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21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY ENGAGEMENT AMONG UCF STUDENTS:  
EXPLORING METRICS & PLATFORMS

by

DANIEL ROBLES DUPREY

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements  
for the Honors in the Major Program in Political Science  
in the College of Sciences  
and in The Burnett Honors College  
at the University of Central Florida  
Orlando, Florida

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Thesis Chair: Dr. Aubrey Jewett

## **ABSTRACT**

This research analyzes the political and social engagement of UCF College of Business students in order to grasp a better understanding of what youth engagement looks like in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Through the implementation of a survey, data is collected on the level of students' social involvement, political participation, and civic engagement – the three vital metrics of citizen engagement. These metrics are then split across the online and offline realm, as well as across key demographics of race, gender identity, political ideology, and party affiliation. Data is also collected about which social media platforms students engage most on, allowing us to understand what demographics of students are participating in society and where they are doing so.

## **DEDICATIONS**

For my family, immediate and extended, who never let me see failure as an option and always put me in a place to succeed. So often we associate our achievements with our efforts, but behind any success is foundation of a support – thank you for always being that bedrock.

For my professor and mentors, thank you for guiding me through the uncertainties of undergrad. Your patience and wisdom have steered me to a brighter future.

For my friends, thank you for all the lifelong memories.

For my late brother, Josue, thank you for being my guardian angel.

For my generation, let's be the change we seek.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

My sincerest gratitude is extended to Dr. Phillip Pollock III, Dr. Aubrey Jewett, and Dr. Carolyn Massiah for your mentorship and patience throughout this process. Thank you for providing me the wisdom to overcome the obstacles of undergraduate research. Special thanks to my older brother Omar for never letting me get complacent and for continuously pushing me to ask bigger questions – not just during this research, but throughout my college career. \*Fist Bump\*

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## CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Contemporary Democratic Theorists have long stressed the importance of an engaged and informed electorate as a means to maintaining a strong democracy - but precisely how we measure that engagement can be rather ambiguous and fluid. In many cases, the terms “political participation” and “civic engagement” have been incorrectly used as synonyms to describe how engaged citizens are. The term civic engagement has been adopted as an all-encompassing buzzword, used to cover everything from voting in an election to participating in a Sunday soccer league, or from attending political rallies to donating money to charity. Often the ambiguity surrounding this term can cause far more confusion than clarity; the breadth of its scope hinders our ability to conduct a precise empirical analysis of the conditions for citizens’ involvement in society. This paper reviews the frameworks that political scientists have used to analyze citizen participation, examines how these frameworks have evolved, and discusses technology’s role in the expansion of these metrics.

As the use of technology has proliferated and becomes more prominent in people’s daily lives, more citizens are turning to social media as a means of socializing with others. This social change in how we communicate information has led to new forms of civic engagement and political participation that were not previously available - the implications of such advancements is a hotly debated topic. In response to these changes, political scientists have begun to expand the scope of these two terms to include both offline and online forms of engagement - this synthesis provides a more comprehensive scope of overall citizen engagement.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Moffett, K. W., & Rice, L. (2016). Web 2.0 and the political mobilization of college students. Lexington Books.

This study will focus on the engagement of one demographic within the American electorate - youth (those between the ages of 18-35). Engagement among this age group, or lack thereof, has been a concern to policy makers and organizations alike. Both scholarly and media accounts have depicted young adults as less engaged in civic life than those older than them.<sup>2</sup> However, young adults are considered to be highly skilled when it comes to technology, especially in regards to the use of social media.<sup>3</sup> Set against this backdrop of contradictions, social science research has discerned the ways in which young adults systematically differ from their elders, and noted the implications that these differences imply for new measurements of engagement in the social and political sphere.

The metrics—the indicators or activities used to measure a behavior of interest—that political scientists have used to define and monitor how engaged citizens are has changed over time. These changes, however, have mostly sought to refine the metrics associated with the offline space—the activities in our non-digital communities. As new digital mediums develop that allow Americans to engage with each other and the political system, the ways we conceptualize and measure citizen engagement will also have to evolve. Building upon existing political frameworks this study aims to shed light on social media’s role in the future of participation in America, specifically among young voters. This study will contribute to a more precise framework for analyzing youth engagement by providing original data on how students of the University of Central Florida (UCF) engage both online and offline, as well as which social media platforms are the most “political”.

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<sup>2</sup> Waternberg, Marvin P. (2011). *Is Voting for Young People?* 3rd Ed. New York, NY: Pearson Longman.

<sup>3</sup> Jones, Sydney, and Susannah Fox (2009). “Generations Online in 2009.” January 28, 2009. <http://pewinternet.org/2009/01/28generations-online-in-2009>

## **CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW**

Before we can discuss political participation and civic engagement among young voters, it is important that I first explain the difference between the two terms and how they have been measured over time. In the process of doing so, I will cover the history of how political scientists have measured offline forms of engagement - a vital step to understanding how online engagement differs from “traditional” forms of participation.

This literature review is divided into three sections. Section I and II will analyze citizen engagement through the lens of political participation and civic engagement respectively, as civic engagement and political participation are related but not synonymous terms. It should be noted here that the important distinction to make among the terms “political participation” and “civic engagement” is not between the use of “participation” versus “engagement”, but rather between “civic” versus “political”. Thus, “political engagement” can be used interchangeably with “political participation”, and vice versa with “civic participation” and “civic engagement”. Furthermore, when I use the term “citizen engagement” I am referring to overall participation as measured by both civic engagement and political participation. That being said, Section I will shed light on how political participation has been measured and how these metrics have changed over time. Section II will then discuss the metrics used to measure civic engagement and how they differentiate from those for political participation. Finally, Section III will discuss the online expansion of participation in America and the implications that these innovations carry in regards to civic engagement and political participation among youth.

## Section I: Citizen Engagement Through the Lens of Political Participation

The most fundamental way of calculating political participation has been in the context of electoral politics. Participation was once defined solely as voting and voting plus some additional campaign activities.<sup>4</sup> In the early 70's, political scientists began to challenge these simplistic metrics of political participation. In *Participation in America: Political Democracy and Social Equality*, Sidney Verba and Norman Nie argued that studies on participation prior to their research had paid little attention to “alternative ways” in which citizens can participate. Verba and Nie were the first researchers to point out that citizens could also, in addition to voting, participate in politics *in-between* elections. Their philosophy on participation challenged previous notions that, “almost all measures of political involvement and participation are highly correlated with one another and for analytical purposes, interchangeable”.<sup>5</sup> Verba and Nie also disagreed with other arguments for “a hierarchy of political acts such that the citizens who engage in the most difficult acts are almost certain to engage in the easier ones”.<sup>67</sup> Rather, *Participation in America: Political Democracy and Social Equality* categorizes all political actions into a framework that differentiates them across four characteristics and classifies actions into four modes based on shared characteristics - thus changing how political participation is measured.

Verba and Nie's study identifies thirteen political acts that cover most of those activities “ordinarily carried on by citizens.” These thirteen acts include, voting in presidential and local

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<sup>4</sup> Verba, Sidney and Norman H. Nie (1972). *Participation in America: Political Democracy and Social Equality*. New York, NY: Harper and Row.

<sup>5</sup> Berelson, Lazarsfeld, McPhee (1954). *Voting*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press: 24.

<sup>6</sup> Robert E. Lane (1959). *Political Life: Why People Get Involved in Politics*. New York, NY: Free Press: 93-94

<sup>7</sup> Lester W. Milbrath (1965). *Political Participation: How and Why do People Get Involved in Politics?* Chicago, IL: Rand McNally: 19 & 22

elections, attending political rallies, working with the community to solve a problem, and contacting government officials; all of which are categorized into four modes of activities. The four modes of political activities include: *voting, campaign activity, communal activities, and particularized contacts*. Voting is the most widespread and regulated political act, and is therefore a mode of activity in-and-of itself. Campaign activities include activities such as working for a party or candidate, attending meetings, contributing money, and trying to influence how others vote. Communal activities cover “any group or organizational activity by citizens to deal with social or political problems.” The last category, Particularized contacts, includes citizen-initiated contacts in which the citizen acts alone or within a small group towards a particular outcome.<sup>8</sup> The four modes of participation represent a significant set of activities; covering a number of ways in which citizens can attempt to influence the government. All told, political actions can be classified into the following modes:

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<sup>8</sup> Verba, Sidney and Norman H. Nie (1972). *Participation in America: Political Democracy and Social Equality*. New York, NY: Harper and Row: 44-56

Table 1 - Modes of Participation as Described by Verba and Nie's Model

Mode of Participation	Actions within Each Mode
Voting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Voting in presidential</li> <li>• Voting in local &amp; state elections</li> </ul>
Campaign activity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Attempting to influence how others vote</li> <li>• Attending political rallies</li> <li>• Contributing money to a political candidate, party, or cause</li> <li>• Working for party or candidate</li> <li>• Joining a group related to a political candidate, party, or cause</li> </ul>
Communal activity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Working with others in the community to solve a communal problem</li> <li>• Taking part in the formation of a community group</li> <li>• Contacting members of the local community about a need or problem within the community.</li> <li>• Contacting State or Federal representatives about a need or problem within the community.</li> </ul>
particularized contacts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Contacting members of the local community about a need or problem of an individual or small group of citizens within the community.</li> <li>• Contacting State or Federal representatives about a need or problem of an individual or small group of citizens within the community.</li> </ul>

In their later work with Jae-on Kim, *Participation and Political Equality: A Seven-Nation Comparison*, Verba and Nie define political participation as "legal acts by private citizens that are more or less directly aimed at influencing the selection of governmental personnel and/or the acts that they take".<sup>9</sup> Verba and Nie's views and metrics are still considered to be one of the most influential and widely accepted positions on political participation. In fact, other definitions from this time were quite similar; Milbrath and Goel defined political participation as "actions of private citizens by which they seek to influence or support government and politics".<sup>10</sup> Kaase and Marsch described the terms as "all voluntary actions by individual citizens intended to influence either directly or indirectly political choices at various levels of the political system".<sup>11</sup>

<sup>9</sup> Verba, Sidney, Norman H. Nie, and Jae-on Kim (1978). *Participation and political equality: a seven-nation comparison*. Cambridge, Eng: Cambridge University Press.

<sup>10</sup> Lester W. Milbrath (1977). *Political Participation: How and Why do People Get Involved in Politics?* Chicago, IL: Rand McNally

<sup>11</sup> Kaase, M., Marsh, A. (1979). *Political Action: A Theoretical Perspective*. London and Beverly Hills: Sage: 27-56

These definitions were all expansionary for their time in that they showed citizens could, in addition to voting, participate in politics *in-between* elections. Their focuses are all still within the scope of the political domain though, and in the words of Nie and Verba, by no means do their metrics, “exhaust all activities in which citizens engage, but do cover most of those activities ordinarily carried on by citizens”.<sup>12</sup> Even more contemporary definitions of political participation resemble that of Verba and Nie’s; In 2007 Teorrel defined the term as “action by ordinary citizens directed toward influencing some political outcomes”.<sup>13</sup>

As innovative as these contributions to the study of citizen engagement in America were at their time of publication, political scientists later began to question if the metrics used to gauge political participation were broad enough to be used as an all-encompassing measurement for citizen engagement in America. As we shall see in the next section, in order to get the full picture of how citizens participate within a country, we must expand our scope outside of the political sphere.

## Section II: Citizen Engagement as Measured by Civic Engagement

Research into the behavior of American voters—of all ages—had traditionally measured overall engagement through the lens of “political participation”. By surveying citizens on how often they engage in a given set of political acts, Verba, Nie, and other political scientists have successfully accounted for the *manifest* forms of participation. These are actions citizens partake in to influence politics and political outcomes in society. Such actions include voting, campaign

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<sup>12</sup> Verba, Sidney and Norman H. Nie (1972). *Participation in America: Political Democracy and Social Equality*. New York, NY: Harper and Row: 46

<sup>13</sup> Teorell, J., Torcal, M. & Montero, J.R., (2007). *Political Participation: Mapping the Terrain*. In J. van Deth, José Ramon Montero, & A. Westholm, eds. Routledge, pp. 334 – 357.



activities, and citizen-initiated contacts - they all occur within the political system. These scales of political participation may have once painted an accurate picture of overall citizen participation in America. However, they fail to cover *latent* forms of engagement, the kind of “pre-political” engagement that Americans are increasingly participating in. This notion of latency is based on, “the simple observation that citizens actually do a lot of things that may not be directly or unequivocally classified as “political participation”, but at the same time could be of great significance for future political activities of a more conventional type”.<sup>14</sup> In order to create a more precise analysis of participation in America, Political Scientists created a distinction between those actions citizens partake in to directly influence government (manifest political participation), and those actions citizens participate in outside of the political sphere that are still valuable to the measurement of overall participation (latent political participation aka civic engagement).

In 1990, American Political Scientist, Robert D. Putnam, made perhaps the most well known contribution to the study of civic engagement. In his work, *Bowling Alone*, Putnam used the term civic engagement to cover just about everything from reading newspapers, social networking and interpersonal trust, to corporate involvement and all actions associated with manifest participation. For Putnam, it was a matter of highlighting the importance of “social capital” as a vital ingredient for a democratic society.<sup>15</sup>

The core idea of social capital theory is that social networks have value too. Putnam used this theory to expand the scope of citizen participation to include actions that were previously

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<sup>14</sup> Ekman, J. & Amnå, E. Humaff (2012). Political Participation and Civic Engagement: Towards a New Typology. Warsaw, Poland: SP Versita. <https://doi.org/10.2478/s13374-012-0024-1>

<sup>15</sup> Putnam, Robert D. 2000. *Bowling alone: the collapse and revival of American community*. New York: Simon & Schuster.

ignored by political scientists. Putnam classified all the ways citizens could participate into the following categories:

- Political participation
- Civic participation
- Religious participation
- Connections in the workplace
- Informal social connections
- Altruism, volunteering, and philanthropy
- Reciprocity, honesty, and trust
- Small groups, social movements, and the net (though during Putnam's research social media had not yet been created, the internet was in its early growth phase)

According to Putnam, all of these categories fit under the broad umbrella of civic engagement. Though his work greatly expanded the scope of research on citizen participation, his definition of the term civic engagement lacked consensus among scholars.

In their 2005 work, Adler and Goggin reviewed existing definitions of civic engagement and concluded that there is no single agreed-upon meaning of the term.<sup>16</sup> Some definitions were more confined in that they restricted civic engagement to include very specific actions, such as community service, collective action and even political involvement - these definitions assume that such engagement most often comes in the form of collaboration to improve conditions in the civil sphere. Some definitions emphasized the aspect of "civic", equating civic engagement with

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<sup>16</sup> Adler, R. P., & Goggin, J. (2005). What Do We Mean By "Civic Engagement"? *Journal of Transformative Education*, 3(3), 236–253

“activities that are not only collective but that are specifically political”.<sup>17</sup> Others, such as Putnam, have chosen to conceptualize the term in far more expansive ways. As political scientist, Berger, points out, such expansive definitions include all sorts of informal social activities alongside associational involvement and political participation.<sup>18</sup>

In their own attempt to conceptualize the term, Adler and Goggin ask us to think of civic engagement as a continuum spanning from the *private* sphere to the formal or *public* sphere. Whereas the private sphere includes individual actions such as simply discussing politics with one’s friends, and the public sphere includes collective actions such as activity within an interest group. Thus, the two political scientists propose their own definition of civic engagement that focuses on “how an active citizen participates in the life of a community in order to improve conditions for others or to help shape the community’s future”.<sup>19</sup>

Though Adler and Goggin’s conceptualization helps bring some clarity to the plethora of definitions for the term civic engagement, it still entails what some Political Scientists consider to be “conceptual stretching.” Essentially, if civic engagement is used by scholars to mean completely different things, it confuses more than it illuminates. With scholarly and media claims of declining levels in “civic engagement” among youth, we must be more clear about what is actually declining.

In 2012, political scientists Joakim Ekman and Erik Amnå attempted to clarify the conceptual stretching and disagreements among political scientists by developing what is

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<sup>17</sup> Adler, R. P., & Goggin, J. (2005). What Do We Mean By “Civic Engagement”? *Journal of Transformative Education*, 3(3), 238.

<sup>18</sup> Berger, Ben (2009). “Political Theory, Political Science and the End of Civic Engagement.” *Perspectives on Politics* 7, no. 2: 335–50. doi:10.1017/S153759270909080X.

<sup>19</sup> Adler, R. P., & Goggin, J. (2005). What Do We Mean By “Civic Engagement”? *Journal of Transformative Education*, 3(3), 241.

arguably the most comprehensive typology of overall citizen engagement. Through the distinction between *latent* and *manifest* forms of political participation, as well as between *individual* and *collective* forms of engagement, they construct a matrix to highlight distinct forms of citizen behavior.<sup>20</sup>

The theory behind the distinction between *individual* and *collective* forms of engagement is based on two notions. One being that liberal democracy is rooted in the idea of *individual* political liberties, but at the same time on the idea of political *representation*. The other notion being that over the last two decades there has been a sociological debate about the value changes among citizens in the postmodern society from collective identities (social class, party identity, etc.), to various individual identities. With these changes in identities comes different forms of political behavior - citizens have begun to move away from traditional channels of political participation and have moved towards “life politics”.<sup>21</sup> Through this type of political behavior, people decide for themselves when and how to get involved in politics - and “traditional” institutions, such as political parties, are not always considered the most appropriate channels.<sup>22</sup>

Unlike other typologies, Ekman and Amnå’s creates both a distinction and cohesion between the terms political participation and civic engagement that are “theory driven” rather than “indicator driven”. The difference here lies in their argument that as societal and political changes have occurred, models have simply expanded as a response to cover increasingly more aspects of political participation. By introducing the notion of “latent” political participation,

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<sup>20</sup> Ekman, J. & Amnå, E. Humaff (2012). Political Participation and Civic Engagement: Towards a New Typology. Warsaw, Poland: SP Versita. <https://doi.org/10.2478/s13374-012-0024-1>

<sup>21</sup> Inglehart, R., Welzel, C. (2005). Modernization, Cultural Change, and Democracy: The Human Development Sequence. New York: Cambridge University Press.

<sup>22</sup> Beck, U. (1992). Risk Society: Towards a New Modernity. London and New Dehli: Sage.

these two political scientists vitalize a theoretical debate for literature on the study of political participation and civic engagement.

Ekman and Amnå define manifest participation as all actions directed towards influencing governmental decisions and political outcomes - it is goal oriented, rational, observable, and can be measured straightforwardly. In their typology, they divide manifest forms of participation into two groups: *formal* political participation and *extra-parliamentary* political participation. Formal participation includes actions, both collective and individual, that are taken within the parliamentary sphere. These include actions covered by Verba and Nie, such as voting, “contact activities”, running for office, and membership to a political party, trade union, or any organization with a distinct political agenda. However, Ekman and Amnå point out that not all manifest participation takes place within these frameworks of institutions or towards the conventional actors within them. Extra-parliamentary participation covers the activities that citizens partake in to influence the political agenda that occur outside of the traditional channels - sometimes referred to as protest behavior.

According to Ekman and Amnå, if we want to understand the conditions for participation in different countries, we must not overlook the latent forms of political behavior. These are forms of engagement that do not formally relate to the political or parliamentary sphere, but that nevertheless could be seen as “pre-political”. Under their typology, Ekman and Amnå label these latent actions as “Civil participation”. Just as they do with manifest participation, Ekman and Amnå divide latent political participation (civil participation) into two categories - *Civic engagement* and *Social Involvement*. It’s important to note that manifest “political participation” does not unequivocally presuppose “civic engagement”. Ekman and Amnå point out that

different forms of civic engagement could very well be strongly correlated with specific political activities, but their main focus was to simply map out the different types of political and civil participation. The two political scientists simply provide us with a way of ordering our thinking in terms of actions we can empirically study.

*Civic Engagement* refers to “actions by ordinary citizens that are intended to influence circumstances in society that is of relevance to others, outside of their own family and close friends.<sup>23</sup> Examples of such actions include, discussing politics, following political issues, and recycling for environmental reasons. Civic engagement can also be done at the collective level - for example, people can organize together to solve local problems or improve conditions for different groups in society.

*Social Involvement* encompasses an individual’s attention to, and interest in, social and political issues - collective forms include identifying with a political party or ideology. Ekman and Amnå are unique in that they make this distinction between engagement and involvement. For many political scientists before them, the notion of engagement included attention and interest in politics by default. Ekman and Amnå believe that distinguishing between the two is important because they are two different empirical phenomena - one is measured through the metrics of political efficacy, while the other is measured by a list of self-reported activities. Furthermore, if one wanted to make the argument that involvement is a precursor to engagement, the two terms must be differentiated for analytical purposes.

Finally, it is worth mentioning that Ekman and Amnå also create a category of *disengagement* to also include the opposite of engagement. Those who fall into this category of

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<sup>23</sup> Adler, R.P., Goggin, J. (2005). What Do We Mean By “Civic Engagement”? *Journal of Transformative Education* 3 (3), 241

disengagement are those that either actively or passively do not care about politics, elections of political parties. Active political disengagement is when a person is not only uninterested in politics, they are also appalled with the system and purposefully avoid getting involved. Passive political disengagement is when a person is simply uninterested in politics and hold no strong opinions on issues - it is *apolitical* as opposed to the *anti-political* orientation of active disengagement.

As we can see, the metrics used to measure overall citizen engagement have changed over time. As I will discuss in the next section, online platforms have expanded the ways in which citizens can participate in politics that do not fit these traditional metrics - forms of participation that have multiple implications for youth involvement in both social and political spheres.

### Section III: Online Expansions of Engagement & What They Mean for Youth

A staple of literature on voting behavior is that those 18-35 years of age vote at much lower rates their older counterparts. Furthermore, these same accounts show that young adults (18-35) are also less likely to engage in other ways, such as participating in protests, contacting government officials, and contributing to or working for political campaigns.<sup>24,25</sup> However, these metrics are those of traditional political participation. If we solely focus on youth engagement through this lens, then scholarly and media accounts are correct in saying that younger people are disengaged when compared to their older peers.

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<sup>24</sup> Miller, Warren E. and J. Merrill Shanks 1996. *The New American Voter*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

<sup>25</sup> Teixeira, Ruy 1987. *Why Americans Don't Vote*. New York, NY: Greenwood Press.

If we expand our scope to include online mediums, we may find a different reality. According to the Pew Research Center, 90% of youth actively engages on social media—a 78 percentage-point increase since 2005.<sup>26</sup> Engagement is high across platforms: 88% have a Facebook, 59% have an Instagram, and 36% have a Twitter account.<sup>27</sup> Social media is an inescapable pillar of adolescent and youth development. On any given day, teens in the United States spend about nine hours using media.<sup>28</sup> Social media facilitates communication with friends. Youth consumes news, keeps up with pop culture, and interacts with new ideas. This online engrossment shapes their views and influences their actions. Social media’s pervasiveness is also an opportunity. Facebook’s Timelines, Twitter’s Feeds and Snapchat’s Stories have given youth a way to express their opinions and to interact with new ideas - opening up new forms of political participation and civic engagement that were not previously available.

Of course, there is a counterargument to implications of these low cost methods of engagement. Some political researchers have dismissed online forms of participation as “slackavism” - claiming that these low costs carry with them low impact.<sup>29</sup> However, new research provides evidence to show that online participation can lead directly to engaging in greater levels offline engagement, and vice versa.<sup>30</sup> This rotating door between online and offline forms of engagement carry many mobilization implications with it that could be utilized in political campaigns.

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<sup>26</sup> Perrin, A. (2015, October 08). Social Media Usage: 2005-2015. <http://www.pewinternet.org/2015/10/08/social-networking-usage-2005-2015/>

<sup>27</sup> Greenwood, S., Perrin, A., & Duggan, M. (2016, November 11). Social Media Update 2016. <http://www.pewinternet.org/2016/11/11/social-media-update-2016/>

<sup>28</sup> Wallace, K. (2015, November 03). Teens spend 9 hours a day using media, report says. <http://www.cnn.com/2015/11/03/health/teens-tweens-media-screen-use-report/>

<sup>29</sup> Morozov, Evgeny 2009. “Iran: Downside to the ‘Twitter Revolution.’” Dissent Fall 2009 10-14

<sup>30</sup> Moffett, K. W., & Rice, L. (2016). Web 2.0 and the political mobilization of college students. Lexington Books.



To recap, original metrics of citizen engagement were limited to those actions aimed at directly influencing government officials and the decisions that they make (political participation). Then these metrics were expanded to include forms of engagement that do not formally relate to the political or parliamentary sphere, but that nevertheless could be seen as “pre-political”. Now, in order to get the full picture of how citizens engage, we have begun to expand our scope to include the online realm. Due to the mobilization implications of this expansion and the level at which young adults are engaged in online platforms, I believe this research into the political behaviors of UCF College of Business students will help to provide insight into what equates citizen engagement in the 21st century.

## CHAPTER 3: THEORY & HYPOTHESIS

As I have stated in the literature review, much research has been done into the different ways citizens participate in democracy. As online platforms have begun to expand how we connect in the world, they have also provided new forms of citizen engagement. Many of these new forms are simply online methods of achieving offline engagement, such as contributing to campaigns online, contacting government officials online, discussing politics online, and joining online political groups. However, these new forms of participation come at much lower costs than those that preceded them. For instance, someone can post their thoughts in 280 characters on twitter and reach a much larger audience than they would if they did so offline - and they can do so all through their fingertips on a device connected to the internet, no matter the location. Thus these low cost forms of engagement allow for individuals to engage socially and politically through mechanisms that do not require more formal commitments, such as going to a physical event/location, spending money, or any other significant changes in their daily lives. Consequently, the low costs associated with online engagement may appeal to a population which doesn't have the time and/or resources to engage in more costly forms of engagement - inherently offline forms. In this aspect, online forms of engagement opens the door for 90% of American youth to participate in the political sphere at the touch of a button — through platforms they engage with for several hours daily. It is for these reasons that I believe my research will find higher levels of both political participation and civic engagement in the online realm among UCF College of Business students.

Furthermore, as Ekman and Amnå point out, there is a sociological debate about the value changes among citizens in the postmodern society from collective identities to various

individual identities. With these changes in identities comes different forms of political behavior - citizens have begun to move away from traditional channels of political participation and have moved towards “life politics”. Through this type of political behavior, people decide for themselves when and how to get involved in politics - and “traditional” institutions, such as political parties, are not always considered the most appropriate channels. It is because of this debate, that I believe my research will find higher levels of civic engagement among UCF College of Business students, over traditional forms of political participation. It is also for this reason this reason that I believe I will find high levels of independence from political parties among my sample, partnered with relatively high levels of political efficacy - two indicators of social involvement. As the Center for Information and Research Civic Learning and Engagement found in 2018 poll, young people’s political energy and engagement does not necessarily translate to party membership.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> CIRCLE "CIRCLE Poll: Young People's Ambivalent Relationship with Political Parties." CIRCLE RSS, October 24, 2018. <https://civicyouth.org/circle-poll-young-peoples-ambivalent-relationship-with-political-parties/>

## CHAPTER 4: METHODOLOGY

In order to grasp a better understanding of how college youth engages in the technological era, I implemented an original survey through the computer lab at UCF's College of Business (N=220). Respondents were primarily College of Business students who elected to take the survey as an alternative extra credit assignment. Each student took the survey on a computer in a controlled lab environment while being monitored by a lab administrator.

The survey was comprised of 28 questions that were aimed at gathering information about how the respondents participate both online and offline, as well as important demographics of each respondent. The survey start by asking about general social media usage, then platform-specific questions, questions about offline engagement, questions about issue importance, followed by questions about political efficacy and voting habits, and lastly I asked some self-identifying questions to allow me to break responses down by important demographics. For the full survey refer to Appendix A.

The first question asked respondents "on which of the following social media platforms do you have an account." I ask this for two reasons - to gauge which social media platforms are the most popular among respondents and to make sure respondents did not receive platform specific questions about social media sites that they do not use. The following four questions ask about "follow activities" of the respondents - asking students if they followed government officials, politically-oriented pages, and political candidates, as well as on which platforms they follow them on. Question 6 asked students if they use social media as a news source for politics and current events, as well as how often they do so and on which platforms. Questions 7 then asked students how credible they find news to be on the platforms they use to stay informed.

These questions are important to understanding students' levels of civic engagement, as following political issues is a form of civic engagement that has been made more available through online platforms. However, in the "age of misinformation", where what you believe depends on who you know (and who you follow), it is important to also understand how credible students believe information on social media to be.

Following questions about general online activities, questions 8-11 then asked students platform-specific questions based on the accounts they selected to have in question 1. These questions ask about how often they engage in a list of activities that cover both political participation and civic engagement on the various platforms. These actions range from "liking" a post related to a current event in politics, to contacting government officials through social media platforms, and many more. The 5-point scale of frequency ranged from "never" partaking in the act, to partaking in the act "very often" (6 or more times a month). In categorizing each action as political participation or civic engagement, I referred to the typology laid out by Ekman and Amnå to decide which category each action fit under best. Deciding what actions to question students on was partly inspired by the research conducted by Moffett and Rice, as well as personal experience with each platform. The platforms that I chose to ask questions about include Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, and Snapchat as these are considered to be the "big four". The complete typology I used to classify actions which citizens can partake in is as seen in Table 3.

Table 2 — Typology Used for this Survey

Citizen Engagement				
Social Involvement	Civic Engagement		Political Participation	
Online & Offline	Online	Offline	Online	Offline
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Follow social media accounts of government officials</li> <li>Follow social media account of political candidates</li> <li>Follow "politically-oriented" pages on social media</li> <li>Use online news sources to stay up to date with current events                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Express political Knowledge</li> <li>Express political Interest</li> <li>Identify with a political ideology</li> <li>Identify with a political party</li> <li>Identify political issues as important</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>"Like" or promote material related to a political or social issue</li> <li>Share material related to a political or social issue</li> <li>Post original comments about a political or social issue</li> <li>Encourage others to take action on a political or social issue online</li> <li>Engage in online political discussion</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Contact a newspaper, radio, or TV talk show to express your opinion on an issue</li> <li>Work with a group to solve a problem in a community</li> <li>Make a purchasing decision based on the conduct or values of a company</li> <li>Engaged in a political discussion with someone</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Contact your government representative about an issue facing society online (political or non-political)</li> <li>Contact your government representative about a personal need online (political or non-political)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Wear a campaign button or shirt, put a campaign sticker on car, or placed a sign in your window or in front of residence</li> <li>Talk to people and explain why they should vote for or against one of the parties or candidates                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Attend any political meetings, rallies, speeches, dinners, or things like that in support of a particular candidate</li> </ul> </li> <li>Participate in political activities such as protests, marches, or demonstrations</li> <li>Work or volunteer on a political campaign for a candidate or party                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Contact or visit someone in government who represents your community</li> </ul> </li> <li>Contribute money to a political candidate, party, or affiliated organization</li> <li>Contact your government official about a social or political issue</li> </ul>

Traditionally, questions about the frequency of political participation and civic engagement are asked on the timeline of “over the past year.” However, due to the instant gratification of social media and the high usage of platforms among youth on a daily basis, I elected to ask these platforms-specific questions on the timeline of “during the average month.” It is my intention that this will allow me to gauge the general online engagement of students, as opposed to actions taken over the last 12 months.

Following the questions asked about online activities, I move towards questions about the offline space. Question 12 asked students how often they engaged in a list of offline activities that cover both civic engagement and political participation. However, for these questions I elected to maintain the standard timeline of “over the past year” - which may hinder my ability to come up with precise conclusions about the levels of offline engagement to online engagement, however I believe general trends will still be comparable.

The remaining questions ask students about what issues are important to them, their political efficacy, voting behaviors, and about some self-identifying characteristics. Question 13

asked students how important a list of issues are in influencing who they vote for. Questions 14-21 then ask students questions about their age, race, gender identity, academic major, and who they voted for in the 2016 and 2018 elections. Questions 22 and 23 ask questions about students' political efficacy, including how interested they are in politics and how knowledgeable they feel on the topic. Finally, questions 24-28 ask students about their party affiliation and political ideology. Students that picked "moderate" as their ideology were asked to pick if they identified as more liberal or conservative leaning, and students who picked Democrat or Republican for their party affiliation were asked how strongly they identify with their party.

After conducting the survey, I used Microsoft Excel to analyze the results - primarily utilizing Excel's pivot table and histogram function to visualize the data. I collected responses from 223 students. However, three respondents fell out of the 18-35 age range I was seeking to study, so I omitted their responses from the results. Due to the sample size of 220 respondents, the results of this survey are specific to the UCF College of Business. Nevertheless, it is my hope that the results of this survey will be useful for analyzing youth participation at a broader level in the future.

In order to answer the questions of whether students are engaged more online than offline, I first had to measure levels of engagement for both realms. To do this I took all the questions I asked about how frequent students engaged in certain online activities and recoded the responses to a simple "yes" or "no". I then coded a student as "engaged" on a platform if they had taken part in any classified action on that platform. I performed this recoding for engagement on each social media platform, across all platforms, as well as for offline actions, while maintaining the distinction between civic engagement and political participation for both realms.

After doing this, I then broke down all engagement by the demographics of party affiliation, political ideology, race/ethnicity, and gender identity. It is important to note here that when analyzing the data by gender identity I only broke down the results by male and female, as the sample size of transgender students was too small to make any definitive conclusions. It is for this same reason that I also limited my breakdown of party affiliation to Democrats, Republicans, and Independents; my breakdown of political ideology to liberals, conservatives, and moderates; and my breakdown of race/ethnicity to black, white, and Hispanic - the sample sizes for other demographics were far too small to make conclusions with. However, you can find the full demographic breakdown of the sample in appendix B.

In order to measure social involvement among UCF College of Business students I asked questions about students' political efficacy, political ideology, and party affiliation, as Ekman and Amnå identify these as measurement of this type of participation. These metrics are unique in that they are characteristics which transcend the online/offline divide. Therefore, there is no comparison to be made about "offline social involvement" versus "online social involvement."

In order to get an understanding of overall citizen engagement that includes the online space, I conducted a "yes" or "no" count for all actions I surveyed about. If students participated in any of the actions I asked about, they are coded as having participated in an act of citizen engagement, as this is the broad umbrella that all actions of civic engagement and political participation fall under.

The data analysis I conducted limits me to identifying general trends in the data. Due to time limitations, I was unable to conduct a thorough regression analysis of the data - which would allow for a more in depth analysis for factors that drive students to participate in the ways



that they do and testing whether there is a connection between engaging online and engaging offline. The overall point of the analysis I have conducted here is to dissect how UCF College of Business students are participating both politically and civically, as well as whether that engagement is happening primarily in the online or offline space. The data analysis I have conducted also allows me to see which social media platforms have the highest levels of engagement.

## **CHAPTER 5: RESULTS & ANALYSIS**

The results section of this paper will be broken down as follows - first, I will provide a breakdown of the respondents by key demographics of age, race, gender identity, academic major, and by platforms that they have accounts on. Then I will delve into social involvement among UCF College of Business students, discussing how they identify ideological and with which party, as well as their levels of political efficacy, news consumption, follow activities, and issue importance. Following this, I will analyze the results for levels of political participation among the students I surveyed, breaking it down by overall offline engagement versus overall online engagement, engagement across platforms, and engagement across some key demographics. Lastly, I will repeat this process for levels of civic engagement among respondents.

## Section I: Key Demographics of Respondents

### A. Age

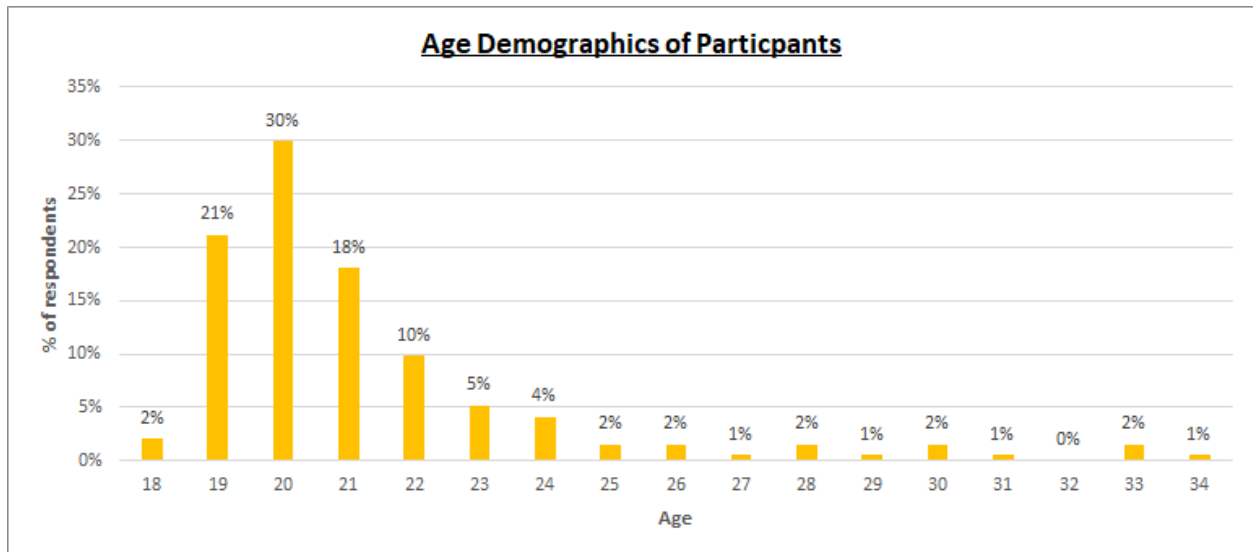


Figure 1 - Age Demographics of Participants (N=194)

The average age of respondents for this survey was 21 years old, with students ranging in age from 18-34. This is exactly what I was looking for, as the target age group for this survey was young adults (18-35).

*B. Gender Identity*

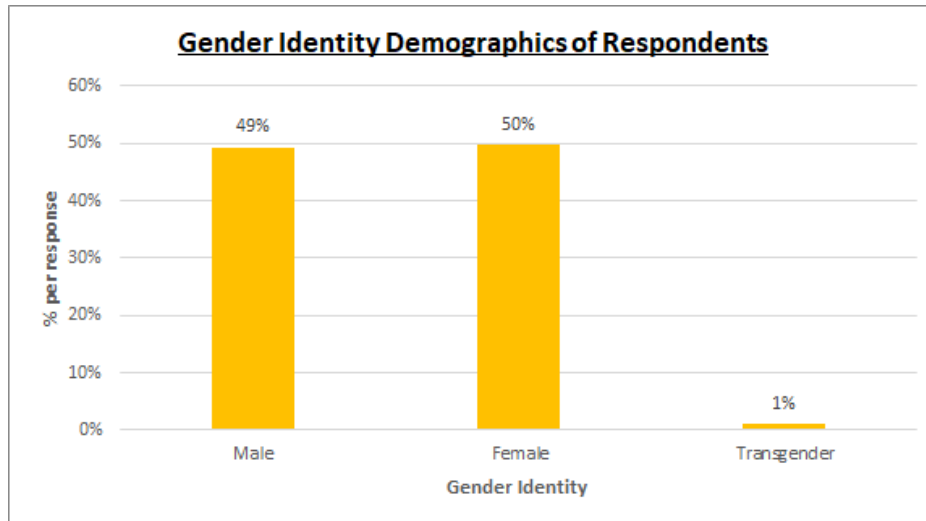


Figure 2 - Gender Identity Demographics of Respondents (N=195)

The breakdown of gender identity was 49% male, 50% female, and 1% transgender. This is fairly representative of the student body as females make up 55.1% of the student population whereas males make up 44.9%, according to the UCF Race and Gender Demographics 2016 Report.

### C. Race/Ethnicity

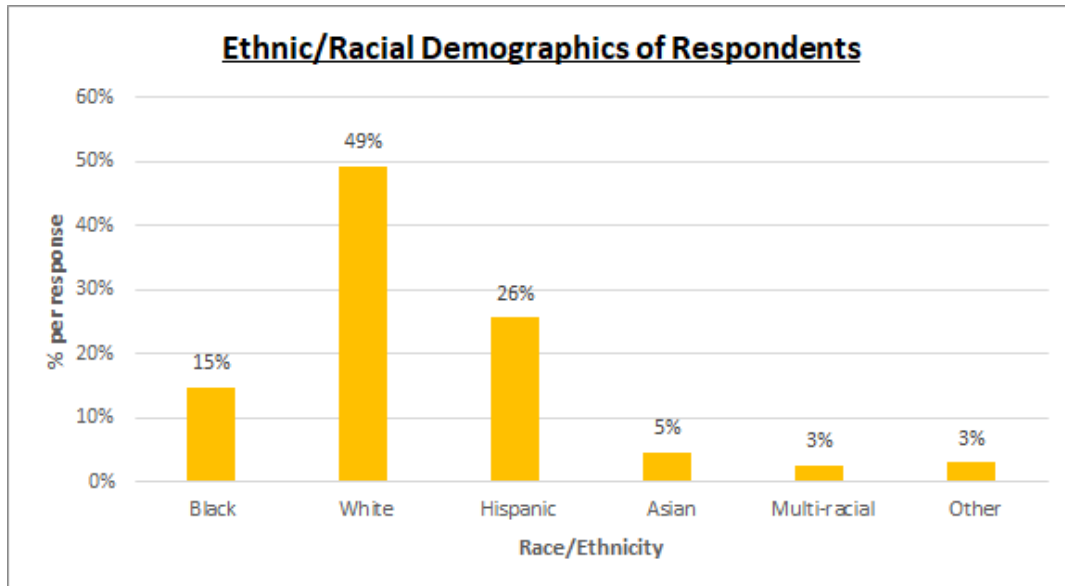


Figure 3 - Ethnic/Racial Demographics of Respondents (N=195)

Among those surveyed 15% were black, 49% were white, 26% were Hispanic, 5% were Asian, 3% multiracial, and 3% identified as other. This is again representative of the general student body at UCF as more than half of the student body is comprised of white students (52.8%). Hispanic/Latino students make up 22.5% of the student population followed by black/African American (10.9%), Asian (5.8%), multiracial (3.3%), according to the UCF Race and Gender Demographics 2016 Report.<sup>32</sup>

<sup>32</sup> <https://diversity.ucf.edu/files/2015/02/UCF-Race-and-Gender-Demographics-2016-report.pdf>

*D. Academic Major*

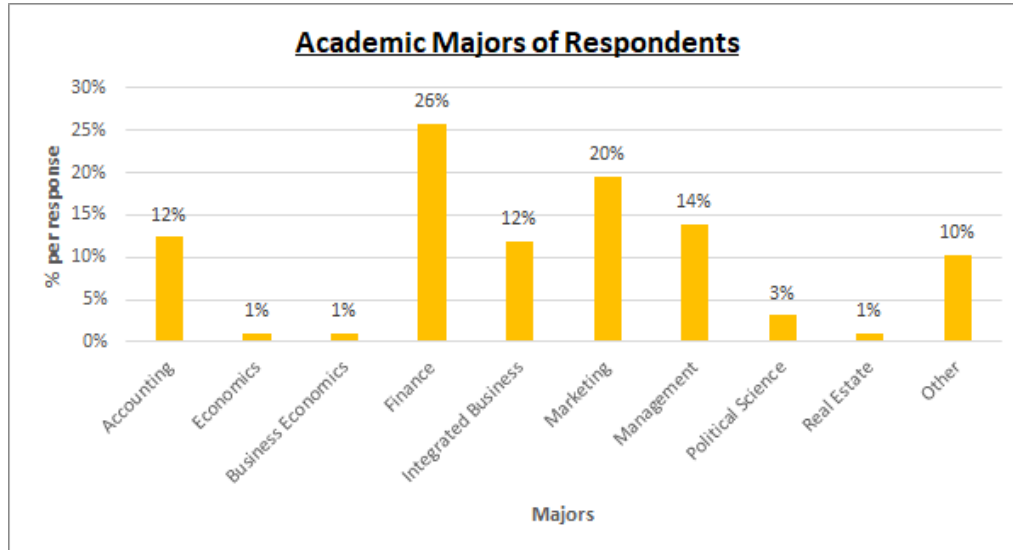


Figure 4 - Academic Majors of Respondents (N=194)

In regard to split by academic major, 12% were accounting majors, 2% were economics majors, 26% finance majors, 12% integrated business majors, 20% marketing majors, 14% management majors, 3% political science majors, 1% real estate majors, and 10% “other.”

### E. Platform Accounts

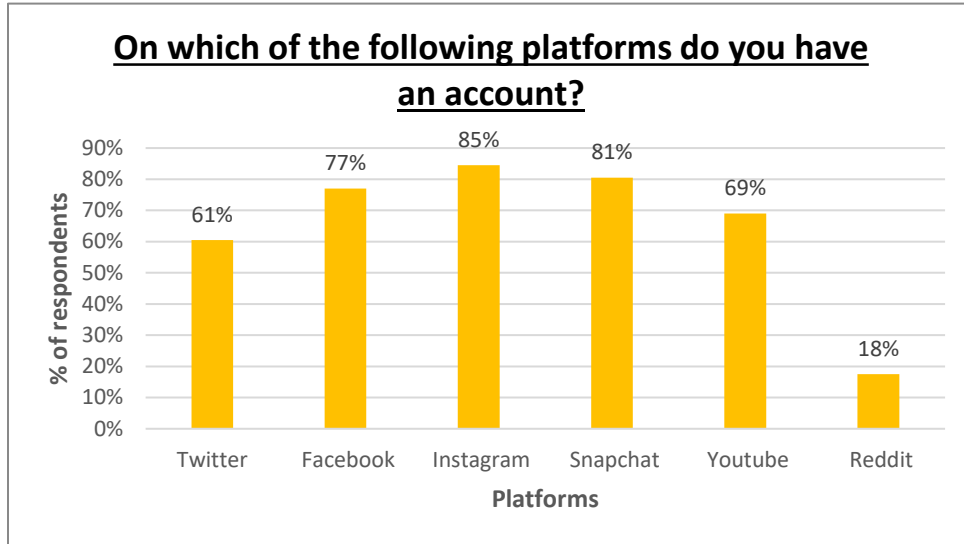


Figure 5 - Platform Accounts of Students (N=200)

The most popular platform among students surveyed is Instagram, followed closely by Snapchat. By far the least popular platform was Reddit, with only 18% of students having an account on the online community. It will be interesting to see if popularity of platforms will lead to higher levels of engagement on them, or if the less utilized platforms will have more active communities.

### Section II: Social Involvement Among College of Business Students

Social involvement is an important aspect to citizen engagement that encompasses an individual's attention to, and interest in, social and political issues. Collective forms include identifying with a political party or ideology, while individual forms include levels of political efficacy and knowledge. Previously, these forms of identity were merely considered characteristics of citizens, however under new typologies these forms of involvement are argued

to be precursors to engagement - which is why I chose to cover it before delving into political participation and civic engagement.

### A. Party Affiliation

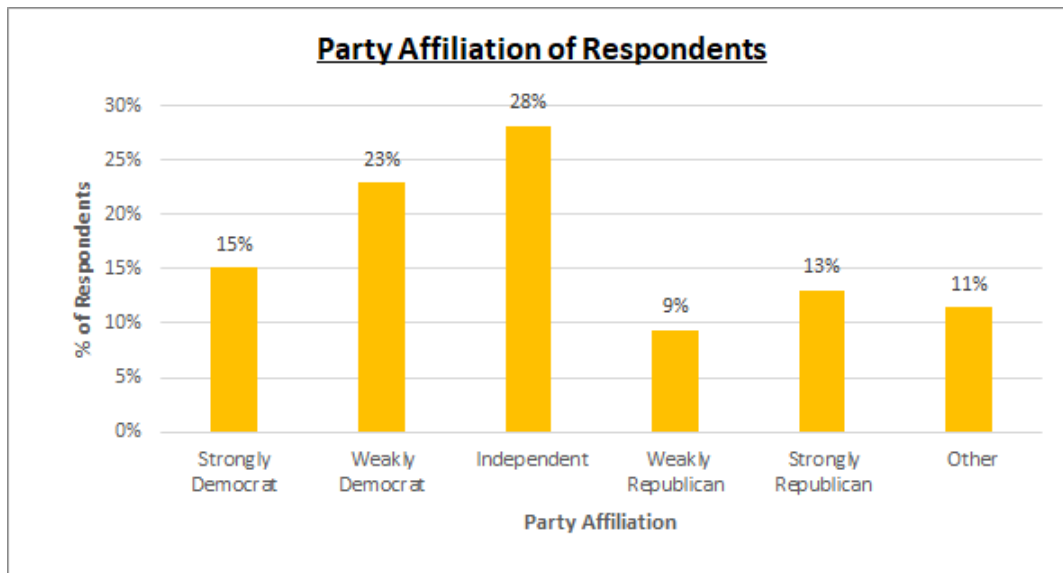


Figure 6 - Party Affiliation of Respondents (N=192)

When looking at the party affiliation breakdown of the survey respondents we find a rather even spread with 38% of respondents identifying as Democrats, 28% as independents, 22% as Republican, and 11% identifying as other. There are several factors at play that could lead to this even spread - one being that Florida is a very “purple” state in and of itself with a state-wide party split of 35% Republican, 37% Democrat, 1% minority party, and 27% Independent, according to the Florida Division of Elections. However, this is not just a Florida phenomena, as young adults across the country are more likely than their elders to identify as independents.<sup>33</sup> According to the Center for Information and Research on Civic Learning and Engagement, the

<sup>33</sup> “Trends in Party Affiliation among Demographic Groups.” Pew Research Center for the People and the Press, 18 Sept. 2018, <https://www.people-press.org/2018/03/20/1-trends-in-party-affiliation-among-demographic-groups/>



tepid embrace of political parties appears to be driven by doubts that the parties represent their views and interests and skepticism about their efficacy. The same study also finds that many partisan youth also have a dim view of their party's establishment. All these factors may explain why respondents are evenly spread across party lines.

*B. Political Ideology*

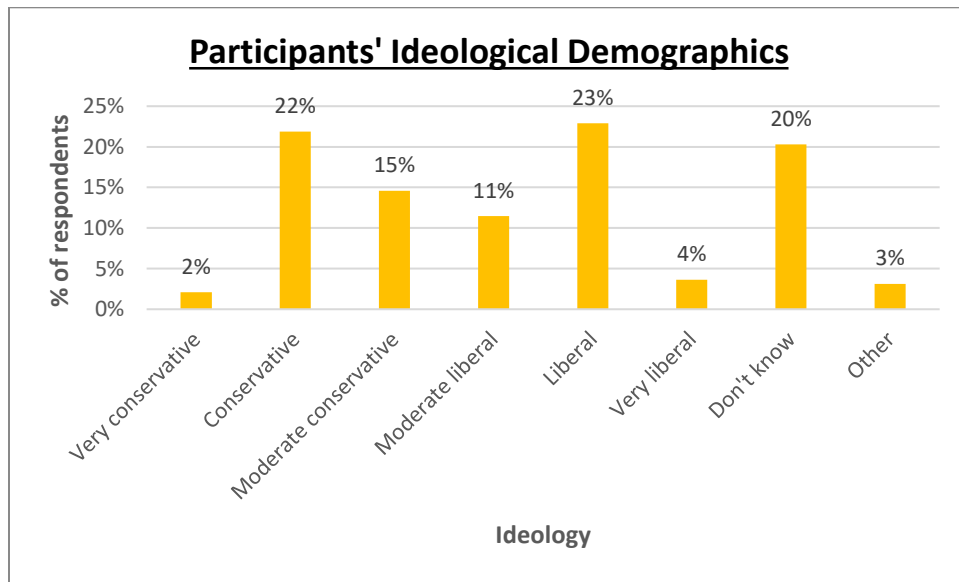


Figure 7 - Participants' Ideological Demographics (N=192)

When looking at how students identify with certain political ideologies and how strongly they do so, we also find a relatively even spread. An interesting thing to point out here is the high number of students who said that they don't know their political ideology (20%). It would be easy to pin this on a lack of political knowledge, however this may be due to the same factors that drive students away from political parties. Unfortunately, this is not something we test in this study but is something of interest for future studies

### C. Interest in Politics

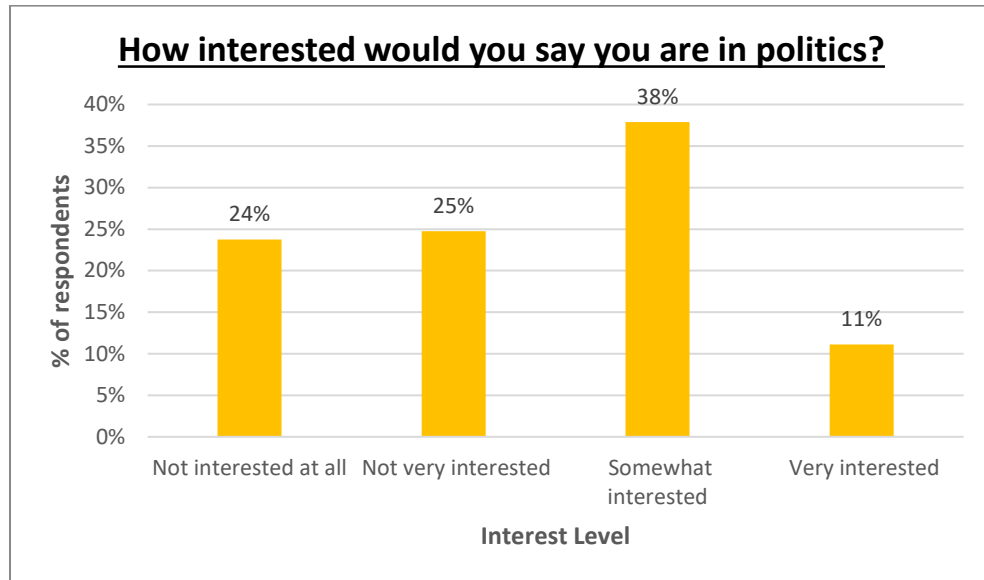


Figure 8 - Interest in Politics Among Respondents (N=193)

Interest in politics is arguably a major requirement for engaging both civically and politically. When students were asked how interested they are in politics, about a quarter of them said that they were not interested in all (24%). Meanwhile, 11% said they were very interested in politics, 38% said they were somewhat interested, and 25% said they were not very interested. That means that half of the respondents either don't care at all or only slightly care about politics (49%). Considering these results one might expect low levels of political participation and civic engagement. However, when we look at questions of political efficacy and issue importance, we see somewhat contradicting results.

D. Issue Importance

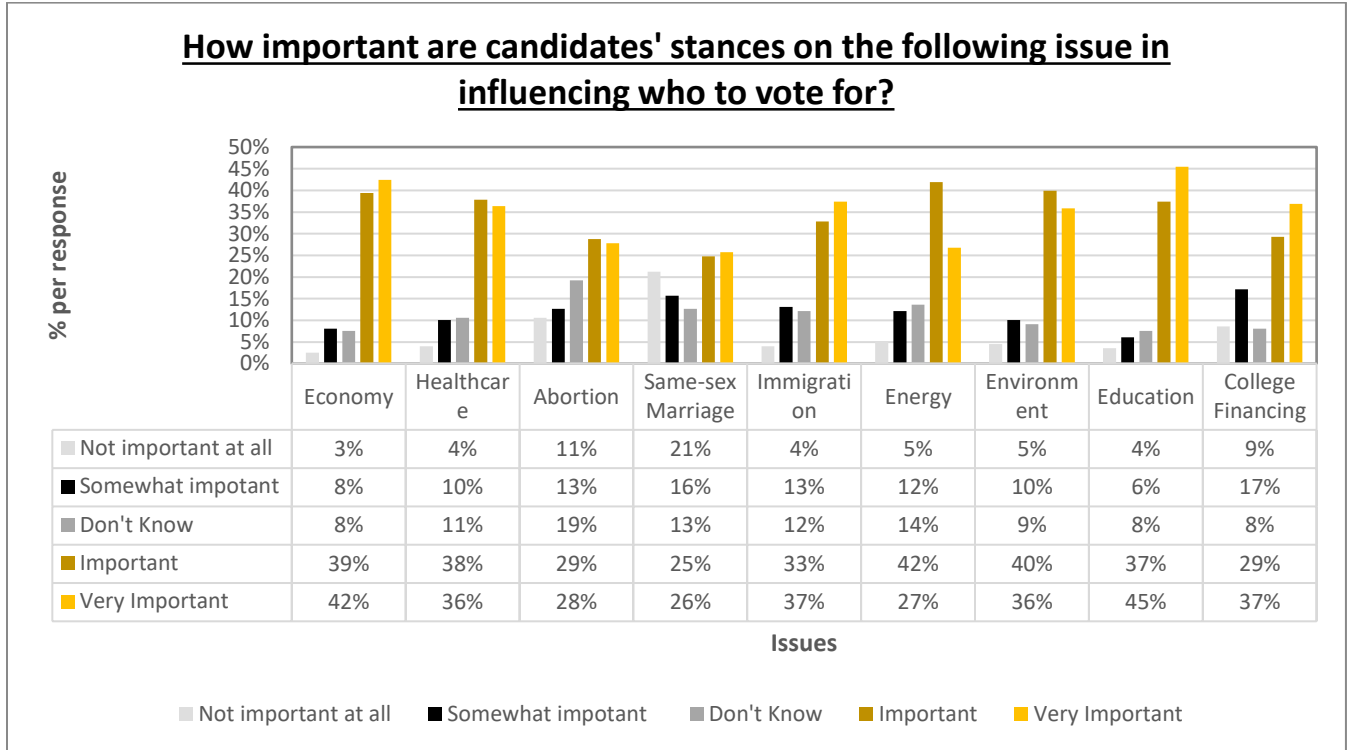


Figure 9 - Importance of Issues to Respondents (N=198)

Another way in which I measured for social involvement was gauging how important different political issues were in influencing who students vote for. As you can see from figure 9, students placed high levels of importance on essentially every issue they were surveyed on. Unsurprisingly, education was the issue of most importance to students with 83% of students declaring it important or very important, as this is an issue that students have a direct stake in. The issue of least importance to students was same-sex marriage. However, this is not due to a lack of support for the issue – according to Pew Research Center, 74% of young people favor

same-sex marriage.<sup>34</sup> The fact that students place high importance on such a broad range of issues may in fact lead to higher levels of civic engagement and political participation.

### E. Political Efficacy

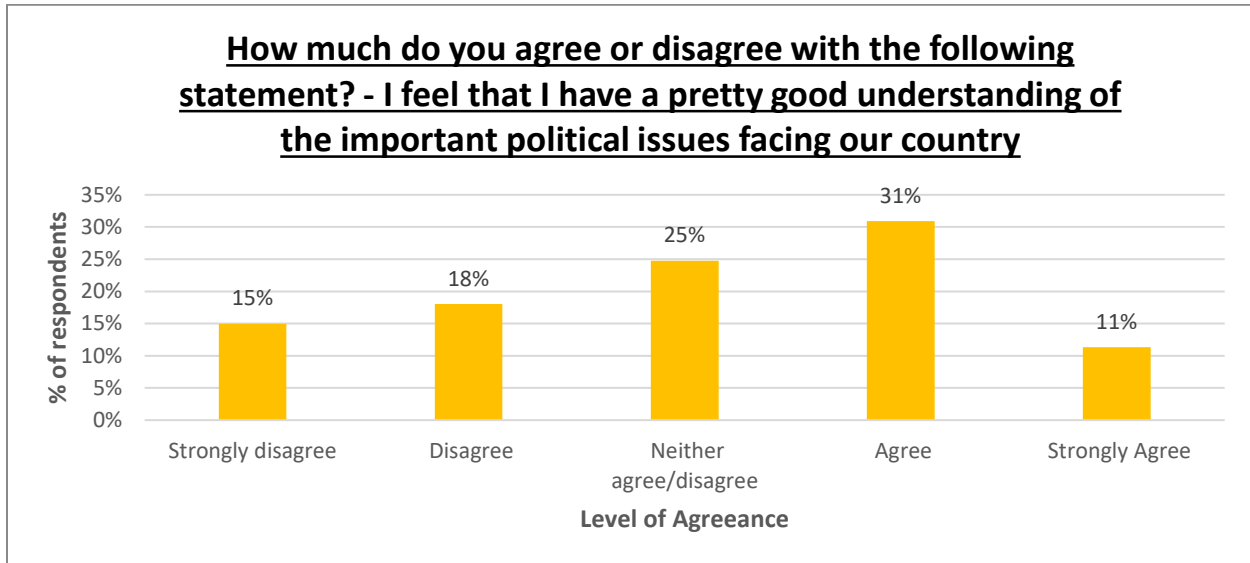


Figure 10 - Political Efficacy of Respondents as Measured by Issue Knowledge (N=194)

Political efficacy is a measure of belief that one can understand and influence political affairs – higher levels of political efficacy tend to associate with higher levels of engagement.<sup>35</sup> As you can see in Figure 10, 42% of students believe that they have “a pretty good understanding of the important political issues facing our country” – a relatively good sign for political efficacy among the respondents.

<sup>34</sup> “Changing Attitudes on Same-Sex Marriage.” Pew Research Center’s Religion & Public Life Project, May 14, 2019. <https://www.pewforum.org/fact-sheet/changing-attitudes-on-gay-marriage/>.

<sup>35</sup> Reichert, Frank. “How Internal Political Efficacy Translates Political Knowledge Into Political Participation: Evidence From Germany.” *Europe’s journal of psychology* vol. 12,2 221-41. 31 May. 2016, doi:10.5964/ejop.v12i2.1095

*F. News Consumption and Credibility*

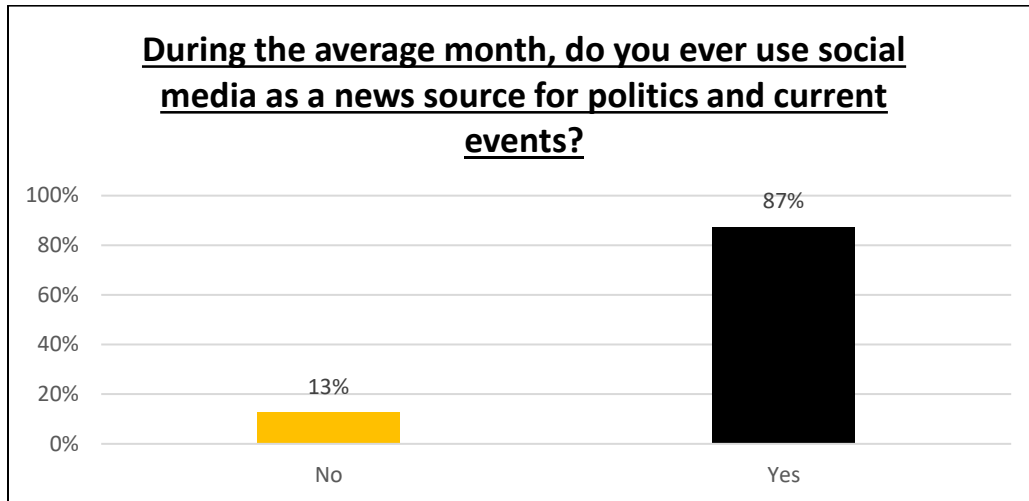


Figure 11 - Online News Consumption Among Students (N=198)

Social involvement encompasses a person’s attention to politics, so a natural online expansion of this metric would be online news consumption. As seen in Figure 11, 83% of students are socially involved in this way - this has important implications regarding elections. In the 2016 presidential election between Candidates Donald Trump and Hilary Clinton, there was a mass spread of misinformation online lead by Russia to influence our elections – most of which occurred on social media platforms.<sup>36</sup> With this in mind, it is not enough to look at how many students are using social media as a news source, it is also important to see how credible students believe the news to be.

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<sup>36</sup> Parlapiano, Alicia, and Jasmine C. Lee. “The Propaganda Tools Used by Russians to Influence the 2016 Election.” The New York Times, The New York Times, 17 Feb. 2018, <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2018/02/16/us/politics/russia-propaganda-election-2016.html>

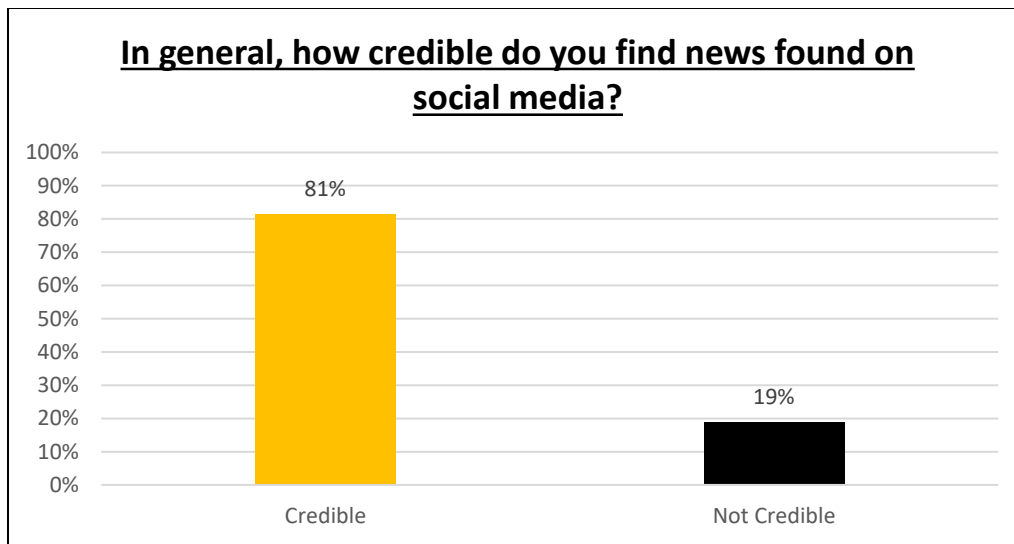


Figure 12 - Belief of Online News Credibility Among Respondents (N=198)

Figure 12 shows that 81% of students that use social media as a source of news believe the news found on these platforms to be credible. This can be dangerous, as social media platforms are already preparing for more disinformation campaigns ahead of the 2020 presidential election, and without properly vetting information on social media student can be easily susceptible to these campaigns.<sup>37</sup>

However, I took a step further and investigated what platforms students were gathering their information from, how often they were gathering this information, and how credible they found news on each platform. The results can be found in Figures 13 & 14.

<sup>37</sup> Isaac, Mike. "Facebook Finds New Disinformation Campaigns and Braces for 2020 Torrent." The New York Times, The New York Times, 21 Oct. 2019, <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/10/21/technology/facebook-disinformation-russia-iran.html>.

**During an average month, how often do you use the following social media platforms as a news source for politics and current events?**

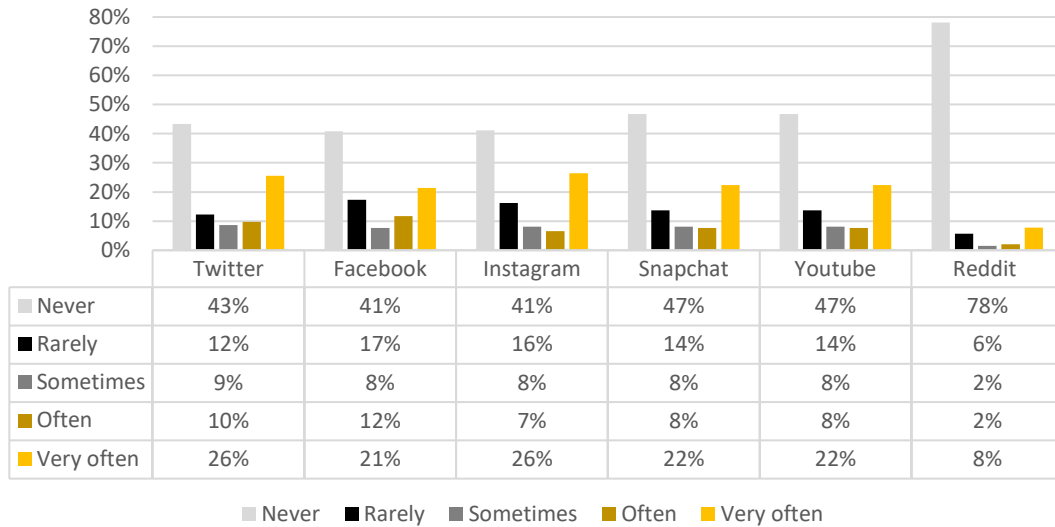


Figure 13 - Online News Sourcing by Platform (N=197)

**In general, how credible do you believe news found on the following social media platforms is?**

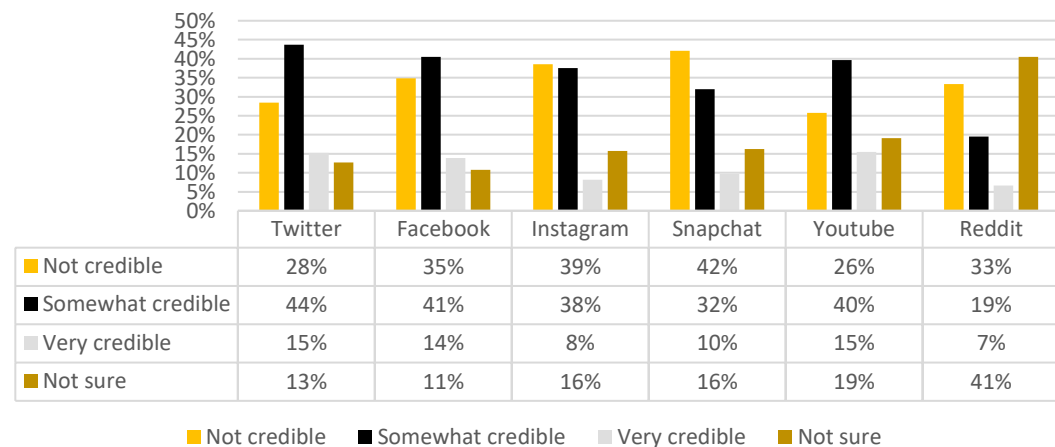


Figure 14 - News Credibility by Platform (N=197)

When we breakdown news consumption and credibility by platforms, we see that Instagram and Facebook have the highest levels of news consumption by a slight margin. However,

students find news on Twitter to be slightly more credible than news found on other platforms.

Reddit is the least

### *G. Follow activity*

Another online expansion of social involvement comes in the form of “follow activities”. This describes the action of following accounts that are political in nature, including candidates, government officials, and politically-oriented pages (I.e. pages that post political memes, videos, or comments). Figures 15 – 18 show what percentage of respondents are involved in this aspect.

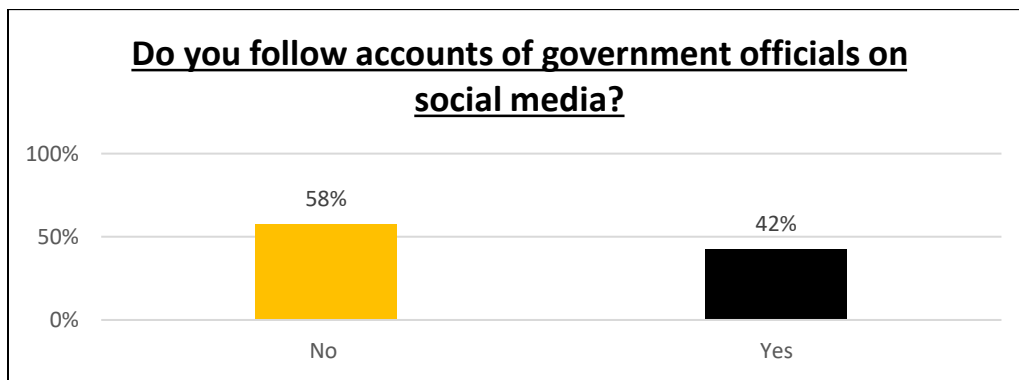


Figure 15 - Following of Government Officials by Respondents (N=170)

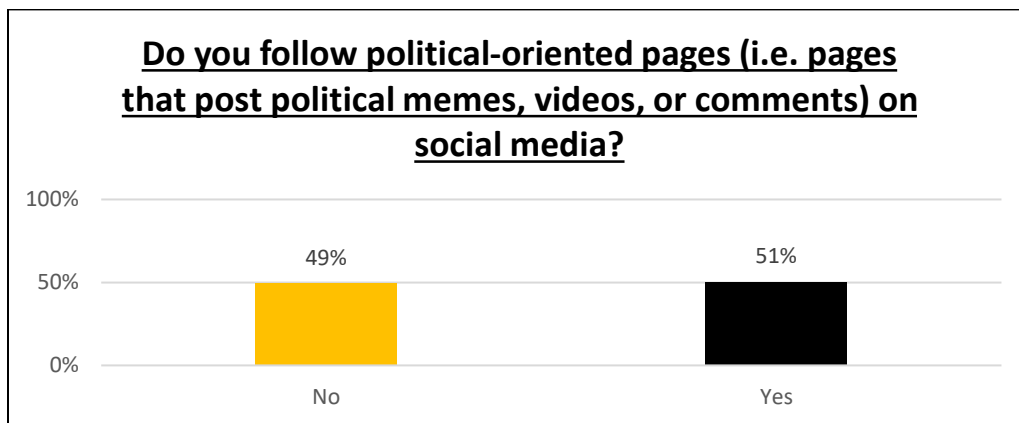


Figure 16 - Following of Politically-oriented Pages by Respondents (N=170)



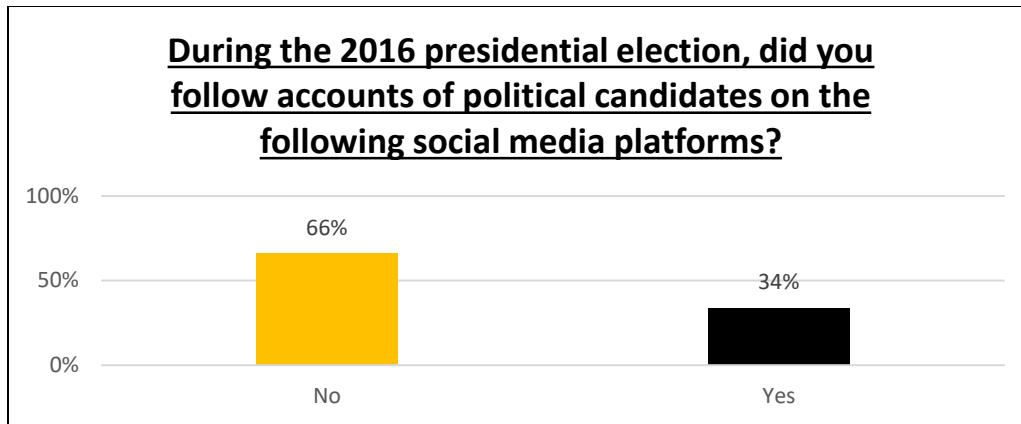


Figure 17 - Following of 2016 Presidential Candidates by Respondents (N=170)

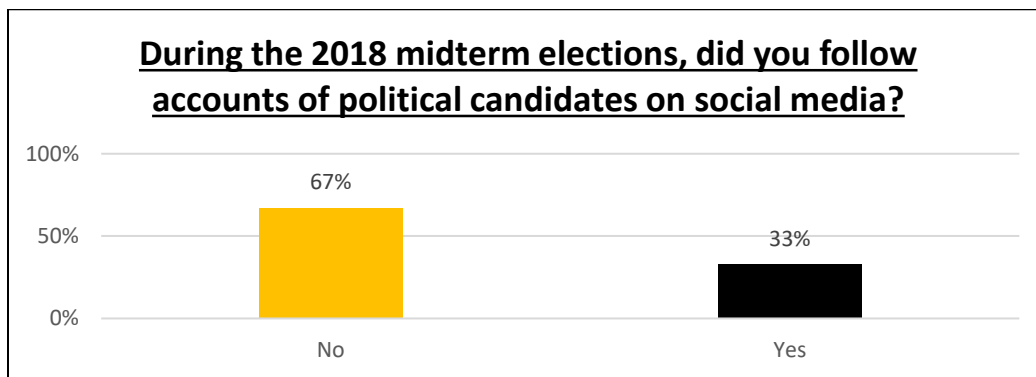


Figure 18 - Following of 2018 Midterm Candidates by Respondents (N=170)

It is apparent from Figures 15-18 that the most popular form of follow activity among students is politically oriented pages that post political memes, videos, and comments. This may be because these pages post content that is more “natural” to social media platforms.

### Section III: Political Participation Among College of Business Students

To recap, political participation is all actions directed towards influencing governmental decisions and political outcomes - it is goal oriented, rational, observable, and can be measured straightforwardly. In this section I will go over how UCF College of Business students participate politically offline, online, across platforms, and across key demographics. Before

doing this though, let's look at arguably the most important form of political participation – voting.

*A. Voting*

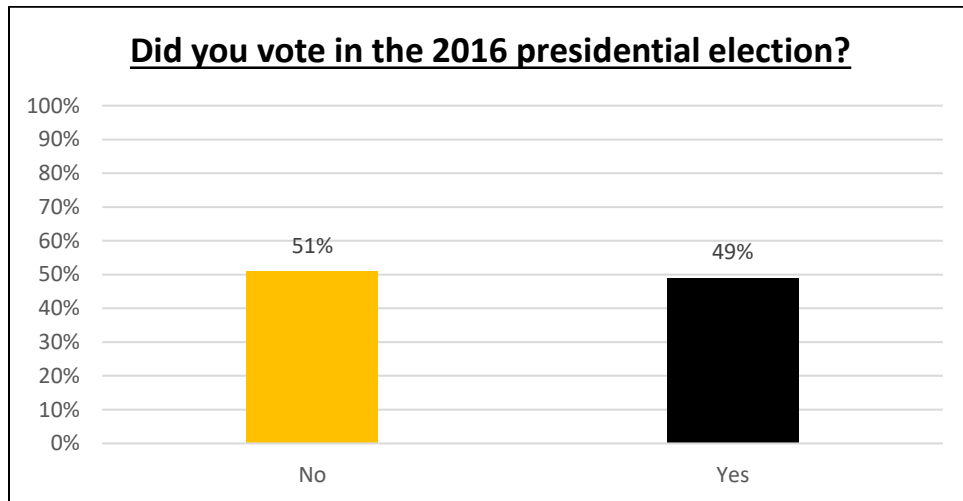


Figure 19 - 2016 Voting Turnout Among Students (N=198)

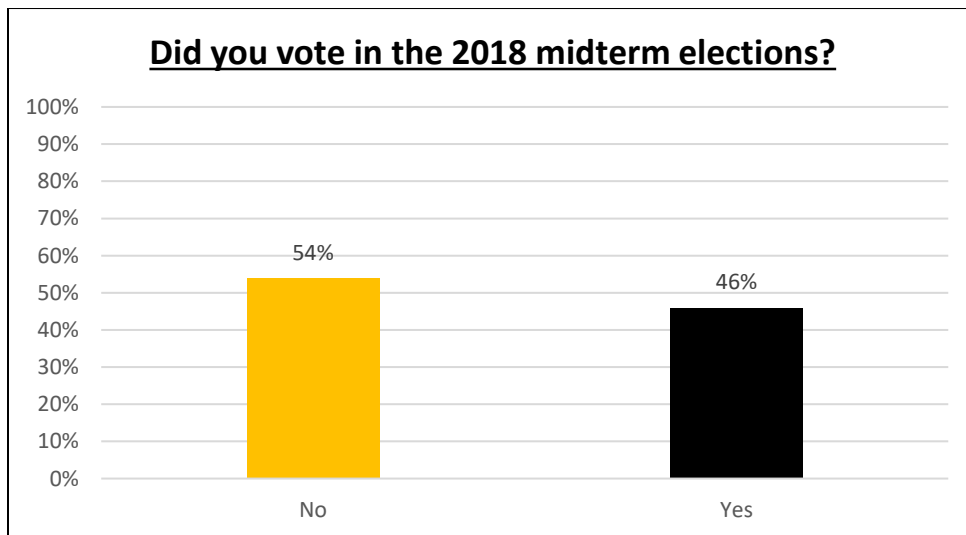


Figure 20 - 2018 Voting Turnout Among Students (N=198)

Voter turnout among young adults has been notoriously low throughout history – averaging a turnout of 47.37% in presidential elections and 26.03% in midterm elections since

1972.<sup>38</sup> Both turnout numbers are lower than the national average of 56.43% and 40.25% for presidential and midterm elections, respectively.<sup>39</sup> However, in 2018 there was a surge in turnout across the board with youth having the highest jump of a 79% increase in turnout.<sup>40</sup> The survey I conducted reflects this jump, as 49% of student voted in the 2016 presidential election and 46% in the 2018 midterm elections. This could have much to do with the increase in political ad spending on social media, as the 2020 election is expected to break another record for ad spending.<sup>41</sup> We will now see if these boosts in voter turnout have led to higher level of other forms of political participation.

*B. Offline v. Online Political Participation*

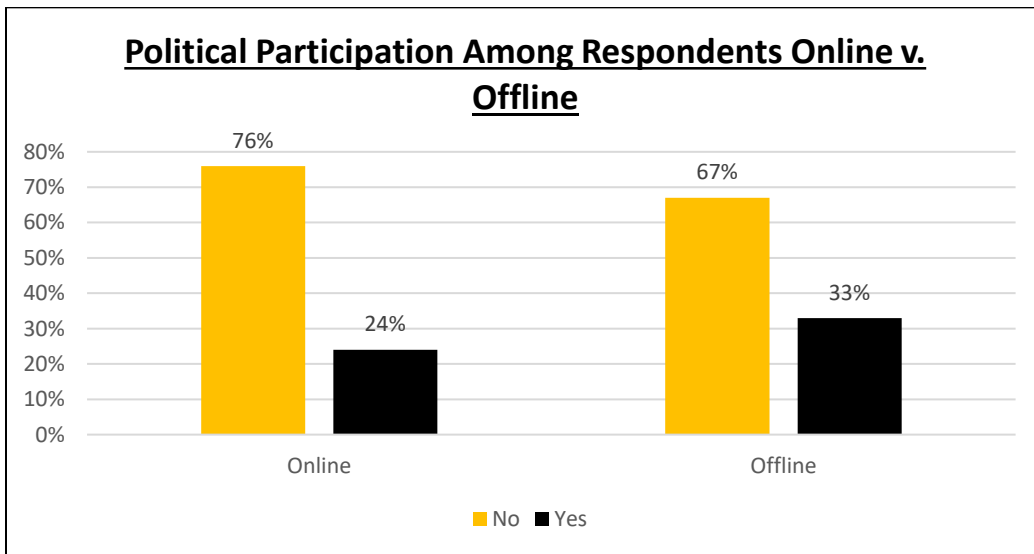


Figure 21 - Online v. Offline Political Participation (N=170)

<sup>38</sup> “Youth Voting.” CIRCLE RSS, <https://civicyouth.org/quick-facts/youth-voting/>.

<sup>39</sup> FairVote.org. “Voter Turnout.” FairVote, [https://www.fairvote.org/voter\\_turnout#voter\\_turnout\\_101](https://www.fairvote.org/voter_turnout#voter_turnout_101)

<sup>40</sup> U.S. Census Bureau. “Behind the 2018 U.S. Midterm Election Turnout.” The United States Census Bureau, 16 July 2019, <https://www.census.gov/library/stories/2019/04/behind-2018-united-states-midterm-election-turnout.html>.

<sup>41</sup> Goldmacher, Shane, and Quoc Trung Bui. “Facebook Political Ads: What the 2020 Candidates’ Campaign Spending Reveals.” The New York Times, The New York Times, 14 Oct. 2019, <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2019/10/14/us/politics/democrats-political-facebook-ads.html>.

The results of online versus offline political participation go against what I originally hypothesized – students participation more offline than online by almost 10%. This may be due to limited ways in which one can participate in the political process through online channels. Citizens are limited to contacting there government officials online, while there are a plethora of ways in which they can participate offline. As new forms of political participation begin to form online, we may see the numbers of those engaged online increase as well.

### C. Political Participation Across Platforms

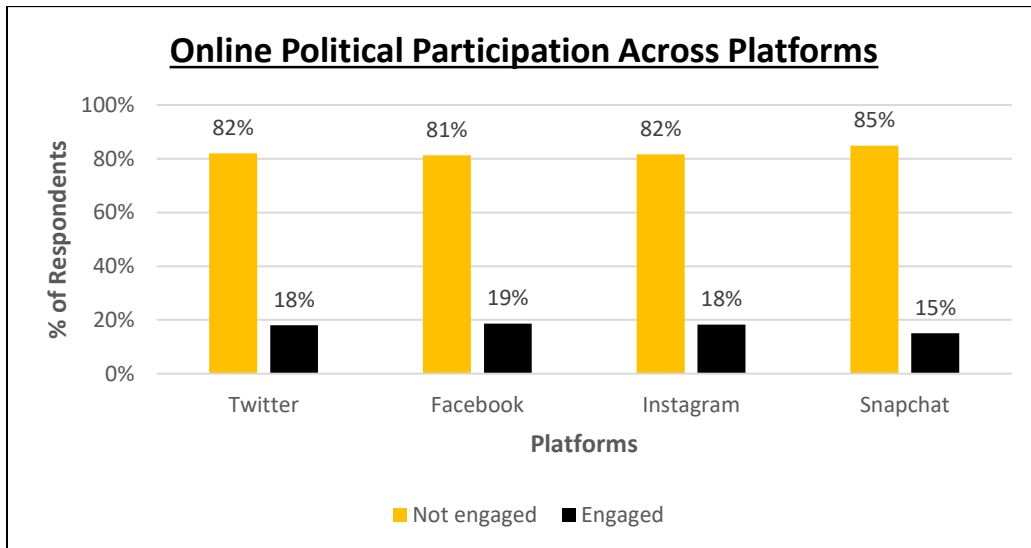


Figure 22 - Online Political Participation Across Platforms (N=170)

When looking at political participation across platforms, we can see that it is consistently low across all the “big four.” Facebook has a 1% lead in engagement above Instagram, however none of the platforms seem to attract a significant level of engagement above the rest.

*D. Offline v. Online Political Participation Across Demographics*

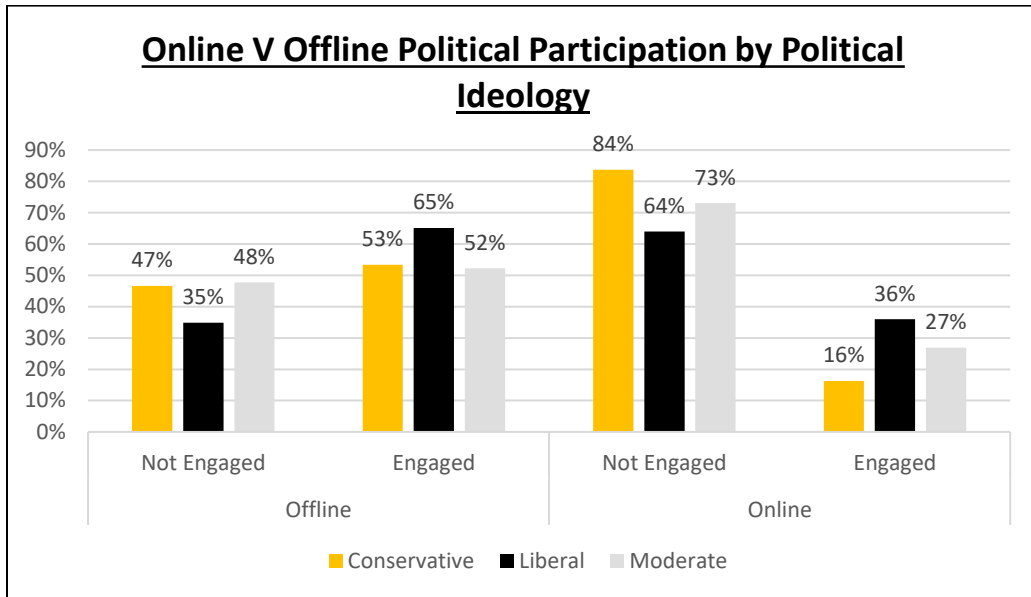


Figure 23 - Online V Offline Political Participation by Political Ideology (N=170)

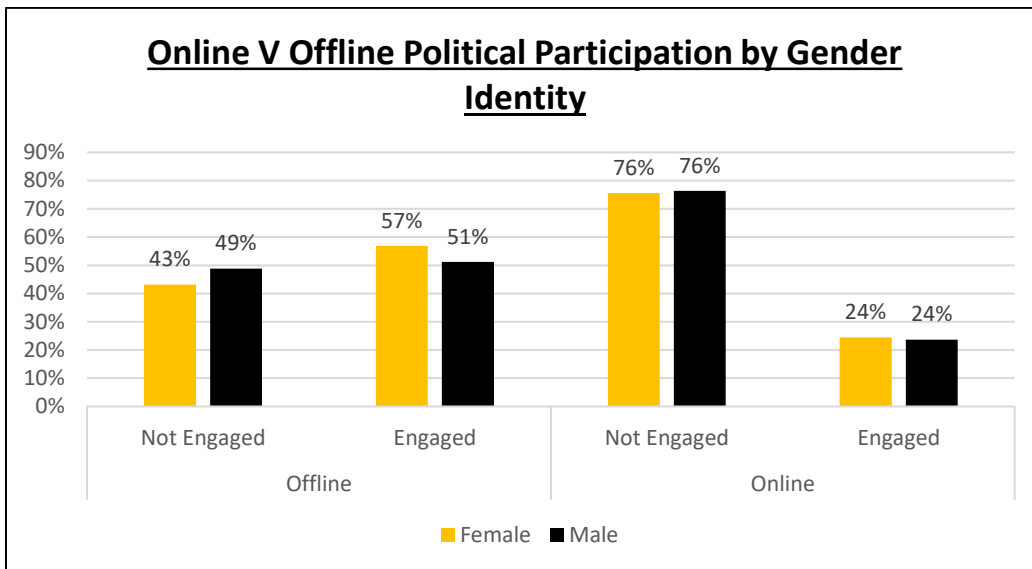


Figure 24 - Online V Offline Political Participation by Gender Identity (N=170)

When breaking down political participation by political ideology and gender identity, some interesting trends became apparent. Initially, Figure 23 shows that liberals are more politically active both online and offline than their conservative and moderate counterparts. This is consistent with research done by Pew Research Center that shows liberals as more likely than

other groups to be politically active on social media.<sup>42</sup> Another interesting trend that I identify is between male and female students – there is no difference among the two gender identities when it comes to online political participation. Figure 24 shows that online political participation is low among both the major gender identities (24%).

#### Section IV: Civic Engagement Among College of Business Students

Civic Engagement entails “actions by ordinary citizens that are intended to influence circumstances in society that is of relevance to others, outside of their own family and close friends. Examples of such actions include, discussing politics, following political issues, and recycling for environmental reasons. Civic engagement can also be done at the collective level - for example, people can organize together to solve local problems or improve conditions for different groups in society. I will now go over the results for how often students engage in these activities and whether they are doing so more online or offline.

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<sup>42</sup> Anderson, Monica, and Jingjing Jiang. “Liberal Democrats More Likely to Be Politically Active on Social Media than Other Groups.” Pew Research Center, Pew Research Center, 5 Nov. 2018, <https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2018/11/05/liberal-democrats-more-likely-than-other-groups-to-be-politically-active-on-social-media/>

A. *Online v. Offline Civic Engagement*

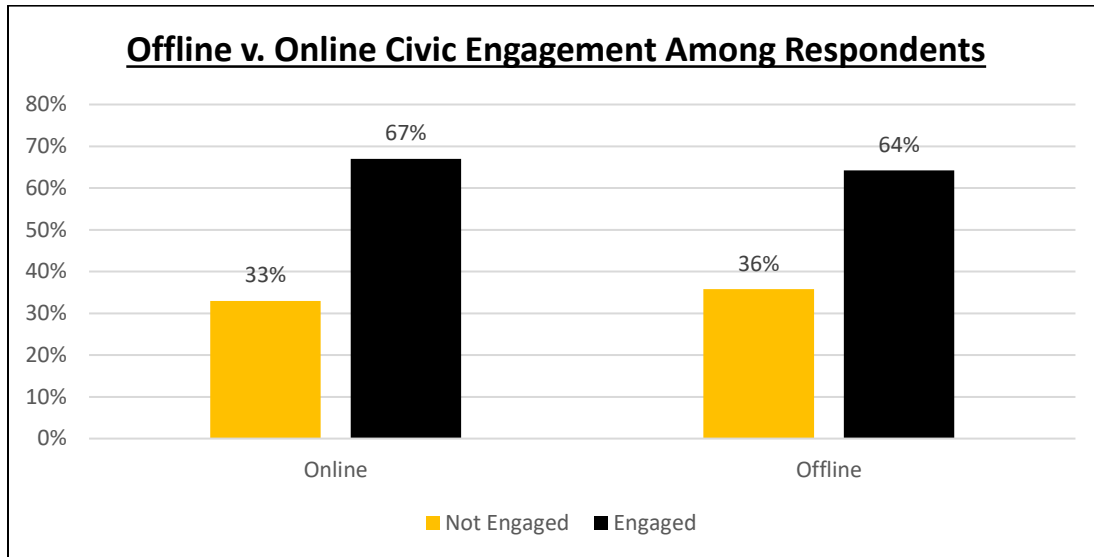


Figure 25 - Offline v. Online Civic Engagement Among Respondents (N=170)

Immediately upon looking at the results, it is apparent that students are far more engaged civically than they are politically. This may reflect young adults’ historically low feelings of distrust in government, which leads them to turn to “alternative” forms of engagement to make systematic change.<sup>43</sup> However, contrary to my hypothesis, students engage civically more offline than they do online by a rate of 3%. This gap between online and offline civic engagement is relatively small, and as time passes and new forms of online civic engagement become abundant, we may see this gap close or flip the other way.

<sup>43</sup> Walker, Hunter. “Harvard Poll Shows Millennials Have 'Historically Low' Levels Of Trust In Government.” Business Insider, Business Insider, 29 Apr. 2014, <https://www.businessinsider.com/poll-millennials-have-historically-low-levels-of-trust-in-government-2014-4>

*B. Civic Engagement Across Online Platforms*

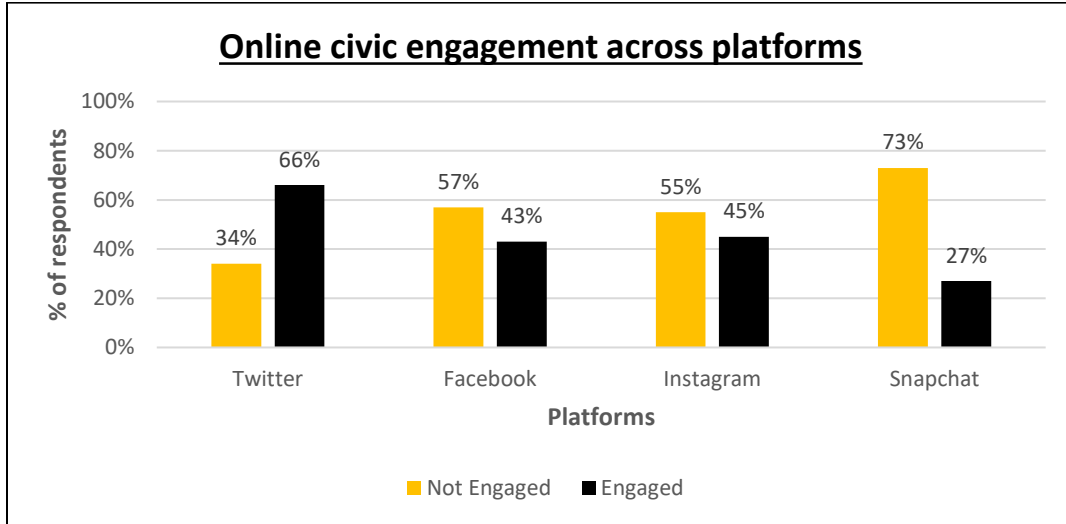


Figure 26 - Online Civic Engagement Across Platforms (N=170)

Of the “big four” platforms, Twitter has the highest levels of civic engagement with a 21% lead ahead of second place Instagram. This may have to do with the way Twitter allows users to communicate with others that do not follow them, as opposed to other sites that limit interactions to between people that follow each other.



C. Offline v. Online Civic Engagement Across Demographics

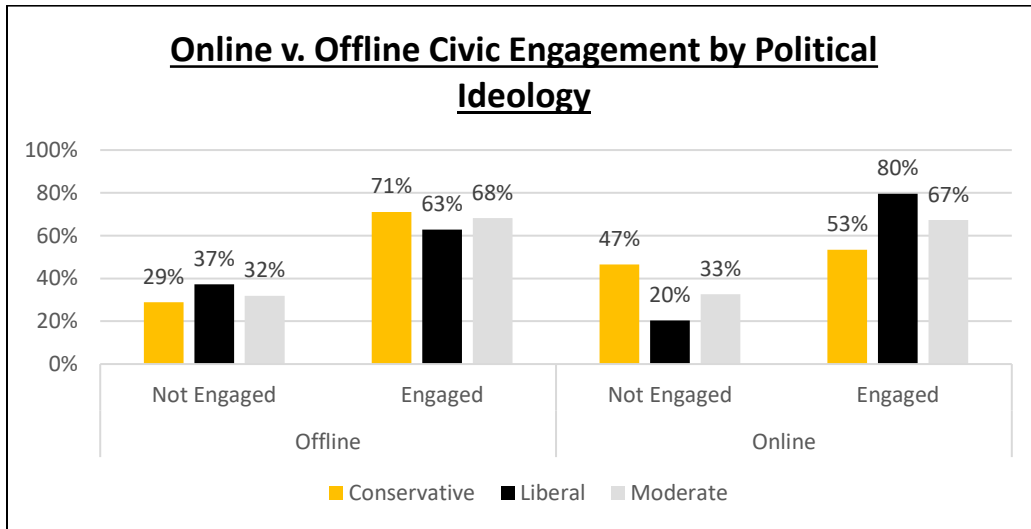


Figure 27 - Online v. Offline Civic Engagement by Political Ideology (N=170)

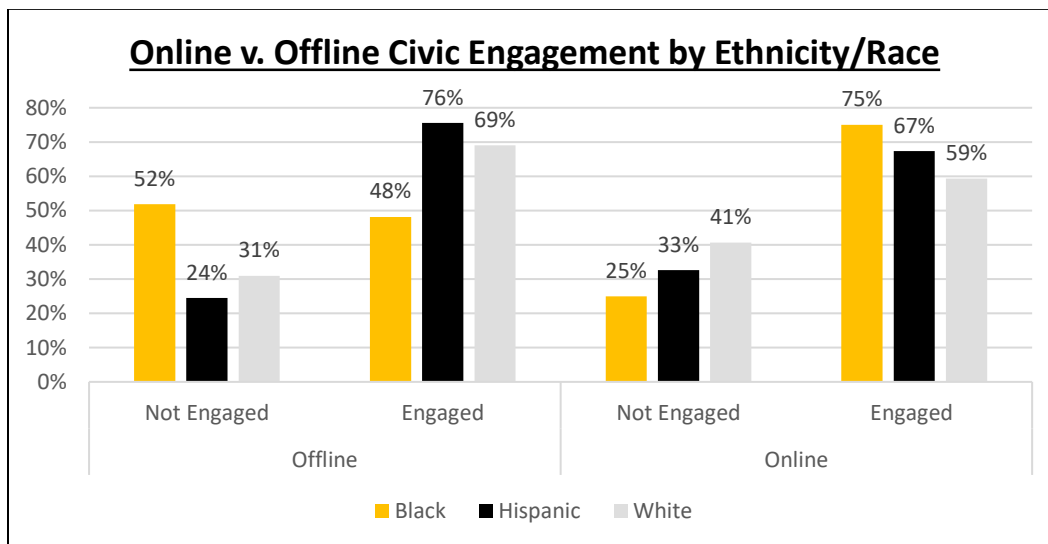


Figure 28 - Online v. Offline Civic Engagement by Ethnicity/Race (N=170)

When it came to civic engagement, I found very little differences across the key demographics of party affiliation and gender identity. However, there are some interesting trends across the ideological and racial lines. Initially, liberals are far more civically engaged online than their conservative and moderate counterparts – though they are the least engaged when it comes to offline civic engagement. Furthermore, blacks resemble similar characteristics among

racial demographics – being the most civically engaged online but having the lowest engagement numbers offline. This may mean that the “lower cost” forms of engagement presented through online platforms may appeal most to these ideological and racial groups.

## **CHAPTER 6: OVERALL CONCLUSIONS**

After analyzing the data, there are several significant trends that I found. Initially, it seems that UCF College of Business students are indeed socially involved. Many identify with a political ideology and/or political party. Furthermore, there seems to be mild levels of political interest and knowledge among students, which seems contradictory to the high levels of importance that students place on multiple issues facing society today. Students seem to very involved when it comes to keeping up with politics online and they utilize social media to do so. All of these forms of social involvement leave students in a position where they can be easily “activated” to take action.

Furthermore, political participation among UCF College of Business Students was generally low across the board – both online & offline, across platforms, and across key demographics. Contrary to my hypothesis, students engage politically at a higher level offline than they do online. As stated before, this may be due to the limited ways in which students can act “on the system” through online platforms. When we look at civic engagement among students, we also see higher levels of participation offline than we do online. However, the overall levels of civic engagement are much higher than those of political participation. This may reflect young adults’ historically low feelings of distrust in government, which leads them to turn to “alternative” forms of engagement to make systematic change.

Though the findings of this research show lower levels of online participation than I had anticipated, I would caution against anyone who may doubt the power of engagement via social

media. With some progressive steps towards, the power of social media can be harnessed to create real societal impact – steps such as the ones that I lay out below.

Social media is a platform used for a variety of high-stakes tasks: banking, investment and education. Through partnerships between social media platforms, non-profit voting organizations, and the US government, registration via social media can become a reality. Some social media platforms have started this process. In 2016, Twitter announced that users could direct message their Zip Code to the @Gov Twitter account and receive a personalized link to register. Widespread implementation of progressive steps like this one would open the door for 90% of American youth to register at the touch of a button.

Most democratic countries assume responsibility for registering its citizens to vote. America leaves this task up to the voter; this aspect of the America electoral system is widely seen as a key contributor for low turnout rates. Peer-reviewed literature affirms that the easier registering is, the more likely people will register to vote. Linking a registration procedure to social media channels has the ability to increase in registration among youth, who as an age demographic have the lowest registration rates (58.5%) among eligible voters.<sup>44</sup>

For some voters, a lack of information—not knowing when, where, how, or even why to cast a ballot—keeps them away from the polls on Election Day. Social media could be used to ease these barriers. Simply by allowing users to type in their name and address directly into users’ “profile pages” to identify when and where to cast their ballots could mobilize would-be youth voters. Some websites already offer this service, such as rockthevote.com. These sites,

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<sup>44</sup> File, T. (2014, April). Young-Adult Voting: An Analysis of Presidential Elections, 1964–2012. <https://www.census.gov/prod/2014pubs/p20-573.pdf>

however, exist beyond social media channels. Directly linking the service to social media platforms in ways that provide actionable information and sync to calendar reminders is more likely to connect with 90% of youth who check their profiles daily.

Social media, though seen mostly as a positive thing, has created a new source of social pressures. Donna Wick, EdD, founder of Mind-to-Mind Parenting, says the combined weight of vulnerability, the need for validation, and a desire to compare themselves with peers forms a “perfect storm of self-doubt” for teenagers.<sup>45</sup> Social media’s influence is thus not always positive; however, it could be could be positively channeled to increase voter turnout. In 2008, Yale University scholars published findings from a large-scale experiment on social pressure and voter turnout. The result: social pressure has a profound and statistically significant impact on individuals voting behavior, specifically as an inducement for increasing voter turnout in America.<sup>46</sup>

Social pressure also interplays with creating a sense of duty and community. The most basic example of this interplay is the “I Voted” sticker voters receive at the polls. Political scientists say the sticker itself does not get people out to vote, but the sticker instills a sense of community—and this feeling does matter.<sup>47</sup> Observing that a community member has voted is a powerful nudge for others to do the same.

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<sup>45</sup> Jacobson, Rae (n.d.). *Social Media and Self-Esteem | Impact of Social Media on Youth*. <https://childmind.org/article/social-media-and-self-doubt/>

<sup>46</sup> Gerber, A. S., Green, D. P., & Larimer, C. W. (2008). *Social Pressure and Voter Turnout: Evidence from a Large-Scale Field Experiment*. *American Political Science Review*, 102(01), 33-48. <http://isps.yale.edu/sites/default/files/publication/2012/12/ISPS08-001.pdf>

<sup>47</sup> *Election Day 2016: The Story Behind Your 'I Voted' Sticker*. (n.d.). <http://time.com/4541760/i-voted-sticker-history-origins/>

Social media platforms should adopt something similar to the “I Voted” sticker. In concert with a leading advertising agency, an online version of the sticker could ignite a similar effect. If well designed, framed and tested, the desire to be “in” and have a particular icon, image or color on one’s profile would be powerful. If youth were to go online and see that their friends had an “I Voted badge” on all their accounts, the badge would create both social pressure and a sense of community that associated with voter turnout. With consent, this feature could also link to candidate’s profiles.

Elected officials themselves could also better leverage social media platforms. Youth are the most active demographic on social media platforms, and social media can help to mitigate evidence-based barriers and to facilitate voter turnout. Research finds that more personal approaches in campaign advertising are more likely to stimulate voting.<sup>48</sup> “Getting out the youth vote” is routinely a key concern during elections. Before, during and after the next election social media can help.

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<sup>48</sup> Krasno, J. S., & Green, D. P. (2008). *Do Televised Presidential Ads Increase Voter Turnout? Evidence from a Natural Experiment*. *The Journal of Politics*, 70(1), 245-261  
<http://isps.yale.edu/sites/default/files/publication/2012/12/ISPS08-002.pdf>



## APPENDIX A: FULL SURVEY

**Q1** On which of the following social media platforms do you have an account? (Please check all that apply)

- Twitter
- Facebook
- Instagram
- Snapchat
- Youtube
- Reddit

**Q2** Do you follow accounts of government officials (i.e. local, state, or federal representatives) on the following social media platforms?

	Yes	No	Do not have an account
Twitter	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Facebook	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Instagram	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Snapchat	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Youtube	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Reddit	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>



**Q3** Do you follow politically-oriented pages (i.e. pages that post political memes, videos, or comments) on the following social media platforms?

	Yes	No	Do not have an account
Twitter	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Facebook	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Instagram	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Snapchat	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Youtube	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Reddit	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**Q4** During the 2016 presidential election, did you follow accounts of political candidates on the following social media platforms?

	Yes	No	Do not have an account
Twitter	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Facebook	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Instagram	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Snapchat	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Youtube	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Reddit	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**Q5** During the 2018 midterm elections, did you follow accounts of political candidates on the following social media platforms?

	Yes	No	Do not have an account
Twitter	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Facebook	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Instagram	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Snapchat	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Youtube	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Reddit	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**Q6** During an average month, how often do you use the following social media platforms as a news source for politics and current events?

	0) Never	1) Rarely (once a month)	2) Sometimes (2-3 times a month)	3) often (4-5 times a month)	4) Very often (6 or more times a month)	5) Don't know
Twitter	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Facebook	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Instagram	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Snapchat	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Youtube	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Reddit	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**Q7** In general, how credible do you believe news found on the following social media platforms is?

	1) Not Credible	2) Somewhat credible	3) Very credible	4) Not sure
Twitter	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Facebook	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Instagram	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Snapchat	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Youtube	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Reddit	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**Q8** During the average month, how often do you engage in the following activities on Twitter?

	0) Never	1) Rarely (once a month)	2) Sometimes (2-3 times a month)	3) often (4-5 times a month)	4) Very often (6 or more times a month)	5) Don't know
"Like" or promote material about a current event in politics	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
"Like" or promote material about a current event not related to politics	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
"Retweet" or share material about a current event in politics	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
"Retweet" or share material about a current event not related to politics	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
"Tweet" or post your own comments about a current event in politics	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

“Tweet” or post your own  
comments about a current event  
not related to politics

0 0 0 0 0 0

Encourage other people to take  
action on a political issue (i.e.  
immigration, education,  
healthcare, etc.)

0 0 0 0 0 0

Encourage other people to take  
action on a non-political issue  
(ie. recycling, going to a  
community event, joining a club,  
etc.)

0 0 0 0 0 0

Engaged in political discussion  
with another user

0 0 0 0 0 0

"Tweet" or contact your  
government representative about  
an issue facing society (political  
or non-political)

0 0 0 0 0 0

"Tweet" or contact your  
government representative about  
a personal need (political or non-  
political)

o o o o o o



**Q9** During the average month, how often do you engage in the following activities on Facebook?

	0) Never	1) Rarely (once a month)	2) Sometimes (2-3 times a month)	3) often (4-5 times a month)	4) Very often (6 or more times a month)	5) Don't know
"Like" or promote material about a current event in politics	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
"Like" or promote material about a current event not related to politics	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Repost material about a current event in politics	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Repost material about a current event not related to politics	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Post your own comments about a current event in politics	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Post your own comments about a current event not related to politics	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Encourage other people to take action on a political issue (i.e. immigration, education, healthcare, etc.)

0 0 0 0 0 0

Encourage other people to take action on a non-political issue (ie. recycling, going to a community event, joining a club, etc.)

0 0 0 0 0 0

Engaged in political discussion with another user

0 0 0 0 0 0

Contact your government representative about an issue facing society (political or non-political)

0 0 0 0 0 0

Contact your government representative about a personal need (political or non-political)

0 0 0 0 0 0

**Q10** During the average month, how often do you engage in the following activities on Instagram?

	0) Never	1) Rarely (once a month)	2) Sometimes (2-3 times a month)	3) often (4-5 times a month)	4) Very often (6 or more times a month)	5) Don't know
"Like" or promote material about a current event in politics	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
"Like" or promote material about a current event not related to politics	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
"Share" or repost material about a current event in politics	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
"Share" or repost material about a current event not related to politics	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Post your own comments about a current event in politics	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Post your own comments about a current event not related to politics

Encourage other people to take action on a political issue (i.e. immigration, education, healthcare, etc.)

Encourage other people to take action on a non-political issue (ie. recycling, going to a community event, joining a club, etc.)

Engaged in political discussion with another user

Contact your government representative about an issue facing society (political or non-political)

Contact your government representative about a personal need (political or non-political)

**Q11** During the average month, how often do you engage in the following activities on Snapchat?

	0) Never	1) Rarely (once a month)	2) Sometimes (2-3 times a month)	3) often (4-5 times a month)	4) Very often (6 or more times a month)	5) Don't know
Repost material about a current event in politics	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Repost material about a current event not related to politics	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
"Snap" or post your own comments about a current event in politics	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

"Snap" or post your own  
comments about a current event  
not related to politics

0 0 0 0 0 0

Encourage other people to take  
action on a political issue (i.e.  
immigration, education,  
healthcare, etc.)

0 0 0 0 0 0

Encourage other people to take  
action on a non-political issue  
(ie. recycling, going to a  
community event, joining a club,  
etc.)

0 0 0 0 0 0

Engaged in political discussion  
with another user

0 0 0 0 0 0

Contact your government  
representative about an issue  
facing society (political or non-  
political)

0 0 0 0 0 0

Contact your government representative about a personal need (political or non-political)

**Q12** Over the PAST YEAR, how often have you engaged in the following activities OFFLINE?

	0) Never	1) Rarely (1-2 times a year)	2) Sometimes (3-5 times a year)	3) Often (6-10 times a year)	4) Very often (11 or more times a year)	5) Don't know
Worn a campaign button or shirt, put a campaign sticker on your car, or placed a sign in your window or in front of your residence	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Tried to talk to people and explain why they should vote for or against one of the parties or candidates	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Contacted a newspaper, radio, or TV talk show to express your opinion on an issue

Attended any political meetings, rallies, speeches, dinners, or things like that in support of a particular candidate

Participated in political activities such as protests, marches, or demonstrations

Worked or volunteered on a political campaign for a candidate or party

Contacted or visited someone in government who represents your community

Worked with a group to solve a problem in a community



Made a purchasing decision based on the conduct or values of a company

0 0 0 0 0 0

Contributed money to a political candidate, party, or affiliated organization

0 0 0 0 0 0

Engaged in a political discussion with someone

0 0 0 0 0 0

Contacted your government official about a social or political issue

0 0 0 0 0 0

**Q13** How important are candidates' stances on each of the following issues in influencing your decision about who you will vote for?

	0) Not important at all	1) Somewhat important	2) Don't know	3) Important	4) Very important
Economy	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Health Care	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Abortion	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Same-sex Marriage	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Immigration	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Energy	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Environment	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Education	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
College Financing	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**Q14** What is your age?

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**Q15** What gender do you identify with?

- Male
- Female
- Transgender
- Other \_\_\_\_\_

**Q16** Which of the following best describes your race/ethnicity?

- Black
- White
- Hispanic
- Asian
- Multi-Racial
- Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

**Q17** What is your Major?

- Accounting
- Economics
- Economics, Business
- Finance
- Integrated Business
- Marketing
- Management
- Political Science
- Real Estate
- Other \_\_\_\_\_

**Q18** Have you ever served or are you currently serving in the U.S. Military, The National Guard, Military reserves, or in a ROTC program?

- Yes
- No

**Q19** In the 2018 Florida Senate Race I voted for...

- Rick Scott
- Bill Nelson
- Did not vote
- Other \_\_\_\_\_

**Q20** In the 2018 Gubernatorial race I voted for...

- Andrew Gillum
- Ron DeSantis
- Did not vote
- Other \_\_\_\_\_

**Q21** In the 2016 Presidential election I voted for...

- Donald Trump
- Hilary Clinton
- Gary Johnson
- Jill Stein
- Did not vote
- Other \_\_\_\_\_

**Q22** How interested would you say you are in politics?

- 0) Not interested at all
- 1) Not very interested
- 2) Somewhat interested
- 3) Very interested

**Q23** How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

	1) Strongly disagree	2) Disagree	3) Neither agree/disagree	4) Agree	5) Strongly agree
I feel that I have a pretty good understanding of the important political issues facing our country	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Sometimes politics and government seem so complicated that a person like me can't really understand what's going on	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I consider myself well-qualified to participate in politics	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**Q24** Generally speaking, how would you describe your political ideology?

- Very conservative
- Conservative
- Moderate
- Liberal
- Very liberal
- Don't know
- Other \_\_\_\_\_

**Q25** If you had to choose, would you consider yourself as a liberal or a conservative?

- Liberal
- Conservative

**Q26** Generally speaking, do you usually think of yourself as a Republican, a Democrat, an Independent, or something else?

- Democrat
- Republican
- Independent
- Other \_\_\_\_\_

**Q27** How strongly do you affiliate with the Republican party?

- Weakly affiliate
- Strongly affiliate

**Q28** How strongly do you affiliate with the Democratic party?

- Weakly affiliate
- Strongly affiliate



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