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Speaking to the State: Exploring the Correlative Nature Between Speech Absolutists and Political Participation

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Speaking to the State: Exploring the Correlative Nature Between Speech Absolutists and Political Participation

By: Tyler Burke

Abstract

The key determinants of political participation have been long argued between political scientists. This study seeks to examine the relationship between a level of belief in Freedom of Speech and political participation. After examination of previous works and studies regarding this topic, such as Brady, Verba and Schlozman's *Resource Model of Political Participation* and Riker and Odershook's *A Theory of the Calculus of Voting* three hypotheses arose; first, that the level of belief in Free Speech significantly factors into voters' decision to participate politically, second, a person's belief in Freedom of Speech positively correlates to the likelihood of participation in all measures of political participation, and third, a person's limited belief in freedom of speech positively correlates to the unlikelihood to participate in all measures of political participation. These hypotheses were examined through a scale that measured levels of belief in Freedom of Speech. This scale was crafted specifically for the sake of this study and functioned as the independent variable. The dependent variable was spilt into four different categories: 2016 voting behavior, past participation, future participation, and future voting behavior. To test the hypotheses, an original survey was created and issued through Amazon's MTurk service. After reviewing the results that were collected from the 516 participants, it was found that the level of belief in Freedom of Speech significantly affects the rate at which people participate in all of the four variables. However, my second and third hypotheses do not stand in every dependent variable with the exception of future voting behavior.

Introduction:

One of the single most important freedoms in the United States is the right to Free Speech. The Freedom of Speech and the other liberties enshrined in the First Amendment have become the selling point of American democracy since the passage of the First Amendment and the rest of the Bill of Rights in 1791. "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances" (US Constitution, Amendment 1).

Like many important beliefs in the United States, there are different levels of belief in Freedom of Speech. These levels range from absolute to very limited. The most absolute believers in Freedom of Speech view this right as something that the government should restrain from abridging in any manner. In the simplest of terms this means that they, the absolutists, believe that the government should not make any laws restricting the Freedom of Speech. While the people who believe in the most limited view of Freedom of Speech would accept that the government theoretically should make laws to restrict the right of Freedom of Speech based on the value of the law and the good that it could produce for the citizens that it would be trying to protect. The importance of the First Amendment cannot be understated in the ways in which it influences the country and its policy making. Does this effect carry over to the individual actor? While studies point to political interest and education as the leading causes as to what determines who participates politically and when, this does not mean that a strong belief in Freedom of Speech cannot affect individuals' decisions to participate political.

Understanding why people participate politically and the determinants of participation are increasingly important given

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that citizen turnout in the United States is so low. While political participation is a wide group of activities, voting is one of the most common. As a nation that prides itself on democracy voter turnout is a demonstration that the citizens of the United States are not participating in democracy. In the 2016 election only 55.7 percent of the voting- age population voted, meaning that the United States is ranked 24th behind Mexico and the Czech Republic (Desilver 2018). This is a very troubling statistic because it shows that citizens are not turning out to vote and in effect are neglecting their ability to participate politically. The conventional wisdom in Political Science is that voter turnout is linked with political knowledge (Galston 2001). While this is a strong reason for political participation being the way it is, what are the others that determine why people show up and participate in the political system?

Could an individual's view of how speech should be regulated and allowed in society have an effect above and beyond already known determinants of political participation? Does an absolutist belief in freedom of speech lead to an increased political participation for an individual? In this paper, I present evidence to test the likelihood that the level of belief in Freedom of Speech will affect the rate at which people participate politically. This will be tested using an original survey design that will be conducted on Amazon's MTurk platform.

History:

The history of Freedom of Speech dates to the passage of the Bill of Rights in 1791. After the failure of the Articles of Confederation the United States Constitution was developed. Stated in the document is the First Amendment which give Americans their freedom of speech, religion, assembly and press rights. Since the passage of the First Amendment the freedom of speech has

not been changed too terribly much in the United States. What has changed is the governmental limitation placed on the First Amendment. These changes happen mainly as a result of Supreme Court cases.

When these trends are placed in the same space do they share a connection, or are they merely coincidence? Does a strong belief in Freedom of Speech have a connection to the political participation of a citizen?

Literature Review:
Why People Participate:

For any democracy, one of the most important lessons to learn is why their citizens participate. In the United States with its struggling voter turnout and increased polarization, it seems that fewer people are becoming involved and participating in the political system. Many political scientists have looked at the question of why people participate, and many different explanations have come about. The first important explanation is that political knowledge is tied to the rate of participation (Galston 2001). While many agree with this causal relationship, others have tied the main reason as to why some participate, and some do not to a sense of civic duty (Campbell 2006). The very interesting thing about both of these explanations is that both Galston and Campbell believe that a civic education is the key to increasing participation.

> Civic knowledge helps citizens understand their interests as individuals and as members of groups. The more knowledge we have, the better we can understand the impact of public policies on our interests, and the more effectively we can promote our interests in the political process.
>
> Delli Carpini & Keeter (1996:238–64) offer a wealth of

> evidence that political knowledge fosters citizens'
> "enlightened self-interest"—the ability to connect
> personal/group interests with specific public issues and
> to connect those issues with candidates who are more
> likely to share their views and promote their interests.
> (Galston 2001, 223).

This is the point at which Galston and Campbell's theories come together and become basically the same theory. Because, as Galston explains, a civic education leads people to understand their "enlightened self-interest" and promotes interest in the political process which leads to a higher probability of political participation (Galston 2001). This is much the same as the civic duty argument that Campbell explains because people will vote when they view the political process as important and their role in it as important which is where the sense of civic duty comes from (Campbell 2006).

Another method by which political scientists make sense of how they can determine who will participate is the Calculus of Voting. This is the formula that Riker and Ordeshook presented in their paper *A Calculus of Voting*, "R = (PB) – C + D" (Riker and Ordeshook 1968, 28). This formula sets out to understand who will and who will not participate. The variables of the formula are defined as:

> R: the reward, in utiles, that an individual voter receives
> from his act of voting B: the differential benefit, in utiles,
> that an individual voter receives from the success of his more
> preferred candidate over his less preferred one P: the
> probability that the citizen will, by voting, bring about the
> benefit, B; of course, $0 < P < 1$ C: the cost to the individual
> of the act of voting. (Riker and Ordeshook 1968, 25)

The only variable that is missing is the D variable and that is because when the other variables are listed they are part of the

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hypothesis expression while the D variable is added in at a later time, after Riker and Ordeshook determined that the expressions they listed in their hypothesis would not work. The original formula failed because no matter was entered the voter would be determined to be "irrational." The revised equation includes the D variable which is "Doubtless there are other satisfactions that do not occur to us at the moment; but this list is sufficient to indicate the nature of D. It should be noted that most of the items, and the most significant items, are political satisfactions or benefits and therefore must be included in any consideration of the political rewards of voting" (Riker and Ordeshook 1968, 28). This means that the D variable stands for the satisfaction the voter gets from the act of voting, what that exactly means is up to the individual to determine. Authors such as Campbell would argue that the satisfaction talked about in the D variable would come from a sense of civic duty (Campbell 2008, 188). While this is left up to the author of each individual theory no definitive answer has been given what that satisfaction could be for all people. It is unknown even if there exists an objective definition that applies to all voters for the definition of D. With the inclusion of the D variable, Riker and Ordeshook found voting to be a rational action (Riker and Ordeshook 1968).

The author Anthony Downs raises a different logic of voting in his An Economic Theory Voting. Downs' logic of voting is built on a utilitarian understanding of rational voters. Downs' first assertion in his theory was that all people act rationally in politics (Downs 1957, 36). The logic behind this theory is that voters will vote for the candidate/party that will provide them with them the highest utility income. Downs defines utility as the "measure of benefits in a citizen's mind which he uses to decide among alternative courses of action" (Downs 1957, 36). This means that to determine the utility of a candidate/party the rational voter must engage in a comparison between the candidates in a given election. But knowing that a

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party/candidate cannot logically accomplish all they set out to the voter "must estimate in his own mind what the parties would actually do were they in power" (Downs 1957, 39). This is an activity of a hypothetical nature and relies on the rationality of the voter solely. To find the utility income between the parties in the two-party system like the United States the voter must do all of the following,

> (1) examine all phases of government action to find out where the two parties would behave differently, (2) discover how each difference would affect his utility income, and (3) aggregate the differences in utility and arrive at a net figure which shows by how much one party would be better than the other (Downs 1957, 45).

This theory expects that the citizenry in the United States is capable of this cost benefit analysis. When assuming that a voter acts rationally means that they have to engage in this cost benefit analysis, and along with engaging in this cost benefit analysis they will be educated on the policy platform of the candidate/party. This is reflective of an engaged population, which means that the population is interested politically. But in the end Downs determined that the act of voting was irrational (Downs 1957).

Outside of the D variable and Downs' rational voter model, Verba, Schlozman and Brady identify resources that would increase political participation. Education and language skills are some of those resources that directly affect the amount that people vote. "Education enhances participation more or less directly by developing skills that are relevant to politics - the ability to speak and write, the knowledge of how to cope in an organizational setting" (Verba, Schlozman and Brady 1995; 305). This is where one of the most common linkage between participation exists. The education linkage is important and should be recognized when looking for participation. "The best

educated are 12.0 percent more likely to have written to U.S. senators or representatives than the least educated, and the best educated are 12.5 percent more likely to have attended local meetings than those with less formal education" (Rosenstone and Hansen 1996, 74). These statistics from Rosenstone and Hansen solidify the linkage between education and participation with the more educated people the more likely they are to engage in politics in multiple ways.

Verba, Schlozman, and Brady identify many resources that have direct linkages to political participation, but some of the most important are "Money and time are the resources expended most directly in political activity. It is impossible to contribute to a campaign or other political cause without some discretionary income" (Verba, Schlozman and Brady 1995; 289). These determinates are the main portion of Verba, Schlozman and Brady's A Resource Model of Political Participation. The influence of money and time goes far beyond political participation. Money and time dictate how many Americans determine their actions in an everyday sense. But when applied to political participation it makes sense that money and time would be the biggest determents because if a voter does not have the time to go to the polling place or participate in other activities associated with political participation they simply will not participate. If a voter lacks money than they cannot participate with money and they have to work long hours which causes them to have less time to contribute to politics.

> The relationship between income and participation persists even after we take the other causes of participation into account, as reported in table 5-1. The wealthiest Americans are 15.8 percent more likely to vote in presidential elections, 5.7 percent more likely to try to convince others how to vote, 1.8 percent more likely to work for a party or candidate, and 14.8

> percentage more likely to make campaign contribution than the poorest Americans (Rosenstone and Hanson 1996, 134).

This information only furthers the relationship between money and voter participation. Money becomes very important when the activities involve both time and money.

Theory:
Before explaining the theory, it is important to define some key terms that will be used to throughout this theory. Political Participation which is the dependent variable in this study and will use the following definition. "Political Participation affords citizens in a democracy an opportunity to communicate information to government officials about their concerns and preferences and to put pressure on them to respond" (Verba, Schlozman, Brady 1995, 37). This definition puts focus on the fact that the citizen must be trying to communicate with the government. This communication is vital to any democracy but will be expressed at different levels throughout the Federal, State, and Local levels. The activities that can fall under the political participation category are very broad, "Although voting is an important mode of citizen involvement in political life, it is but one of many political acts" (Verba, Schlozman, Brady 1995, 42). When people talk about political participation the main activity that people associate participation with is voting but as Verba, Schlozman and Brady explain there are many other activities that lend themselves to being counted under political participation:

> consider a wider range of political acts, including working in and contributing to electoral campaigns and organizations contacting government officials; attending protests, marches, or demonstrations; working informally with others to solve community problems;

> serving without pay on local elected and appointed boards; being active politically through the intermediation of voluntary associations; and contributing money to political causes in response to mail solicitations (Verba, Schlozman, Brady 1995, 42).

Based on that identification of actions that count towards political participation this study will view the following acts as a means of participating politically: voting, campaign work, contacting government officials, participating in protests, contributing money to political parties/candidates, holding an elected or appointed position within the community and engaging in the spread of political information. This view of political activity leaves out some activities that are listed in the Verba, Schlozman and Brady list, and that is because looking to people solving community problems informally would be difficult to identify and would possibly lead to false markers of political participation.

The next definition that will be vital to this theory is Freedom of Speech. Traditionally, freedom of speech is defined as a right to express one's opinions/beliefs without fear of censorship from the government. For this theory, the interest in freedom of speech is focused more on the levels at which people believe in the freedom of speech. For example, the least restrictive level of freedom speech is the absolutist. Traditionally, the absolutist is a person who would not approve of any government interference with speech, this would likely go as far as allowing speech that may be seen as obscene. The next level of speech belief is the semi- absolutist, this is someone who is more willing to allow to government interference but only when the speech would result immediately in danger. The next level of speech belief is the semi- limited person, this person is more open to government interference and would approve of government interference in the use of certain offensive words

and phrases. The final level of speech belief is the Limited person this person believes that the government should be involved in most speech, for example, the limited person would approve of the government involving itself in speech that is hateful, and emotionally harmful.

   The relationship between freedom of speech and voter participation is based upon what the voter understands their participation to mean. Understanding the way participants interpret the meaning of their participation will be integral in understanding if the level of belief in freedom of speech will affect political participation. The logic behind why level of belief would influence freedom of speech is based off of the personal interpretation of participation. This means that linkage will occur because the person views of voting will identify it as an act of speech.

   This association between speech and participation will likely occur because of the participant's feelings about freedom of speech. If a person is a speech absolutist then they are more likely to feel this way, speech equals participation, because the unrestricted view of speech lends itself to have participation seen as a way of speaking directly to the state. If a person views political participation as a means of speaking directly to the state, then a person who is a free absolutist and believes in unrestricted speech will utilize their right to speech and participate in politics. Speaking more broadly to political participation, the free speech absolutist will likely participate more because the actions that are deemed as acts of political participation could also be seen as actions of speech.

   The relationship between political interest and voter participation must be understood in this theory. Many scholars have argued that political interest is one of the key determinants as to why voters participate in the political system of the United States. This theory will be looking at the other reasons why people vote. This theory has been formulated with the

understanding that political interest does play a role in who participates, but is it the only reason that people would participate in the political system? This theory is trying to explain that there is more than one reason why people participate.

The logic behind how free speech absolutism will affect voting comes directly from the Calculus of Voting. The D variable in the formula, $R = (PB) - C + D$, is not a clearly defined variable but it roughly translates to satisfaction from voting (Riker and Ordeshook 1968). The satisfaction will come from if someone values free speech than exercising it will bring them satisfaction. If the absolutist views participation as speech than they will get satisfaction from voting or any other action associated with political participation hence fulfilling the D variable definition given by Riker and Ordeshook. Meaning that in simplest terms the D variable will be defined as satisfaction gained through using their freedom of speech based on much they value freedom of speech.

H1: The level of belief in Freedom of Speech will significantly factor into the voter's decision to participate politically.

H2: When a person holds a higher belief in Freedom of Speech it will make that person more likely to participate in all measures of political participation.

H3: When a person holds a limited view of Freedom of Speech it will make that person less likely to participate in all measures of political participation.

Proposed Methodology

The methodology that I will be using in this study will be quantitative survey design. The way in which I intend to get the data for this study is from a survey that I will be creating an original survey design. The reason to use a survey and not use an already existing data set is twofold. The first reason is that the study that will be conducted will not explicitly say, freedom of speech or the First Amendment. The reason for this is to avoid partisan beliefs bleeding into the speech questions. By mentioning the principle of free speech, it makes it an inherently political entity, without mentioning it then it is all about the situations and how the participant would feel about them within the constraints of the United States. The second reason that a survey will be used is because the way that freedom of speech will be measured in this study will be based on a scale from limited to absolutist. Meaning that out of the nine questions that call speech into question each result will place the subject on the scale.

Location of the Survey:

The survey will be conducted on Amazon's MTurk service, the main reason for this is the ability to gather a larger and a more diverse sample group. This service has been utilized by many social science researchers. Being that this is such a new platform many scholars have raised challenges to the validity of the results from this platform.

While these challenges have been raised many social sciences have been able to conduct studies and have agreed that the MTurk platform is a valid sample. "Interactive experiments run through MTurk seem to be just as internally valid as those run in the lab, as experimental designs are credible within the MTurk framework" (Thomas and Clifford 2017, 194). This study shows that as long as a study is valid and works within a framework that is acceptable for the platform than the results of

the study will be valid.

Independent Variable: Freedom of Speech Belief Scale

The independent variable of this study will be the belief in freedom of speech. The scale that will be used in this study, was explained in the theory section. This will be measured using a survey asking participants situational questions about freedom of speech. The questions that measure this variable are specific scenarios that relate to specific issues about free speech. These questions have been written in a way that is vague enough that the issue of freedom of speech is not blatant, but with enough specificity that the topic is clear and present in the question not leaving the survey taker confused by what the question is asking. There are nine questions that will allow the participants' answers to be placed on the absolutist scale. The belief scale will range in 4 parts from absolutist to limited. These situations will be aimed at identifying how the participants feels about applied freedom of speech questions and not the abstract idea overall. When the participants give their responses to the nine questions they are placed on an additive scale of -18 to 18.

The way in which these questions are graded is that there are five available answers to each question. Those five answers are: strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree, strongly disagree. These answers do not themselves hold a point value, but it is the ideological value that each are given. This means that the answer that denotes an absolutist response will receive +2, the answer that denotes the semi-absolute answer will receive +1, the answer that denotes a semi-limited response will receive -1, and finally the response that represents the limited response will receive
-2.

Dependent Variable: Political Participation

The dependent variable is voter participation, this means the measure will look at voting rate of an individual, the rate that

the person participates on a political campaign, attends rallies, and engages in persuasion. This will be measured simply by asking how much a person is involved in politics and also when they last did one of the activities, they will be measured in terms of two or 4-year periods, this is done to prevent people who have participated in one of the activities listed many years ago and affirming that they do these activities. This is done to put the participants on a continuum of political participation. This participation measure will also count voting, while voting is sometimes seen as the most important activity of participation in this study voting will be seen as one activity of participation with no special value added. The voting behaviors of the participants will be measured by a couple of different questions. The first is talking about eligibility for voting; if a participant is not eligible to vote that they will not vote or have voted in the past. The second question being asked is if the participants are registered to vote; participants who are not registered to vote means that they will not vote because they legally cannot without voting. The next question is if they voted in 2016; this is meant to establish a record of voting. The next question of note is asking total number of elections that the participant participated in; this is to understand if compared to age, did they participate in the majority of elections that they were eligible to? The final questions were about the likelihood of the participants in future elections.

This portion of the survey in the analysis portion along with the total participation measure will be split into four different measures. These splits will revolve around the time periods in which the participation takes place. For example, the measure of future participation behavior will be made different than the measure of past participation. This split will give the study its four-dependent variable of voting behavior in 2016, past participation, future participation, and future voting behavior.

Based on this methodology, the hypothesis for this study will be that as the belief in freedom of speech moves towards absolutism the voter participation will increase. Also, if the political interest/knowledge of the participant is low but they are high on the speech absolutism scale their voter participation will be high. If politically interest/knowledge is high, and the participant is low on the speech absolutism scale than their voter participation will be high.

Finding and Analysis:

This survey was conducted on Amazon's MTurk services. The total sample size of this survey is 516 participants. This survey was created as a unique survey with myself formulating all of the question and the structure of the survey. For the survey to be distributed it was IRB approved and was created using the survey program Qualtrics. The MTurk services is a platform online where researches pay the participants for their involvement in the survey. The survey was put on the Amazon MTurk service on October 30th, 2018, around 3:00pm. The last participants participated on November 6th.

Dependent Variables: Participation Voting Behavior:

In this study political participation has been measured in many different ways. The first way that participation was measured in this study was by determining if participants voted in the 2016 election. The majority of people identified that they had voted in the 2016 election 78.7 percent. The rest of the participants identified that they did not vote 18.2 percent. The sample size of this study was much higher than the national turnout for the election (Desilver 2018). For this variable the answer that indicated that they voted would result in a one and the answer that indicated that the participant did not vote would receive a zero.

Future Voting Behavior:

  The next measure of participation was testing the likelihood that participants would vote in the next three major elections. When participants were asked about their likelihood to participate in the next election (November 6th, 2018) the average response was that participants said they had a 77.59 percent probability of turning out. Responses for this election also ranged from 0 percent to 100 percent. The next election that was asked about was the next presidential primary. The average likelihood of voting in the next presidential primary was 78.51 percent. Once again responses ranged from 0 percent to 100 percent. The final election that was asked about was the 2020 General election. In this election the average likelihood for participants to go out and vote was 81.83 percent. In this election the responses ranged from 0 percent to 100 percent. The next question that was asked dealing with voting behavior was the total amount of times a participant had voted in their life. The average amount that a participant had voted was 10.11 elections. The responses ranged from having participated in 0 elections to 50 elections. The overall view of all of these elections shows that these participants are very optimistic about how likely they are to turnout and vote. These values were all added together and then divided by three to determine the average of all three elections.

Past Participation:

  In this portion of the study the goal was to gauge what activities of political participation the participants had participated in. The first question that was used to measure this was asking if participants had worked on a political campaign in the past four years. The majority of participants had claimed that they did not work on a political campaign in the past four years: 82 percent. The portion of participants who claimed to have worked on a political campaign was only 14.9 percent. The next question that was used to determine past political participation

was in the past two years had the participants worn campaign materials or displayed a sign for a campaign. The majority of participants said that they did not do any of these activities in the past 2 years 73.1 percent. The other participants who said that they had displayed these materials numbered 24 percent. The next question that deals with past participation of the participants is whether or not they participated in any political rallies or marches. The vast majority of participants said that they did not participate in any of these activities: 78.9 percent. The remaining participants who said that they participated in these activities was 18.2 percent. The final past participation question is one that focuses on community leadership. The participants were asked if they held a community leadership position in the past 4 years. All of these questions were placed into an additive scale. This resulted in the questions that indicated political participation would equal one and the answers that did not indicate participation would result in a zero.

Future Participation:

The next portion of the dependent variable that should be looked at is the measure of future political participation. The first question that dealt with future political participation was asking the participants about their likelihood of donating money to political campaigns or promoting social issues. The vast majority of participants said that they were not likely to give money to political campaigns or social movements (38.2 percent). The next highest group of participants said that they are only a little likely to donate money (23.1 percent). Only a small portion of the participants said that they would be extremely likely to donate money (5.4 percent). The next question that tested the participants future political participation was asking about how likely they were distribute political advertisements for a political or social cause. The vast majority of the participants said that they would not be likely to distribute this information

(36.4 percent). The next largest portion of the participants said that they would only be a little likely to distribute this information (26 percent). The smallest portion of the participants were the participants who said that they were extremely likely to turnout and distribute this information (5 percent). This shows that participants in this study are not optimistic at all about their future political participation.

Independent Variable: Freedom of Speech

This measure was made completely by me. This measure's goal was to measure the level of speech absolutism that the person believes in. This measure was developed by asking the participants nine questions. These questions were asking people about the different parts
surrounding Free Speech.

Tables and Figures:

Table 1: Speech Questions

This table shows all of the questions

	Free Speech Questions
Question 1:	D...
	de
Question 2:	D...
	fr
Question 3:	D...
	h
	as
Question 4:	D
	h
Question 5:	D
	te
	id
Question 6:	D
	ab
Question 7:	D
	g
Question 8:	D
	sh
Question 9:	D
	th
	in

Table 2: Linear Regression Model

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
Dependent Variable	Vote 16	Past Participation	Future Participation	Future Voting Behavior
Speech Scale	-0.005*	-0.046***	-0.05**	0.737***
	[.003]	[.009]	[.017]	[.200]
Gender	-0.036	0.015	0.122	-5.701**
	[.033]	[.099]	[.195]	[2.242]
Urban/Rural	-0.15	0.244***	0.508***	-2.353***
	[.024]	[.072]	[.142]	[1.634]
Partisan Intensity	-0.018*	-0.023	-0.113*	-0.894***
	[.011]	[.069]	[.061]	[.705]
Party	0.083***	0.228***	0.507***	7.468***
	[.023]	[.069]	[.136]	[1.568]
Interest	0.105***	0.112**	0.572***	9.809***
	[.017]	[.050]	[.099]	[1.156]
Education	0.044***	0.025	0.059	3.453***
	[.011]	[.034]	[.067]	[.769]
Race	0.083**	0.312*	0.417*	2.993
	[.040]	[.118]	[.232]	[2.677]
Constant	0.305**	-0.417	-0.801	32.742***
	[.100]	[.294]	[.580]	[6.684]

Standard error in brackets. Coefficients generated using SPSS linear regression. Dependent variable = type of participation. *** $p<0.01$, ** $p<0.05$, * $p<0.1$

that were asked to participants to determine their level of free speech. The way that the questions were scored was based on the response. The different answers were weighted differently, the answer that support the most free Speech was + 2 the answer that supported the next amount of Free Speech was + 1, the neutral answer was worth 0 points. The answer that is the most restrictive was worth -2 and the question that was less restrictive was worth -1. All responses were put into an additive scale and once they are all placed together they are then group into who scored what. This means that the most absolute of participants would score an 18 and the most limited speech advocate would score a -18.

Overall, the majority of the speech scale is slanted to the more absolute end of the spectrum. The average distribution along the scale was 5.63, this means that the average responded fell in the semi-absolute category. A total of only eight participants scored a total score of 18. While no participant was able to score a full -18 score. The lowest score that was achieved by a participant was -12. Only one participant was able to reach that -12 score. The next lowest score recorded was -10 were four participants were able to achieve this score.

Correlations:

This study's correlations are based around the relationship between the Freedom of Speech scale and the different measures of political participation. To start analyzing the results of this study, it is important to understand the relationships between the independent and dependent variable.

The first correlation that should be explored is the correlation between the Freedom of Speech absolutism scale and the voting behavior of the participants in the 2016 election. After running this bivariate correlation in SPSS, it showed that there existed no significant correlation between the speech scale and voting behavior. While there exists no significance in this correlation it is important to notice the direction that the

correlation was going in. In this case the correlation is going in a negative direction. This means that the relationship between indicates that the higher a person ranks on the Freedom of Speech scale will be less likely to vote. This result does not support any of my hypotheses. H1 is not supported because there exists no significant relationship. H2 and H3 are not supported because the negative relationship shows that the people who are more absolute were less likely to have voted in the 2016 election.

The second correlation that is important to the study is the relationship between the Freedom of Speech scale and the past political participation activity of the participants in this study. When the bivariate correlation was run in SPSS, it showed that there was indeed a significant relationship between the past participation. The level of significance in this correlation is a significance score of .000. This supports H1 because it shows that a significant relationship does indeed exist. However, the direction of this relationship does not support H2. H3. This is because the direction is once again negative. This means that people who scored high on Freedom of Speech scale were less likely to have participated politically in the past.

The third correlation that is important to the study is the relationship between the Freedom of Speech scale and the future political participation that the participants said they would engage in. This bivariate correlation was run in SPSS. In this correlation there exists a significant relationship between the speech scale and future participation. The relationship had a significance score of .025. This once again supports H1 because the significant relationship shows that level of belief in Freedom of Speech effects level of political participation. The direction of the relationship in this case is once again negative. This means that the people who scored high in level of belief in Free Speech were not likely to say they would participate in the future. This means that H2 and H3 are not supported by this correlative relationship.

The fourth correlation that is important to test for this study is the relationship between the Freedom of Speech scale and future voting behavior. This relationship is very significant. This correlation has a significance score of .000. This once again supports H1 because it shows that level of belief in Freedom of Speech plays a significant part in the rate at which people participate politically. The direction of this relationship is positive which means that people who score high on the Freedom of Speech scale are more likely to say they will turn out to vote in the future. This means that H2 and H3 are supported by this correlative relationship.

Regression:

       After determining that in most cases belief in Freedom of Speech significantly indicated a relationship with political

Table 2: Linear Regression Model

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
Dependent Variable	Vote 16	Past Participation	Future Participation	Future Voting Behavior
Speech Scale	-0.005*	-0.046***	-0.05**	0.737***
	[.003]	[.009]	[.017]	[.200]
Gender	-0.036	0.015	0.122	-5.701**
	[.033]	[.099]	[.195]	[2.242]
Urban/Rural	-0.15	0.244***	0.508***	-2.353***
	[.024]	[.072]	[.142]	[1.634]
Partisan Intensity	-0.018*	-0.023	-0.113*	-0.894***
	[.011]	[.069]	[.061]	[.705]
Party	0.083***	0.228***	0.507***	7.468***
	[.023]	[.069]	[.136]	[1.568]
Interest	0.105***	0.112**	0.572***	9.809***
	[.017]	[.050]	[.099]	[1.156]
Education	0.044***	0.025	0.059	3.453***
	[.011]	[.034]	[.067]	[.769]
Race	0.083**	0.312*	0.417*	2.993
	[.040]	[.118]	[.232]	[2.677]
Constant	0.305**	-0.417	-0.801	32.742***
	[.100]	[.294]	[.580]	[6.684]

Standard error in brackets. Coefficients generated using SPSS linear regression. Dependent variable = type of participation. *** $p<0.01$, ** $p<0.05$, * $p<0.1$

participation. To further cement these results and prove that these results were not a result of belief in Freedom of Speech becoming entangled with another contributing factor to political participation, I ran five different linear regression models. These models were run through SPSS and are documented down in table 2.

Each of the five regression models all include the same eight independent variables. The difference between each model was the dependent variables. The dependent variables that were used in the different regression models are the same ones that are used in the correlations in this study.

Of the eight independent variables that were run in each test they included: speech scale, gender, urban rural, PID, party, political interest, education, and race. The dependent variables in this case were once again voting behavior in the 2016 election, past participation, future participation and future vote.

In model 1 of the regressions the dependent variable is the voting behavior of the participants in the 2016 election. Of the eight independent variables six were found to be significant. Of those six education, party, and interest were found to be the highest level of significance, $p<0.01$. The race variable was the only variable in this model to be found as the second highest level of significance, $p<0.05$. PID and the Speech Scale variable were found to be the lowest level of significance, $p<0.1$. This means that the alongside of all of the other variables that effect political participation the level of belief in Freedom of Speech still was able to play a significant role. This goes to support H1. While the significance of these model supports this studies hypothesis the direction of the relationship does not. Much like the correlation that was between voting behavior in the 2016 election and the level of belief in Freedom of Speech the relationship that exists is negative. This means that H2 and H3 are not supported by this result.

In model 2 the dependent variable that is being tested is

past participation. Of the eight variables that were being tested in this regression model five of them were indicated as significant. Out of those five the speech scale, urban/rural, and party variables were found to have the highest level of significance, $p<0.01$. Interest was found to be significant at the second highest level, $p<0.05$. Race was found to significant but at the lowest level, $p<0.1$. The result of this regression model shows that once again H1 is supported by the findings of this model.

Examining the direction of the relationship that exists between the level of belief in Freedom of Speech and past participation it is indicated that the direction of the relationship in this case is negative. With the relationship being identified as negative does not support H2 or H3.

In model 3 the dependent variable in this model is future participation. Of the eight variables being tested six were identified as significant. Interest, party, and urban/rural were identified with the highest level of significance, $p<0.01$. Speech scale was the only variable identified as the second highest level of significance, $p<0.05$. PID and race were identified as the lowest level of significance, $p<0.1$. The results of this model once again support H1 because speech scale was identified as significant. Once again, the direction of the relationship between the speech scale and future participation indicates a negative direction. This negative direction does not support H2 or H3.

In model 4 the dependent variable in this model is Future voting behavior. Of the eight variables being tested seven variables were found to be significant. Speech scale, urban/rural, partisan intensity, party, interest, and education were all found to be the highest level of significance, $p<0.01$. Gender was the only variable to be identified as the second highest level of significance, $p<0.05$. There were no variables identified as the lowest level of significance. This model demonstrates that once again this model supports H1. The direction of the relationship that exists in this model is positive. The positive direction in this

relationship supports H2 and H3.

Conclusion:

Seeking to understand the existence of a relationship between a level of belief in Freedom of Speech and political participation led to research that accumulated in review of previous literature on the topics, the creation of a unique survey design, and vast statistical analysis. After creating the unique survey, the survey was distributed using Amazon MTurk's service. Going through my hypotheses it is clear to see that H1 is proven to be true by all four models of the linear regression. H2 and H3 are disproven in the models 1-3 of the regressions. Model 4 of my regression upholds H2 and H3. I believe it to vitally important to examine the dependent variable of model 4. The dependent variable involved in model 4 is future voting behavior. Now this measure may not actually be representative of the actual behaviors of the participants. It is very interesting to examine this dependent under the light of participants words not meeting their actions. For example, in this study it is very understandable that the 78.2 percent who said they voted did not all actually vote. So, it would make sense that the confidence of participants who are willing to turnout to vote in the future are likely to actually be substantially lower. Trying to understand why the negative relationship exists in models 1-3 is very difficult to try and comprehend. Personally, I have come up with some points that may explain this relationship. The first being that people who land higher on the absolutist scale may believe in the libertarian ideology at a higher rate than other people identified in this survey. This would explain this relationship because libertarians believe in extremely limited governments and would want to limit their interactions with the government as it currently exists. While this explanation would explain it, I am cautious in pointing this out as the sole reason why this relationship occurred. Another explanation that could be

associated is that the sample size was disproportionally politically active, meaning that absolutists who participated in this survey may have just been the lower just in general.

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