**Online Participation, Offline Mobilization?: A Look at the Relationship Between Online and Offline Participation in the 2008 Presidential Election**

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*Political participation is undisputedly essential to democracy. Yet, research continually shows that some people—usually those who are older, more educated, and wealthier—participate more than others and that overall participation is on the decline. Journalists, politicians, and pundits regularly assert that the Internet is a panacea to declining participation's threat to democracy, but scholarly studies on the subject have produced mixed results. Using the 2008 National Annenberg Election Survey (NAES), this paper assesses the relationship between online and offline political participation during the 2008 presidential election. I find that online participation positively predicts offline participation, but this predictive power is less impressive when we group offline participatory activities into two categories—high and low effort—based upon the amount of effort they demand. Specifically, I find that online participation has a substantially smaller effect on high intensity offline participation.*

Political participation is undisputedly essential to democracy (Brady et al., 1995; Dahl, 1971; Norris, 2002; Verba and Nie, 1972). Yet, research continually shows that some people—usually those who are older, more educated, and wealthier—participate more than others and that overall participation is on the decline (Abramson and Aldrich, 1982; Norris, 2002; Putnam, 2000; Verba and Nie, 1972). Those studies that employ broad conceptions of participation, however, tend to find that political participation is on par with other participatory activities (Verba and Nie, 1972).

Rational choice theory suggests that among those who participate, the benefits of participation outweigh the costs. Individuals with high socioeconomic statuses (SES) possess, to a greater degree, those resources—time, money, civic skills—that ease the burdens of political participation (Norris, 2002; Wilhelm, 2000). While the Internet, particularly since the advent of online campaigning, lowers the costs of participation, Internet use demands many of the same resources associated with political participation (Anduiza et al., 2009).

In this paper, I look at the relationship between online and offline participation. Many studies have examined online and offline participation comparatively; however, few have explored the relationship between the two. This paper focuses on this relationship, exploring the effects of online participation on overall offline participation, as well as high and low effort forms of offline participation, within the context of the 2008 presidential election. I use the 2008 National Annenberg Election Survey (NAES) to assess the relationship. First, I review the relevant literature on traditional and online political participation. Next, I detail the study's experimental design. Then, I present the results of the empirical test. Finally, I offer theoretical explanations for the findings herein.

**Political Participation**

Political scientists have long concerned themselves with questions of political participation. *What constitutes political participation? Why do people participate in politics? Who participates and who abstains?* For the purposes of this paper, I offer an abridged answer to each of these questions.

*What constitutes political participation?*

Scholars disagree on what counts as political participation. Teorell (2006) offers a suitable—albeit, non-exhaustive—framework for categorizing the literature on this topic. Prominent theories conceive of participation as either an attempt at influencing policy, direct decision-making, or political discussion (Teorell, 2006). The 'participation as an attempt at influencing policy' category encompasses both the elitist model that considers voting to be the single most important participatory act (Downs, 1957), as well as more expansive models like the one offered by Verba and Nie (1972), which defines political participation as attempting to "[influence] the government, either by affecting the choice of government personnel or by affecting the choices made by government personnel."

Those who conceptualize participation as direct decision-making promote citizens making decisions rather than solely influencing them. While these theorists do not discredit the importance of voting or campaigning, they advocate "[widening] the opportunities for direct participation by providing new arenas outside the traditional representative system" (Teorell, 2006). Pateman (1970) argues in favor of expanding the political sphere beyond the national government—giving workers' democratic control over their workplaces. Macpherson (1977) advocates "pyramidal participation" with direct democracy at the base to insure that citizens have ultimate control over government.

Theories viewing participation as political discussion broaden participation even more than those centered on direct democracy. Not only are traditional forms of participation—voting, writing a legislator—valued, but conversations about political life are also deemed worthwhile participatory endeavors. Gutmann and Thompson (2004) describe deliberative democracy as a way for citizens to take part in the governance process "by presenting and responding to reasons . . .with the aim of justifying the laws under which they must live together. Discourse of this kind lends subjective legitimacy to policies, making citizens feel like integral parts of the policy making process (Teorell, 2006). Those in favor of deliberative democracy view political discussions—even, those undertaken by ordinary citizens—as the engines of political vehicles.

*The Internet and Conceptions of Political Participation*

In order to understand the Internet's effects on political participation, it is important to emphasize the multidimensionality of the web. Polat (2005) describes the Internet as a source of information, a means of communication, and a public sphere. By conceptualizing the Internet as a multifaceted technology, it becomes easier to explain the ways in which the Internet interacts with each of the previously discussed conceptions of participation.

In 2004, Howard Dean used the Internet to solicit money from donors to fund his presidential campaign (McGrath, 2011). Though ultimately unsuccessful in the race, he garnered a substantial number of small donations and paved the way for online campaigning (McGrath, 2011). By 2008, campaign volunteers for Barack Obama could generate phone-banking lists from home computers allowing them to campaign for the then presidential candidate whenever they pleased. Similarly, a number of government offices have digitized their communications, enabling citizens to engage in a wide range of participatory activities with the click of a button. In addition to developing online equivalents to numerous participatory activities, the Internet

allows citizens to undertake activities with no offline counterpart, such as forwarding emails or YouTube videos to others (Anduiza et al., 2009).

Presently, the Internet has less to offer those who view participation as direct decision making. However, the technology to facilitate voting and other direct decision making processes via the Internet exists—security issues and administrative burdens are likely the barriers to implementation in many places—and governments have begun to use it. Arizona allowed citizens to vote online during the 2000 Democratic primary, a number of states have piloted Internet voting for absentee ballots, and both Belgium and the Netherlands have afforded voters some online voting privileges (Gibson, 2001-02; Hirzalla et al., 2011; Wilhelm, 2000).

While democratic theorists continuously re-evaluate the normative questions surrounding which of the three conceptions of participation modern democracies ought to embrace, it is generally agreed upon that political participation extends beyond voting. The extent to which political discussion qualifies as participation, by contrast, continues to be debated. However, the Internet has had the greatest effect on political discussion. From chat rooms, to blogs, to social networking sites, the Internet affords users a community in which to discuss politics, and these discussions can lead to increased political participation (Vitak et al., 2011). Given the Internet's substantial effect on political communication and deliberation, this paper adopts a broad conception of political participation that includes the discussion of politics as one measure of participation.

*Why do people participate in politics?*

Rational choice theorists explain voting as a cost-benefit analysis (Downs, 1957; Riker and Ordeshook, 1968). Under this model, people vote when the costs are lower than the benefits they expect to receive in return. One can view other participatory acts under the same lens. Many

forms of political participation have high costs; they require time, energy, money, and civic skills, to name a few. One expects a person to participate when his benefits from participating outweigh the costs. Thus, barring substantial costs, people participate when they have a general interest in politics, when they are vested in policy or election outcomes, when they have a strong desire to uphold societal norms, or when they are seeking the social or intrinsic benefits—friendships, self-fulfillment, confidence—that accompany participation.

*Who participates and who abstains?*

Studies on voting suggest that, by and large, higher age, education, and income increase one's likelihood of voting (Norris, 2002). However, a majority of political activity occurs between election years, and those who take part in lobbying the government can have a substantial effect on political outcomes. Thus, it is worth investigating the participation patterns of a wide range of political activities.

Verba and Nie (1972) developed six categories explaining participatory activities: 21% of those interviewed were deemed voting specialists—listing voting as their only participatory activity; 4% contacted officials for personally motivated reasons and were, thus, dubbed parochial activists; communalists—those who were highly engaged in community activities but not in campaign activities—made up 20% of those surveyed; campaigners—whose activities where the opposite of communalists—accounted for 15% of the sample; 11% were totally active—engaged in all types of activities; and, the totally inactive—those who abstained from voting, parochial, communal, and campaign activities—accounted for 22% of individuals surveyed. They found that participants—communalists, campaigners, and total activists, like voters, typically came from higher status backgrounds; however, those who limited themselves

solely to voting were disproportionately from groups of lower-status backgrounds (Verba and Nie, 1972).

Explaining participation patterns solely using socioeconomic status (SES)—income, education, occupation, and class—fails to explain the role of costs and benefits in the participation equation  (Best and Krueger, 2005; Krueger, 2002; Krueger, 2006; Verba and Nie, 1972; Wilhelm, 2000). Furthermore, money and education alone do not insure participation. Resource models expand on SES and examine the resources—time, money, civic skills— individuals possess (or lack) as a result of their socioeconomic statuses (Anduiza et al., 2009; Best and Krueger, 2005; Brady et al., 1995; Krueger, 2006; Norris, 2002; Wilhelm, 2000). Using a rational choice framework, we can expect those people for whom the benefits of participating outweigh the costs to engage in political activity, and people with high socioeconomic statuses have, to a greater extent, those resources that lower the costs of participation.

*The Internet and Participation Patterns*

Results of research on the Internet's effect on political participation span a continuum that ranges from widely negative to wholly positive results. Wilhelm (2000) offers a three-category classification system for organizing researchers' attitudes toward the Internet. Dystopians fear that the Internet will disrupt social and political life. DiGennaro and Dutton (2006) looked at online and offline participation among Internet users in the United Kingdom and found that online participation patterns exacerbated the inequalities typically found in offline patterns. Similarly, Krueger (2006) argued that because of Internet etiquette, online mobilization depended more heavily on interest than did traditional mobilization. Internet mobilization, he asserted, typically occurred via email; and, because email addresses are not publicly available, people must distribute them to campaigns in order to be contacted—a factor Krueger (2006)

assumed to be a proxy for political interest.   He furthered his argument stating that because SES impacts civic skills and political interest, it, too, indirectly affected one's likelihood of being mobilized via the Internet (Krueger, 2006).

Arguably, the surge in popularity of social networking sites (i.e. Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn) has impacted online mobilization. Not only are peoples' email addresses more likely to be available, but also individuals can easily monitor the everyday activities of everyone from fifth cousins to presidential candidates. With the click of a button, people who previously would not have been exposed to mobilization efforts consent to receiving campaign updates via social networking sites. Furthermore, the fact that updates are in real time means mobilization efforts can happen faster than ever and reach a greater number of people. While Putnam (2000) feared that technology-based, solo activities would perpetuate isolation and threaten social capital—which he deemed the underpinning of democracy, these mobilization advantages have had positive effects on offline participation as well. One study not only found that the amount of time people spent online did not negatively affect their likelihood of engaging in public life, but that some online activities encouraged offline participation (Quintelier and Vissers, 2008). Another found that political participation among young adults on Facebook (i.e. encouraging others to vote, "liking" a political figure) predicted offline political participation (Vitak et al., 2011). These results lend credence to the argument that the Internet is democratizing and encourages participation amongst previously non-participatory groups.

Unlike dystopians, neofuturists have little fear of the sociopolitical implications of technological advances. Instead, they assert that said advances work to diversify the pool of participants engaging in political activity. McGrath (2011) argued that the Internet, and more specifically the availability of the Internet on cell phones, diminished gaps in political

participation across color lines. Likewise Gibson et al. (2005) found that the barriers to participation that exist in the offline world mostly disappear in the online realm.

Technorealists are less hopeful about technology's political benefits than neofuturists, but are also less cynical than dystopians (Wilhelm, 2000). Hirzalla et al. (2011) looked at one type of e-democracy's—the use of Internet technology to improve democratic processes—effects on participation in the Netherlands. During the 2006 election, the country used an online vote advice application (VAA)—a survey designed to help voters identify the party that is nearest their preferences (Hirzalla et al., 2011). Hirzalla et al. (2011) found that the online VAA was mobilizing (meaning it encouraged participation) among Dutch youth, but normalizing (meaning it had no effect on participation) among older populations. Similarly, Xie and Jaeger (2008) found that older adults in both the U.S. and China were hesitant to engage in online political participation, even when they had access to the Internet. Anduiza et al. (2009) and Wilhelm (2000) assert that the unequal distribution of resources results in unequal access (and, logically, unequal participation). Also, Pautz's (2010) study of e-democracy in Germany concluded that the nation's e-democracy site facilitated participation but did not encourage previously non-participatory citizens to engage in politics.

Wilhelm (2000) suggests, however, that equal Internet access can give the technologically disenfranchised a boost into the mainstream information society. Similarly, Kenski and Stroud (2006) found that Internet access and online exposure to political information was positively associated with efficacy, knowledge, and participation—even when controlling for SES, party ID, and interest. While accessibility is an issue in its own right, researchers have found that given equal access, the Internet encourages participation among the previously non-participatory (Anduiza et al., 2009; Gibson et al., 2005; Krueger, 2002; McGrath, 2011).

**Research Questions**

While previous research has considered the effects of the Internet on politics and political participation, little investigative research has been done on the interplay between online and offline participation. The work that has been done primarily focused on comparing the two forms of participation and was unable to capture the effects of recent gains in Internet access and online campaigning. This paper focuses, instead, on the relationship between online and offline participation—or their effects on one another, holding constant other variables of influence. I also examine the differences in the effects on high and low intensity offline participation.

*RQ1: What is the relationship between online and offline political participation?*

*RQ2: Does online participation affect high and low effort offline activities in the same manner?*

**A Theory of the Relationship Between Online and Offline Participation**

The Internet offers users access to a wealth of political information and a diverse group of social connections, both of which are likely to encourage participation. The Internet lowers the costs of participating given that many of the participatory activities undertaken via the Internet—forwarding emails, watching campaign videos—are low-intensity activities. It is possible, however, that as people are exposed to these activities (as well as to increased information and a greater number of politically interested social ties), they build the knowledge, skills, connections, and interest needed to encourage them to engage in offline activities (i.e. canvassing, phone banking). Verba and Nie (1972) emphasize that people tend to engage in activities requiring similar modes of input, or resources. Thus, if online participants do make the switch to offline participation, we would expect for them to engage in offline activities that are comparable to online activities in terms of the resources required. Alternatively, a positive relationship between

online and offline participation could indicate that those people who participate offline are also seeking out ways to participate online—that rather than encouraging the inactive to participate, the Internet merely allows the politically active to participate even more. Finally, a negative relationship could suggest that people choose one form of participation over the other, perhaps because the two forms require substantially different resources.

**Data**

This paper uses the 2008 National Annenberg Election Survey (NAES) to explore the relationship between online and offline participation during the 2008 presidential election. The NAES is a national telephone survey with more than 57,000 adult respondents. The survey used random digit dialing. The first eight digits were produced in proportion to estimates of the number of home phone lines beginning with said digits, and the last two digits were chose at random. When possible, cell phones were excluded from the sample. Potential respondents who were not reached on the first attempt were called back as many as 18 times.

**Measures of Online and Offline Participation**

I measure online participation using five survey questions asking respondents if they had done any of the following: visited a campaign website, viewed an online campaign video, forwarded online campaign information, discussed politics online, or read or commented on a blog.[1] Response values were recoded (0 for those who did not participate in the activity, and 1 for those who did) and summed to create an Online Participation Scale ranging from 0 to 5.[2] I employ Cronbach's alpha to test the scale's reliability.[3] The Online Participation Scale yields an alpha coefficient of .70—this is comparable to other scales in the discipline.[4]

To measure offline participation, I use six survey questions asking respondents the following: how many days they had discussed politics in the past week, if they had tried to

influence someone's vote, if they had contributed to a candidate, if they had worked for a

candidate, if they had attended a political meeting, and if they had showed a campaign sign.

Responses were recoded as 1 if a respondent had done the activity—respondents who discussed

politics one or more times received a score of 1 on this question—and 0 if they had not. Then, I

summed respondents' scores for each of the six questions resulting in an Offline Participation

Scale ranging from 0 to 6.[5]

In order to examine the relationship between online participation and high and low effort

forms of offline participation, I separate the questions that compose the Offline Participation

Scale into two categories based upon the amount of effort required. Low intensity offline

participation is measured by four questions; the other two questions measure high effort

participation.

**Methodology**

I employ ordinary least squares (OLS) regression analysis to examine the relationship

between online and offline participation. To allow for an accurate depiction of the relationship, I

use the following variables as measures of control: age, income, race, education, gender, political

interest, and political knowledge.

First, I examine the effects of online participation on offline participation (Table 1)—

absent the aforementioned control variables—and compare this with the reverse model (Table 2).

Together, these models provide a general picture of the relationship between the two variables.

*Model 1: offpart=constant + onpart($x_1$)*

*Model 2: onpart=constant +offpart($x_1$)*

Then, I explore the effects of online participation on offline participation while controlling for age, income, race, education, gender, interest, and knowledge (Table 3).

*Model 3: offpart=constant + onpart($x_1$) + age($x_2$) + income($x_3$) + nonwhite($x_4$) + educ($x_5$) + male($x_6$) + knowledge($x_7$) + interest($x_8$)*

Finally, I produce two additional models by modifying the dependent variable in *Model 3*. The first (Table 4) looks at online participation's affect on high-effort offline participation, and the second (Table 5) looks at its affect on low-effort activities.

*Model 4: higheffort=constant + onpart($x_1$) + age($x_2$) + income($x_3$) + nonwhite($x_4$) + educ($x_5$) + male($x_6$) + knowledge($x_7$) + interest($x_8$)*

*Model 5: loweffort constant + onpart($x_1$) + age($x_2$) + income($x_3$) + nonwhite($x_4$) + educ($x_5$) + male($x_6$) + knowledge($x_7$) + interest($x_8$)*

**Results**

There is a clear positive relationship between online and offline participation (Tables 1 and 2). A one-point increase on the Online Participation Scale yields a .32-point increase on the Offline Participation Scale. Similarly, a one-point increase in offline participation increases online participation by .42 points. Unfortunately, the NAES data set does not allow us to analyze whether online participation causes offline participation, or vice versa.

```
          TABLE 1
    Offline Participation
-----------------------------------
                        Model 1
                          b/se
-----------------------------------
onpart                 0.319***
                        (0.00)
constant               0.892***
                        (0.00)
-----------------------------------
R-sqr                    0.134
dfres                    57469
BIC                    105008.3
n                        57471
-----------------------------------
*p <0.05, **p <0.01, ***p <0.001
```

```
          TABLE 2
     Online Participation
-----------------------------------
                        Model 2
                          b/se
-----------------------------------
offpart                0.420***
                        (0.00)
constant              -0.151***
                        (0.01)
-----------------------------------
R-sqr                    0.134
dfres                    57469
BIC                    120773.3
n                        57471
-----------------------------------
*p <0.05, **p <0.01, ***p <0.001
```

When we take into consideration other impacting factors—age, income, race, education, gender, knowledge, and interest—the relationship between online and offline participation remains positive and significant at the .001 level—a one-point increase in online participation produces a .26-point increase in offline participation (Table 3). Three control variables share noteworthy relationships with offline participation in the model. First, age has a slight negative relationship with offline participation. Second, being a person of color is positively related to offline participation in the model. Third, being male is negatively correlated with offline participation. These three findings contradict conventional wisdom regarding who participates. However, these findings may be the result of controlling for knowledge and interest, factors that are likely linked to age, race, and gender.

```
                       TABLE 3
                 Offline Participation
         ------------------------------------
                                   Model 3
                                    b/se
         ------------------------------------
         onpart                   0.262***
                                   (0.00)
         age                     -0.019***
                                   (0.00)
         income                   0.018***
                                   (0.00)
         nonwhite                 0.020**
                                   (0.01)
         educ                     0.008***
                                   (0.00)
         male                    -0.013*
                                   (0.01)
         knowledge                0.022***
                                   (0.00)
         interest                 0.220***
                                   (0.00)
         constant                 0.347***
                                   (0.01)
         ------------------------------------
         R-sqr                     0.235
         dfres                     48845
         BIC                     82782.6
         n                         48854
         ------------------------------------
         *p <0.05, **p <0.01, ***p <0.001
```

When we break down offline participation into high-effort and low-effort activities, online participation loses a great deal of its predictive power (Tables 4 and 5). While a one-point increase in online participation results in a .24-point increase in low-effort offline participation, the same increase in online participation only yields and additional .03 points of high-effort participation. In the high-effort model (Table 4), race and interest have slight, albeit significant, positive effects on participation. In the low-effort model, age is negatively related to offline participation, while income, education, and knowledge share slight positive relationships. Interest has a greater effect on participation, generating an additional .22 points of participation.

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        TABLE 4                                    TABLE 5
 High-Effort Offline Participation         Low-Effort Offline Participation
------------------------------------       ------------------------------------
                         Model 4                                    Model 5
                           b/se                                       b/se
------------------------------------       ------------------------------------
onpart              0.026***               onpart               0.236***
                     (0.00)                                       (0.00)
age                  0.001                 age                  -0.020***
                     (0.00)                                       (0.00)
income              -0.000                 income                0.018***
                     (0.00)                                       (0.00)
nonwhite             0.013***              nonwhite              0.007
                     (0.00)                                       (0.01)
educ                -0.000                 educ                  0.008***
                     (0.00)                                       (0.00)
male                -0.002                 male                 -0.011*
                     (0.00)                                       (0.00)
knowledge            0.000                 knowledge             0.022***
                     (0.00)                                       (0.00)
interest             0.006***              interest              0.215***
                     (0.00)                                       (0.00)
constant            -0.011***              constant              0.358***
                     (0.00)                                       (0.01)
------------------------------------       ------------------------------------
R-sqr                0.032                 R-sqr                 0.235
dfres                49138                 dfres                 48845
BIC                -69619.2                BIC                   76803.4
n                    49147                 n                     48854
------------------------------------       ------------------------------------
*p <0.05, **p <0.01, ***p <0.001          *p <0.05, **p <0.01, ***p <0.0
```

**Conclusion**

This study set out to explore the relationship between online and offline participation. Online and offline participation positively affect one another; however, limitations with the data prohibited the determination of which, if either, of the two is the causal mechanism. When controlling for online participation, age, race, and gender affected offline participation in ways contradictory to conventional wisdom. Online participation did not impact all forms of offline participation equally. In fact, the relationship between online and high-effort offline participation was slight.

Further research must be done to better understand the relationship between online and offline participation. This research will be of great significance as candidates move to expand their online campaigning efforts and as Internet technology develops, making the online participatory experience more robust. In order to capture a broad range of participatory activities, I emphasized participatory diversity over frequency. Thus, a person who engaged in a single activity multiple times would have received a lower participation score than an individual who engaged in two different activities only once. Future research should incorporate frequency measures to better capture participation patterns.

Additionally, as Internet technologies develop and become more specialized, it will be advantageous for future research to single out technologies to examine the effects on participation. To some degree, researchers have begun doing this with social networking sites; however, reliable methods should be developed to continue the process and to evaluate the relationships over time. This will allow future studies to incorporate expanded measures of online participation than used here.

Researchers should also continue to explore the differences in the relationships between online participation and high and low intensity offline participation. Until digital alternatives to activities such as door-to-door canvassing are embraced by voters and harnessed by political campaigns, high intensity offline participation will remain an integral part to electoral campaigns. If online participation offers people the intrinsic benefits of offline participation without the costs, then it could threaten the already low high-effort offline participation rates.

Finally, developments in online campaigning and participation have primarily been associated with Democratic politics; however, gains in Internet use and access have encouraged, if not required, Republicans to expand their online campaign efforts. Thus, future research should explore the differences in participation on this basis.

**Notes**

1. Information regarding the NAES questions used to operationalize each of the variables can be found in Appendix A.

2. For the purposes of this research, all "Don't Know" and "No Answer" responses were treated as missing values, and, thus, not included in the reported data. The one exception to this was knowledge questions. For knowledge questions, "Don't Know" and "No Answer" responses were recoded as 0.

3. Cronbach's alphas is a commonly used interim consistency test used herein to evaluate the reliability of the Online Participation Scale.

4. The alpha coefficients used herein are similar to those used by Krueger (2002). He offers a similar defense of his coefficients in the Notes section of his paper.

5. The Offline Participation Scale had a relatively low Cronbach's alpha score (.31). This is because the measures aim to capture a multimodal picture of offline participation, thus making it unlikely that respondents participated equally in the selected activities.

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**Appendix A**

The NAES asks slightly different questions over the course of the election. In order to maintain a sizeable sample population, I combined answers to similarly worded questions—no one person answered more than one question in a set of similarly worded questions. A list of variables and the short versions of the NAES questions I used to operationalize them follows. The questions can be found in there entirety on the NAES website.

**Online Participation**

*Questions asking if respondents had visited a campaign website*

KG01-Visited campaign website in past week (1)
KG02-Visited campaign website in past week (2)
KG04-Visited campaign website during campaign so far
KG05-Visited campaign website during primary

*Questions asking if respondents had viewed an online campaign video*

KG08-Viewed online campaign video in past week (1)
KG09-Viewed online campaign video in past week (2)
KG10-Viewed online campaign video during campaign so far

*Questions asking if respondents had forwarded online campaign information*

KG12-Forwarded online campaign information in past week (1)
KG13-Forwarded online campaign information in past week (2)
KG14-Forwarded online campaign information during campaign so far
KG15-Forwarded online campaign information during primary

*Questions asking if respondents had discussed politics online*

KG18-Discussed politics online in past week (1)
KG19-Discussed politics online in past week (2)
KG20-Discussed politics online during campaign so far

*Questions asking if respondents had read or commented on a political blog*

KG22-Read or commented on political blog in past week (1)
KG23-Read or commented on political blog in past week (2)
KG24-*Read or commented on political blog during campaign so far*

**Offline Participation**

Low Effort Participation

*Questions asking if respondents had discussed politics*

KB01-Days discussed politics in past week

*Questions asking if respondents had tried to influence someone's vote*

KB03-Tried to influence other's vote in past week (1)
KB04-Tried to influence other's vote in past week (2, wording #1)
KB05-Tried to influence other's vote in past week (2, wording #2)
KB06-Tried to influence other's vote during campaign so far
KB07-Tried to influence other's vote during primary

*Questions asking if respondents had contributed to a candidate*

KD01-Contributed to candidate in past week (1)
KD0-Contributed to candidate in past week (2)
KD04-Contributed to candidate during campaign so far
KD05-Contributed to candidate during primary

*Questions asking if respondents had shown a campaign sign*

KF07-Showed campaign sign in past week
KF09-Showed campaign sign during campaign so far
KF10-Showed campaign sign during primary

High Effort Participation

*Questions asking if respondents had worked for a candidate*

KE02-Worked for candidate in past week (2)
KE04-Worked for candidate during campaign so far
KE05-Worked for candidate during primary

*Questions asking if respondents had attended a political meeting*

KF01-Attended political meeting in past week
KF03-Attended political meeting during campaign so far
KF04-Attended political meeting during primary

**Age**

WA02-Age

Age was recoded as follows:

1- 18-24
2- 25-34
3- 35-44
4- 45-54
5- 55-64
6- 65+

**Income**

WA04-Household income (wording #1)
WA04-Household income (wording #2)

Wording number two was recoded to match wording number 1.

**Race**

WC03-Race

Race was coded 1 for nonwhite and 0 for white.

**Education**

WA03-Education

**Gender**

WA01-Sex

Gender was coded 1 for male and 0 for female.

**Interest**

KA01-How closely following 2008 campaign

Interest was coded on a 5-point Likert scale.

**Political Knowledge**

MC01-Who determines if law is constitutional
MC02-Majority required to override presidential veto
MC03-Party with most members in Congress

Correct answers were coded as 1; incorrect answers—including DK and No Answer—were coded as 0. The resulting knowledge scale ranged from 0 to 3.