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The American ideal of representative democracy: The roles of national identity and
perceived consensus and homogeneity among the American people

by

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The American ideal of representative democracy: The roles of national identity and
perceived consensus and homogeneity among the American people

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A “true” American takes pride in the democratic processes that grant power to the people, right? Some literature has shown that “power to the people” is actually quite far from being uniformly endorsed by the American people, largely because of the inherent conflict and disagreement that comes with it (e.g., Hibbing & Theiss-Morse, 2002). So are people more positive toward democratic processes when they perceive consensus among citizens? I utilize survey data from a representative sample of the United States in order to show that perceptions of consensus are positively related to support for the political power of the American people, but only insofar as this power is filtered through elected representatives. As prior research has suggested, perceptions of consensus are largely a function of national identity (Theiss-Morse, 2009), which has both direct and indirect influences on attitudes regarding representative democracy. Generalized trust shows substantial independent relationships with both perceptions of consensus and attitudes for the political power of the public. Importantly, national identity, perceived consensus, and generalized trust exhibit different relationships with support for *more direct* involvement of the public in decision-making. All are related to increases in having faith in the public during elections, but national identity is unrelated to support for more direct involvement, and both trust and perceived consensus are *negatively* related to support for more direct involvement. Support for indirect democratic processes has the expected relationships with national identity and perceptions of consensus, but things are quite different with regard to support for more direct democracy.

The Jeffersonian ideal of direct democracy – it’s in the air and in the water. And it is not an exclusively American ideal. People from democracies across the world hold most precious the will of the public over that of any elite or politician, and will gladly stand and march to the tune of John Lennon’s “Power to the People” if the will of the public is undermined. Obviously, this is only true in theory. While Americans do value the idea of political power being held primarily by the public, they are also by and large resistant to the idea of actually becoming involved in politics and have little (if any) positive regard for a direct democratic political system. When asked in detail about their preferences for how government should work, Americans prefer a sort of “stealth democracy” to the direct democracy that many theorists and even practitioners typically think of as the American ideal (see Hibbing & Theiss-Morse, 2002). In a “stealth democracy,” selfless public representatives make decisions on behalf of constituents with public input only in the rare circumstance that the public has a clear opinion on the issues. When there is “too much” public input, such as that inherent in the processes proposed by many deliberative theorists (e.g., Ackerman & Fishkin, 2004; Dahl, 1970), people generally shirk at the conflict and disagreement that it usually comes with. Americans’ ideals of how government should work are thus more in line with the representative democracy talked about by Madison than the direct democracy championed by Jefferson. But this does not mean that people never have faith in democratic processes, or in the public as a whole. There is a sizable amount of variation in attitudes regarding the extent to which political decisions should be made “democratically” (e.g., Hibbing, Theiss-Morse, & Whitaker, 2008). So when and why do people actually put faith in democratic procedures?

Indeed, this is quite a broad and daunting question to tackle in a research paper. Other research has shed light on this issue from various perspectives. In this paper, I tackle this question from the psychological perspective of the Social Identity Approach (e.g., Tajfel & Turner, 1979; Turner, 1985), which has been applied to the concept of national identity in past literature (e.g., Huddy, 2001; Huddy & Khatib, 2007; Theiss-Morse, 2009). Specifically, I propose that national identity will be positively related to faith in the American people's decisions making within our representative system, but will be negatively related to support for more direct democratic processes, as direct democracy is a deviation from the representative American system. This follows from prior research that has suggested that individuals high in national identity are also more likely to engage in "ideal behaviors" of the national group, such as participating in politics (Huddy & Khatib, 2007). If representative democracy is an American ideal, then we should expect those who strongly identify with being American to value democratic processes that reflect indirect democracy more than those who only weakly identify with being American, and vice versa with regard to more direct involvement of the people.

Further, one of the proposed reasons for why Americans don't put faith in decision-making by the people is that they are turned off by the amount of conflict and disagreement that is inherent in these processes (e.g., Hibbing & Theiss-Morse, 2002). Indeed, research has suggested that the social conflict of democratic processes is a significant deterrent to political involvement (McClurg, 2006; Mutz, 2006; Ulbig & Funk, 1999), even at the biological level (e.g., French et al., 2011; Neiman et al., 2013). It is also possible that greater perceived consensus among the public is associated with perceptions that more people agree with one's own beliefs. Along these lines, I suggest

that perceptions of consensus and homogeneity among the American people will be positively related to faith in the American people's decisions making, but only insofar as this decision-making stays in line with the American representative system of government. Simply put, if people perceive the American public to be on the same page with regards to their attitudes and values, then they will perceive less of a chance for conflict and disagreement when the public is put in charge of decision-making, so long as that decision-making is within the realm of a representative system.

Interestingly, some work has shown that individuals high in American national identity are more likely to perceive consensus and homogeneity among the American public than those low in American national identity (Theiss-Morse, 2009). I therefore propose that perceptions of consensus and homogeneity will be positively related to faith in the American people's decision making within a representative system, and that national identity will display a positive relationship with perceptions of consensus and homogeneity as well as a direct positive relationship with faith in the American people's decision making.

This paper is not intended to provide a full explanation for why people do or do not support democratic processes. Rather, I utilize data with psychological variables related to national identity and perceptions of the American people in order to see how these variables are related to attitudes regarding democracy. The results I present are, rather, proposed as an addition to the larger picture of how we might understand public support for democratic procedures. I propose national identity and the subsequent perceptions of consensus and homogeneity among a populace as important factors in understanding when people put faith in a democracy and the people within it.

Democracy, Stress, and Conflict

The attitudes of Americans regarding how democracy should work cannot be summed up concisely in any meaningful way except to say that there is quite a bit of variation. Utilizing data from the 2006 Congressional Elections Study (CES), Hibbing, Theiss-Morse, and Whitaker show that Americans are surprisingly divided on key issues regarding how the government should be run. When asked, “would you prefer that members of Congress: a) stand up for their principles, or b) compromise with opponents in order to get something done,” respondents were roughly divided 50/50 (2008, p. 155-156). The same goes for the question, “which of the following do you think is the better explanation for why Congress sometimes has difficulty arriving at decisions? a) American people have different ideas, or b) American people agree but Congress like to argue.” Further, only 55% of respondents chose “the American people” over “policy experts or members of Congress” as the group that would make decisions that would best solve the country’s problems.

One explanation for this variation is based on the idea that democratic politics comes with a substantial degree of conflict between people and between points of view, and this simply turns some people off. Indeed, civic participation has been found to be lower in heterogeneous communities, where there is, theoretically, greater diversity in views, than in homogenous communities (Alesina & La Ferrara, 2000; Campbell, 2004; Costa & Kahn, 2003; see Theiss-Morse & Hibbing, 2005). However, whether this is a function of individual differences in conflict-avoidance or differences in the amount of conflict in politics that people perceive remains unclear. Both factors likely play vital

roles and are likely interrelated. Some work has focused on the former explanation, but little has addressed the latter.

Individual differences in conflict-avoidance have been associated with lower political involvement (e.g., Ulbig & Funk, 1999). Even at the level of human biology, those with higher baseline levels of the hormone, cortisol, which has been strongly related to stress, are shown to be more likely to become involved in politics than those with lower baseline levels of cortisol (e.g., French et al., 2011). On the other hand, some work supports a more context-dependent explanation, suggesting that exposure to political disagreement deflates motivations to participate in politics (e.g., McClurg, 2006; Mutz, 2006; but see Jang, 2009 on how this is not necessarily always the case). So there is evidence that both individual differences in reactivity to conflict and social context play important roles in attitudes related to democracy, but what remains to be studied is whether individual differences in *perceptions* of social conflict are also playing a role. If “my America” consists of a homogenous public, is democracy as stressful as for someone whose America is diverse?

Some work has suggested that high levels of national identity can yield perceptions of homogeneity in a country (Theiss-Morse, 2009). If this is the case, then perhaps national identity can indirectly appease cynicism toward democratic procedures via having a positive impact on perceptions of consensus and homogeneity among the public. However, I also suggest that national identity will have a direct effect on attitudes regarding democratic procedures that is not dependent on perceptions of consensus and homogeneity. The theory on which this proposed direct relationship is built is essential, because it is upon this literature that I propose that the relationship between perceptions

of consensus and homogeneity with attitudes toward democratic procedures is limited. Perceptions of consensus and homogeneity, which are largely a function of national identity, are only positively related to support for the decision-making power of the public insofar as that decision-making happens within the realm of the agreed-upon system (in the case of the United States, a representative democracy). Once the power of the public extends beyond that of the prescribed norm within society (i.e., toward a more direct democracy), national identity, and thus perceptions of consensus and homogeneity, should display a negative effect on support for power residing with the people. This hypothesis requires an examination of literature on social identity and group norms.

National Identity and Adherence to Group Norms

Social Identity and Politics

The Social Identity Approach in psychology encompasses two related theories: Social Identity Theory (e.g., Tajfel & Turner, 1979) and Social Categorization Theory (e.g., Turner, 1985; Turner et al., 1987). Under this framework of understanding human behavior, an individual's sense of worth is derived from his or her perceived group's status, and as such, the self becomes inextricably linked to the group – people feel when their group wins and when their group loses. Citrin and colleagues were among the first to empirically investigate the existence of an “American identity,” and found that people's subjective definitions of what is “American” vary substantially between individuals (e.g., Citrin, Reingold, & Green, 1990; Citrin, Wong, & Duff, 2000; also see Schatz, Staub, & Lavine, 1999). Building more directly from the Social Identity Approach, Huddy (2001) provides a thorough outline of how the study of social identity may be applied to the study of political behavior. In doing so, she highlights that the

strength of identification individuals feel toward a group may vary, and that certain group identities may be more stable and long-lasting than others. These variations in the strength and stability of certain identities are especially relevant to political identities, which are often influenced by history and context. As such, the study of political identity requires examination of individual differences. Other work has shown that there is indeed a measurable “national identity” that individuals feel, and that this identity has significant implications for political behavior (e.g., Huddy & Khatib, 2007).

National Identity and Democratic Norms

According to the Social Identity Approach, individuals who identify strongly with a group are also likely to abide by that group’s norms, such that even behaviors that would benefit the individual are left to the wayside if they are not endorsed by the group as “normal” (e.g., Turner et al., 1987; Terry, Hogg, & White, 1999). The norms of a group are functional in the sense that they enforce interdependence among individuals (e.g., Baumeister & Leary, 1995; Stevens & Fiske, 1995; Blanchard, Lilly, & Vaughn, 1991; Fiske & Von Hendy, 1992; Mackie, Hamilton, Susskind, & Rosselli, 1996). Similarly, behaviors that may not even necessarily be rational are endorsed by strong identifiers if the group also endorses those behaviors (e.g., Terry, Hogg, & Duck, 1999; Wellen, Hogg, & Terry, 1998).

Huddy and Khatib (2007) build off of this literature to show that individual differences in strength of national identity are actually related to differences in levels of political involvement. It has been shown in some research that “prescriptive” norms that suggest how members of a group ought to behave are more effective and emotionally rewarding than “descriptive” norms that simply tell how members of a group do behave

(Christensen et al., 2004). Huddy and Khatib demonstrate that this holds for political involvement broadly as well, and demonstrate using multiple samples that strong national identity is positively related to increased political involvement (2007). Thus, there is evidence that identification with the national group comes with, just as with any other group, positive appraisals of the prescribed norms and ideals of that group. By this logic, it would make sense for individuals who strongly identify with a country where representative democracy is the “prescribed group norm” to value this ideal to a greater extent than individuals who only weakly identify with that country. This is precisely what I expect to find in the United States.

National Identity and Perceptions of the American People

Indirect democracy can be seen as a norm in itself, but it can also be seen as a reflection of people’s attitudes toward the American public as a whole. Some work suggests that individual differences in identification with the national group are essential to Americans’ attitudes toward members of the American populace. National identity has a positive relationship with how people view the United States in general, but high levels of national identity also come with a tendency to “marginalize” fellow citizens who are not seen as typical of the “average” American (Theiss-Morse, 2009). Thus, strong feelings of national identity come with a cost to our democracy in which any citizen, regardless of their prototypical qualities, is supposed to be equally qualified to receive the benefits associated with being a citizen.

The reason that individuals high in national identity set strict boundaries on being a “true” American and marginalize less prototypical citizens is essentially that the strength of the group as a close-knit, coherent network of individuals is more important to

high identifiers than to low identifiers. The Social Identity Approach suggests that group identification is closely linked to psychological motivations like maintenance and improvement of self-esteem (e.g., Tajfel et al., 1971; but see Abrams & Hogg, 1988 for review of how self-esteem is related to social identity), and even from an evolutionary perspective, as Fiske concisely explains, “over human history, being banished from the group has amounted to a death sentence” (2000, p. 305). Group membership also comes with increased perceptions of cohesion in the world; the world becomes easier to understand under the guidelines of societal or group-level norms. Along these lines, humans turn to the in-group as a source of protection from both physical threat and psychological uncertainty (see Fiske, 2000). For individuals identifying strongly with the in-group, there is an inherent motivation to see the group as highly entitative, cohesive, and even homogenous. Cohesion allows for a stronger in-group with more a more clearly understandable structure.

Theiss-Morse provides evidence that people high in national identity are indeed more likely than those low in national identity to perceive Americans as sharing the same values and as agreeing on the major political issues of the day (2009, p. 84-85). Essentially, people who identify strongly with being American are more likely to perceive the American populace as cohesive, tight-knit, and homogenous with regard to values and attitudes. I suggest that these perceptions have a positive impact on how individuals feel about political power lying in the hands of the American public, but only when this power is filtered through the representative system that serves as the “group norm” for the United States.

Theory and Hypotheses: National Identity, Consensus, and Direct Democracy

It is easy for many citizens to frown upon democratic processes due to the conflict and subsequent stress that is inherent in them. In a democratic nation, this is not only concerning but also somewhat paradoxical, as it is the democratic nature of a government that ultimately leads to preferences for less democratic processes. However, as research has shown, there is actually a substantial degree of variation in preferences for democratic processes (e.g., Hibbing, Theiss-Morse, & Whitaker, 2008). I suggest that national identity leads to perceiving higher levels of consensus and homogeneity among the public, which will lead to greater confidence in the political power of the people within a representative system, but to less confidence in that power when regarding more direct power by the people.

I first seek to replicate findings that perceptions of consensus and homogeneity are largely influenced by national identity (Theiss-Morse, 2009). As such, my first hypothesis is:

1. Strength of American national identity will be significantly positively related to perceptions of consensus and homogeneity among the American people.

I next seek to demonstrate that perceptions of consensus and homogeneity are related to attitudes toward the American public's political power, and that national identity plays not only an indirect role through these perceptions, but also a direct role due to its significance in adherence to group norms. However, I suggest that the relationships between perceptions of consensus and homogeneity and attitudes toward democratic procedures will be reversed between attitudes toward the role of the public in the current (representative) system and attitudes toward the public in a more direct democratic

system. As such, I layout separate hypotheses for attitudes regarding indirect democratic processes and those regarding direct processes. These hypotheses are:

2. Perceptions of consensus and homogeneity with regard to the values and attitudes of the American public will be significantly positively related to confidence in the American public's decision-making during elections.
3. Besides the indirect relationship through perceptions of consensus and homogeneity, strength of American national identity will have a significant, positive, direct effect on confidence in the American public's decision-making during elections.
4. Perceptions of consensus and homogeneity with regard to the values and attitudes of the American public will be significantly negatively related to support for more direct involvement of the public in political decision-making.
5. Besides the indirect relationship through perceptions of consensus and homogeneity, strength of American national identity will have a significant, negative, direct effect on support for more direct involvement of the public in political decision-making.

Data and Measures

The data used for this paper are the same data used by Theiss-Morse (2009), which was collected via the Perceptions of the American People project funded by the National Science Foundation (Grant SES-0111887). The survey was administered by the Ohio State University's Center for Survey Research, and data were collected through 1,254 interviews between May 29, 2002 and July 21, 2002. Households in the 48 contiguous states and the District of Columbia were randomly selected via random-digit

dialing, and an English-speaking respondent within the household was randomly chosen using the “last birthday” selection technique (Lavrakas, 1993). Only U.S. citizens were included in the sample (see Theiss-Morse, 2009 for additional details regarding the survey data).

Measures

Confidence in the American people during elections: The first variable used to address support for democratic processes is a question regarding how much confidence people have in the American people when it comes to being involved in political decision-making during elections. I use this variable as a measure of people’s support for the political power of the public within the current, representative system of the United States. The question was worded, “How much trust and confidence do you have in the wisdom of the American people when it comes to making choices on Election Day?” and response options ranged from 1, meaning none, to 4, meaning a great deal ($M = 2.74$, $S.D. = 0.79$). The item distribution exhibited sufficient normality and was slightly but not substantially negatively skewed (skewness = $-.363$).

Support for more direct involvement of the American people: The second variable I use to address support for democratic processes is a question that taps into support for the American public having more say in political decision-making. It is one thing to have confidence in the ability of the American people to make decisions under the status quo, in which the will of the people is filtered through public representatives via elections, but it is quite different to support a deviation from, as I have described above, the group norm of representative democracy. The question measured respondents’ agreement (from 1, strongly disagree, to 5, strongly agree) with the statement: “If the

American people decided political issues directly instead of relying on politicians, the country would be a lot better off” ($M = 2.90$, $S.D. = 1.12$).

Perceived consensus: Perceptions of consensus among the American people can be thought of as the degree to which people see the public as capable of agreeing on issues related to politics. This taps directly into the idea that what people dislike about democratic processes is the stress and conflict that comes out of people trying to compromise who have diverging issues stances. Perceptions of consensus were measured via an item worded: “On the major issues of the day, do Americans agree almost all of the time, agree sometimes, or agree almost none of the time?” This item was reverse-coded so that 1 means agree none of the time and 3 means agree almost all of the time ($M = 1.95$, $S.D. = 0.44$).

Perceived homogeneity: Perceptions of homogeneity are distinct from perceptions of consensus because rather than gauging the ability of the public to agree on particular issues, homogeneity refers to the degree to which the public consists of individuals holding the same values and beliefs. While consensus refers to how much agreement there would be if the public were given the opportunity to make a decision at a particular time, homogeneity refers more to levels of similarity between Americans on a more static level. The item used to measure perceptions of homogeneity was agreement (from 1, strongly disagree, to 5, strongly agree) with the statement: “Americans are similar to each other, sharing the same values and outlooks” ($M = 3.10$, $S.D. = 1.08$).

Personal similarity and agreement: It is possible, and in fact quite obvious, that the amount of power people prefer to be in the hands of the public might depend on how much they perceive the public as sharing their own views. When one thinks they are on

the same page as everyone else, of course they will support “power to the people.” In order to test for the possibility that perceptions of consensus are not simply acting as proxies for personal similarity, I include two variables in my models that gauge how similar respondents feel personally to the American public as a whole. The first item resembles a personal-level version of perceptions of consensus, and is worded: “On the important issues, I find I often agree with the American people” (ranging from 1, strongly disagree, to 5, strongly agree) ($M = 3.62$, $S.D. = 0.92$). The second item resembles a personal-level version of perceptions of homogeneity, and is worded: “In many respects, I am different from most Americans” (ranging from 1, strongly disagree, to 5, strongly agree – reverse-coded so that higher values mean disagreement) ($M = 3.09$, $S.D. = 1.12$). Interactions between each of these variables and each of the consensus and homogeneity variables are also included in the models to test for the possibility that the relationship between consensus/homogeneity and attitudes toward democratic processes depends on how similar individuals feel to the public.

American national identity: A measure of identification with America was constructed using a set of 6 items included in the survey that addressed feelings toward fellow Americans as well as how respondents perceive themselves in relation to the American national group, thus capturing both the cognitive and affective elements of social identity (see Theiss-Morse, 2009). The scale demonstrated sufficient reliability (Cronbach’s $\alpha = .648$). Each of these items was transformed to range from 0 to 1, and then a variable was created using the mean of these items, where higher values indicate stronger identification ($M = 0.72$, $S.D. = 0.12$). The scale is slightly negatively skewed

but not enough to warrant transformation (skewness = -.660) (see Appendix A for exact items).

Uncritical Patriotism and Nationalism: Prior literature has shown that it is very important to distinguish national identity from other forms of attachment to one's country. Huddy and Khatib (2007) showed convincingly that national identity, as conceptualized under a social identity framework, is distinct from symbolic, constructive, and uncritical patriotism, as well as nationalism. While national identity is an internal, psychological belonging to the national group, traditional measures of patriotism are often conflated with other aspects of political behavior like ideology or political involvement. Other research suggests that nationalism and patriotism are actually extensions of specific aspects of national identity (e.g., Bar-Tal, 1997; Schatz & Staub, 1997; Schatz, Staub, & Lavine, 1999; Blank & Schmidt, 2003). As such, I include items in my models that account for alternative constructs. Unfortunately, the data do not contain items relating to symbolic or constructive patriotism, so I only include items addressing uncritical patriotism and nationalism.

Two items address uncritical patriotism: "Americans should support the U.S. even if it is in the wrong" ($M = 2.83$, $S.D. = 1.14$), and "There are some things about the U.S. today that make me feel ashamed of the U.S." ($M = 2.56$, $S.D. = 1.15$) (both ranging from 1, strongly disagree, to 5, strongly agree). These items demonstrated poor reliability (Cronbach's $\alpha = .290$), and so are included separately in each model. Four items were used to gauge feelings of nationalism, which is essentially pride in one's country relative to other countries. High levels of nationalism would infer, for example, the belief that the United States is the best country in the world (e.g., Blank & Schmidt, 2003). Each of

these items was measured on a 5-point scale from strongly disagree to strongly agree, and was coded so that higher values indicate higher levels of nationalism. A scale was created as the mean of the 4 items (Cronbach's alpha = .617; see Appendix A for exact items).

Group Identification in general: Strength of identification with various demographic groups the respondents belonged to was measured to control for the possibility that some people are just strong "identifiers" in general. That is, some people are likely to report identifying strongly with most, if not all, groups that they perceive themselves as belonging to. Since I am interested only in the extent to which people display national identity, I control for identification with other groups so as to isolate the part of national identity in each model that is specific to individuals' feelings to the United States. This variable was constructed by calculating the mean of 6 items measuring identification with the respondent's racial or ethnic group, members of the same sex, people who do the same work, people with the same religious beliefs, people from the same region of the country, and people from the same state. Each was measured on a 7-point scale from "not a part of this group" to "very strongly part of this group" and held together as one factor yielding high reliability (Cronbach's alpha = .810) ($M = 5.48$, $S.D. = 1.15$).

Generalized Trust: A measure of generalized trust was included to account for the fact that some people might simply be more trusting of others, which might explain differences in strength of national identity as well as levels of support for direct democratic processes. Indeed, in-group associations have been associated with trust (e.g., Janoff-Bulman, 1992; but see Fiske, 2000), and it seems likely that generalized trust in others would follow the same patterns as perceptions of consensus and homogeneity.

Two dichotomous variables were used: “Do you think most people would try to take advantage of you if they got the chance, or do you think they would try to be fair?” and “Generally speaking, would you say that most people can be trusted, or would you say that you can’t be too careful in dealing with people?”. The mean of these variables was taken yielding a scale from 0 (not trusting) to 1 (trusting) ($M = 0.57$, $S.D. = .42$), and showed sufficient reliability (Cronbach’s $\alpha = .638$).

Ideology: Ideology was evaluated in the survey via two questions – one asking whether respondents identified as liberal, moderate, or conservative, and then a follow-up question that asked respondents that picked liberal or conservative how strongly they identified with that ideology on a 3-point scale. A single ideology measure was calculated from these items by transforming the first variable into a -1 to 1 scale, and then multiplying that variable times the ideological strength variable to obtain a 7-point ideological scale from “strongly liberal” to “strongly conservative” ($M = 0.31$, $S.D. = 1.56$). This variable is included in all primary analyses as a continuous variable so as to maximize the information obtained from each analysis. As such, it is important to note that relationships are the result of comparing “more conservative” individuals to “more liberal” individuals, as opposed to comparing self-identified conservatives to self-identified liberals (although, the data are not substantially skewed; skewness = $-.222$).

Political Knowledge: Political knowledge was measured using responses to four questions: three regarding the current (at the time) political system and one representing the American political system in general. The items were: “What job or political office does Dick Cheney now hold?” (70 percent correct); “What job or political office does Tony Blair now hold?” (45 percent correct); “Who has the final responsibility to decide if

a law is constitutional or not? Is it the President, Congress, or the Supreme Court?” (53 percent correct); and, “Which party currently has the most members in the U.S. House of Representatives?” (51 percent correct). These items were coded so that 1 means correct, and then a scale was created from the mean of the 4 items ($M = 0.77$, $S.D. = 0.24$).

The rest of the variables included in the models are standard control variables and were coded according to common standards. Race was coded so that 0 meant “White,” 1 meant “Black” (or “African American”), and 2 meant “Other,” and religious affiliation was dummy coded so that all Christian denominations were coded as 1, and all others 0.

Results

Using OLS regression, I ran two sets of models testing my hypotheses. First, I will explain my results as they pertain to trust and confidence in the American people on Election Day. These models shed light on how national identity and perceptions of consensus and homogeneity are related to confidence in the American people to carry out democratic processes within the current system of indirect democracy. Then, I show what happens when I turn to the dependent variable of support for more direct involvement of the people in political decision-making. These models, I suggest, show what relationships exist when people are asked if they want to deviate from the status quo and empower the public beyond the current system. Importantly, these two dependent variables are uncorrelated with one another ($r = -.008$, $p = .795$), supporting the idea that, although these items seem very related to one another at face value, they tap into quite different constructs. While this does not demonstrate that the constructs I hypothesize are indeed the two that underlay these items, it does bolster the expectation that my main independent variables would have such differing effects on the two.

Trust and Confidence in the American People on Election Day

Before we include measures of national attachment in the models, it is evident that perceptions of consensus and homogeneity among the American people are both positively related to trust and confidence in the American people on Election Day, thus supporting my second hypothesis (H2). Perceived consensus has a significant main effect on trust and confidence ($B = .280$, Std. Error = $.081$, $t = 3.458$, $p = .001$), and perceived homogeneity has an indirect effect through an interaction with personal similarity to the American people. The model as a whole does not explain much of the variation in trust and confidence in the American people (Adj. $R^2 = .071$, $F = 3.331$, $p < .001$), but nonetheless the theory holds that perceptions of consensus and homogeneity will exhibit a positive relationship. Table 1 shows these results.

[Table 1 about here]

The main effect of perceived homogeneity is non-significant ($B = .051$, Std. Error = $.033$, $t = 1.567$, $p = .118$), but the interaction between perceived homogeneity and how similar one perceives themselves to be to the American people is significant and negative ($B = -.055$, Std. Error = $.025$, $t = -2.189$, $p = .029$), meaning that the relationship between perceived homogeneity and trust and confidence in the American people on Election Day is significantly more positive among individuals who consider themselves more different from the American people. When I re-center the personal similarity variable at 1 standard deviation below the mean (to represent people who are generally on the lower end of personal similarity), there is a significant positive relationship between perceived homogeneity and trust and confidence in the American people on Election Day ($B = .113$, Std. Error = $.041$, $t = 2.720$, $p = .007$). This means that among people who perceive

themselves to be relatively different from the American people, there is a positive relationship between perceptions of homogeneity and trust and confidence in the American people, but as can be seen in Figure 1, those who feel average or greater than average levels of personal similarity have stable levels of trust and confidence regardless of perceived homogeneity.

[Figure 1 about here]

So, perceptions of consensus and homogeneity seem to have the expected effects with regard to this dependent variable, but are they emanating from national identity as hypothesized in my first hypothesis (H1)? OLS regression models suggest that perceptions of both consensus and homogeneity are, as shown by Theiss-Morse (2009), significantly positively related to national identity. Perceptions of consensus are significantly predicted by national identity ($B = .776$, Std. Error = $.207$, $t = 3.752$, $p < .001$), generalized trust ($B = .147$, Std. Error = $.047$, $t = 3.120$, $p = .002$), and income ($B = -.031$, Std. Error = $.016$, $t = -1.984$, $p = .048$). Although a substantial amount of variance remains unexplained ($\text{Adj. } R^2 = .073$, $F = 2.866$, $p < .001$), it is still clear that perceptions of consensus are positively influenced by national identity, with generalized trust also accounting for a sizeable portion of variance. These results can be seen in Table 2.

[Table 2 about here]

Table 3 shows the model predicting perceptions of homogeneity. It is clear that national identity is a very significant predictor of perceptions of homogeneity here too ($B = 1.859$, Std. Error = $.494$, $t = 3.764$, $p < .001$), thus further replicating what was shown by Theiss-Morse (2009) and supporting H1. Other predictors include uncritical patriotism (supporting the U.S. even when it is wrong) ($B = .141$, Std. Error = $.041$, $t = 3.437$, $p =$

.001), generalized trust ($B = .311$, Std. Error = $.113$, $t = 2.755$, $p = .006$), and the interaction between ideology and uncritical patriotism (supporting the U.S. even when it is wrong) is marginal ($B = .072$, Std. Error = $.041$, $t = 1.782$, $p = .075$).

[Table 3 about here]

When we include all potential independent variables, including consensus and homogeneity variables as well as national identity variables, in a model predicting trust and confidence in the American people on Election Day, we can see that the overall results generally still hold (Adj. $R^2 = .137$, $F = 4.311$, $p < .001$). National identity shows a significant independent relationship with trust and confidence in the American people outside of the influence of perceived consensus and homogeneity ($B = 1.866$, Std. Error = $.390$, $t = 4.784$, $p < .001$). This suggests that the effects of national identity on trust and confidence in the American people on Election Day are not merely through subsequent perceptions of consensus and homogeneity. Rather, in support of my third hypothesis (H3), national identity exhibits an independent effect.

Perceived consensus also shows a significant main effect ($B = .203$, Std. Error = $.083$, $t = 2.461$, $p = .014$), providing further support for my H2. The model suggests, then, that seeing the American populace as capable of coming to an agreement on issues is positively related to having trust in confidence in them on Election Day. Also, generalized trust maintains its positive relationship with trust and confidence. These results can be seen in Table 4.

[Table 4 about here]

Perceived homogeneity is marginally related to trust and confidence in the American people on Election Day via its interaction with personal agreement ($B = .055$,

Std. Error = .032, $t = 1.723$, $p = .086$). Similarly to what was found in Table 1 regarding just consensus and homogeneity variables as predictors, we can see that perceptions of the public as holding similar values and outlooks plays a more positive role in influencing trust and confidence in the public on Election Day when people perceive themselves as being on the same page as everyone else. However, in this case, the interaction is with personal agreement, or the extent to which respondents believe they agree with the public on issues, rather than personal similarity, or the extent to which respondents feel similar to the broader public. As can be seen in Figure 2, those who perceive themselves as agreeing with the public more display a more positive relationship between perceived homogeneity and trust and confidence in the public on Election Day.

[Figure 2 about here]

Support for More Direct Involvement of the People

Turning to my other main dependent variable, support for more direct involvement of the public in political decision-making, results become quite different. An OLS regression utilizing perceived consensus and homogeneity variables but leaving out national identity variables shows that perceptions of homogeneity are unrelated to support for more direct involvement, and perceptions of consensus are significantly negatively related ($B = -.336$, Std. Error = .120, $t = -2.807$, $p = .005$), providing partial support for my fourth hypothesis (H4). The only other marginally significant prediction comes from ideology, and suggests that increased conservatism is marginally associated with decreased support for more direct involvement of the people ($B = -.056$, Std. Error = .032, $t = -1.753$, $p = .080$). Thus, overall, a very small amount of variance is explained by the model (Adj. $R^2 = .027$, $F = 1.828$, $p = .017$). Nonetheless, the model suggests that

perceptions of homogeneity don't matter for support for more direct involvement of the people, and perceptions of consensus are associated with lower levels of support for more direct involvement of the people. Table 5 shows these results.

[Table 5 about here]

Finally, Table 6 shows the complete model predicting support for more direct involvement of the people with both consensus and homogeneity variables and national identity variables. Here, we see similar results (although, a small amount of variance is explained again; Adj. $R^2 = .058$, $F = 2.056$, $p = .001$). National identity is a non-significant predictor, which is contrary to my fifth hypothesis (H5), but it is in the negative direction ($B = -.885$, Std. Error = $.594$, $t = -2.271$, $p = .137$). Perceived consensus maintains its negative relationship with support for more involvement of the people, but it becomes only marginal ($B = -.230$, Std. Error = $.126$, $t = -1.823$, $p = .069$), which takes away partly from the support I found for H4, and generalized trust shows a significant negative relationship with support for more involvement ($B = -.474$, Std. Error = $.132$, $t = -3.600$, $p < .001$). We can also see that conservatism is significantly related to less support for more direct involvement ($B = -.078$, Std. Error = $.034$, $t = -2.271$, $p = .024$), those who are more likely to feel shame in the U.S. are more likely to support more direct involvement ($B = -.107$, Std. Error = $.046$, $t = -2.308$, $p = .021$),¹ and age has a positive relationship with support for more direct involvement ($B = .112$, Std. Error = $.055$, $t = 2.026$, $p = .043$). Overall, these results suggest that perceptions of consensus and trust in others work to inhibit support for more direct involvement of the American people in decision-making, although this conclusion is only modestly supported.

¹ This variable was recoded so that higher values indicate less agreement with feeling ashamed of the U.S.

[Table 6 about here]

Discussion

The results gathered from this study are in line with the hypothesized narrative. The finding that national identity is significantly positively related to perceptions of consensus and homogeneity stands consistently with previous research. Using the same data as Theiss-Morse (2009), I use a somewhat more complex model controlling for alternative types of national attachment (i.e., uncritical patriotism and nationalism) in order to duplicate and reinforce Theiss-Morse's finding that high levels of national identity are significantly related to perceiving consensus and homogeneity among the American people with regard to their values and outlook as well as the degree to which American agree with one another on the major political issues. Beyond this finding, interpretation of these results requires careful consideration.

The American People on Election Day versus the American People "Beyond" Election Day

A key point of interest in these findings is the divergence between the results regarding trust and confidence in the American people on Election Day and those regarding support for more direct involvement of the people. Both dependent variables can be said, in theory, to tap into support for political decision-making being in the hands of the people, or support for the democratic ideal. However, the two clearly are not affected the same way by the variables presented in my models. How can perceptions of consensus be positively related to putting faith in the American people on Election Day, but negatively related to supporting more direct involvement of the American people in general?

As I have suggested in the beginning of this paper, the difference may lay in that having faith in the public on Election Day only requires that respondents trust the people within the current, representative system that has been “agreed-upon,” or is the “norm,” of the national group of the United States. On the other hand, support for more direct influence by the public is a deviation from that norm. Social identity has been shown to encourage people to adhere to prescribed group norms (e.g., Turner et al., 1987; Terry, Hogg, & White, 1999), and national identity has similar effects on political behavior (e.g., Huddy & Khatib, 2007). Accordingly, we would expect national identity to have a negative influence on support for more direct democracy, which is an extension beyond the norm. Further, elections can be thought of as a forum for groups to elect fitting leaders who will lead the group. Indeed, there is much literature on the dynamics of group leadership that suggests that leaders are typically chosen that are prototypical of the group and represent that groups goals (e.g., Haslam, Reicher, & Platow, 2011; Hogg, 2001; Reicher, Haslam, & Hopkins, 2005). When people support direct democracy over the election of leaders, it is in some ways a resistance to the prescribed dynamics of the national group. However, we would then expect a negative relationship between national identity and support for more direct involvement of the public, and while the direction of the observed relationship is correct, it is evident that perceptions of consensus and homogeneity, which are nonetheless influenced by national identity, play a somewhat larger role.

Support for More Direct Involvement of the People as an Act of Distrust

In order to address the fact that H4 was supported to a greater extent than H5 (that is, there was a significant negative relationship between perceived consensus and support

for more direct democracy but only a non-significant relationship for national identity), it may be helpful to mix the current theory with another branch of literature. Manin, Przeworski, and Stokes (1999) suggest that there are two conceptions of representation: the mandate model and the accountability model. Under the mandate model, voters select a “program” by which political decisions will be made rather than a candidate. This requires 1) that campaigns keep their promises, and 2) that the winning platform actually be in line with the voters’ preferences. Also, it is essential that politicians and voters have similar interests, that politicians primarily seek re-election and believe that keeping their promises is the best way to achieve re-election, and that politicians want their future promises to be perceived as credible. Under the accountability model, the emphasis is on voters’ power over the government via the threat of backlash at re-election time. In essence, the mandate model of representation exists in a much more trusting, even credulous political world than the nearly cynical accountability model.

It makes sense then that people who identify more strongly with the American people, who perceive the people as being on the same page, and who are more trusting of others generally, to have a great deal of confidence in the American people on Election Day while also having more faith in the current political system in which the public will be filtered through politicians. In other words, people who are more trusting in general might be more okay with trusting in the mandate model of representation: “We elected these officials, and since I trust people in general, I trust that candidates will stay true to the promises they made in their campaigns. There is little need for a deviation from that.” Further, perceiving consensus in the American people makes it easier to perceive that politicians and voters have similar interests – the mandate model essentially becomes

“more realistic.” People who perceive the American public as a diverse body of issue stances would also be less likely to see politicians and voters as having similar interests – this makes the mandate model “less realistic.” As far as the implications of such an interpretation, it suggests that national identity and perceptions of consensus and homogeneity are associated with lower support with the deviation from the status quo that is more direct democracy, but more through consensus and homogeneity than the direct relationship with national identity referred to in H5, under which we would have observed a significant independent effect of national identity.

Limitations and Conclusion

Although I have put forward a particular argument for how the two main dependent variables (trust and confidence in the public on Election Day and support for more direct involvement of the people) differ, further research is necessary to determine the extent to which this theory really encompasses the difference between the two items. As it stands, the difference between the two dependent variables can only be determined by face validity. Also, more broadly, it is difficult to make reliable interpretations of results based on single-item dependent variables. The results of this study would be much more powerful given a scale designed to tap into the constructs of interest. The interpretations of results put forward are simply the best the author has to offer given the available data.

Finally, the data for this study were collected in 2002 for a larger project. As such, the items included in the data were not designed specifically for this study, and some might argue that the data are outdated. However, I would argue that the purpose of the original data collection was close enough to the purposes of this study to mostly abate

concerns of the former, and while the relationships observed here may very well be in part an artifact of the times, this is no less true for any research study that does not utilize longitudinal data. Nonetheless, it is important to note that during the time of data collection, the United States was primarily under Republican control, and the tragedies of September 11th, 2001 were far from in the past, so the possibility of historical influence must not be ignored. It is possible, for example, that the effects of perceived consensus on support for democratic processes are different in data that were not collected during the “rally-around-the-flag” period following 9/11.

Despite these limitations, the results presented in this paper suggest a relatively coherent story regarding the attachment Americans feel toward their fellow citizens, the subsequent perceptions of consensus and homogeneity that people see among the American people, and how much faith people put in democracy. Given the diverging results between the two main dependent variables, the story requires some nuance. When considering the decision-making abilities of the American people on Election Day, national identity and perceptions of consensus seem to exert a positive influence on people’s attitudes. However, when asked if the country would be better off with more direct democratic procedures, perceived consensus shows the opposite effect. Putting faith in the public’s wisdom on Election Day thus seems an act of trust, and of endorsement of the representative democratic system that is the “norm” of the United States. To support more direct involvement of the American people, however, is more an act of distrust, and an act of defiance against the agreed-upon system. From another perspective, people who are not trusting in general and perceive greater gaps in opinion among the public don’t trust politicians to fulfill their mandates, and don’t see the

necessary electoral connection between public official and constituent as realistic. Of course, one might think that this distrust can be applied to the public as well, but putting decision-making in the hands of the vague term, “the people,” is perhaps an acceptable alternative to keeping it in the hands of individuals who are already in charge of the current system, and are likely to be self-centered and corrupt.

APPENDIX A: Survey item wording

American national identity items (7-point scale unless otherwise noted; transformed to range from 0-1):

1. *Do you identify with the American people?*
2. *I am a person who feels strong ties to the American people. (5-point scale)*
3. *Being an American is important to the way I think of myself as a person. (5-point scale)*
4. *Where would you place the American people about being informed about politics?*
5. *Where would you place the American people about being unselfish?*
6. *Where would you place the American people about being tolerant?*

Nationalism items (5-point scale):

1. *Generally the U.S. is a better country than most other countries.*
2. *I cannot think of another country in which I would rather live.*
3. *The world would be a better place if people from other countries were more like the people in the U.S.*
4. *When someone from another country criticizes the United States, it doesn't bother me. (reverse-coded)*

APPENDIX B: Tables and Figures

Table 1: OLS regression predicting trust and confidence in the American people on Election Day by perceived consensus and personal similarity variables

| Model | Unstandardized Coefficients | | Standardized Coefficients | t | Sig. |
|--------------------------------|-----------------------------|------------|---------------------------|--------|-------|
| | B | Std. Error | Beta | | |
| (Constant) | 1.445 | .324 | | 4.461 | <.001 |
| Personal similarity | .055 | .030 | .079 | 1.847 | .065 |
| Personal agreement | .110 | .039 | .132 | 2.841 | .005 |
| Perceived homogeneity | .051 | .033 | .070 | 1.567 | .118 |
| Perceived consensus | .280 | .081 | .149 | 3.458 | .001 |
| Pers sim*Perc homog | -.055 | .025 | -.093 | -2.189 | .029 |
| Pers sim*Perc consensus | .005 | .071 | .003 | .072 | .943 |
| Pers agree*Perceived homog | .029 | .032 | .040 | .900 | .368 |
| Pers agree*Perceived consensus | .052 | .075 | .030 | .694 | .488 |
| Ideology | -.004 | .022 | -.009 | -.198 | .843 |
| Political knowledge | .076 | .145 | .023 | .522 | .602 |
| Gender | -.095 | .066 | -.060 | -1.435 | .152 |
| Income | -.008 | .027 | -.014 | -.315 | .753 |
| Age | .039 | .034 | .049 | 1.156 | .248 |
| White | -.137 | .165 | -.055 | -.829 | .407 |
| Black | -.131 | .199 | -.041 | -.655 | .513 |
| Hispanic | -.069 | .165 | -.019 | -.417 | .677 |
| Native | .078 | .159 | .020 | .488 | .626 |
| Christian | .017 | .083 | .009 | .203 | .839 |
| Education | -.005 | .020 | -.012 | -.265 | .791 |
| F | 3.331 | <.001 | | | |
| Adj. R² | .071 | | | | |
| N | 581 | | | | |

a. Dependent Variable: "How much trust and confidence do you have in the wisdom of the American people when it comes to making choices on Election Day?"

Table 2: OLS regression predicting perceived consensus by American national identity

| Model | Unstandardized Coefficients | | Standardized Coefficients | t | Sig. |
|---|-----------------------------|------------|---------------------------|--------|-------|
| | B | Std. Error | Beta | | |
| (Constant) | .159 | .147 | | 1.087 | .278 |
| Group identity | -.006 | .019 | -.015 | -.290 | .772 |
| National identity | .776 | .207 | .222 | 3.752 | <.001 |
| Ideology | -.005 | .013 | -.019 | -.403 | .687 |
| Uncritical Patriotism: Support when wrong | .000 | .017 | .001 | .026 | .979 |
| Uncritical Patriotism: Ashamed (reverse-coded) | .012 | .017 | .032 | .697 | .486 |
| Nationalism | -.006 | .032 | -.009 | -.170 | .865 |
| Generalized trust | .147 | .047 | .144 | 3.120 | .002 |
| Political knowledge | .064 | .083 | .036 | .767 | .444 |
| Gender | .054 | .038 | .064 | 1.421 | .156 |
| Income | -.031 | .016 | -.096 | -1.984 | .048 |
| Age | .007 | .020 | .015 | .330 | .741 |
| White | -.056 | .093 | -.042 | -.605 | .546 |
| Black | .123 | .114 | .071 | 1.087 | .277 |
| Hispanic | .018 | .093 | .009 | .196 | .845 |
| Native | -.151 | .093 | -.072 | -1.630 | .104 |
| Christian | .001 | .048 | .001 | .023 | .982 |
| Education | -.009 | .012 | -.038 | -.761 | .447 |
| F | 3.183 | <.001 | | | |
| Adj. R² | .066 | | | | |
| N | 523 | | | | |

a. Dependent Variable: "On the major issues of the day, do Americans agree almost all the time, agree sometimes, disagree sometimes, or disagree almost all the time?"

Table 3: OLS regression predicting perceived homogeneity by American national identity

| Model | Unstandardized Coefficients | | Standardized Coefficients | t | Sig. |
|---|-----------------------------|------------|---------------------------|--------|-------|
| | B | Std. Error | Beta | | |
| (Constant) | -.137 | .351 | | -.389 | .698 |
| Group identity | .072 | .046 | .074 | 1.559 | .120 |
| National identity | 1.859 | .494 | .210 | 3.764 | <.001 |
| Ideology | .005 | .030 | .008 | .179 | .858 |
| Uncritical Patriotism: Support when wrong | .141 | .041 | .155 | 3.437 | .001 |
| Uncritical Patriotism: Ashamed (reverse-coded) | .072 | .041 | .078 | 1.782 | .075 |
| Nationalism | .048 | .078 | .031 | .611 | .541 |
| Generalized trust | .311 | .113 | .120 | 2.755 | .006 |
| Political knowledge | .196 | .199 | .043 | .982 | .327 |
| Gender | .082 | .091 | .038 | .900 | .368 |
| Income | .015 | .037 | .019 | .409 | .682 |
| Age | .066 | .048 | .061 | 1.393 | .164 |
| White | -.196 | .222 | -.058 | -.882 | .378 |
| Black | .219 | .271 | .050 | .809 | .419 |
| Hispanic | -.212 | .222 | -.043 | -.959 | .338 |
| Native | -.123 | .222 | -.023 | -.554 | .580 |
| Christian | -.049 | .116 | -.018 | -.421 | .674 |
| Education | -.033 | .029 | -.055 | -1.169 | .243 |
| F | 7.265 | <.001 | | | |
| Adj. R² | .170 | | | | |
| N | 522 | | | | |

a. Dependent Variable: "Americans are similar to each other, sharing the same values and outlooks."

Table 4: OLS regression predicting trust and confidence in the American people on Election Day by perceived consensus and American national identity

| Model | Unstandardized Coefficients | | Standardized Coefficients | t | Sig. |
|---|-----------------------------|------------|---------------------------|--------|-------|
| | B | Std. Error | Beta | | |
| (Constant) | 2.837 | .264 | | 10.741 | <.001 |
| Group identity | -.032 | .035 | -.045 | -.928 | .354 |
| National identity | 1.866 | .390 | .289 | 4.784 | <.001 |
| Ideology | -.012 | .023 | -.024 | -.535 | .593 |
| Uncritical Patriotism: Support when wrong | -.040 | .031 | -.060 | -1.274 | .203 |
| Uncritical Patriotism: Ashamed (reverse-coded) | .051 | .030 | .074 | 1.662 | .097 |
| Nationalism | -.060 | .059 | -.053 | -1.016 | .310 |
| Personal similarity | .048 | .031 | .070 | 1.536 | .125 |
| Personal agreement | .056 | .041 | .068 | 1.362 | .174 |
| Perceived homogeneity | .039 | .034 | .053 | 1.127 | .260 |
| Perceived consensus | .203 | .083 | .110 | 2.461 | .014 |
| Pers sim*Perc homog | -.027 | .026 | -.046 | -1.065 | .288 |
| Pers sim*Perc consensus | .054 | .071 | .034 | .757 | .450 |
| Pers agree*Perc homog | .055 | .032 | .079 | 1.723 | .086 |
| Pers agree*Perc consensus | .077 | .074 | .045 | 1.044 | .297 |
| Generalized trust | .222 | .086 | .117 | 2.567 | .011 |
| Political knowledge | .081 | .149 | .024 | .542 | .588 |
| Gender | -.074 | .068 | -.047 | -1.088 | .277 |
| Income | -.029 | .028 | -.049 | -1.036 | .301 |
| Age | -.020 | .036 | -.025 | -.564 | .573 |
| White | -.167 | .167 | -.068 | -1.003 | .316 |
| Black | -.107 | .203 | -.033 | -.526 | .599 |
| Hispanic | -.145 | .166 | -.040 | -.875 | .382 |
| Native | .147 | .166 | .038 | .888 | .375 |
| Christian | -.080 | .087 | -.041 | -.922 | .357 |
| Education | -.003 | .021 | -.007 | -.141 | .888 |
| F | 4.311 | <.001 | | | |
| Adj. R² | .137 | | | | |
| N | 521 | | | | |

a. Dependent Variable: "How much trust and confidence do you have in the wisdom of the American people when it comes to making choices on Election Day?"

Table 5: OLS regression predicting support for more direct involvement of the American people by perceived consensus and personal similarity variables

| Model | Unstandardized Coefficients | | Standardized Coefficients | t | Sig. |
|--------------------------------|-----------------------------|------------|---------------------------|--------|-------|
| | B | Std. Error | Beta | | |
| (Constant) | 3.418 | .485 | | 7.048 | <.001 |
| Personal similarity | -.037 | .044 | -.037 | -.840 | .401 |
| Personal agreement | .057 | .057 | .047 | .986 | .325 |
| Perceived homogeneity | .064 | .048 | .061 | 1.327 | .185 |
| Perceived consensus | -.336 | .120 | -.124 | -2.807 | .005 |
| Pers sim*Perc homog | .059 | .037 | .070 | 1.593 | .112 |
| Pers sim*Perc consensus | -.117 | .104 | -.050 | -1.120 | .263 |
| Pers agree*Perceived homog | -.010 | .047 | -.010 | -.217 | .829 |
| Pers agree*Perceived consensus | .054 | .111 | .021 | .485 | .628 |
| Ideology | -.056 | .032 | -.079 | -1.753 | .080 |
| Political knowledge | -.107 | .216 | -.022 | -.493 | .622 |
| Gender | -.051 | .098 | -.023 | -.523 | .601 |
| Income | -.062 | .039 | -.073 | -1.566 | .118 |
| Age | .044 | .050 | .038 | .877 | .381 |
| White | -.289 | .249 | -.081 | -1.161 | .246 |
| Black | -.032 | .298 | -.007 | -.109 | .913 |
| Hispanic | .333 | .244 | .064 | 1.364 | .173 |
| Native | .350 | .239 | .063 | 1.461 | .144 |
| Christian | -.059 | .123 | -.021 | -.482 | .630 |
| Education | -.034 | .030 | -.054 | -1.141 | .254 |
| F | 1.828 | .017 | | | |
| Adj. R² | .027 | | | | |
| N | 577 | | | | |

a. Dependent Variable: "If the American people decided political issues directly instead of relying on politicians, the country would be a lot better off."

Table 6: OLS regression predicting support for more direct involvement of the American people by perceived consensus and American national identity

| Model | Unstandardized Coefficients | | Standardized Coefficients | t | Sig. |
|---|-----------------------------|------------|---------------------------|--------|-------|
| | B | Std. Error | Beta | | |
| (Constant) | 3.092 | .407 | | 7.590 | <.001 |
| Group identity | .006 | .053 | .006 | .122 | .903 |
| National identity | -.885 | .594 | -.094 | -1.490 | .137 |
| Ideology | -.078 | .034 | -.109 | -2.271 | .024 |
| Uncritical Patriotism: Support when wrong | .012 | .047 | .012 | .252 | .801 |
| Uncritical Patriotism: Ashamed (reverse-coded) | -.107 | .046 | -.108 | -2.308 | .021 |
| Nationalism | .064 | .090 | .039 | .708 | .479 |
| Personal similarity | .000 | .048 | .000 | -.009 | .992 |
| Personal agreement | .098 | .062 | .082 | 1.565 | .118 |
| Perceived homogeneity | .074 | .052 | .070 | 1.404 | .161 |
| Perceived consensus | -.230 | .126 | -.085 | -1.823 | .069 |
| Pers sim*Perc homog | .020 | .039 | .023 | .507 | .612 |
| Pers sim*Perc consensus | -.127 | .108 | -.055 | -1.177 | .240 |
| Pers agree*Perc homog | -.043 | .049 | -.042 | -.875 | .382 |
| Pers agree*Perc consensus | .102 | .112 | .042 | .911 | .363 |
| Generalized trust | -.474 | .132 | -.172 | -3.600 | <.001 |
| Political knowledge | -.054 | .228 | -.011 | -.236 | .813 |
| Gender | -.010 | .104 | -.004 | -.098 | .922 |
| Income | -.059 | .043 | -.068 | -1.374 | .170 |
| Age | .112 | .055 | .096 | 2.026 | .043 |
| White | -.178 | .259 | -.049 | -.687 | .492 |
| Black | -.101 | .313 | -.022 | -.321 | .748 |
| Hispanic | .402 | .253 | .076 | 1.588 | .113 |
| Native | .229 | .259 | .040 | .885 | .376 |
| Christian | -.069 | .132 | -.024 | -.518 | .604 |
| Education | -.017 | .033 | -.026 | -.508 | .612 |
| F | 2.298 | <.001 | | | |
| Adj. R² | .059 | | | | |
| N | 517 | | | | |

a. Dependent Variable: "If the American people decided political issues directly instead of relying on politicians, the country would be a lot better off."

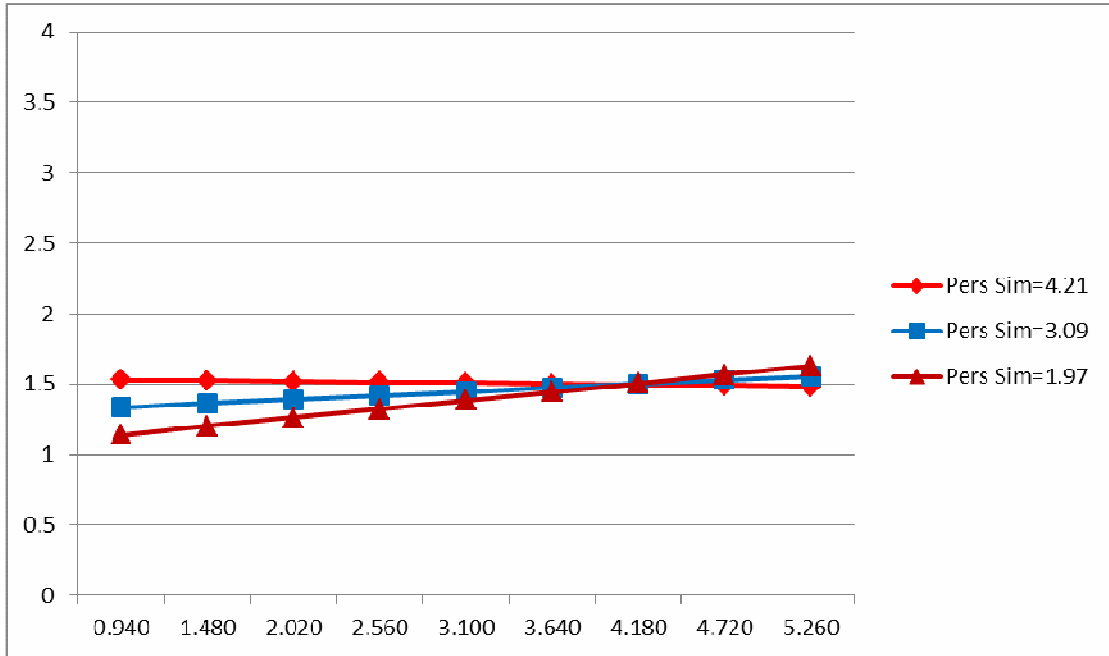


Figure 1: Interaction of personal similarity and perceived homogeneity predicting trust and confidence in the American people on Election Day

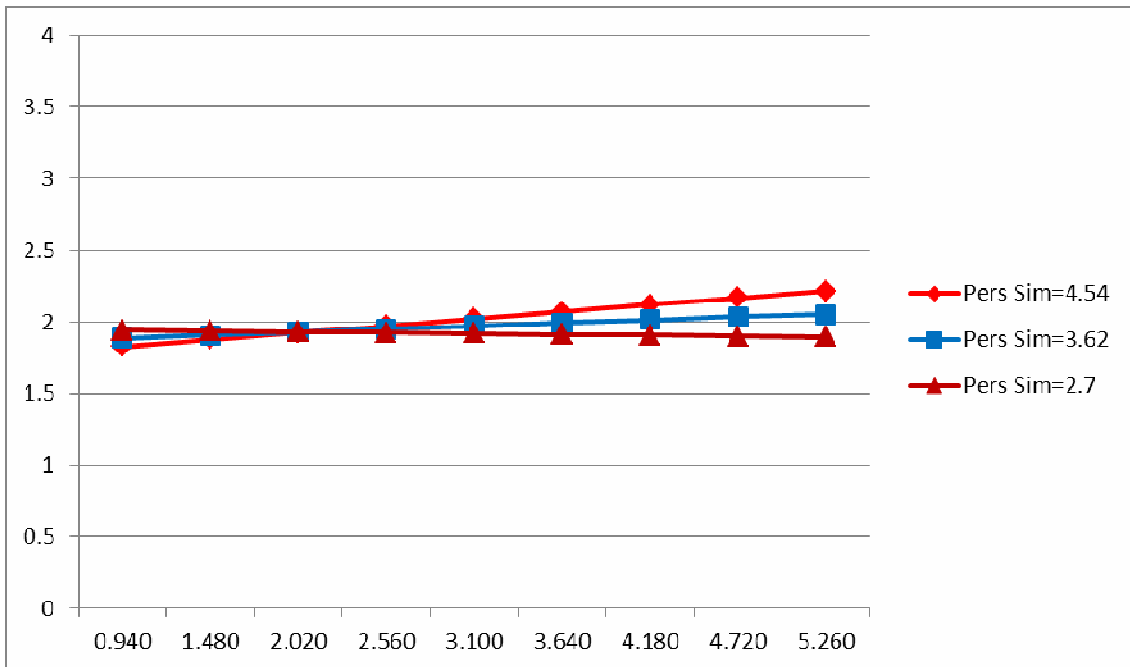


Figure 2: Interaction of personal agreement and perceived homogeneity predicting trust and confidence in the American people on Election Day

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