

Political Participation in Brazil and Sweden: The Role of Stereotypes and Contagion

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RESUMO - This study assessed the influence of Stereotypes about Parliamentarians and Behavioral Contagion on Political Participation, comparing two countries: Brazil and Sweden. Stereotypes were admitted to be useful to tell parliamentarians' groups apart and predict their behavior. Behavioral Contagion was investigated as a possible catalyst of political action. Online questionnaires were administered to 984 Brazilians (37.4% women) and 879 Swedes (46.5% women). Structural Equation Modeling assessed relationships among variables. Behavioral Contagion played a pivotal role on predicting political engagement. Stereotypes predicted participation where they challenged commonsense: Brazilians usually cannot tell the difference among politicians, then those Brazilians who could were more politically engaged; in Sweden, the factor "corruption" predicts non-institutional types of Participation.

Keywords: Political Participation, Stereotypes about Parliamentarians, Behavioral Contagion

Participação Política no Brasil e na Suécia: o papel dos estereótipos e do contágio

ABSTRACT - Este estudo investigou a influência de estereótipos sobre parlamentares e contágio comportamental na participação política, comparando dois países: Brasil e Suécia. Considerou-se que estereótipos podem ser úteis para diferenciar grupos de parlamentares e prever seus comportamentos. O Contágio Comportamental foi investigado como um possível catalisador da ação política. Os questionários online foram respondidos por 984 brasileiros (37,4% mulheres) e 879 suecos (46,5% mulheres). Empregou-se a Modelagem por Equações Estruturais para aferir as relações entre as variáveis. O Contágio Comportamental foi central na predição do engajamento. Os estereótipos predisseram participação quando desafiavam o senso comum: brasileiros não costumam diferenciar parlamentares, mas aqueles que conseguiram eram mais engajados; na Suécia, o fator "corrupção" predisse a participação não-institucional.

Palavras-chave: participação política, estereótipos sobre parlamentares, contágio comportamental

How do individuals make decisions about political participation in the real context, in their everyday lives, based on the straggling information they have about parliamentarians? Some psychological processes could help summarize a large amount of information and political influences received by a given individual. However, such processes might be relatively stable inside one country, as citizens are subject to the same context and culture. Comparing contrasting countries may unfold to which extent those processes truly influence participation, avoiding context-specific interpretations (Teorell, 2006).

This study's general objective is to compare the influence of Stereotypes about Parliamentarians and Behavioral Contagion on Political Participation between two contrasting countries (Brazil and Sweden). It is hypothesized that Political Participation can be predicted by Stereotypes about Parliamentarians and Behavioral Contagion.

Brazil and Sweden were selected for such comparison for their reported contrasts on culture and political behavior. Swedes do not accept power distance from their representatives, while in Brazil this might be considered

"natural". Swedes' preference for equality and individual sovereignty requires citizens (including politicians) to be self-sufficient and respect general rules. Brazilians do not trust "people outside family", and do not feel obligations to larger groups such as neighbors, fellow citizens, or nation (Realo, Allik & Greenfield, 2008; Triandis & Gelfand, 1998).

These differences are reflected in political life. Regarding trust in the political system, Brazilians complain about the malfunctioning of governmental institutions and the impunity of bad politicians (Moisés & Carneiro, 2008). Moreover, Brazilian politics is marked by 'generalized' corruption, and it is hard to uphold the existence of 'good politicians' (Cunha, 2006). Swedes, in turn, highly trust their system, which enabled a Welfare State that promotes social equality and experiences low corruption (Kumlin & Rothstein, 2005; Marien & Hooghe, 2011; Rothstein & Uslaner, 2005). Both countries have recently faced strong popular mobilization. For example, since 2011 Brazilians have been taking the streets to protest against political corruption, with massive protests in June 2013, followed by other important protests up to 2016. In Sweden, protesters have been fighting primarily over issues like the conditions

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of African and Arabian refugees, especially after riots burst on immigrant neighborhoods of Stockholm in May 2013. If results in this study are found to be valid to such contrasting cases, the concepts employed herein can be useful to investigate other countries.

Political Participation. The theoretical perspectives on political participation started by focusing exclusively on the citizen's act of selecting the political elite members, as if citizens should be active only during elections (Dahl, 1956; Downs, 1957; Schumpeter, 1942). The attention for political behaviors not exclusively related to elections was fostered after the publication of works by Almond and Verba (1963, 1980), Milbrath (1965), Verba and Nie (1972), and Kaase and Marsh (1979). Along the last 50 years new behaviors were investigated as exemplary political engagement (Teorell, 2006).

Engagement in community actions, political consumerism, participation in organized social movements, participation in protests, organization of petitions or even getting involved in acts of political violence could also be considered to be forms of political participation (Brussino, Rabbia & Sorribas, 2008; Dalton, 2008; Lake & Huckfeldt, 1998; Stolle, Hooghe & Micheletti, 2005). The inclusion of these new behaviors expanded the concept of political participation.

Ekman and Amnå's (2012) framework is the basis for this study's approach on Political Participation. They proposed a framework intended to organize such diversity of behaviors into categories. They have built a spectrum that starts with Non-participation (antipolitical and apolitical attitudes), through Latent Participation (Attention and Action), and ends with Manifest Participation (Formal Participation, Legal and Illegal activism). For Ekman and Amnå (2012), non-participation or disengagement could be respectively characterized in terms of anti-political or apolitical attitudes. Anti-political attitudes are linked to active forms of disengagement (like manifesting their displeasure about politics or having an anti-political lifestyle), while apolitical attitudes are linked to passive forms, such as perceiving politics as something humdrum. The latent forms of participation comprise *attention* to politics and "Civic Engagement" (actions that produce political impact external to the context of governmental institutions, like voluntary social works). These authors state that latent forms of participation were neglected by studies in the field; moreover, they discuss if attentive citizens get into action when actually needed (Amnå & Ekman, 2014).

Manifest types of Political Participation comprise participation in the formal political system (actions which comply with the rules of political institutions) and the extra-parliamentarian participation, which was divided into legal and illegal forms of action (Ekman & Amnå, 2012). This could become a serious obstacle for cross-country comparisons, as what is legal in one country can be illegal in another, or even legality boundaries can change on the same country, through time. Hence, instead of classifying activism in terms of legality or illegality, it is proposed to differentiate violent and non-violent acts. The behaviors classified by Ekman and Amnå (2012) remain unchanged,

but the item 'Civil Disobedience' was moved to the "non-violent" group. At last, the framework allows the evaluation of several types of Political Participation, which suits this study's main objective.

Stereotypes about Parliamentarians. Every day, citizens are exposed to an avalanche of political information. Newspapers, TV, radio, social media, blogs, websites, chats in bars etc. A wide range of information could be used to understand the interaction of groups in the parliamentary arena: parties, interests of the sectors they represent, profession (previous to that as parliamentarian), political offices previously held, etc. (Carlin & Love, 2013; Druckman, 2001; Garzia, 2013; Kam, 2007; Koch, 2003). However, politically lay citizens may ignore several pieces of information and base their opinions on what they consider to be more relevant (Arceneaux, 2008; Druckman, 2001, Lau & Redlawsk, 2001).

This study assumes that stereotypes can summarize a large amount of information about a group (Jussim, McCauley & Lee, 1995; Mackie, 1973; Ryan, 2003). Regarding politics, stereotypes can be especially useful to help lay citizens to differentiate members of political parties or those who represent some specific sector of society (Haslam, Turner, Oakes, McGarty & Reynolds, 1997; Koch, 2003; Lau & Redlawsk, 2001; Schneider & Bos, 2011). Based on relevant information, citizens can try to predict the behavior of parliamentarians (Arceneaux, 2008; Carlin & Love, 2013; Samuels & Zucco, 2013). Moreover, this study tests if citizens may choose their form of political participation based on how they perceive the behavior of parliamentarians (Kinder & Sears, 1985; Sacchi, Carnaghi, Castellini & Colombo, 2013).

On one hand, the present study evaluates citizens' perception on how critical some pieces of information might be – henceforth, this dimension of stereotypes about parliamentarians will be named "Critical Information". On the other hand, this study assesses citizens' expectations upon the parliamentarians – henceforth, this dimension of stereotypes about parliamentarians will be named "Behavior Prediction".

Stereotype-based classification can be useful to understand the parliamentary politics. People capable of identifying the difference between parties can recognize, with higher probability of success, stereotypic or counter-stereotypic behaviors of politicians (Carlin & Love, 2013; Koch, 2003; Samuels & Zucco, 2013). In other words, if a left-wing Socialist candidate employs arguments that do not fit in his/her stereotype (e.g., advocating non-intervention of the State on economy), electors recognize the disparity and point out that 'there is something wrong' in that speech (Kinder & Sears, 1985; Lau & Redlawsk, 2001; Sacchi et al., 2013). This study intends to assess the association between the citizens' attention to such information and a higher or lower degree of political engagement.

Behavioral Contagion. The classic work of Gustave Le Bon (1896), *The Crowd: a study of the popular mind* is considered an important milestone in the understanding of collective action. Though criticized for his anti-democratic bias, the issues raised by Le Bon fostered scientific debates

along the 20th century (McGuire, 1987; Moscovici, 1985). Le Bon argues that crowds are assembled as they bear three characteristics: *suggestibility*, *feeling of invincible power* and *contagion*. The author states that crowds become irresponsible for their actions and that individuals in a crowd act as they were hypnotized, guided by the collective will.

Some researchers followed Le Bon's (1896) aristocratic ideas, while others tried to provide 'neutrality' to his analysis (McGuire, 1987; Nye, 1973). Social psychology studies have mostly found evidence that individuals tend to adjust their behaviors according to the surrounding crowd, with little self-criticism. Some post-1950 theories (as organized by Jesus, 2013) reach similar conclusions: theory of deindividuation (e.g. Diener, 1980); theory of social identity (e.g. Tajfel & Turner, 1979); theory of convergence (based on Festinger's, 1975, theory of cognitive dissonance); and emerging norms model (Fehr & Fischbacher, 2004).

The concept of *contagion* provides especially relevant insights to the investigation of political participation. It is indeed worth questioning if there is a multiplying effect that could increase the chances of an individual to participate in a collective action – even if by imitation of friends or other close persons.

Empirical evidences of the implication of contagion on political participation were found (e.g., Cho & Rudolph, 2008; Harrigan, Achananuparp & Lim, 2012; McClurg, 2003; McFarland & Thomas, 2006). Contrary to the idea of unconscious group behavior, Gomes and Maheirie (2010) point out that collectively organized political participation has impact on the psychological constitution of the individual; the authors highlight that individuals *assign conscious meaning* to what they do as member of the group (corroborated by McClurg, 2003). This research intends to assess the influence of Behavioral Contagion on Political Participation, adding empirical evidence to this debate on the literature.

The set of independent variables tested herein is innovative; as such, empirical support is needed to state whether they can or cannot predict Political Participation. The social relevance of such an investigation is the assessment of the effect of Stereotypes about Parliamentarians and Behavioral Contagion on Political Participation, in order to explain and help encouraging the increase of political action.

Method

Instruments

Instruments in this study were elaborated with the co-operation of 21 specialists in Brazil and in Sweden in a Delphic Panel procedure (Hsu & Sandford, 2007). This ensured that the items would not be based on one culture and forced onto another, as specialists from both countries worked in sync. The resulting questionnaire, originally in English, underwent back-translation (to Brazilian Portuguese and to Swedish) in repeated rounds, until judges reached enough agreement. This procedure reduced as much as possible the effect of translation over the participants'

interpretation of items. Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) disclosed the factor structure used herein and Confirmatory Factor Analyses (CFA) indicated Factor Structure and Metric Equivalences between Brazil and Sweden. Internal consistency of Factors, assessed with Jöreskog's Rho, ranged from 0.60 to 0.90, and some items were assessed as standalones (where mentioned below).

After CFA, the factor structure represented this study's variables as follows:

- a) Political Participation: Political Disillusion (3 items), Pre-Political Engagement (2 items); Institutional Participation became a second-order factor, comprising Attention (4 items) and Action (5 items) – which differed from Ekman and Amnå's (2012) framework. Three items remained as standalones (they did not fit in any factor): Political Consumerism; Street Demonstrations and Political Violence Legitimation.
- b) Stereotypes about Parliamentarians: "Critical Information" was organized in a second-order factor, comprising Party-Oriented View (3 items); Representation Trends (4 items) and Personal Information (2 items) – these factors assessed how much attention citizens pay to these types of information. Other items were organized in two "Behavior Prediction" factors: Corruption (2 items) and Quality of Representation (5 items) – which assessed citizens' expectations about politicians.
- c) Behavioral Contagion: This became a single-factor variable, with 4 items encompassing behaviors of influencing other people and being influenced by others to engage political action.
- d) Demographics: Gender, Age, Educational Achievement (highest educational grade obtained), Political Orientation (Left-Right wings); Party Membership, Party Sympathy, Party Rejection and Wealth (computed according to the possession of economic goods, such as TV, computer, car, house, boat, etc.). Participants also declared, in a zero to ten scale, how much each educational context has contributed to their knowledge of politics: School (first and second grades); University, Family, Co-workers, Friends; members of an association / trade union / party in which they are also members; and learning on their own.

Data Collection

Brazilian and Swedish versions of the questionnaire were inserted into web panel platforms (websites with data collection tools). Data collection occurred in the year 2014, between June 25 and August 31 in Brazil, and between August 05 and August 18 in Sweden. Informed consent emphasized that the participant's privacy was preserved.

Participants

Under a tolerance threshold of up to 10% of missing answers, 984 Brazilians' questionnaires were considered

valid for analysis. The mean age was 43.95 ($SD = 15.64$), and 37.4% were women. Concerning educational level, 71.3% had completed University Education, from which 48.5% were post-graduated. Regarding Swedes, 879 participants were considered for analysis. Swedish participants were 49.57 years old on average ($SD = 16.64$), and 46.5% were women. On education, 27.9% had completed University Education, from which 5.1% were post-graduated.

Analyses

Multiple Imputation (Allison, 2003) was used to estimate the missing data, especially because SEM is strictly missing-unfriendly. Independent samples t-test was conducted to compare means between Brazil and Sweden. The effect of independent variables (Stereotypes, Behavioral Contagion and Demographics) on Political Participation (dependent variable) was tested through Stepwise Multiple Regression. Stepwise Multiple Regression models provided a first selection of independent variables and a first look on how they influenced political participation. Those models were reproduced in Structural Equation Models (SEM). SEM provided additional evaluation, as multiple instances of mediation among variables could be tested and models' Goodness-of-Fit could be evaluated. The adopted acceptance criteria for SEM models were χ^2 d.f. between 1 and 5 (Roussel et al., 2002); RMSEA < 0.70; SRMR < 0.80; CFI > 0.92; TLI > 0.92; (Hair, Anderson, Tatham, Black & Babin, 2009).

Models for Brazil and Sweden were created separately and compared. Data-driven exploration with different models for each country can elucidate cultural differences - the variables that predict political participation in one country may not work on another. Concurrent models were built, so that the best Goodness-of-Fit could be met through elicitation of relationships (such as mediation) and iterative exclusion of multicollinear variables.

Results

Regarding average answers to the 0 to 10 scales for each factor, Political Disillusion is below the midpoint for both groups, but Brazilians ($M = 3.19$, $SD = 2.75$) are more disillusioned than Swedes ($M = 2.60$, $SD = 2.23$); $t(1843.48) = 5.09$, $p < 0.001$. Participants from Brazil ($M = 1.90$, $SD = 3.07$) engaged in street demonstrations more often than those from Sweden ($M = 0.60$, $SD = 1.95$); $t(1687.83) = 11.04$, $p < 0.001$. Political violence legitimation was remarkably low in both countries, but it received greater support in Brazil ($M = 1.49$, $SD = 2.85$) than in Sweden ($M = 0.75$, $SD = 1.90$); $t(1726.70) = 6.67$, $p < 0.001$.

Pre-Political Participation (volunteering for a non-governmental association, neighborhood or kids school, for example) was more frequent in Brazil ($M = 4.22$, $SD = 3.63$) than in Sweden ($M = 2.45$, $SD = 3.19$); $t(1860.48) = 11.16$, $p < 0.001$. Brazilians ($M = 5.27$, $SD = 4.28$) and Swedes ($M = 4.98$, $SD = 4.43$) do not differ on the en-

gagement on Political Consumerism; $t(1821.52) = 1.41$, $p = 0.158$. When it comes to Institutional Participation, as assessed by the homonym Second-Order Factor, Brazilians ($M = 3.11$, $SD = 2.29$) are more often engaged than Swedes ($M = 1.46$, $SD = 1.70$); $t(1799.64) = 17.79$, $p < 0.001$.

Regarding Stereotypes about Parliamentarians, there is no significant difference on the general attention Brazilians ($M = 4.61$, $SD = 2.37$) and Swedes ($M = 4.59$, $SD = 2.69$) pay to the Critical Information, $t(1861.59) = 0.17$, $p = 0.866$. Quality of Representation is close to the mid-point of the scale in Sweden ($M = 4.68$, $SD = 1.77$), which is significantly higher than the low quality perceived by Brazilians ($M = 2.02$, $SD = 1.36$); $t(1642.36) = 36.05$, $p < 0.001$. Corruption, on the other hand, is perceived as higher in Brazil ($M = 7.41$, $SD = 2.24$) than in Sweden ($M = 4.08$, $SD = 2.62$); $t(1737.21) = 29.22$, $p < 0.001$.

These results present a first overview on political action differences between Brazil and Sweden. The understanding of the relationships among these variables, provided by Structural Equation Modeling, is crucial to the comprehension of their systemic functioning in both countries.

Structural Equation Models for the present study achieved adequate Goodness-of-Fit (Table 1). These models' structures, covariance and R^2 values are summarized in Table 2 and Table 3. Political Participation prediction models differ between Brazil and Sweden.

Political Disillusion is predicted by some factors of Stereotypes about Parliamentarians. Party-Oriented View and Quality of Representation had negative effects in both countries (see Table 2). In Sweden two other Stereotypes factors entered the model, with positive effects on Political Disillusion: Personal Information and Corruption. Education Level (assessed as scholarship attainment) had significant negative effect on Political Disillusion in Brazil. The positive effect of Age indicates that older Brazilians are more disillusioned than the younger ones. Perceptions over parties add relevant evidence. Party Rejection had positive effect on Political Disillusion in Brazil, while Party Membership and Party Sympathy had negative effect. Party membership had negative effect in Sweden. The total of Political Disillusion's explained variance was $R^2 = 0.33$ for Brazil and $R^2 = 0.46$ for Sweden.

Pre-Political Engagement (community-driven political action, association and volunteering) was mainly predicted by Behavioral Contagion, both in Brazil and Sweden. Also, women are more prone to Pre-Political Engagement than men. Learning about politics from members of an association had positive effect on Behavioral Contagion. This is the common ground for both countries (Table 2). In Brazil, Party Sympathy had a negative effect on Pre-Political Engagement. Concerning Stereotypes about Parliamentarians, *Quality of Representation* in Brazil and perceived *Corruption* in Sweden had negative impact on *Pre-Political Engagement*. Attention to *Personal Information* had positive effect on Behavioral Contagion, producing a mediated effect on Pre-Political Engagement. The total of explained variance for Pre-Political Engagement in Brazil was $R^2 = 0.27$; and $R^2 = 0.23$ in Sweden.

Table 1. Goodness of Fit indices for Structural Equation Models.

| Model | | χ^2 | d.f. | $\chi^2/d.f.$ | RMSEA | SRMR | CFI | TLI |
|-----------------------------|--------|----------|------|---------------|-------|-------|------|------|
| Political Disillusion | Brazil | 388.79 | 112 | 3.47 | 0.050 | 0.065 | 0.94 | 0.93 |
| | Sweden | 212.34 | 97 | 2.19 | 0.037 | 0.045 | 0.98 | 0.97 |
| Pre-Political Engagement | Brazil | 334.82 | 98 | 3.42 | 0.050 | 0.070 | 0.93 | 0.92 |
| | Sweden | 96.51 | 32 | 3.02 | 0.048 | 0.035 | 0.97 | 0.95 |
| Institutional Participation | Brazil | 746.77 | 182 | 4.10 | 0.056 | 0.047 | 0.93 | 0.91 |
| | Sweden | 569.56 | 165 | 3.45 | 0.053 | .048 | 0.93 | 0.92 |
| Political Consumerism | Brazil | 359.51 | 87 | 4.13 | 0.056 | 0.073 | 0.94 | 0.93 |
| | Sweden | 225.28 | 52 | 4.33 | 0.062 | 0.060 | 0.95 | 0.94 |
| Street Demonstrations | Brazil | 130.27 | 49 | 2.66 | 0.041 | 0.054 | 0.97 | 0.96 |
| | Sweden | 99.74 | 34 | 2.93 | 0.047 | 0.038 | 0.98 | 0.97 |
| Violence | Brazil | 134.53 | 42 | 3.20 | 0.047 | 0.066 | 0.96 | 0.95 |
| | Sweden | 97.67 | 48 | 2.04 | 0.034 | 0.037 | 0.99 | 0.98 |

Table 2. Summary of SEM models – predicting Political Participation factors and standalone items (part 01).

| | Political Disillusion | | Pre-Political Engagement | | Institutional Participation (2 nd order factor) | |
|---|-----------------------|--------|--------------------------|---------|--|--------------------|
| | Brazil | Sweden | Brazil | Sweden | Brazil | Sweden |
| R ² = | 0.33 | 0.46 | 0.27 | 0.23 | 0.83 | 0.80 |
| Behavioral Contagion | ... | ... | +0.51 | +0.46 | +0.91 | +0.73 |
| Stereotypes about Parliamentarians | | | | | | |
| Critical Information (2 nd order factor) | ... | ... | ... | ... | +0.56 ^a | ... |
| Party-Oriented View | -0.29 | -0.27 | ... | ... | ... | ... |
| Representation Trends | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... |
| Personal Information | ... | +0.19 | +0.25 ^a | ... | ... | ... |
| Quality of Representation | -0.25 | -0.22 | -0.08* | ... | ... | -0.16 |
| Corruption | ... | +0.47 | ... | -0.10** | ... | ... |
| Demographics | | | | | | |
| Political Education | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... |
| “on your own” | +0.39 ^b | ... | ... | ... | ... | +0.30 ^a |
| “from members of association” | ... | ... | +0.42 ^a | ... | ... | ... |
| Age | +0.25 | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... |
| Wealth | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... |
| Education Attainment | -0.20 | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... |
| Gender | ... | ... | ♀ 0.12 | ♀ 0.07 | ... | ... |
| Left-Right | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... |
| Party member | -0.08* | -0.08* | +0.42 | +0.43** | ... | +0.26 |
| Party sympathy | -0.10** | ... | -0.12** | ... | ... | ... |
| Party rejection | +0.10** | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... |

^aMediated by Behavioral Contagion. ^bMediated by Party-Oriented View.

*p < 0.05; **p < 0.01; For all other values, p < 0.001. Non-significant results were removed.

Table 3. Summary of SEM models – predicting Political Participation factors and standalone items (part 02).

| | Political Consumerism | | Street Demonstrations | | Violence | |
|---|-----------------------|-----------|-----------------------|--------|----------|---------|
| | Brazil | Sweden | Brazil | Sweden | Brazil | Sweden |
| R ² = | 0.16 | 0.18 | 0.19 | 0.18 | 0.12 | 0.09 |
| Behavioral Contagion | +0.34 | +0.25 | +0.38 | +0.40 | +0.23 | -0.20 |
| Stereotypes about Parliamentarians | | | | | | |
| Critical Information (2 nd order factor) | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... |
| Party-Oriented View | +0.48 ^a | +0.11** | ... | ... | ... | -0.14 |
| Representation Trends | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... |
| Personal Information | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | +0.15** |
| Quality of Representation | -0.08* | ... | -0.07* | -0.13 | -0.15 | ... |
| Corruption | ... | -0.18 | ... | ... | ... | +0.17 |
| Demographics | | | | | | |
| Political Education | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... |
| “on your own” | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... |
| “from members of association” | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... |
| Age | ... | ... | -0.17 | ... | -0.21 | ... |
| Wealth | ... | ... | -0.09** | ... | ... | ... |
| Education Attainment | +0.16 | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... |
| Gender | ♀ 0.12 | ♀ 0.10 | ... | ... | ... | ... |
| Left-Right | ... | Left 0.21 | ... | ... | ... | ... |
| Party member | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... |
| Party sympathy | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... |
| Party rejection | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... |

^aMediated by Behavioral Contagion.

*p < 0.05; **p < 0.01; For all other values, p < 0.001. Non-significant results were removed.

In both Brazil and Sweden, Behavioral Contagion plays a core role in predicting *Institutional Participation* (see Table 3). In Brazil, Behavioral Contagion mediated the effect of Critical Information (second-order factor from Stereotypes about Parliamentarians). In Sweden, the only Stereotype factor that entered the model was Quality of Representation, with negative effect over Institutional Participation. Still in Sweden, other variables had significant prediction power towards Institutional Participation: Party Membership had a positive effect – hence, being a member of a party helped engaging into institutional participation in Sweden. Learning politics alone helped participation, however mediated by Behavioral Contagion.

In both countries, a relevant amount of variance was explained by the independent variables that entered the model (Brazil: R² = 0.83; Sweden: R² = 0.80). Regarding the first-order factors under Institutional Participation, relevant shares of variance were also explained for Attention (Brazil: R² = 0.87; Sweden: R² = 0.81) and Action (Brazil: R² = 0.62; Sweden: R² = 0.66).

On *Political Consumerism*, the common ground between Brazil and Sweden is that Behavioral Contagion had direct positive effect and that women are a little more likely to engage in this type of action (Table 3). In Brazil, Stereotypes

about Parliamentarians predicted Political Consumerism: while Party-Oriented View had positive effect, mediated by Behavioral Contagion, Quality of Representation had a small negative effect. Education achievement had a positive direct effect. Total of variance explained for Political Consumerism was R² = 0.16 for Brazil. In Sweden, Party-Oriented View and perceived Corruption had direct impact on Political Consumerism. Additionally, left-winged citizens were more likely to engage Political Consumerism. Total of variance explained for Political Consumerism in Sweden was R² = 0.18.

In Sweden, Behavioral Contagion had the strongest impact on participation in *Street Demonstrations* and Quality of Representation had negative direct impact, i.e., the perception of the bad quality of parliamentarians' work helps to explain the engagement on Street Demonstrations (R² = 0.18, see Table 3). In Brazil, similar effects were observed for Behavioral Contagion and Quality of Representation. However, other variables entered the model. Wealth and Age had negative direct effect, i.e., poorer and younger Brazilians are more likely to engage on street demonstrations. The total of variance explained in Brazil was R² = 0.19.

The perception that *Violence* is a legitimate kind of political action was explained in Brazil by Behavioral Contagion, Age (with negative effect) and a negative perception of Quality of Representation (Table 3). Total of variance explained for Political Violence Legitimacy in Brazil was $R^2 = 0.12$. In Sweden, the perception of parliamentarians' Corruption had positive effect. *Party-Oriented View* had negative direct effect on Political Violence Legitimacy, while attention to parliamentarians' *Personal Information* had positive effect. These two Stereotypes factors were partially mediated by Behavioral Contagion. Behavioral Contagion had positive direct effect on Political Violence Legitimacy. Total of variance explained for Sweden was $R^2 = 0.09$.

Discussion

Mean differences provided a more positive scenario for Sweden than for Brazil, considering that Swedes show less Disillusion and lower support for Violence (see the first part of the results section). Brazilians, nonetheless, were more engaged in Institutional Participation and Street Demonstrations, possibly as effect of recent mass participation episodes (Rantum, 2013). Further explanation of Political Participation, concerning the effect of Stereotypes about Parliamentarians and Behavioral Contagion, is presented henceforth.

Critical Information about parliamentarians was a second-order factor, composed by *Party-Oriented View*, *Representation Trends* and *Personal Information* first-order factors. The general Critical Information measure offers an evidence of participants' sensitivity to the parliamentarians' diversity. It is inferred that, if a participant ignores one type of information, it is not relevant to him/her to tell the difference of one politician to another. Hence, stereotypes supposedly work as cues to understand which groups are present at the parliament (Jussim et al., 1995; Sacchi et al., 2013).

Critical Information played a significant role to predict *Institutional Participation* in Brazil (though mediated by Behavioral Contagion – Table 3). Nonetheless, there is previous evidence that Brazilians cannot easily understand their country politics and do not usually know the difference among parties and among politicians (Henrique, 2010). In Sweden, none of the Critical Information factors helped predicting Institutional Participation. Conversely, there is previous evidence that Swedes understand the difference among parties (Rothstein & Uslaner, 2005). This counter-intuitive finding will be further discussed ahead.

Swedes attentive to Personal Information (Stereotypes based on the politicians' gender and religion) were more likely to be disillusioned. In Sweden, both gender and religion are currently related to political issues. Feminist activism makes its points through intensively contesting activity (Johansson & Lilja, 2013). Religion, on its turn, is related to the immigration of Muslims – which is the underlying motivation of 2013 riots, when the killing of an immigrant triggered violent protests (Hansson, Cars, Ekenberg & Danielson, 2013).

Differently from Sweden, Personal Information in Brazil was associated with Pre-Political Engagement, mediated by Behavioral Contagion. This might reflect the insertion of churches into the political scene and gender-equality activism. In Brazil, churches are actively connected to vo-

luntarism. Likewise, feminist and gay-rights activism have gained importance on the recent years. These themes are often connected, as homosexual and feminist activism antagonize with Christian commonly spread beliefs (Natividade, 2010).

In both countries, Political Disillusion decreased as the citizen showed a Party-Oriented View. This highlights that understanding the party-related differences helps preventing citizens falling into hopelessness towards political institutions. This is supported by results on party preferences. Brazilian party-sympathizers and party members are less disillusioned. Those who reject parties are more likely to feel disillusioned. In Sweden, only party membership had a negative effect on Disillusion.

Party-Oriented View and the second-order Critical Information factors had a pro-democratic effect – hence, the ability to differentiate politicians based on these criteria produced a positive attitude towards politicians. Personal Information, on the contrary, was associated with Disillusion and Violence, unveiling a negative attitude. In short, criteria for differentiating politicians may reflect how people identify and react to opposing groups in society, either seeking institutions, avoiding them or supporting violence.

Party-Oriented View had positive effects on Political Consumerism, both in Brazil (mediated by Behavioral Contagion) and in Sweden (directly). In Sweden, it was found that left-wing participants are more likely to engage Political Consumerism, which actually reflects the trend of environmental-friendly parties, as they usually oppose big businesses (Green-Pedersen, 2012; Holmberg & Hedberg, 2009). In Brazil, instead of political orientation, the increase of Educational Attainment positively predicted Political Consumerism. Therefore, use of consumption choices to pressure businesses seems to be related to the scientific knowledge provided by formal education.

Regarding the second element in Stereotypes about Parliamentarians, *Behavior Prediction* (i.e., how citizens predict parliamentarians' behaviors), Quality of Representation was found to be better in Sweden, and Corruption was perceived as higher in Brazil. This finding actually supports previous studies on each country's political context, as they indicate poor trust, high corruption and low perceived efficacy of political institutions in Brazil (Cunha, 2006; Moisés & Carneiro, 2008) and high trust, low perceived corruption and good efficacy of Swedish political institutions (Kumlin & Rothstein, 2005; Rothstein & Uslaner, 2005). It is reasonable to infer that Swedes are more satisfied with their democratic institutions than Brazilians, which is also supported by the studies above.

Political Disillusion in Sweden increases as perception of Corruption increases and perception of Quality of Representation lowers. The same effect was found for Quality of Representation in Brazil, but perceived Corruption did not help predicting Political Disillusion there. The absence of the Corruption factor on the model indicates that Brazilians can get Disillusioned or not, regardless how corrupt politicians seem to be. This is another counter-intuitive result.

In Sweden, lower perceived Corruption was related to higher Political Consumerism and Pre-Political Engagement (Table 2 and Table 3). In Brazil, the result was the opposite: when politicians are “not doing a good job”, Pre-Political Engagement and Political Consumerism increased. For both countries, bad Quality of Representation is connected to Disillusion. Nevertheless,

Swedish citizens that perceive bad Quality of Representation are more likely to engage Institutional Participation. Hence, it is true that in Sweden dissatisfied citizens may get more interested in politics. Amnå and Ekman (2014) suggest that people get into action when they *distrust* people in power. The same effect was observed on Street Demonstrations (where lower Quality of Representation increased engagement, see Table 3).

We now examine these counter-intuitive findings. Despite corruption being a very important issue on Brazilian politics (Bethell, 2008; Cinnanti, 2011), this factor did not enter any of the Brazilian prediction models. Nonetheless, Corruption did predict participation in Sweden. This requires a careful interpretation. The absence of Corruption in the prediction models does not necessarily indicate that all Brazilians are insensitive to it – especially considering that Brazilians took the streets on Marches against Corruption since 2011 and on June 2013 protests (Ranthum, 2013). It indicates that some Brazilians react to Corruption by engaging in political action, others do not – hence, statistics become trendless, and no significant covariance is found. Swedes seem to react against corruption on a more consistent way. Conversely, Quality of Representation played a significant role on predicting participation in Brazil and Sweden. This indicates that corruption alone is not enough to explain citizens' dissatisfaction with politicians, but perceiving the low Quality of Representation may catalyze action.

In another counter-intuitive finding, the attention to Critical Information (which encompasses Party-Oriented View) had significant impact to Institutional Participation in Brazil, not in Sweden. It may be deduced that, when it comes to Stereotypes about Parliamentarians, what is relevant to one country has greater effect on the other. This is intriguing, right?

Stereotypes, just as other cultural artifacts, are systems of shared beliefs (Jussim et al., 1995; Mackie, 1973; Ryan, 2003). What is commonsense to one country (such as Brazilian corruption) loses its power to differentiate citizens' attitudes and behaviors. Therefore, in Brazil, where people more difficultly understand parliamentarians' differences (Henrique, 2010; Kinzo, 2004; Moisés & Carneiro, 2008), Critical Information was relevant to tell the difference between Brazilians who engage Institutional Participation and those who do not. In Sweden, on the contrary, Corruption becomes relevant to predict participation as citizens clearly feel moved to react.

Cultural differences may explain what becomes commonsense to one country or another. Swedes' Horizontal Individualism is probably the ground for their low tolerance on corruption – i.e., parliamentarians are expected to respect laws as citizens do, as egalitarianism and solidarity are core values (Hofstede, 1980; Realo et al., 2008; Triandis & Gelfand, 1998). Brazilians' Vertical Collectivism (Triandis & Gelfand, 1998) and Power Distance (Hofstede, 1980) are related to their tolerance to social hierarchy, their acceptance of politicians' (supposed) higher status and their distrust in institutions' capacity to fight corruption (Realo et al., 2008).

Behavioral Contagion had a strong positive effect on Political Participation. Wherever this variable entered, it had the strongest direct covariance over the target type of Political Participation (Table 2 and Table 3). It also had mediating effect on Critical Information factors (from Stereotypes about Parliamentarians) for Brazilians.

Behavioral Contagion had a pivotal role for Pre-Political Engagement (Table 2). The learning of politics from members of an association, labor union or party is mediated by Behavioral Contagion, which emphasizes that the mutual influence is fundamental to convert the learned knowledge into action. In Brazil, those who avoid mainstream politics and integrate a network of influence may mobilize their communities, as they do not trust the capacity of politicians to solve their country's problems (Amnå & Ekman, 2014; Stolle et al., 2005).

Behavioral Contagion was also pivotal for Institutional Participation. In Brazil, attention to parliamentarians' characteristics (Critical Information) seems to discriminate citizens who are prone to engage institution-oriented action. As this variable was mediated by Behavioral Contagion, it is understood that the network influence is needed to convert the knowledge about Parliamentarians into action. In Sweden, citizens' dissatisfaction with Quality of Representation is already a direct trigger for Institutional Participation. However, a greater effect is caused by Behavioral Contagion, as it helps converting the learning of politics "on your own" (Table 3) into action. In both Brazil and Sweden, Behavioral Contagion was important to convert beliefs into action (corroborating Cho & Rudolph, 2008; Lake & Huckfeldt, 1998; Le Bon, 1896; Moscovici, 1985).

Similarly, Behavioral Contagion predicted engagement into Street Demonstrations without mediation or covariation effects in Brazil and Sweden. It also had the strongest effect over Political Violence Legitimation in both countries. These results offer support to the strong effect of social influence for catalyzing political action (e.g. Cho & Rudolph, 2008; Lake & Huckfeldt, 1998; McClurg, 2003; McFarland & Thomas, 2006).

Generally speaking, political education contexts had very little effect on Political Participation. Most *loci* of political learning were excluded from SEM analyses – school, university, family, coworkers and friends. Solely two items offered mediated effect. The item "[you learned] ... from members of an association / trade union / party in which you are a member" was found important to Pre-Political Engagement, possibly because the context of learning was also the context of participation. The item "[you learned] on your own", was important to prevent Political Disillusion in Brazil and to predict Institutional Participation in Sweden. There is no consensus in literature if Education significantly contributes to engaging in political action (Berinsky & Lenz, 2011; Kam & Palmer, 2008; Mayer, 2011). However, there is the possibility that education in schools, universities and other *loci* has effect for some students to engage in political action, but not to others, then in this case no trend comes out from statistics.

Conclusion

The main contribution of this research was to add evidence to the empirical approach on Political Participation, comparing contrasting countries. Brazil and Sweden are so different in political culture that this comparison became an acid test for this research instruments and objective.

Structural Equation Models helped to identify how Brazilian and Swedish mindsets differ. This study provided additional evidence that the concept of Stereotypes

can be used to understand citizens' viewpoint over the parliamentarians, with relevant usefulness to predict participation. This highlights that the understanding of group differences is not necessarily attached to prejudice and discrimination (corroborating Jussim, et al., 1995; Mackie, 1973; Ryan, 2003) and, moreover, it is useful to predict the participants' behavior. It was also found that Behavioral Contagion played a pivotal role on predicting participation. These processes may be similarly found on other cultures; therefore, this study can be replicated in other countries by translating the questions and making cultural adaptations on instruments and methodology.

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