (.09)**	.14 (.07)*	.11 (.08)	.21 (.08)**
Info Proxy × Other race	−.12 (.09)	−.04 (.11)	−.07 (.12)	−.15 (.09)	.01 (.09)	.12 (.09)
Info Proxy × Bachelors degree	.00 (.05)	−.08 (.04)	−.11 (.05)*	−.03 (.04)	−.03 (.04)	.00 (.04)
Info Proxy × Advanced degree	−.01 (.05)	−.08 (.05)	−.03 (.05)	.01 (.04)	−.03 (.04)	.01 (.05)
Info Proxy × Income	.07 (.09)	.16 (.09)	.09 (.09)	.03 (.07)	.11 (.07)	−.10 (.08)
(Intercept)	.66 (.07)***	.64 (.04)***	.71 (.06)***	.56 (.04)***	.64 (.04)***	.59 (.06)***
Observations	1061	1045	1061	1064	1023	1052
R^2	.10	.11	.11	.10	.10	.11
Adj. R^2	.09	.09	.09	.09	.08	.09

Note: Table shows unstandardized regression coefficients with standard errors in parentheses.
* p < .05, ** p < .01, *** p < .001

Table F14: Fully Interacted 2012-2013 Stability Models

	DV: Stability					
	Interest	Attention	Media Freq	Discuss Freq	Placement	Pol Know
Info Proxy	−.03 (.08)	−.14 (.09)	.07 (.09)	−.17 (.09)	.33 (.08)***	.38 (.10)***
Verbal Ability	.08 (.05)	.06 (.04)	.11 (.05)*	.12 (.03)***	.21 (.07)**	.26 (.07)***
Info Proxy × Verbal Ability	.09 (.08)	.20 (.09)*	.06 (.10)	.14 (.08)	−.13 (.09)	−.24 (.11)*
Age	.00 (.00)***	.00 (.00)***	.00 (.00)***	.00 (.00)***	.00 (.00)***	.00 (.00)***
Male	−.05 (.02)*	−.01 (.02)	.02 (.02)	−.02 (.01)	−.02 (.03)	−.07 (.03)*
Black	−.01 (.04)	−.02 (.03)	−.06 (.03)	−.02 (.02)	−.02 (.04)	−.11 (.04)**
Hispanic	−.02 (.04)	−.01 (.03)	.00 (.03)	−.01 (.02)	.01 (.04)	−.02 (.04)
Asian	−.17 (.09)*	−.16 (.08)	−.10 (.10)	−.13 (.07)*	−.33 (.14)*	−.13 (.11)
Other race	.00 (.06)	−.01 (.04)	−.02 (.05)	.00 (.03)	−.16 (.09)	−.02 (.08)
Bachelor's degree	.03 (.03)	.03 (.02)	.02 (.03)	.03 (.01)*	.02 (.05)	−.01 (.04)
Advanced degree	.01 (.04)	.04 (.03)	.06 (.03)	.03 (.02)	.07 (.06)	.01 (.04)
Income	.01 (.04)	.02 (.03)	.02 (.03)	.01 (.02)	.02 (.05)	.01 (.05)
Info Proxy × Age	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)*	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)***	.00 (.00)***
Info Proxy × Male	.08 (.03)**	.02 (.04)	−.04 (.04)	.07 (.03)*	.02 (.03)	.10 (.04)*
Info Proxy × Black	.01 (.06)	.01 (.06)	.08 (.06)	.01 (.05)	.00 (.05)	.17 (.06)*
Info Proxy × Hispanic	.05 (.06)	.04 (.06)	.01 (.06)	.09 (.06)	.03 (.05)	.04 (.07)
Info Proxy × Asian	.12 (.13)	.13 (.19)	−.02 (.19)	.12 (.22)	.30 (.18)	.01 (.17)
Info Proxy × Other race	.00 (.08)	.01 (.09)	.03 (.10)	.00 (.09)	.20 (.10)	.01 (.13)
Info Proxy × Bachelors degree	−.02 (.04)	−.03 (.05)	.01 (.05)	−.08 (.04)*	−.01 (.05)	.03 (.06)
Info Proxy × Advanced degree	.02 (.05)	−.03 (.06)	−.05 (.06)	−.02 (.04)	−.04 (.07)	.04 (.06)
Info Proxy × Income	.00 (.06)	−.01 (.07)	−.01 (.07)	.04 (.06)	.01 (.06)	.01 (.07)
(Intercept)	.59 (.05)***	.63 (.04)***	.54 (.05)***	.61 (.03)***	.36 (.06)***	.40 (.06)***
Observations	1410	1411	1412	1411	1412	1412
R^2	.10	.09	.10	.10	.11	.12
Adj. R^2	.08	.08	.08	.09	.10	.10

Note: Table shows unstandardized regression coefficients with standard errors in parentheses.
* p < .05, ** p < .01, *** p < .001

Table F15: Fully Interacted 2016-2020 Stability Models

	DV: Stability					
	Interest	Attention	Media Freq	Discuss Freq	Placement	Pol Know
Info Proxy	.01 (.04)	−.04 (.04)	.08 (.04)*	.01 (.03)	.14 (.04)***	.10 (.04)*
Verbal Ability	.04 (.03)	.03 (.03)	.09 (.03)**	.10 (.02)***	.06 (.03)*	.07 (.03)*
Info Proxy × Verbal Ability	.12 (.05)*	.15 (.05)**	.04 (.04)	.05 (.03)	.03 (.04)	.02 (.05)
Age	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)*	.00 (.00)*	.00 (.00)*	.00 (.00)***	.00 (.00)
Male	−.04 (.01)**	−.03 (.01)**	−.03 (.01)	−.01 (.01)*	−.01 (.01)	−.03 (.01)*
Black	−.05 (.02)	−.04 (.02)	−.04 (.03)	−.03 (.01)	−.07 (.02)***	−.04 (.02)
Hispanic	−.03 (.02)	.00 (.02)	.01 (.02)	−.01 (.01)	−.08 (.02)***	−.01 (.02)
Asian	.00 (.03)	−.01 (.03)	−.01 (.04)	−.02 (.02)	−.10 (.03)**	−.08 (.04)*
Other race	.04 (.03)	.02 (.03)	.04 (.04)	.01 (.02)	.01 (.03)	.03 (.03)
Bachelor's degree	.03 (.02)*	.06 (.02)***	.04 (.02)*	.01 (.01)	.00 (.02)	.04 (.02)*
Advanced degree	.00 (.02)	.02 (.02)	.00 (.02)	.02 (.01)	.05 (.02)	.02 (.02)
Income	.06 (.02)*	.02 (.02)	.06 (.03)*	.05 (.01)***	.05 (.02)*	.08 (.02)***
Info Proxy × Age	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)**	.00 (.00)
Info Proxy × Male	.04 (.02)*	.04 (.02)	.02 (.02)	.01 (.01)	−.01 (.02)	.02 (.02)
Info Proxy × Black	.04 (.04)	.03 (.04)	.02 (.03)	.01 (.02)	.08 (.03)**	.04 (.04)
Info Proxy × Hispanic	.01 (.03)	−.03 (.03)	−.04 (.03)	−.01 (.02)	.09 (.03)***	.01 (.03)
Info Proxy × Asian	−.04 (.05)	−.02 (.06)	−.02 (.05)	−.02 (.03)	.13 (.04)**	.07 (.06)
Info Proxy × Other race	−.06 (.04)	−.02 (.05)	−.04 (.04)	−.01 (.03)	.00 (.04)	−.04 (.05)
Info Proxy × Bachelors degree	−.02 (.02)	−.05 (.02)*	−.02 (.02)	.03 (.01)*	.03 (.02)	−.03 (.02)
Info Proxy × Advanced degree	.05 (.03)	.03 (.03)	.05 (.03)	.03 (.02)	.01 (.03)	.02 (.03)
Info Proxy × Income	−.05 (.03)	.01 (.04)	−.04 (.03)	−.05 (.02)*	−.05 (.03)	−.10 (.04)**
(Intercept)	.58 (.03)***	.60 (.03)***	.52 (.03)***	.57 (.02)***	.49 (.03)***	.55 (.02)***
Observations	2407	2404	2407	2404	2407	2404
R^2	.19	.18	.18	.18	.22	.20
Adj. R^2	.18	.18	.17	.17	.21	.19

Note: Table shows unstandardized regression coefficients with standard errors in parentheses.
* p < .05, ** p < .01, *** p < .001

Table F16: Fully Interacted Pooled Stability Models

	DV: Constraint					
	Interest	Attention	Media Freq	Discuss Freq	Placement	Pol Know
Info Proxy	−.01 (.04)	−.05 (.04)	.06 (.03)*	.01 (.03)	.12 (.03)***	.14 (.04)***
Verbal Ability	.07 (.03)**	.07 (.02)***	.11 (.02)***	.12 (.01)***	.13 (.02)***	.12 (.03)***
Info Proxy × Verbal Ability	.10 (.04)*	.12 (.04)**	.03 (.03)	.04 (.03)	−.04 (.03)	−.03 (.04)
Age	.00 (.00)***	.00 (.00)***	.00 (.00)***	.00 (.00)***	.00 (.00)**	.00 (.00)**
Male	−.04 (.01)***	−.02 (.01)	.00 (.01)	−.01 (.01)	.00 (.01)	−.04 (.01)***
Black	−.03 (.02)	−.02 (.01)	−.04 (.02)*	−.02 (.01)	−.04 (.02)*	−.05 (.02)**
Hispanic	−.05 (.02)*	−.03 (.02)*	−.01 (.02)	−.01 (.01)	−.08 (.02)***	−.03 (.02)
Asian	−.03 (.03)	−.06 (.03)	−.07 (.04)	−.04 (.02)*	−.13 (.03)***	−.10 (.04)*
Other race	.01 (.03)	−.01 (.02)	−.01 (.02)	.00 (.01)	−.05 (.03)*	.00 (.03)
Bachelor's degree	.02 (.01)	.03 (.01)**	.02 (.01)	.01 (.01)	.01 (.01)	.02 (.01)
Advanced degree	.00 (.02)	.02 (.01)	.00 (.01)	.02 (.01)*	.02 (.02)	.01 (.02)
Income	.02 (.02)	.00 (.02)	.02 (.02)	.03 (.01)*	.04 (.02)	.06 (.02)**
Info Proxy × Age	.00 (.00)**	.00 (.00)*	.00 (.00)***	.00 (.00)*	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)
Info Proxy × Male	.06 (.02)***	.02 (.01)	.00 (.01)	.02 (.01)	−.01 (.01)	.05 (.02)**
Info Proxy × Black	.02 (.03)	.01 (.03)	.03 (.02)	.01 (.02)	.03 (.02)	.08 (.03)**
Info Proxy × Hispanic	.05 (.03)	.03 (.03)	.00 (.02)	.00 (.02)	.10 (.02)***	.04 (.03)
Info Proxy × Asian	.00 (.05)	.04 (.06)	.04 (.05)	.00 (.04)	.14 (.05)**	.09 (.06)
Info Proxy × Other race	−.03 (.04)	.01 (.04)	.01 (.03)	−.02 (.03)	.07 (.03)	.00 (.04)
Info Proxy × Bachelors degree	−.01 (.02)	−.03 (.02)	.00 (.02)	.01 (.01)	.01 (.02)	−.01 (.02)
Info Proxy × Advanced degree	.04 (.02)	.02 (.02)	.04 (.02)*	.02 (.02)	.01 (.02)	.02 (.03)
Info Proxy × Income	.00 (.03)	.03 (.03)	−.01 (.02)	−.01 (.02)	−.03 (.03)	−.08 (.03)**
(Intercept)	.58 (.04)***	.59 (.04)***	.53 (.04)***	.56 (.04)***	.51 (.04)***	.51 (.04)***
Random Effects						
σ^2	.02	.02	.02	.02	.02	.02
$\tau_{00\ \text{Sample}}$	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
ICC	.18	.19	.18	.19	.14	.18
NSample	.03	.03	.03	.03	.03	.03
Observations	4878	4860	4880	4879	4842	4868
Marginal R^2 / Conditional R^2	.10 / .26	.09 / .26	.09 / .26	.09 / .27	.11 / .24	.10 / .27

Note: Table shows unstandardized regression coefficients with standard errors in parentheses.
* p < .05, ** p < .01, *** p < .001

F.2 Models Reported in Table 5 and Alternative Specifications

Table F17: 2016 Social Policy Constraint Models from Table 5

	DV: Constraint					
	Interest	Attent Media	Media Freq	Discuss Freq	Placement	Pol Know
Info Proxy	−.04 (.06)	−.04 (.07)	.01 (.05)	−.08 (.04)	.12 (.05)*	.07 (.06)
Verbal Ability	.11 (.05)*	.10 (.06)	.15 (.06)*	.14 (.03)***	.24 (.06)***	.16 (.05)**
Info Proxy × Verbal Ability	.19 (.08)*	.22 (.09)*	.11 (.07)	.20 (.06)***	−.04 (.08)	.06 (.09)
Age	.00 (.00)***	.00 (.00)***	.00 (.00)***	.00 (.00)***	.00 (.00)***	.00 (.00)***
Male	−.03 (.01)***	−.04 (.01)***	−.03 (.01)***	−.04 (.01)***	−.04 (.01)***	−.05 (.01)***
Black	−.03 (.02)	−.03 (.02)	−.03 (.02)	−.03 (.02)	−.03 (.02)	−.03 (.02)
Hispanic	.01 (.02)	.00 (.02)	.01 (.02)	.00 (.02)	.01 (.02)	.00 (.02)
Asian	−.04 (.03)	−.02 (.03)	−.04 (.03)	−.02 (.03)	−.02 (.03)	−.03 (.03)
Other race	−.03 (.02)	−.03 (.02)	−.03 (.02)	−.02 (.02)	−.02 (.02)	−.02 (.02)
Bachelor's degree	.05 (.01)***	.04 (.01)**	.05 (.01)***	.04 (.01)**	.04 (.01)**	.04 (.01)**
Advanced degree	.10 (.01)***	.10 (.02)***	.10 (.01)***	.09 (.02)***	.10 (.02)***	.10 (.02)***
Income	.00 (.02)	.00 (.02)	.00 (.02)	.00 (.02)	−.01 (.02)	−.01 (.02)
(Intercept)	.44 (.04)***	.44 (.04)***	.41 (.04)***	.42 (.03)***	.33 (.04)***	.39 (.04)***
Observations	3673	3162	3673	3163	3166	3161
R^2	.09	.09	.09	.09	.09	.09
Adj. R^2	.08	.09	.08	.09	.09	.09

Note: Table shows unstandardized regression coefficients with standard errors in parentheses.
* p < .05, ** p < .01, *** p < .001

Table F18: 2016 Size of Government Constraint Models from Table 5

	DV: Constraint					
	Interest	Attent Media	Media Freq	Discuss Freq	Placement	Pol Know
Info Proxy	−.14 (.03)***	−.17 (.03)***	−.06 (.03)*	−.10 (.02)***	−.10 (.03)***	−.08 (.03)*
Verbal Ability	−.07 (.03)*	−.08 (.03)*	.04 (.03)	.04 (.02)*	−.06 (.03)	−.04 (.03)
Info Proxy × Verbal Ability	.29 (.05)***	.33 (.05)***	.10 (.04)*	.18 (.03)***	.24 (.04)***	.25 (.05)***
Age	.00 (.00)***	.00 (.00)***	.00 (.00)***	.00 (.00)***	.00 (.00)***	.00 (.00)***
Male	.00 (.01)	.00 (.01)	.01 (.01)	.01 (.01)	.00 (.01)	.00 (.01)
Black	.03 (.01)***	.03 (.01)***	.03 (.01)***	.03 (.01)***	.03 (.01)***	.03 (.01)***
Hispanic	.01 (.01)	.01 (.01)	.01 (.01)	.01 (.01)	.01 (.01)	.01 (.01)
Asian	.04 (.02)**	.04 (.02)*	.03 (.02)*	.04 (.02)*	.04 (.02)*	.03 (.02)*
Other race	.03 (.01)**	.04 (.01)**	.04 (.01)**	.04 (.01)**	.04 (.01)**	.04 (.01)**
Bachelor's degree	.03 (.01)***	.03 (.01)***	.03 (.01)***	.03 (.01)***	.02 (.01)***	.02 (.01)***
Advanced degree	.07 (.01)***	.07 (.01)***	.08 (.01)***	.07 (.01)***	.07 (.01)***	.07 (.01)***
Income	−.03 (.01)*	−.02 (.01)*	−.02 (.01)*	−.02 (.01)*	−.03 (.01)**	−.03 (.01)**
(Intercept)	.47 (.02)***	.48 (.02)***	.41 (.02)***	.41 (.01)***	.44 (.02)***	.44 (.02)***
Observations	3380	3375	3380	3377	3380	3375
R^2	.09	.09	.08	.09	.09	.09
Adj. R^2	.09	.09	.07	.09	.09	.09

Note: Table shows unstandardized regression coefficients with standard errors in parentheses.
* p < .05, ** p < .01, *** p < .001

Table F19: 2016-2020 Social Policy Stability Models from Table 5

	DV: Constraint					
	Interest	Attent Media	Media Freq	Discuss Freq	Placement	Pol Know
Info Proxy	.03 (.04)	−.04 (.05)	.05 (.04)	.03 (.03)	.16 (.04)***	.13 (.04)**
Verbal Ability	.12 (.04)**	.08 (.04)*	.15 (.04)***	.13 (.02)***	.19 (.04)***	.15 (.04)***
Info Proxy × Verbal Ability	.03 (.06)	.11 (.06)	.00 (.05)	.02 (.04)	−.10 (.05)	−.07 (.06)
Age	.00 (.00)**	.00 (.00)*	.00 (.00)**	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)*
Male	−.02 (.01)***	−.02 (.01)***	−.02 (.01)***	−.02 (.01)**	−.02 (.01)***	−.03 (.01)***
Black	−.05 (.01)***	−.05 (.01)***	−.05 (.01)***	−.05 (.01)***	−.05 (.01)***	−.05 (.01)***
Hispanic	−.02 (.01)*	−.02 (.01)*	−.02 (.01)*	−.02 (.01)*	.02 (.01)	−.02 (.01)
Asian	−.02 (.02)	−.02 (.02)	−.03 (.02)	−.02 (.02)	.01 (.02)	−.03 (.02)
Other race	.00 (.02)	.00 (.02)	.00 (.02)	.00 (.02)	.00 (.02)	.00 (.02)
Bachelor's degree	.03 (.01)**	.03 (.01)***	.03 (.01)***	.03 (.01)**	.02 (.01)**	.02 (.01)**
Advanced degree	.03 (.01)***	.03 (.01)***	.04 (.01)***	.03 (.01)***	.03 (.01)***	.03 (.01)***
Income	.05 (.01)***	.05 (.01)***	.05 (.01)***	.05 (.01)***	.04 (.01)**	.04 (.01)***
(Intercept)	.70 (.03)***	.73 (.03)***	.68 (.03)***	.70 (.02)***	.62 (.03)***	.67 (.02)***
Observations	2332	2329	2332	2330	2332	2329
R^2	.13	.12	.12	.13	.14	.13
Adj. R^2	.12	.12	.12	.12	.14	.13

Note: Table shows unstandardized regression coefficients with standard errors in parentheses.
* p < .05, ** p < .01, *** p < .001

Table F20: 2016-2020 Size of Government Stability Models from Table 5

	DV: Stability					
	Interest	Attent Media	Media Freq	Discuss Freq	Placement	Pol Know
Info Proxy	−.09 (.03)**	−.09 (.04)**	.01 (.03)	−.04 (.02)	.04 (.03)	.02 (.03)
Verbal Ability	−.04 (.03)	−.02 (.03)	.07 (.03)*	.05 (.02)**	.03 (.03)	.03 (.03)
Info Proxy × Verbal Ability	.18 (.04)***	.17 (.05)***	.02 (.04)	.08 (.03)*	.04 (.04)	.06 (.04)
Age	.00 (.00)**	.00 (.00)**	.00 (.00)**	.00 (.00)***	.00 (.00)***	.00 (.00)**
Male	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)
Black	.01 (.01)	.01 (.01)	.01 (.01)	.01 (.01)	.01 (.01)	.01 (.01)
Hispanic	−.02 (.01)*	−.02 (.01)*	−.02 (.01)*	−.02 (.01)*	−.02 (.01)	−.02 (.01)*
Asian	−.02 (.01)	−.03 (.01)	−.03 (.01)*	−.03 (.01)	−.02 (.01)	−.03 (.01)*
Other race	.01 (.01)	.01 (.01)	.01 (.01)	.01 (.01)	.01 (.01)	.01 (.01)
Bachelor's degree	.01 (.01)*	.02 (.01)*	.02 (.01)**	.02 (.01)*	.01 (.01)	.01 (.01)*
Advanced degree	.03 (.01)***	.04 (.01)***	.04 (.01)***	.03 (.01)***	.03 (.01)***	.03 (.01)***
Income	.01 (.01)	.01 (.01)	.01 (.01)	.01 (.01)	.00 (.01)	.00 (.01)
(Intercept)	.70 (.02)***	.70 (.02)***	.64 (.02)***	.65 (.01)***	.62 (.02)***	.65 (.02)***
Observations	2458	2455	2458	2455	2458	2455
R^2	.09	.08	.08	.08	.09	.08
Adj. R^2	.08	.08	.07	.07	.09	.08

Note: Table shows unstandardized regression coefficients with standard errors in parentheses.
* p < .05, ** p < .01, *** p < .001

Table F21: Fully Interacted 2016 Social Policy Constraint Models

	DV: Constraint					
	Interest	Attent Media	Media Freq	Discuss Freq	Placement	Pol Know
Info Proxy	.13 (.08)	.03 (.09)	.00 (.07)	−.04 (.06)	.32 (.08)***	.17 (.09)
Verbal Ability	.13 (.06)*	.12 (.06)	.18 (.06)**	.16 (.04)***	.19 (.06)**	.20 (.06)***
Info Proxy × Verbal Ability	.15 (.09)	.18 (.10)	.07 (.08)	.16 (.07)*	.02 (.08)	.00 (.10)
Age	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)*	.00 (.00)***	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)*
Male	.01 (.03)	−.02 (.03)	−.04 (.03)	−.02 (.02)	.05 (.03)	−.01 (.03)
Black	.04 (.05)	−.02 (.05)	−.08 (.05)	.01 (.03)	−.05 (.04)	−.04 (.04)
Hispanic	.04 (.04)	.01 (.05)	.07 (.04)	.01 (.03)	.02 (.04)	.08 (.04)
Asian	.07 (.06)	.00 (.08)	−.01 (.07)	−.03 (.04)	−.04 (.07)	.10 (.09)
Other race	.12 (.06)*	.07 (.06)	.14 (.06)*	.01 (.04)	.05 (.07)	.01 (.06)
Bachelor's degree	.07 (.03)*	.07 (.04)	.08 (.04)*	.02 (.02)	.06 (.05)	.07 (.04)
Advanced degree	.03 (.04)	.06 (.05)	.09 (.05)	.07 (.03)*	−.07 (.06)	−.06 (.05)
Income	−.01 (.05)	−.07 (.05)	−.07 (.05)	.00 (.03)	.05 (.05)	.00 (.05)
Info Proxy × Age	.00 (.00)*	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)***	.00 (.00)
Info Proxy × Male	−.07 (.04)*	−.05 (.04)	.01 (.03)	−.03 (.03)	−.12 (.04)**	−.06 (.04)
Info Proxy × Black	−.11 (.07)	−.03 (.08)	.07 (.06)	−.09 (.05)	.04 (.06)	.03 (.08)
Info Proxy × Hispanic	−.06 (.06)	−.02 (.07)	−.08 (.05)	−.01 (.04)	.03 (.06)	−.14 (.07)*
Info Proxy × Asian	−.21 (.10)*	−.04 (.14)	−.05 (.09)	.04 (.08)	.03 (.10)	−.21 (.13)
Info Proxy × Other race	−.24 (.08)**	−.16 (.10)	−.22 (.07)**	−.07 (.07)	−.11 (.09)	−.05 (.10)
Info Proxy × Bachelor's degree	−.03 (.05)	−.04 (.05)	−.03 (.04)	.04 (.03)	−.02 (.05)	−.04 (.06)
Info Proxy × Advanced degree	.09 (.06)	.05 (.07)	.01 (.06)	.04 (.04)	.20 (.07)**	.22 (.07)**
Info Proxy × Income	.02 (.07)	.11 (.08)	.10 (.06)	−.01 (.05)	−.08 (.07)	−.02 (.08)
(Intercept)	.33 (.05)***	.40 (.06)***	.40 (.06)***	.40 (.03)***	.18 (.05)***	.34 (.05)***
Observations	3673	3162	3673	3163	3166	3161
R^2	.09	.10	.09	.10	.10	.10
Adj. R^2	.09	.09	.08	.09	.10	.09

Note: Table shows unstandardized regression coefficients with standard errors in parentheses.
* p < .05, ** p < .01, *** p < .001

Table F22: Fully Interacted 2016 Size of Government Constraint Models

	DV: Constraint					
	Interest	Attent Media	Media Freq	Discuss Freq	Placement	Pol Know
Info Proxy	−.10 (.05)*	−.14 (.05)**	−.07 (.04)	−.06 (.03)	−.11 (.04)**	−.09 (.05)
Verbal Ability	−.04 (.04)	−.04 (.03)	.05 (.04)	.04 (.02)*	−.06 (.03)	.01 (.03)
Info Proxy × Verbal Ability	.24 (.05)***	.27 (.05)***	.09 (.05)	.17 (.03)***	.25 (.04)***	.20 (.05)***
Age	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)**
Male	−.01 (.02)	−.02 (.01)	.00 (.02)	.00 (.01)	−.01 (.02)	−.01 (.01)
Black	.06 (.03)*	.05 (.03)	.01 (.03)	.03 (.01)*	−.03 (.02)	.02 (.02)
Hispanic	.04 (.02)	.04 (.02)	.03 (.03)	.03 (.01)*	.03 (.02)	.06 (.02)**
Asian	.09 (.04)*	.14 (.04)***	.04 (.04)	.03 (.02)	.09 (.04)*	.11 (.05)*
Other race	.07 (.03)*	.07 (.03)*	.04 (.04)	.02 (.02)	.02 (.03)	.02 (.03)
Bachelor's degree	.00 (.02)	.02 (.02)	.01 (.02)	.02 (.01)	.01 (.02)	.05 (.02)*
Advanced degree	.01 (.03)	.03 (.02)	.03 (.03)	.06 (.01)***	.01 (.03)	.03 (.03)
Income	−.02 (.03)	−.04 (.03)	.00 (.03)	−.02 (.02)	−.04 (.03)	−.06 (.03)*
Info Proxy × Age	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)
Info Proxy × Male	.02 (.02)	.03 (.02)	.01 (.02)	.02 (.01)	.02 (.02)	.02 (.02)
Info Proxy × Black	−.03 (.04)	−.03 (.04)	.03 (.04)	.00 (.03)	.10 (.03)**	.03 (.04)
Info Proxy × Hispanic	−.05 (.04)	−.07 (.04)	−.02 (.03)	−.04 (.02)	−.03 (.03)	−.10 (.04)**
Info Proxy × Asian	−.09 (.07)	−.18 (.07)*	.01 (.05)	.02 (.04)	−.07 (.05)	−.12 (.07)
Info Proxy × Other race	−.05 (.05)	−.06 (.05)	.01 (.05)	.04 (.04)	.02 (.04)	.03 (.05)
Info Proxy × Bachelor's degree	.04 (.03)	.02 (.03)	.02 (.03)	.02 (.02)	.02 (.03)	−.04 (.03)
Info Proxy × Advanced degree	.09 (.03)*	.07 (.04)	.06 (.03)	.02 (.02)	.08 (.03)*	.04 (.04)
Info Proxy × Income	.01 (.04)	.02 (.04)	.03 (.04)	−.02 (.03)	.01 (.04)	.05 (.04)
(Intercept)	.45 (.03)***	.46 (.03)***	.42 (.03)***	.39 (.02)***	.44 (.03)***	.45 (.03)***
Observations	3380	3375	3380	3377	3380	3375
R^2	.10	.10	.08	.09	.10	.10
Adj. R^2	.09	.09	.07	.09	.09	.09

Note: Table shows unstandardized regression coefficients with standard errors in parentheses.
* p < .05, ** p < .01, *** p < .001

Table F23: Fully Interacted 2016-2020 Social Policy Stability Models

	DV: Stability					
	Interest	Attent Media	Media Freq	Discuss Freq	Placement	Pol Know
Info Proxy	.01 (.06)	−.05 (.06)	.07 (.05)	.03 (.04)	.16 (.05)**	.11 (.06)
Verbal Ability	.13 (.05)**	.08 (.04)	.16 (.05)***	.13 (.02)***	.16 (.04)***	.15 (.04)***
Info Proxy × Verbal Ability	.02 (.07)	.11 (.07)	.01 (.06)	.01 (.04)	−.06 (.06)	−.06 (.07)
Age	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)**
Male	−.06 (.02)**	−.03 (.02)	−.06 (.02)**	−.03 (.01)**	−.02 (.02)	−.04 (.02)*
Black	−.08 (.04)*	−.08 (.04)*	−.04 (.04)	−.05 (.02)*	−.07 (.03)*	−.03 (.03)
Hispanic	−.05 (.03)	−.04 (.03)	−.01 (.03)	−.02 (.02)	−.06 (.03)*	.00 (.03)
Asian	.01 (.04)	−.03 (.05)	−.02 (.05)	.00 (.02)	−.09 (.05)*	−.04 (.05)
Other race	.07 (.05)	.02 (.04)	.04 (.05)	.03 (.03)	.02 (.04)	.06 (.04)
Bachelor's degree	.02 (.02)	.05 (.02)*	.02 (.03)	.00 (.01)	−.03 (.03)	.03 (.02)
Advanced degree	−.01 (.03)	.01 (.03)	.00 (.03)	.01 (.02)	.03 (.04)	.01 (.03)
Income	.08 (.04)*	.03 (.03)	.07 (.04)	.08 (.02)***	.10 (.03)**	.12 (.03)***
Info Proxy × Age	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)*
Info Proxy × Male	.05 (.03)*	.02 (.03)	.05 (.02)	.02 (.02)	.00 (.02)	.01 (.03)
Info Proxy × Black	.05 (.05)	.04 (.05)	.01 (.05)	.00 (.04)	.04 (.04)	−.02 (.05)
Info Proxy × Hispanic	.04 (.04)	.02 (.05)	−.02 (.04)	.01 (.03)	.06 (.04)	−.03 (.04)
Info Proxy × Asian	−.06 (.07)	.01 (.08)	.01 (.06)	.07 (.05)	.12 (.06)	.02 (.08)
Info Proxy × Other race	−.11 (.06)	−.05 (.07)	−.05 (.06)	−.07 (.05)	−.02 (.06)	−.10 (.07)
Info Proxy × Bachelor's degree	.00 (.03)	−.03 (.03)	.00 (.03)	.04 (.02)	.06 (.03)	.01 (.04)
Info Proxy × Advanced degree	.05 (.04)	.03 (.04)	.04 (.04)	.04 (.03)	.01 (.04)	.04 (.05)
Info Proxy × Income	−.04 (.05)	.03 (.05)	−.03 (.04)	−.06 (.03)	−.08 (.04)	−.13 (.05)*
(Intercept)	.71 (.04)***	.74 (.04)***	.66 (.04)***	.70 (.02)***	.62 (.04)***	.68 (.03)***
Observations	2332	2329	2332	2330	2332	2329
R^2	.13	.13	.13	.13	.15	.14
Adj. R^2	.12	.12	.12	.13	.14	.13

Note: Table shows unstandardized regression coefficients with standard errors in parentheses.
* p < .05, ** p < .01, *** p < .001

Table F24: Fully Interacted 2016-2020 Size of Government Stability Models

	DV: Constraint					
	Interest	Attent Media	Media Freq	Discuss Freq	Placement	Pol Know
Info Proxy	−.06 (.04)	−.06 (.05)	.04 (.04)	−.03 (.03)	.06 (.04)	.01 (.05)
Verbal Ability	−.05 (.04)	−.02 (.03)	.07 (.04)	.05 (.02)*	.01 (.03)	.00 (.03)
Info Proxy × Verbal Ability	.20 (.05)***	.18 (.05)***	.02 (.04)	.08 (.03)*	.10 (.04)*	.11 (.05)*
Age	.00 (.00)**	.00 (.00)**	.00 (.00)*	.00 (.00)*	.00 (.00)***	.00 (.00)
Male	−.02 (.01)	−.03 (.01)	.01 (.02)	.00 (.01)	.01 (.01)	−.01 (.01)
Black	.01 (.03)	.03 (.03)	.02 (.03)	.01 (.01)	−.02 (.02)	.00 (.02)
Hispanic	−.04 (.02)	−.02 (.02)	−.01 (.02)	−.02 (.01)	−.07 (.02)**	−.03 (.02)
Asian	−.02 (.03)	−.01 (.04)	.00 (.04)	−.03 (.02)	−.08 (.03)*	−.07 (.04)
Other race	−.06 (.03)	−.07 (.04)	.01 (.04)	.01 (.02)	−.01 (.03)	−.01 (.03)
Bachelor's degree	.03 (.02)	.05 (.02)**	.04 (.02)	.01 (.01)	.01 (.02)	.03 (.02)
Advanced degree	.02 (.02)	.03 (.02)	.01 (.03)	.02 (.01)	.06 (.03)*	.05 (.02)
Income	.01 (.03)	−.01 (.03)	.01 (.03)	.02 (.02)	.01 (.03)	.03 (.03)
Info Proxy × Age	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)*	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)**	.00 (.00)
Info Proxy × Male	.04 (.02)	.04 (.02)*	.02 (.02)	.01 (.01)	.01 (.02)	.02 (.02)
Info Proxy × Black	.01 (.04)	−.02 (.04)	.01 (.04)	.00 (.03)	.05 (.03)	.02 (.04)
Info Proxy × Hispanic	.03 (.04)	.00 (.04)	−.01 (.03)	.01 (.02)	.08 (.03)**	.02 (.03)
Info Proxy × Asian	.00 (.06)	−.04 (.06)	−.04 (.05)	.02 (.04)	.08 (.05)	.07 (.06)
Info Proxy × Other race	.10 (.05)*	.12 (.05)*	.02 (.05)	.01 (.03)	.04 (.04)	.04 (.05)
Info Proxy × Bachelor's degree	−.02 (.03)	−.05 (.03)*	−.02 (.02)	.01 (.02)	.00 (.03)	−.03 (.03)
Info Proxy × Advanced degree	.01 (.03)	.00 (.03)	.04 (.03)	.02 (.02)	−.03 (.03)	−.02 (.03)
Info Proxy × Income	−.01 (.04)	.03 (.04)	.00 (.03)	−.02 (.03)	.01 (.03)	−.04 (.04)
(Intercept)	.69 (.03)***	.68 (.03)***	.61 (.03)***	.65 (.02)***	.61 (.03)***	.65 (.03)***
Observations	2458	2455	2458	2455	2458	2455
R^2	.09	.09	.08	.08	.10	.09
Adj. R^2	.08	.08	.07	.07	.09	.08

Note: Table shows unstandardized regression coefficients with standard errors in parentheses.
* p < .05, ** p < .01, *** p < .001

F.3 Models Reported in Table 8 and Alternative Specifications

Table F25: 2008-2010 Baseline Models from Table 8

	DV: Stability						DV: Constraint					
	Political Interest	Attention Media	Media Frequency	Discuss Frequency	Placement Knowledge	Political Knowledge	Political Interest	Attention Media	Media Frequency	Discuss Frequency	Placement Knowledge	Political Knowledge
Info Proxy	−.53	−.30	−.32	−.30	−.28	−.32	−.07	.00	−.19	.02	−.02	.03
	(.09)***	(.10)**	(.11)**	(.08)***	(.07)***	(.08)***	(.07)	(.07)	(.08)*	(.06)	(.06)	(.06)
Verbal Ability	−.23	.00	−.05	−.01	−.01	−.20	.08	.15	.05	.16	.16	.09
	(.08)**	(.05)	(.08)	(.05)	(.05)	(.06)**	(.06)	(.04)***	(.06)	(.04)***	(.04)***	(.05)
Proxy x Ability	.65	.40	.39	.37	.37	.53	.15	.03	.25	.02	.09	.07
	(.12)***	(.12)**	(.14)**	(.10)***	(.10)***	(.10)***	(.10)	(.09)	(.11)*	(.08)	(.08)	(.08)
(Intercept)	.54	.34	.39	.36	.35	.44	.57	.54	.63	.53	.55	.54
	(.06)***	(.04)***	(.06)***	(.04)***	(.04)***	(.05)***	(.05)***	(.03)***	(.04)***	(.03)***	(.03)***	(.04)***
Observations	1035	970	1035	1038	992	1091	1071	1053	1070	1073	1032	1062
R^2	.06	.04	.04	.04	.04	.06	.07	.06	.07	.07	.07	.08
Adj. R^2	.06	.04	.03	.04	.04	.06	.07	.06	.06	.07	.07	.08

Note: Table shows unstandardized regression coefficients with standard errors in parentheses.
* p < .05, ** p < .01, *** p < .001

Table F26: 2012-2013 Baseline Models from Table 8

	DV: Constraint						DV: Stability					
	Political Interest	Attention Media	Media Frequency	Discussion Frequency	Placement Knowledge	Political Knowledge	Political Interest	Attention Media	Media Frequency	Discussion Frequency	Placement Knowledge	Political Knowledge
Info Proxy	−.10	−.10	−.08	−.12	−.10	.00	−.04	−.15	−.01	−.08	.19	.33
	(.02)***	(.02)***	(.03)**	(.02)***	(.02)***	(.02)	(.06)	(.06)*	(.06)	(.06)	(.05)***	(.07)***
Verbal Ability	−.01	.04	.05	.07	−.12	−.06	.14	.10	.17	.17	.29	.35
	(.02)	(.01)**	(.02)**	(.01)***	(.02)***	(.02)**	(.05)**	(.04)**	(.04)***	(.03)***	(.06)***	(.05)***
Proxy x Ability	.20	.20	.14	.20	.28	.21	.07	.21	.03	.09	−.19	−.35
	(.03)***	(.03)***	(.03)***	(.03)***	(.03)***	(.03)***	(.07)	(.08)**	(.08)	(.07)	(.07)**	(.09)***
(Intercept)	.36	.34	.34	.33	.39	.34	.66	.70	.64	.65	.52	.48
	(.01)***	(.01)***	(.01)***	(.01)***	(.01)***	(.01)***	(.04)***	(.03)***	(.03)***	(.02)***	(.04)***	(.04)***
N	5286	5056	5061	5279	5284	5288	1470	1471	1472	1469	1472	1472
R^2	.06	.05	.05	.06	.08	.10	.06	.06	.06	.06	.07	.07
Adj. R^2	.06	.05	.05	.06	.08	.10	.06	.06	.06	.06	.07	.07

Note: Table shows unstandardized regression coefficients with standard errors in parentheses.
* p < .05, ** p < .01, *** p < .001

Table F27: 2016-2020 Baseline Models from Table 8

	DV: Constraint						DV: Stability					
	Political Interest	Attention Media	Media Frequency	Discussion Frequency	Placement Knowledge	Political Knowledge	Political Interest	Attention Media	Media Frequency	Discussion Frequency	Placement Knowledge	Political Knowledge
Info Proxy	−.15	−.17	−.07	−.11	−.07	−.07	.01	−.03	.05	.01	.14	.12
	(.03)***	(.03)***	(.02)***	(.02)***	(.02)**	(.03)**	(.03)	(.03)	(.02)*	(.02)	(.02)***	(.03)***
Verbal Ability	−.07	−.06	.03	.02	−.07	−.07	.09	.08	.15	.14	.16	.12
	(.02)**	(.02)*	(.03)	(.01)	(.02)**	(.02)**	(.03)**	(.03)**	(.03)***	(.02)***	(.03)***	(.02)***
Proxy x Ability	.30	.31	.13	.21	.24	.27	.10	.13	.01	.04	−.05	−.01
	(.04)***	(.04)***	(.03)***	(.02)***	(.03)***	(.03)***	(.04)*	(.04)**	(.04)	(.03)	(.03)	(.04)
(Intercept)	.33	.33	.29	.28	.29	.29	.59	.61	.55	.59	.51	.55
	(.02)***	(.02)***	(.02)***	(.01)***	(.01)***	(.01)***	(.02)***	(.02)***	(.02)***	(.01)***	(.02)***	(.02)***
N	3543	3539	3543	3541	3543	3538	2551	2547	2551	2548	2551	2548
R^2	.09	.09	.07	.10	.11	.11	.14	.14	.14	.13	.17	.16
Adj. R^2	.09	.09	.07	.10	.11	.11	.14	.13	.13	.13	.17	.16

Note: Table shows unstandardized regression coefficients with standard errors in parentheses.
* p < .05, ** p < .01, *** p < .001

Table F28: 2008/2009 Constraint Models w/ Controls from Table 8

	Political Interest		Attention Politics Media		News Frequency		Discussion Frequency		Issue Placement		Political Knowledge	
Info Proxy	−.56 (.11)***	−.88 (.20)***	−.20 (.12)	−.68 (.24)**	−.22 (.13)	−.51 (.22)*	−.31 (.10)**	−.33 (.18)	−.21 (.09)*	−.54 (.16)**	−.18 (.09)	−.24 (.18)
Verbal Ability	−.26 (.09)**	−.28 (.11)**	.01 (.07)	.00 (.08)	−.06 (.09)	−.04 (.11)	−.06 (.06)	−.08 (.07)	.02 (.06)	.06 (.07)	−.14 (.08)	−.17 (.09)
Proxy x Ability	.65 (.15)***	.69 (.17)***	.31 (.16)*	.38 (.18)*	.33 (.16)*	.30 (.19)	.42 (.13)***	.47 (.15)**	.25 (.12)*	.17 (.13)	.39 (.12)**	.43 (.15)**
Age	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)**	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)**	.00 (.00)***	.00 (.00)**	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)**	.00 (.00)*	.00 (.00)***	.00 (.00)
Male	.00 (.01)	.01 (.04)	−.01 (.01)	−.02 (.03)	.00 (.01)	−.03 (.04)	.00 (.01)	−.04 (.03)	.00 (.01)	.03 (.03)	−.01 (.01)	−.01 (.04)
Black	.01 (.02)	.16 (.07)*	.00 (.03)	.04 (.05)	.00 (.02)	.05 (.07)	.01 (.02)	.05 (.05)	.00 (.02)	.04 (.04)	.00 (.02)	.04 (.06)
Hispanic	.00 (.03)	−.37 (.11)***	.02 (.03)	−.15 (.06)*	.01 (.03)	−.09 (.09)	.00 (.03)	−.14 (.06)*	.01 (.03)	−.10 (.06)	.01 (.03)	−.07 (.08)
Other race	.06 (.04)	.03 (.12)	.06 (.04)	.09 (.09)	.06 (.04)	.01 (.11)	.06 (.04)	.06 (.07)	.06 (.04)	.02 (.08)	.06 (.03)	.24 (.12)*
Bachelor's degree	.04 (.02)**	.07 (.05)	.04 (.02)*	.03 (.04)	.04 (.02)**	.12 (.04)**	.04 (.02)**	.06 (.03)	.04 (.02)**	.03 (.03)	.04 (.01)**	.09 (.05)
Advanced degree	.07 (.02)***	.15 (.07)*	.08 (.02)***	.08 (.04)	.07 (.02)***	.09 (.06)	.06 (.02)***	.05 (.04)	.07 (.02)***	.04 (.04)	.06 (.02)***	.09 (.06)
Income	−.02 (.03)	.01 (.10)	−.04 (.03)	−.08 (.07)	−.02 (.03)	−.06 (.08)	−.02 (.03)	.01 (.06)	−.03 (.03)	−.05 (.06)	−.04 (.03)	−.06 (.08)
Party ID	−.03 (.02)	−.10 (.06)	−.03 (.02)	−.02 (.04)	−.03 (.02)	−.05 (.05)	−.03 (.02)	−.05 (.04)	−.02 (.02)	−.04 (.04)	−.04 (.02)*	−.03 (.05)
Partisan Extremity	.03 (.02)	−.07 (.05)	.01 (.02)	−.03 (.04)	.01 (.02)	−.08 (.05)	.02 (.02)	−.05 (.04)	.01 (.02)	−.04 (.03)	.01 (.02)	−.07 (.05)
Need to Evaluate	−.02 (.05)	−.31 (.17)	−.04 (.06)	−.37 (.12)**	−.05 (.05)	.04 (.15)	−.03 (.05)	−.05 (.11)	−.05 (.06)	−.17 (.11)	−.06 (.05)	−.09 (.14)
Need for Cognition	−.01 (.02)	−.01 (.06)	−.02 (.02)	.08 (.04)	−.01 (.02)	.08 (.06)	−.02 (.02)	.00 (.04)	−.01 (.02)	−.05 (.04)	−.02 (.02)	−.05 (.05)
Proxy x Age		.00 (.00)		.00 (.00)		.01 (.00)**		.00 (.00)		.00 (.00)		.00 (.00)
Proxy x Male		−.01 (.06)		.06 (.07)		.06 (.07)		.09 (.05)		−.08 (.05)		.00 (.06)
Proxy x Black		−.22 (.11)*		−.09 (.11)		−.09 (.13)		−.08 (.10)		.10 (.09)		−.05 (.10)
Proxy x Hispanic		.58 (.17)***		.54 (.17)**		.16 (.16)		.34 (.13)*		.24 (.12)*		.09 (.13)
Proxy x Other race		.03 (.20)		−.08 (.21)		.11 (.23)		−.01 (.18)		.10 (.15)		−.27 (.17)
Proxy x Bachelors		−.04 (.08)		.02 (.08)		−.13 (.08)		.04 (.06)		.03 (.06)		−.08 (.07)
Proxy x Postgrad		−.11 (.10)		−.01 (.09)		−.03 (.09)		.02 (.07)		.04 (.07)		−.06 (.08)
Proxy x Income		−.04 (.15)		.10 (.17)		.07 (.15)		−.06 (.12)		.04 (.11)		.03 (.12)
Proxy x Party ID		.10 (.09)		−.02 (.09)		.03 (.09)		.03 (.07)		.04 (.07)		−.02 (.08)
Proxy x Extremity		.18 (.08)*		.13 (.09)		.17 (.09)		.15 (.07)*		.13 (.06)*		.13 (.07)
Proxy x NTE		.48 (.26)		.87 (.28)**		.14 (.28)		.01 (.20)		.29 (.21)		.05 (.22)
Proxy x NFC		.00 (.09)		−.26 (.10)**		−.18 (.10)		−.02 (.07)		.09 (.07)		.04 (.08)
(Intercept)	.62 (.07)***	.81 (.12)***	.43 (.06)***	.61 (.09)***	.47 (.08)***	.61 (.12)***	.47 (.06)***	.47 (.09)***	.44 (.05)***	.56 (.08)***	.51 (.06)***	.55 (.11)***
N	.622	.622	.582	.582	.627	.627	.627	.627	.599	.599	.658	.658
R2	.12	.17	.10	.15	.09	.13	.10	.13	.09	.12	.13	.14
Adj.R2	.10	.13	.08	.11	.07	.09	.08	.09	.07	.08	.11	.11

Note: Table shows unstandardized regression coefficients with standard errors in parentheses.
* p < .05, ** p < .01, *** p < .001

Table F29: 2012 Constraint Models w/ Controls from Table 8

	Political Interest		Attention Politics Media		News Frequency		Discussion Frequency		Issue Placement		Political Knowledge	
Info Proxy	−.13 (.05)**	−.22 (.09)*	−.20 (.05)***	−.19 (.09)*	−.12 (.05)*	−.15 (.10)	−.14 (.05)**	−.33 (.10)***	−.14 (.04)**	−.36 (.09)***	−.02 (.06)	−.25 (.11)*
Verbal Ability	−.03 (.04)	.02 (.05)	−.01 (.03)	.03 (.04)	.02 (.04)	.07 (.04)	.02 (.02)	.03 (.02)	−.14 (.05)**	−.13 (.06)*	−.05 (.05)	.02 (.06)
Proxy x Ability	.16 (.06)**	.08 (.07)	.19 (.06)**	.10 (.08)	.10 (.07)	.00 (.08)	.20 (.06)***	.17 (.07)*	.26 (.06)***	.24 (.07)**	.16 (.08)*	.12 (.09)
Age	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)
Male	.00 (.01)	−.04 (.02)	.00 (.01)	−.02 (.01)	.00 (.01)	−.02 (.02)	.00 (.01)	−.01 (.01)	.00 (.01)	.01 (.02)	−.01 (.01)	−.03 (.02)
Black	.01 (.01)	.09 (.03)**	.01 (.01)	.07 (.02)**	.01 (.01)	.07 (.03)*	.01 (.01)	.03 (.02)*	.01 (.01)	.04 (.04)	.01 (.01)	−.02 (.04)
Hispanic	.00 (.01)	.08 (.03)*	.00 (.01)	.05 (.02)*	.00 (.01)	.06 (.03)*	.00 (.01)	.01 (.02)	.00 (.01)	.10 (.04)**	.00 (.01)	.08 (.04)*
Asian	.00 (.04)	−.04 (.07)	.00 (.04)	−.03 (.07)	.00 (.04)	−.02 (.08)	.00 (.04)	.00 (.05)	.00 (.04)	−.03 (.12)	.00 (.04)	−.12 (.09)
Other race	−.01 (.02)	−.03 (.05)	−.01 (.02)	.02 (.03)	−.01 (.02)	.00 (.04)	−.01 (.02)	.02 (.02)	−.01 (.02)	−.07 (.07)	.00 (.02)	−.07 (.06)
Bachelor's degree	.02 (.01)*	.00 (.02)	.02 (.01)*	.01 (.02)	.02 (.01)*	.04 (.02)	.02 (.01)*	.01 (.01)	.02 (.01)*	−.01 (.04)	.01 (.01)	.03 (.03)
Postgrad degree	.04 (.01)***	.00 (.03)	.04 (.01)***	.04 (.02)	.04 (.01)***	.05 (.03)	.04 (.01)***	.05 (.02)**	.03 (.01)**	−.03 (.05)	.04 (.01)**	.03 (.04)
Income	−.01 (.01)	.03 (.03)	−.01 (.01)	.00 (.02)	−.01 (.01)	−.04 (.03)	−.01 (.01)	.00 (.02)	−.01 (.01)	.04 (.04)	−.01 (.01)	.02 (.04)
Party ID	.02 (.01)	.03 (.03)	.02 (.01)	.05 (.02)*	.02 (.01)	.07 (.03)**	.02 (.01)	.03 (.02)*	.02 (.01)	.04 (.04)	.02 (.01)	.03 (.04)
Partisan Extremity	.06 (.01)***	.05 (.02)	.06 (.01)***	.06 (.02)***	.06 (.01)***	.06 (.02)**	.06 (.01)***	.04 (.01)**	.05 (.01)***	−.05 (.03)	.05 (.01)***	.00 (.03)
Read Papers	.03 (.01)*	−.02 (.04)	.03 (.01)**	.03 (.03)	.03 (.01)**	.02 (.03)	.03 (.01)*	.01 (.02)	.03 (.01)*	.06 (.06)	.02 (.01)	−.01 (.05)
Listen NPR	.02 (.01)	.07 (.04)	.02 (.01)	.06 (.03)	.02 (.01)	.06 (.03)	.02 (.01)	.04 (.02)*	.01 (.01)	.00 (.07)	.01 (.01)	−.02 (.05)
Listen Talk Radio	.04 (.01)***	−.01 (.04)	.05 (.01)***	.03 (.03)	.04 (.01)***	.00 (.03)	.04 (.01)***	.04 (.02)*	.04 (.01)**	−.06 (.06)	.04 (.01)**	.02 (.04)
Watch Fox News	.01 (.01)	.03 (.03)	.02 (.01)	.02 (.02)	.01 (.01)	.02 (.02)	.01 (.01)	.00 (.01)	.01 (.01)	−.05 (.03)	.01 (.01)	−.03 (.03)
Watch MSNBC	.02 (.01)*	−.01 (.03)	.02 (.01)*	.00 (.02)	.02 (.01)*	−.01 (.03)	.02 (.01)*	.03 (.01)	.02 (.01)*	.01 (.04)	.01 (.01)	−.05 (.04)
Need to Evaluate	.00 (.02)	−.06 (.05)	.01 (.02)	−.04 (.03)	.01 (.02)	−.02 (.04)	.00 (.02)	−.03 (.02)	.00 (.02)	−.13 (.07)	−.01 (.02)	−.14 (.06)*
Need for Affect	−.10 (.02)***	−.18 (.06)**	−.10 (.02)***	−.11 (.04)*	−.10 (.02)***	−.12 (.05)*	−.10 (.02)***	−.14 (.03)***	−.10 (.02)***	−.21 (.08)**	−.10 (.02)***	−.12 (.07)
Need for Cognition	.00 (.01)	.00 (.03)	.01 (.01)	.00 (.02)	.01 (.01)	.02 (.03)	.01 (.01)	.00 (.02)	.00 (.01)	−.07 (.04)	.00 (.01)	−.03 (.04)
Proxy x Age		.00 (.00)		.00 (.00)		.00 (.00)		.00 (.00)		.00 (.00)		.00 (.00)
Proxy x Male		.06 (.03)*		.06 (.03)		.03 (.03)		.03 (.03)		−.01 (.03)		.04 (.04)
Proxy x Black		−.12 (.05)*		−.13 (.05)**		−.12 (.05)*		−.10 (.04)*		.03 (.05)		.07 (.06)
Proxy x Hispanic		−.14 (.05)**		−.14 (.05)**		−.14 (.05)**		−.04 (.05)		−.13 (.05)**		−.15 (.06)**
Proxy x Asian		.09 (.11)		.09 (.15)		.03 (.16)		.01 (.18)		.03 (.15)		.21 (.14)
Proxy x Other race		.05 (.07)		−.07 (.07)		−.02 (.08)		−.08 (.07)		.09 (.09)		.11 (.10)
Proxy x Bachelors		.04 (.03)		.01 (.04)		−.04 (.04)		.03 (.03)		.03 (.04)		−.03 (.05)
Proxy x Postgrad		.05 (.04)		.01 (.05)		−.03 (.05)		.02 (.04)		.08 (.06)		.00 (.05)
Proxy x Income		−.05 (.05)		.01 (.05)		.08 (.06)		−.03 (.05)		−.07 (.05)		−.05 (.06)
Proxy x Party ID		−.02 (.04)		−.07 (.05)		−.11 (.05)*		−.07 (.04)		−.02 (.05)		−.03 (.06)
Proxy x Extremity		.02 (.04)		.01 (.04)		.01 (.04)		.08 (.04)*		.13 (.04)**		.10 (.05)*
Proxy x Papers		.05 (.05)		.01 (.05)		.02 (.06)		.05 (.04)		.04 (.07)		.03 (.06)
Proxy x NPR		−.08 (.05)		−.07 (.05)		−.06 (.06)		−.06 (.04)		.01 (.07)		.04 (.06)
Proxy x Talk Radio		.06 (.05)		.03 (.05)		.07 (.06)		.01 (.04)		.11 (.06)		.02 (.06)
Proxy x Fox News		.02 (.04)		.01 (.04)		.00 (.04)		.04 (.03)		.07 (.04)		.05 (.05)
Proxy x MSNBC		.04 (.04)		.06 (.04)		.06 (.05)		−.02 (.03)		.00 (.05)		.09 (.05)
Proxy x NTE		.09 (.07)		.13 (.08)		.05 (.08)		.12 (.07)		.15 (.08)		.22 (.09)*
Proxy x NFA		.13 (.08)		.01 (.09)		.05 (.09)		.14 (.08)		.14 (.09)		.04 (.10)
Proxy x NFC		.00 (.04)		.01 (.05)		−.02 (.05)		.01 (.04)		.09 (.05)		.05 (.06)
Intercept	.42 (.03)***	.48 (.06)***	.41 (.03)***	.40 (.04)***	.39 (.03)***	.40 (.05)***	.38 (.03)***	.42 (.03)***	.46 (.04)***	.64 (.07)***	.40 (.04)***	.54 (.07)***
N	1412	1412	1413	1413	1414	1414	1413	1413	1414	1414	1414	1414
R^2	.11	.13	.12	.13	.11	.13	.11	.13	.12	.15	.12	.15
Adj.R^2	.09	.10	.10	.11	.10	.10	.10	.11	.10	.12	.11	.12

Note: Table shows unstandardized regression coefficients with standard errors in parentheses.
* p < .05, ** p < .01, *** p < .001

Table F30: 2016 Constraint Models w/ Controls from Table 8

	Political Interest		Attention Politics Media		News Frequency		Discussion Frequency		Issue Placement		Political Knowledge	
Info Proxy	−.14 (.03)***	−.16 (.04)***	−.16 (.03)***	−.22 (.05)***	−.05 (.02)*	−.11 (.04)**	−.11 (.02)***	−.12 (.03)***	−.04 (.02)	−.15 (.04)***	−.05 (.03)	−.14 (.05)**
Verbal Ability	−.07 (.02)**	−.03 (.03)	−.06 (.02)**	−.03 (.03)	.02 (.03)	.02 (.03)	.01 (.01)	.00 (.02)	−.05 (.02)*	−.06 (.03)*	−.04 (.02)*	−.03 (.02)
Proxy x Ability	.23 (.04)***	.17 (.04)***	.23 (.04)***	.17 (.04)***	.07 (.03)*	.06 (.04)	.16 (.02)***	.16 (.03)***	.16 (.03)***	.16 (.03)***	.18 (.04)***	.15 (.04)***
Age	.00 (.00)***	.00 (.00)**	.00 (.00)***	.00 (.00)***	.00 (.00)***	.00 (.00)**	.00 (.00)***	.00 (.00)**	.00 (.00)***	.00 (.00)*	.00 (.00)***	.00 (.00)***
Male	.01 (.00)	−.02 (.01)	.01 (.00)	−.02 (.01)*	.01 (.00)	−.01 (.01)	.01 (.00)	.00 (.01)	.00 (.00)	.00 (.01)	.00 (.00)	−.01 (.01)
Black	−.04 (.01)***	.04 (.02)	−.04 (.01)***	.04 (.02)	−.04 (.01)***	−.02 (.02)	−.04 (.01)***	.00 (.01)	−.04 (.01)***	−.02 (.02)	−.04 (.01)***	−.01 (.02)
Hispanic	−.02 (.01)*	.01 (.02)	−.02 (.01)*	.01 (.02)	−.02 (.01)*	−.01 (.02)	−.02 (.01)*	−.01 (.01)	−.01 (.01)	.01 (.02)	−.02 (.01)*	.04 (.02)*
Asian	.01 (.01)	.02 (.03)	.01 (.01)	.04 (.03)	.00 (.01)	.00 (.03)	.01 (.01)	.01 (.02)	.01 (.01)	−.01 (.03)	.00 (.01)	.01 (.03)
Other race	−.01 (.01)	.02 (.03)	−.01 (.01)	.03 (.03)	−.01 (.01)	.00 (.03)	.00 (.01)	−.01 (.02)	.00 (.01)	−.01 (.03)	−.01 (.01)	.00 (.02)
Bachelor's degree	.02 (.01)***	.03 (.02)	.02 (.01)***	.05 (.02)**	.02 (.01)***	.02 (.02)	.02 (.01)***	.03 (.01)***	.02 (.01)***	.03 (.02)	.02 (.01)***	.05 (.02)***
Postgrad degree	.04 (.01)***	.03 (.02)	.04 (.01)***	.05 (.02)**	.04 (.01)***	.01 (.02)	.04 (.01)***	.05 (.01)***	.04 (.01)***	.04 (.02)	.03 (.01)***	.03 (.02)
Income	.00 (.01)	.02 (.02)	.00 (.01)	.00 (.02)	.00 (.01)	.04 (.02)	.00 (.01)	.01 (.01)	.00 (.01)	.03 (.02)	.00 (.01)	.02 (.02)
Party ID	−.10 (.01)***	−.03 (.02)	−.10 (.01)***	−.04 (.02)	−.10 (.01)***	−.07 (.02)**	−.10 (.01)***	−.07 (.01)***	−.10 (.01)***	−.04 (.02)	−.10 (.01)***	−.04 (.02)*
Partisan Extremity	.03 (.01)***	−.04 (.02)**	.03 (.01)***	−.04 (.02)**	.03 (.01)***	−.04 (.02)*	.03 (.01)***	.00 (.01)	.02 (.01)***	−.10 (.02)***	.03 (.01)***	−.06 (.01)***
Read Papers	.03 (.01)***	.03 (.02)	.03 (.01)***	.03 (.02)	.03 (.01)***	.06 (.02)**	.03 (.01)***	.04 (.01)***	.03 (.01)***	.02 (.02)	.02 (.01)***	.01 (.02)
Listen NPR	.05 (.01)***	.00 (.02)	.05 (.01)***	.02 (.02)	.05 (.01)***	.06 (.03)*	.05 (.01)***	.04 (.01)**	.04 (.01)***	.02 (.03)	.04 (.01)***	.07 (.02)**
Listen Talk Radio	.01 (.01)	.01 (.03)	.01 (.01)	.01 (.03)	.01 (.01)	.03 (.03)	.01 (.01)	.02 (.01)	.01 (.01)	−.01 (.03)	.01 (.01)	.00 (.02)
Watch Fox News	−.01 (.01)*	.00 (.02)	−.01 (.01)*	.02 (.02)	−.01 (.01)*	.01 (.02)	−.01 (.01)	−.01 (.01)	−.01 (.01)**	−.01 (.02)	−.01 (.01)*	.01 (.01)
Watch MSNBC	.00 (.01)	.01 (.03)	.00 (.01)	.00 (.03)	.00 (.01)	.02 (.03)	.00 (.01)	−.02 (.01)	.00 (.01)	−.06 (.02)*	.00 (.01)	−.05 (.02)*
Need to Evaluate	−.01 (.01)	−.04 (.02)	−.01 (.01)	−.04 (.02)	.00 (.01)	−.03 (.03)	−.01 (.01)	−.02 (.01)	−.01 (.01)	−.06 (.03)*	−.01 (.01)	−.04 (.02)
Proxy x Age		.00 (.00)		.00 (.00)*		.00 (.00)		.00 (.00)		.00 (.00)		.00 (.00)**
Proxy x Male		.03 (.02)*		.05 (.02)**		.02 (.02)		.02 (.01)*		.01 (.01)		.02 (.02)
Proxy x Black		−.11 (.03)***		−.12 (.03)***		.03 (.03)		−.09 (.02)***		.02 (.03)		.04 (.03)
Proxy x Hispanic		.04 (.03)		.05 (.03)		.02 (.02)		.01 (.02)		.03 (.03)		−.09 (.03)***
Proxy x Asian		.01 (.05)		−.07 (.06)		.00 (.04)		.01 (.03)		.03 (.04)		.01 (.05)
Proxy x Other race		−.04 (.04)		−.05 (.04)		.01 (.03)		.02 (.03)		.01 (.03)		.01 (.04)
Proxy x Bachelors		.01 (.02)		−.04 (.02)		.01 (.02)		.01 (.01)		.02 (.02)		−.06 (.02)*
Proxy x Postgrad		.01 (.03)		−.02 (.03)		.04 (.03)		.02 (.02)		.01 (.03)		.00 (.03)
Proxy x Income		.02 (.03)		.00 (.03)		.05 (.03)		.02 (.02)		.05 (.03)		−.04 (.03)
Proxy x Party ID		−.11 (.03)***		−.11 (.03)***		.04 (.03)		−.07 (.02)***		−.09 (.03)***		−.10 (.03)***
Proxy x Extremity		.12 (.02)***		.13 (.02)***		.10 (.02)***		.07 (.02)***		.18 (.02)***		.15 (.02)***
Proxy x Papers		.01 (.02)		.01 (.02)		.04 (.02)		.02 (.01)		.01 (.02)		.02 (.02)
Proxy x NPR		.06 (.03)*		.05 (.03)		.01 (.03)		.02 (.02)		.03 (.03)		−.03 (.03)
Proxy x Talk Radio		.00 (.04)		.00 (.04)		.02 (.03)		.01 (.02)		.03 (.03)		.01 (.03)
Proxy x Fox News		.01 (.02)		−.04 (.02)		−.02 (.02)		.00 (.01)		.01 (.02)		−.03 (.02)
Proxy x MSNBC		.02 (.03)		.01 (.03)		.02 (.04)		.03 (.02)		.07 (.03)**		.06 (.03)*
Proxy x NTE		.04 (.04)		.05 (.04)		.03 (.03)		.03 (.02)		.07 (.03)*		.05 (.04)
(Intercept)	.40 (.02)***	.40 (.03)***	.40 (.02)***	.42 (.03)***	.34 (.02)***	.38 (.03)***	.35 (.01)***	.35 (.02)***	.35 (.02)***	.42 (.03)***	.36 (.02)***	.40 (.03)***
N	2938		2938		2936		2936		2938		2933	
R^2	.26		.28		.26		.28		.27		.30	
Adj. R^2	.26		.27		.26		.27		.26		.29	

Note: Table shows unstandardized regression coefficients with standard errors in parentheses.
* p < .05, ** p < .01, *** p < .001

Table F31: 2008-2010 Stability Models w/ Controls from Table 8

	Political Interest		Attention Politics Media		News Frequency		Discussion Frequency		Issue Placement		Political Knowledge	
Info Proxy	.02 (.09)	−.13 (.18)	.06 (.10)	−.26 (.20)	−.20 (.10)	−.06 (.19)	.06 (.08)	−.02 (.15)	−.04 (.07)	−.05 (.13)	.02 (.08)	−.02 (.15)
Verbal Ability	.15 (.08)	.19 (.09)*	.18 (.05)**	.15 (.06)*	.01 (.07)	−.08 (.09)	.15 (.05)**	.14 (.06)*	.08 (.05)	.06 (.05)	.08 (.07)	.08 (.08)
Proxy x Ability	−.01 (.12)	−.08 (.14)	−.10 (.13)	−.03 (.15)	.25 (.13)	.41 (.15)**	−.03 (.10)	−.01 (.12)	.09 (.09)	.15 (.11)	.07 (.11)	.08 (.12)
Age	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)*	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)
Male	.01 (.01)	−.02 (.03)	.01 (.01)	−.02 (.02)	.01 (.01)	−.08 (.03)**	.01 (.01)	−.01 (.02)	.02 (.01)	.01 (.02)	.01 (.01)	−.05 (.03)
Black	.01 (.02)	.02 (.06)	.01 (.02)	.00 (.04)	.02 (.02)	−.01 (.06)	.01 (.02)	.03 (.04)	.02 (.02)	.01 (.04)	.02 (.02)	.00 (.05)
Hispanic	−.05 (.02)*	−.09 (.07)	−.06 (.03)*	−.19 (.05)***	−.06 (.02)*	−.11 (.07)	−.05 (.02)*	−.08 (.05)	−.05 (.02)*	−.09 (.05)	−.06 (.03)*	−.25 (.07)***
Other race	−.04 (.03)	−.03 (.10)	−.08 (.03)*	.01 (.07)	−.05 (.03)	.01 (.09)	−.05 (.03)	.00 (.06)	−.07 (.03)*	−.05 (.07)	−.06 (.03)*	−.13 (.11)
Bachelor's degree	.02 (.01)	.01 (.04)	.02 (.01)	.06 (.03)	.02 (.01)	.08 (.04)*	.02 (.01)	.03 (.03)	.02 (.01)	.03 (.03)	.01 (.01)	−.02 (.04)
Advanced degree	.01 (.01)	−.01 (.06)	.00 (.01)	.04 (.03)	.01 (.01)	−.01 (.04)	.00 (.01)	.00 (.03)	.01 (.01)	.05 (.03)	.00 (.01)	−.04 (.05)
Income	.02 (.03)	.03 (.08)	.02 (.03)	−.06 (.06)	.02 (.03)	.04 (.07)	.02 (.03)	.06 (.05)	.02 (.03)	−.02 (.05)	.02 (.03)	.09 (.07)
Party ID	.01 (.01)	−.01 (.05)	.01 (.01)	.05 (.03)	.01 (.01)	.05 (.04)	.01 (.01)	−.02 (.03)	.01 (.01)	−.03 (.03)	−.01 (.01)	.00 (.05)
Partisan Extremity	.00 (.01)	−.04 (.05)	−.01 (.01)	.00 (.03)	.00 (.01)	.01 (.04)	−.01 (.01)	−.03 (.03)	−.01 (.01)	−.02 (.03)	.00 (.01)	−.02 (.04)
Need to Evaluate	.02 (.04)	−.04 (.14)	.03 (.05)	−.06 (.09)	.02 (.04)	−.01 (.13)	.01 (.04)	−.04 (.09)	−.01 (.04)	.08 (.09)	.00 (.04)	.01 (.12)
Need for Cognition	−.01 (.02)	−.06 (.05)	−.01 (.02)	.03 (.03)	−.01 (.02)	.11 (.05)*	−.01 (.02)	−.04 (.03)	−.02 (.02)	.02 (.03)	−.02 (.02)	.01 (.05)
Proxy x Age		.00 (.00)		.00 (.00)		.00 (.00)		.00 (.00)		.00 (.00)		.00 (.00)
Proxy x Male		.05 (.05)		.11 (.05)*		.18 (.05)***		.05 (.04)		.01 (.04)		.09 (.05)
Proxy x Black		.00 (.09)		.04 (.09)		.05 (.11)		−.03 (.08)		.00 (.07)		.05 (.08)
Proxy x Hispanic		.07 (.12)		.42 (.14)**		.12 (.12)		.07 (.10)		.10 (.10)		.31 (.11)**
Proxy x Other race		−.03 (.17)		−.23 (.17)		−.13 (.18)		−.15 (.14)		−.04 (.12)		.10 (.16)
Proxy x Bachelors		.01 (.07)		−.09 (.06)		−.12 (.06)*		−.03 (.05)		−.03 (.05)		.04 (.06)
Proxy x Postgrad		.03 (.08)		−.09 (.07)		.02 (.08)		.01 (.06)		−.07 (.05)		.06 (.07)
Proxy x Income		.00 (.13)		.22 (.14)		−.03 (.12)		−.09 (.10)		.08 (.09)		−.11 (.10)
Proxy x Party ID		.03 (.08)		−.11 (.07)		−.09 (.07)		.05 (.06)		.07 (.05)		.00 (.06)
Proxy x Extremity		.07 (.07)		−.01 (.07)		−.03 (.07)		.06 (.06)		.03 (.05)		.03 (.06)
Proxy x NTE		.11 (.22)		.27 (.22)		.07 (.24)		.10 (.16)		−.17 (.17)		.02 (.19)
Proxy x NFC		.08 (.08)		−.10 (.08)		−.22 (.08)**		.05 (.06)		−.09 (.06)		.02 (.07)
(Intercept)	.54 (.06)***	.63 (.11)***	.52 (.05)***	.63 (.08)***	.65 (.06)***	.58 (.10)***	.55 (.05)***	.59 (.07)***	.60 (.04)***	.61 (.06)***	.57 (.06)***	.60 (.10)***
N	646		646		613		613		650		650	
R^2	.08		.09		.08		.12		.08		.11	
Adj. R^2	.06		.05		.06		.08		.05		.07	

Note: Table shows unstandardized regression coefficients with standard errors in parentheses.
* p < .05, ** p < .01, *** p < .001

Table F32: 2012-2013 Stability Models w/ Controls from Table 8

	Political Interest		Attention Politics Media		News Frequency		Discussion Frequency		Issue Placement		Political Knowledge	
Info Proxy	−.06 (.06)	.01 (.10)	−.15 (.06)*	−.21 (.12)	.01 (.06)	.06 (.12)	−.12 (.06)*	−.22 (.12)	.20 (.05)***	.40 (.11)***	.32 (.08)***	.45 (.13)***
Verbal Ability	.10 (.05)*	.09 (.06)	.07 (.04)	.04 (.04)	.14 (.05)**	.08 (.05)	.10 (.03)***	.09 (.03)**	.29 (.06)***	.20 (.07)**	.32 (.06)***	.24 (.07)***
Proxy x Ability	.04 (.07)	.06 (.08)	.14 (.08)	.20 (.09)*	−.05 (.08)	.09 (.10)	.09 (.07)	.16 (.09)	−.24 (.08)**	−.13 (.09)	−.38 (.09)***	−.24 (.11)*
Age	.00 (.00)***	.00 (.00)***	.00 (.00)***	.00 (.00)***	.00 (.00)***	.00 (.00)***	.00 (.00)***	.00 (.00)***	.00 (.00)***	.00 (.00)***	.00 (.00)***	.00 (.00)***
Male	.01 (.01)	−.04 (.02)	.01 (.01)	.00 (.02)	.01 (.01)	.02 (.02)	.01 (.01)	−.01 (.01)	.00 (.01)	.00 (.03)	.00 (.01)	−.06 (.03)*
Black	−.05 (.01)**	.02 (.04)	−.05 (.01)**	−.05 (.03)	−.05 (.01)***	−.08 (.03)*	−.04 (.01)**	−.04 (.02)*	−.05 (.01)***	−.01 (.05)	−.05 (.01)***	−.13 (.04)**
Hispanic	.00 (.02)	.01 (.04)	.00 (.02)	−.01 (.03)	.00 (.02)	.01 (.03)	.00 (.02)	−.01 (.02)	.00 (.02)	.01 (.04)	.00 (.02)	−.01 (.04)
Asian	−.12 (.05)**	−.23 (.09)**	−.12 (.05)**	−.21 (.08)*	−.12 (.05)**	−.14 (.10)	−.12 (.05)**	−.15 (.07)*	−.13 (.05)**	−.38 (.15)**	−.14 (.05)**	−.16 (.11)
Other race	−.01 (.02)	.00 (.06)	−.01 (.02)	−.01 (.04)	−.01 (.02)	−.02 (.05)	−.01 (.02)	.00 (.03)	−.01 (.02)	−.17 (.09)	−.01 (.02)	−.03 (.08)
Bachelor's degree	.02 (.01)	.04 (.03)	.02 (.01)	.03 (.02)	.02 (.01)	.02 (.03)	.02 (.01)	.04 (.02)**	.02 (.01)	.03 (.05)	.02 (.01)	.01 (.04)
Postgrad degree	.02 (.01)	.03 (.04)	.02 (.01)	.04 (.03)	.02 (.01)	.06 (.03)	.02 (.01)	.03 (.02)	.02 (.01)	.08 (.07)	.02 (.01)	.03 (.05)
Income	.01 (.02)	.01 (.04)	.01 (.02)	.02 (.03)	.02 (.02)	.02 (.04)	.02 (.02)	.01 (.02)	.01 (.02)	.00 (.05)	.01 (.02)	.00 (.05)
Party ID	−.06 (.01)***	−.03 (.04)	−.06 (.01)***	−.05 (.03)*	−.06 (.01)***	−.02 (.03)	−.05 (.01)***	−.04 (.02)*	−.06 (.01)***	−.01 (.05)	−.06 (.01)***	−.04 (.04)
Partisan Extremity	.01 (.01)	−.01 (.03)	.01 (.01)	.00 (.02)	.00 (.01)	−.01 (.03)	.00 (.01)	.01 (.02)	.00 (.01)	−.08 (.04)*	.00 (.01)	−.04 (.04)
Read Papers	.03 (.01)	.11 (.05)*	.03 (.01)	.08 (.03)*	.03 (.01)*	.14 (.04)**	.03 (.01)*	.04 (.02)	.03 (.01)*	.08 (.07)	.03 (.01)*	.09 (.06)
Listen NPR	.00 (.01)	−.07 (.05)	.00 (.01)	.02 (.04)	.00 (.01)	−.04 (.04)	.00 (.01)	.01 (.02)	.00 (.01)	.00 (.08)	.00 (.01)	−.08 (.06)
Listen Talk Radio	−.01 (.01)	−.02 (.05)	−.01 (.01)	−.01 (.04)	−.01 (.01)	−.01 (.04)	−.01 (.01)	−.02 (.02)	−.01 (.01)	.06 (.07)	−.01 (.01)	.01 (.05)
Watch Fox News	.00 (.01)	−.02 (.04)	.00 (.01)	−.04 (.02)	.00 (.01)	−.04 (.03)	.00 (.01)	−.01 (.02)	.00 (.01)	−.01 (.04)	.00 (.01)	−.03 (.04)
Watch MSNBC	.01 (.01)	.00 (.04)	.01 (.01)	.00 (.03)	.01 (.01)	.03 (.03)	.02 (.01)	.01 (.02)	.01 (.01)	−.01 (.05)	.01 (.01)	.02 (.05)
Need to Evaluate	.02 (.02)	.07 (.06)	.02 (.02)	.04 (.04)	.02 (.02)	.04 (.05)	.03 (.02)	.03 (.03)	.01 (.02)	.00 (.08)	.01 (.02)	.02 (.07)
Need for Affect	.09 (.03)**	.08 (.07)	.08 (.03)**	.03 (.05)	.08 (.03)**	.07 (.06)	.09 (.03)***	.06 (.04)	.07 (.03)**	.23 (.09)*	.08 (.03)**	.22 (.08)**
Need for Cognition	−.01 (.01)	−.05 (.04)	−.01 (.01)	−.02 (.03)	−.01 (.01)	−.03 (.03)	−.01 (.01)	−.02 (.02)	−.01 (.01)	−.04 (.05)	−.01 (.01)	−.02 (.05)
Proxy x Age		.00 (.00)*		.00 (.00)		.00 (.00)*		.00 (.00)		.00 (.00)***		.00 (.00)**
Proxy x Male		.08 (.03)*		.03 (.04)		−.03 (.04)		.06 (.03)		.00 (.04)		.10 (.04)*
Proxy x Black		−.05 (.06)		.00 (.06)		.07 (.06)		−.03 (.05)		−.05 (.06)		.15 (.07)*
Proxy x Hispanic		.01 (.06)		.03 (.06)		−.01 (.06)		.06 (.06)		.01 (.06)		.02 (.07)
Proxy x Asian		.18 (.13)		.24 (.19)		.03 (.19)		.16 (.22)		.34 (.19)		.02 (.17)
Proxy x Other race		.00 (.08)		−.01 (.09)		.02 (.10)		−.01 (.09)		.20 (.11)		.03 (.13)
Proxy x Bachelors		−.04 (.04)		−.03 (.05)		.01 (.05)		−.10 (.04)*		.01 (.05)		.01 (.06)
Proxy x Postgrad		−.02 (.05)		−.05 (.06)		−.08 (.06)		−.04 (.05)		−.07 (.07)		−.01 (.07)
Proxy x Income		.00 (.06)		−.03 (.07)		.00 (.07)		.01 (.06)		.01 (.06)		.00 (.08)
Proxy x Party ID		−.04 (.05)		−.02 (.06)		−.08 (.06)		−.05 (.05)		−.05 (.06)		−.03 (.07)
Proxy x Extremity		.03 (.04)		.01 (.05)		.04 (.05)		.01 (.04)		.10 (.05)*		.08 (.06)
Proxy x Papers		−.11 (.06)		−.10 (.06)		−.18 (.07)**		.02 (.05)		.05 (.08)		.07 (.08)
Proxy x NPR		.09 (.06)		.04 (.07)		.07 (.07)		.01 (.05)		.00 (.09)		.10 (.07)
Proxy x Talk Radio		.02 (.07)		−.01 (.06)		.01 (.07)		.03 (.05)		−.08 (.08)		.03 (.07)
Proxy x Fox News		.03 (.05)		.11 (.05)*		.09 (.05)		.05 (.04)		.01 (.05)		.04 (.06)
Proxy x MSNBC		.02 (.05)		.02 (.05)		−.02 (.06)		.04 (.04)		.02 (.06)		−.03 (.06)
Proxy x NTE		−.07 (.08)		−.05 (.09)		−.03 (.09)		−.02 (.08)		.01 (.10)		.00 (.11)
Proxy x NFA		.01 (.10)		.14 (.11)		.02 (.11)		.11 (.10)		−.21 (.11)		−.24 (.13)
Proxy x NFC		.07 (.05)		.03 (.06)		.03 (.06)		.04 (.05)		.04 (.06)		.02 (.07)
(Intercept)	.59 (.04)***	.55 (.07)***	.62 (.04)***	.64 (.05)***	.56 (.04)***	.52 (.06)***	.57 (.03)***	.59 (.04)***	.46 (.04)***	.30 (.09)***	.43 (.05)***	.34 (.08)***
N	1401		1401		1402		1402		1403		1403	
R^2	.12		.13		.12		.13		.12		.15	
Adj. R^2	.10		.10		.10		.10		.11		.12	

Note: Table shows unstandardized regression coefficients with standard errors in parentheses.
* p < .05, ** p < .01, *** p < .001

Table F33: 2016-2020 Stability Models w/ Controls from Table 8

	Political Interest		Attention Politics Media		News Frequency		Discussion Frequency		Issue Placement		Political Knowledge	
Info Proxy	−.02 (.03)	−.07 (.05)	−.07 (.03)*	−.10 (.05)	.01 (.03)	.07 (.05)	.01 (.02)	.01 (.03)	.16 (.03)***	.09 (.05)*	.11 (.03)***	.08 (.05)
Verbal Ability	.06 (.03)*	.06 (.03)	.04 (.03)	.05 (.03)	.10 (.03)**	.09 (.04)*	.10 (.02)***	.11 (.02)***	.15 (.03)***	.10 (.03)***	.11 (.03)***	.09 (.03)**
Proxy x Ability	.07 (.04)	.07 (.05)	.12 (.04)**	.11 (.05)*	.02 (.04)	.03 (.04)	.00 (.03)	−.01 (.03)	−.10 (.04)**	−.04 (.04)	−.05 (.04)	−.02 (.05)
Age	.00 (.00)**	.00 (.00)*	.00 (.00)***	.00 (.00)*	.00 (.00)**	.00 (.00)**	.00 (.00)***	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)***	.00 (.00)**	.00 (.00)**	.00 (.00)
Male	.00 (.00)	−.04 (.01)**	.00 (.00)	−.04 (.01)**	.00 (.00)	−.03 (.02)	.00 (.00)	−.01 (.01)	−.01 (.00)	−.01 (.01)	−.01 (.00)	−.02 (.01)
Black	−.05 (.01)***	−.06 (.03)*	−.04 (.01)***	−.04 (.03)	−.05 (.01)***	−.07 (.03)*	−.04 (.01)***	−.04 (.01)*	−.04 (.01)***	−.06 (.02)*	−.04 (.01)***	−.05 (.02)*
Hispanic	−.02 (.01)**	−.04 (.02)	−.02 (.01)**	−.01 (.02)	−.02 (.01)**	.00 (.02)	−.02 (.01)*	−.02 (.01)	−.02 (.01)*	−.07 (.02)**	−.02 (.01)*	−.02 (.02)
Asian	−.02 (.01)	.01 (.03)	−.02 (.01)	−.02 (.03)	−.02 (.01)	−.03 (.04)	−.02 (.01)	.01 (.02)	−.01 (.01)	−.11 (.03)**	−.03 (.01)*	−.05 (.04)
Other race	.00 (.01)	.03 (.03)	.00 (.01)	.01 (.03)	.00 (.01)	.02 (.04)	.00 (.01)	.01 (.02)	.00 (.01)	.00 (.03)	.00 (.01)	.01 (.03)
Bachelor's degree	.02 (.01)***	.04 (.02)*	.02 (.01)***	.06 (.02)***	.02 (.01)***	.03 (.02)	.02 (.01)***	.01 (.01)	.02 (.01)**	−.01 (.02)	.02 (.01)**	.04 (.02)*
Postgrad degree	.03 (.01)***	.01 (.02)	.03 (.01)***	.03 (.02)	.03 (.01)***	.00 (.02)	.03 (.01)***	.02 (.01)	.02 (.01)***	.06 (.03)*	.02 (.01)***	.03 (.03)
Income	.02 (.01)*	.05 (.02)	.02 (.01)*	.01 (.02)	.02 (.01)*	.05 (.03)	.02 (.01)*	.04 (.01)*	.01 (.01)	.06 (.02)*	.01 (.01)	.06 (.02)**
Party ID	−.05 (.01)***	−.03 (.02)	−.05 (.01)***	−.01 (.02)	−.05 (.01)***	−.03 (.03)	−.05 (.01)***	−.03 (.01)*	−.06 (.01)***	−.03 (.02)	−.05 (.01)***	−.03 (.02)
Partisan Extremity	.04 (.01)***	.01 (.02)	.04 (.01)***	.02 (.02)	.04 (.01)***	.04 (.02)	.04 (.01)***	.04 (.01)***	.03 (.01)***	−.05 (.02)**	.04 (.01)***	.01 (.02)
Read Papers	.01 (.01)	.01 (.02)	.01 (.01)	.00 (.02)	.01 (.01)	.02 (.02)	.01 (.01)	.02 (.01)	.01 (.01)	.01 (.02)	.01 (.01)	−.01 (.02)
Listen NPR	.02 (.01)***	−.03 (.02)	.02 (.01)***	−.02 (.02)	.03 (.01)***	.00 (.03)	.03 (.01)***	.00 (.01)	.02 (.01)***	.00 (.03)	.03 (.01)***	.02 (.02)
Listen Talk Radio	.00 (.01)	.00 (.03)	.00 (.01)	−.02 (.03)	.00 (.01)	.01 (.04)	.00 (.01)	−.01 (.01)	.00 (.01)	−.06 (.03)*	.00 (.01)	−.03 (.03)
Watch Fox News	−.01 (.01)	.02 (.02)	−.01 (.01)	.03 (.02)	−.01 (.01)	.02 (.02)	−.01 (.01)	.00 (.01)	−.01 (.01)	.03 (.02)	−.01 (.01)	.03 (.02)
Watch MSNBC	.01 (.01)	.01 (.03)	.01 (.01)	.04 (.03)	.01 (.01)	−.01 (.04)	.01 (.01)	.00 (.02)	.01 (.01)	−.01 (.03)	.01 (.01)	.02 (.03)
Need to Evaluate	.01 (.01)	−.06 (.03)*	.01 (.01)	−.04 (.03)	.02 (.01)	.00 (.03)	.01 (.01)	.00 (.02)	.01 (.01)	−.03 (.03)	.02 (.01)	.01 (.03)
Proxy x Age		.00 (.00)		.00 (.00)		.00 (.00)*		.00 (.00)		.00 (.00)		.00 (.00)
Proxy x Male		.06 (.02)**		.06 (.02)**		.03 (.02)		.01 (.01)		.00 (.02)		.03 (.02)
Proxy x Black		.02 (.04)		.00 (.04)		.03 (.04)		−.01 (.03)		.03 (.03)		.02 (.04)
Proxy x Hispanic		.03 (.03)		−.02 (.04)		−.02 (.03)		.01 (.02)		.08 (.03)**		−.01 (.03)
Proxy x Asian		−.02 (.05)		.01 (.06)		.00 (.05)		−.04 (.04)		.13 (.05)**		.04 (.06)
Proxy x Other race		−.04 (.05)		−.02 (.05)		−.02 (.04)		−.02 (.03)		.01 (.04)		.01 (.05)
Proxy x Bachelors		−.03 (.02)		−.07 (.03)**		−.01 (.02)		.02 (.02)		.03 (.02)		−.03 (.03)
Proxy x Postgrad		.02 (.03)		−.01 (.03)		.04 (.03)		.02 (.02)		−.04 (.03)		.01 (.03)
Proxy x Income		−.04 (.04)		.01 (.04)		−.03 (.03)		−.03 (.02)		−.06 (.03)		−.08 (.04)*
Proxy x Party ID		−.03 (.03)		−.07 (.03)*		−.02 (.03)		−.05 (.02)*		−.03 (.03)		−.04 (.03)
Proxy x Extremity		.05 (.03)		.04 (.03)		.00 (.02)		.02 (.02)		.12 (.02)***		.06 (.03)*
Proxy x Papers		.00 (.03)		.02 (.03)		−.01 (.03)		−.02 (.02)		.00 (.02)		.03 (.03)
Proxy x NPR		.06 (.03)*		.06 (.03)		.03 (.03)		.03 (.02)		.03 (.03)		.01 (.03)
Proxy x Talk Radio		.00 (.04)		.04 (.04)		−.01 (.04)		.02 (.02)		.07 (.04)*		.04 (.04)
Proxy x Fox News		−.04 (.03)		−.05 (.03)		−.03 (.03)		−.01 (.02)		−.05 (.02)*		−.06 (.02)*
Proxy x MSNBC		.01 (.04)		−.05 (.04)		.02 (.04)		.00 (.02)		.02 (.03)		−.02 (.04)
Proxy x NTE		.12 (.04)**		.09 (.04)*		.02 (.04)		.03 (.03)		.05 (.04)		.00 (.04)
(Intercept)	.59 (.02)***	.61 (.03)***	.61 (.02)***	.62 (.03)***	.56 (.02)***	.52 (.04)***	.57 (.01)***	.57 (.02)***	.49 (.02)***	.54 (.03)***	.54 (.02)***	.56 (.03)***
N	2146		2146		2144		2144		2146		2143	
R^2	.23		.25		.23		.25		.26		.24	
Adj. R^2	.23		.23		.22		.23		.25		.24	

Note: Table shows unstandardized regression coefficients with standard errors in parentheses.
* p < .05, ** p < .01, *** p < .001

References

Abel, Millicent H. and L. Katherine Brown. 1998. "Validity of the 16PF Reasoning Ability Scale". *Psychological Reports* 83 (3, Pt 1): 904–906.

Alwin, Duane F. 1991. "Family of Origin and Cohort Differences in Verbal Ability". *American Sociological Review* 56 (5): 625–638.

Brady, Henry E., Sidney Verba, and Kay Lehman Schlozman. 1995. "Beyond Ses: A Resource Model of Political Participation". *The American Political Science Review* 89 (2): 271–294.

Conn, Steven R. and Mark L. Rieke (Eds.)1994. *The 16PF Fifth Edition Technical Manual*. Champaign, IL: Institute for Personality and Ability Testing.

Converse, Philip E. 1964. "The nature of belief systems in mass publics". In D. E. Apter (Ed.), *Ideology and Discontent*, pp. 206–261. New York: The Free Press.

Enns, Peter K. and Paul M. Kellstedt. 2008. "Policy Mood and Political Sophistication: Why Everybody Moves Mood". *British Journal of Political Science* 38 (3): 433–454.

Erikson, Robert S., Michael B. MacKuen, and James A. Stimson. 2001. *The Macro Polity*. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.

Gibson, James L. 1991. *Freedom and Tolerance in the United States, 1987 (ICPSR 9454) - Version 2 [dataset and documention]*. Ann Arbor, MI: Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research. https://doi.org/10.3886/ICPSR09454.v2.

Gooch, Andrew. 2015. "Measurements of cognitive skill by survey mode: Marginal differences and scaling similarities". *Research & Politics* 2 (3): 2053168015590681.

Gooch, Andrew and Lynn Vavreck. 2019. "How Face-to-Face Interviews and Cognitive Skill Affect Item Non-Response: A Randomized Experiment Assigning Mode of Interview". *Political Science Research and Methods* 7 (1): 143–162.

Hagen, Elizabeth P. and Robert L. Thorndike. 1955. "Normative test data for adult males obtained by house-to-house testing". *Journal of Educational Psychology* 46 (4): 207–216.

Hamaker, Ellen L., Rebecca M. Kuiper, and Raoul P. P. P. Grasman. 2015. "A critique of the cross-lagged panel model". *Psychological Methods* 20 (1): 102–116.

Huang, Jason L. and Justin A. DeSimone. 2021. "Insufficient Effort Responding as a Potential Confound between Survey Measures and Objective Tests". *Journal of Business and Psychology* 36 (5): 807–828.

Huang, Min-Hsiung and Robert Hauser. 1998. "Trends in Black-White test-score differentials: II. The WORDSUM vocabulary test". In *The rising curve: Long-term gains in IQ and related measures*, pp. 303–332. Washington, DC, US: American Psychological Association.

Johnston, Christopher D. 2018. "Authoritarianism, Affective Polarization, and Economic Ideology". *Political Psychology* 39 (S1): 219–238.

Kraft, Patrick W. 2018. "Measuring Morality in Political Attitude Expression". *The Journal of Politics* 80 (3): 1028–1033.

Kraft, Patrick W. 2024. "Women Also Know Stuff: Challenging the Gender Gap in Political Sophistication". *American Political Science Review* 118 (2): 903–921.

Lelkes, Yphtach and Rebecca Weiss. 2015. "Much ado about acquiescence: The relative validity and reliability of construct-specific and agree–disagree questions". *Research & Politics* 2 (3): 2053168015604173.

Lorge, Irving. 1957. *Vocabulary Test G-T: Directions and Norm.* New York, NY: Columbia University.

Miner, John B. 1957. *Intelligence in the United States: A Survey–with Conclusions for Manpower Utilization in Education and Employment.* New York, NY: Springer.

Miner, John B. 1961. "On the use of a short vocabulary test to measure general intelligence". *Journal of Educational Psychology* 52 (3): 157–160.

Motta, Matthew P. 2016. "What do interviewer intelligence ratings actually measure?". *Research & Politics* 3 (3): 2053168016665136.

Motta, Matthew P. 2018. "The Dynamics and Political Implications of Anti-Intellectualism in the United States". *American Politics Research* 46 (3): 465–498.

Nie, Norman H., Jane Junn, and Kenneth Stehlik-Barry. 1996. *Education and Democratic Citizenship in America.* University of Chicago Press.

Prior, Markus. 2009a. "The Immensely Inflated News Audience: Assessing Bias in Self-Reported News Exposure". *Public Opinion Quarterly* 73 (1): 130–143.

Prior, Markus. 2009b. "Improving Media Effects Research through Better Measurement of News Exposure". *The Journal of Politics* 71 (3): 893–908.

Schlozman, Kay Lehman, Nancy Burns, and Sidney Verba. 1994. "Gender and the Pathways to Participation: The Role of Resources". *The Journal of Politics* 56 (4): 963–990.

Stenner, Karen. 2005. *The authoritarian dynamic*. The authoritarian dynamic. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.

Thorndike, Robert L. 1967. *Vocabulary Test G-T: Directions and Norm*. New York, NY: Institute of Psychological Research.

Verba, Sidney, Nancy Burns, and Kay Lehman Schlozman. 1997. "Knowing and Caring about Politics: Gender and Political Engagement". *The Journal of Politics* 59 (4): 1051–1072.

Verba, Sidney, Kay Lehman Schlozman, and Henry E. Brady. 1995. *Voice and Equality: Civic Voluntarism in American Politics*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Wechsler, David. 1958. *The measurement and appraisal of adult intelligence* (4 ed.). The measurement and appraisal of adult intelligence, 4th ed. Baltimore, MD, US: Williams & Wilkins.

Wechsler, David. 1981. *WAIS-R Manual: Wechsler Adult Intelligence Scale-revised*. New York, NY: Psychological Corporation.

Wilson, James A. and Walter R. Gove. 1999. "The Intercohort Decline in Verbal Ability: Does it Exist?". *American Sociological Review* 64 (2): 253–266.

Wolfle, Lee M. 1980. "The Enduring Effects of Education on Verbal Skills". *Sociology of Education* 53 (2): 104–114.