

The role of Social Cultural and Political Factors in explaining Perceived Responsiveness of Representatives in Local Government.

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Summary

Aim of this study is to explore whether there are differences between Dutch civilians in levels of Perceived Responsiveness of Dutch representatives in local government and to explain any such differences. In the relevant literature some debate is going on whether Perceived Responsiveness is the result of Social Cultural Factors or Political Factors. In this study both basic lines of arguments will be examined as complementary political orientations. First the differences between levels of Perceived Responsiveness of Dutch civilians towards representatives in local government will be explored with descriptive analyses and a bi-variate analysis, after which multiple regression analyses will be used to investigate the extent to which Social Cultural Factors and Political Factors separately and in combination affect the levels of Perceived Responsiveness of Dutch representatives in local government.

In this study the focus is on Local Attachment, Social Trust and Subjective Political Competence, as Social Cultural Factors. Political Satisfaction, Service Satisfaction and Mayor's Party Preference are in this study included as Political Factors.

The hypotheses are that higher levels of each of these factors will contribute to higher levels of Perceived Responsiveness of Dutch representatives in local government.

For this study an existing data set is being used, in which the factors were already operationalized so that the information regarding the methodology of this existing data set is being used in this research.

The results of this study show that there is a direct effect of Political Factors when referred to as Political Satisfaction and Service Satisfaction.

This study empirically distinguishes itself because the results also show that the "socio-cultural" and the "political" approach can be regarded as complementary explanations of political orientations.

1. Introduction.

Aim of this study is to explore whether there are differences between levels of Perceived Responsiveness of Dutch civilians towards representatives in local government and to explain any such differences. There is some debate on whether Perceived Responsiveness of Dutch civilians towards their local representatives are “the result of political socialization or if it reflects citizens’ recent experiences with the current political system” (cf. Denters, Gabriel & Torcal, 2007; p 74). In the relevant literature (Mishler & Rose, 2001; Denters, Gabriel & Torcal, 2007) two basic lines of arguments can be distinguished, in this study these lines will be referred to as the “socio-cultural” and the “political” approach. Whereas other relevant literature regards them as “rival explanations of political orientations” (Mishler & Rose, 2001; p 31 - 32), this study distinguishes itself because both are regarded as “complementary explanations of political orientations” (Denters, Gabriel & Torcal, 2007; p 67).

General research question:

Are there any differences between levels of Perceived Responsiveness of Dutch civilians towards representatives in local government and to what extent do the Social Cultural Factors and Political Factors separated and in combination affect these levels of Perceived Responsiveness of Dutch civilians towards representatives in local government?

Sub question 1:

Are there any differences between levels of Perceived Responsiveness of Dutch civilians towards representatives in local government?

Sub question 2:

To what extent do Social Cultural Factors and Political Factors separately affect the levels of Perceived Responsiveness of Dutch civilians towards representatives in local government?

Sub question 3:

To what extent do Social Cultural Factors and Political Factors in combination affect the levels of Perceived Responsiveness of Dutch civilians towards representatives in local government?

In chapter 2 the theoretical underpinning will be given, in chapter 3 the research method used will be discussed and for each of the six predictors a short discussion of its operationalization will be given. In chapter 3 also the measuring instruments (questions or statements) and statistical aspects (i.e. index score, scale, Cronbach’s Alpha) will be discussed. In chapter 4 the three sub questions will be answered, and the empirical validity of the six hypotheses will be examined. In chapter 5 the conclusions of this study will be presented and points for the discussion will be made.

2. Theory and hypothesis.

In this chapter the theoretical underpinning of the “socio-cultural” and the “political” approach will be given as well as the assumptions and the derived hypotheses.

Social Cultural Factors

Social Cultural Factors are factors of which early political scientists assume that “citizens form broad political orientations in early childhood, these orientations are presumed to persist relatively unchanged throughout adulthood and are primarily affective attachments to social groups and value perspectives” (Krosnick, 1991; p. 547). Social Cultural Factors according to literature are “communicated through early-life socialization outside the political sphere in long-standing and deeply seeded beliefs about people that are rooted in cultural norms and the exogenous trust in political institutions” (Mishler & Rose, 2001; p 31).

The explanatory value of Social Cultural Factors can be found in the presumption that Socio Cultural theories emphasize that “social and cultural conditions give rise to positive feelings” about government (Gilley, 2009; p. 33).

In this study the explanatory Social Cultural Factors variables are Local Attachment, Social Trust and Subjective Political Competence. There are more possible explanatory variables to be mentioned as Social Cultural Factors, according to social scientists “a whole range of civilians’ attitudes and orientations discussed in socio-cultural theories” (Gilley, 2009: 33). In the existing data set just a limited number of questions were available, therefore in this study the focus is on the three factors as mentioned.

The assumption is that higher levels of Social Cultural Factors will contribute to higher levels of Perceived Responsiveness of Dutch civilians towards representatives in local government. This assumption is translated into three hypotheses:

It is plausible that civilians, who are attached to their local community, will also be attached to their local politicians. Therefore the hypothesis of Local Attachment is:

Hypothesis 1

Higher levels of Local Attachment of citizens will contribute to higher levels of Perceived Responsiveness of Dutch civilians towards representatives in local government.

It is plausible that when civilians trust others, those citizens will also trust their local representatives. Therefore the hypothesis of Social Trust is:

Hypothesis 2

Higher levels of Social Trust of citizens will contribute to higher levels of Perceived Responsiveness of Dutch civilians towards representatives in local government.

It is plausible that when civilians feel to have a certain amount of control on their environment, they will have the feeling that they can rely on others to have this control as well. Therefore the hypothesis of Subjective Political Competence is:

Hypothesis 3

Higher levels of Subjective Political Competence of citizens will contribute to higher levels of Perceived Responsiveness of Dutch civilians towards representatives in local government.

Political Factors

In the theory of symbolic politics it is assumed that 'political factors' are "non-symbolic attitudes such that are shaped during adulthood, primarily as result of information integration and can therefore easily change in response to persuasive arguments and to changes in the objective political world" (cf. Krosnick, 1991; p. 548).

The explanatory value of Political Factors can be found in the fact that they refer to "people's subjective attitudes as mechanism linking government performance to legitimacy of governments, which in turn is based on consent or the positive actions that express a citizen's recognition of the government right to be in office" (Gilley, 2009).

In this study Political Factors are Political Satisfaction, Service Satisfaction and Mayor's Party Preference. There are more possible explanatory variables that can serve as Political Factors, because they consist of "people's sympathy for the incumbent government and other personal political outlooks" (Denters, Gabriel & Torcal, 2007; p 67). In the existing data set just a limited number of questions were available, therefore in this study the focus is on the three factors as mentioned.

The assumption is that higher levels of Political Factors will contribute to higher levels of Perceived Responsiveness of Dutch civilians towards representatives in local government. This assumption is separated into three hypotheses:

It is plausible that when civilians who are satisfied with local authority, will perceive the responsiveness of their local representatives positively. Therefore the hypothesis of Political Satisfaction is:

Hypothesis 4

Higher levels of Political Satisfaction of citizens will contribute to higher levels of Perceived Responsiveness of Dutch civilians towards their local representatives.

It is plausible that when civilians who are satisfied with services rendered by the authority, will perceive the responsiveness of their local representatives positively. Therefore the hypothesis of Service Satisfaction is:

Hypothesis 5

Higher levels of Service Satisfaction of citizens will contribute to higher levels of Perceived Responsiveness of Dutch civilians towards their local representatives.

It is plausible that when civilians are in favor of the mayor's party, they will perceive the responsiveness of their local representatives positively as well. Therefore the hypothesis of Mayor's Party Preference is:

Hypothesis 6

When citizens are in favor of the Mayor's Party, this will contribute to higher levels of Perceived Responsiveness of Dutch civilians towards their local representatives.

3. Research Method.

In this chapter the research method for this study will be shown. Furthermore for each of the six predictors a short theoretical underpinning (operationalization), the measuring instruments (questions or statements) and statistical aspects (i.e. index score, scale, Cronbach's Alpha) will be given.

A part of the Dutch Citizenship Involvement and Democracy (CID) mass-survey was used as data set for this study. The "common core was worked out jointly by those members of the CID network, who participated in its first four meetings from the autumn of 1998 to the autumn of 1999 in Mannheim (2x), Uppsala and Barcelona". The year of data collection was 2001 and a "multi-method approach was combining a personal face-to-face or telephone interview and a follow up self-administered postal questionnaire". Although the objective was to obtain complete responses (both personal face-to-face or telephone interview and postal questionnaire) from roughly 30 persons in each of the sample municipalities, the number of complete responses varied from 9 to 28.

Sampling

A multistage, disproportionally stratified type of sample was used, as can be seen in table 1.2 on page 28 in Van Deth, Montero and Westholm (2007). The two-stage sampling process has been designed to select residents living in different municipalities, reflecting as much variation in municipalities as possible. The first stage was "a stratification scheme combined with a systematic sampling procedure was used to select a relatively large number of municipalities (N=50)" and secondly "a random sample of persons residing in each of the sample municipalities has been drawn for interview purposes".

Available N of cases was 1,649 with a response rate of 30,0 % as can be seen in table 1.2 on page 28 in Van Deth, Montero and Westholm (2007) were a more detailed description of the mass-survey is provided on pages 26 until 31.

Dependent variable Perceived Responsiveness.

As mentioned the dependent variable in this study is Perceived Responsiveness of Dutch civilians towards their local representatives. The theoretical underpinning to use this variable is that in a representative democracy voters need representatives to bargain for them in policy making, and influence policy as the voter would have wished (cf. Powell, 2000). Political officeholders should represent citizens in political decision-making and are politically accountable for choices made in the process (cf. Esmark, 2007). The legitimacy of a political system thus is influenced by the confidence civilians have in their representatives (cf. Gilley, 2009). A rather crucial determinant of this confidence is the representatives' work and functioning at local level (Denters, Gabriel & Torcal, 2007: p 74).

Perceived Responsiveness of Dutch civilians towards their local representatives is examined with two statements and two questions. The first two statements (a) 'Local councilors do not care much about the views of the people in this community' and (b) 'Political Parties in this municipality are only interested in our votes, [and] not in our opinions', could be answered on a scale from 1 (agree strongly) to 5 (disagree strongly) (see appendix 1). The second two questions (c) 'How much do you feel that having elections makes the municipal council in this municipality pay attention to what the people think?', and (d) 'Generally speaking how much attention do you feel the mayor and aldermen [council representatives] in this municipality pay to what the people think they decide what to do?', could be answered on a scale from 1 (not at all) to 5 (very much) (see appendix 1). Both statements and questions had an answering possibility 8 (don't know).

Information from the existing data set states that for the dependent variable, “the items were recoded so that high scores indicate a high degree of Perceived Responsiveness of Dutch civilians towards their local representatives”, “index scores were computed as the mean score on the four items”, “in cases where one or two item scores were missing, the other item scores were used to impute the missing score for the index” and “the reliability measured with Cronbach’s Alfa for the four items-scales is 0.78” (Denters, Gabriel & Torcal, 2007).

Social Cultural Factors

1. Local Attachment

The first Social Cultural Factor in this study is Local Attachment, which “relates to citizens subjective orientations on their local community” (cf. Denters, Goldsmith, Ladner, Mouritzen & Rose (forthcoming); Chapter 4). To understand this it needs to be explained that Social Cultural Factors in this study are closely related to the concept of Political Socialization. Political Socialization does not speak of “child development in general terms and the introduction of the child into his adult political roles and attitudes” but emphasizes the “influence of culture-personality or psycho-cultural approach to the study of political phenomena” (Almond & Verba, 1963, 1989; p 11). Such a process starts in “early childhood through people’s inclusion in social networks, particularly in family and among peers” (Denters, Gabriel & Torcal, 2007; p. 71).

Local Attachment is examined with two statements, that according to the information of the existing data set “indicate in general how strongly, to the subjective opinion of the civilians themselves, they are attached to their neighborhood or municipality in which they live” (cf. Denters, Goldsmith, Ladner, Mouritzen & Rose (forthcoming); Chapter 4). The respondents were given the following information: ‘Below we have listed several geographical areas, the names of different institutions such as the police, government, civil service, etc.’ (see appendix 2). In this study only the statements (A) ‘The neighborhood or village in which you live’ and (B) ‘The municipality in which you live’, could be answered on a scale from 0 (no attachment at all) to 10 (very strong attachment) (see appendix 2). Both statements had an answering possibility 98 (don’t know).

Information from the existing data set states that for the predictor Local Attachment, “a composite index based on the mean scores of items is made”, “the index has been rescaled such that the theoretical range varied between a minimum of 0 and a maximum of 100”, “so high scores indicate a high degree of Local Attachment” and “the reliability measured with Cronbach’s alpha for the two items-scales is 0.79” (cf. Denters, Goldsmith, Ladner, Mouritzen & Rose (forthcoming); Chapter 4).

2. Social Trust

The second Social Cultural Factor in this study is Social Trust, which is derived from “a framework that rests on the concept of Social Capital (cf. Denters, Goldsmith, Ladner, Mouritzen & Rose (forthcoming); Chapter 4) which entails “features that facilitate coordination and cooperation for mutual benefit” (Putnam, 1995; p. 67). In this study Social Trust is the “perceived trustworthiness of fellow citizens and the perceived preparedness of others to be helpful rather than being selfish” (cf. Denters, Goldsmith, Ladner, Mouritzen & Rose (forthcoming); Chapter 4).

Social Trust is examined with two questions that according to the information of the existing data set “are widely used for measuring generalized social trust and reflect both perceptions

of trustworthiness and helpfulness” (Denters, Goldsmith, Ladner, Mouritzen & Rose (forthcoming): Chapter 4). The respondents were asked ‘Generally speaking, would you say that most people can be trusted or that you can’t be too careful in dealing with people?’, the question could be answered on a scale from 0 (you can’t be too careful) to 10 (most people can be trusted). The second question ‘Would you say that most of the time people try to be helpful or that they are mostly looking out for themselves?’, could be answered on a scale from 0 (people mostly look out for themselves) to 10 (people mostly try to be helpful) (see appendix 3).

Information from the existing data set states that for the predictor Social Trust, “a composite index based on the mean score of two items is made”, “this index has been rescaled such that the theoretical range varied between a minimum of 0 and a maximum of 100”, “so that high scores indicate a high degree of Social Trust” and “the reliability measured with Cronbach’s alpha for the two item-scales is 0.56” (Denters, Goldsmith, Ladner, Mouritzen & Rose (forthcoming): Chapter 4). Despite of this low reliability Social Trust in this study still will be used because of its content. It is regarded an important aspect of Social Cultural Factors.

3. Subjective Political Competence

The third Social Cultural Factor in this study is Subjective Political Confidence. The theoretical underpinning is related to self-efficacy, which is civilians “beliefs about own capabilities to produce designated levels of performance that exercise influence over events that affect lives of other members of society” (cf. Bandura, 1977, 1982). In general Subjective Political Competence has to do with how civilians feel, think, behave, and motivate themselves when political knowledge is regarded.

Subjective Political Competence is examined with three statements, and one question that according to the information of the existing data set were “parts of several groups of agree-disagree items interspersed throughout the interview” (Denters, Goldsmith, Ladner, Mouritzen & Rose (forthcoming): Chapter 7). The respondents were asked: ‘I consider myself to be well qualified in local politics’, ‘I feel that I could do as good a job as a member of the municipal council [or comparable local body] as most other people’ and ‘I feel that I have a pretty good understanding of the important political issues facing my municipality’. The question could be answered on a scale from 1 (agree strongly) to 5 (disagree strongly) (see appendix 4). The respondents furthermore were asked: ‘How well informed do you feel you are regarding that which happens in municipal politics?’. The question could be answered on a scale from 1 (very well informed) to 5 (not at all informed). Both scales had an answering possibility 8 (don’t know).

Information from the existing data set states that for the predictor Subjective Political Competence “a single index based on the selected items is made”, “this index has been rescaled such that the theoretical range varied between a minimum of 0 and a maximum of 100”, “so high scores indicate a high degree of Subjective Political Confidence” (Denters, Goldsmith, Ladner, Mouritzen & Rose (forthcoming): Chapter 7).

Political Factors

Institutional Performance.

Institutional Performance is for the purpose of this study divided into Political Satisfaction and Service Satisfaction. This is done because it is considered that the content of both variables can explain Perceived Responsiveness of Dutch civilians towards their local representatives in a different way.

1. Political Satisfaction.

The first Political Factor in this study is Political Satisfaction. Political Satisfaction focuses on the actions taken by the municipality (local authority) where you live to deal with the problems confronting the municipality (Denters, Goldsmith, Ladner, Mouritzen & Rose (forthcoming): Chapter 9).

Political Satisfaction is examined with one question: 'In general, how satisfied are you with the actions taken by the municipality (local authority) where you live to deal with the problems confronting the municipality?'. The question could be answered on a scale from 0 ("Very dissatisfied") to 10 ("Very satisfied").

Information from the existing data set states that; "the item has been recoded so that the theoretical range varied between 0 – 100 so that high scores indicate a high degree of Political Satisfaction" (Denters, Goldsmith, Ladner, Mouritzen & Rose (forthcoming): Chapter 9).

2. Service Satisfaction.

The second Political Factors in this study is Service Satisfaction, which "focuses on civilians being satisfied with local governmental services" (Denters, Goldsmith, Ladner, Mouritzen & Rose (forthcoming): Chapter 9).

Service Satisfaction is examined with one question: 'In general, how satisfied are you with these services in the municipality where you live?'. The question could be answered on a scale from 0 ("Very dissatisfied") to 10 ("Very satisfied"). Examples of services rendered were given to the respondents, such as 'Services and aid for the elderly; Services and aid for people relying on social security benefits; Daycare for children; Issuing permits and licenses; Granting subsidies for organizations and activities; Providing information on local services and policies'.

Information from the existing data set states that "the item has been recoded so that the theoretical range varied between 0 – 100 so that high scores indicate a high degree of Service Satisfaction" (Denters, Goldsmith, Ladner, Mouritzen & Rose (forthcoming): Chapter 9).

3. Mayor's Party Preference.

The third Political Factor in this study is Mayor's Party Preference, which "Holmberg formulated in a home team hypothesis, suggesting that political trust goes up among people whose preferred party is in the Cabinet and goes down among people whose party is out of the ruling circle" (cf. Holmberg, 1999; p 117 in Denters, Goldsmith, Ladner, Mouritzen & Rose (forthcoming): Chapter 3).

Information from the existing data set states that respondents are asked which party they voted for during last elections, this party preference is compared with the party of the incumbent Mayor of the respondent's municipality. These matches have been recoded with 0 for no and 100 for yes.

4. Analyses & Results

In this chapter on the basis of the measurements discussed in the previous section the three sub questions will be answered.

In section 4.1 descriptive statistics are used to examine the distribution of the dependent variable. A bi-variate analysis is used to determine whether or not these differences between the predictors and the dependent variable significantly correlate. In this section the answer is given to sub question 1: *Are there any differences between levels of Perceived Responsiveness of Dutch civilians towards representatives in local government?*

In section 4.2 a multiple regression analysis is being used to examine the influence of the different predictors in separated models for Social Cultural Factors and Political Factors. This analysis gives a detailed insight in the effect of the predictor variables on the dependent variable. In this section the answer is given to sub question 2: *To what extent do Social Cultural Factors and Political Factors separately affect the levels of Perceived Responsiveness of Dutch civilians towards representatives in local government?*

In section 4.3 a multiple regression analysis is being used to examine the influence of the different predictors in models of Social Cultural Factors and Political Factors in combination. This because both school of thoughts are regarded as complementary. In this section the answer is given to sub question 3: *To what extent do the Social Cultural Factors and the Political Factors in combination affect the levels of Perceived Responsiveness of Dutch civilians towards representatives in local government?*

In section 4.4 an additional fourth question is being answered with a tri-variate analysis of both Social Cultural Factors and Political Factors. This is done because during the previous analyses it appeared that there were no direct effects of Social Cultural Factors on the dependent variable, thus an indirect effect of these factors is examined. In this section the answer is given to additional sub question 4: *To what extent are any effects of Social Cultural Factors mediated by Political Factors?*

4.1 First exploration of the data set

In this section descriptive statistics are used to examine the distribution of the dependent variable. A bi-variate analysis is used to determine whether or not these differences between the predictors and the dependent variable significantly correlate. Also an answer is being formulated to sub question 1.

Sub question 1:

Are there any differences between levels of Perceived Responsiveness of Dutch civilians towards representatives in local government?

To answer sub question 1 it is necessary to analyze the data of the dependent variable with descriptive statistics as shown in table 1.

Table 1

Descriptive Statistics of Perceived Responsiveness of Dutch civilians towards representatives in local government (N=965).

	Mean	Range	Standard Deviation	Variance	Skewness	Kurtosis
Dependent Variable Perceived Responsiveness	2.96	4.00	.765	.585	-.082	-.225

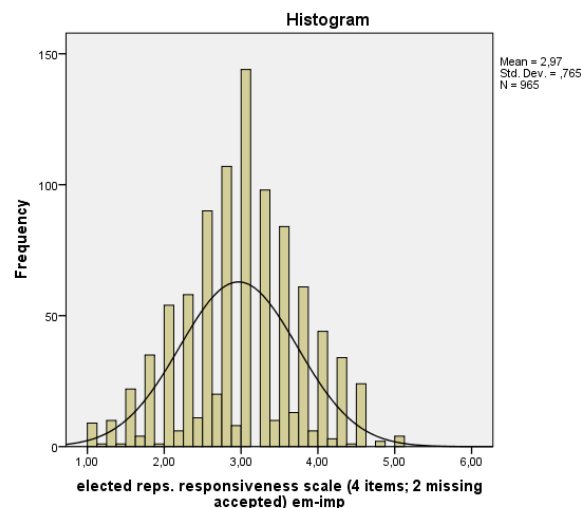
Table 1 shows the descriptive statistics of the dependent variable Perceived Responsiveness of Dutch civilians towards representatives in local government. From this table we can see

that, on the scale that varied from 1 (agree strongly) to 5 (disagree strongly) (appendix 1), the computed index scores on average were 2,96. Measures of variability furthermore show that the range is 4.00, the standard deviation is .765 and the variance is .585. The distribution of the dependent variable can be called normal because the skewness is practically zero (-.082) and the kurtosis (-.225) is also low.

Figure 1 shows the distribution of the frequencies in a histogram of Perceived Responsiveness of Dutch civilians towards representatives in local government.

Figure 1

Histogram of Perceived Responsiveness of Dutch civilians towards representatives in local government. (N=965)



In answer to sub question 1; if there are any differences between levels of Perceived Responsiveness of Dutch civilians towards representatives in local government, the results show that there are such differences. The mean is 2,96 with a significant standard deviation of .765, the range (4,00) varies sufficiently between the 5 answering categories and the distribution of the dependent variable can be called normal.

To examine the data further we first have to establish whether all the six independent variables of the Social Cultural Factors and the Political Factors correlate with Perceived Responsiveness of Dutch civilians towards representatives in local government. For this purpose the data is analyzed with descriptive statistics (correlations) as shown in table 2.

Table 2

Correlations of Social Cultural Factors & Political Factors variables (N = 788).

	Local Attachment	Social Trust	Subjective Political Competence	Political Satisfaction	Service Satisfaction	Mayor Party Preference
Dependent Variable Perceived Responsiveness	,128**	,151**	,061	,571**	,453**	,095*

*Sig. (1 tailed): **P<0.001, *P<0.05*

In table 2 the correlations between Perceived Responsiveness of Dutch civilians towards representatives in local government and the six independent variables is shown. Three conclusions can be derived from these results.

First conclusion is as was expected, it appears that most independent variables have a significant positive correlation with the dependent variable (Local Attachment = .128, Social

Trust = .151, Subjective Political Competence = .571, Political Satisfaction = .453, Service Satisfaction = .453 and Mayor Party Preference = .095).

Second conclusion from the results is that the correlation of Subjective Political Competence is not significant. Further detailed analysis of Subjective Political Competence not reported here, showed that the predictor is also not significant when controls for other relevant variables in the model are entered into the analysis. Therefore already in this early stage of the exploration of the data set, this has implications for hypothesis 3.

Hypothesis 3 (Subjective Political Competence): This hypothesis is rejected because table 2 shows that higher levels of Subjective Political Competence of citizens will not contribute to higher levels of Perceived Responsiveness of Dutch civilians towards representatives in local government and further analysis showed similar results. The results in this study do not confirm that when civilians feel to have a certain amount of control on their environment, they will be more confident towards politicians.

Third conclusion is that Political Factors seem to correlate much stronger with Perceived Responsiveness of Dutch civilians towards representatives in local government than Social Cultural Factors.

4.2 More detailed analysis of the Social Cultural Factors or Political Factors separated.

In this section a multiple regression analysis is being used to examine the influence of the different predictors in models of Social Cultural Factors or Political Factors as separated schools of thought. This analysis gives a more detailed insight of the effect the predictor variables have on the dependent variable. The extent to which the Social Cultural Factors and Political Factors correlate with Perceived Responsiveness of Dutch civilians towards representatives in local government will be answered with sub question 2.

Sub question 2:

To what extent do Social Cultural Factors and Political Factors separately affect the levels of Perceived Responsiveness of Dutch civilians towards representatives in local government?

To answer sub question 2, the data on Social Cultural Factors and Political Factors is analyzed separately with Multiple Regression Analyses.

Social Cultural Factors

The extent to which Social Cultural Factors affect the levels of Perceived Responsiveness of Dutch civilians towards representatives in local government are shown in table 3. Model 1 consists of the predictor variable Local Attachment, and the dependent variable. Model 2 consists of the predictor variable Social Trust, and the dependent variable. Model 3 consists of both these Social Cultural Factors, and the dependent variable.

Table 3

Regression estimates of Social Cultural Factors (R-square & Standardized B-parameter).

Dependent Variable: Perceived Responsiveness (N = 963)			Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
Constant	min. 1	max. 5	2.64	2.47	2.32
Local Attachment	min. 0	max. 100	.123****		.084**
Social Trust	min. 0	max. 100		.171****	.149****
R-square			.015	.029	.036

**** $P < 0.001$, *** $P < 0.005$, ** $P < 0.010$, * $P < 0.050$ Note: Social Factors are rescaled.

In the models 1 & 2 the value of the regression coefficient B represents a significant change in outcome resulting from a unit change in the predictor Local Attachment (B = .123) and in the predictor Social Trust (B = .171). The amount of variation (that is the R-square in the model) in the outcome variable that is accounted for by model 1 is .015 and by model 2 this is .029.

First conclusion is that the extent to which Local Attachment and Social Trust separated affect the levels of Perceived Responsiveness of Dutch civilians towards representatives in local government is significant.

In model 3 the value of the regression coefficient B represents a significant change in outcome resulting from a unit change in the predictor Local Attachment (B = .084) and in the predictor Social Trust (B = .149). The amount of variation (that is the R-square in the model) in the outcome variable that is accounted for by model 3 is .036.

Second conclusion is that the extent to which Local Attachment & Social Trust in combination as the Social Cultural Factors affect the levels of Perceived Responsiveness of Dutch civilians towards representatives in local government is significant.

In this analysis the predictor variable Subjective Political Competence was not included because on the basis of previous analyses (see section 4.1 discussion of table 3) it was established to have no effect on the dependent variable. Therefore the variable has not been taken into account.

Political Factors

The extent to which Political Factors affect the levels of Perceived Responsiveness of Dutch civilians towards representatives in local government is shown in table 4. Model 1 consists of the predictor variable Political Satisfaction, and the dependent variable. Model 2 consists of the predictor variable Service Satisfaction, and the dependent variable. Model 3 consists of the predictor variable Mayor's Party Preference, and the dependent variable. Model 4 consists of all three Political Factors, and the dependent variable.

Table 4

Regression estimates of Political Factors (R-square & Standardized B-parameter).

Dependent Variable: Perceived Responsiveness (N = 821)			Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
Constant	min. 1	max. 5	1.75	1.64	2.94	1.45
Political Satisfaction	min. 0	max. 100	.555****			.452****
Service Satisfaction	min. 0	max. 100		.443****		.170****
Mayor's Party Preference	No = 0	Yes = 100			.097**	.054
R-square			.30	.19	.00	.33

**** $P < 0.001$, *** $P < 0.005$, ** $P < 0.010$, * $P < 0.050$

Note: Political Factors are recoded.

In the models 1, 2 & 3 the value of the regression coefficient B represents a significant change in outcome resulting from a unit change in the predictors Political Satisfaction ($B = .555$), Service Satisfaction ($B = .443$) and Mayor's Party Preference ($B = .097$). The amount of variation (that is the R-square in the model) in the outcome variable that is accounted for by model 1 is .30, by model 2 is .19 and by model 3 is .00.

Third conclusion is that the extent to which Political Satisfaction, Service Satisfaction and Mayor's Party Preference affect the levels of Perceived Responsiveness of Dutch civilians towards representatives in local government is significant.

In model 4, the value of the regression coefficient B represents a significant change in outcome resulting from a unit change in the predictor Political Satisfaction ($B = .452$), in the predictor Service Satisfaction ($B = .170$) and not significant in the predictor Mayor's Party Preference ($B = .054$). The amount of variation (that is the R-square in the model) in the outcome variable that is accounted for by model 4 is .33.

Fourth conclusion is that Political Factors seem to correlate much stronger with Perceived Responsiveness of Dutch civilians towards representatives in local government than Social Cultural Factors, as was expected from the previous analysis in section 4.1.

Fifth conclusion from the results shown in table 4 is that Mayor's Party Preference is not significant. Further detailed analysis of Mayor's Party Preference not reported here, showed that the predictor this factor is also not significant when controls for other relevant variables in the model are entered into the analysis. Therefore already in this early stage of the exploration of the data set, this has important consequences for hypothesis 6.

Hypothesis 6 (Mayor's Party Preference): This hypothesis is rejected because table 4 shows that higher levels of Mayor's Party Preference will not contribute to higher levels of Perceived Responsiveness of Dutch civilians towards representatives in local government and further analysis showed similar results. The results in this study do not confirm that when civilians are in favor of the mayor's party, they will perceive the responsiveness of their local representatives positively as well.

In this stage of this study two of the six hypotheses have been rejected. Hypothesis 3 and 6 have been rejected because the results show that the predictors Subjective Political Competence and Mayor's Party Preference seem to not contribute significantly to the explanation of the levels of Perceived Responsiveness of Dutch civilians towards representatives in local government. The other hypotheses 1, 2, 4 & 5 will be further examined for the results show that the predictors Local Attachment, Social Trust, Political Satisfaction and Service Satisfaction seem to significantly contribute to the explanation of the dependent variable. Also, the results show that the amount of variation in the outcome variable that is accounted for by Political Factors ($R\text{-square} = .33$) is much stronger than of Social Cultural Factors ($R\text{-square} = .036$).

4.3 More detailed analysis of the Social Cultural Factors and Political Factors in combination

In this section a multiple regression analysis is being used to examine the influence of the different predictors in models of Social Cultural Factors and Political Factors in combination. This because both school of thoughts are regarded as complementary an answer is being formulated to sub question 3.

Sub question 3:

To what extent do the Social Cultural Factors and the Political Factors in combination affect the levels of Perceived Responsiveness of Dutch civilians towards representatives in local government?

The model of Social Cultural Factors and Political Factors in combination is shown in table 5.

Table 5

Regression estimates of the combined model of Social Cultural Factors & Political Factors (R-square & Standardized B-parameter).

Dependent Variable: Perceived Responsiveness (N = 819)		
Political Satisfaction	min. 0 - max. 100	.446****
Service Satisfaction	min. 0 - max. 100	.173****
Local Attachment	min. 0 - max. 100	.021
Social Trust	min. 0 - max. 100	.019
R-square		.33

*** $P < 0.001$, ** $P < 0.005$, * $P < 0.010$, $P < 0.050$

In table 5 the value of the regression coefficient B represents a significant change in outcome resulting from a unit change in the predictor Political Satisfaction ($B = .446$) and in the predictor Service Satisfaction ($B = .173$) which are both Political Factors. In the model the value of the regression coefficient B however does not represent a significant change in outcome resulting from a unit change in the predictor Local Attachment ($B = .021$) and in the predictor Social Trust ($B = .019$) which are both Social Cultural Factors. The amount of variation in the outcome variable that is accounted for by the combined model of the remaining Social Cultural Factors and Political Factors is .33.

The conclusion is that the extent to which Political Factors affects the levels of Perceived Responsiveness of Dutch civilians towards representatives in local government is significant whereas the effect of Social Cultural Factors is not significant.

Of the four hypotheses that are still being researched, two are related to Social Cultural Factors (number 1 & 2), and two are related to Political Factors (number 4 & 6). Below for clarity these hypotheses are repeated.

Hypothesis 1

Higher levels of *Local Attachment* of citizens will contribute to higher levels of Perceived Responsiveness of Dutch civilians towards representatives in local government.

Hypothesis 2

Higher levels of *Social Trust* of citizens will contribute to higher levels of Perceived Responsiveness of Dutch civilians towards representatives in local government.

Hypothesis 4

Higher levels of Political Satisfaction of citizens will contribute to higher levels of Perceived Responsiveness of Dutch civilians towards their local representatives.

Hypothesis 5

Higher levels of Service Satisfaction of citizens will contribute to higher levels of Perceived Responsiveness of Dutch civilians towards their local representatives.

When in combination and regarded complementary hypotheses 1 and 2 seem to have to be rejected because there appears no direct effect of Social Cultural Factors.

4.4 Mediation analysis of the Social Cultural Factors and Political Factors

In this section a tri-variate analysis is being done for Social Cultural Factors and Political Factors in combination. Previous results have shown that Local Attachment and Social Trust do not directly affect the levels of Perceived Responsiveness of Dutch civilians towards representatives in local government, therefore a possible indirect affect has been examined in this research.

First, an indirect effect of Local Attachment with Political Factors has been examined and secondly an indirect effect of Social Trust, for this purpose an additional sub question 4 is:

Additional sub question 4:

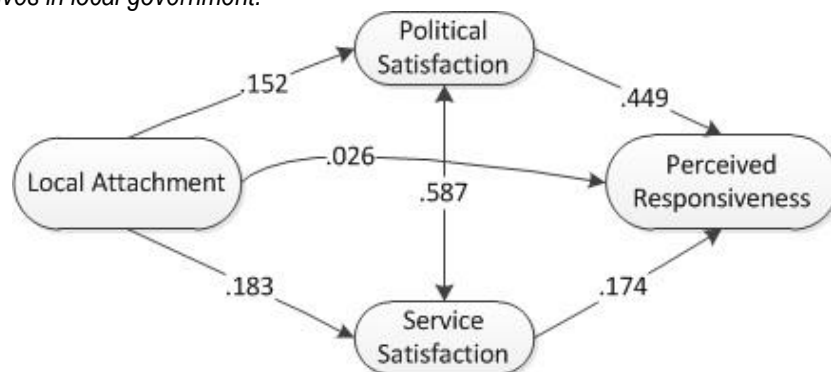
To what extent are Social Cultural Factors mediated by Political Factors?

Model B1: Local Attachment and Political Factors

Model B1 consists of Local Attachment, Political Satisfaction, Service Satisfaction, and the dependent variable Perceived Responsiveness. The results shown in the correlation matrix of section 4.1 (table 2) are used to display the relation between Local Attachment & Political Satisfaction, and the relation between Local Attachment & Service Satisfaction. Also, the relation between Political Satisfaction, and Service Satisfaction has been derived from table 2. The relations between Local Attachment, Political Satisfaction & Service Satisfaction, as shown in figure 2 have been derived from a multi regression analysis of which the results are shown in appendix 6. The applicable combinations of model B1 are shown in figure 2.

Figure 2

Model B1: Indirect effects of Local Attachment on Perceived Responsiveness of Dutch civilians towards representatives in local government.



In figure 2 the value of the regression coefficient B again represents a significant change in outcome resulting from a unit change in the predictor Service Satisfaction ($B = .174$ as shown in appendix 6) and in the predictor Political Satisfaction ($B = .449$ as shown in appendix 6). The direct effect of Local Attachment is insignificant ($B = .026$ as shown in appendix 6).

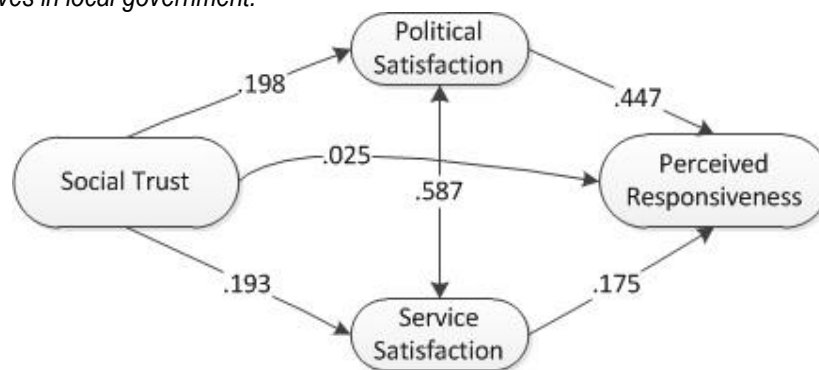
As shown in table 5 the value of the regression coefficient B represents a change in outcome resulting from a unit change in the predictor Local Attachment ($B = .021$) which is insignificant. This suggests that Local Attachments does not have an effect on the dependent variable. But this conclusion disregards the potential indirect effects of this factor. As shown in appendix 5 there is a correlation between Local Attachments and Perceived Responsiveness. Moreover the figure 2 shows that: a. there is a direct effect of Local Attachments on both Political Satisfaction and Service Satisfaction and b. there are also two direct effects of these two political factors on Perceived Responsiveness. There are therefore two indirect effects of Local Attachments: one through Political Satisfaction and the other through Service Satisfaction.

Model B2: Social Trust and Political Factors

Model B2 consists of Social Trust, Political Satisfaction, Service Satisfaction and the dependent variable Perceived Responsiveness. The results shown in the correlation matrix of section 4.1 (table 2) are used for the relation between Social Trust & Political Satisfaction and the relation between Social Trust & Service Satisfaction. Also the relation between Political Satisfaction and Service Satisfaction has been derived from table 2. The relations between Social Trust, Political Satisfaction & Service Satisfaction as shown in figure 3 have been derived from a multi regression analysis of which the results are shown in appendix 7. The applicable combinations of model B2 are shown in figure 3.

Figure 3

Model B2: Indirect effects of Social Trust on Perceived Responsiveness of Dutch civilians towards representatives in local government.



In figure 3 the value of the regression coefficient B again represents a significant change in outcome resulting from a unit change in the predictor Service Satisfaction ($B = .175$ as shown in appendix 7) and in the predictor Political Satisfaction ($B = .447$ as shown in appendix 7). The direct effect of Local Attachment is insignificant ($B = .025$ as shown in appendix 7).

As shown in table 5 the value of the regression coefficient B represents a change in outcome resulting from a unit change in the predictor Social Trust ($B = .019$) which is insignificant. This suggests that Social Trust does not have an effect on the dependent variable. But this conclusion disregards the potential indirect effects of this factor. As shown in appendix 5 there is a correlation between Social Trust and Perceived Responsiveness. Moreover the figure 3 shows that: a. there is a direct effect of Social Trust on both Political Satisfaction and Service Satisfaction and b. there are also two direct effects of these two political factors on Perceived Responsiveness. There are therefore two indirect effects of Social Trust: one through Political Satisfaction and the other through Service Satisfaction.

5. Discussion & Conclusion

The general question of this study was whether there are differences between Dutch civilians in levels of Perceived Responsiveness of representatives in local government, and to what extent Social Cultural Factors and Political Factors, affect these levels of Perceived Responsiveness independently of one another, or in combination with each other. In answer to the general question of this research it appears that Social Cultural Factors are mediated through Political Factors and of those Political Factors only two explanatory variables are eminent. In regard to the mentioned hypotheses of Social Cultural Factors this means that hypotheses 1 & 2 are **differentiated** (see appendix 8):

Hypothesis 1 (Local Attachment): The analysis shows that higher levels of Local Attachment of citizens will not significantly contribute directly to higher levels of Perceived Responsiveness of Dutch civilians towards representatives in local government, but is mediated through Political Factors. It is not plausible that civilians, who are attached to their local community, will also be attached to their local politicians. However Local Attachment will influence the level of the Political Satisfaction and Service Satisfaction, which in turn are good predictors.

Hypothesis 2 (Social Trust): The analysis shows that higher levels of Social Trust of citizens will not significantly contribute directly to higher levels of Perceived Responsiveness of Dutch civilians towards representatives in local government, but is mediated through Political Factors. It is not plausible that when civilians trust others, those citizens will also trust their local representatives directly. However Social Trust will influence the level of the Political Satisfaction and Service Satisfaction, which in turn are good predictors.

In regard to the mentioned hypotheses of Political Factors this means that hypotheses 4 & 5 are **corroborated** (see appendix 8):

Hypothesis 4 (Political Satisfaction): Table 5 shows that higher levels of Political Satisfaction of citizens most significantly contribute to higher levels of Perceived Responsiveness of Dutch civilians towards their local representatives. It is plausible that when civilians who are satisfied with local authority, will perceive the responsiveness of their local representatives positively.

Hypothesis 5 (Service Satisfaction): Table 5 shows that higher levels of Service Satisfaction of citizens also significantly contribute to higher levels of Perceived Responsiveness of Dutch civilians towards their local representatives. It is plausible that when civilians who are satisfied with services rendered by the authority, will perceive the responsiveness of their local representatives positively.

As the results show there is a direct effect of Political Factors (Political Satisfaction and Service Satisfaction). This results is similar to other relevant literature which state that “the most important Political Factors explaining political confidence is the satisfaction of civilians with the Democratic Performance of local politics” (Denters, Gabriel & Torcal, 2007; p 84).

In relevant literature the “socio-cultural” and the “political” approach are regarded as “rival explanations of political orientations” (Mishler & Rose, 2001; p 31 - 32). The empirical importance of this study is that the results show that both Social Cultural Factors (Social Trust and Local Attachment) and Political Factors (Political Satisfaction and Service Satisfaction) can be regarded as complementary explanations of political orientations.

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Appendix 1: Survey items to measure the index of Perceived Responsiveness

How much do you agree or disagree with the statements listed below? Place a checkmark for each statement.

- a. Local councillors do not care much about the views of the people in this municipality.
b. Political parties in this municipality are only interested in our votes, [and] not in our opinions.

Response categories for items a and b:

Agree strongly	Agree somewhat	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree somewhat	Disagree strongly	Don't know
1	2	3	4	5	8
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

- c. How much do you feel that having elections makes the municipal council in this municipality pay attention to what the people think. Would you say not at all, very little, somewhat, quite a bit or very much?
d. Generally speaking how much attention do you feel the mayor and aldermen [council representatives] in this municipality pay to what the people think when they decide what to do? Would you say not at all, very little, somewhat, quite a bit or very much?

Response categories for items c and d:

Not at all	Very little	Somewhat	Quite a bit	Very much	Don't know
1	2	3	4	5	8
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Appendix 2: Survey items to measure the index of Local Attachment.

Below we have listed several geographical areas, the names of different institutions such as the police, government, civil service, etc. On a scale from 0 to 10 where 0 means "No attachment at all" and 10 means "Very strong attachment", please indicate how strongly you attached are you to each of these areas. Place one checkmark on each line.

	No attach- ment at all	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Very strong attach- ment	Don't know
														98
A. The neighbourhood or village in which you live	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
B. The municipality in which you live	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Appendix 3: Survey items to measure the index of social trust.

Generally speaking, would you say that most people can be trusted or that you can't be too careful in dealing with people? Indicate your opinion on a scale from 0 ("You can't be too careful") to 10 ("Most people can be trusted").

You can't be too careful	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Most people can be trusted
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

Would you say that most of the time people try to be helpful or that they are mostly looking out for themselves? Indicate your opinion on a scale from 0 ("People mostly look out for themselves") to 10 ("People mostly try to be helpful").

People mostly look out for themselves	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	People mostly try to be helpful
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

Appendix 4: Survey items to measure the index of subjective political confidence.

I consider myself to be well qualified to participate in local politics.

I feel that I could do as good a job as a member of the municipal council [or comparable local body] as most other people.

I feel that I have a pretty good understanding of the important political issues facing my municipality.

Response categories:

Agree strongly	Agree somewhat	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree somewhat	Disagree strongly	Don't know
1	2	3	4	5	6
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

How well informed do you feel you are regarding that which happens in municipal politics? Would you say that you are very well informed, well informed, somewhat informed, only slightly informed, or not at all informed?

Response categories:

Very well informed	Well informed	Somewhat informed	Only slightly informed	Not at all informed	Don't know
1	2	3	4	5	6
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Appendix 5: Correlations between Social Cultural Factors & Political Factors.

Correlations between Social Cultural Factors & Political Factors indicators

Dependent Variable: Perceived Responsiveness (N = 788)	Local Attachment	Social Trust	Subjective Political Competence	Political Satisfaction	Service Satisfaction	Mayor Party Preference
Local Attachment		,288****	,120****	,152****	,183****	,086
Social Trust			,141****	,198****	,193****	,104*
Subjective Political Competence				,040	,061*	,052
Political Satisfaction					,587****	,046
Service Satisfaction						,116**

Sig. (1 tailed): **** $P < 0.001$, ** $P < 0.010$, * $P < 0.050$

Appendix 6: Regression estimates of the combined model of Social Cultural Factors & Political Factors (B1).

Regression estimates of the combined model of Social Cultural Factors & Political Factors

Dependent Variable:
Perceived Responsiveness
(N = 819)

Political Satisfaction	min. 0 - max. 100	.449****
Service Satisfaction	min. 0 - max. 100	.174****
Local Attachment	min. 0 - max. 100	.026
R-square		.33

**** $P < 0.001$, *** $P < 0.005$, ** $P < 0.010$, * $P < 0.050$

Appendix 7: Regression estimates of the combined model of Social Cultural Factors & Political Factors (B2).

Regression estimates of the combined model of Social Cultural Factors & Political Factors

Dependent Variable:

Perceived Responsiveness

(N = 819)

Political Satisfaction	min. 0 - max. 100	.447****
Service Satisfaction	min. 0 - max. 100	.175****
Social Trust	min. 0 - max. 100	.025
R-square		.33

**** $P < 0.001$, *** $P < 0.005$, ** $P < 0.010$, * $P < 0.050$

Appendix 8: Hypotheses.

Social Cultural Factors				
	Hypotheses	Predictor	Rejected	Differentiated Collaborated
1	It is plausible that civilians, who are attached to their local community, will also be attached to their local politicians. Higher levels of Local Attachment will contribute to higher levels of Perceived Responsiveness of Dutch civilians towards representatives in local government.	<u>Local Attachment</u>		Yes
2	It is plausible that when civilians trust others, those citizens will also trust their local representatives. Higher levels of Social Trust will contribute to higher levels of Perceived Responsiveness of Dutch civilians towards representatives in local government.	<u>Social Trust</u>		Yes
3	It is plausible that when civilians feel to have a certain amount of control on their environment, they will have the feeling that they can rely on others to have this control as well. Higher levels of Subjective Political Competence will contribute to higher levels of Perceived Responsiveness of Dutch civilians towards representatives in local government.	<u>Subjective Political Competence</u>	Yes	
Political Factors				
	Hypotheses	Predictor	Rejected	Differentiated Collaborated
4	It is plausible that when civilians who are satisfied with local authority, will perceive the responsiveness of their local representatives positively. Higher levels of Political Satisfaction will contribute to higher levels of Perceived Responsiveness of Dutch civilians towards their local representatives.	<u>Political Satisfaction</u>		Yes
5	It is plausible that when civilians who are satisfied with services rendered by the authority, will perceive the responsiveness of their local representatives positively. Higher levels of Service Satisfaction will contribute to higher levels of Perceived Responsiveness of Dutch civilians towards their local representatives.	<u>Service Satisfaction</u>		Yes
6	It is plausible that when civilians are in favor of the mayor's party, they will perceive the responsiveness of their local representatives positively as well. When a civilian is in favor of the Mayor's Party this will contribute to higher levels of Perceived Responsiveness of Dutch civilians towards their local representatives.	<u>Mayor's Party Preference</u>	Yes	