2021 ICSP Exam questions

0. Code of honor

By submitting this assignment, I declare that the work I submit as part of this exam is my own.

I will answer in my own words. If I use texts written by others in my response I will provide a reference in the text (author, year, URL). If I quote a source, I will provide the page number or URL and enclose the quote in 'quotation marks'. I will not communicate with others about the questions on this exam during the exam time.

Please enter your name and student number below:

1. Education and Civic Voluntarism (24 points)

A (6 points). Study Table 1 with indicators of civic voluntarism by level of education provided here: https://renebekkers.files.wordpress.com/2022/02/tables_wvs_evs_ext.pdf

State two hypotheses about the difference in the level of civic voluntarism between countries with a relatively high and a relatively low proportion of university graduates. Base one hypothesis on the absolute education model, and the other on the relative education model.

B (6 points). Go to https://www.calculator.net/random-number-generator.html?slower=1&supper=41&ctype=1&s=218&submit1=Generate where you get a random number between 1 and 43. Write down what the number is that you get. The number indicates for which countries you are going to test the hypothesis you stated in question (A).

Go to Table 2. Three countries in the table have this number: one country in Panel A with a relatively low proportion of university graduates, one country in Panel B with an intermediate proportion, and another country in Panel C with a relatively low proportion of university graduates.
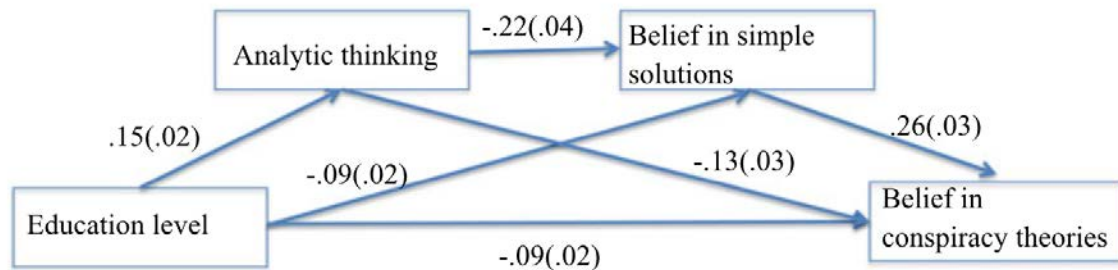
Select two indicators of civic voluntarism, and explain why these are good indicators. Compare the level of civic voluntarism for these three countries on these two indicators. Which hypothesis that you stated in question A is supported by the differences in civic voluntarism between the three countries?

C (6 points). Compare your own level of education with the level of education that your parents attained. Describe the difference. Also compare your current level of civic participation with that of your parents. Describe the difference as well. To what extent is the difference in civic participation associated with the difference in educational attainment?

D (6 points). Provide two arguments why this comparison is not a good test of the effect of education on civic participation.

2. Effects of education on belief in conspiracy theories and political behavior (32 points)

Conspiracy theories have become an increasingly important political force in democratic countries, for example, in relation to vaccination or masking mandates. Van Prooijen (2017) surveyed a nationally representative sample of Dutch people in order to better understand how education is related to belief in conspiratorial thinking. He asked a series of questions that measured an individual's level of education, analytical thinking skills, their belief that most problems have simple solutions, and their tendency to believe in conspiracy theories. Figure 3 below is taken from the paper.

Note: values outside of brackets are Bs, values inside brackets are SEs

A (8 points). Does Education level have a direct, mediated or moderated relationship with Belief in conspiracy theories? Use Figure 3 to describe each pathway through which Education level is associated with Belief in conspiracy theories.

B (8 points). Using your answer from part (A), which pathway (direct, mediated or moderated) for Education level to Belief in conspiracy theories is the strongest relationship? What is the direct association of Education level with Belief in conspiracy theories? Justify your answers.

C (8 points). Recall the three models presented in Person (2015). Which of those models are implicated by van Prooijen's (2017) findings?

D (8 points). Draw a model that includes belief in conspiracy theories, education level, and one indicator of political participation of your choice: voting in general elections, preference for a populist political party. You do not need to include analytical thinking or belief in simple solutions. Write a brief description of the theory that the model implies.

Reference

Van Prooijen, J.-W. (2017). Why Education Predicts Decreased Belief in Conspiracy Theories. *Applied Cognitive Psychology*, 31: 50–58. https://canvas.vu.nl/files/4514210/

3. Influences on postmaterialism (24 points)

A (12 points). Go to https://www.calculator.net/random-number-generator.html?slower=1&supper=4&ctype=1&s=4821&submit1=Generate to obtain a random number between 1 and 4, and write down what the result was. *Note that this is a new link – do **not** use the link from question 1, also if you have that tab still open.*

Because of the low interest rates, governments can currently spend a lot of public money to reduce the impact of COVID-19 measures on the economy. Below are four events that may happen in the coming years:

1. Inflation increases strongly
2. Wealth inequality increases further
3. A sudden decrease in housing prices once the bubble explodes
4. The current labor shortage suddenly switches to oversupply

Imagine the World Values Survey is still running in 2050. For the event with the number you received through the random number generator, predict what its effect will be on the level of postmaterialism of citizens in 2050, according to the theories and empirical studies covered in the course.

B (12 points). Go back to the random number generator you have just used at https://www.calculator.net/random-number-generator.html?slower=1&supper=4&ctype=1&s=4821&submit1=Generate and click on the green 'Generate' button to generate a new random number. Write down what the result was.

Below are four recent political events that shape the level of postmaterialism in different countries:

1. Gabriel Boric won the presidential election in Chile.
2. A coalition agreement was signed by the new government parties in Germany.
3. A coalition agreement was presented for the new government of the Netherlands.
4. Before he took office, US President-Elect Joe Biden announced an ambitious agenda for the first 100 days of his administration.

For the event with the number you received through the random number generator, describe how postmaterialistic the plans of the new government are. In your response, explicitly refer to the ingredients of the 4-item index for postmaterialism. https://ourworldindata.org/materialism-and-post-materialism

4. Effects of Postmaterialism and wealth inequality (20 points)

A (5 points). At the Glasgow COP26 conference earlier this year world leaders discussed climate change mitigation policies. The article on https://www.euronews.com/green/2021/11/16/tears-climate-fears-and-watered-down-agreements-what-does-the-final-cop26-agreement-really describes how the absence and interventions of certain national leaders watered down the eventual agreement, while other countries decided to impose more stringent measures than those in the agreement.

Predict which countries you would expect to water down the agreement and which countries you would expect to do more than the agreement, based on the scores for postmaterialistic values of the populations of these countries provided in the table provided here https://canvas.vu.nl/files/4518556/

B (5 points). Formulate a prediction about the influence of wealth inequality on the level of protest based on the theory of accumulation of capital by Marx & Engels.

C (5 points). Choose three different countries from this line graph. Choose one country with a relatively low level of income inequality, one with an intermediate level of inequality, and one with a relatively high level of inequality. What would you predict about the level of protest in these three countries?
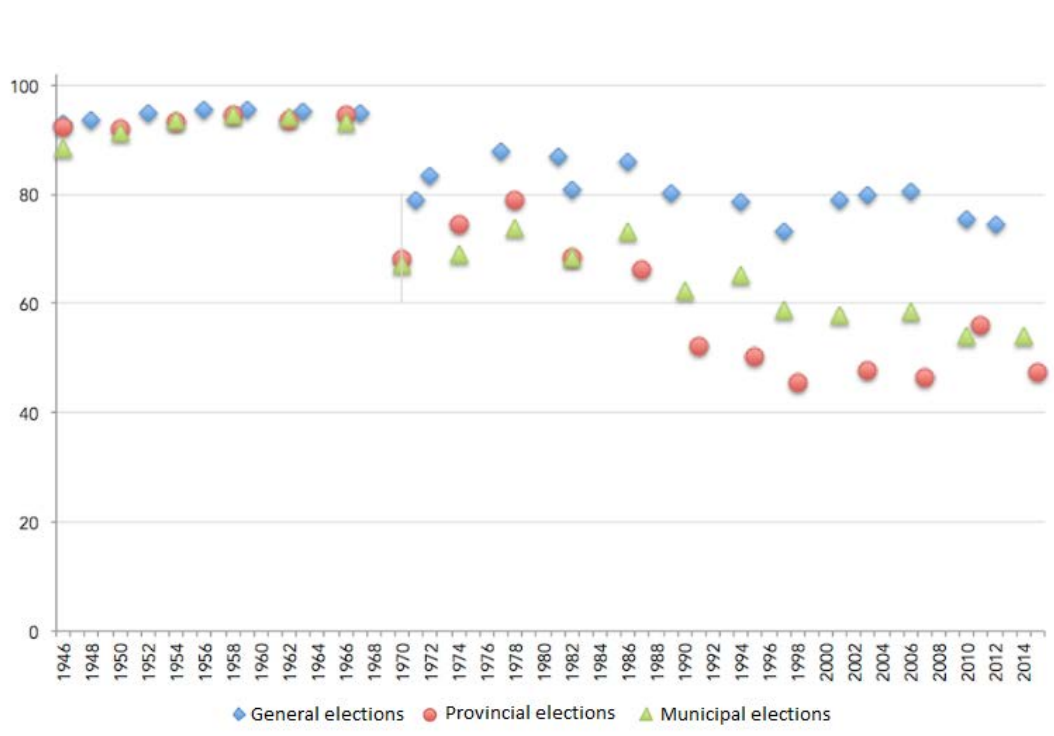
D (5 points). Go to the Mass Mobilization Analytics dashboard, https://massmobilization.shinyapps.io/mm_analytics/, and navigate to the Country Trends using the tab at the top of the window. Look up the three countries you selected in question C.
Note that most countries in the dashboard are placed in alphabetic order, but some countries appear only at the bottom of the list.

Test your hypothesis about differences between the three countries you selected using the data on the number of protest days.

If the data do not support your hypothesis, why do you think this may be? If the data do support your hypothesis, which alternative reasoning may explain the association?

Bonus Question (10 points)

A (2 points). Below you find a graph showing the turnout at various elections in the Netherlands. In 1970 the legal duty to vote in elections (opkomstplicht) was abolished. Think about this as a natural experiment: after 1970, citizens were free to decide for themselves whether they voted or not. Describe the trends *after* 1970 and discuss what they imply for the validity of the absolute education model.

B (4 points). What do you think happened with the differences in the turnout in general elections between citizens who attained primary, secondary and tertiary levels of education after 1970?

C (2 points). Draw a likely picture of the trends in voting in general elections in the period between 1946 and 2015 for those with primary, secondary and tertiary education that is consistent with the relative education model. Explain how the trends correspond to the model.

D (2 points). Draw a likely picture of the trends in voting in general elections in the period between 1946 and 2015 for those with scores in the highest tercile, those with intermediate scores, and those with scores in the lowest tercile of a polygenic risk score for educational attainment that is consistent with the preadult socialization model. Explain how the trends correspond to the model.