

The Association between Political Ideology and **Political Engagement among Different** Household Incomes

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Introduction

- Opposing parties commonly accuse one another of political ignorance. This has created a highly partisan society which has led, and will continue, to lead, to civil unrest (Feldman, Hart, Leiserowitz, Maibach, & Roser-Renouf, 2015; Rainie, Smith, Schlozman, Brady& Verba, 2012).
- The higher an individual's interest in politics, the stronger their political opinions and ideology (Keene, Shoenberger, Berke, & Bolls, 2017).

Results

Univariate

- 57.33% of respondents have an engagement score less than 8
- 39.12% of respondents indicated that they are "moderates"

Bivariate

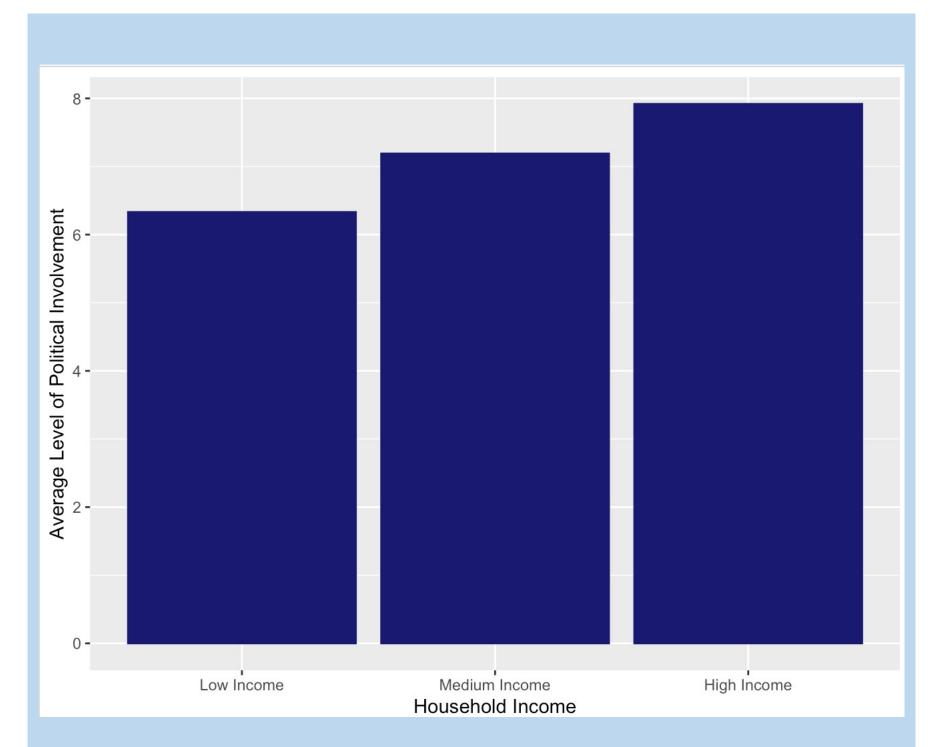
- ANOVA analysis showed that **political engagement** was not significantly associated with **political ideology** (F(1,2215)=0.233,p=0.629).
- Economic drivers have a positive correlation with an individual's access to media and other political minded individuals (Rohe & Stegman, 1994).
- There is evidence that moderate individuals often consume less media as a result of frustration with the lack of non-partisan news sources (Keene, Shoenberger, Berke, & Bolls, 2017).
- It is unclear whether media is driving an individual's ideology or whether it is the outcome of their beliefs and preferences (Galston, 2001).

Research Questions

- Are politically engaged individuals more likely to have a specific political ideology?
- Is that relationship consistent across different household income levels?

 ANOVA analysis showed that household income was not significantly associated with **political ideology** (F(1,2232)=0.199, p=0.656).

Figure 1. Average Level of Political Engagement for Various **Household Incomes**



 ANOVA analysis showed that there is a significant association between household income and political engagement (F(1,2269)=84.39,p<0.002). Individuals with higher household incomes tended to have higher rates of political engagement (Figure 1). This is to be expected by the initial literature review.

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Methods

Sample

 Respondents (n=2,294) were drawn from the 2012 Outlook on Life Survey (OLS), a nationally representative sample of English-speaking, noninstitutionalized adults in the U.S with access to a computer and an internet connection.

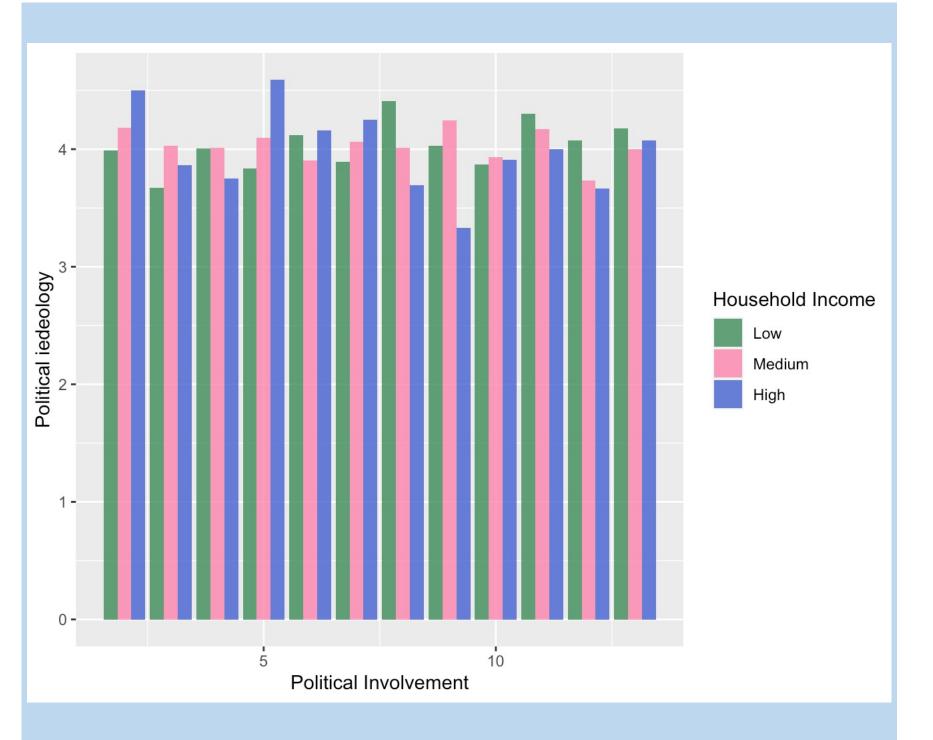
Measures

- Political engagement was assessed using the sum of two questions. The first response was coded on a scale of 1 to 8. The second response was coded on a scale of 1 to 5. Scores ranged from 2 (least engaged) to 13 (most engaged).
- Political ideology was assessed by individuals placing themselves on a scale. Scores ranged from 1 (extremely liberal) to 7 (extremely conservative).
- Household income was measured with the question "Household Income". The variable was then grouped into three categories as per the census.

Multivariate

- Household income does not appear to moderate the relationship between political ideology and engagement (Figure 2).
- After controlling for education, age, ethnicity, and region, engagement is still not significantly associated with political ideology (B=-0.003, p=0.734); however, there is a statistically significant relationship between education level and political ideology (B=-0.063, p<0.003) and between ethnicity and political ideology (B=-0.192p<.002)

Figure 2. The Association between Political Engagement and **Political Ideology by Household Income**





Discussion

- Political engagement most likely has no affect on an individual's political ideology
- This relationship, or lack thereof, is consistent across various household incomes
- Individuals and researchers should disseminate this information so that antagonistic rhetoric amongst opposing political parties is minimized
- In addition, there appears to be a statistically significant relationship between engagement and household income
- Since political engagement is an innate virtue, targeted programs to improve engagement in areas with low household incomes would be beneficial.
- There is also a relationship between education level and political ideology & between ethnicity and political ideology; further research is needed to explore this relationship.

Feldman, L., Hart, P. S., Leiserowitz, A., Maibach, E., & Roser-Renouf, C. (2015). Do Hostile Media Perceptions Lead to Action? The Role of Hostile Media Perceptions, Political Efficacy, and Ideology in Predicting Climate Change Activism. Communication Research, 44(8), 1099-1124. doi:10.1177/0093650214565914

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https://www.pewresearch.org/internet/2012/10/19/social-media-and-political-engagement/

Keene, J. R., Shoenberger, H., Berke, C. K., & Bolls, P. D. (2017). The biological roots of political extremism. Politics and the Life Sciences, 36(2), 37-48. doi:10.1017/pls.2017.16 Rohe, W. M., & Stegman, M. A. (1994). The Impact of Home Ownership on the Social and Political Involvement of Low-Income People. Urban Affairs Quarterly, 30(1), 152-172. doi:10.1177/004208169403000108

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