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Dissertation Proposal – Draft  
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Note: This is the first time I've presented this, so I welcome any comments, suggestions, or questions, but from the methods workshop, I'm hoping to get feedback on a couple of issues in particular:

- general criticisms of the project that I'm just completely missing?
- does my approach to measuring attitudes seem reasonable/plausible?
- given some measure of attitudes, how to measure heterogeneity in a population?
- how to deal with the fact that different issues/attitudes/dimensions are more relevant in some countries than others? Is there a difference between consensus and an issue/dimension not being relevant in a country? If so, how do I deal with this?

I've also inserted a few more related questions in the text below in the methods part. The other paper that is posted is a revised version of my field paper (intended for a comparative audience). It's an example of how some of the ideas here can be applied to a particular case. When the 2000 wave of the WVS data comes out, I hope to include it in the analysis and then try to publish the paper. Any feedback on the paper would be appreciated as well, but the primary thing is this proposal. Thanks in advance for taking the time to think about it.

### **Introduction**

What people believe and think is affected by and has an effect on the institutions and policies adopted by governments. This is the basic premise that underlies my dissertation, which seeks to answer the question: How much heterogeneity exists in different countries and subnational groups on basic social attitudes? My goal is to address this question by both measuring heterogeneity without reference to ethnic groups and by examining how ethnic divisions and differences in attitudes correspond to each other.

In this proposal, I first discuss how heterogeneity has been commonly viewed in political science and the links between values and attitudes and political outcomes. I then lay out the goals of the dissertation and discuss why each one is important. Next, I address how I will proceed with work on this project, what methodologies I am likely to employ, and possible data sources. Finally, I conclude by discussing some other issues that this project raises.

### **Views of Heterogeneity**

In political science, heterogeneity is most often measured as a function of the number and size of ethnic groups within a country (most often called ethnolinguistic fractionalization). There are several lines of reasoning that can lead to the use of ethnic groups as an appropriate way to measure heterogeneity more generally. First, much of the violence and conflict that is observed in society falls along the lines of ethnicity. Civil wars, distributional politics, nationalism, separatist movements, and civil rights are all very visible demonstrations of how ethnicity matters in political contexts. Since ethnicity can be observed to play an important role, it is a reasonable measure of heterogeneity. Second, regardless of how the distinctions come to be, people do identify themselves and others along ethnic lines and believe there to be differences between ethnic groups, whether or not differences actually exist. Even if meaningful differences cannot be found between two groups, the process of self and other identification and the belief in

the existence of differences functions to create divisions within society that can be seen as sources of heterogeneity. Third, even if everyone in a society has the same goals, as long as people have a stronger connection to their co-ethnics than to their fellow countrymen or to abstract principles of justice, issues of distribution will often play out along ethnic lines. Fourth, ethnic groups are somewhat easy to measure. Data is often collected on census forms, and many governments keep track of the distribution of ethnicities within their countries.

All of these are valid reasons for using ethnicity to measure heterogeneity. Using ethnicity alone as a measure of heterogeneity, however, has several important implications. One is that if there are two societies with the same number and size ethnic groups, these societies have the same measure of heterogeneity. Second, the degree of difference between two or more groups is not taken into account (Fearon 2002 is an exception to this). This means that the difference between Protestants and Catholics in Ireland is taken to be the same as the difference between Asian-Americans and African-Americans in the US. A third implication is that ethnicity is the relevant or dominant characteristic which divides a society. While language, religion, nationality, and culture are often all wrapped up in ethnicity measures, other divisions in society are not captured. An example of this is the division between fundamentalist Christians and more secular individuals in the United States.

Ethnicity in and of itself does play a role in heterogeneity, but a better measure of heterogeneity would be able to say something more about how much disagreement exists in a society with regards to issues relevant for politics. This would involve taking into account non-ethnic political cleavages, such as those between liberals and conservatives. It would also involve a measure of how different ethnic groups are in their values and goals; if two groups were to sit down at a table together to make political choices, how much trouble would they have compromising and producing common decisions?

Where distributional issues dominate politics, in parts of Africa for example, a measure which uses the number and size of ethnic groups alone may be the most appropriate one. However in places where there are working laws which prevent discrimination on the basis of ethnicity, when particular groups cannot be targeted for benefits, or where politics encompasses more than direct distribution of goods, differences in attitudes and opinions can matter significantly. If people of different ethnic groups see eye to eye on issues important to their society, other differences that may exist between them in terms of culture, clothing, or appearance become less important. Whether or not groups share common values or have similar views on issues important to their society matters for how politics is conducted and what the results of the political process are.

### **Values, Attitudes, and Politics**

Previous research provides ample reasons to believe that shared values and attitudes about how society should be run matter for politics.

- Those who study the connection between political culture and democracy (Almond and Verba 1963, Dahl 1966, Lipset 1960, Putnam 1993) argue that consensus over certain values is an important element for ensuring functional, stable democracy. The counter argument has been made as well, that democracy creates consensus about a common set of values (Barry 1970). While others have argued that ethnic divisions, not values, may

be responsible for democratic instability (Dahl 1971, Horowitz 1985, Lijphart 1968, 1984), Weingast (1997) brings these arguments together by explaining how ethnic cleavages can prevent the necessary coordination on values that democracy requires from occurring.

- Theories of voter choice assume that people have ideal points on multiple dimensions that determine how they vote. Voters are assumed to have a placement on a liberal/conservative dimension at a minimum and are often assumed to have a position on a secondary dimension as well. When this idea is generalized beyond how people behave in the voting booth, it is reasonable to assume that people have ideal points or attitudes on 2 or 3 dimensions that determine their political preferences and actions more broadly.
- Political parties are often argued to be the result of social cleavages within society (Lipset and Rokkan 1967 and others), which is simply another way of saying that there is a lack of agreement in society about fundamental issues and values. These divisions in society affect the way political parties form and the positions they take, which shapes politics in almost every possible way.
- More recently, Inglehart (1990, 1997, 2003) and others have argued that a shift from materialist values to postmaterialist values has caused the focus of politics to move from class divisions and economic outcomes to issues such as environmentalism and social justice. This has resulted in the emergence of new political parties and the inclusion of new topics of debate into national legislatures.
- Taking the argument to a global level, Huntington (1996) has argued that the values or culture of entire countries can be in conflict with each other, and that this lack of agreement over basic political values is the cause of much of the conflict that exists on an international scale. When countries, or subnational groups, have fundamentally different views of how society should be structured and governed, political conflict and violence result.

While there are faults to be found in all of these theories that link values and attitudes of one kind or another to political outcomes, the idea that the values and attitudes of individuals do matter for politics has persisted in political science for many years. Evidence has been presented from many different angles that what people believe, and how much consensus exists within and across societies, is an important explanatory factor when studying politics. This suggests that studying heterogeneity in the values and attitudes of individuals and groups is at least as important as studying heterogeneity that is based solely on ethnic divisions. By measuring the values and attitudes of individuals, a better measure of heterogeneity can be constructed that will meet the goals of being able to account for non-ethnic cleavages and providing a measure of the division, or lack thereof, that exists between ethnic groups.

Examples of the value and attitude dimensions that should matter for politics are religious vs. secular, libertarian vs. authoritarian, liberal vs. conservative, tolerance vs. conformity, and individuality vs. community. Those are general but fundamental dispositions that determine how people believe society should be organized, problems should be solved, and policies should be set. These conflicting viewpoints are some of the major dividing lines in societies and the source of conflict over both general approaches to governance and specific policy choices. Examining these dimensions is the first step in understanding how heterogeneity of attitudes affects the political process.

## Goals of the Dissertation

This dissertation has several goals:

1. Provide a measure of heterogeneity that is not based on the number or size of ethnic groups in a country but rather on the values and attitudes of individual.
2. Provide a way to measure the magnitude of the division that exists between ethnic or any other type of groups on a dimension that is relevant for political outcomes.
3. Make better use of cross-national survey data by using the individual level data in addition to the country aggregates.
4. Test existing theories that make claims regarding the extent of division between different ethnic groups or countries.
5. Seek to explain the source of variation in the levels of heterogeneity cross-nationally.

The first goal is important because ethnicity is not the major division relevant for politics in all countries. In most advanced industrialized democracies, politics does not play out primarily along ethnic lines; yet, heterogeneity in these countries is still measured by ethnicity in many cases. When researchers have gone beyond ethnicity in these countries, economic/social class has been one of the major divisions, but increasingly class based divisions are also becoming marginal. This leaves a void as to how political divisions in these countries are to be characterized and measured.

Those who have looked at how consensus affects institutions in the past have focused on whether people believe in the basic tenets of democracy and have values that support democratic principles, such as whether people support minority rights and freedom of speech. Such beliefs may be important ones to look at, but I am more interested in whether consensus exists on a broader range of topics. Particularly in countries with established and long-standing democracies, the basic rights and freedoms have been largely guaranteed. Debates over whether or not there should be freedom of speech is not what politics is primarily about in most countries in Europe. What is more relevant is whether people agree about the role of religion in society, for example. Because I intend to look at people's attitudes about a broader range of social and political issues, not just democratic values, this project will be expanding on the previous work on political culture in a way that has not been pursued extensively up to this point.

More generally, a measure of heterogeneity based on attitudes should be of interest to political scientists because we currently do not have a sense of how divided societies are on the dimensions that affect politics. Are people in Ireland or South Africa more heterogeneous in their beliefs about how society should be structured? Additionally, understanding how heterogeneous people are in terms of their attitudes and values is important for understanding the ways that ethnicity affects politics. Are countries that are ethnically diverse also diverse in terms of the values of their citizens, or are ethnic divisions sometimes mobilized in places where there is a high degree of consensus?

The second goal also addresses the issue of how attitudes/values and ethnicity interact. Many researchers assume that ethnic groups are significantly different from each other in a way that matters for their theory without ever testing this assumption. If the variance in attitudes within ethnic groups is greater than that between ethnic groups, then the role of ethnicity/culture in

many theories needs to be reconsidered (for example, see Wildavsky 1988). If ethnic groups are not significantly different from each other in what they want out of government, what is it that makes ethnicity relevant for politics? If ethnic groups are significantly different from each other, how great is the difference, and why is the division between some groups greater than the division between others? What causes ethnic groups to be more or less in agreement about the issues that face their society? To answer these questions we first need a way to measure the magnitude of differences between groups.

And to measure the differences between groups, we need good data. Making better use of cross-national survey data is a goal unto itself because the way in which this data is used will shape how future surveys are constructed and what data is collected. Dowley and Silver (2004) discuss how it is difficult to use the cross-national datasets that currently exist to explore questions of ethnicity because there is no standardization of ethnicity questions as there is with occupational questions, for example. Those who developed the surveys were generally not interested in examining differences between subnational groups, and as a result they did not include questions that make it easy to do so. Cross-national surveys were constructed to test differences between countries, but with a little bit of tweaking they could also be just as useful for individual level analyses. Questions that currently address ethnicity in a tangential way could be revised to collect the information that ethnicity researchers need. Such a change in the mindset of survey designers would render the data applicable to a wider range of research questions.

With improved measures of heterogeneity and the magnitude differences between ethnic groups, existing theories concerning heterogeneity, both of attitudes and ethnicity, can be reexamined. Theories that are concerned with differences in attitudes have often not been tested or tested only on a few countries because of the lack of data. Testing these theories broadly would be a new addition to the literature. For theories concerned with ethnic heterogeneity, if tests of the theories do not hold up to a measure of ethnic heterogeneity that includes the magnitude of difference between groups, then these theories would need to be rethought and the mechanisms by which ethnicity and the relevant outcome were related would need to be reexamined. If including a measure of the magnitude of difference produces similar results as when using existing measures, then this adds validity to the use of those measures and provides some insight as to why it is that ethnicity matters. I think that the major contribution of this project will be to force those who research ethnic divisions to think about and contend with the variance that exists within ethnic groups. I hope to show why it is that the distribution within groups matters for understanding how ethnicity can affect political outcomes.

Finally, once I have an idea of what the variation in heterogeneity of attitudes looks like cross-nationally, I hope to go beyond existing theories to identify some of the institutions and policies that correlate with the level of heterogeneity in countries cross-nationally and, where I have the data, over time as well. This is an important step of the project for two reasons. First, while examining causal relationships may fall outside of the scope of this project, identifying relationships between variables is an important first step in identifying questions that should be researched further. By seeking out associations, I will be able to identify areas that I can explore in the future and gather data that will make it possible to test causal relationships. Second, heterogeneity is often used as an independent variable in studies, but it is rarely researched as a dependent variable. I am particularly interested in identifying factors that contribute to increased

or decreased heterogeneity in a country. For example, does the availability of many different types of schools (university track, vocational, technical, etc.) increase the heterogeneity in a country? I expand on some of my hypotheses about factors that may affect heterogeneity, and factors that heterogeneity may affect, below.

### **Doing the Dissertation: Goals 1-3**

The question of how to measure attitudes and values is a serious one. In attempting to measure attitudes and values, I am first making the assumption that they are real and exist in the world. It is an assumption because they can not be observed directly in the way a war or a treaty or an election can be observed. Attitudes must be inferred from the observable actions and reports that individuals make. The most common way that attitudes are measured is through survey data. The idea is that the attitudes, values, or beliefs that an individual has determine how he or she will answer survey questions. The response an individual gives to any single question is an imperfect measure of the underlying attitude of the respondent; there is error and uncertainty in how the attitudes held by individuals are translated into responses to survey questions. When the responses to multiple questions are considered together, however, a more accurate measure of the respondent's underlying attitude can be achieved. For example, the answer a respondent gives to the question "How often do you go to church?" provides an imperfect indication of the importance of religion to the respondent. Considering the response to another question, "Were you brought up religiously at home?" as well decreases the uncertainty with which the importance of religion to the respondent can be measured. The value of interest is the underlying, more general view or attitude of the respondent, not the answer he or she gives to a particular substantive question.

Abramson and Inglehart (1995 and elsewhere) use factor analysis to measure the underlying values of respondents to the World Values Survey. Their primary interest, however, is how countries compare to each other, not what the distribution of respondents within a country looks like (except in terms of postmaterialist values). Factor analysis is useful, particularly as a preliminary tool, but when measuring attitudes, particularly when the individual is the unit of interest, better methods exist. Item-response theory provides a more flexible framework for estimating the latent attitudes of respondents than factor analysis allows. Item-response models are similar to factor analysis in they use the idea that the answer an individual gives to any particular question should provide an indication of the actual attitude of the respondent which is determining the respondent's answer to the question; item-response models, however, estimate the latent trait directly, which is important in this situation where the latent trait, the attitude of the respondent, is the variable of interest. Item-response models are also particularly good for measurement problems involving ordinal indicator variables and missing data (Treier and Jackman 2000) - common characteristics of survey data. They also allow for the possibility that questions measure the latent trait with differing degrees of precision. As with factor analysis, item-response models can be used to estimate multiple factors, or dimensions, that are present in the data.

Questions: other ways to go about measuring attitudes? other models/methods I should be looking at? should I focus more on individual questions, instead of general views? criticisms/objections to using this approach to measuring values? any objections to the idea that what I'm trying to measure really exists?

Once attitudes have been measured the second step is measuring how disperse the attitudes of individuals are within and between countries. First consider measuring heterogeneity within countries. Using the variance is a simple measure of heterogeneity, but there are a lot of differences that can exist between groups that the variance cannot capture. The distribution of attitudes could be approximately normally distributed, skewed, bimodal, or follow many other possible distributions; the variance is useful for roughly capturing the degree of consensus, but not for capturing the finer details of the distribution, which is of interest for understanding how attitudes can and do affect the political process. For example, a bimodal distribution suggests more conflict than a normal distribution does.

When comparing two groups or countries, they may differ simply in terms of their mean values, or they may have different distributions entirely. There may be a high or low degree of overlap between the members of one group and those of another, or there may be only a few in each group who share values with the other. When just a handful of groups or countries are being compared, similarity can be assessed by simply examining each of the distributions. This cannot be done, however, on a larger scale.

The problem becomes more complex when considering more than one attitude at a time. There are at least two dimensions or different attitudes that individuals possess (based on existing research) and which I would like to measure. Whatever solutions exist for the one dimensional case can most likely be generalized to multivariate distributions, but considering more than one attitude at a time allows for more types of comparisons to be made than with a single attitude.

Questions: this is where I could really use some suggestions. Some things I've considered (some decent, some not):

- difference of means (something that always needs to be checked, but doesn't suffice as a measure on its own)
- difference of means for (50%, for example) highest density regions (to account for skew, etc.)
- % of overlap between groups
- likelihood that a random draw from one group will be greater than a random draw from another group
- overlap of the middle 50% of two groups
- percentile comparisons (5% and 95% for example)
- comparing a group's variance/range to that which exists for the world population
- variance and range for within group level of heterogeneity

Any suggestions or comments? Coming up with a within group measure of heterogeneity that is convincing is probably the most important issue for me at the moment, since there are a lot of ways to compare groups. Any other measures of distance/variation I should look at? Using the variance may not pose any problems since it's possible (although unlikely) that all groups follow a similar, approximately normal distribution. At what point would using the variance start to raise questions, if it raises any at all (how dissimilar would the distributions need to be)? Most of the work with the data I've done so far has been on measuring attitudes and comparing a handful of groups, not on heterogeneity.

#### **Doing the Dissertation: Goal 4**

Some of the theories which make use of heterogeneity as an explanatory factor for different aspects of politics are mentioned above. Political culture theories hypothesize that the stability of democracy is affected by the level of heterogeneity, or level of consensus, in certain values. Social cleavages or heterogeneity have been shown to affect the number and type of political parties. Heterogeneity across societies has also been hypothesized as a cause of international conflicts.

In addition to these theories that define heterogeneity primarily in terms of values or attitudes, ethnic heterogeneity has been associated with a wide range of political and economic outcomes. Alesina, et al. (2003) review the literature and point out that studies have found ethnic heterogeneity to be related to per capita GDP growth (Easterly and Levine 1997), the quality of government (La Porta et al. 1999), the provision of public goods (Alesina and others), and interpersonal trust. Ordershook and Shvetsova (1994) find a relationship between ethnic heterogeneity and the number of political parties in a country, subject to institutional constraints.

Theories concerning heterogeneity of attitudes or values can be tested using the measure of heterogeneity I discuss above. Theories concerning ethnic heterogeneity cannot be tested directly using a measure of heterogeneity of attitudes, but the difference in the attitudes of ethnic groups can be used to construct new measures of ethnic heterogeneity that go beyond the measures of ethnic fractionalization that have been used to test these theories in the past. Fractionalization measures are only concerned with the number and size of ethnic groups within a country. As mentioned above, there are some outcomes of interest, such as the distribution of divisible goods or pork, where fractionalization is the conceptually appropriate measure. However, for other theories, such as those explaining the number of political parties in a country, a more complex measure of heterogeneity is called for.

#### **Doing the Dissertation: Goal 5**

This is the most undefined part of the project, because until I have an idea of what the variation in the level of heterogeneity looks like cross-nationally, it is difficult to specify correlates. Existing theories suggest several candidates, such as the number of political parties, the number of ethnic groups, and social mobility, and these theories can and will be tested. In addition to these existing theories, however, I am interested in seeing if an association exists between heterogeneity and a few particular variables.

- The level of economic inequality in a country: When people are further apart in their material well-being, are they also further apart in their attitudes? Is this effect mediated by the overall level of development of the country? There are several ideas bundled up here. One is that people with different material resources may see the world differently. This effect may exist at all levels of economic well-being, or there may be a threshold over which more material goods cease to have a significant effect on attitudes. A second idea ties up social class with inequality – those with similar amounts of material goods interact most often with each other and develop similar attitudes which are different from the attitudes of those with more (or less) material goods. A third idea brings in social welfare policies – those countries that have committed to having lower levels of economic inequality may have reached consensus in other areas (or the effect may be

reversed – that less inequality resulted in more consensus). The general hypothesis here is that more corporatist social policies should be positively associated with greater levels of consensus. Teasing out causation will be more difficult.

- The type of education system in the country: Does the availability of more types of schools (vocational, university track, technical, religious, private) increase the heterogeneity of values in a country? The idea behind this is that schools are one of the major influences on the development of the social views of individuals. Where there is more variation in types of schools, there should be more variation in attitudes. A second idea relating to schooling is that different types of schools provide different degrees of exposure to alternative ideas. Those students in university-track education programs are likely to be exposed to a greater number of viewpoints and attitudes than those in a vocation program, as a result of the substance of the education in the two cases. Countries that have more students in university-track programs or schools should have a higher level of heterogeneity in attitudes because more students have been exposed to a greater variety of ideas – there is an assumption here that part of what determines a person's attitudes is the options that they are aware of (what the universe of acceptable attitudes is).
- The level of generality of issues that divide political parties: When there is more consensus in a country, political parties should be more similar in their positions on big or general issues – what divides political parties instead should be specific policy differences. For example, instead of parties being split as to whether they are pro-choice or pro-life, they would all be pro-choice but be split on parental consent laws or other more technical details. I think it would be possible to construct measures of how specific the issues are that divide parties by using the party manifestos. Again, there are of course endogeneity problems, but at least in Europe where there is some time series data, it may be possible to track changes over time. I think this is one of the areas where the amount of heterogeneity really matters for politics, besides in the number of political parties.

I realize that I need to think more about the ways in which heterogeneity could affect political outcomes – what are the motivations of and options available to those who find themselves in extreme positions relative to others in their country? Will different policies be made in heterogeneous societies than in homogeneous ones? How do institutional characteristics (electoral system, presidential vs. parliamentary, federal vs. unitary) interact with different levels of heterogeneity? These are the types of questions that I am most interested in, but I think that many of the ideas in this section are extensions of what will be my dissertation instead of parts of it. The tasks of measurement, testing some existing theories, and looking at ethnic divisions should provide more than enough work for the time being.

## **Data**

Several cross-national survey datasets now exist that would be useful in measuring attitudes. The World Values Survey (WVS) is the main source. There have been four waves of the survey, with many of the same questions asked in each wave. About 80 countries are included in the most current wave of the study. This survey was designed by Inglehart (and others) to measure the presence of post-materialist values. These are values that place more importance of things such as the environment and justice than material well-being. For those not interested in post-materialism (myself included) this survey is useful because of the over 200 questions on the

importance of social institutions and organizations, views of the government, questions of morality, views of the workplace, and questions about family. The WVS includes the greatest number of developing countries of any of the datasets.

The International Social Survey Programme (ISSP) is another good source of cross-national survey data. Starting in 1985, they have conducted a survey on a different topic each year (repeating some of the same topics over time). The role of government, social inequality, the environment, and national identity are examples of the different topics. About 40 countries are involved in the project, although not every country participated each year.

The Comparative Study of Electoral Systems (CSES) is a third source that provides limited individual level data. The CSES includes some political information questions, respondents' assessments of the economy, and a few other questions related to a national election in the country. The CSES is not particularly useful for measuring general social and political attitudes, but it may prove useful for certain topics.

The final major sources are the Euro, Latino, and Afro barometers. These are independent sources, so comparisons within each region can be made but not between regions. The Latino and Afro barometers are fairly new endeavors, and include a limited number of countries over a short time span. The Eurobarometer, however, includes data for some countries since 1974 and currently includes all EU countries. In addition to the Eurobarometer, the development of the EU has produced additional public opinion and general survey data for Europe.

### **Other Considerations**

While the ideas I've set out above should apply generally, I think it may make sense to focus primarily on advanced industrialized democracies for two reasons, one practical and one theoretical. First, most of the data comes from the US, Europe, and similar countries. There is the possibility for doing estimates over time and for getting other institutional and policy data that I will need to test theories. Second, it is in these countries where ethnic politics are less relevant and where there is the greatest need for a measure of heterogeneity that is not based on the number of ethnic groups; and where ethnic groups are important in these countries, measuring the magnitude of difference between these groups in terms of the attitudes makes the most sense because of the high level of social integration that exists in these countries. When talking about African countries, it is more difficult to make the argument that what distinguishes the Yoruba from the Igbo is how authoritarian they think the government should be. While attitudes are one part of the picture of politics in developing countries, they are not likely to be the most important one.

Another important artifact of the data that will shape the way this project progresses is the availability of ethnicity indicators in the datasets (see Dowley and Silver 2004 for an extended discussion). There is no standardized ethnicity question, like there is with occupation or other demographic variables. When questions about ethnicity are included in surveys, they often mix ethnic identifications with civic ones, forcing people to choose between their ethnic and civic identities. This gives a biased view of ethnic group membership. In some cases, language or religion questions can be used to extract ethnic identities, but often ethnicity does not align with these characteristics. This means that even though there is data available for a large number of

countries, it will not be possible to estimate the magnitude of differences between many of the ethnic groups present in these countries because of the lack of adequate ethnicity questions on the surveys.

The implication of this for my project is that while it would be wonderful to be able to construct a new dataset of ethnic heterogeneity, this most likely will not be possible. To examine how heterogeneity of attitudes interacts with ethnicity, I will have to use case studies as my primary method. This has the benefit of providing a more detailed examination of existing theories, but I will not be able to re-run cross-national regressions using my measure of ethnic heterogeneity instead of existing ones. Conducting case studies will, however, make it possible to identify in what situations ethnicity may matter more than differences in attitudes, and where the reverse may be true.

Turning away from data concerns, one thing that will be particularly important for my dissertation is distinguishing my theories and work from that of the political culture literature, which has been criticized harshly (see as an example Johnson 2003 or Laitin 1995). While my dissertation is obviously related to work in this area, it is also different in important ways, not the least of which is that I am not trying to make a cultural argument (at least at this point). I recognize that it will be important to address some of the criticisms of the political culture literature, particularly as they apply to my own work, in order to distinguish my theory from these existing ones.

One of the important ways in which my work will depart from political culture research is that I am particularly interested in heterogeneity as a dependent variable. Most researchers recognize that there is a feedback loop between values and institutions, but almost all research has been directed at understanding how values affect institutions, and not the other way around. Even less attention has been paid to how institutions affect the variety of opinions and beliefs that exist in a society. I hope to use the measures of heterogeneity I construct to study this neglected link.

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