

Income Status, Perceived Equity of Income Distribution and Political Participation

-- Evidence from the Asian Barometer Survey

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Abstract. Popular political participation is an essential aspect of political modernization. Existing studies have focused on institutional political participation, such as voting in elections, and have primarily explained political participation from objective perspectives, such as income status. However, there has been some neglect of non-institutional political participation. In studies affecting political participation, subjective perceptions of the equity of income distribution and their interaction with income have yet to receive sufficient attention. Based on this, this paper uses data from the fourth round (2014-2016) of the 2016 Asian Barometer (ABS) survey to analyze the impact of income status and perceived equity of income distribution on political participation and the mechanisms of their effects through multiple regressions. The results indicate that income and perceived equity of income distribution have a positive effect on institutional political participation; in terms of impact mechanisms, income status and perceived equity of income distribution affect institutionalized political participation by influencing government satisfaction and political trust; subjective perceptions of equity of income distribution influence institutional political participation behavior more than income inequality; the paper concludes by applying social capital theory to explain the finding that income status and perceived income distribution equity are positively associated with non-institutionalized political participation in terms of the participant path and the dominant path.

Keywords: Political Participation; Income Inequality; Perceived Equity of Income Distribution; Political Trust; Government Satisfaction.

1. Introduction

Political participation is an essential aspect of political modernization. In the book *The Civic Culture*, Gabriel Almond and Verba define political participation as citizens actively and deliberately influencing their government (Almond & Verba, 1963). Huntington and Nelson argue that "political participation is an attempt by civilians to influence governmental decisions" (Samuel & Joan, 1976). According to Verba and Nie (1972), political participation is another form of civil action influencing government activities. Consequently, this paper argues that the subject of political participation is the people. At the same time, the object of their actions is the public authority or decisions regarding distributing public benefits.

Political participation is significant both theoretically and practically. Political engagement is the embodiment of democratic theory's value. Schumpeter's view that the essence of democracy is to make political decisions through competitive elections and that competitive elections are the threshold of democracy also forms the basis of modern Western democratic theory (Schumpeter, 1942), implying that citizens must vote to influence the formulation and implementation of policies. Moreover, political participation is a measure of the political order's stability. When the political system can adequately meet the political participation requirements of citizens in social development, the public will engage in politics through institutionalized channels, thereby achieving political stability. Nonetheless, if political participation mechanisms are inadequate, citizens' participation requirements may be expressed through media outside the formal system, resulting in political disorder. Therefore, political participation is essential for maintaining a stable political order.

Many factors define political participation. Participant characteristics classify political participation as individual or group (Samuel & Joan, 1989). Direct and indirect political participation

depend on whether participants affect the political process through intermediaries. Personal attitudes drive active and mobilized participation. Samuel & Joan (1989) define institutionalized political participation as an activity that conforms to broad legal rules and is predictable. The first three classes are based on subject properties, participation links, and participation psychology, while the fourth is based on behavioral traits.

What specific factors contribute to differences in the political participation behaviors of individuals? Verba et al. explain political participation from three perspectives: resources, motivation and mobilization (Verba et al., 1995). In addition, numerous factors influence political participation, including objective economic dimensions such as income, education and occupation, as well as subjective psychological dimensions such as political efficacy, political trust and government satisfaction. The Internet's increasing penetration into people's daily lives increasingly influences political participation.

Scholars are increasingly studying economic equality. Confucius reminded ancient politicians that "it is not a matter of scarcity but of inequality." Aristotle believed that economic equality is the foundation of democracy and that serious class division would lead to the collapse of social order and city-states. The affluent class's oligarchs make policy today, and economic disparity has led to political inequality and dissatisfaction with democracy (Han & Yang, 2019). According to Adams' "equity theory," subjective economic equality affects political sentiments as much as income equality. Therefore, it is crucial to examine the influence of economic equality on the political participation behavior of individuals, which may help to predict political disorder.

Varieties of political participation exist in democratic societies. Protests, marches, and petition signing are radical, whereas voting and contacting politicians are moderate. How does economic inequality drive political participation? Two conflicting views have examined economic inequality and political participation (Beramendi & Anderson, 2008). On the one hand, economic disparity may encourage moderate political participation (Brady, 2004). On the other hand, economic inequality prevents people from participating in politics to achieve their particular aims and interests, encouraging more violent political participation (Goodin & Dryzeze, 1980). Both approaches believe that human interests can influence conduct and that economic interests may promote political participation regardless of wealth or poverty.

However, existing research needs to pay more attention to four issues. First, most political participation studies have concentrated on institutionalized political participation, such as voting, while non-institutionalized political participation has gotten less attention. Second, much research has focused on the link between objective financial status and political participation, even though inequality is relative, and people's subjective judgments of inequality may be crucial to its impact (Lee & Kwon, 2019). Thus, subjective and objective economic disparities need to be addressed. Thirdly, most academics have measured economic inequality using country-level variables like the Gini coefficient, whereas only some have explored individual-level inequality. Fourth, studies have also insufficiently examined the mechanisms of the role between socioeconomic status, psychological motivation, and political participation (Liu & Zhang, 2020).

Consequently, this paper seeks to address the three issues listed below. First, how does subjective and objective economic equality affect institutionalized and non-institutionalized political participation? What interaction exists between subjective and objective economic inequality? Third, through what mechanisms does income status influence the population's psychology and, by extension, political participation?

To answer these questions, this paper uses the Asian Barometer Survey (ABS) data to consider the impact of income status and perceived equity of income distribution as the core independent variables and thus considers their effects on political participation from the subjective and objective dimensions at the economic aspect; secondly, this paper examines the mediating effects of the psychological factors of political trust and government satisfaction; and finally, it integrates the effects and mechanisms of economic factors on political participation.

2. Theoretical Framework and Research Hypothesis

2.1 Income Status, Perceived Equity of Income Distribution, and Political Participation

Extensive research indicates that in institutionalized political participation, specific groups (e.g., the affluent, the highly educated, and the elderly) are more likely to vote in elections than those without these characteristics (Matsusaka et al., 1999). Several studies conducted in the United States (Verba et al., 1995) and other parts of the world (Verba et al., 1978) have suggested that income inequality most likely influences the prevalence of "income bias" in voter turnout (Tetsuya & Shiro, 2021). Thus, income has long been considered a major determinant of political participation.

What effect does income have on institutionalized participation? Income status boosts institutionalized political participation. Resource theory, which initially focused on electoral participation, holds that political activities are costly and require a certain amount of resources (time, money, and skills) to be invested (Brady et al., 1995). Because higher-income groups have more resources to support politics than lower-income groups, they are more likely to achieve their political goals and choose institutionalized political participation to influence politics. Relative power theory (Schattschneider, 1960) states that in countries with unequal income distribution, wealthy political elites set the political agenda and influence policymaking (Fumagalli & Narciso, 2012).

This positive correlation is questioned. Bruno Frey asked the resource theory: if the high cost of voting equals time to do other things, then the group with the higher income has a more significant opportunity cost. Thus, the higher-income group has no advantage (Frey, 1971). One study revealed that low-income participants were more involved in Moon Jae-in's Minjoo Party of Korea's presidential campaign. Thus, political dissatisfaction may lead to active engagement in presidential elections (Kwon & Han, 2018).

Most research simply considered income status as the independent variable. Perceived inequality may influence political participation more than objective inequality (Porter & Diani, 2006). Political participation is cognitive for social constructivists. This paper addresses the perceived equity of income distribution. According to social constructivism, subjective perceptions and objective circumstances can significantly impact political participation. Different perceptions of equity may exist among members of society, and these different perceptions may influence political participation. In contrast, groups with a weaker perception of inequality are less likely to engage in non-institutionalized political participation (Lee & Kwon, 2019).

In contrast, non-institutionalized participation, such as demonstrations and marches, has increased in contemporary democratic societies, while electoral participation has decreased (Norris, 2002). This trend is a reminder that non-institutionalized political participation must be analyzed from new angles. Political participation may be influenced by perceived equity of income distribution as well.

Based on the preceding analysis, this paper makes two fundamental hypotheses:

H1: The *higher* the income status and perceived equity of income distribution, the *more* likely it is that people will choose institutionalized political participation behavior.

H2: The *lower* the income status and perceived equity of income distribution, the *more* likely people are to choose non-institutionalized political participation behaviors.

2.2 Mediating Effects of Political Trust and Government Satisfaction

The cognitive-behavioral theory reliably links political trust, government satisfaction, and political participation. Cognition and Behavior Theory distinguishes between cognition and behavior, suggesting that cognitive activity can influence conduct and vice versa. This suggests that income status and perceived income distribution fairness affect political participation directly and indirectly through individual cognition translated into a particular psychology or attitude.

According to much research, voters' economic views affect their government confidence (Miller & Listhaug, 1999). Research has examined the relationship between citizens' economic assessments or expectations and their trust in government. Negative economic assessments enhance political mistrust (Citin & Green, 1986). Loveless was among the first to claim that individual income

inequality predicts political outcomes better than national inequality. He believes that subjective income inequality perceptions affect political beliefs, with higher income inequality perceptions lowering trust and political efficacy (Loveless, 2013).

Political trust is thought to reduce conflict and increase political participation. High political trust leads to institutionalized participation because people believe the existing system may help them achieve their interests (Norris, 1999). Political rebellion and collective action expressing anger, fury, and suspicion of the government can come from low government trust (Kaase, 1999).

Therefore, this paper makes the following hypothesis:

H3: First, *high (low)* income status and perceived equity of income distribution *promote (reduce)* political trust; next, the high level of political trust fosters *institutionalized (non-institutionalized)* political participation among the populace.

Government satisfaction links people's expectations of the government and their feelings about its work (Li & Li, 2013). Public satisfaction rises when government work meets public demands and expectations. If government work falls below expectations, public contentment will decrease. Thus, public happiness with the government depends on the gap between expectations and performance.

Income determines an individual's material satisfaction. The government boosts income through livelihood projects to gain popular support and pleasure. This has been confirmed by a number of studies; Wang (2010) found that government satisfaction is higher when the economy is growing rapidly. Kosecik & Sagbas (2004) found the same result in their analysis using World Values Survey data. In Ronald Inglehart's "post-materialist values" theory, high-income groups prioritize freedom, equality, fairness, and justice over survival, identify less with political power, and seek more diverse goals. Government satisfaction may be reduced (Inglehart, 1997). Another dimension of satisfaction is the difference between actual access and expectations. Adams' "equity theory" emphasizes that people's satisfaction comes from their actual access to needs and their perception of distribution equality (Karp & Banducci, 2008). Consequently, perceived income distribution equity and government satisfaction must be examined.

The effect of government satisfaction on political participation behavior can be inferred. When government behavior meets people's expectations, they're satisfied and trust the government, which helps maintain the political order. When it doesn't, they're dissatisfied and apathetic. Pent-up negative emotions and feelings can turn into rage and resentment, radicalizing the people and making them more likely to use violence and protests to change things. we can make the following hypothesis:

H4: First, *high (low)* income status and perceived equity of income distribution *promote (reduce)* government satisfaction; next, the high level of government satisfaction fosters *institutionalized (non-institutionalized)* political participation among the populace.

2.3 Analysis Framework

To test these hypotheses, this study employs the following methodology:

This paper divides political participation into institutionalized and non-institutionalized based on current studies. The subjective economic inequality component, "perceived equity of income distribution," is included in the primary independent variable with income status. To explore the relationship between socioeconomic status, psychological motivation and political participation, this paper considers what roles two individual psychological-level factors, political trust and government satisfaction, assume in the influence of the core independent variables on political participation. The Internet can supply more political information, improving people's access to information. The Internet's decentralized and independent nature may spread negative government appraisals, which may influence participation. Political efficacy is "an individual's feeling or belief that his or her political behavior can have an impact on the political process" (He, 2009), and two critical kinds of research have examined its relationship to political participation. Caprara et al. (2009) state that people with low political efficacy are more apathetic (Li, 2003). This study covers Internet use and political efficiency.

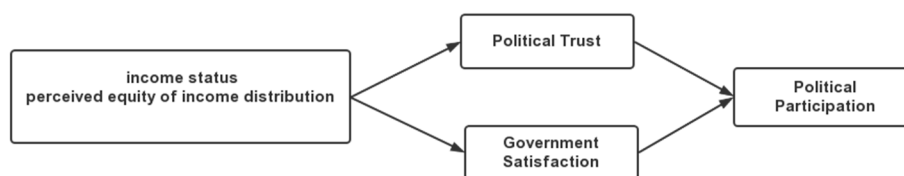


Fig 1. Income status, perceived equity of income distribution-political trust/government satisfaction - political participation behavior Analytical path diagram

3. Models, Data, and Variables

3.1 Model

According to the study design, we build the complete model as follows:

$$y_{1i} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 * inc + \beta_2 * dis + \beta_3 * gov_sat + \beta_4 * pol_tr + \beta_5 * (inc * dis) + \beta_6 * X + \varepsilon_i \quad (1)$$

$$y_{2i} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 * inc + \beta_2 * dis + \beta_3 * gov_sat + \beta_4 * pol_tr + \beta_5 * (inc * dis) + \beta_6 * X + \varepsilon_i \quad (2)$$

In the formula, i represents the respondent, y_{1i} denotes the level of institutionalized political participation of the i th respondent, and y_{2i} denotes the level of non-institutionalized political participation of the i th respondent; X denotes all control variables at the individual level, including Internet use, political efficacy, gender, age, and education level.

Modeling procedure: Model 1 controls for respondent-specific factors to explore how income status and perceived income distribution equity affect political participation. Model 2 was created by adding government satisfaction to model 1 to study how government satisfaction mediates political participation. Third, model 1 includes political trust to examine its mediating influence on political participation. Model 4 is model 1 plus Internet usage and political effectiveness. Fifth, model 5 examines the relationship between the two fundamental independent variables by adding the interaction term of economic status and perceived equality of income distribution to model 4. Separately, model 2 and model 3 are utilized to study the mediating influence of political trust and government satisfaction on income level and income distribution fairness. Tables 2–4 show model analysis findings.

3.2 Data

The data for this study were obtained from the fourth wave of the 2016 Asian Barometer Survey (ABS). The ABS accurately sample political participation, political attitudes, and economic levels. The Philippines, Taiwan (China), Thailand, Mongolia, Singapore, South Korea, Indonesia, Japan, Malaysia, Hong Kong (China), Vietnam, Mainland China, Cambodia, and Myanmar were surveyed in the fourth wave between 2014 and 2016. Two thousand eleven valid samples resulted from missing value processing.

3.3 Variable

3.3.1 Dependent Variable

Institutionalized political participation. The ABS question "Have you voted since you became eligible to vote?" measures institutionalized political participation in this study. "Voted in every election = 4, voted in most elections = 3, voted in some elections = 2, hardly ever voted = 1".

Non-institutionalized political participation. It was measured by asking respondents "how often they took non-institutionalized actions over the past three years." "Participation in demonstrations" and "petition signing" are non-institutionalized political participation in this study. This paper discusses "participation in demonstrations" and "petition signing." Never done and will not do = 1, never done and may do = 2, done once = 3, done several times = 4.

3.3.2 Core Independent Variables

Income status. The questionnaire divides income into five quintiles as an objective measure of economic disparity. "Fifth quintile, i.e., lowest 20% (less than 5500) = 1. Fourth quintile 20% (5501 to 10000) = 2. Third quintile (10001 to 20000) = 3. Second quintile (20001 to 40000) = 4. First quintile, the first 20% (over 40,000) = 5". perceived income distribution equality. "How fair do you think the income distribution is in your country?" was reverse-coded to "very unfair = 1, unfair = 2, fair = 3, fair = 4".

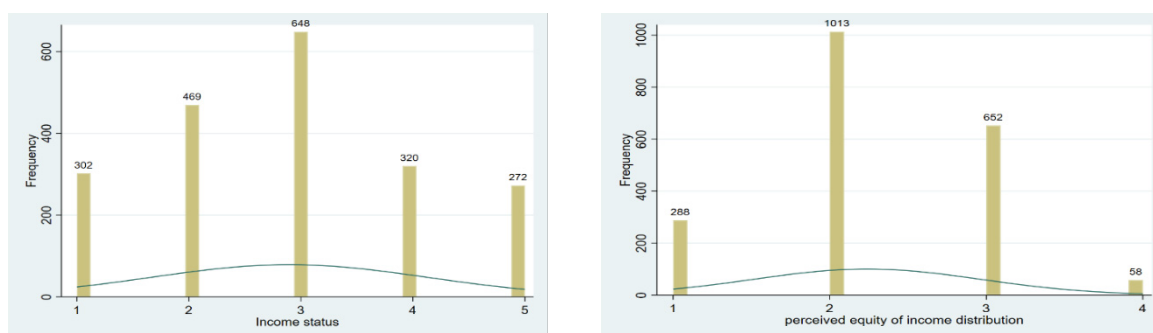


Fig 2. Histogram of frequency distribution of perceived equity of income distribution

3.3.3 Control Variables

The control variables in this study consisted mainly of Internet use, political efficacy, and demographic variables.

Internet use. This paper uses the question, "How often do you use the Internet to find political and government information?" which was reverse coded as "never used = 1, several times a year = 2, several times a month = 3, once or twice a week = 4, several times a week = 5, every day = 6.

Political efficacy. Political efficacy is measured by the degree of agreement that "people like me have no influence on the government's actions," "strongly agree = 1, somewhat agree = 2, agree = 3, somewhat disagree = 4, disagree = 5", the higher value means the higher political efficacy.

Demographic variables. The main variables included gender: "male = 1, female = 2"; age "coded according to actual age"; and education "coded from 1 to 11 according to education level".

3.3.4 Mediating Variables

The mediating variables of the study were political trust and government satisfaction.

Table 1. Descriptive statistics of each variable

Variables	Mean	Min	SD	Max
InsPP	3.322	1.000	0.987	4.000
Non-InsPP	1.766	1.000	0.701	4.000
Income	2.896	1.000	1.235	5.000
Perceived income	2.239	1.000	0.725	4.000
Internet use	2.101	1.000	1.453	6.000
Political efficacy	2.357	1.000	0.816	4.000
Political trust	2.556	1.000	0.571	4.000
Government-Sat	2.506	1.000	0.854	4.000
Gender	1.456	1.000	0.498	2.000
Age	43.041	19.000	13.171	82.000
Education	4.989	1.000	2.194	11.000

Political trust. Academics often have total or average political trust in each political institution (Kenneth, 2006). This study will assess political trust by summing trust in each political institution and obtaining the mean value. The questionnaire questioned, "How much do you trust the following political institutions?": president or prime minister (political leader), courts, central government, political parties, parliament, civil servants, military, police, local government, etc. Reverse-coded, "not at all trust = 1, not very trust = 2, fairly trust = 3, very trust = 4".

Government satisfaction. In this paper, the question "How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the current government?" was selected to measure the satisfaction level of the government. This question is reverse coded as "very dissatisfied = 1, relatively dissatisfied = 2, satisfied = 3, very satisfied = 4".

4. Data Analysis

4.1 Descriptive Statistics

Table 1 gives descriptive statistics for each variable. The people prefer institutionalized political engagement, while non-institutionalized political participation is low.

Income was described (Figure 2). The sample income distribution is circular and regular. There are many low-income groups, but the sample is balanced, and the middle-income group is more concentrated without extremes.

The perceived equity of income distribution was described (Figure 3). Most people believe the income distribution is unfair, while only 13% believe it is fair. The descriptive statistics of more balanced income levels suggest that the subjective and objective economic performance of the publics surveyed is highly variable, making it worthwhile to examine the impact on political engagement independently.

4.2 Regression Analysis

4.2.1 Direct Effect Analysis

Table 2. Institutionalized political participation

Y= InsPP	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Income	0.0719*** (4.0615)	0.0688*** (3.8797)	0.0610*** (3.4547)	0.0673*** (3.8128)	0.1292** (2.2803)
Perceived income	0.0844*** (2.7904)	0.0590* (1.8590)	0.0212 (0.6651)	0.0795*** (2.6344)	0.1577** (2.1206)
Government-sat		0.0704** (2.5712)			
Political trust			0.2459*** (5.9560)		
Internet use				-0.0147 (-0.9293)	-0.0153 (-0.9690)
Political efficacy				0.1271*** (4.7959)	0.1274*** (4.8082)
Gender	-0.0105 (-0.2397)	-0.0100 (-0.2288)	-0.0157 (-0.3618)	-0.0136 (-0.3119)	-0.0147 (-0.3368)
Age	0.0089*** (5.3134)	0.0091*** (5.3995)	0.0097*** (5.8239)	0.0086*** (5.0677)	0.0087*** (5.1167)
Education	-0.0197* (-1.9230)	-0.0149 (-1.4332)	-0.0074 (-0.7102)	-0.0191* (-1.8176)	-0.0197* (-1.8697)
Income * Perceived income					-0.0271 (-1.1508)
_cons	2.6444*** (19.9895)	2.5038*** (17.5139)	2.0953*** (13.0692)	2.4135*** (16.3083)	2.2352*** (10.4309)
N	2011	2011	2011	2011	2011
R ²	0.0298	0.0330	0.0467	0.0412	0.0418
Adjusted R ²	0.0274	0.0301	0.0467	0.0379	0.0380

Note: t-values are in (). *, ** and *** represent 10%, 5% and 1% significance levels, respectively.

How does subjective and objective economic equality affect institutionalized political participation?

After controlling for demographic variables, Model 1 (Table 2) shows that the objective income dimension shows a significant positive relationship between income status and institutionalized political participation: the higher the respondent's income, the more likely they are to participate. In the subjective dimension, institutionalized political participation is positively correlated with perceived equity of income distribution. Income status affects institutionalized political engagement less than perceived equity of income distribution, with a correlation coefficient of 0.0719 versus 0.0844.

As anticipated, do income status and perceived equity of income distribution negatively affect non-institutionalized political participation?

The regression results in Table 3 show that income status, perceived equity of income distribution, and non-institutionalized political participation are positively and somewhat statistically associated after controlling for Internet use and political efficacy. The substitution relationship between the two core independent variables shows that income status and perceived equity of income distribution have identical effects on non-institutionalized political participation. As perceived equity of income distribution increases, the positive relationship between income status and non-institutionalized political participation decreases, while the positive relationship between perceived equity of income distribution and non-institutionalized political participation increases.

Table 3. Non-institutionalized political participation

Y=Non-InsPP	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Income	0.0094 (0.7463)	0.0112 (0.8952)	0.0099 (0.7870)	0.0126 (1.0369)	0.0941** (2.4114)
Perceived income	-0.0288 (-1.3444)	-0.0137 (-0.6063)	-0.0255 (-1.1230)	-0.0113 (-0.5448)	0.0915* (1.7874)
Government-sat		-0.0421** (-2.1697)			
Political trust			-0.0127 (-0.4318)		
Internet use				0.1279*** (11.7691)	0.1271*** (11.6962)
Political efficacy				0.0269 (1.4705)	0.0273 (1.4951)
Gender	-0.1078*** (-3.4822)	-0.1081*** (-3.4949)	-0.1076*** (-3.4721)	-0.0946*** (-3.1552)	-0.0960*** (-3.2052)
Age	-0.0042*** (-3.5146)	-0.0043*** (-3.5847)	-0.0042*** (-3.5373)	-0.0020* (-1.7215)	-0.0019 (-1.6177)
Education	0.0399*** (5.4966)	0.0370*** (5.0233)	0.0392*** (5.2984)	0.0183** (2.5189)	0.0175** (2.4155)
Income * Perceived income					-0.0357** (-2.1975)
_cons	1.8330*** (19.5516)	1.9171*** (18.9126)	1.8615*** (16.2409)	1.4606*** (14.3226)	1.2261*** (8.3111)
N	2011	2011	2011	2011	2011
R ²	0.0349	0.0371	0.0350	0.0983	0.1005
Adjusted R ²	0.0325	0.0343	0.0321	0.0952	0.0969

Note: t-values are in (). *, ** and *** represent 10%, 5% and 1% significance levels, respectively.

4.2.2 Mediating Effects

In order to examine the mediating effect of government satisfaction and political trust on political participation, the Causal Steps Approach is utilized to examine the mediating variables. In the regression model of institutionalized political participation, according to model 1, both income status and perceived equity of income distribution have significant positive correlations with institutionalized political participation; in the regression models of two mediating variables and two core independent variables, they also have significant positive correlations; in models 2 and 3,

government satisfaction and political trust are placed respectively. The fact that the coefficients of the two core independent variables decrease slightly indicates that the path of the mediating effect of "income status and perceived equity of income distribution promote institutionalized political participation behavior by increasing government satisfaction and political trust" exists. Consequently, hypotheses H3 and H4 are confirmed.

Table 4. Regression analysis of the Mediating effects test

	Y=Government-sat	Y=Political trust
Income	0.0448*** (3.1036)	0.0445*** (4.6818)
Perceived income	0.3598*** (14.6087)	0.2571*** (15.8531)
Gender	-0.0070 (-0.1962)	0.0212 (0.9029)
Age	-0.0019 (-1.4158)	-0.0033*** (-3.6403)
Education	-0.0681*** (-8.1639)	-0.0501*** (-9.1313)
_cons	1.9967*** (18.5258)	2.2331*** (31.4720)
N	2011	2011
R ²	0.1395	0.1673
Adjusted R ²	0.1373	0.1653

Note: t-values are in (). *, ** and *** represent 10%, 5% and 1% significance levels, respectively.

5. Conclusion and Discussion

This study demonstrates a significant positive relationship between income status and institutionalized political participation in direct effect.

This article posits the influence mechanism as "income status, perceived equity of income distribution → government satisfaction, political trust → institutionalized political participation." Income status increases government satisfaction and political trust. When income status rises, people's circumstances improve, and they can better perceive the government's contribution to their livelihoods (Wang & Luo, 2016), increasing government satisfaction. Satisfied citizens are more enthusiastic about political participation and more willing to influence politics through institutionalized political participation, such as stable and moderate political parties. Political trust is also influenced by income. Income increases with better living conditions, employment options, and resources. Long-term winners have more political faith (Schoon et al., 2010). People who trust the government to protect and advance their interests are more likely to participate in politics and show their support for the political system through institutionalized political participation.

Coercive state power control is an effective method for preserving social stability, but it has the short-sighted effect of treating symptoms but not the underlying cause. It may also result in additional social conflicts and resistance to the control process, creating a vicious cycle. This study proposes a sustainable method for maintaining social order: by increasing satisfaction and trust, political institutions can persuade individuals to choose moderate and institutionalized political participation behaviors, thereby contributing to the maintenance of social order.

Coercive state power control is an effective method for maintaining social stability, but its drawbacks are reflected in its tendency to treat symptoms but not fundamental causes. It may also lead to more social conflicts and resistance in the control process, creating a vicious circle. This study proposes a sustainable method for maintaining social order. By increasing satisfaction and trust, political institutions can persuade individuals to engage in moderate and institutionalized political participation, thereby contributing to a stable social environment.

Two relationships merit consideration in institutionalized political participation: income status and perceived income distribution equity. Regression research shows that subjective income perception affects institutionalized political participation more than actual income. Given scarcity and inequality, the government should pay more attention to the intuitive psychological sentiments of the public to balance and reconcile income distribution. Economic and political indicators are the second pair. Models 2 and 3 show that government satisfaction and political trust affect institutionalized political participation more than economic considerations; this suggests that government views and attitudes matter more than economic issues. The government should promote "right distribution" and material justice to improve psychological access.

This paper reached a noteworthy conclusion. After controlling for Internet use and political efficacy, income status and perceived income distribution equity positively predict non-institutionalized political participation in model 5. Why are demonstrations and petition signing more popular than better income status? From another perspective of social capital theory, the higher the income status, the higher the social status and class, and therefore the more affluent the social resources, the more abundant the funds, which provide the basis for political participation activities, and the extensive social network resources provide the advantage of participation.

This paper argues that there are typically two ways for individuals with higher incomes to engage in non-institutionalized political participation. The participant road is the first road. Because higher-income groups create more wealth per unit of time, institutionalized political participation is more expensive for them than for lower-income groups under the assumption that influencing policy change takes longer. Thus, high-income groups pressure political institutions and establish groups to engage in non-institutionalized political engagement, which speeds up policy influence and saves money. The dominant group dominates the second path. When the higher social class group cannot achieve its goals through institutionalized political participation, it can use its abundant social resources to dominate or initiate non-institutionalized political participation more directly and under more pressure than other classes. High-income organizations can employ demonstrators to achieve their goals.

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