

# Political Involvement in “Mobilized” Society: The Interactive Relationships Among Mobile Communication, Social Network Characteristics, and Political Life

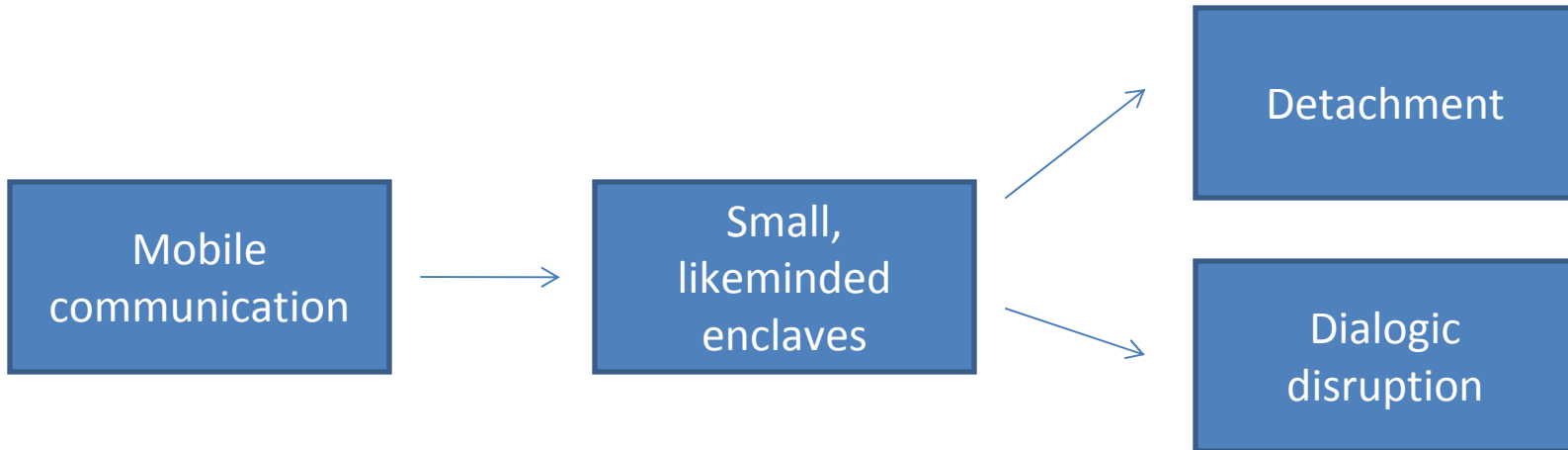
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# Theoretical Framing

## “Monadic Clusters”



# Empirical Framing

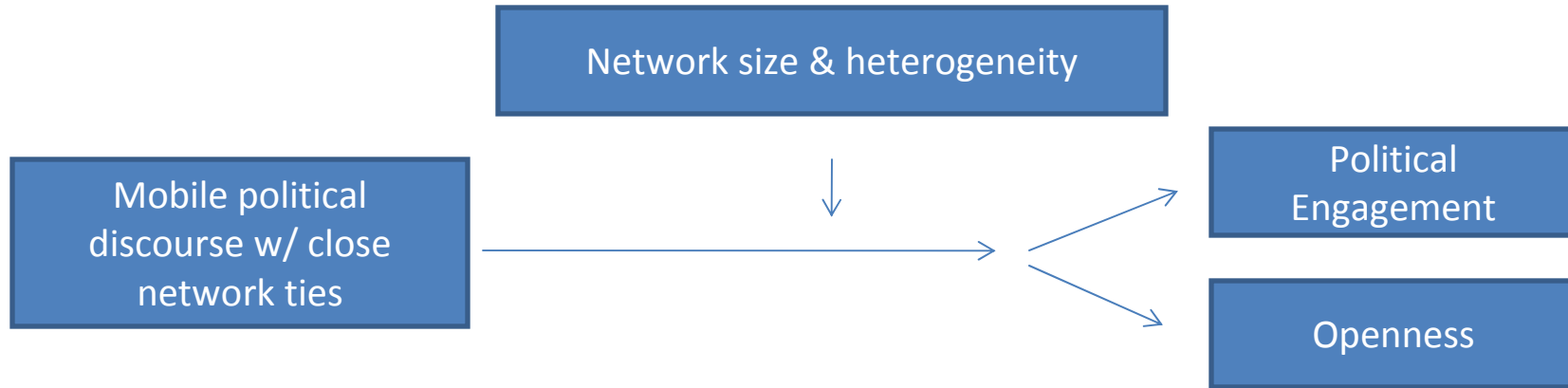
## Network size

- Larger is better for political life

## Network heterogeneity (“cross-cutting”)

- Bad for involvement
  - Interpersonal level - conflict avoidance
  - Intrapersonal level - ambivalence
- But good attitudinally
  - Deepens understanding
  - Enhances tolerance (close ties only)

# Hypotheses & RQ



H1: Mobile dialogue with close ties will be positively associated with levels of political participation and openness.

H2: Mobile dialogue in larger networks = greater participation and openness than in smaller networks

H3-4: Mobile dialogue in more diverse networks = greater openness (H3), but less participation (H4) than in more homogenous networks

RQ: Three-way interaction effects -- How are the associations affected by network size and heterogeneity when these characteristics are accounted for simultaneously?

# Method - Measurement

- Criterion variables
  - Political participation (attending events, petitioning, contacting political official)
  - Political openness (interest in listening to alternative viewpoints, enjoy talking politics with others who may not agree, enjoy talking politics with others don't know)
- Predictor variables
  - Mobile phone use: social & informational (informational will be focus here)
- Moderating variables: social network size & homogeneity
- Control variables: age, gender, education, income, political interest

# Method - Sample

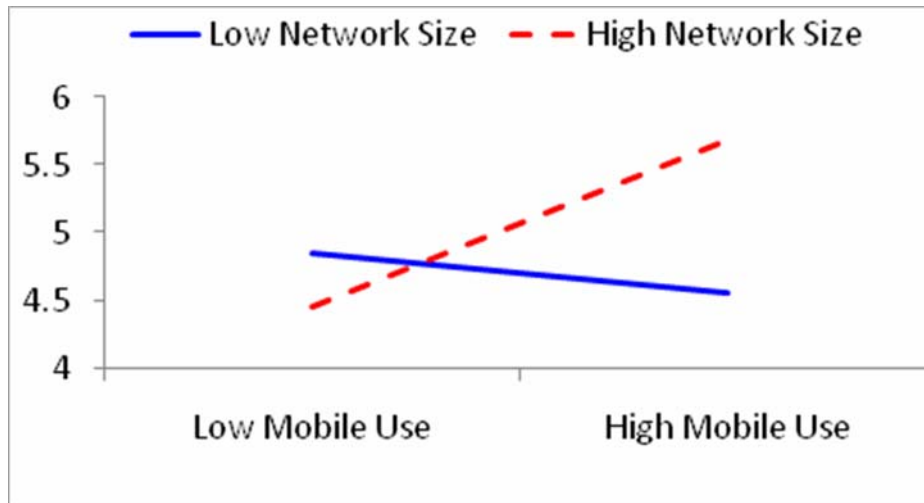
- Mail survey of demographically balanced sample of US adults
  - Income
  - Population density
  - Age
  - Gender
  - Region
  - Education
- 2000 of US adults sampled, 1,000+ responded wave 1, 700+ for wave 2

# Findings

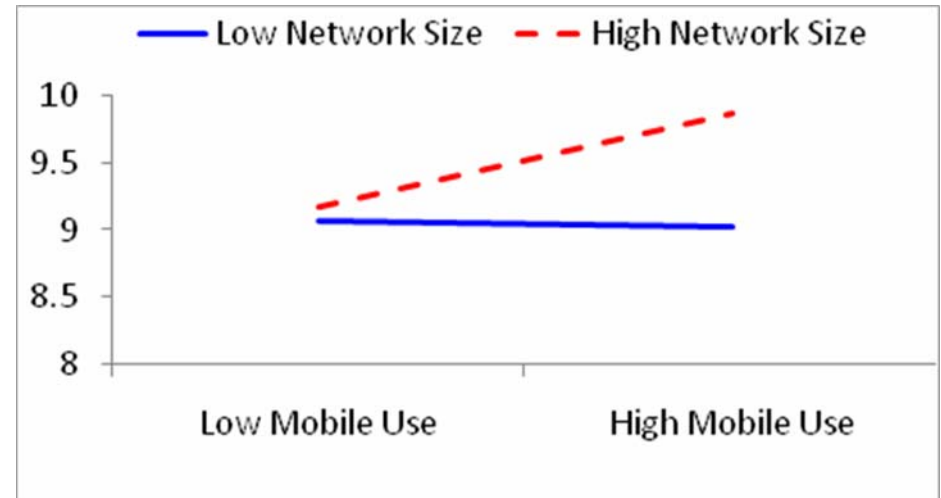
H1: Mobile use linked to greater participation & openness

H2: Moderating effects of size

Political Participation



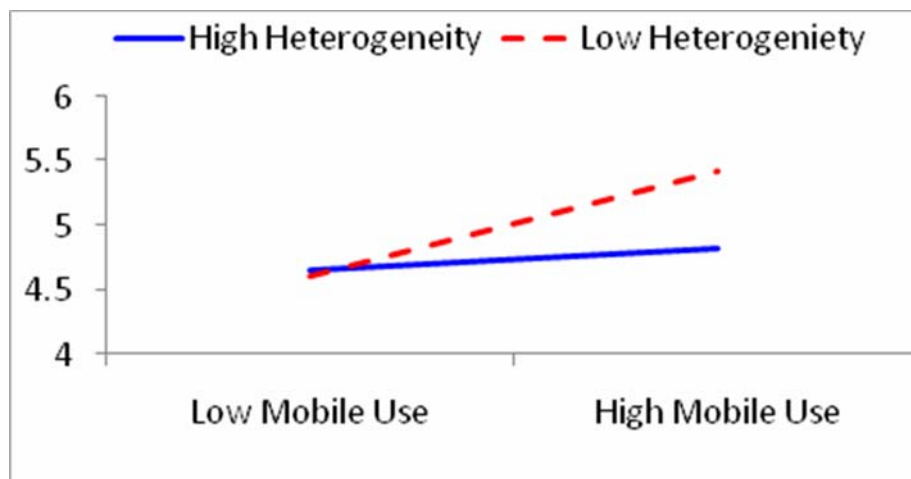
Political Openness



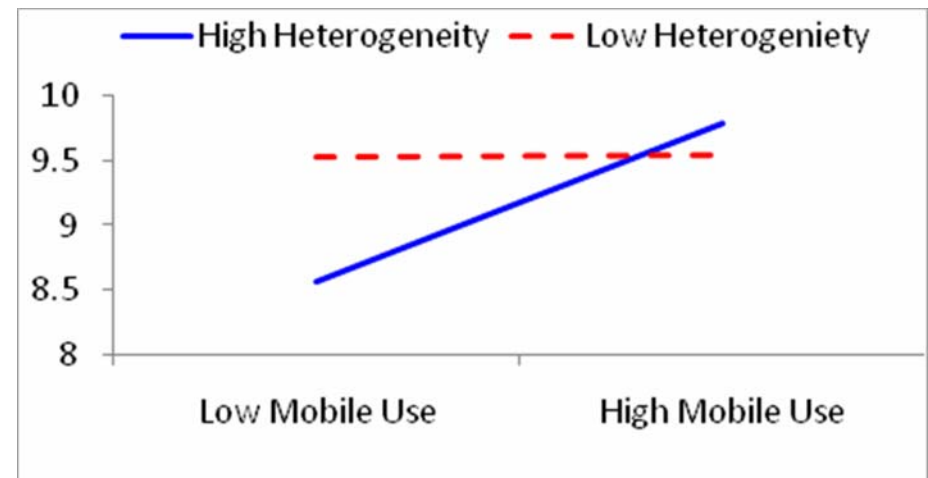
# Findings

## H3-4: Moderating effects of heterogeneity

Political Participation



Political Openness

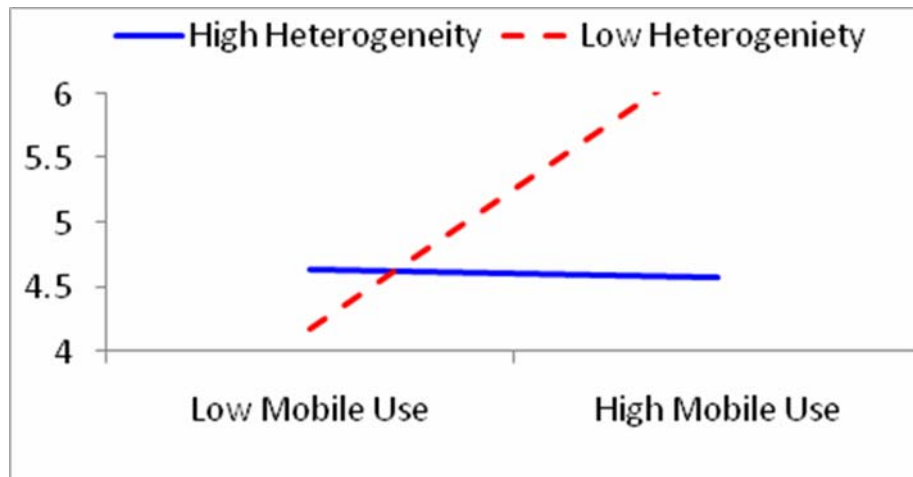




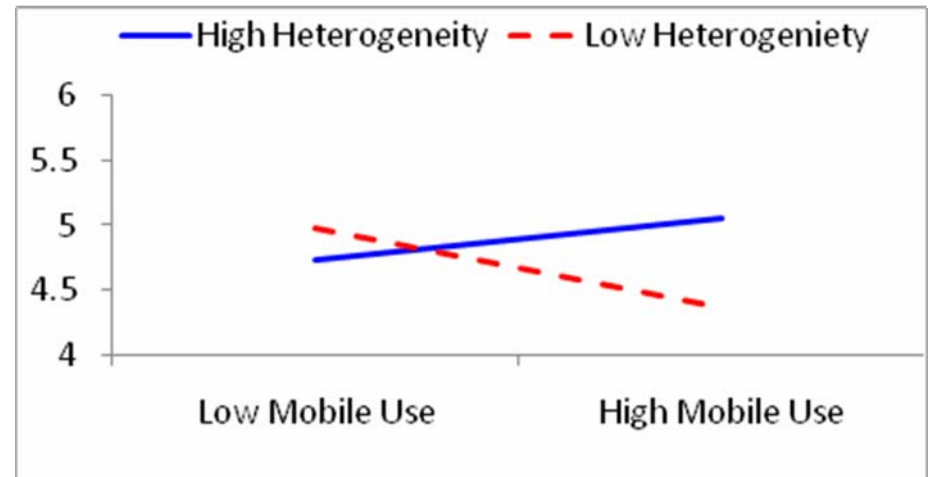
# Findings

RQ: Three-way interaction effects: participation

Political Participation with High Network Size



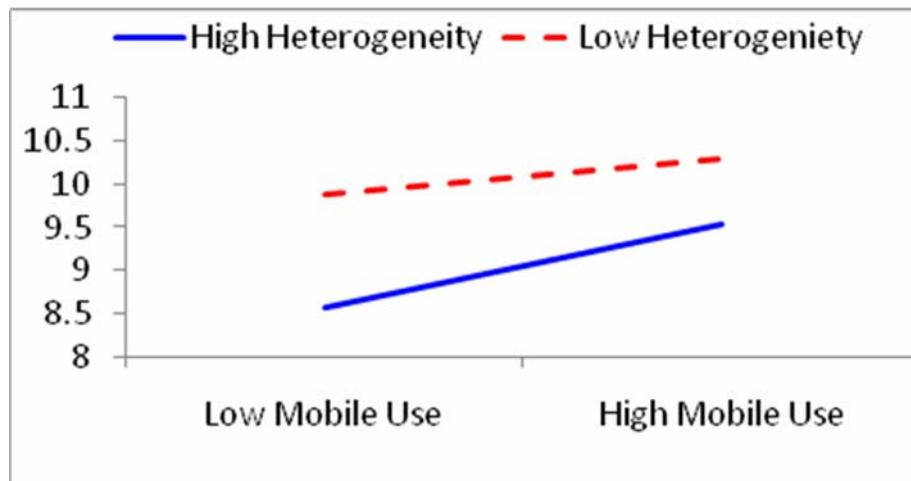
Political Participation with Low Network Size



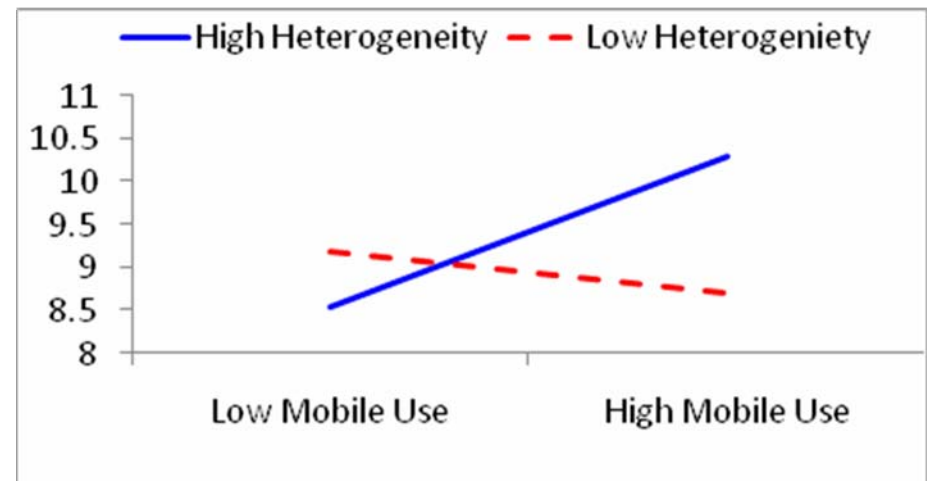
# Findings

RQ: Three-way interaction effects: political openness

Political Openness with High Network Size



Political Openness with Low Network Size



# Discussion

- Some good news: Positive links between mobile use & both indicators of political life
- But: Lower size mitigates both of these positive associations, mobile discourse NOT helpful for small networks
- Other side of this coin: Greater size has dramatic positive interaction effect
- Heterogeneity: Mobile use seems to enhance the expected trends for participation (-) & openness (+)

# Discussion

- Three-way interactions:
  - Monadic clusters? Those with frequent mobile use in small, like-minded networks also less likely to participate and less open-minded.
  - Increased mobile communication with diverse others mitigates the negative effects of having a small network of close ties. In fact, the findings suggest that it reverses them (particularly interesting for participation).

# Discussion

- 2<sup>nd</sup> wave to examine causality
- Add a layer by looking at causal relationship between mobile use and network size/homogeneity ... which comes first in the model?
- Adolescents
- More nuanced usage patterns
- Put in context of other media (old & new)