

**Adults' Civic Engagement in the U. S. and
Germany:
Evidence from the PIAAC Survey**

*Amy D. Rose, Thomas J. Smith,
Jovita M. Ross-Gordon, Jill Zarestky,
Tobin Lopes, M Cecil Smith,
Anke Grotlüschen, & Marion Fleige*

Background

- Immigration and, in the EU, internal migration are often viewed as...
 - *Social problems*, e.g., lack of integration; using taxpayer dollars; and,
 - *Political problems*, e.g., increasing xenophobia
- We were interested in exploring these issues through analysis of PIAAC data

Definition: Civic engagement

“working to make a difference in the civic life of our communities and developing the combination of knowledge, skills, values and motivation to make that difference” (Ehrlich, 2000, vi)

Civic engagement includes...

- **Voluntary work:**
 - “doing work without pay for charities, political parties, trade unions or other nonprofit organizations” (OECD, 2011, p. 46)
- **Political efficacy:**
 - “the extent to which people feel they understand and can affect politics” (p. 46)
- **Social trust:**
 - “confidence in the reliability of a person or system” (p. 46)

U.S. and Germany

- Both advanced industrial countries
- Different education systems and paths to citizenship
- Different treatment of immigrants
 - Recently, and historically
- Comparison can lead to insights about the integration of immigrants into the civic life of the country

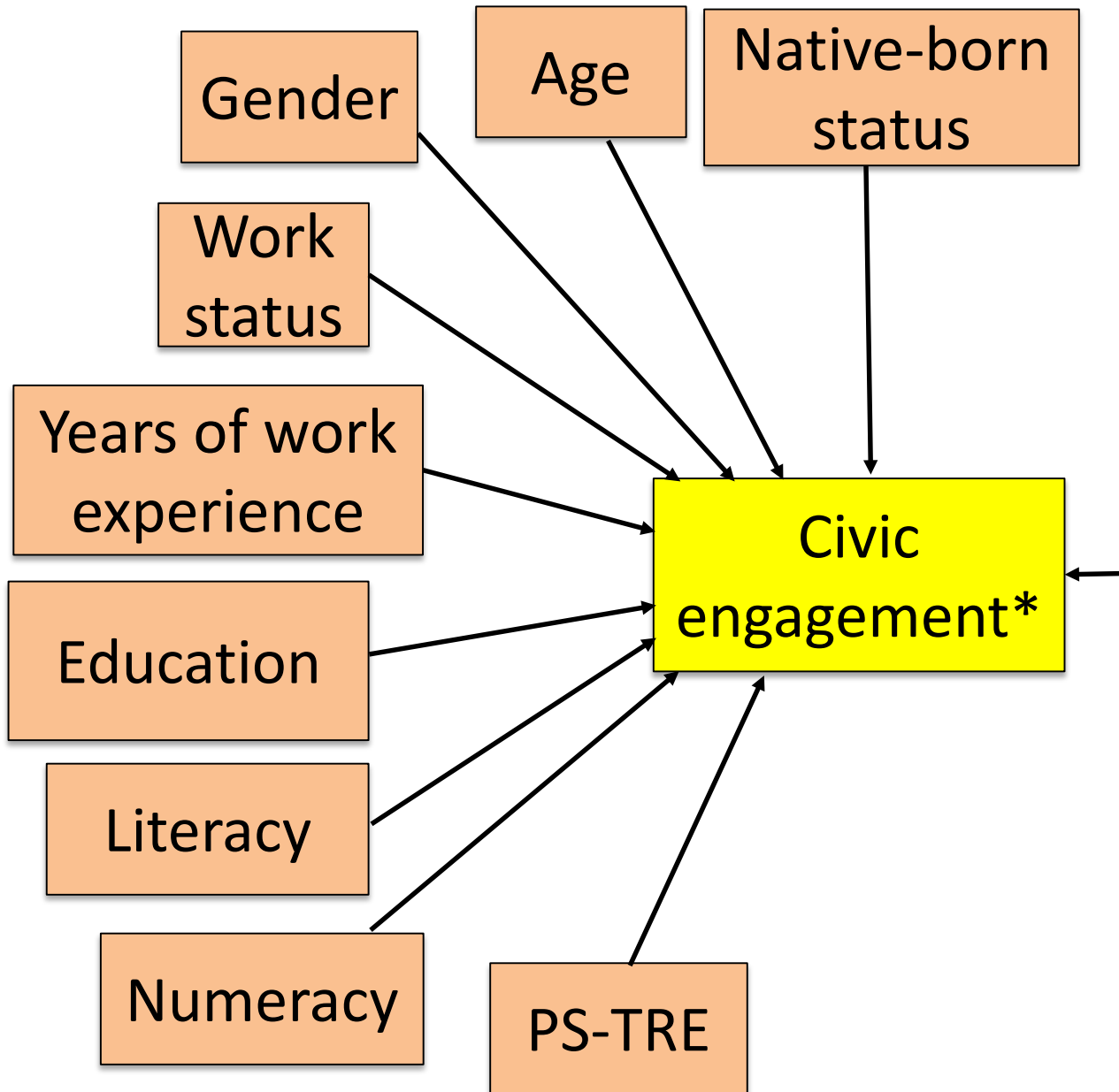
Research questions

- 1.) Among adults in the US and Germany, are age, education, gender, immigration status, skill proficiency, work status, and number of years worked associated with civic engagement (i.e., voluntary work for non-profit organizations, political efficacy, and social trust)?
- 2.) Do the associations of age, education, gender, immigration status, skill proficiency, work status, and number of years worked with civic engagement (i.e., voluntary work for non-profit organizations, political efficacy, and social trust) differ between individuals in the US and Germany?

Method

- RQ1: Four ordinal regression models predicting each of four ordinal indicators of civic engagement from immigration status, demographic characteristics, and skill proficiencies
- RQ2: Multi-group ordinal regression (Germany vs. U.S.) using the same ordinal regression outcomes and predictors from RQ1

RQ1



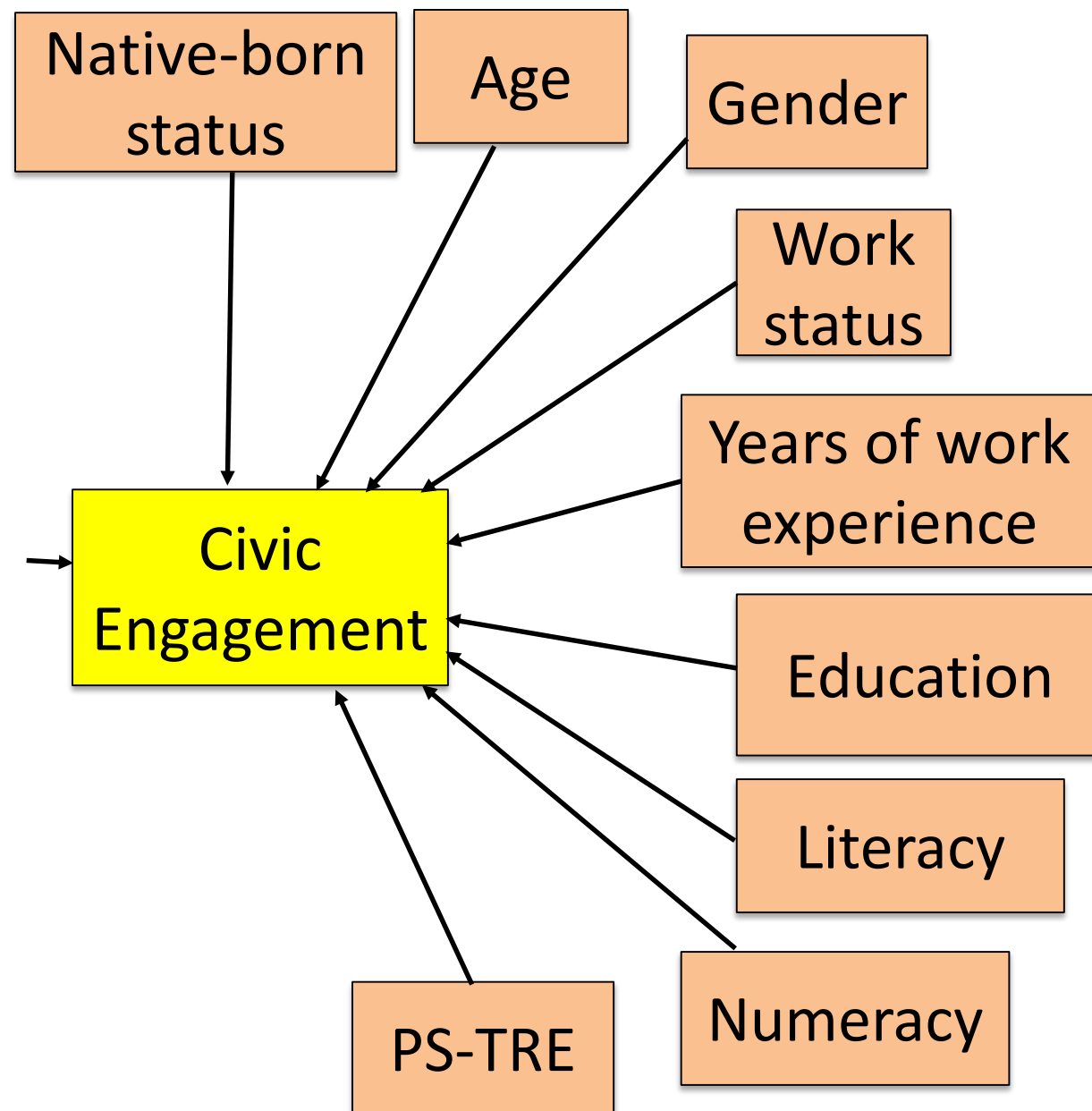
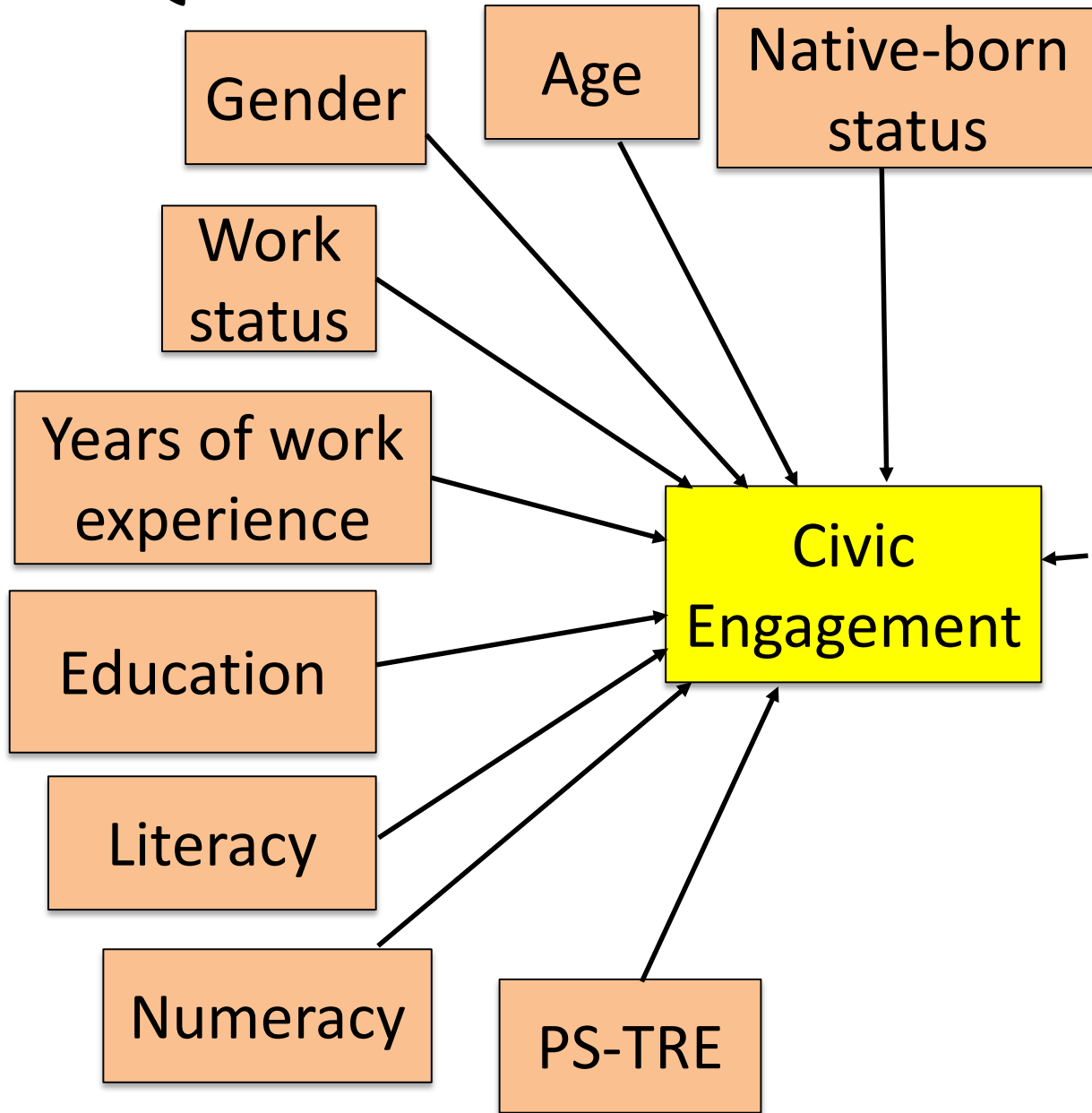
Ordinal civic engagement outcomes:

- *Volunteer work*
- *Political efficacy*
- * • *Ability to trust more than few people, and*
- *Belief that others won't take advantage*

RQ2

Germany

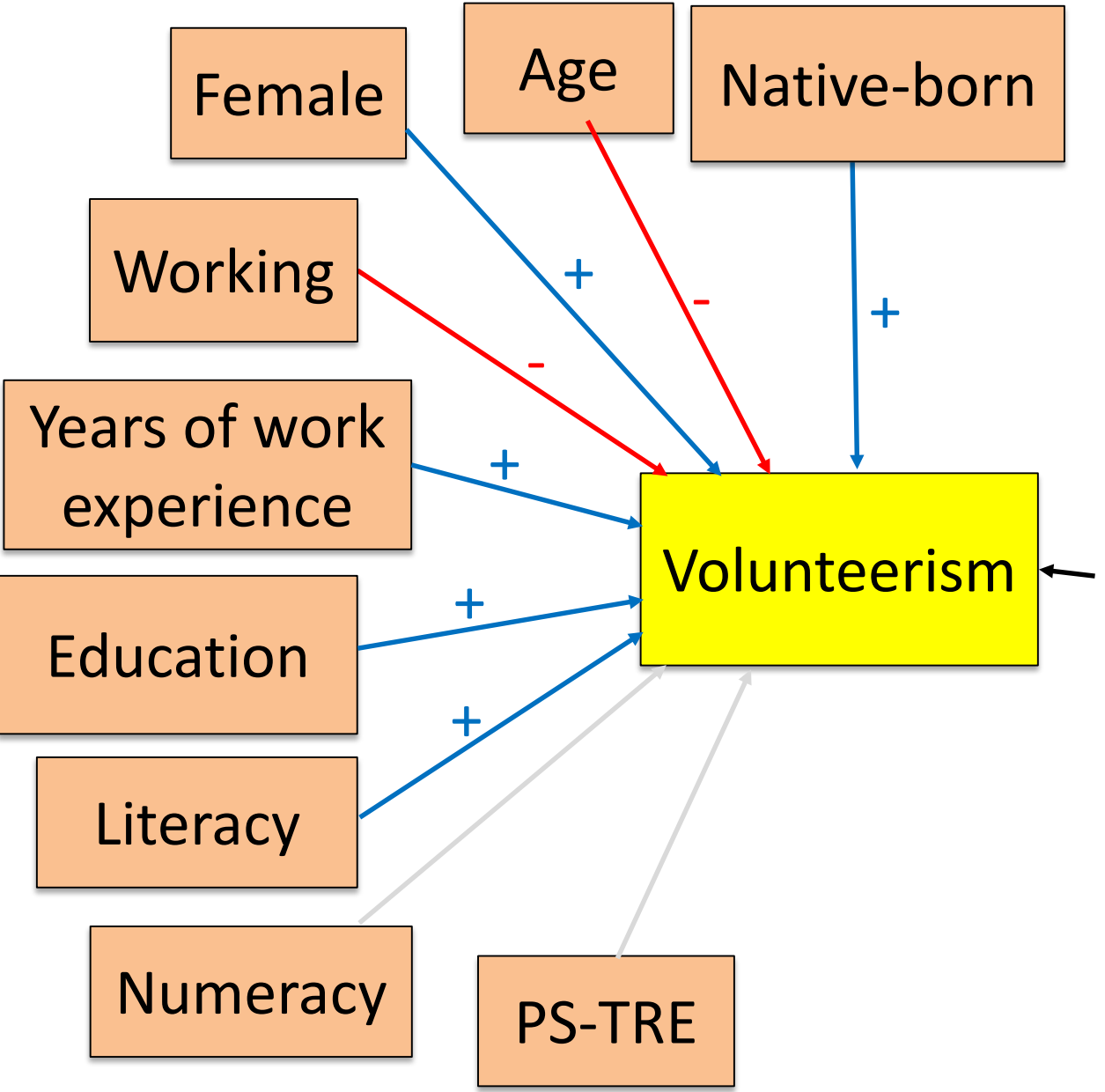
U.S.



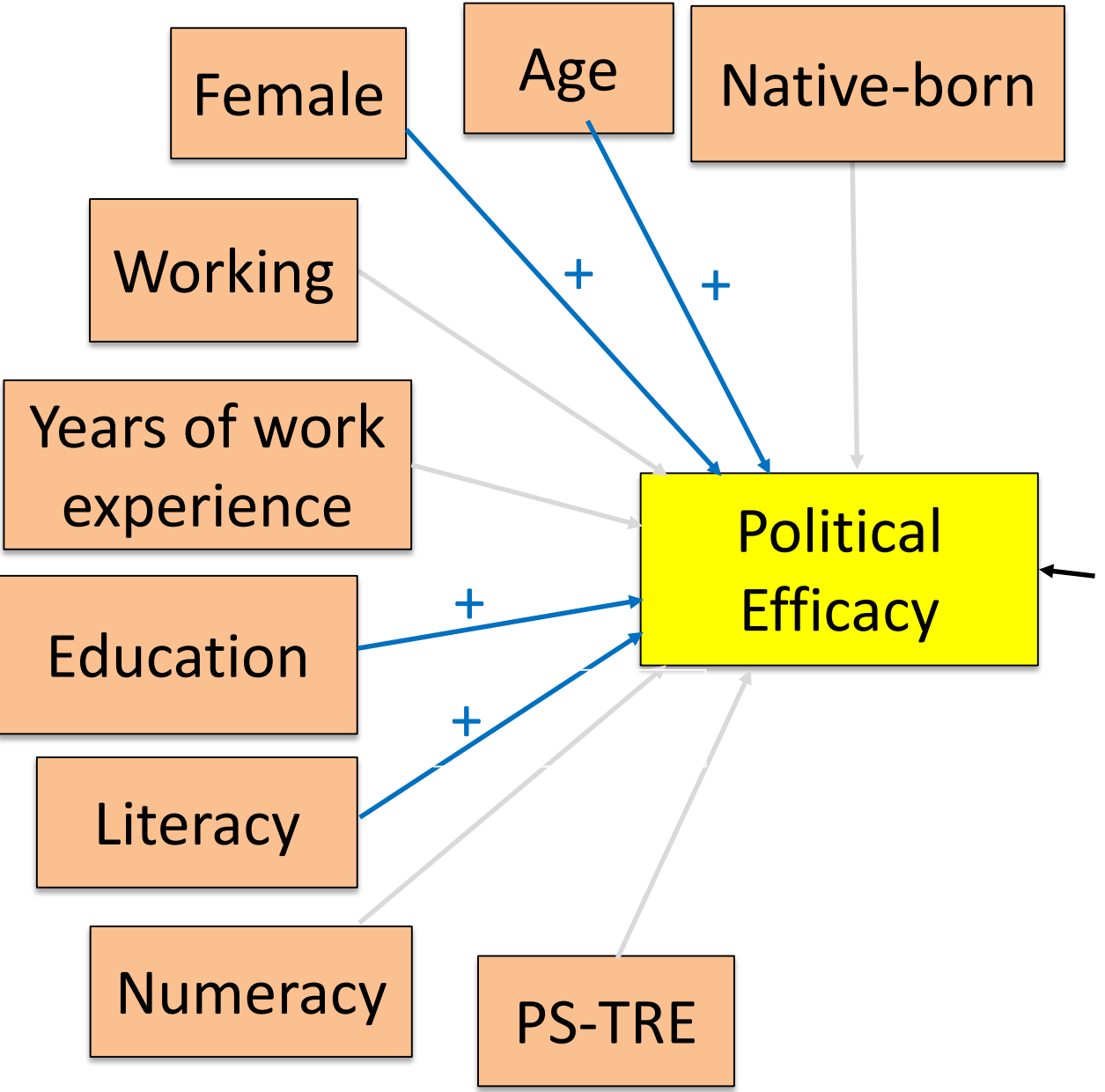
Data analyses

- Sampling weights and replicate weights utilized
- Analyses repeated using 10 sets of plausible values for the skill proficiencies, and parameters averaged
- Between-country differences in effects from multi-group regression assessed by comparing unconstrained and constrained regression models

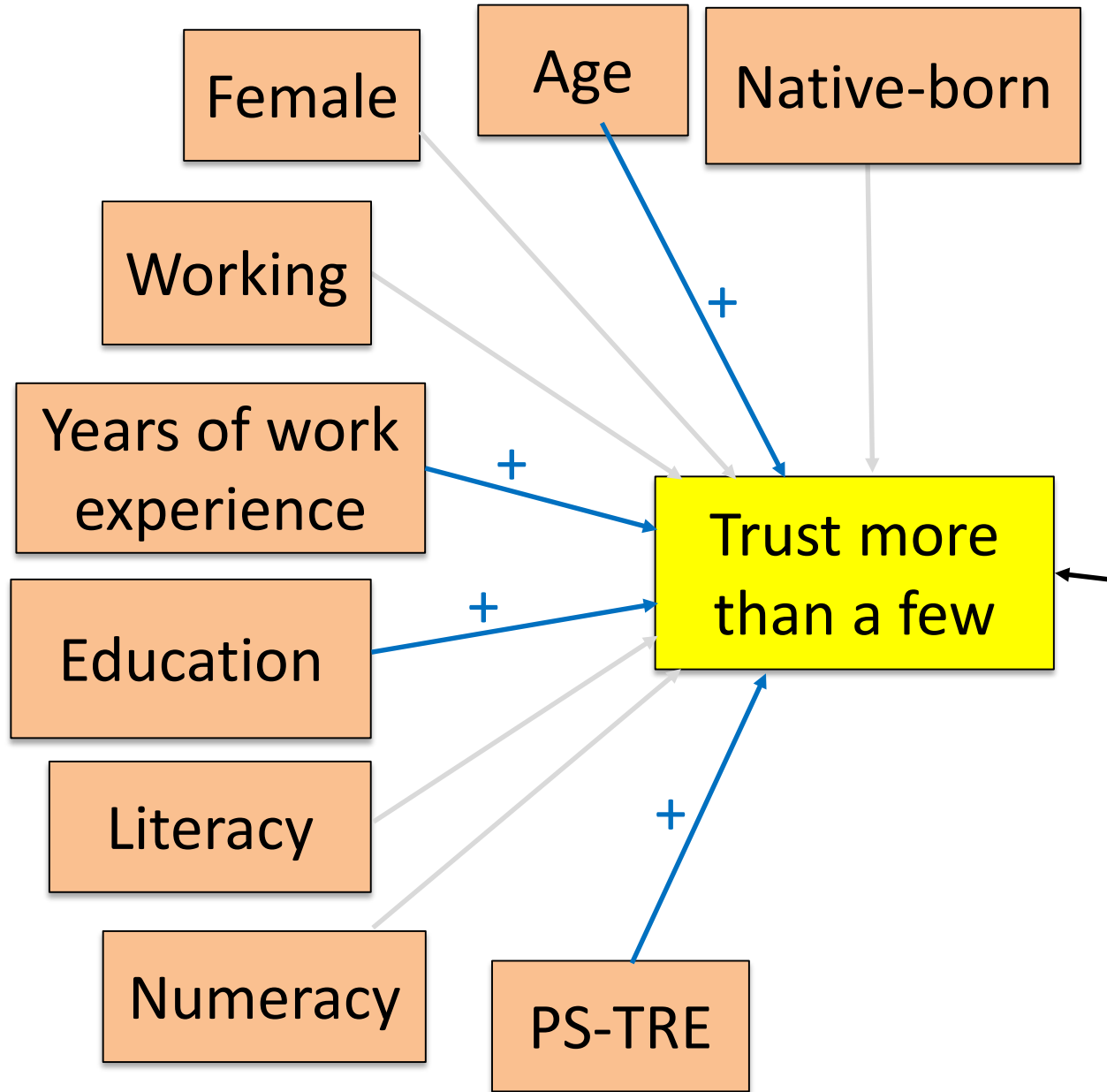
RQ1



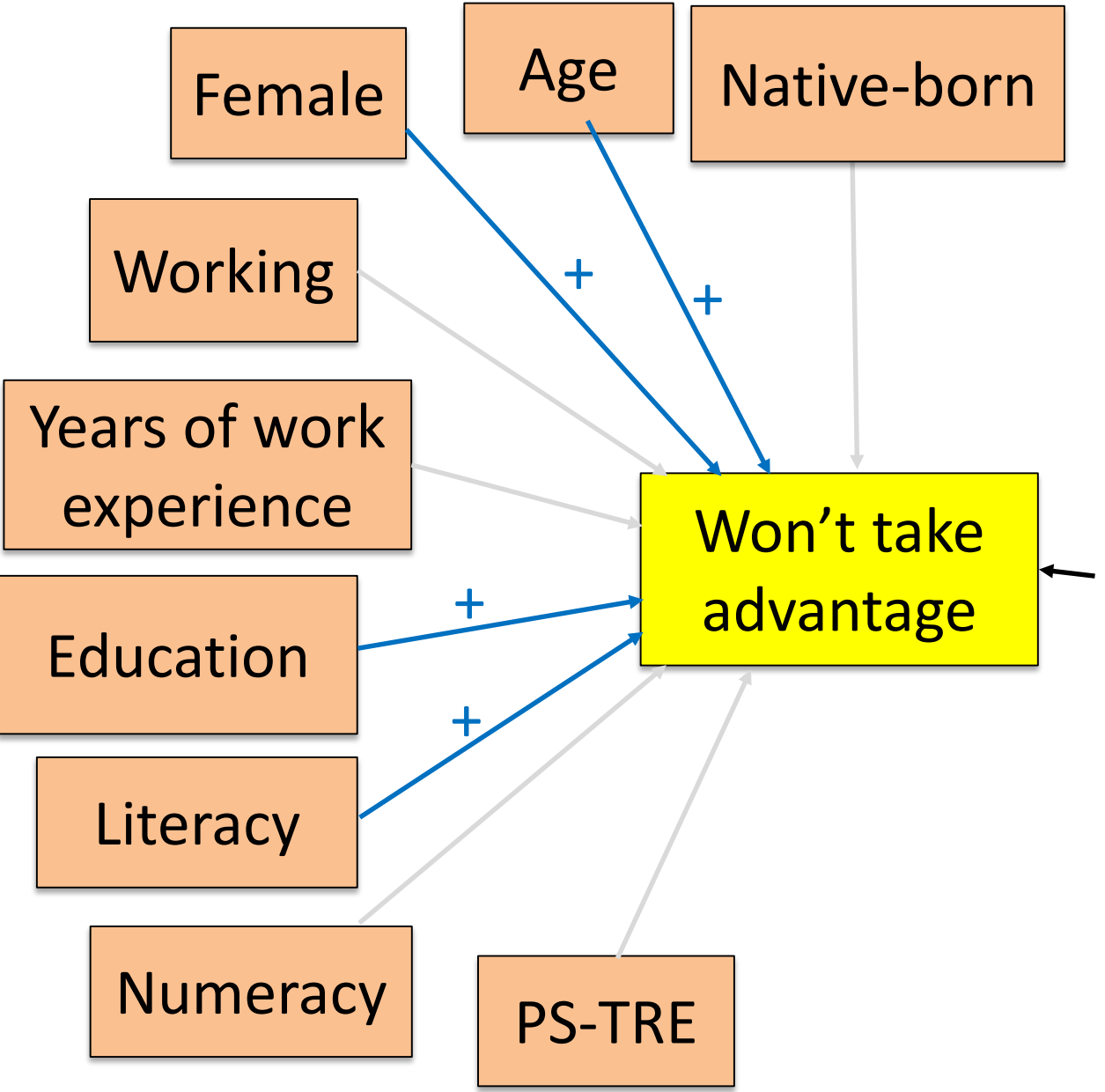
RQ1



RQ1



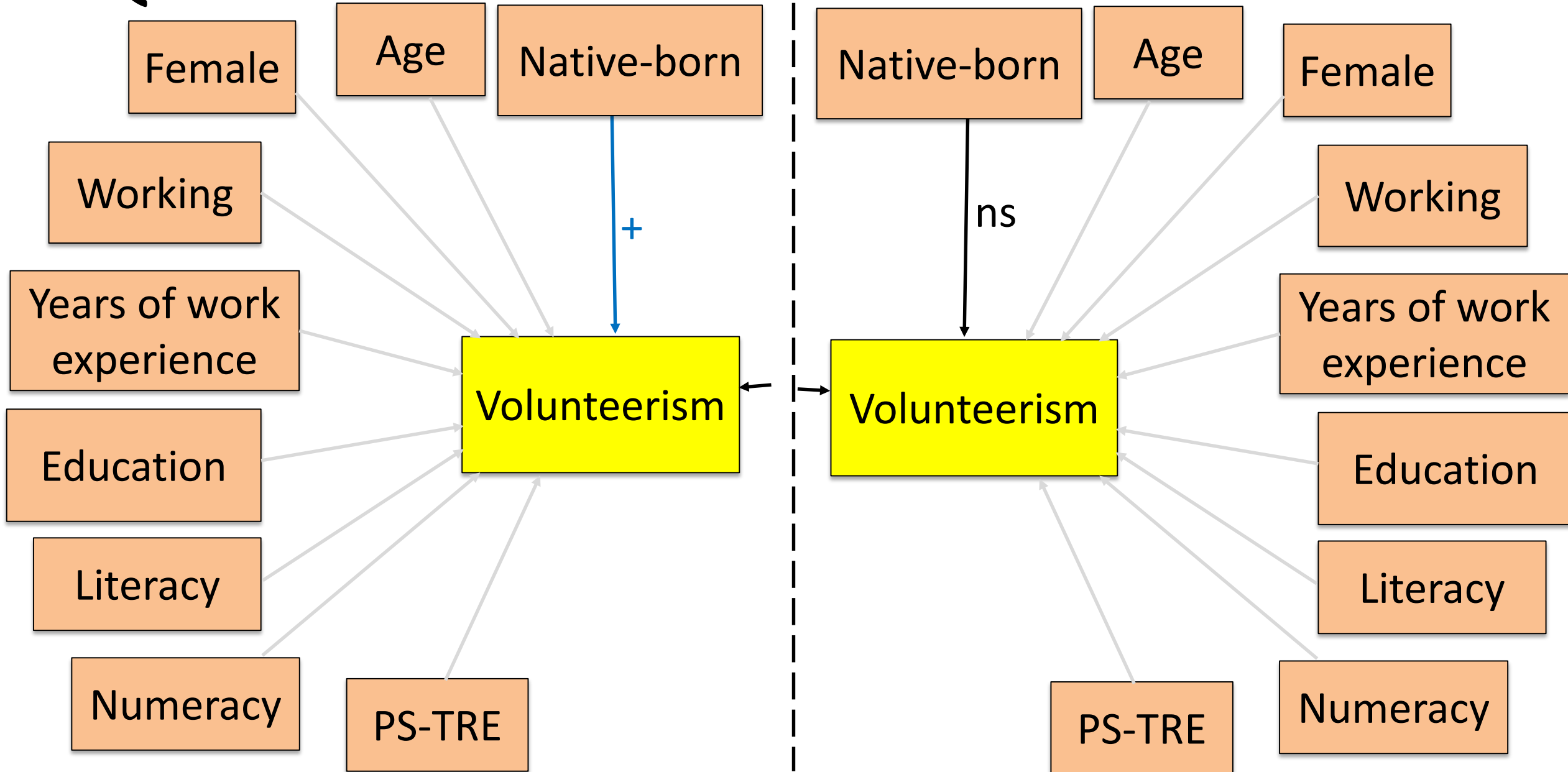
RQ1



RQ2

Germany

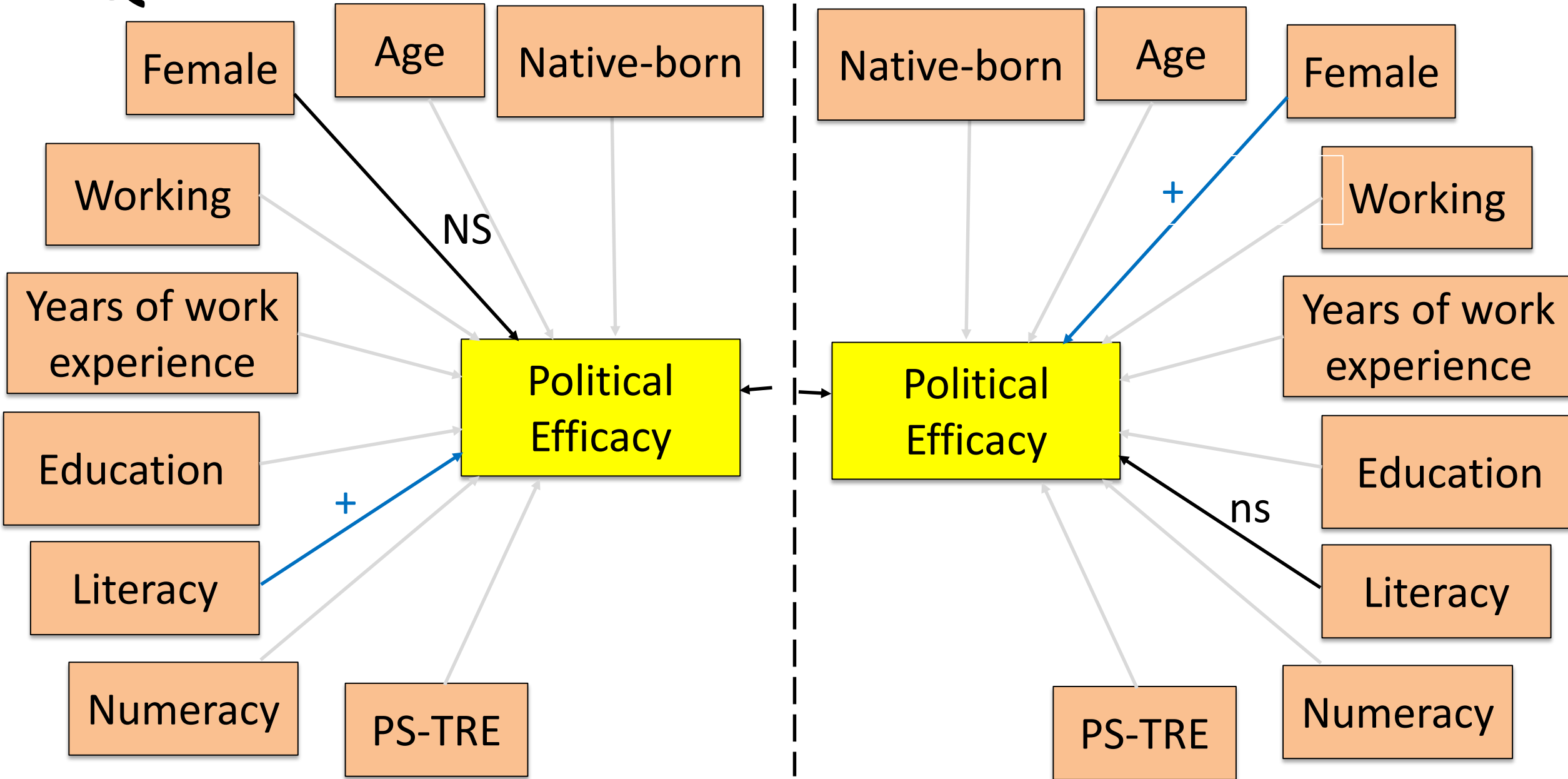
U.S.



RQ2

Germany

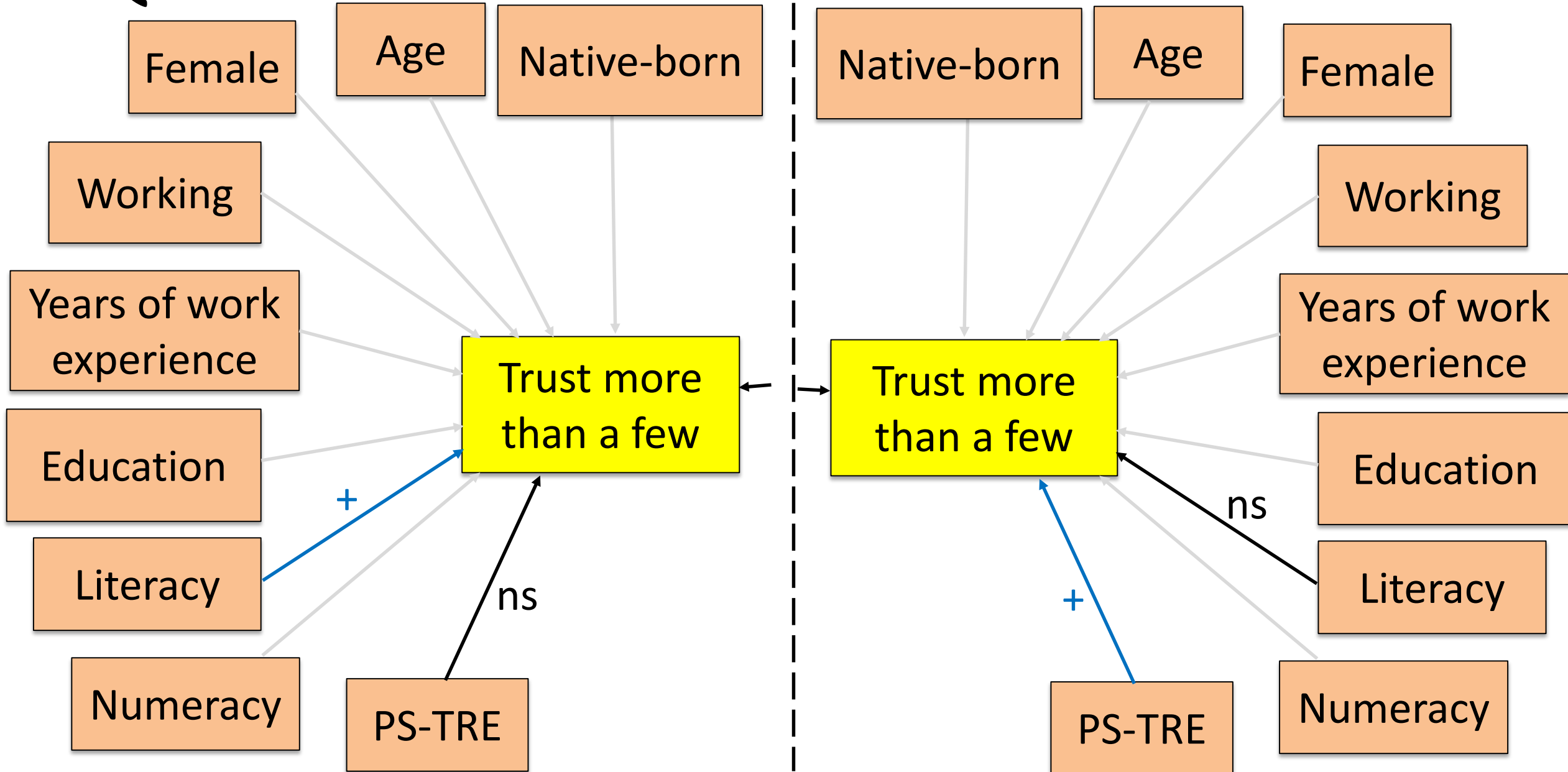
U.S.



RQ2

Germany

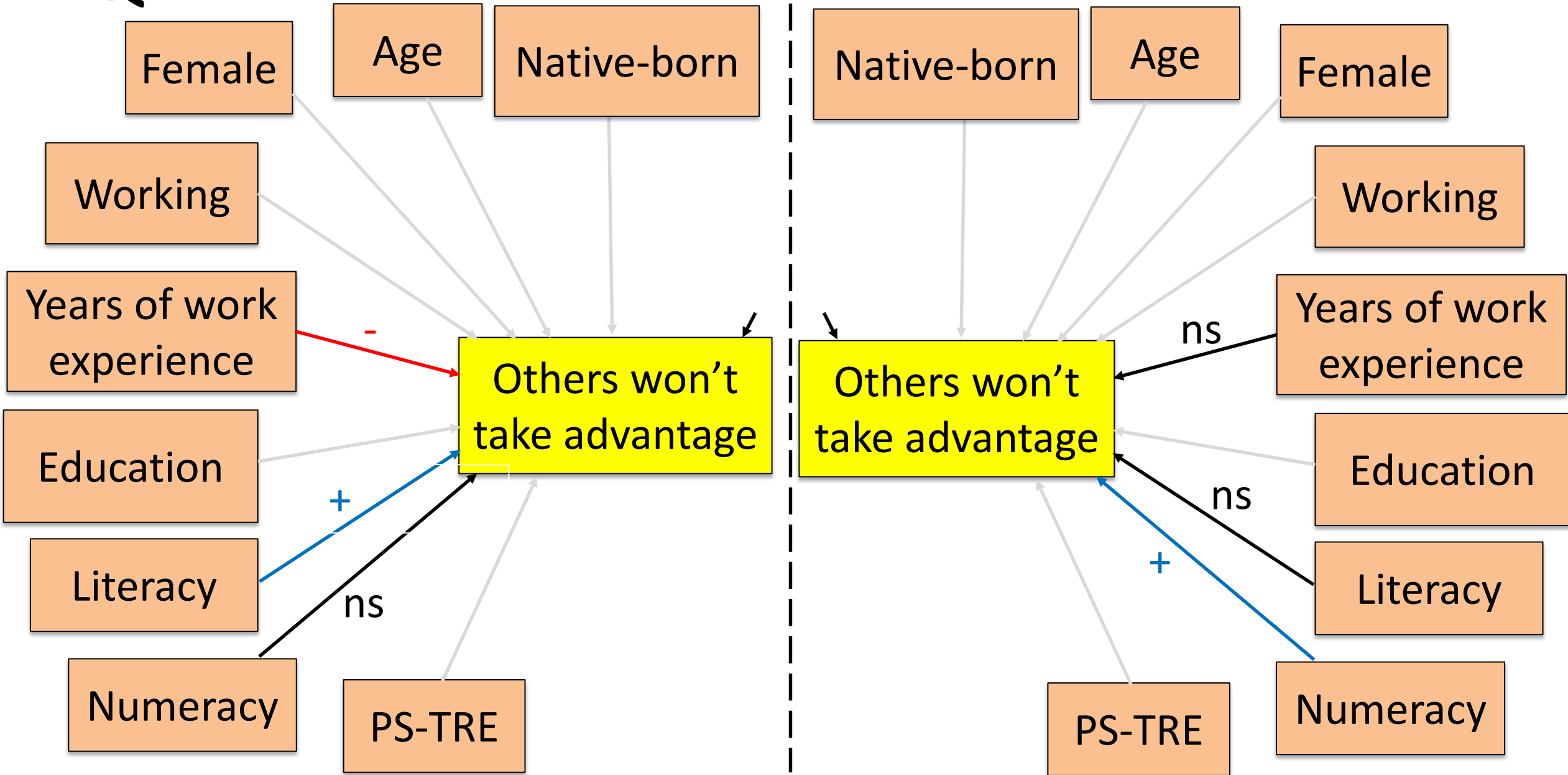
U.S.



RQ2

Germany

U.S.



Discussion

- Several background variables predict dimensions of civic engagement—age, education, work experience, gender, and skills (i.e., literacy, numeracy, PS-TRE)—though not consistently or uniformly
- Only one observed difference between immigrants and native-born on civic engagement (voluntary work in Germany)
- Predictive capacity of gender, skills, and work experience on political efficacy and social trust appears to differ between Germany and the U.S.

Implications

- The U.S. and Germany should embrace immigration and assist immigrants in becoming acclimated to their communities, and encourage civic participation among immigrants (in Germany, volunteering)
- Address misinformation about immigrants
- Educational opportunity and skills are keys to civic engagement
- Increasing skills is not sufficient; need for programs that engage people, in terms of volunteering and political efficacy