

News consumption patterns among Dutch and German college students with regard to their intended political behavior: A comparative nationality study of gender differences.

Corinna Jürgens

Bachelorthesis Psychologie 2009

Faculty of Behavioral Sciences

University of Twente, the Netherlands

Tutors: Ard Heuvelman

Oscar Peters

Abstract

The present research proposes a theory about the relationship between media news exposure and intended political participation based on the theory of planned behavior by Ajzen (1988). The main goal was to detect the causes of decreased political participation in Western societies and men's higher political participation compared to women. This study examined the role of news consumption patterns through communication in the context of predicting intended political participation among Dutch and German college students. Two kinds of communication, interpersonal and through media were studied separately. An analysis of survey data (N = 104) showed no strong moderator role of the favorite media news source (Television, Newspapers, Internet). A significant medial influence of the two interpersonal communication variables, community integration and reflective integration on the relationship between media news exposure and political participation, could be demonstrated. The generally assumed gender difference in political participation could not be confirmed in this study. As a moderator variable, gender showed a significant effect on the relationship between media news exposure and political participation. To draw a comparison, this gender difference is greater among Dutch students than German students.

Introduction

Nowadays, most people in the Western civilization live in a complex media environment. According to the Social and Cultural Planning Office of the Netherlands, since 1985 Dutch people from 12 upwards spend more than 18 hours per week of their leisure time on media consumption (Sociaal en Cultureel Planbureau, 2005). In Germany, adolescents are preoccupied with television 122 minutes and with the Internet 117 minutes per day, (Medienpädagogischer Forschungsverbund Südwest, 2008). Due to the high amount of time spent on mass media, they play an important role in the socialization process among people. As a logical consequence, time spent on media, replaces interactions with other people in the community (Besley, 2006). Therefore, media does not only influence the user directly. They also shape society as a whole by means of conveying cultural norms, gender roles and political attitudes. The majority of people are not personally involved in politics and most of those people learn about political events mainly via the mass media (Becker, McCombs, & McLeod, 1975). Therefore, the media are our sources of political knowledge and could thus determine our intended political behavior. Moreover, Doris Graber's (1988) research showed that media are the dominant source of political information. In an analysis of television viewing, Gauntlett and Hill concluded that many viewers actually structure their television use and their daily routines around news (Giles, 2003). The fact that political participation, which is an essential part of an effective democracy, declines (Putnam, 2000), emphasizes the need to examine the relationship between media effects and political behavior. As a political instrument, the media are key opinion formers in a contemporary democratized Western society. In terms of mass communication research, the question that arises is, whether media use plays a role in predicting political participation. And if so, how? (Hoffman & Thomson,

News Consumption Patterns among Dutch and German college students: A comparative nationality study of gender differences
 2009). To gain insight in the media effects of political participation, it is of major importance to include the complex media environment we live in. According to the Social and Cultural Planning Office of the Netherlands, the three media mainly used are television, print media, and computer/Internet, respectively (Sociaal en Cultureel Planbureau, 2005). In Germany, the three most frequently used media are television, radio, and Internet, respectively (ARD/ZDF Onlinestudie 2009).

Television, as the primarily used information source, and newspapers differ from each other in three important ways. First, television news is generally short, ranging from 15 to 25 minutes (e.g. Tagesschau, RTLaktuell, and NOS journaal take 15 minutes, whereas the Netherlands' news program 'RTL Nieuws' takes 25 minutes), and therefore, less time is available to present more than the essential facts concerning a topic. Second, television is, in contrast to newspapers, sequential. That means that viewers have to wait until the end of one story before proceeding to the next one. Third, relating to this, there is no possibility to refresh our memory regarding the facts provided in television news (Giles, 2003).

In the Netherlands, daily newspapers are used by the half of the population at least once a week (Sociaal en Cultuur Planbureau, 2005). In Germany, 59 per cent of the people from 14 years upwards read the newspaper on a daily basis (Oehmichen and Schröter, 2008). However, the usage increases with higher ages. Adolescents between 12 and 19 years spend less than half an hour per week on reading newspapers, whereas people above 65 spend between three and four hours per week on it (Sociaal en Cultureel Planbureau, 2005).

The third most frequently used medium, the computer in combination with the Internet is a source that offers a wide range of possibilities of gathering all kinds of information. Information gathering in the Internet differs from information gathering in more traditional media in the way that the first is more prone to alteration and it is often more difficult to detect the source behind the information (Metzger, Flanagin, and Zwarun, 2003).

In the Netherlands, the amount of access to the Internet increased from 25 per cent to 60 per cent in the last five years. Particularly in the age groups, ranging from 12 to 19 years and from 20 to 34 years, there is a huge rise in the online computer usage from 2000 to 2005 (Sociaal en Cultureel Planbureau, 2005). Generally speaking, in Germany the radio is the third most frequently used medium. However, among German adolescents and young adults (14 -29 years), which is the group that is of particular interest for this study, the Internet is the third most frequently used medium (Oehmichen and Schröter, 2008).

A wide range of research exists about the effect that a medium, which is used for newsgathering, has on political behavior. In particular, research has focused on newspapers and television as the major information sources of political issues. For instance, Hollander's meta-analysis (n. d.) examined the relationship between media use and political involvement. His meta-analysis supports the hypothesis that television use has a weaker link to political involvement than newspaper use. In another study, Miron and Bryant in press indicate a relationship between newspaper use and voting. Perse (2001) states that the potential of television as a political resource is limited because of its sensational and simple story-telling (Hayes, 2006). Robinson and Davis (1990) found in their study that the more television news people watch, the less they comprehend the information (Giles, 2003).

Hence, the interplay between television as the major information source and its negative effect on the political participation is a challenge we are confronted with. One explanation might be that television shortens the time available for other activities outside the own home and thus prevent political participation (Putnam, 1995). Due to the fact that the influences of situational context, the effects of media use and interpersonal communication are often assumed but not examined in detail (Sotirovic & McLeod, 2001), the present study includes ample variables to take the first step to overcome this shortcoming. According to the Social and Cultural Planning Office, the Internet seems to displace television as the major

News Consumption Patterns among Dutch and German college students: A comparative nationality study of gender differences
 medium. This suggests that the Internet is related to declines in television and newspaper use for news gathering. Additionally, the Internet acts as a source of news (Giles, 2003). Early studies on the effects of the Internet on political participation have been mixed (Tolbert & McNeal, 2003). Therefore, Internet should nowadays be acknowledged in studies that examine the relationship between media news exposure and political participation and examine its potential function. In the present paper, we focus on the effects of television, newspapers, and Internet.

In general, the present study addresses the following research question:

What are the news consumption patterns of college students and which effects on political participation result from these patterns? Appending to this question we hypothesize, based on the previous research, that

Hypothesis 1: The exposure of newspaper news is positively related to political participation. (Sotirovic & McLeod, 2001)

Hypothesis 2: The exposure of television news is negatively related to political participation (Sotirovic & McLeod, 2001; Putnam, 1995).

Hypothesis 3: The exposure of Internet news is positively related to political participation.

The goal of the present paper is to explain and predict the media technology behavior in relationship to general human behavior. The general social cognitive theory (Bandura, 1986) assumes that human behavior is influenced by the interaction between the environment, the individual itself, and the cognitive processes of the individual (Brug et al. 2005). Additionally, self-efficacy is a key variable in the processes moderating the individual's behavior because a positive perceived outcome leads to a higher possibility of operating in this way (Bandura, 1977). Due to our purpose to measure the intended political

behavior, we apply a more tailored social cognitive theory, namely the theory of planned behavior of Ajzen (1988) which is one of the most influential models for predicting behavior. Furthermore, we choose the theory of planned behavior because there is support for the predictive validity of the model with respect to voting behavior (Glasford, 2008), which is one kind of political participation measured in this study. According to Ajzen, intended behavior is determined by three components. First, the attitude is defined by opinions people have about certain topics. These attitudes are relatively stable and are formed by prior learning experiences. They are not only based on logical and rational considerations, but also on habits and irrational beliefs. In the model, attitudes are constructed through the repeated reflection and evaluation of one's own opinions to specific topics. Second, subjective norm influences intended human behavior. Subjective norm is divided into both, the normative expectations a person has regarding the thoughts other people may have about the person's behavior and the extent a person complies these thoughts. The third determinant perceived behavioral control stems from the concept of self-efficacy which originated in the social cognitive theory of Bandura (1986). Self-efficacy is defined as the control, a person thinks it has about the outcomes of the own behavior. According to Bandura, self-efficacy can be measured by means of the three dimensions magnitude, generality, and strength. These three dimensions have to be taken into consideration to understand the whole concept of self-efficacy (Brug et al., 2005).

To gain insight in the relationship between intended political behavior and media news exposure, we expand the theory of planned behavior to answer the central research question.

In our model (Figure 1), we describe the environmental factors, based on the theory of planned behavior, as subjective norm and as political community integration. Again, subjective norms, or an individual's perception of whether others think the behavior is important, can be measured by means of the variables normative beliefs and a person's

News Consumption Patterns among Dutch and German college students: A comparative nationality study of gender differences
 motivation to comply (Brug et al., 2005). To strengthen the interpersonal communication aspect, we also measured the variable political community integration as an environmental factor. Community integration describes the dimension of social networks. Here, an important factor is the present communication pattern between the members of a community (McLeod et al., 1999). According to Wanta and Ghanem (2000), interpersonal discussions of issues in the news can bring issue awareness without the necessity of exposure to the news. Shah, Cho, Eveland, and Kwak (2005) have also shown that informational media use fosters interpersonal political discussion, which in turn contributes to increased civic participation. Thus, with reference to our research issue, we focus on political communication patterns within a community. Since the actual act of political participation takes place in the local environment, we assume an important relationship between the political community integration and the political behavior of an individual. In sum, the following hypotheses are

Hypothesis 4: The two environmental factors subjective norm and community integration have an impact on the intended behavior and are affected by media exposure.

Hypothesis 4.1: In terms of politics, subjective norm has an influence on the intended political participation and is affected by media news exposure.

Hypothesis 4.2: Political community integration has an impact on intended political participation and is affected by media news exposure.

With regard to the individual itself, the demographic factors, such as age, education and income, have to be taken into consideration. Individual factors, such as gender, type of study and nationality, country of residence and duration, are of importance, as well.

In the context of our study, the cognitive processes of the individual are understood as the variables attitude and political reflective integration. Tailoring the concept of attitude, we

News Consumption Patterns among Dutch and German college students: A comparative nationality study of gender differences

measure the opinion people have about, the prior experiences they gained and the personal extent of importance regarding political actions. Reflective integration is defined as the amount of time people invest in talking with friends or others about political issues, recall political events later, think about them and try to find additional information about a certain political topic (Sotirovic & McLeod, 2001). Consistent with previous research (Sotirovic & McLeod, 2001), this variable is assumed to act as a mediator between media use and participation. Thus, the following hypotheses are

Hypothesis 5: The two cognitive factors attitude and reflective integration have an impact on the intended behavior and are affected by media exposure.

Hypothesis 5.1: In terms of politics, attitude has an influence on intended political participation and is affected by media news exposure.

Hypothesis 5.2: Political reflective integration has an impact on intended political participation and is affected by media news exposure.

According to Bandura, self-efficacy plays a major role in the intended behavior and is specific in its nature (Bandura, 1977). Therefore, we divide this concept into political and media self-efficacy concepts, which are influencing the ongoing processes of political behavior and media news exposure, respectively. Political self-efficacy is defined as the extent to which people believe that they can influence the course of politics through personal action and the responsiveness of governmental institutions to public preferences (Conway, 1985). According to Hofstetter, political self-efficacy is measured by asking whether respondents think that they can influence a variety of political situations and tasks (generality) and how confident they are to influence every situation or task (strength). Covering the dimension ‘magnitude’ we also ask how they estimate the degree of difficulty to

News Consumption Patterns among Dutch and German college students: A comparative nationality study of gender differences

perform a specific task. Media self-efficacy can be understood as the confidence individuals have to handle with certain media to achieve a specific goal (Hofstetter, Zuniga, & Dozier, 2001). In our study, this goal includes finding political information on certain issues. To measure media self-efficacy, we ask how they estimate the degree of difficulty to deal with a specific kind of news media, how they estimate the amount and extent of emerging problems, when interacting with a specific kind of news media in certain situations, and how confident they are to achieve the goal, when interacting with a specific kind of media. In sum, our following hypotheses are

Hypothesis 6: Self-efficacy has a positive impact on intended behavior.

Hypothesis 6.1: Political self-efficacy has an influence on intended political participation and is affected by media news exposure.

Hypothesis 6.2: Media self-efficacy has an influence on intended media news exposure.

Bandura mentioned the interacting nature of the factors environment, cognition, self-efficacy and behavior. However, the theory of planned behavior specifies the determinants of intended behavior as subjective norm, perceived behavioral control and attitude. In our research, we focus on political behavior and participation, which are measured by means of the intended behavior. In this context, the distinction between traditional and non-traditional participation is of certain importance. Traditional participation can be understood in terms of voting and contacting a public official. Non-traditional ways of participation include participating in demonstrations, collecting signatures, and donating or attending a civic forum to get attention for an issue of special interest (McLeod et al., 1999). For both ways, we measure the intent to participate by means of duration and extent of participation as well as

News Consumption Patterns among Dutch and German college students: A comparative nationality study of gender differences

the motivation to maintain political engagement. To clarify the relationship between certain types of media news exposure and the intent of political participation, we distinguish between three types of media news, namely newspapers, television news and Internet news. For each type we examine the extent of media usage, the frequency of using certain news sources, the content of the source (serious vs. non-serious), the duration of use and whether it was used for additional background information. The qualitative and quantitative analysis about the media usage is worthwhile since the social learning point of view indicates that learning may be enhanced by means of repetitions of media messages (Hayes, 2006). In all, our conceptual model has the following relationships:

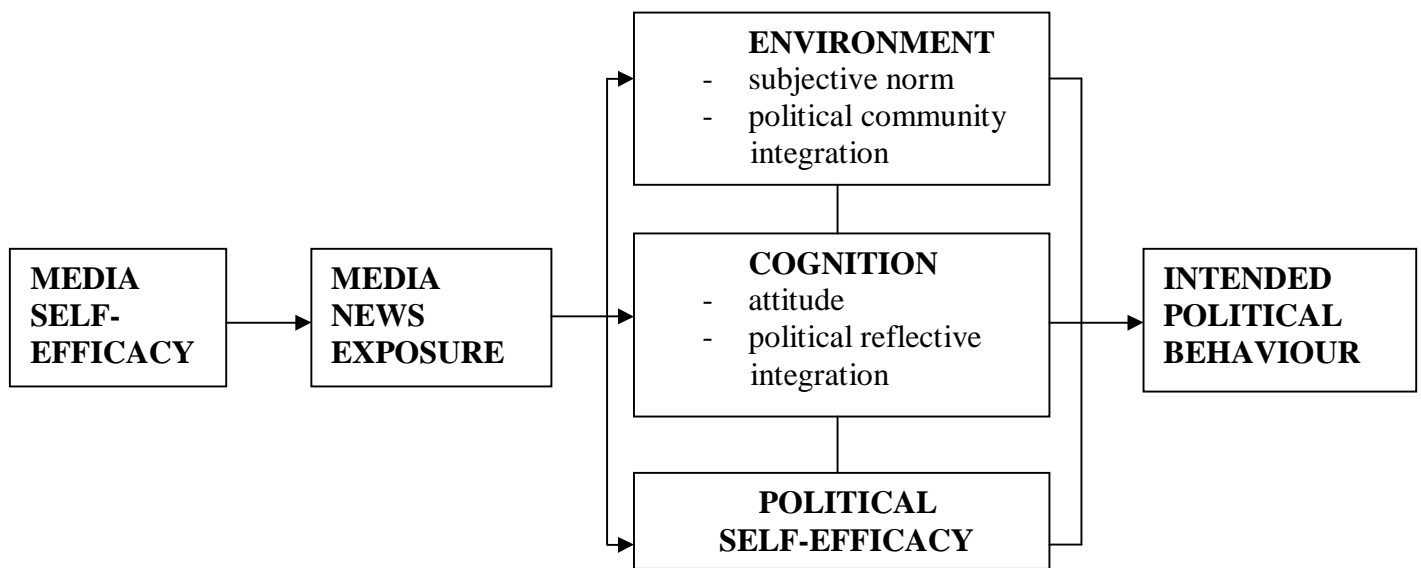


Figure 1: Description of the conceptual model

The sample of this study consists of German and Dutch students. There are three main reasons to choose students as a research sample in terms of media use and political participation. Initially, they are the first “Internet generation”. Based on that, they can be used to explore the question of emergent news consumption patterns among future users (Diddi, 2006). Especially college students more and more rely on the internet, as a source of academic and general information (Metzger et al., 2003). Therefore, it is most appropriate to use students for research on media news consumption with regard to the effect of Internet news consumption on political participation. Second, students are, in comparison to others in their age group, highly involved in political events (Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek, 2009). According to the second chamber voting of , on the 22nd of November, 2006 in the Netherlands, students' voter turnout was in excess of people with a lower level of education. Only nine per cent of the student group did not participate. Additionally, the political participation in 2006 was highest among those with the highest degree of education. Ten per cent of the students that participate in politics are members in a political party or organization. In 2006, 17 per cent of students contacted politicians or public servants and 12 per cent took part in demonstrations. The high percentage of politically active students makes this group attractive to use them as sample. We expect that if political participation is present, the effects of the three different kinds of media should be most significant. Third, intention is more suitable for predicting behavior among adults than among adolescents (Sommer Hukkelberg & Dykstra, 2009). The conceptual model in the present paper is designed to grasp the intention for political behavior, rather than capture the political behavior itself. Thus, to get valid insight in the political behavior by means of this model and the measure resulting from this, it is very convenient to use students as respondents. Research shows that consumption patterns and voting behavior, which are maintained for a lifetime, are formed during the college time when students are allowed to vote (Henke, 1985) and confronted with

News Consumption Patterns among Dutch and German college students: A comparative nationality study of gender differences

varying political beliefs from fellow students. Furthermore, in our study we include Dutch and German students. Both countries have similar political and media structures. This includes a multi-party system with distinct party leadership positions and public-service channels as well as commercial stations (Schoenbach, de Ridder, & Lauf, 2001). Here, it is important to watch both, the nationality and the country of current residence since the latter determines the availability of newspapers and television programs. However, there is a difference in history between these two countries regarding the voting right of men and women. In the Netherlands, the general voting rights for males was enacted in the year 1917. Only two years later, in the year 1919, women also got the right to vote. The end of World War I led to the elective franchise for German females, as well. However, German males can look back on a longer history of political participation than German females or Dutch citizens because they were allowed to engage in political events since 1871. According to Sommer Hukkelberg and Dykstra (2009), experiences of a certain behavior are linked to favorable attitudes and subjective norms relating to this behavior. In accordance with the theory of planned behavior, it has been argued that the more positive one's attitude and subjective norm toward politics is, the stronger is the intention to be engaged in politics (Morton & Koufteros, 2009). Attitude and subjective norm are two variables which are examined in this study and therefore, it is interesting to find out whether the different possibilities of engaging in politics express themselves through the voter participation among male and female. According to previous findings and the theory of planned behavior, we assume that political participation is more likely among males than females (Veccione & Caprara, 2009).

The following hypotheses are:

Hypothesis 7: Because of the huge amount of experiences in political participation of German males in contrast to German females, we hypothesize that the difference between the

News Consumption Patterns among Dutch and German college students: A comparative nationality study of gender differences
sexes is greater than in the Netherlands where both sexes have the same amount of experiences.

Hypothesis 7.1: Previous experiences are associated with positive attitudes relating to the behavior and therefore, result in a high degree of intended political participation.

Hypothesis 7.2: Previous experiences are associated with favorable subjective norms.

To support the assumptions, it is appropriate to look at the gender difference in media usage, as well. According to the Social en Cultural Planning Office of the Netherlands (2005), for the last thirty years, men make more use of the media environment than women. Relating to political information sources, this phenomenon might be self-explanatory due to the fact that news mainly is produced, reported, and edited by men to be consumed by men (Everitt, 2005). In the year 2005, Dutch males spend 20.5 hours per week on media and Dutch females 17.4 hours per week. In particular, there is a clear difference between males and females in the usage of the computer/ Internet. Men deal more than twice as often with the computer than females, namely 5.2 hours per week and 2.4 hours per week, respectively (SCP, 2005). This difference becomes also obvious in the ARD/ZDF Onlinestudie 2008 which compares men's and women's Internet usage and indicates that men are almost twice as often preoccupied with the Internet (20,1 per cent opposed to 11,0 per cent).

Method

Participants and Procedure. Data were drawn from a self-administered questionnaire completed by 120 German and Dutch students during summer 2009. A pretest with 9 participants was applied to confirm the chosen variables and to ensure the reliability of the data. After modifying and shortening the survey, the final version (see Appendix A) was

News Consumption Patterns among Dutch and German college students: A comparative nationality study of gender differences distributed in Germany and in the Netherlands in the period from July to August, 2009. Respondents were recruited via e-mail and via a German website for students, namely 'www.studivz.net'. In each message with which the students were approached, it was requested to fill in the questionnaire and to forward the link to other students to enhance the randomization by means of the snowball effect. 14 questionnaires were excluded in data analysis because they contained insufficient answers. Further, one questionnaire was excluded because the respondent was no student and another one since the respondent had a different nationality than Dutch or German. Of the 104 questionnaires that were included in the analysis, the sample consisted of 58.7% males and 41.3% females, with a median age of 21 to 23 years. The Dutch sample consisted of 12 male students and 4 female students. 49 students of the German sample were male and 39 students were female.

Measures. An online-survey, which included items to measure the variables *Demographic factors*, *Subjective norm*, *Political community integration*, *Attitude*, *Reflective integration*, *Political self-efficacy*, *Media self-efficacy*, *Media exposure*, and *Intended political participation*, was conducted. The assumed model items were based on the work of the aforementioned authors. Additional items measuring the theory of planned behavior constructs were developed and based on Fishbein and Ajzen's (1975) research. This type of measure, an online-survey, was chosen to ensure anonymity and since it is the most comfortable way to respond and collect responses (Morton & Koufteros, 2008).

Demographic factors: With regard to the individual itself, we have chosen for a homogeneous sample of college students for holding the demographic factors such as age, education and income, relatively constant. Individual factors, such as gender, type of study, length of study, nationality, country of residence and duration, are additionally estimated through strictly formulated questions.

Environmental variables

Subjective Norm: To measure this variable we have chosen several items, such as 'The political interest of my family/friends has motivated me to be engaged in the political process as well'. Respondents were asked to fill out a 5-point Likert-scale. To exclude response tendencies, the items were positively and negatively counterbalanced.

Community Integration: Several variables were associated with the factor community integration due to its assumed multidimensionality. First, we determined the likelihood of moving as if you are willing to leave the community. We assumed that the integration and the state of well-being of the individual in this community were less likely. Second, the satisfaction with the actual political events and the system might be an indicator for the degree of community integration. Third, the extent of discussion about certain topics was of certain importance to be able to understand and reflect about someone's opinion. Finally, the access to media determined additionally an extent of integration because we supposed that it showed the motivation to be informed about important national issues and to feel at home. For the first three chosen variables of political community integration we designed several items, such as 'Sometimes I feel like I belong to where I currently live' measured by means of a 5-point Likert-scale, ranging from disagree to agree. To exclude random tendencies, the items were positively and negatively counterbalanced. To measure the access to media, 5 items were designed, such as 'I have a television access'. In this case, response options were twofold, namely 'Yes' and 'No'.

Cognitive variables

Attitude: Attitude was measured by means of items such as 'Elections are an easy way to influence the political situation' and 'In the past my political engagement

offers successful results' were measured by means of a 5-point Likert-scale, ranging from disagree to agree. To avoid response tendencies, the items were positively and negatively counterbalanced.

Political Reflective Integration: Several 5-point Likert-scale items were employed to measure how often people talk about, recall, think about, and search for political issues. Items, such as 'I do not spend much time thinking about politics' and 'There are a lot of political topics I am concerned with in my free-time', were used to measure this variable. To avoid response tendencies, the items were positively and negatively counterbalanced.

Self-efficacy variables

Political self-efficacy: According to Hofstetter, political self-efficacy was measured by asking whether respondents think that they can influence a variety of political situations and tasks (generality) and how confident they are that they can influence each situation or task (strength). To cover the dimension 'magnitude' we also asked about how they estimate the degree of difficulty to perform a specific task. Participants responded to items, such as 'If I go to elections, I am convinced that I can influence the political situation this way' and 'I think I can influence the actual political situation by going to demonstrations/collecting signatures' by means of a 5-point Likert-scale, ranging from disagree to agree. To avoid response tendencies, the items were positively and negatively counterbalanced.

Media self-efficacy: Media self-efficacy can be understood as the confidence individuals have to engage in certain media to achieve a specific goal (Hofstetter et al., 2001). For this reason, separate measures of self-efficacy were developed for each medium in the study (television, newspapers, and Internet). As by political self-efficacy, items were chosen according to the three dimensions of self-efficacy

(magnitude, generality, strength). Items, such as ‘I am highly confident in searching for information by means of newspapers’ and ‘When I am searching for a specific topic on the Internet I know where I have to look for it’ were measured with a 5-point Likert-scale, ranging from disagree to agree. Again, to avoid response tendencies, the items were positively and negatively counterbalanced.

Behavioral variables

Intended political participation: The activities, which are measured in this study, included traditional political behavior, such as voting, working for a party, donating money, contacting political instances, and non-traditional political participation by means of engaging in political citizens’ groups, and participating in a demonstration (Van der Meer & Van Ingen, 2009). The measures focused on past experiences, the present situation, and future intended political behavior. The variable was measured with 3 items for each type of participation, such as ‘In the future I will donate money to certain political interest groups’. A 5-point Likert-scale, ranging from disagree to agree, was used to measure the intended political behavior.

Media news exposure: Measurement of media exposure focused on self-reported exposure to news on television, in newspapers, and in the Internet. For each medium, respondents were asked about their daily average use to gather news, the frequency of certain news sources (television, newspapers, Internet), the content of source (serious and non-serious), the duration of use (minutes per day), and about the source used for receiving background information (television, newspapers, Internet). With reference to the content, we distinguished between serious and non-serious sources to cope with the qualitative aspect of news gathering. Relating to television, examples were given as the nationwide public service systems. Tagesschau (ARD) in Germany and Journaal (NOS) in the Netherlands are serious sources. Regarding to

non-serious news, representative programs on television are RTL aktuell (RTL) in Germany and RTL nieuws (RTL4) in the Netherlands. Consistent with the research of Schoenbach et al. (2001), we expected a high popularity of both of the kinds of sources in the respective countries. Relating to newspapers and Internet, we chose the most widespread national newspapers (serious and non-serious) in Germany and in the Netherlands in printed and online (written mode and video mode) versions. In general, the number of items for television and newspapers were 5, e.g. 'How much time do you approximately spend on reading/watching newspapers/television news per day?'. Even if younger people read newspapers they prefer a national level rather than a regional one. Higher educated people also show this preference (Sociaal en Cultuur Planbureau, 2005). Based on the latter findings and since the sample examined in the study consists of students only, it seems logical to deal with daily newspapers on a national level. With regard to Internet, the numbers of items are 9 because of the different ways (article and video) of news presented in the Internet. Additionally, to detect the frequency of usage of news sources, we included an item where respondents have to choose a kind of medium. The frequency use of the different sources of news and the search for background information were measured by a 5-point Likert-scale, ranging from 0 hours to 6-8 hours per week.

Data-analysis and results

A pretest with 9 participants was conducted to control the reliability of the variables and to choose the most valid items as measures. Data analysis was performed using SPSS (Version 16). A principal reliability analysis was performed on the mayor questionnaire data, which was followed by a varimax rotation. Reliability for the *subjective norm* subscale was Cronbach's $\alpha = .79$ and for the *community integration* scale $\alpha = .78$. Both factors represented

News Consumption Patterns among Dutch and German college students: A comparative nationality study of gender differences

the environmental variables. Reliability for the *reflective integration* subscale, for the *attitude* subscale, and for the subscales of *political* and *media self-efficacy* were Cronbach's $\alpha = .97$, $\alpha = .92$, $\alpha = .75$, and $\alpha = .85$, respectively. Reliability for the *political participation* subscale to measure the intended political behavior of the respondents, was Cronbach's $\alpha = .85$. For each variable, the items that added most to the reliability coefficient, were selected and included in the final version of the survey. Of 120 collected questionnaires, 104 were included in the data analysis.

Evaluation of the model and testing the hypotheses

Data analysis was performed, using SPSS (Version 16) to test the application of the measure. Again, a reliability analysis of all the 8 subscales was first conducted. Reliability for the *subjective norm* subscale was Cronbach's $\alpha = .65$, and for the *political community integration* subscale, after excluding three items, Cronbach's $\alpha = .58$. Reliability for the *attitude* subscale and the *political reflective integration* subscale was Cronbach's $\alpha = .59$ and Cronbach's $\alpha = .86$, respectively. The scales of *media and political self-efficacy* have reliabilities of Cronbach's $\alpha = .74$, and Cronbach's $\alpha = .62$, respectively. The two variables that were measured highly detailed because of their importance for the goal of this study are media news exposure and intended political participation with 20 and 17 items, respectively. Reliability of the *media news exposure* subscale was Cronbach's $\alpha = .72$, and for the *intended political participation* subscale was Cronbach's $\alpha = .85$. The moderate reliability of the subscales *subjective norm*, *political community integration*, *attitude*, and *political self-efficacy* has to be taken into account when evaluating the model by the data.

A model generating approach using LISREL (Student Edition 8.80) as suggested by Jöreskog (1993) is the most appropriate method to test both direct paths and indirect relationships between variables. The structural model, which specifies the relationships among latent constructs, was tested via a path analysis. This analysis was conducted to test hypotheses 4-6.

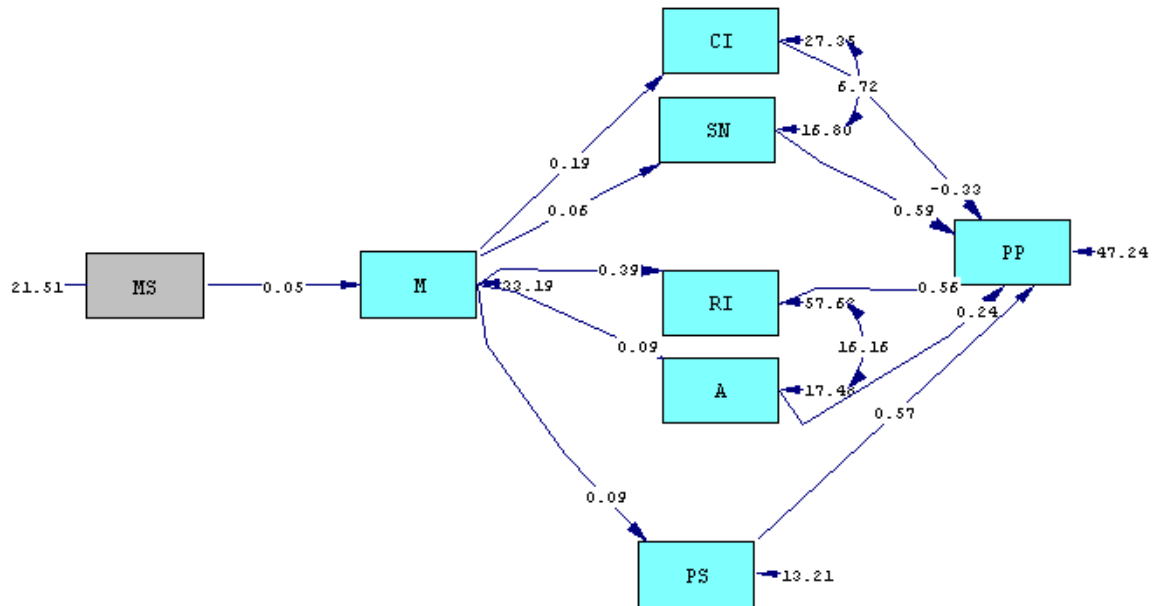
Convergent validity was established by examining the significance, via standardized β -values. Fit indexes, as the chi-square per degrees of freedom, the Comparative Fit Index (CFI), and the Root Mean Squared Error of Approximation (RMSEA), were used to assess the overall fit of the conceptual model. The significance of the relationships and the fit indexes the chi-square per degrees of freedom and the Root Mean Squared Error of Approximation (RMSEA) are expressed in Figure 2. The model fits the data not exceptionally well. The model fit with a value of $X^2 (15, N = 104) = 127.48, p = .00$, a Comparative Fit Index (CFI) = .62, and a Root Mean Squared Error of Approximation (RMSEA) = .271.

Hypothesis 4 has been separated into two sub hypotheses. Hypothesis 4.1 states that subjective norm has an impact on political participation and is in turn affected by media news exposure. The direct relationship between subjective norm (SN) and political behavior (PP) could be confirmed, $\beta = .59$. The direct relationship between media news exposure (M) and subjective norm (SN) could not be demonstrated, $\beta = .06$. Thus, the indirect relationship between media news exposure (M) and political participation (PP) was not mediated through subjective norm ($\beta = .04$). Therefore, hypothesis 4.1 could not be confirmed in general. Hypothesis 4.2 states that political community integration has an impact on political participation and is in turn affected by media news exposure. The direct relationship between community integration (CI) and political participation (PP) was obvious, $\beta = -.33$, and seemed to have a negative direction. The direct relationship between media news exposure (M) and community integration (CI) could also be demonstrated, $\beta = .19$. Thus, the indirect relationship between media news exposure (M) and political participation (PP) was negatively mediated through political community integration (CI) ($\beta = -.0627$). Therefore, hypothesis 4.2 could be confirmed.

Hypothesis 5 has also been separated into two sub hypotheses to test both, the relationship between attitude, political reflective integration and political participation as well as the relationship between media news exposure and the two cognitive factors. In hypothesis 5.1, it is assumed that political attitude (A) has an influence on intended political participation (PP) and is affected by media news exposure (M). Based on our data, those direct relationships could not be confirmed ($\beta = .24$ and $\beta = .09$, respectively). Thus, attitude (A) does not act as a mediator variable between media news exposure (M) and political participation (PP), $\beta = .02$. Hypothesis 5.2, which states that political reflective integration has an impact on the intended political participation and is affected by media news exposure, could be confirmed. The direct relationship between reflective integration (RI) and political participation (PP) could be demonstrated, $\beta = .56$, as well as the relationship between media news exposure (M) and reflective integration (RI), $\beta = .39$. Therefore, political reflective integration (RI) does act as a mediator variable between media news exposure (M) and political behavior (PP), $\beta = .22$. As can be inferred from the beta-value, this relationship is the strongest compared to the other indirect ones.

Hypothesis 6, which states that self-efficacy has a positive impact on intended behavior, has been separated into two sub hypotheses because of the assumed specification of all kinds of self-efficacy. Hypothesis 6.1 focused on both, the relationship between political participation and political self-efficacy as well as between media news exposure and political self-efficacy. The direct relationship between political self-efficacy (PS) and political behavior (PP) could be demonstrated, $\beta = .57$. The relationship between media news exposure (M) and political participation (PP) could not be identified, $\beta = .09$. Thus, media news exposure (M) and political participation (PP) are not mediated by means of political self-efficacy (PS), $\beta = .05$. In other words, hypothesis 6.1 could not be confirmed in general. Hypothesis 6.2 focused on the relationship between media self-efficacy (MS) and media

News Consumption Patterns among Dutch and German college students: A comparative nationality study of gender differences
news exposure (M). A direct relationship between these variables could not be confirmed with our data, $\beta = .05$.



Chi-Square=127.46, df=15, P-value=0.00000, RMSEA=0.271

Figure 2: The conceptual model with the standardized β -values and fit indexes, as the chi-square and the root mean squared error of approximation (RMSEA).

To attain a better model fit to the data, we add two paths and two errors correlations. The first path runs from subjective norm (SN) to attitude (A), $\beta = .63$. The second path runs from political reflective integration (RI) to political community integration (CI), $\beta = .74$. After modification, the errors of attitude (A) and community integration (CI) correlated. This was also true for the errors of media self-efficacy (MS) and media news exposure (M). This brought a decrease in the fit indexes, namely $X^2 (12, N = 104) = 62.06$, (CFI) = 0.84, and RMSEA = .202. Nevertheless, the hypothesized structural model did not fit the data well. Thus, we proceeded to test the hypotheses 4-6 based on Bivariate Pearson product-moment

News Consumption Patterns among Dutch and German college students: A comparative nationality study of gender differences

correlations and Linear Regression Analyses, which were computed to evaluate the relationships between the variables to preclude possible interaction between certain independent variables. The results are shown in Table 1. The subscales of *reflective integration*, *attitude*, *subjective norm*, *political self-efficacy*, *community integration*, *media news exposure*, and *media self-efficacy* all have an influence on the subscale of *political participation*. We chose a significance level of $\alpha = .05$. In both analyses, a difference can be found in the results regarding the relationship between *attitude* and *political participation* and between *community integration* and *political participation*. It seems that *attitude* has an impact on *political participation* since no distracting variables were present. According to the correlation coefficient, *community integration* had a positive rather than a negative impact on *political participation*. In particular, the relationship between the subscale of *media news exposure* and *political participation* is relevant to our research question. There is a positive significant relationship between these two variables ($R = 0.219$) with an $R^2 = .048$ explained variance of *political participation*, which is defined through *media news exposure*. However, in comparison to the other factors, *media news exposure* was not a strong predictor of *political participation*.

Table 1

The linear regression analyses of the relationships between the subscales of the variables.

Variable Y	Variable X	R	R ²	Sig.
PP	RI	0.584*	0.341	0.000
PP	A	0.560*	0.314	0.000
PP	SN	0.555*	0.308	0.000
PP	PS	0.343*	0.118	0.000
PP	CI	0.259*	0.067	0.008

News Consumption Patterns among Dutch and German college students: A comparative nationality study of gender differences

PP	M	0.219*	0.048	0.048
PP	MS	0.201*	0.040	0.040
CI	RI	0.531*	0.282	0.000
CI	A	0.434*	0.188	0.000
CI	PS	0.417*	0.173	0.000
CI	SN	0.344*	0.118	0.000
CI	MS	0.290*	0.084	0.003
CI	M	0.207*	0.043	0.035

Note. M = *media news exposure*, CI = *political community integration*, SN = *subjective norm*, RI = *political reflective integration*, A = *attitude*, PS = *political self-efficacy*, MS = *media self-efficacy*, PP = *political participation*

* $p < .05$.

Table 1(to be continued)

The linear regression analyses of the relationships between the subscales of the variables.

Variable Y	Variable X	R	R ²	Sig.
SN	RI	0.639*	0.409	0.000
SN	A	0.607*	0.368	0.000
SN	PS	0.218*	0.048	0.026
SN	M	0.139*	0.19	0.160
M	RI	0.279*	0.078	0.004

News Consumption Patterns among Dutch and German college students: A comparative nationality study of gender differences

M	PS	0.147	0.022	0.136
RI	A	0.682*	0.464	0.000
RI	PS	0.277*	0.077	0.004
RI	MS	0.253*	0.064	0.010
A	M	0.181	0.33	0.066
A	PS	0.380*	0.145	0.000
A	MS	0.242*	0.059	0.013
PS	MS	0.377*	0.142	0.000

Note. M = *media news exposure*, CI = *political community integration*, SN = *subjective norm*, RI = *political reflective integration*, A = *attitude*, PS = *political self-efficacy*, MS = *media self-efficacy*

* $p < .05$.

To specify whether the different news sources (hypotheses 1-3) have certain effects on the influence *media news exposure* has on *political participation*, Bivariate Pearson product-moment correlations were computed. Television and newspapers did not have a significant effect on the relationship between *media news exposure* and *political participation*, with $P = .55$ and $P = .54$, respectively. However, Internet as most frequently used source for news gathering has a positive significant effect ($P = .02$) on the relationship between the two variables. To check the significance of the difference between the three correlation coefficients, Fisher's r-to-z transformation was conducted. The results are shown in Table 2. It turned out that there is no significant difference between the correlation coefficients within the combined pairs. In other words, the choice of a certain source for news gathering has no significant effect on the relationship between *media news exposure* and *political participation*. Therefore, hypotheses 1-3 were not confirmed.

Table 2

Z- transformations of the Pearson product-moment correlations (Z) and p-values for each combination of the three media news sources used.

Sample A	Sample B	Z	Sig.
Television	Newspapers	-0.22	0.4129
Television	Internet	-0.82	0.2061
Newspapers	Internet	-0.3	0.3821

Hypothesis 7 consists of the assumption that the difference between the sexes is greater in Germany than in the Netherlands relating to the political behavior. A univariate analyse of variance was computed (ANOVA). There was no significant main effect of gender, $F(1, 100) = .033$; $P = .856$, and no significant main effect of nationality, $F(1, 100) = 2.648$; $P = .107$. Additionally, no interaction effect between gender and nationality was found, $F(1, 100) = .296$; $P = .587$. Therefore, hypothesis 7 was not confirmed. However, it is also of interest whether gender and nationality have an influence on the relationship between *media news exposure* and *political participation*. To analyse the correlation coefficients by gender and nationality of *media news exposure* and *political participation*, Pearson-product correlations were conducted. The results did not shown a significant correlation between media news exposure and political participation by both, the German ($P = .367$) and Dutch ($P = .394$) males. German females have a positive significant influence on the relationship between *media news exposure* and *political participation*, $r = .455$; $P = .004$. In contrast,

News Consumption Patterns among Dutch and German college students: A comparative nationality study of gender differences

correlation of Dutch females with these two variables are significant negative, $r = -.995$; $P = .005$. To check the significance of the difference in the two correlation coefficients of the sexes, Fisher's r -to- z transformations were calculated. Results are shown in Table 3. Both nationalities consist of a significant sex difference according to the relationship between *media news exposure* and *political participation*. Opposed to our hypothesis 7, the significance of the correlation coefficient of Dutch sex difference on the relationship between *media news exposure* and *political participation* is greater than in Germany.

Table 3

Z- transformations of the Pearson product-moment correlations (Z) and p-values for each gender in Germany and the Netherlands.

Sample A Sample B		Z	Sig.
German			
Female	Male	-1,61	0,053
Dutch			
Female	Male	3,1	0,001

Hypothesis 7.1 states that the difference between the sexes on political participation is defined through the *attitude* people have towards it. Additionally, it is assumed that the sex difference, regarding political participation, is greater in Germany than in the Netherlands because historically speaking, there is a greater gap between the political experiences German

News Consumption Patterns among Dutch and German college students: A comparative nationality study of gender differences

males and females have, respectively. The main hypothesis 7, which states that gender and nationality have an influence on political participation, cannot be confirmed. Therefore, it was only examined whether *attitude* had an effect on *political participation* in general and whether gender and nationality have an influence on *attitude*. As shown in Table 1, *attitude* correlated significantly with *political participation*, $r = .56$; $P = .00$. The explained variance in *political participation*, defined through *attitude*, is $R^2 = .314$. To gain insight in the effect of gender and nationality on attitude, a univariate analysis of variance (ANOVA) was created. There was no significant main effect of gender, with $F(1, 100) = .796$ and $P = .374$, on attitude, and no main effect of nationality, with $F(1, 100) = 1.263$ and $P = .264$, on attitude. The interaction effect of gender and nationality on attitude was not significant, either, with $F(1, 100) = .368$; $P = .546$. Therefore, hypothesis 7.1 was confirmed in the sense that there was a significant positive correlation between *attitude* and *political participation*. However, no connection could be established between gender, nationality and *attitude*, which were the virtual aim so that a possible explanation for the assumed sex differences in *political participation* in Germany and the Netherlands could be given. At last, as in hypothesis 7, it was analysed whether gender and nationality have an effect on the relationship between *attitude* and *political participation*. Bivariate Pearson-product correlation coefficients of the different sexes and nationalities in terms of the relationship between the two variables of interest were calculated. In the German sample both males ($r = .607$; $P = .000$) and females ($r = .475$; $P = .002$) showed a significant positive correlation between *attitude* and *political participation*. In contrast, in the Dutch sample (female: $r = .633$; $P = .367$; males: $r = .427$; $P = .166$) were no significant correlation coefficients observable. Fisher's r -to- z transformations were applied to check the significance of the correlations coefficient in Germany and the Netherlands. The results are shown in Table 4. The verification of the statistical significance of the assumed effect of gender and nationality on the relationship

News Consumption Patterns among Dutch and German college students: A comparative nationality study of gender differences
 between *attitude* and *political participation* offered no significant results. In other words, there was no significant sex difference in the relationship between *attitude* and *political participation* in Germany and the Netherlands.

Table 4

Z- transformations of the Pearson product-moment correlations (Z) and p-values for each gender in Germany and the Netherlands.

Sample A	Sample B	Z	Sig.
German			
Female	Male	-0,84	0,2005
Dutch			
Female	Male	0,28	0,3897

Hypothesis 7.2 states that the difference between the sexes on political participation is defined by the *subjective norm* people have towards this and that the sex difference of *political participation* should be greater in Germany than in the Netherlands. The latter has been assumed due to the sex difference in political experiences between Dutch males and females. As a result of abolishing hypothesis 7, it is impossible to confirm the second assumption of hypothesis 7.2 to check the relationship between *subjective norm* and *political participation*, both the Pearson-product correlation coefficient and the associated explained variance and p-value were conducted, as shown in Table 1. *Subjective norm* and *political participation* were significantly positive correlated, with $r = .555$ and $P = .000$. The explained variance of *political participation* defined by *subjective norm* is $R^2 = .308$. To gain insight in the effect of gender and nationality on *subjective norm*, a univariate analysis of variance (ANOVA) was applied. There was no significant main effect of gender, with $F(1, 100) =$

News Consumption Patterns among Dutch and German college students: A comparative nationality study of gender differences

.423 and $P = .517$, on *subjective norm*, and no main effect of nationality, with $F(1, 100) = 1,392$ and $P = .241$, on *subjective norm*. The interaction effect of gender and nationality on *subjective norm* was not significant, either, with $F(1, 100) = .339$; $P = .562$. Therefore, hypothesis 7.2 was confirmed in the sense that there was a significant positive correlation between *subjective norm* and *political participation*. However, a connection between gender, nationality and *subjective norm* could not be made. Again, Bivariate Pearson-product correlation coefficients of the different sexes and nationalities with reference to the relationship between the two variables of interest were calculated at last. In the German sample, both males ($r = .592$; $P = .000$) and females ($r = .487$; $P = .002$) showed a significant positive correlation between *subjective norm* and *political participation*. In contrast, in the Dutch sample (female: $r = .494$; $P = .506$; males: $r = .295$; $P = .351$), there were no significant correlation coefficients observable. Fisher's r-to-z transformations were conducted to check the significance of the correlations coefficient in Germany and the Netherlands. The results are shown in Table 5. The verification of the statistical significance of the assumed effect of gender and nationality on the relationship between *subjective norm* and *political participation* offered no significant results. In other words, there was no significant sex difference in the relationship between *subjective norm* and *political participation* in Germany and the Netherlands.

Table 5

Z- transformations of the Pearson product-moment correlations (Z) and p-values for each gender in Germany and the Netherlands.

Sample A	Sample B	Z	Sig.
German			
Female	Male	-0,67	0,2514

Dutch

Female	Male	0,23	0,409
--------	------	------	-------

Conclusion

The goal of this study was to show the effect of a certain media news pattern on intended political participation among German and Dutch students. Our basic structural equation model (Figure 1) specified that environmental factors (*subjective norm* and *political community integration*), cognitive factors (*attitude* and *political reflective integration*), and *political self-efficacy* mediate the effect of *media news exposure* on *political participation*. The *media news exposure* is, in turn, influenced by the self-efficacy someone has to use a certain medium in order to achieve a specific goal (*media self-efficacy*). The model clarifies the roles that environmental factors (*subjective norm* and *political community integration*), cognitive factors (*attitude* and *political reflective integration*), and *political self-efficacy* play in *political participation*. Hypotheses 4-6 refer to the structural relations in the model (see Figure 2). Hypothesis 4, which is separated in two sub hypotheses, states that the two environmental factors *subjective norm* and *community integration* have an impact on political participation and are affected by media news exposure. Hypothesis 4.1 focuses on the assumption that subjective norm has an impact on political participation and is in turn affected by media news exposure. The direct relationship between subjective norm (SN) and political behavior (PP) could be confirmed. The direct relationship between media news exposure (M) and subjective norm (SN) could not be demonstrated. Therefore, hypothesis 4.1 could not be confirmed in general. Hypothesis 4.2 states that political community integration has an impact on political participation and is in turn affected by media news exposure. The

News Consumption Patterns among Dutch and German college students: A comparative nationality study of gender differences

negative direct relationship between community integration (CI) and political participation (PP) became obvious. The direct relationship between media news exposure (M) and community integration could also be demonstrated. Thus, the indirect relationship between media news exposure (M) and political participation is negatively mediated through political community integration. Therefore, hypothesis 4.2 could be confirmed.

Hypothesis 5 has also been separated into two sub hypotheses to test both, the relationship between attitude, political reflective integration and political participation as well as the relationship between media news exposure and the two cognitive factors.

In hypothesis 5.1, it is assumed that political attitude (A) has an influence on intended political participation (PP) and is affected by media news exposure (M). This could not be confirmed. Thus, attitude (A) does not act as a mediator variable between media news exposure (M) and political participation (PP). Hypothesis 5.2, which states that the political reflective integration has an impact of the intended political participation and is affected by media news exposure, could be confirmed. Therefore, political reflective integration (RI) acted well as a mediator variable between media news exposure (M) and political behavior (PP), $\beta = .21$ and actually as the best one.

Hypothesis 6, which stated that self-efficacy had a positive impact on intended behavior, was separated in two sub hypotheses because of the assumed specification of all kinds of self-efficacy. Hypothesis 6.1 focused on the relationships between political participation and political self-efficacy, and between media news exposure and political self-efficacy. The direct relationship between political self-efficacy (PS) and political behavior (PP) could be demonstrated. However, the relationship between media news exposure (M) and political participation (PP) could not be identified. Thus, hypothesis 6.1 could not be confirmed, in general. Hypothesis 6.2 focused on the relationship between media self-efficacy (MS) and media news exposure (M). That there is a direct relationship between these

News Consumption Patterns among Dutch and German college students: A comparative nationality study of gender differences

variables could also not be confirmed with our data. Although, some assumed structural relationships between variables were present, the model fit not the data in general. Nevertheless, the variables *subjective norm*, *community integration*, *attitude*, *reflective integration*, *political self-efficacy*, *media self-efficacy*, and *media news exposure* all have a positive significant correlation with *political participation* since analyzed the relationships apart. Therefore, the variables have all a direct positive impact on *political participation*, only the interplay between these variables stays unclear.

To test the first three hypotheses it has to be specified whether the favorite source for news gathering has an influence on the relationship between *media news exposure* and *political behavior*. Hypothesis 1 states that television as news source has a negative influence on the *intended political behavior*. In our study, we found no effect of television on the relationship between *media news exposure* and *political participation* at all. Hypothesis 2, which assumed a positive relationship between newspapers use and *political participation*, could not be confirmed in our research, either. The only effect that has been found was the positive effect of Internet (hypothesis 3) as favorite source for news gathering on the relationship between the two variables of interest. Nevertheless, the verification of the significance of this effect relating to the other two kinds of sources, did not offer any satisfactory results regarding the goal of our study. Therefore, all first three hypotheses have to be dismissed. Although an effect of *media news exposure* on *intended political behavior* was observable, we were not able to specify whether a certain news consumption pattern is relevant to the *intended political behavior* of Dutch and German students. One reason for choosing a sample of students was the assumption that they are the first “Internet generation”. This is why they can be helpful to explore the question of emergent news consumption patterns among future users. The highly frequent use of the Internet as source for news gathering was noticeable among the Dutch and German students in this study. Approximately

60 per cent of the respondents reported the Internet as their favorite news source. Television was with 28.8 per cent the second self-reported most used source for news gathering.

Hypothesis 7 consists of the assumption that the sex difference of political behavior is greater in Germany than in the Netherlands, because historically speaking, there is a greater gap between the political experiences German males and females have, respectively. The increase in political participation is assumed to be caused by the attitude and subjective norm people have towards it (hypothesis 7.1 and hypothesis 7.2). Combining the main hypothesis with its sub-hypotheses, the emerging main assumption is that the more experience one has with a certain behavior, the more positive the attitude and subjective norm towards it. However, we found no significant sex difference relating to political participation between Dutch and German students. Therefore, the main hypothesis was not confirmed. Additionally, an effect of gender and nationality on attitude and subjective norm could also be negated in our study. Therefore, to test hypothesis 7.1 and hypothesis 7.2, we only inspected the effect of the attitude and subjective norm people have towards political behavior on the actual intended political behavior people perform in general. Our results show that the attitude and subjective norm of political behavior were reliable predictors of the intended political behavior. In this sense, the two sub-hypotheses were separately confirmed, however, not as possible explanations of the assumed main hypothesis. Although the main hypothesis that gender and nationality have a direct effect on political participation have to be dismissed, it is possible that there are indirect effects. First, we investigated whether sex differences were noticeable in the relationship between media news exposure and political participation between the Dutch and the German sample. Within both nationalities a significant effect of gender on the relationship between media news exposure and intended political behavior was present. The Dutch students showed a more significant gender effect on the relationship of the two variables of interest than the German students did. The verification of the significant

News Consumption Patterns among Dutch and German college students: A comparative nationality study of gender differences
 difference among the two nationalities refers to the relationships between attitude and political behavior and subjective norm and political behavior, do not show any satisfactory results. Therefore, the only obvious effect regarding gender differences was on the relationship between media news exposure and intended political participation.

Discussion

The goal of this study was to show the effect of a certain media news pattern on intended political participation among German and Dutch students. The assumed model did not fit the data well (Figure 2). A possible explanation might be the moderate reliability of the subscales for *subjective norm*, *political community integration*, *attitude*, and *political self-efficacy* because this could make a contribution to the results.

However, several relationships between variables could be confirmed. For instances, *community integration* negatively mediated the relationship between *media news exposure* and *political participation* (hypothesis 4.2.). Surprisingly, the indirect relationship between *media news exposure* and *political participation* that is mediated through *community integration* is a negative one. Furthermore, *reflective integration* also acts as a mediator variable between *media news exposure* and *political participation*. This indirect relationship was the strongest one between *media news exposure* and *political participation* compared to the other indirect relationships that were examined. Additionally, the variables *subjective norm*, *community integration*, *attitude*, *reflective integration*, *political self-efficacy*, *media self-efficacy*, and *media news exposure* all have a positive significant correlation with *political participation* when analyzing each of the relationships apart. Therefore, all of those variables have a direct positive impact on *political participation*. Only the interplay between these variables stays unclear. The fit indexes changed for the better after assuming an additional relationship between *subjective norm* and *attitude* as well as between *reflective*

News Consumption Patterns among Dutch and German college students: A comparative nationality study of gender differences

integration and *community integration* on the one hand, and error correlations between *attitude* and *community integration* as well as between *media self-efficacy* and *media news exposure* on the other hand. Taking all this into consideration, the model still needs to be more modified to attain a model fit by the data. According to Hoffman and Thomson (2009), several media effect studies followed the line of research that media interact with or come between the effects of one variable on another. Therefore, one alternative might be to let *media news exposure* act as a mediator variable between *political participation* and *subjective norm*, *community integration*, *attitude*, *reflective integration*, *political self-efficacy*. Another alternative might be to use *political self-efficacy* as a mediator variable between the two variables of interest since Hoffman and Thomson (2009) found out that political efficacy would positively mediate the relationship between watching TV and civic participation. Consequentially, it is of importance, before blaming media for a decline in democracy, the processes that intervene in the relationship between the communicators and their audience has to be specified. Future research still has to detect the actual associations between these variables to predict intended political behavior.

In our study, we found that the Internet is the most frequently used source for news gathering among German and Dutch students. More than the half of the respondents preferred the Internet over television or newspapers as news sources. That is not surprising since, as already mentioned above, students were assumed to use Internet often and it is clear that a sample containing students only is not representative of a whole Western population. However, the Internet was assumed to be the third most frequently used news source in the Netherlands. In Germany, the Internet is not the major source but it is especially popular among young adults. Interpreting the results, it must be emphasized that we generalize the findings although we have a sample that yields a relatively narrow range in terms of age and ability levels. We are aware of the fact that, given the limited number of participants ($N =$

104) and the great number of variables in this study, these results should be interpreted with caution and can be considered speculatively only. In particular, the low number of Dutch participants (male: 12; female: 4) have to be taken into consideration when interpreting the results.

In our study, *media news exposure* was positively related to *political participation*, in general. According to literature (Robinson & Levy, 1986; Putnam, 1995; Perse, 2001), it has been assumed that television has a negative effect on political participation. Neither this effect nor a general effect could be confirmed in our study. Therefore, it remains uncertain whether the effect of television is a product of people's expectations or whether the negative effects of television are immoderate. For instances, Besley (2006) states that the total television exposure is negatively correlated with participation but that television news and other public affairs are actually positively related to political behavior. Regarding to newspapers, several meta-analyses (Hollander, 2005; Miron & Bryant, in press) showed a positive relation between the use of newspapers and political participation. However, we were not able to replicate this finding in our study as we did not find a significant effect of newspapers on political participation at all. As hypothesized in our study, we found that the Internet had a positive influence on political behavior. However, this relationship did not remain significant after verifying the significance in relation to the other news sources. In other words, the assumed significant positive influence of the Internet on political participation could not be confirmed by means of data analysis. Nevertheless, Internet seems to be the major source for news gathering and may, therefore, functions as a new central venue for political information for and communication among students. As above mentioned, Tolbert and McNeal (2003) state that previous findings of the effect of the Internet are mixed. Above all, while it appears that the Internet increases participation, they query whether the positive impact of the Internet lasts in the long run. Referring to Putnam (2000), Tolbert and

McNeal restate that the findings that the Internet may foster ‘bonding’ among individuals with similar perspectives and interests, but inhibits ‘bridging’ people with different values and norms. This could be an explanation why the positive effect vanishes over time. The rising importance of the Internet in politics may be a response to citizens’ needs for information caused by dissatisfaction with traditional media (Tolbert & McNeal, 2003). In this respect, the Internet and especially its effects on human behavior should be a topic in future research. Since Everitt (2005) found that media play an important role in the perpetuation of traditional orders and patriarchal structures which tend to marginalize women, it seems important to analyse the way gender roles are presented in this medium to make people aware of the inequalities between men and women. In our study, we assumed to find a gender difference in political participation with men surpassing women. Additionally, we argued that a gender difference has to be greater in Germany than in the Netherlands because, historically speaking, there is a greater gap between the political experiences of German males and females, respectively. As already mentioned above, according to Sommer Hukkelberg and Dykstra (2009), experiences related to a certain behavior are linked to favorable attitudes and subjective norms in terms of this behavior. Unfortunately, these assumptions could not be confirmed in our study. The missing effect of gender difference regarding political participation in our study could attributed to the narrow age cohort (median: 21 to 23 years) of the sample. According to Glasford (2008), there is strong evidence for an effect of age on voting behavior, with young adults voting less frequently than members of other age cohorts. Additionally, according to Sotirovic and McLeod (2001), younger people in general, regardless of the gender, tend to be more reflective. Since we found out that *political reflective integration* has an impact on the relationship between *media news exposure* and *political participation*, it could be anticipated that it has also an impact on the failure to find a gender difference in political participation among our young sample.

Another explanation might be the relatively narrow range of ability levels. For instances, Sotirovic and McLeod (2001) state that people learn how to think abstractly dependent on their level of education and, by doing so, they become prepared to deal with the concepts of the political world. Thus, since the level of education in our sample is generally high, regardless of gender, it might be that all students can think abstractly equally well and therefore, do not differ in the political perception and behavior. Additionally, Tolbert and McNeal (2003) support the assumption that socioeconomic factors, particularly income and education, influence decisions whether to vote or not to. Thus, since there is a comparable level of education among our participants, the individual decisions should not significantly differ and therefore the absence of a significant gender difference regarding the intention to participate could be partly explained.

Third, the utilized instrument, an online-survey, gave rise to a self-selected and non-random response rate and therefore, people who participated in this study might have the tendency to participate more often in general. The respondents were indeed recruited via e-mails and a German Internet page for students to enable a snowball-effect, but the demographics of the respondents showed that approximately 40 per cent of the German students live in the Netherlands. Therefore, the missing gender difference in both, Germany and the Netherlands might be a result of the unrepresentative sample.

Finally, the missing gender difference in our study might be explained by means of the wide range of political participation, including traditional and non-traditional forms, offered in the survey. According to Briggs (2008), there is no gender gap in the amount of political participation but rather in the kind of political participation, with young men more likely taking part in direct action and demonstrations, whereas women were more likely to have donated money to a cause or signed a petition (Briggs, 2008). One explanation for the activism gap between men and women, according to the UK Electoral Commission Report

News Consumption Patterns among Dutch and German college students: A comparative nationality study of gender differences (2004), might be the difference in the access to social and economic resources among men and women with those in paid employment are more likely to be political active. Therefore, future research should specify whether a gender gap or an activism gap among men and women is present, in relating to political behavior

Apart from these restrictions, we found, as hypothesized, a significantly moderate impact of *subjective norm* and *attitude* on *political participation* and a small, but significant, effect of *media news exposure* on *political participation*, in general. This is in accordance with the theory of planned behavior, which has been argued that the more positive one's attitude and subjective norm toward politics are the stronger is the intention to be engaged in politics (Morton & Koufteros, 2008). However, a direct impact of gender on *subjective norm* and *attitude* could also not be detected. An explanation might be the cultural values and norms of the chosen countries for the comparison. Germany and the Netherlands are both Western countries and since 1951 narrow negotiating partners in the European Union. Gerhards et al. (2009) state the idea of gender equality relating to political decision-making is strongly supported in the EU. Levels of support indeed vary by nation, but with support being strongest among citizens of most 'old' member states, such as Germany and the Netherlands (Gerhards et al., 2009). Another explanation might be that gender has not an impact on the subjective norm or the attitude of someone but rather on the political self-efficacy, which in turn has an impact on political participation. According to the UK Electoral Commission Research Report 2004, women have a weaker sense of political efficacy than men and therefore, they have lower confidence that they can influence the political process through their own actions. Therefore, the variable *political self-efficacy*, which is yet included in the study, should be emphasized and investigated how far it is responsible for the intended political behavior.

Nevertheless, gender acted as a moderator between *media news exposure* and *political participation* in our sample. Surprisingly, the impact of gender on this relationship was greater in the Netherlands than in Germany. Future research has to investigate to what extent gender has an impact on the relationship between media news exposure and political behavior and which inferences can be drawn from this. Additionally, the question whether the unrepresentative sample with only 16 Dutch respondents caused the greater impact of gender in the Netherlands than in Germany, or whether this result could be replicated in other studies.

References

- ARD/ZDF Onlinestudie 2009. Retrieved Juni, 19, 2009, from <http://www.ard-zdf-onlinestudie.de/index.php?id=189>
- Bandura, A.J. (1977). *Social learning theory*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Halls.
- Becker, L. B., McCombs, M. E., & McLeod, J. M. (1975). The development of political cognitions. In S. H. Chaffee (Ed.), *Political communication: Issues and strategies for research*. Beverly Hills: Sage.
- Besley, J. C. (2006): The role of entertainment television and its interactions with individual values in explaining political participation. *The Harvard International Journal of Press/Politics*, 11; 41.
- Briggs, J. E. (2008). Young women and politics: an oxymoron? *Journal of Youth Studies*, 11:6, 579-592.
- Brug, J., Schaalma, H., Ko, G., Meertens, R. M., & Van der Molen, H. T. (2005), *Gezondheidsvoorlichting en gedragsverandering: een planmatige aanpak*. Assen: Koninklijke Van Gorcum BV; 4^e ongewijzigde druk
- Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek [CBS] (2009). Retrieved Juni 16, 2009, from <http://www.cbs.nl/en-GB/menu/themas/overheid-politiek/cijfers/default.htm>.
- Conway, M. M. (1985). *Political participation in the United States*. Washington, DC :CQ Press.
- Diddi, A., & LaRose, R: (2006). Getting hooked on news: Uses and gratifications and the formation of news habits among college students in an internet environment. *Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media*, 50:2, 193-210.
- Electoral Commission Research Report (2004). Gender and political participation in the UK.

- News Consumption Patterns among Dutch and German college students: A comparative nationality study of gender differences
- Everitt, J. (2005). Book reviews. Gender, media, and politics: A critical review essay. *Political Communication* 22, 387-416.
- Gerhards, J., Schäfer, M. S., & Kämpfer, S. (2009). Gender equality in the European Union: The EU script and its support by European citizens. *Sociology* 43, 515.
- Giles, D. (2003). *Media Psychology*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Glasford, D. E. (2008). Predicting voting behavior of young adults: The importance of information, motivation, and behavioral skills. *Journal of Applied Social Psychology* 38:11, 2648-2672.
- Hayes, A. F., Preiss, R. W., Gayle, M. B., Burrell, N., Allen, M., & Bryant, J. (2006). *Mass media effects: Advances through meta-analysis*. Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Henke, L. L. (1985). Perceptions and use of news media by college students. *Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media*, 29, 431-436.
- Hoffmann, L. H., & Thomson, T. L. (2009). The effect of television viewing on adolescents' civic participation: Political efficacy as a mediating mechanism. *Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media*, 53:1, 3-21
- Hofstetter, C. R., Zuniga, S., & Dozier, M. D. (2001). Media self-efficacy: Validation of a new concept. *Mass Communication & Society*, 4:1, 61-76
- McLeod, J. M., Scheufele, D. A., & Moy, P. (1999). Community, communication, and participation: The role of mass media and interpersonal discussion in local political participation. *Political Communication*, 16, 315-336
- Medienpädagogischer Forschungsverbund Südwest [MPFS] (2008). JIM Studie. Retrieved Juni 16, 2009, from <http://www.mpfs.de/index.php?id=120>
- Metzger, M. J., Flanagin, A. J., & Zwarun, L. (2003). College student web use, perception of information credibility, and verification behavior. *Computers & Education* 41, 271-290.

- News Consumption Patterns among Dutch and German college students: A comparative nationality study of gender differences
- Miron, D., & Bryant, J. (in press). *Mass media and voter turnout*. In R.A. Carveth & J. Bryant (Eds.), Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage
- Morton, N. A., & Koufteros, X. (2008). Intention to commit online music piracy and its antecedents: An empirical investigation. *Structural Equation Modeling* 15, 491-512.
- Oehmichen, E., & Schröter, C. (2008). Medienübergreifende Nutzungsmuster: Struktur- und funktionsverschiebungen. Eine Analyse auf Basis der ARD/ZDF-Onlinestudien 2008 und 2003. *Media Perspektiven* 8.
- Perse, E. M. (2001). *Media effects and society*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Putnam, R. D. (1995). Tuning in, tuning out: The strange disappearance of social capital in America. *PS: Political Science & Politics*, 28, 664-683.
- Putnam, R. D. (2000). *Bowling alone: The collapse and revival of American community*. New York: Touchstone
- Robinson, J. P., & Levy, M. R. (1986). *The main source: Learning from television news*. Beverly Hills, CA : Sage.
- Schoenbach, K., De Ridder, J., & Lauf, E. (2001). Politicians on TV news: Getting attention in Dutch and German election campaigns. *European Journal of Political Research* 39, 519-531.
- Shah, D. V., Cho, J., Eveland, W. P., Jr., & Kwak, N. (2005). Information and expression in a digital age: Modeling internet effects on civic participation. *Communication Research*, 32, 531-565.
- Sociaal en Cultureel Planbureau [SCP] (2005). Retrieved Juni, 19, 2009, from <http://www.scp.nl>.
- Sommer Hukkelberg, S., & Dyksra, J. L. (2009). Using the prototype/willingness model to predict smoking behaviour among Norwegian adolescents. *Addictive Behaviors* 34, 270-276.

- News Consumption Patterns among Dutch and German college students: A comparative nationality study of gender differences
- Sotirovic, M. & McLeod, J. M. (2001). Values, communication behavior, and political participation. *Political Communication*, 18, 273-300.
- Tolbert, C. J. & McNeal, R. S. (2003). Unraveling the effects of the internet on political participation? *Political Research Quarterly*, 56:2, 175-185.
- Van der Meer, T. W. G. & Van Ingen, E. J. (2009). Schools of democracy? Disentangling the relationship between civic participation and political action in 17 European countries. *European Journal of Political Research*, 48, 281-308.
- Vecchione, M., & Caprara, G. V. (2009). Personality determinants of political participation: the contribution of traits and self-efficacy beliefs. *Personality and Individual Differences* 46, 487-492.
- Wanta, W. and Ghanem, S.I. (2000) 'Effects of agenda-setting', in Bryant, J. and Carveth, R. (ed.), 'Meta-Analyses of Media Effects', Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Mahwah, NJ, in press.

Appendix A

The Online Survey









































1.	Indicate your gender
	<input type="checkbox"/> man <input type="checkbox"/> woman
2.	Indicate your age
	<input type="checkbox"/> 18-20 <input type="checkbox"/> 21-23 <input type="checkbox"/> 24-26 <input type="checkbox"/> older
3.	How much money do you have available for personal matters per month ?
	<input type="checkbox"/> 0-200 Euro <input type="checkbox"/> 200-400 Euro <input type="checkbox"/> 400-600 Euro <input type="checkbox"/> 600 Euro and more
4.	Indicate your highest educational level
	<input type="checkbox"/> VBO/Hauptschulabschluss <input type="checkbox"/> MAVO/Realschulabschluss <input type="checkbox"/> HAVO/Fachabitur <input type="checkbox"/> VWO/Abitur
5.	Type of study
	<input type="checkbox"/> Social Science <input type="checkbox"/> Humanities <input type="checkbox"/> Natural Science <input type="checkbox"/> Technical Science

	<input type="checkbox"/> Political Science <input type="checkbox"/> Others
--	---

6.	Where do you study?
	<input type="checkbox"/> Netherlands <input type="checkbox"/> Germany <input type="checkbox"/> Others
7.	How long have you been studying at your current institution?
	<input type="checkbox"/> 0-1 year <input type="checkbox"/> 1-2 years <input type="checkbox"/> 2-3 years <input type="checkbox"/> 3 years and longer
8.	What is your nationality?
	<input type="checkbox"/> Dutch <input type="checkbox"/> German <input type="checkbox"/> Others
9.	Where do you currently live?
	<input type="checkbox"/> Netherlands <input type="checkbox"/> Germany <input type="checkbox"/> Others
10.	How long have you been living at your current residence?
	<input type="checkbox"/> 0-1 year <input type="checkbox"/> 1-2 years <input type="checkbox"/> 2-3 years <input type="checkbox"/> 3 years and longer

11.	I have a television access
	<input type="checkbox"/> yes <input type="checkbox"/> no
12.	I have access to private television channels at home, for example RTL
	<input type="checkbox"/> yes <input type="checkbox"/> no
13.	I have access to the Internet at home
	<input type="checkbox"/> yes <input type="checkbox"/> no
14.	I have got a newspaper subscription
	<input type="checkbox"/> yes <input type="checkbox"/> no
15.	I have access to cost-free newspapers
	<input type="checkbox"/> yes <input type="checkbox"/> no
16.	How much time do you approximately spend on watching television news per day?
	<input type="checkbox"/> 0-10 minutes <input type="checkbox"/> 10-20 minutes <input type="checkbox"/> 20-30 minutes <input type="checkbox"/> 30 minutes and longer

17.	How much time do you approximately spend on reading newspapers per day?
	<input type="checkbox"/> 0-10 minutes <input type="checkbox"/> 10-20 minutes <input type="checkbox"/> 20-30 minutes <input type="checkbox"/> 30 minutes and longer
18.	How much time do you approximately spend on reading/watching online news per day?
	<input type="checkbox"/> 0-10 minutes <input type="checkbox"/> 10-20 minutes <input type="checkbox"/> 20-30 minutes <input type="checkbox"/> 30 minutes and longer
19.	What kind of source would you rate as most used by you for news gathering?
	<input type="checkbox"/> Television <input type="checkbox"/> Newspapers <input type="checkbox"/> Internet



















































20.	How much time do you spend on using these sources for newsgathering per week?					
		0 hours	0-2 hours	2-4 hours	4-6 hours	6-8 hours
	public television newsprogrammes like Tagesschau/NOS Journaal					
	private television newsprogrammes like RTL aktuell/RTL nieuws					
	newspapers like Süddeutsche (FAZ, die Welt)/ de Volkskrant etc.					
	newspapers like BILD/ de Telegraaf etc.					
	online news like sueddeutsche.de (faz.net etc.)/volkskrant.nl etc. by means of videos					
	online news like sueddeutsche.de (faz.net etc.)/volkskrant.nl etc.by means of articles					
	online news like BILD.de/telegraaf.nl or e-mail services (msn.nl, gmx.de etc.)by means of articles					
	online news like BILD.de/telegraaf.nl or e-mail services (msn.nl, gmx.de					














































	etc.)by means of videos	
--	-------------------------	--




































21.	On a weekly basis, how much time do you spend on using these sources for searching background information about a specific political issue you are interested in?					
		0 hours	0-2 hours	2-4 hours	4-6 hours	6-8 hours
	public television newsprogrammes like Tagesschau/NOS Journaal	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
	private television newsprogrammes like RTL aktuell/RTL nieuws	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
	newspapers like Süddeutsche (FAZ, die Welt)/ de Volkskrant etc.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
	newspapers like BILD/ de Telegraaf etc.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
	online news like sueddeutsche.de (faz.net etc.)/volkskrant.nl etc. by means of videos	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
	online news like sueddeutsche.de (faz.net etc.)/volkskrant.nl etc. by means of articles	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
	online news like BILD.de/telegraaf.nl or e-mail services (msn.nl, gmx.de etc.)by means of videos	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
	online news like					

	BILD.de/telegraaf.nl or e-mail services (msn.nl, gmx.de etc.)by means of articles	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
22.						
		disagree				agree
	In my country there are a lot of people who vote	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	A lot of my family members/friends live nearby and visit me quite often	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Being politically active (e.g. voting) is the only possibility of influencing the political structures in a country	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	There are a lot of political topics I am concerned with in my free-time	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Politics is an often discussed topic in the conversations I have with my family/friends	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	I have trust in the national political system	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	My family/friends are politically interested	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Democracy is the best type of governance	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	In the past I was engaged in a lot of political actions	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

	A big part of my family is politically active	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
	Sometimes I feel like I belong to where I currently live	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
	I think as a member of a society it is your responsibility to engage in political action	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
	My experiences with political actions are mostly negative	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
	I am unsatisfied with the national political system in the country I currently live in	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
	I find the political domain really interesting	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
	Despite the lack of political interest of my family/friends I am engaged in the political process	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
	In the past my political engagement offers successful results	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
	I do not spend much time thinking about politics	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
	I am interested in the political opinion of other people	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
	My family/friends can often give me additional information about an important political issue which I am confronted with	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>

The country I currently live in is not the place where I actually want to stay for the next years					
I do not discuss political issues with my family/friends a lot					
Despite the high political interest of my family/friends I am not motivated to be engaged in the political process					
I often discuss important political issues with others					
I do not like to argue with people whose political opinion differs from mine					
Me and my family/friends are not really engaged in the political process					
I do not see my family/friends often because they are living far away					
I spend much time thinking about politics					
The political interest of my family/friends has motivated me to be engaged in the political process as well					
My family/friends can not give me additional information about political topics often					
I seek for further information					

whenever I am confronted with an interesting political event					
I am not motivated to search for further information whenever I am confronted with a political event					
If I go to elections, I am convinced that I can influence the political situation this way					
I am uncertain if I can influence the political situation by going to demonstrations/collecting signatures					
Relative to the success of going to demonstrations/collecting signatures, the related efforts are too huge for me					
Elections are an easy way to influence the political situation					
I think I can influence the actual political situation by going to demonstrations/collecting signatures					
I feel uncertain about finding information by means of television news					
I know how to find information about a specific topic by means of television news					
I am highly confident in					

searching for information by means of newspapers					
By going to elections I cannot influence the political situation					
When I am searching for a specific topic on the Internet I know where I have to look for it					
I do not know how to find information about a specific topic by using newspapers					
I do not know where I can find information about a specific topic by means of newspapers					
I feel uncertain about finding information by means of online news					
When I am searching for a specific topic on television news I know where to look for it					
I know how to find information about a specific topic by means of online news	