Inequality & Conflict in Societal Participation Exam, 22 December 2022

Welcome to the exam of the course Inequality & Conflict in Societal Participation (S_ICSP).
This exam consists of 6 questions, with a maximum of 100 points. For each question, the number of points is given. You can make the questions in the order of your preference. Please answer the questions in the text box. For several questions you also need to upload additional documents.

During the exam, you may consult the following resources:

- Readings for the course as mentioned in the course guide, on paper as well as electronically
- Notes you have made yourself of class meetings and readings, on paper as well as electronically
- Slides of meetings and other course materials, on paper as well as electronically on Canvas
- MS Word, Excel, and Acrobat reader
- Online sources mentioned in the questions and related publications you access through your browser.

You will not need a calculator. You may not use your smartphone. You are not allowed to communicate with others about the exam questions during the exam. You are not allowed to use an AI writer such as chatGPT.

The questions are open essay questions, with the objective to test whether you can apply theories and hypotheses that you have learned about in the course to new cases and research data. In your response to each question please give detailed arguments explaining how you arrived at your answers.

In several questions you are asked to draw causal models. You can use MS Word to create causal models and upload them as a separate file. Your response to the questions goes into the textbox.

Unfortunately René Bekkers is caught by the flu and had to stay at home. If you have questions about the content of the test, please ask the invigilators, who are present in the room.

You can choose to make the test in a different look (skin). Switch between the available skins as often as you like. Select another skin at the top right via the Skin pulldown. The following skins are available: VU standard, VU Dyslexia, VU High Contrast.

If you have not signed up for this exam, you will not receive a result. Through VUnet you can object to the fact that you can no longer sign up after the expiry of the registration deadline (and the fact that you will not receive a result for this exam). Submit your appeal online within one week after the exam. More information can be found at www.vu.nl/intekenen.

1. Social Participation and Inequality (15 points)

a. In the course we have discussed several forms of societal participation. Select three forms of participation discussed in the articles by De Wit and colleagues, Van Ingen & Dekker, and the twin study by Bekkers et al. Explain how these forms of participation are different, reasoning from the Civic Voluntarism Model. You can draw the CVM in a MS Word file and upload it along with a text in the textbox below (9 points)

b. For one particular form of participation of your choice, discuss how inequality in this form of participation comes about in society. (6 points)

2. Models Explaining Participation (9 points)

For each of the three models that Persson discusses in his review article explain how the Civic Voluntarism Model is related to it. Do they mutually exclude each other, or can they be true at the same time? You may submit causal models in a separate file to illustrate your reasoning.

3. Cultural Evolution Theory and Postmaterialism (20 points)

In 2022, the U.S. experienced record-breaking levels of inflation, as well as a high-profile court decision ruling that abortion was not anymore a constitutional right (i.e., the overturning of "Roe v. Wade"). In the U.S. midterm elections 2022, the progressive (left-leaning) Democratic party performed surprisingly well against the conservative (right-leaning) Republican party. The exit polls showed that "27% of voters said abortion was the single most important issue in determining their vote — only just behind inflation, which was listed by 31% of voters." (The Hill; link, retrieved 29.11.22).

a. Describe which materialist and postmaterialist issues are at play in this example. Evaluate to what extent and how Inglehart's postmodernization theory predicts the U.S. election outcome (6 points).

b. Describe at least three principles underlying cultural evolution theory (CET) and describe how CET relates to Inglehart's postmodernization theory. Are the two theories mutually exclusive such that they cannot be true at the same time, or could they both be true? Is one more general than the other? (6 points)

c. Formulate two hypotheses about potential additional factors that could explain the election results according to CET (8 points).

4. Historic materialism, inequality and attitudes towards redistribution (20 points)

   a. What would be the prediction following from Marx' historic materialism on the association between income inequality and support for government redistribution of income? Distinguish groups in society that, according to the theory, differ in their views on income redistribution. How will income inequality have different effects on the level of support for income redistribution among these groups? You may submit a causal model as a separate file to illustrate your reasoning (5 points).

   b. Most years of the General Social Survey, conducted among respondents in the US, include the question: "Some people think that the government in Washington ought to reduce the income differences between the rich and the poor, perhaps by raising the taxes of wealthy families or by giving income assistance to the poor. Others think that the government should not concern itself with reducing this income difference between the rich and the poor. Here is a card with a scale from 1 to 7. Think of a score of 1 as meaning that the government ought to reduce the income differences between rich and poor, and a score of 7 meaning that the government should not concern itself with reducing income differences. What score between 1 and 7 comes closest to the way you feel? (CIRCLE ONE)". The trend for Response option 1 ("The government should reduce income differences") is provided here: https://gssdataexplorer.norc.org/trends?category=Current%20Affairs&measure=eqwlth Describe the trend that you observe (5 points).

   c. Our World in Data provides data on income inequality in the US. Describe the trend that you observe. https://ourworldindata.org/grapher/income-shares-by-quintile-pip?time=1979..latest&country=~USA (4 points)

   d. With the "Breakdown" option at https://gssdataexplorer.norc.org/trends?category=Current%20Affairs&measure=eqwlth you can test the hypothesis you formulated on group differences in response to question a with a comparison between the data provided in question b and c. Select a breakdown variable that you are interested in given your response to question a. Justify why you selected this variable, and present the results of the test (6 points).

5. Postmaterialism, education and political preference (20 points)

a. Formulate a hypothesis on the relationship between the level of education and the endorsement of postmaterialist values. Justify the hypothesis with arguments from theories discussed in the readings for the course (4 points).

b. Formulate a hypothesis on the relationship between political preferences (left-right self-placement) and the endorsement of postmaterialist values. Justify the hypothesis with arguments from theories discussed in the readings for the course (4 points).

c. Draw a causal model that visualizes the relationships hypothesized in your answers to a and b above. Add at least two control variables that should be included for valid tests of the hypotheses. Upload a file with the causal model created in MS Word using the upload file option (6 points).

d. Test your hypotheses based on the results of the regression analyses provided here: https://renebekkers.files.wordpress.com/2022/12/wvsoutput.pdf
Use the logic of your causal model to compare coefficients in different columns (6 points).

6. The Relative and Absolute Education Model (16 points)

a. The relative education model and the absolute education model make different predictions about the influence of an increase in the mean level of education on participation. Reasoning from both models, what would be your predictions on the association between the average level of education and the level of postmaterialism? Do you think the average level of education in a country is positively, negatively, or not at all associated with the level of postmaterialism? (4 points)

b. On page 1 and 2 of the document posted at https://renebekkers.files.wordpress.com/2022/12/pmmean-1.pdf you find data with which you can test your predictions. Interpret the data from the hypotheses you formulated in response to question a (4 points).

c. The relative education model and the absolute education model make different predictions about the differences between higher and lower educated citizens, as the mean level of education increases. Reasoning from both models, what would be your predictions on the association between the mean years of schooling and the difference in postmaterialism among lower and higher educated respondents? (4 points)

d. On page 3 and 4 of the document you find data with which you can test your predictions about differences in postmaterialism as education increasses. Interpret the data from the hypotheses you formulated in response to question c (4 points).