Spring 2023

Perceptions of Political Knowledge, Political Participation, and Political Efficacy Among Western Washington University Students

Bryndis Danke

Perceptions of Political Knowledge, Political Participation, and Political Efficacy Among Western Washington University Students

Bryndis Danke

Advised by Dr. Catherine Wineinger

Western Washington University

2023

Abstract

The way people view political knowledge, political participation, and political efficacy impact their interactions with politics. But how exactly do people define political knowledge and participation? Political science scholars are in the midst of discussions on how to broaden these definitions to include traditional forms of both (knowledge of political facts and participation in activities such as voting, campaigning, and protesting) as well as non-traditional forms (experiential knowledge and community activities). This paper examines the results of a survey of 196 university students and 5 student interviews to determine if these broader definitions are held by the general public. Additional information on how students view their own levels of political knowledge, participation, and efficacy was also collected in the study. I find that most students think of the narrow definitions of political knowledge and participation that include only traditional forms of both. There is a clear distinction made in responses between what students believe is community involvement and what is political engagement. I further demonstrate how these narrow definitions among students may negatively affect how they view their own levels of political knowledge, efficacy, and participation. Taken together, these findings suggest that if the broader definitions that exist in the political science literature were more effectively communicated and taught to younger generations, students may exhibit higher levels of political engagement. This may also narrow the gender gap in political knowledge as this study finds that women tend to be more involved in their community while men tend to rate themselves as possessing more political knowledge.

Introduction

What is political knowledge? How do Western Washington University (WWU) students define political knowledge, political participation, community engagement, and the relationships between them? How might these definitions affect their perceived levels of political knowledge, efficacy and participation? As the younger generations become increasingly politically active, it is important to understand how they think about political knowledge and political participation. This study examines Western Washington University students' definitions of political knowledge; their personal levels of political knowledge, political engagement, and community engagement; and their perceptions of the connections between politics and community.

The literature on political knowledge and political participation revolves around discussions of what exactly should be included in the definitions of each. There are conversations on whether political knowledge is knowledge of political facts or knowledge of facts combined with experiential knowledge. Similarly, there are discussions in the political participation literature on if traditional forms of political action make up political participation (voting, campaigning, protesting), or if everyday activities are also political. These discussions have led to broader scholarly definitions of political knowledge and participation over time. In this paper, I seek to understand how WWU students view political knowledge and participation and to what extent those views align with current political science research.

I conducted a survey of 196 students and interviews of 5 students. The survey included demographic, scale, multiple choice, and open-ended questions aimed at uncovering individual definitions and levels of political knowledge, political participation, and community. The responses suggested that students define political knowledge as knowledge of political facts and political participation as traditional political activities. Additionally, political engagement and

community engagement are not considered to be overlapping. The interview responses aligned with this finding.

Not only do WWU students have limited and distinct definitions of political involvement and community involvement, but their reported levels of each also differ. Generally, students report higher levels of community involvement than they do political engagement. There are also correlations between political involvement and political efficacy where individuals who have higher levels of political efficacy, i.e., the belief in one's ability to influence government, also say they have higher levels of political involvement. These relationships suggest that there are two actions political scientists can take that may improve people's political confidence and therefore, encourage them to participate in politics more. The first action is to adopt the broader definitions of political knowledge and participation that are being discussed in the literature. The second is to better communicate those broader definitions to the public. Doing so is not only important for getting students involved in politics, but also for closing the gender gap in political knowledge. Men tend to rate themselves as having more political knowledge than women do. However, women are very involved in their communities. If the connections between community engagement and political participation are made explicit, women may feel more confident in that the skills and knowledge they gain through community involvement are also political skills and political knowledge. Thus, broadening definitions and ensuring those definitions are taught to younger generations could improve general political participation as well as lower gender barriers to political involvement.

Literature Review

Political Knowledge

While specific definitions of political knowledge vary, generally accepted definitions are rooted in knowledge of political facts. Delli Carpini and Keeter have emerged as leading scholars in the realm of political knowledge and define it as "the range of factual information about politics that is stored in long-term memory" (Barabas 2014). The factual information that individuals can possess is broken down into three different categories: textbook facts, surveillance facts, and historical facts (Jennings 1996). Textbook facts include understanding how government systems and processes work (Jennings 1996). From how bills progress through the legislative process to how the Speaker of the House gets elected, these are the type of facts many students learn in their civics classes. Surveillance facts are current events and as such, are a category of constantly changing and evolving facts (Jennings 1996). These are the type of facts that can be learned through consuming news and engaging in social networks (Jennings 1996). The media provides information on political events occurring at all levels of government as do conversations with people in the community. Finally, historical facts are those stored in an individual's memory (Jennings 1996). They are a type political knowledge that influences and informs current perceptions and understandings of government and politics (Jennings 1996). Delli Carpini and Keeter highlight these three types of facts that make up political knowledge and emphasize the role of time and memory in the definition (Barabas 2014).

Other scholars have similarly adopted definitions of political knowledge based on facts, however, have adjusted the time requirements. Matthew Baum (2003) argues that restricting the definition to long-term fact retention omits a type of political learning that is linked to soft news consumption. Soft news, which is media that lays on the border of journalism and entertainment,

is one way in which many people obtain information (Baum 2003). Political information consumed through soft news may not add to a person's arsenal of long-term political facts, however, it is still political learning (Baum 2003). This political learning can influence an individual's political attitudes and can enhance existent long-term fact knowledge (Baum 2003). This "soft news political learning" represents an aspect of political knowledge that the Delli Carpini and Keeter (1996) definition leaves out.

How exactly to define political knowledge is not the only question being debated in the literature. Effective and accurate measurements of political knowledge are also being discussed. Most scholars agree that surveys are the most realistic and efficient method of obtaining data large enough to make estimates of the level of political knowledge for certain populations, for example, political knowledge levels in the United States. However, the way in which these surveys should be conducted is not agreed upon. In 1965, 1973, and 1982, a three-wave national survey took place that asked people questions that fall under Delli Carpini and Keeter's textbook facts and historical facts categories (Jennings 1996). Example of these questions include "about how many years does a U.S. Senator serve?" and "do you happen to remember whether President Franklin Delano Roosevelt [FDR] was a Republican or a Democrat?" (Jennings 1996). Respondents answered correctly, incorrectly, or stated that they did not know (Jennings 1996). Jennings' analysis of the survey responses groups "I do not know" responses together with incorrect responses (Jennings 1996). Therefore, Jennings' method of judging political knowledge levels is based off whether an individual answered correctly or whether they responded any other way.

This grouping of incorrect and "I do not know" responses has been critiqued by many scholars as an invalid approach. The answer "I do not know" may not indicate a lack of

knowledge (Mondak 2000). Respondents may be uninformed, however, they might instead be misinformed or partially informed (Mondak 2000). Being uninformed, misinformed, and partially informed are not the same. Uninformed indicates a complete absence of knowledge, misinformed indicates an exposure to knowledge that was incorrectly received or processed, and partially informed indicates a level of understanding that is simply not high enough to elicit a correct answer (Mondak 2000). The potential of being in these varying states indicates a level of nuance that is not captured when incorrect and "I do not know" responses are grouped together. The gendered implications of this are discussed further in the following sections.

Additionally, using a knowledge scale where answers are either correct or incorrect could capture something other than knowledge during measurement. This other thing is respondent personality traits (Mondak 2000). Respondents who are more confident and willing to take risks may choose to guess rather than say they do not know the answer (Mondak 2000). Those who are less confident and are more risk averse will likely respond with "I do not know" (Mondak 2001). This means that individuals may fall in the "correct" category even if they are uninformed (lucky guess), misinformed (guess), or partially informed (guess). Individuals may also fall in the "incorrect" category for giving an "I do not know" answer, even if they would have guessed correctly, had they been more confident (Mondak 2000). The argument this critique makes it that surveys measuring political knowledge should adopt methods that allow for more complex knowledge categories and analysis (Mondak 2001).

Political Participation

Though widely studied, there are different answers to the question "what is political participation?". Traditional definitions of what falls under the umbrella of activities affecting

politics include voting, protests, and letters to congressional representatives (Milbrath 1981). These are activities that directly attempt to influence government, whether that be by supporting an opinion about the best candidate for office at the ballot box, by trying to sway public opinion through public demonstrations, or by telling representatives how they can represent their constituents' interests (Milbrath 1981). However, critics of this approach to political participation point out a growing category of actions with a more ambiguous connection to politics (Van Deth 2016). As technology has advanced and as political information has become more accessible and abundant, the lines between what is political action and what is not have become blurred (Van Deth 2016). For example, where people choose to shop, and other consumption choices can be political. Additionally, social media engagement, such as liking a post advocating for environmental protections can be political (Van Deth 2016). With everyday actions and choices potentially being political participation, a challenge arises of how to define political participation in a way that does not leave aspects of participation out, but that also is not overly broad.

Some scholars have attempted to tackle this challenge by outlining ways to identify political participation rather than define it a priori. By asking a series of questions about a particular action, that action can either be classified as political participation or not political participation (Van Deth 2016). Deth proposes eight different rules to be used for that purpose. The first requires that the behavior in question is an action (Van Deth 2016). The individual must be doing something political. Simply having political opinions is not sufficient (Van Deth 2016). The second rule requires the action to be voluntary (Van Deth 2016). The third requires the action to be carried out by citizens and not political professionals (Van Deth 2016). The fourth asks if the activity is "located in the sphere of government/state/politics" (Van Deth 2016). If it is

not, the fifth rule asks if the activity targets that area (Van Deth 2016). If so, the activity could qualify as political participation even if it is not located within the "sphere" (Van Deth 2016). The sixth rule asks if the activity is carried out with the goal of solving community problems (Van Deth 2016). If so, the activity could be political participation, even if it is not located within or targeted towards the sphere of government (Van Deth 2016). The seventh rule asks if the activity is within a political context (Van Deth 2016). If so, even if the answer to rules four, five, and six are no, the activity could still be political participation. Finally, the eighth rule asks if the activity is "used to express political aims and intentions" (Van Deth 2016). This final rule allows for an activity that meets none of the previous four rules to still qualify as political participation (Van Deth 2016). This method of judging what is political participation and what is not circumvents the issues of how to define political participation without being overly restricting or broad.

When it comes to measuring political participation, scholars have debated whether individual or social factors should be considered. An individual approach frames socioeconomic status, education, voter registration, political mobilization, and civic skills as individual specific factors or choices (Campbell 2013). For instance, individuals who have a high socioeconomic status, who register to vote, who engage in political mobilization, and who have civic skills are more likely to participate in politics. A social or community-based approach sees these aspects of political participation through a slightly different lens. A person's socioeconomic status is influenced by their community and is relative to others in that community (Campbell 2013). An individual's ability to register to vote is impacted by the restrictions imposed by the government with jurisdiction over the area they live (Campbell 2013). Political mobilization is often built through social networks (Campbell 2013). People can gain civic skills by being an active

member in community organizations (Campbell 2013). This suggests that an individualistic approach does not capture everything driving political participation.

Campbell argues that when measuring political participation, scholars should look at political actions through both an individualistic and social lens (Campbell 2013). Actions, choices, and circumstances are not completely individualistic, nor are they fully social (Campbell 2013). They are a combination of the two. Individual factors correlated with political participation have social aspects to them, just as social factors have individual aspects (Campbell 2013). Thus, in order to understand what impacts political participation and the extent to which people participate, both the individual and social components of participation factors should be considered.

Political Knowledge, Political Participation and Gender

Many studies measuring levels of political knowledge have found a knowledge gap between men and women (Dolan 2011, Mondak & Anderson 2004, Lizotte & Sidman 2009). Specifically, men are typically found to possess more political knowledge than women are (Dolan 2011). However, some scholars have examined whether the way in which political knowledge is measured impacts this supposed gap (Mondak & Anderson 2004, Lizotte & Sidman 2009). As previously discussed in debates about measures of political knowledge, asking questions about political facts and allowing for "I do not know" answers, impacts results (Mondak 2000). Those who select "I do not know" may genuinely not know or they may give the correct answer if they choose to guess instead (Mondak 2000). Additionally, some people who answer correctly may have simply guessed (Mondak 2000). In terms of the gender gap, men and women differ in their propensities to either guess or select "I do not know" (Mondak &

Anderson 2004, Lizotte & Sidman 2009). Women are generally more risk averse and therefore, when they are not sure of an answer, they are more likely to selected "I do not know" (Mondak & Anderson 2004, Lizotte & Sidman 2009). Men, on the other hand, are more likely to guess when they are not certain of an answer than to say they do not know (Mondak & Anderson 2004, Lizotte & Sidman 2009). Guessing allows for the chance of saying the correct answer while choosing "I do not know is often labled as an incorrect answer (Jennings 1996). Therefore, a potential explanation of the political knowledge gender gap is the difference between men and women in their willingness to take risks.

Much research has also been completed on the political participation gender gap, specifically the gap between men and women running for elected office. A study conducted of over 2,100 college students found that "young men are more likely than young women to be socialized by their parents to think about politics as a career path, from their school experiences to their peer associations to their media habits, young women tend to be exposed to less political information and discussion than young men do, young men are more likely than young women to have played organized sports and care about winning, young women are less likely than young men to receive encouragement to run for office from anyone, and young women are less likely than young men to think they will be qualified to run for office, even once they are established in their careers" (Lawless 2013). These findings suggest reasons why more men run for political office than women.

In terms of feeling qualified, women are significantly more likely to view themselves as unqualified for elected office. Men are also 60% more likely than women to think of themselves as "very qualified" to run for elected office (Lawless 2013). Even when analyzing the confidence level of men and women in their politically-relevant skills, there is a gender gap. Only 29% of

women think they are good at public speaking, while 35% of men do. Additionally, 14% of women think they know a lot about politics, while 22% of men stated that they know a lot about politics (Lawless 2013). The way people think about themselves and how confident they are in their qualifications impacts the likelihood they will even think about running for office (Lawless 2013). This gap in self-perceived qualification could also help explain why women are more likely than men to gravitate to nonprofit work while men are more likely to enter politics (Lawless 2013).

The Relationship Between Political Knowledge, Participation, and Efficacy

A common conclusion about the relationship between political knowledge and political participation is that individuals with higher levels of political knowledge are more likely to participate in politics (Galston 2001). Several scholars have identified this relationship by studying the knowledge levels of people who vote and those who do not. An analysis by Delli Carpini and Keeter found "a highly significant independent effect of political knowledge on the probability of voting" (Delli Caripini & Keeter 1996). A study done by Popkin and Dimock agreed with this finding and reported that "the dominant feature of nonvoting in America is lack of knowledge about government; not distrust of government, lack of interest in politics, lack of media exposure to politics, or feelings of inefficacy" (Popkin & Dimock 1999). This link between political knowledge and participation has influenced civic education, political engagement advocacy efforts, and understandings of citizen engagement.

Weaver, Prowse, and Piston challenge the idea of a purely positive relationship between political knowledge and political participation where more of the former leads to more of the latter (Weaver, Prowse, & Piston 2019). By studying a highly policed community and the dual

knowledge people in that community possess, they suggest that increased political knowledge can lead to decreased political participation. Dual knowledge includes knowledge of how political systems, in this case policing systems, should work and knowledge of how they actually work in practice (Weaver, Prowse, & Piston 2019). Participants in the study knew a lot about the law, how the police are supposed to act, and the rights citizens are supposed to have. However, participants also had high levels of experiential knowledge (interactions with police). Through these interactions, participants gained knowledge of the "unofficial rulebook" that dictated how the police actually did their job (Weaver, Prowse, & Piston 2019). This experiential knowledge includes understanding that they would "never see a jury of their peers" and "that police shoot first and ask questions later" (Weaver, Prowse, & Piston 2019). These direct interactions with law enforcement provided participants with detailed, in-depth knowledge of the government and how that government interacts with citizens. It also caused those citizens to distance themselves from the government (Weaver, Prowse, & Piston 2019).

Participants who had high levels of this dual type of knowledge were not motivated to participate in politics (Weaver, Prowse, & Piston 2019). They experienced how broken the system is, namely how the police do not act the way that they should and how local politicians refuse to listen or help, and thus backed away from that system to "preserve their autonomy, sense of dignity, and immediate physical safety" (Weaver, Prowse, & Piston 2019). This study shows that contrary to theories about how higher levels of political knowledge increase the likelihood of political participation, increased political knowledge can actually contribute to a lack of political participation.

Another factor contributing to this decline in political participation is a lack of external political efficacy. External political efficacy is how responsive an individual believes the

government, and the people and institutions that make up that government, are to their political actions and desires (Craig & Maggiotto 1982). In the case that Weaver, Prowse, and Piston (2019) describe, the interactions the community have with their local government (including the police and city council) inform their low levels of external efficacy. This community has seen the failures of the police system and have attempted to advocate for those failures to be corrected (Weaver, Prowse, & Piston 2019). However, their advocacy work did not result in change due to the local government's unwillingness to address the issues (Weaver, Prowse, & Piston 2019). Therefore, the community lost faith in the system and backed away from it.

Political efficacy is discussed in the literature as having a significant impact on political participation. As seen in the Weaver, Prowse, and Piston (2019) case, increased levels of political efficacy are typically linked to increased rates of political participation (Zuniga, Diehl, & Ardevol-Abreu 2017). This holds true for both internal and external efficacy. As previously described, external efficacy is how responsive an individual believes the government is to them and internal efficacy is how much confidence an individual has in their own ability to engage in politics (Craig & Maggiotto 1982). The theory in the literature is that people who believe they have the knowledge and skills to participate in politics and who believe their participation will be acknowledged by the government are more likely to be politically involved (Zuniga, Diehl, & Ardevol-Abreu 2017). This could explain why the heavily policed community had low levels of involvement despite possessing a significant amount of political knowledge. Political efficacy matters for political participation.

Methodology & Data

I conducted a survey of Western Washington University (WWU) students as well as several follow-up interviews to try to better understand how young people define political knowledge and how engaged they are in politics and in their community. In total, there were 196 survey respondents. Those respondents were asked to answer four different types of questions: demographic questions, scale questions, multiple choice questions, and open-ended questions.

The survey began with demographic questions that can be used to analyze certain subgroups' political knowledge and participation. These questions asked about respondents' age, gender, race, university major, graduation year, and employment status. Of those 196 respondents, 121 (64.36%) are between the ages of 18 and 21, 43 (22.87%) are between the ages of 22 and 25, 13 (6.91%) and between the ages of 26 and 29, and 11 (5.85%) are older than 29. Additionally, of the 196 respondents, 100 (53.76%) identify as women, 57 (30.65%) identify as men, 21 (11.29%) identify as nonbinary, and 8 (4.30%) either identify as a gender not listed above or prefer not to say. Respondents also came from a range of 30 different majors including theater, environmental science, English, computer science, economics, geology, psychology, and anthropology. Having variation in these three demographic categories is important for collecting data on WWU students as a whole.

The next survey section was a series of questions asking respondents to select an answer on a scale. This scale consisted of "not at all," "a little," "somewhat," "very," and "extremely" options. The questions in this section aimed to uncover how important respondents think political knowledge and engagement are and how respondents viewed their personal levels of political knowledge, political involvement, and community involvement. Examples of questions in this section include "how politically knowledgeable do you think you are?" "how important do you

think it is to be politically knowledgeable?" and "how confident are you in your own ability to participate in politics?"

The third survey section asked questions to illuminate student's exact individual political and community engagement and their understanding of what political knowledge and participation are. To get a more complete and individual specific responses, the structure of these questions were short-answer/open-ended. These questions were "list the ways, if any, you are involved in your community?" "what does it mean for someone to be politically knowledgeable? "what does it mean for someone to be engaged in politics?" "list the ways, if any, you are involved in politics?" and "what motivates you to be engaged in politics or what prevents you?"

The final survey section is four multiple choice questions that look to quantify respondents' community engagement and to understand political engagement motivations. These questions included "how many on-campus events or activities do you participated in per quarter?" "how many WWU clubs are you are part of?" "how many off-campus activities do you participate in per quarter" and "what emotion drives you to be engaged in politics?"

The goal of this research is to understand how young students at WWU engage with politics and what those students think about political knowledge. A large number of responses from this population is necessary to understand population-wide trends and beliefs. For this reason, the initial data collection method is a survey. That survey has three different types of questions (scale, short-answer, and multiple choice) to understand different aspects of the topic and to avoid certain survey flaws. For instance, open-ended questions help capture each respondent's opinions about what political knowledge is and what participation in politics looks like. Providing an answer set by asking those questions in a multiple-choice format where respondents select from already written choices, would defeat the purpose of the research which

is to uncover individual perceptions of political knowledge. However, asking too many open-ended questions can lead to respondent fatigue (Jeong 2023). At a certain point, respondents may choose to skip questions or answer them half-heartedly. Therefore, a lengthier survey requires a mixture of question type.

While surveys can help with collecting a broad range of data, a drawback of that method is data depth. When answering scale or multiple-choice questions, typically only provided answers are selected and when answering open-ended questions, generally, one to three sentences are written. So, to round-out the data set, I conducted several follow-up interviews. The interviews began with a question asking the interviewee to discuss what their major is and if that discipline influences their perspective on life and current events. The next set of questions revolved around political knowledge. Interviewees were asked what they think of when they think about political knowledge, how they would define political knowledge, how important they think it is for people to be politically knowledgeable if those people want to be politically engaged, and if they consider themselves to be politically knowledgeable. After this, the interview moved on to questions about community by asking interviewees if they consider themselves to be involve in their community and if they think community activities have a political aspect to them. The final question restated the goal of the project, to understand the relationship between political knowledge, community, and engagement, and asked interviewees if there was anything they were not asked that they think would be important to share. Asking these questions in an interview where the interviewee can share however much they feel comfortable sharing can get around issues of respondent fatigue and improve the depth and quality of the data.

In total, I conducted five interviews with students from a variety of majors (political science, environmental science, computer science, international business, and Economics) to delve into how students think about political knowledge and political participation and what students think the relationship between politics and community is. All interviewees agreed that their chosen major influences their perspective on the world. Therefore, collecting responses from different majors is important to understanding broader trends within the WWU student population.

Findings

Definitions of Political Knowledge and Political Participation

In both the survey and interview responses, there was a pattern to how respondents were defining political knowledge and political participation. In the survey, students were asked to describe what it means for a person to be politically knowledgeable. The goal of this question is to understand how respondents define political knowledge. The most frequent responses included a requirement that politically knowledgeable people stay up to date on current events, have an understanding of political history, know how the government is structured, and know how government systems work. Other common responses singled out an understanding of policymaking processes, an understanding of multiple perspectives on an issue, knowledge of representatives, and knowledge of laws/rights. For example, one respondent noted that politically knowledgeable people "know their local representatives and understand basic political structures/procedures (branches of government, both local and state elections, etc.)." Another suggested that politically knowledgeable people are "knowledgeable about how the government works [and] the major figureheads in the current government; and [they] try to stay informed on

the issues of the week." Many of the responses had similar themes and examples. When it comes to defining political knowledge, students think of knowledge of political facts.

This factual definition was also given by interviewees. When asked what they think of when they think of political knowledge, all interviewees mentioned understanding how government operates or understanding what is going on in government. One interviewee defined political knowledge as an "individual's amount of knowledge in a particular area pertaining to the functions of society and government," society being "how the government and citizens interact with each other." Another interviewee defined political knowledge as "a solid understanding of the way political systems operate" which includes being "updated on recent issues and knowing how everything works." A third interviewee defined political knowledge as "knowing what is happening in the world and who is important to local and federal government. Knowing who is doing what."

A couple of the interviewees acknowledged that there may be more to political knowledge than just political facts. Specifically, two of the five interviewees talked about there being two different types of political knowledge. One type focused on academic knowledge and the other on experiential knowledge. For example, one of these interviewees stated that the academic knowledge portion is "the stuff you learn in government class in high school – how the government works, the separation of powers, the constitution, and fundamental rights." The second experiential knowledge definition includes an action element. The interviewee stated that this definition is "knowledge of not just how the government works, but what you can do as well. There's a baseline how the government theoretically should work, then there's the institutional make-up of the government and how certain institutions are run and work with each other that is much harder to learn. You need to be working with them or have somewhat extensive knowledge

based off of some degree." The second interviewee defined political knowledge as knowledge of what politicians are doing, what policy is being enacted, and what the current laws are. They then remarked that this definition "is what I think I have been taught to think politics is. Exclusively, I think of the legislative branch and what they do." When asked to further discuss their perceptions of political knowledge, they differentiated knowledge and awareness, stating that "knowledge is something you become educated on, something you learn," while "awareness is something that you gain through experience." These answers show that some students are thinking about political knowledge as something that includes experiential knowledge. However, they are in the minority, and they have trouble defining exactly what the experiential piece of the definition is.

Another open-ended survey question asked what it means for someone to be engaged in politics. This question seeks to illuminate how respondents think about political engagement and what exactly they classify as political involvement. The majority of responses listed traditional forms of political participation. The most commonly mentioned form of political engagement mentioned is voting, however attending protests, helping a campaign, signing petitions, donating to political organizations, attending town hall/city council meeting, writing to representatives, lobbying for certain issues, keeping up with the news, discussing politics with others, and running for elected office were also often listed as forms of political engagement. One respondent wrote, "They vote at every election. They keep up to date on elections and current laws/ballot happenings at the city, county, and state level (via the news). They voice their opinion (sign petitions, contact their representatives)." These survey responses indicate that students think of traditional forms of political participation when asked to ponder engagement.

A third short answer survey question asked respondents to list the ways in which they are involved in politics. This question aims to understand how respondents are engaging in politics and what respondents define as political involvement. The most common activity listed is voting. Most respondents either included voting in a broader description of their political involvement or mentioned voting as the only way they are politically active. Other common activities include signing petitions, talking to friends or community members, following in the news, and attending protests. Less common activities are donating to a political organization or writing to legislators. Attending an environmental political conference and volunteering each appeared in once response. Social media or digital activities appeared in only three responses. Once again, when students are asked about forms of political participation, they discuss traditional political involvement.

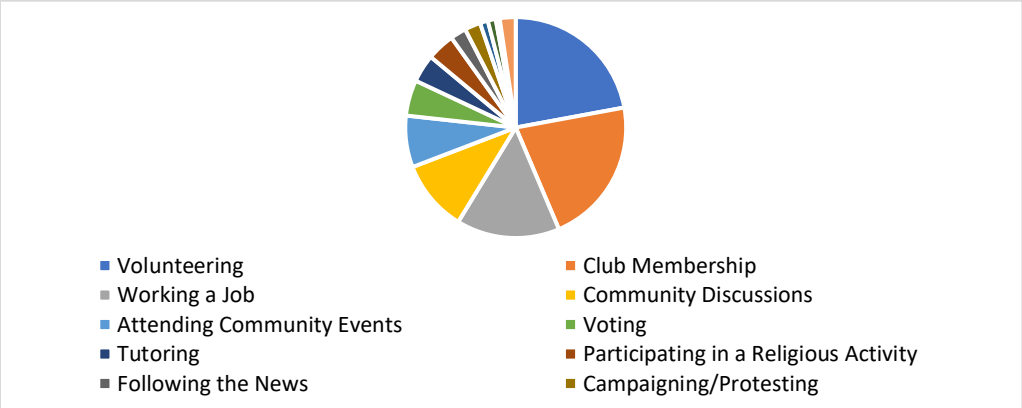
These responses to questions about political knowledge and political participation show an alignment between WWU students' thinking and the political science literature on these topics. As in the literature, most students define political knowledge as knowledge of political facts. This includes facts about how the government operates, who major political actors are, what current events are occurring, and what political history has looked like. In the minority were students who defined political knowledge as both knowledge of political facts and experiential knowledge. This is a type of knowledge that is more difficult to quantify with correct or incorrect answers to factual questions. It is a type of knowledge that is gained through interactions with government, whether that be through the court system, through government agencies, or through the police. However, while some students mentioned this type of political knowledge, most did not. Instead, a substantial majority of definitions included only factual knowledge.

These definitions of political knowledge also align with what students list when they think of political involvement. Most students seemed to have a clear idea of what counts as a political activity. This idea was shared among the majority of respondents. Over and over, voting, protesting, campaigning, signing petitions, and keeping up with current events were listed as forms of political engagement. These are traditional forms of political participation and they, along with how frequently they were listed, perhaps show the influence of civic education on younger generations. As one of the interviewees stated, "that is what [students] have been taught to think politics is."

The Relationship Between Political and Community Involvement

Just as many students agree on the definitions of political knowledge and participation, their definitions of community involvement also align. One open-ended question in the survey asks respondents to list the ways they are involved in their community. This question is meant to uncover how respondents think about community and what specific activities they define as community involvement. Chart 1 depicts the number of times various activities were mentioned in survey responses.

Chart 1: Community Involvement



Of the various responses given, volunteering (mentioned 38 times), club membership (mentioned 37 times), working a job (mentioned 26 times), and talking with people in the community, whether that be neighbors, peers, or friends, (mentioned 18 times) were reported the most. The other activities listed include attending community events (mentioned 13 times), voting (mentioned 9 times), tutoring (mentioned 7 times), participating in a religious activity (mentioned 7 times), following the news (mentioned 4 times), campaigning/protesting (mentioned 4 times), supporting local businesses (mentioned 2 times), donating to charity (mentioned 2 times), being a member of a political organization (mentioned 1 time), or not being engaged at all (stated 4 times).

Similar responses about community involvement were given by interviewees. When asked about their community engagement, four of the five interviewees mentioned club involvement, three mentioned talking with friends/classmates, two mentioned voting, one mentioned athletics, one mentioned signing petitions, and one mentioned their job. What came up in all interviews was a distinction between different types of communities. Respondents mentioned the "Western Washington University community" or the "broader Bellingham community." One interviewee stated that they do not have a clear understanding of what community means. The activities each interviewee chooses to describe and the way in which each defines their community gives insight into what community means to them and what the relationship is between that community and politics.

The community activities listed by survey and interview respondents often did not overlap with the activities listed as political involvement. To understand if students see a connection between the two (politics and community engagement), interviewees were asked if they think community activities have political aspects to them. Answers to that question ranged

broadly. One interviewee said yes, community activities do have political aspects. Specifically, "every activity you do is for a cause." The example given is a beach clean-up. A person participates "because you have a belief that we should clean up the world, so that we can survive in the future." The interviewee stated that this belief is political and thus, the action is also political. Another interviewee thought community activities are "not inherently political. They don't lead to overt political action, but they do change the inclusion of people into spaces that are dominated by majority groups. I think that that, in itself, is kind of political." A different interviewee drew a connection between community activities and politics by giving an example of a "park cleanup that is funded by a group that is doing it because of their political beliefs," and a fifth interviewee thought "governance and society are intertwined" and because "community activities are part of society" they have political aspects. These responses indicate that students can begin identifying links between political and community engagement when asked specifically about that connection.

However, once the interviewees return to discussions of what exactly political and community involvement looks like, the majority of students go back to talking about political and community engagement as two separate things. Occasionally, a few students will list some political activities as community involvement, specifically voting, campaigning, and protesting, but this is a rare occurrence. Generally, what is viewed as political participation is not seen as community involvement and vice versa.

The way community and political participation are defined by individuals and the slight overlap between the two within the realm of community involvement, suggests that there is a clear line between what people think is political and what is not. When people are initially asked to share what they think of when they think about political knowledge and engagement, they talk

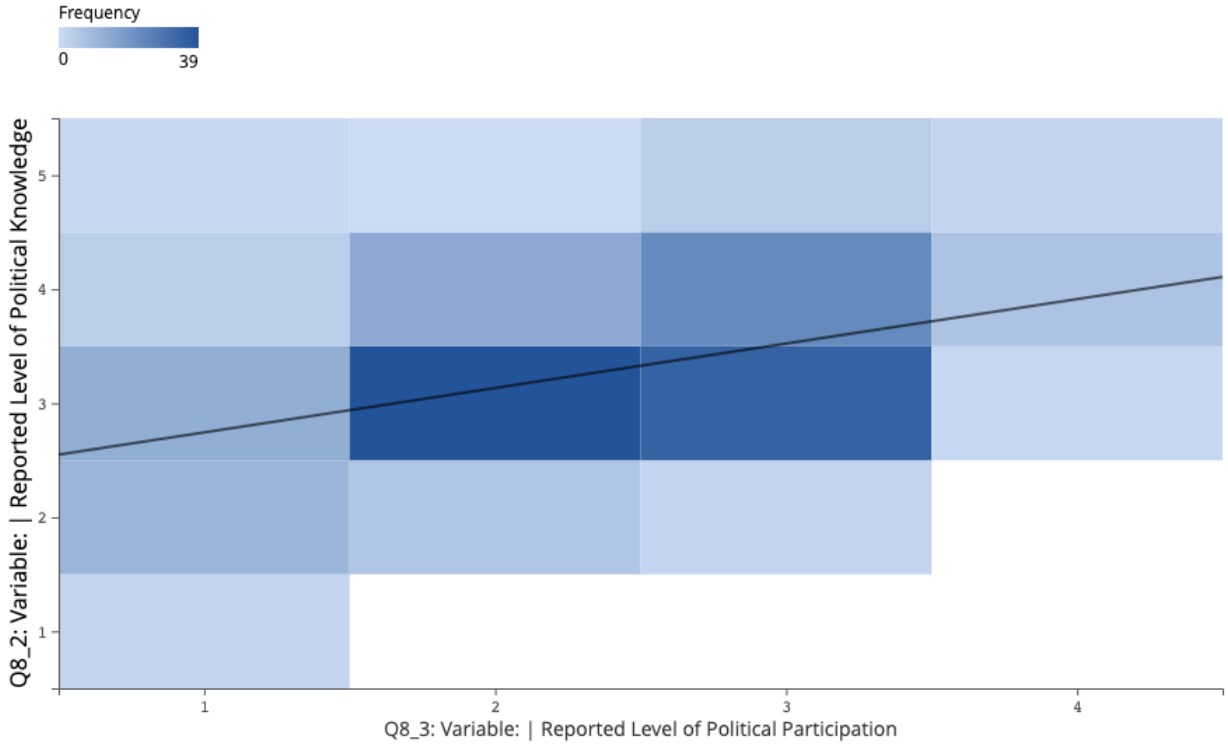
about traditional forms of political knowledge (facts), and traditional forms of political participation (voting, protesting, campaigning, etc.). When explicitly asked if there are links between political and community engagement, students are able to make connections between the two. However, when returning to discussions of specific political actions, answers return to traditional forms of participation. So, while students are able to talk about politics in a broader sense, one that includes community engagement as a contributor to political involvement, they are limited in their definition of particular political actions. There seem to be clear borders in students' minds that limits political participation to traditional participation or to actions that are directly linked to government. While some of these political actions can venture across that boarder and into the realm of community engagement, community activities are generally not considered political involvement.

Reported Levels of Political Knowledge and Engagement

Two areas of particular interest are how respondents view their personal levels of political knowledge and political participation, and how important they think it is to be politically knowledgeable and politically involved. Those who believe political knowledge and participation are important may think that they themselves are more politically knowledgeable and involved. This could suggest that the degree to which a person values political knowledge and participation impacts how much they personally pursue knowledge and engagement. Alternatively, there may not be an obvious relationship between how students view their own levels of political knowledge and involvement and how important they think it is to be politically knowledgeable and involved. This might indicate that personal values are not motivators for acquiring political knowledge or becoming politically engaged.

How WWU students perceive their own levels of political knowledge and engagement are addressed through the survey questions “how politically involved are you?” and “how politically knowledgeable do you think you are?”. Graph 1 depicts the relationship between these two variables.

Graph 1: Relationship between Reported Levels of Political Knowledge and Levels of Political Participation



P-Value < 0.00001; Pearson’s r = 0.419

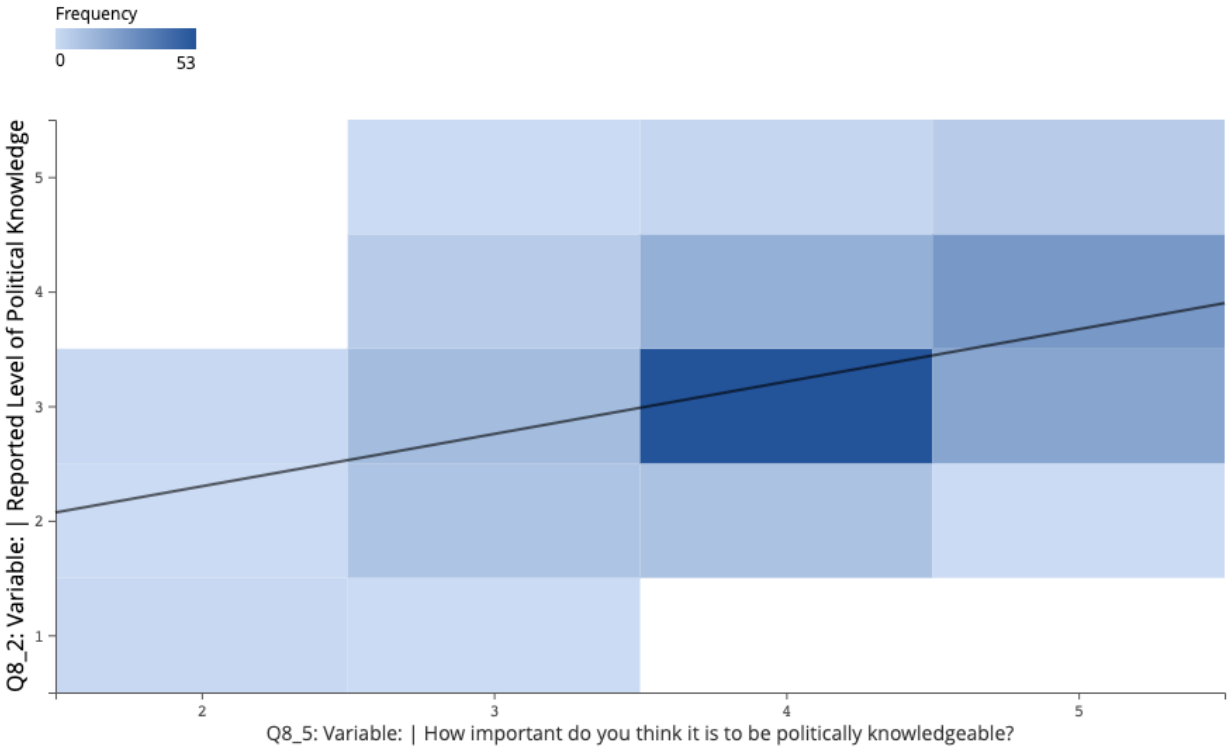
These results show a positive correlation between reported levels of political knowledge and political participation. This aligns with the literature that argues the more political knowledge an individual possesses, the more civically engaged they will be.

These results also show that WWU students generally believe they have higher levels of political knowledge than political participation. This is evident in the lack of a single individual

selecting that they are “extremely” politically involved while some people who selected at every other range of political involvement (not at all, a little, somewhat, and very) did rate themselves as being “extremely” politically knowledgeable. Additionally, most students (61.5%) who think they are “very” politically involved also believe they are “very” politically knowledgeable. Similarly, most students (52.2%) who believe they are “somewhat” political involved think they are also “somewhat” politically knowledgeable. This changes once the “a little” and “not at all” categories are analyzed. The majority of students (62.9%) who think they are “a little” politically involved believe that they are “somewhat” politically knowledgeable. Here we see greater perceptions of political knowledge than political involvement. This is also true for the “not at all” section of political involvement. Of the students who selected that answer, 33.3% also said that they are “a little” and 38.9% said that they are “somewhat” politically knowledgeable. Again, perceptions of personal levels of political knowledge are higher than perceptions of personal levels of political involvement.

Students’ opinions about the importance of political knowledge and political engagement, particularly when compared to their own reported levels of knowledge and engagement, are of similar interest. Graph 2 shows the relationship between how important survey respondents think political knowledge is and their own levels of political knowledge.

Graph 2: Relationship Between the Reported Importance of Political Knowledge and Reported Levels of Political Knowledge



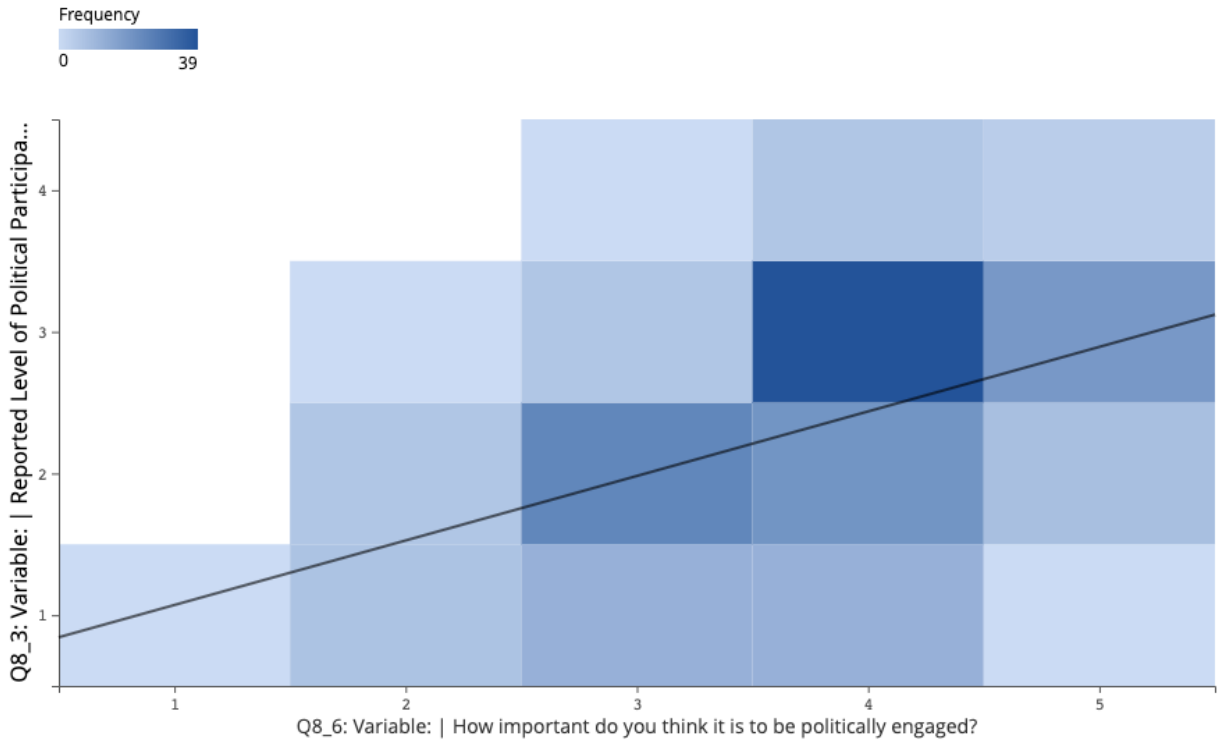
P-Value < 0.00001; Pearson's r = 0.434

There is also a positive correlation here between reported levels of political knowledge and how important respondents think it is to be politically knowledgeable. Additionally, there are several key findings in this correlation. The first is that all respondents agreed that it is at least "a little" important to be politically knowledgeable. While some respondents reported possessing no political knowledge, none stated that it is "not at all" important to be politically knowledgeable. Additionally, of the respondents who believe it is "somewhat" important to be politically knowledgeable, 71.9% report that they themselves are either "somewhat" or "a little" politically knowledgeable. Of the students who believe it is "very" important to be politically knowledgeable, 62.4% think they are "somewhat" politically knowledgeable. Finally, of the respondents who think it is "extremely" important to be politically knowledgeable, 47.4% think

they themselves are “very” knowledgeable and 38.6% believe they are “somewhat” politically knowledgeable. This data presents a misalignment between how important students think it is to be politically knowledgeable and how knowledgeable they think they themselves are. Generally, students believe they are less politically knowledgeable than the degree to which they believe it is important to be knowledgeable.

This same trend is found when examining the relationship between students’ perceived importance of political engagement and their own reported levels of political involvement. Graph 3 shows how respondents answered the questions “how important is it to be politically engaged?” and “how politically involved are you?.”

Graph 3: Relationship between Reported Importance of Political Engagement and Reported Levels of Political Involvement



P-Value < 0.00001; Pearson’s r = 0.464

The findings are similar to the political knowledge results. There is a positive correlation between reported level of political involvement and how important respondents think it is to be politically engaged. Also, no student rated themselves as being "extremely" politically involved. Respondents who think it is “a little” important to be politically engaged are most likely to say that they are “a little” or “not at all” politically involved. Out of the students who think it is “somewhat” important to be politically engaged, 54.3% think they are “a little” politically involved. Out of the students who think it is “very” important to be politically engaged, 48.8% think they are “somewhat” politically involved. And finally, out of the students who think it is “extremely” important to be politically engaged, 57.1% think they are “somewhat” politically involved. The largest percentage of students who responded within each category (with the exception of the “not at all” category) rated their own political engagement lower than the degree to which they consider political engagement to be important.

The interviews delved further into the perceived relationship between political knowledge and political participation by asking interviewees how important they think it is to be politically knowledgeable in order to be politically involved. Generally, interviewees think that it is important to be politically knowledgeable to be politically engaged. Answers to this question ranged from “fairly important” to “very important.” Responses as to why it is important include: it is “important to understand what you’re voting for or what you’re advocating for,” “you need a little bit of knowledge, especially about the issue area you are advocating for,” and “you should probably know who you are voting for.” One interviewee compared political knowledge to a driver’s license: “You need a driver’s license to drive a car – I mean you technically can, but you wouldn’t be very good at it.” This aligns with another interviewee’s answer that lacking political knowledge is a disadvantage because “you can’t advocate for yourself if you don’t know how.”

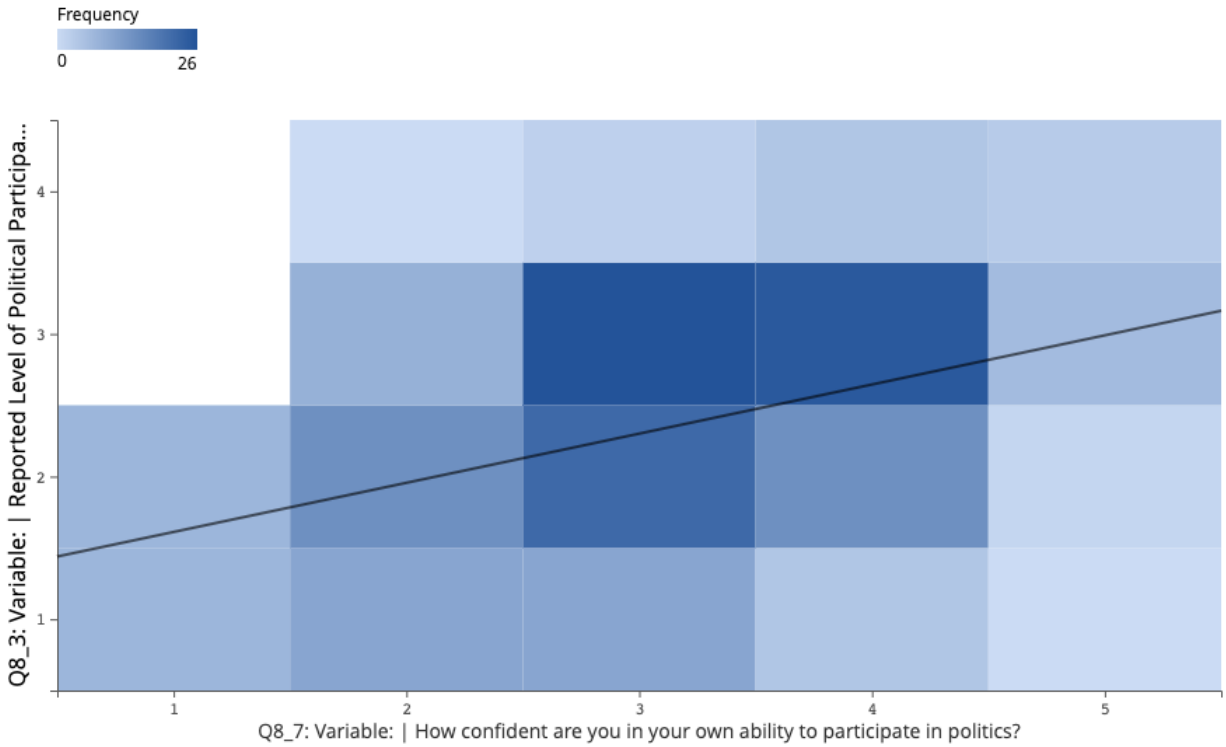
These responses indicate that some students think political knowledge helps people be politically engaged and that it helps people be more successful in achieving their political goals.

When asked to talk about their own levels of political involvement and what that involvement looks like, interviewees talked about learning about government, voting, staying informed on issues they care about, signing petitions, protesting, and attending WWU lobby day. Two of the five interviewees think they are politically knowledgeable or that they are more knowledgeable than most people. The other three think they are somewhat politically knowledgeable and wish they were more involved. These perceptions follow the trend set by survey responses.

Political Efficacy and Political Engagement

In addition to personal levels of political participation, the survey asked respondents to rate their own levels political efficacy. Specifically, respondents were asked “how confident are you in your own ability to participate in politics?.” Graph 4 shows the relationship between levels of internal political efficacy and levels of political involvement.

Graph 4: Relationship between Reported Levels of Internal Political Efficacy and Political Involvement



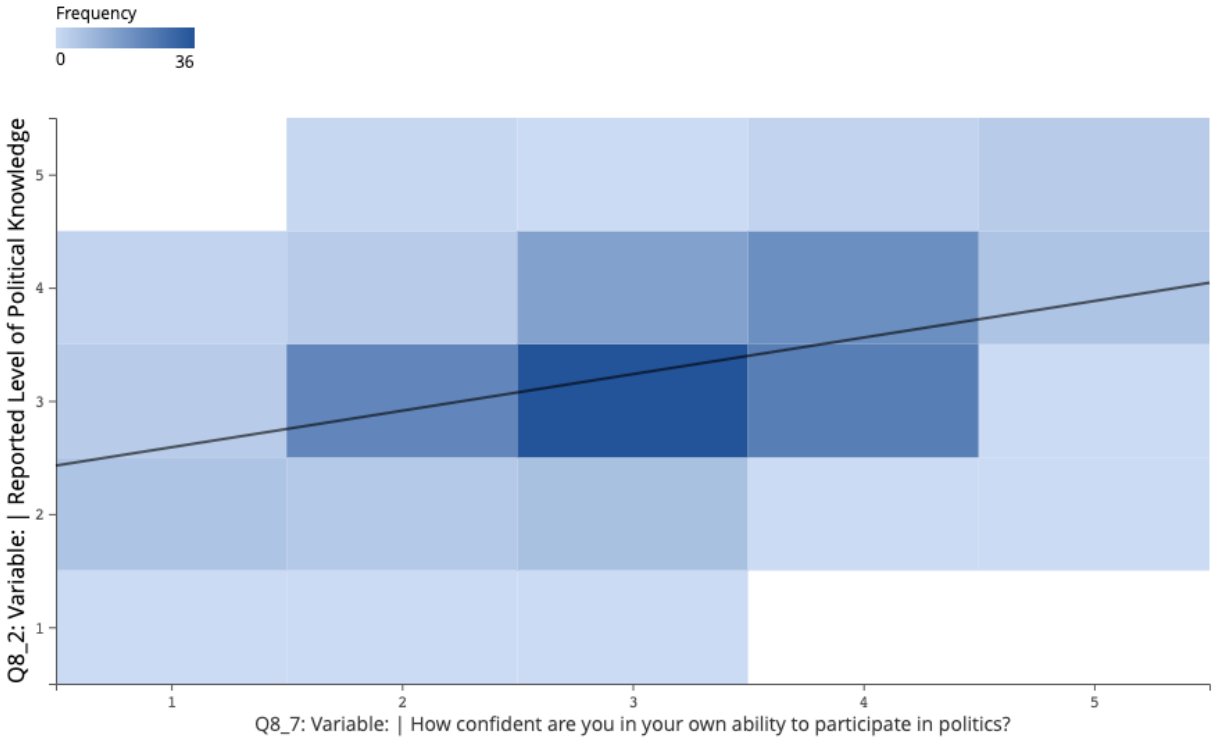
P-Value < 0.00001; Pearson's r = 0.422

These results suggest that as internal efficacy levels increase, so do levels of political participation. Those who are "not at all" or "a little" confident in their ability to be a political participant are also likely to say they are "not at all" or "a little" politically involved. Moving up the confidence scale, 41.9% of those who feel they are "somewhat" confident also think they are "somewhat" politically involved. Out of the students who think they are "very" and "extremely" confident in their ability to participate in politics, 60% and 78.6% respectively, rate themselves as either "somewhat" or "very" politically involved. In general, students report higher levels of internal political efficacy than political participation, however, increased efficacy correlates with increased participation. This aligns with the literature on the relationship between political

efficacy and political participation. The more confident a person is in their ability to be engaged in politics, the more they are engaged.

A similar relationship exists between reported levels of internal political efficacy and political knowledge. This relationship is visible in Graph 5.

Graph 5: Relationship between Reported Levels of Internal Political Efficacy and Political Knowledge



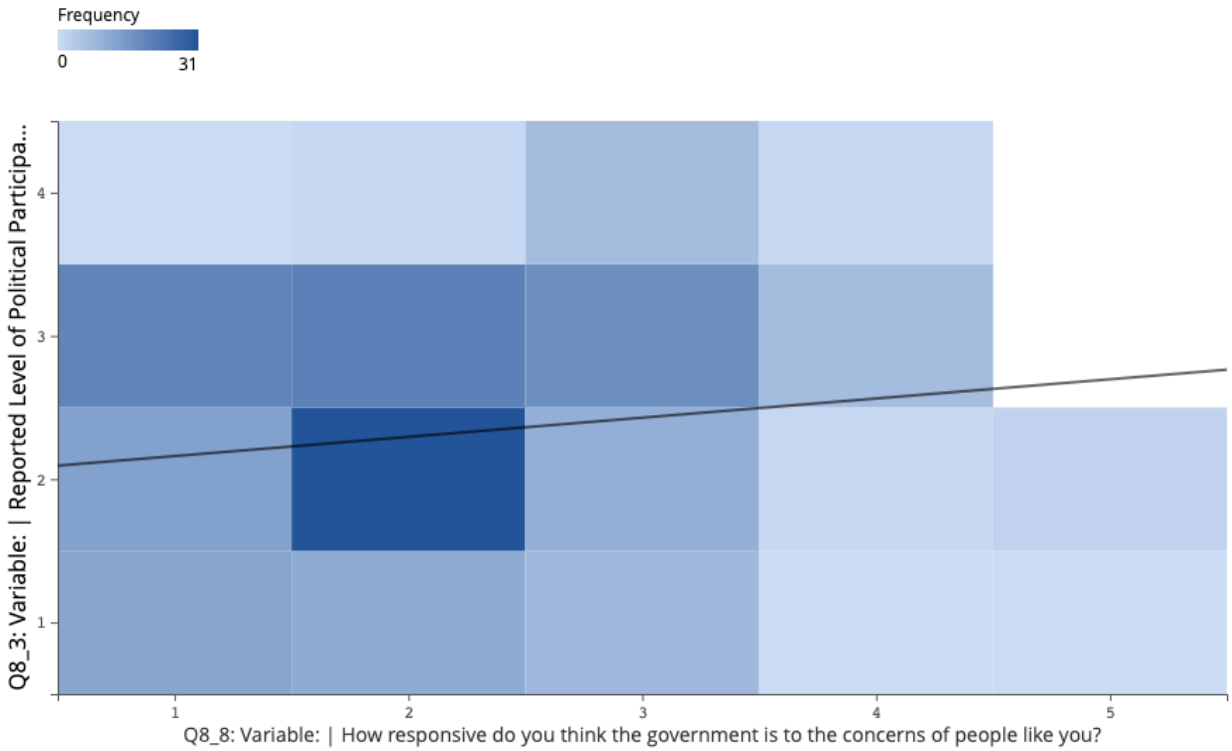
P-Value < 0.00001; Pearson's r = 0.424

Graph 5 shows a positive correlation between reported level of political knowledge and internal political efficacy. The more political knowledge and individual possesses, the more likely they are to feel confident in their own ability to participate in politics. This finding, along with the finding from Graph 4, that increased internal political efficacy is positively correlated with increased political engagement, show how political knowledge, efficacy, and participation

are all related. The more knowledge a person believes they have, the more confident they are in their ability to be politically engaged, and the more they will participate politics. This relationship is important because it suggests that if people experience an increase in the amount of knowledge they believe they have, they may also gain more internal efficacy and participate more.

However, when the relationship between external efficacy and political involvement is analyzed, the results look slightly different. Graph 6 lays out the responses to the questions "How responsive do you think the government is to the concerns of people like you?" and "How politically involved are you?."

Graph 6: Relationship between Reported Levels of External Political Efficacy and Political Involvement



P-Value = 0.0441; Pearson's r = 0.152

These results show that while there is a statistically positive correlation between external efficacy and political engagement, that correlation is not substantial. The majority of students who think the government is “not at all” (70.9%) “a little” (78.8%), “somewhat” (68%), and “very” (76.9%) responsive to the concerns of people like them, all rate their own levels of political involvement as either “a little” or “somewhat” involved. All of the students who think the government is “extremely” responsive believe that they themselves are “not at all” or “a little” politically involved.

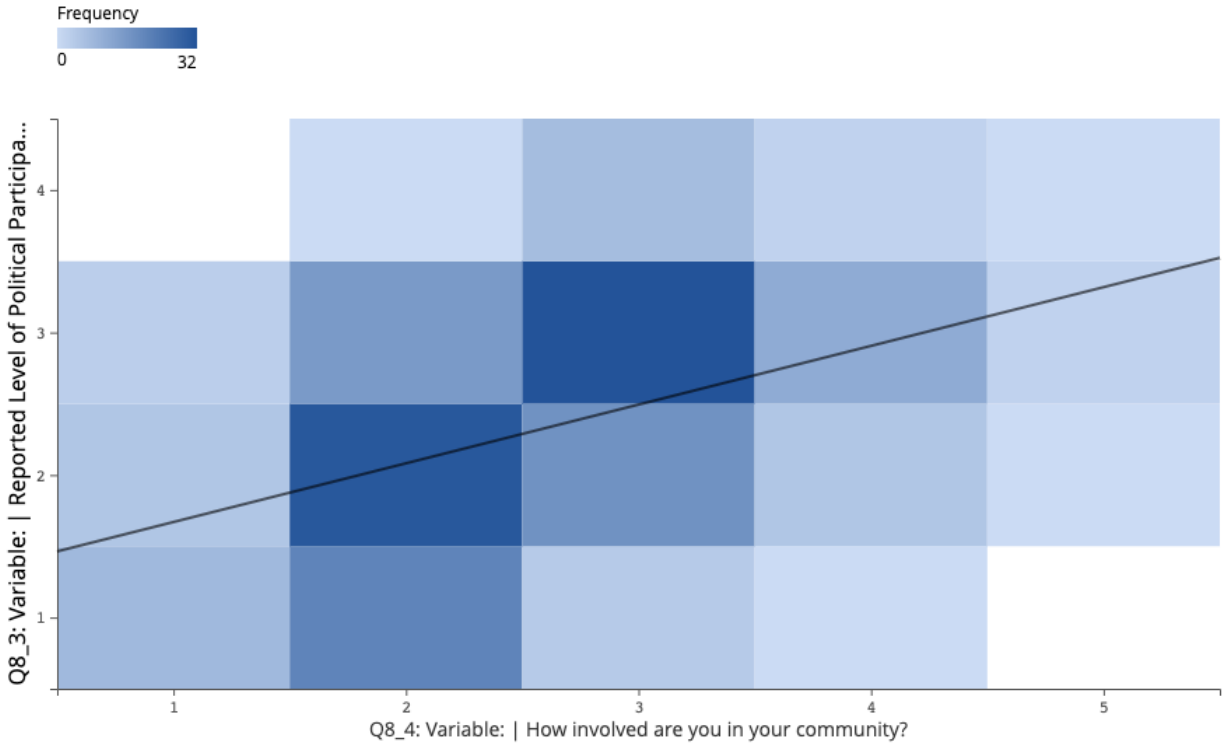
This suggests that internal efficacy matters more to political participation than external efficacy does. Increased confidence in one’s own ability to participate in politics is related to increased political engagement, however, a stronger belief in the responsiveness of the government to your own concerns is not as strongly related.

One possible explanation for the lack of a substantial correlation between external political efficacy and political participation might be that students who think the government is extremely responsive also feel that there is no need to get involved. Another possible explanation has to do with the number of respondents who selected “not at all” and “a little” compared to the number that selected “very” and “extremely.” There were 115 respondents who selected “not at all” and “a little” while only 17 selected “very” or “extremely.” The fact that most students believe the government is only a little responsive, if at all, could skew the results. Further research should delve deeper into the relationship between external political efficacy and political participation.

Political Engagement and Community

The responses to the questions "how involved are you in your community?" and "how politically involved are you?" offer insights into what students think the relationship between political and community engagement is. Table 6 shows the relationship between self-reported levels of community involvement (columns) and levels of political involvement (rows).

Graph 8: Relationship between Reported Community and Political Involvement



P-Value 0.00001; Pearson's r = 0.439

In general, students rate themselves as more involved in their community than they are in politics. Out of the students who consider themselves to be "extremely" involved in their community, 60% think they are only "somewhat" politically involved. Similarly, out of the students who think they are "very" involved in their community, 54.5% think they are only "somewhat" politically involved. The majority of students who think they are "somewhat"

involved in their community believe themselves to be “somewhat” or “a little” politically engaged. The majority of students who think they are “a little” or “not at all” involved in their community also think that they are “a little” or “not at all” politically involved.

This difference between community and political involvement supports the finding that students think of community and political participation as two separate things. If students viewed community activities as political, it would be expected that the reported levels of political involvement would be higher than what they are. Additionally, these responses show that students are engaged in their communities. Even a portion of the students who do not think they are involved in politics at all report being involved in their community. This suggests that if students began to think of the activities they do in their communities as having political aspects to them, their reported levels of political involvement may increase. Rates of reported community and political involvement also have gendered effects, which I discuss in the next section.

Gender and Political Involvement

The results of the survey scale questions provide insights into students’ political attitudes, participation, and opinions. I analyzed the differences between men and women in terms of reported levels of community involvement (Figure 1), reported levels of political knowledge (Figure 2), and reported levels of political participation (Figure 3).

Figure 1: How involved are you in your community?

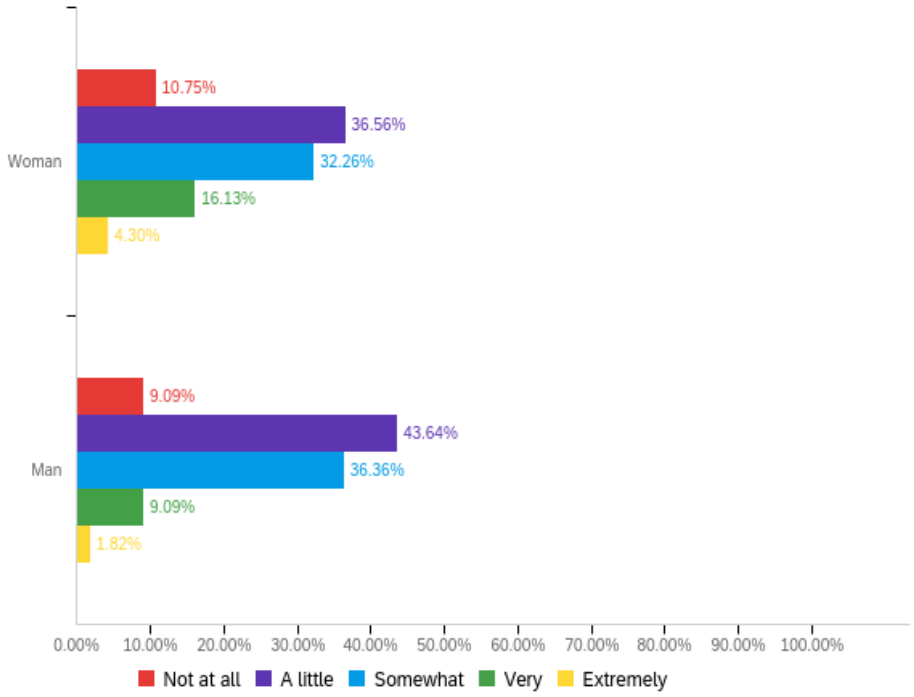


Figure 2: How politically knowledgeable do you think you are?

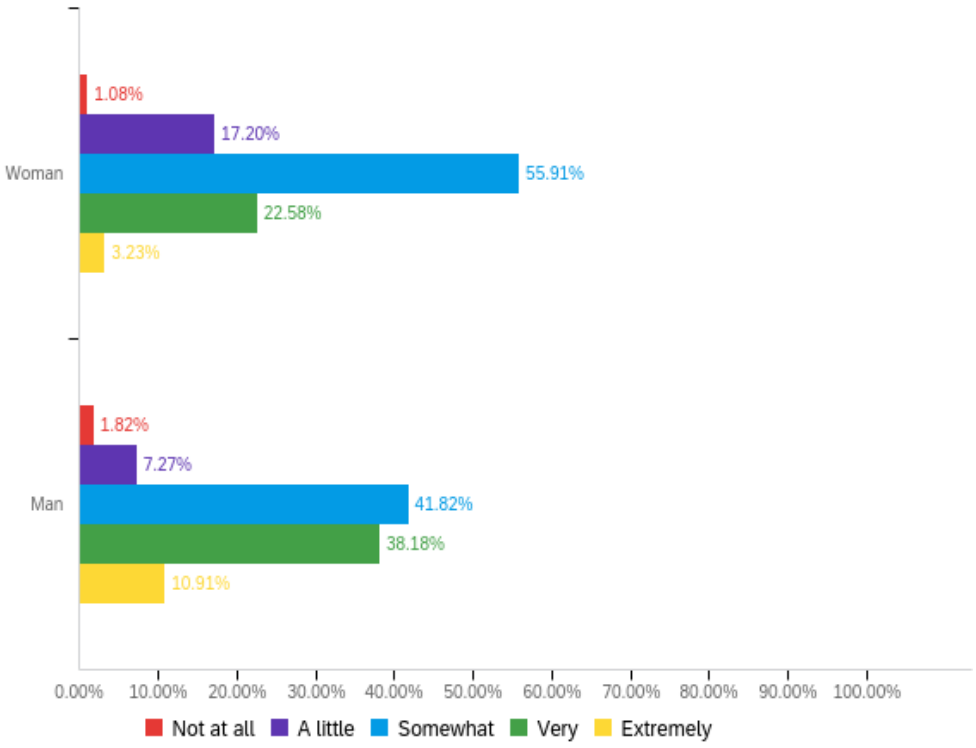
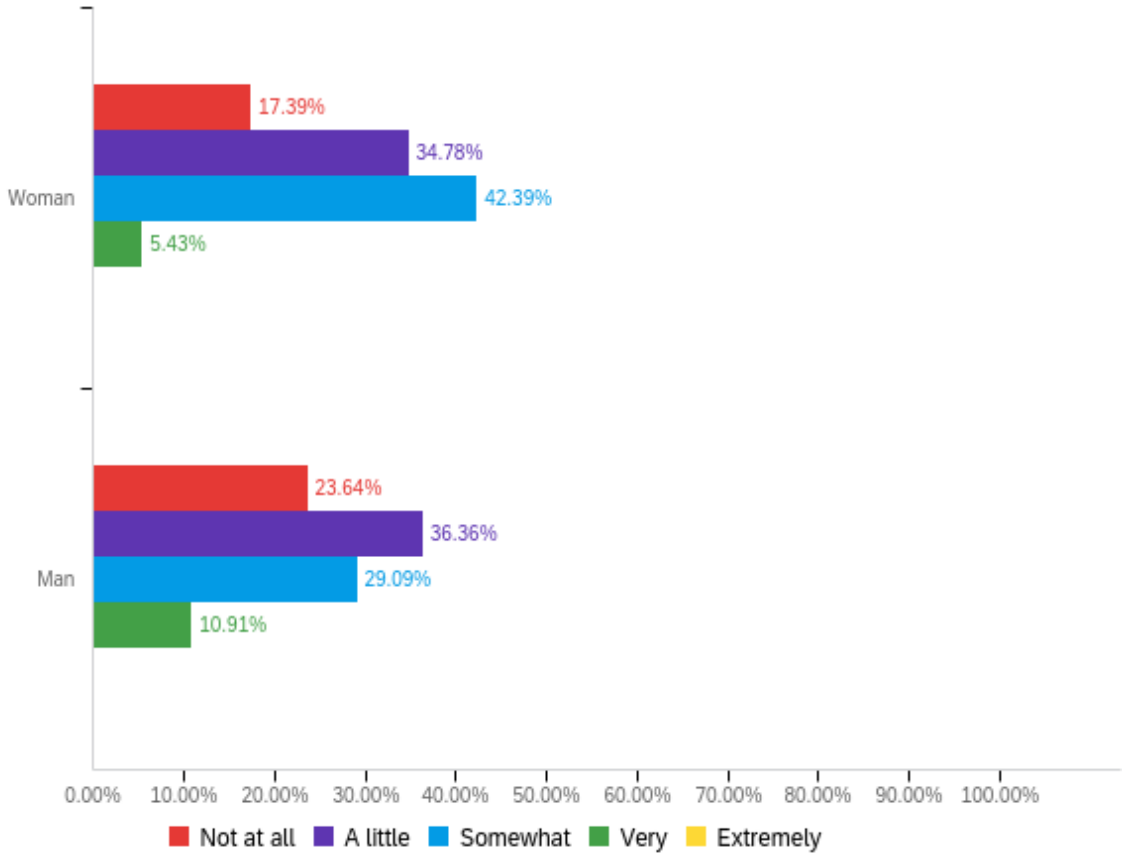


Figure 3: How politically involved are you?



Women report being more engaged in their community than men, with 20.43% of women selecting “extremely” or “very” involved as compared to 10.91% of men selecting “extremely” or “very” involved. In other words, when it comes to community involvement, women are almost twice as likely as men to report being “very” or “extremely” involved. On the other hand, men report being more politically knowledgeable than women do with 42.89% of men selecting “extremely” or “very” politically knowledgeable, while only 25.81% of women selected “extremely” or “very” knowledgeable. In terms of political engagement, more men reported being extremely involved (Men: 10.91%; Women: 5.43%), however, more women reported being very involved (Men: 29.09%; Women: 42.39%). Overall, the percentage of women and the

percentage of men who feel more than somewhat politically involved are within 8% of each other.

This gender gap in political knowledge and the tendency for women to report being more involved in their community than men align with the literature on how women and men engage in politics differently. Men score higher on political knowledge tests, partially because they have less aversion to risk and choose to guess rather than state that they do not know an answer (Mondak & Anderson 2004, Lizotte & Sidman 2009). In this study, men are reporting higher levels of political knowledge, perhaps due to higher confidence levels or perhaps due to the selection of men and women respondents. Women, who report lower levels of political knowledge, report higher levels of community engagement. As previously discussed, students do not think of community and political involvement as the same thing. However, the political science literature on the topic is discussing how to expand definitions of political knowledge and participation to include the activities students are listing as community activities (Mondak 2000, Van Deth 2016). These discussions are happening precisely because community activities are political. If these broader definitions of political knowledge and participation were taught to students, they might feel that they are gaining political knowledge and skills through their community involvement. For women, who report being heavily engaged in their communities, this could mean they gain greater confidence in the political skills and knowledge they possess. It could also lead women to recognize the political knowledge and skills they are gaining through their community involvement. This recognition and confidence might reduce the political knowledge gender gap.

Discussion

Understanding how young people think about political knowledge and the ways in which they engage in politics and in their communities is important. As younger people become eligible to vote they have become increasingly politically active (Circle). This is especially true for the current generation of young voters. The 2022 election saw the second highest turnout in voters ages 18-29 in the last thirty years (Circle). These younger generation will help shape the United States' political future. The way young people view political participation, how they are involved in their community, and their beliefs around political knowledge influence both their political engagement and the way they engage with society. Therefore, understanding their perceptions of political knowledge, political participation, and community is essential to deciphering how they will behave as political actors.

The results from this descriptive study indicate that students at WWU have clear definitions of political participation and community and that these definitions do not overlap. Political participation is thought of in terms of traditional forms of political involvement. This includes voting, campaigning, and signing petitions. Community engagement is something else. Volunteering, working a job in the community, and being a club member are viewed as community activities and not as something political. This distinction has implications for students' perceptions of their own levels of political knowledge and engagement.

The way people view community and politics impacts their interactions with it. In general, people think that it is "very" or "extremely" important to be politically knowledgeable and politically engaged. They also think that it is important for people to be politically knowledgeable in order to be politically engaged. However, the majority of respondents think

that they are only “somewhat” politically knowledgeable and “somewhat” or “a little” politically engaged.

This might indicate the presence of a couple barriers to political participation. The first barrier is a lack of perceived political knowledge and internal efficacy. Students who do not think they have political knowledge or who do not have confidence in their ability to participate in politics, are reporting low levels of political participation. The second barrier is the distinction made between community and political involvement. Students do not think community engagement is political and therefore, they may not see the skills and knowledge they gain from being an active community member as political. That knowledge and those skills would then not help improve an individual’s confidence in their ability to participate in politics, their internal efficacy. These two barriers work in tandem to restrict political participation. However, if people think that individuals must possess knowledge to be politically engaged, but they do not think that community engagement is political, then changing that perception could help people participate more in politics.

Broadening the definition of political knowledge and participation to include forms of community engagement could help people recognize that they are being political when they are active community members. This could in turn help increase individuals’ confidence in their ability to participate in politics and increase their confidence that they actually have political knowledge. This is because respondents reported higher levels of community involvement than political involvement. As seen in the efficacy results, higher levels of political confidence correspond with more political participation. This is further evidence that if broadening definitions of political knowledge and participation increases political confidence, then these broader definitions could improve political participation rates.

Of particular interest is the role that political efficacy, the confidence one has in their ability to participate in politics, plays as an intermediary between political knowledge and political participation. The research presented in this paper highlights a positive relationship between internal efficacy and political engagement. This aligns with the literature that assumes higher levels of political efficacy correspond with higher levels of participation. Specifically, the more political knowledge a person has, the more confident they will be in their ability to navigate political systems and make an impact. This confidence supports engagement with those political systems. With students reporting higher levels of community engagement but not seeing the connection between community involvement and political involvement, teaching that broader definition could improve political participation by improving efficacy. People may then view the knowledge they gain by being an active community member has knowledge that can help them be a successful political participant.

In addition to the political efficacy impacts, including community engagement in definitions of political participation could be especially impactful for helping close the political engagement gap between men and women. Women and men who want to make a difference in their community go about it in different ways. Women tend to enter the nonprofit world and men tend to go into electoral politics (Lawless 2013). In this study, women reported higher levels of community involvement while men reported higher levels of political involvement. If the knowledge and skills gained through community engagement were explicitly discussed and taught as forms of political participation, people with community experience may gain confidence in their political qualifications and be more inclined to consider entering politics.

Expanding the definitions of political knowledge and participation also provides more room for experiential political knowledge and nontraditional forms of political participation. As

some students noted, there is a type of political knowledge that is gained through interacting with the government. Interactions with the police may increase knowledge of how that arm of government functions and decrease political participation (Weaver 2019). Alternatively, as one student hypothesized, increased knowledge of how institutions function could lead to more participation and increased success of that participation. Limiting the definition of political knowledge to political facts leaves an important component out. That is why the broader definitions being discussed in the literature need to be adopted and taught.

Conclusion

What is political knowledge? How do students define political knowledge, political participation, community engagement, and the relationships between them? The literature suggests that political knowledge is knowledge of facts, that political participation either consists of traditional political activities like voting and campaigning or of so many everyday activities that political knowledge cannot be defined. There are ongoing discussions on how to approach political engagement in a way that is not overly restricting or too broad. These discussions recognize that nontraditional political activities still have political aspects to them. Additionally, the literature generally agrees that political knowledge leads to political participation.

This research study suggests that students think of political knowledge and political participation in the more restrictive ways. These restrictive definitions confine political knowledge to knowledge of political facts (with the exception of a few respondents who think political knowledge also includes experiential knowledge), and political participation to traditional forms of political action. These definitions indicate that students have clear ideas

about what types of activities are political and what types are not. Specifically, community engagement is not considered political involvement.

Despite the conversations political scientists are having with one another about how to broaden definitions of political knowledge and participation, students are not considering nontraditional forms of political knowledge and engagement. This suggests a communications failure. The idea that community activities and the actions people take in their everyday lives can be political has not been communicated to WWU students. It is possible that this idea has also not been communicated to many more young people around the country. This is a potential failure that should be further investigated. While this study's results are limited and not generalizable, the findings laid out here suggest additional research should be conducted in this area to explore young people's perceptions of political knowledge and participation and if they think community fits into those definitions.

Young people have become more politically active in recent years and will continue to do so. As this upcoming generation evolves, it is important to understand how those in it view politics and how politically active they are. While this research just scratches the surface of understanding young students' definitions of political knowledge and political participation, it helps bring those perceptions into the foreground for further research.

Bibliography

Barabas, J., Jerit, J., Pollock, W., & Rainey, C. (2014). The Question(s) of Political Knowledge. *The Annual Political Science Review*, 108(4), 840–855.

Baum, M. (2003) Soft News and Political Knowledge: Evidence of Absence or Absence of Evidence?, *Political Communication*, 20(2), 173-190.

Campbell, D. (2013). Social Networks and Political Participation. *The Annual Review of Political Science*, 16, 33–48.

Circle. "The Youth Vote in 2022." *Center for Information & Research on Civic Learning and Engagement*, Tufts.

Craig, S. & Maggiotto, M. (1982). Measuring Political Efficacy. *Political Methodology*, 8(3), 85-109.

Delli Caripini, M., & Keeter, S. (1996). "What Americans Know About Politics and Why it Matters." Yale University Press.

Dolan, K. (2011). Do Women and Men Know Different Things? Measuring Gender Differences in Political Knowledge. *The Journal of Politics*, 73(1), 97-107.

Galston, W. (2001). Political Knowledge, Political Engagement, and Civic Education. *Annual Review of Political Science*, 4(1), 217–234.

Jennings, K. (1996). Political Knowledge Over Time and Across Generations. *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 60(2), 228–252

Jeong, D., Aggarwal, S., Robinson, J., Kumar, N., Spearot, A., & Park, D. (2023). Exhaustive or Exhausting? Evidence on Respondent Fatigue in Long Surveys. *Journal of Development Economics*, 161.

Lawless, J., & Fox, R. (2013). “Girls Just Wanna Not Run: The Gender Gap in Young Americans’ Political Ambitions.” *Women and Politics Institute, American University*,

Lizotte, M., & Sidman, A. (2009). Explaining the Gender Gap in Political Knowledge. *Politics & Gender*, 5(2), 127-151.

Milbrath, L. (1981). Political Participation. *The Handbook of Political Behavior*, 4, 197-240.

Mondak, J. & Anderson, M. (2004). The Knowledge Gap: A Reexamination of Gender-Based Differences in Political Knowledge. *Journal of Politics*, 66(2), 492-512.

Mondak, J. & Davis, B. (2001). Asked and Answered: Knowledge Levels When We Will Not Take “Don’t Know” for an Answer. *Political Behavior*, 23(3), 199–224.

Mondak, J. (2000). Reconsidering the Measurement of Political Knowledge. *Political Analysis*, 8(1), 57–82.

Popkin, S., & Dimock, M. (1999) "Political Knowledge and Citizen Competence." *Citizen Competence and Democratic Institutions*, 117-146.

Van Deth, J. (2016). What is Political Participation? *Oxford Research Encyclopedia*.

Weaver, V., Prowse, G., & Piston, S. (2019). “Too Much Knowledge, Too Little Power: An Assessment of Political Knowledge in Highly-Policed Communities.” *University of Chicago*.

Zuniga, H., Diehl, T., & Ardevol-Abreu, A. (2017). Internal, External and Government Political Efficacy: Effects on News Use, Discussion, and Political Participation. *Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media*, 61(3), 574-596.