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Relationship between information about the EU and participation in elections.

Results of a split-ballot survey

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ABSTRACT

Since European elections are held turnout has been considerably lower than in national elections of participating European countries. Throughout the years The European Union has grown more and more powerful and today has more influence on national legislation than it has ever had before. The increase of influence and decrease of turnout leads me to believe that the influence of the European Union is underestimated by most people. I argue that because people are not informed enough about the influence of the European Union they are less inclined to vote.

The main research question of this thesis is whether people that are informed about the European Union have a higher propensity to vote then people that are not informed. Since the information concerns the influence of the European Union I have decided to use both negatively and positively formulated information. By doing so we will be able to see if negative information influences people differently than positive information.

A split-ballot survey was created to answer the research question. I created this survey in cooperation with two other researchers. By doing so we were able to develop a substantial survey in which I was able to introduce the stimuli. A split-ballot survey is essentially a normal survey but it allows the researcher to present different version of a similar survey. In this case the surveys differed in the information that was supplied in the survey. Three different versions were created. Two of them provided the respondents with information. One group received positive information and the other negative information. The information consisted of six question in which information was supplied. The information was in essence the same but formulated in either a negative or positive way. By doing so I was able to create a certain state of mind of the respondents. After the information was given I asked them how likely it would be that they will vote in the upcoming European elections of 2009. The control group was given no information whatsoever but were asked the same questions as the two stimuli groups.

Literature suggested that characteristics like education, political interest and age make a difference in voting propensity. Therefore I differentiated between different groups of these characteristics. The survey data has been analyzed using several independent t-tests. The results of this analysis has indicated that especially when differentiating between the characteristics above information does influence people's propensity to vote. Namely for lower educated people significant responses were found. Also when looking at different age groups several significant responses to the different stimuli were found.

PREFACE

This research has allowed me to dive into the world of research in a for me unprecedented way. For the first time I participated in a project of this magnitude and I have never learned so much in so little time. One of the lessons I have learned is that everything you do will take at least twice as long as you first planned. Creating the survey for instance is a very time-consuming process. And when the results came in, I thought to myself '*let's just unleash the statistics and test my hypotheses'* , never before was I so wrong. Transforming the raw data into useful information proofed to be even more time-consuming that the creation of the survey. Nevertheless it was very exciting to 'work with my own creation' and see what the results of the survey would be.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all that have helped me with this research. Dr. Martin Rosema for his supervision of the project and help in creating the surveys. Rory Costello for being the co-reader of this thesis. Judith Benda and Stefan Michel for their help in creating the surveys and helping to distribute them. Marloes Nannings for distributing the pre-election Dutch survey. The people of Health City Borne for their effort in the distribution of the pre-election Dutch survey. I would also like to thank all the people that participated in the survey.

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1. INTRODUCTION

In the year 2009 European elections were held for the sixth time in history. Since 1979 elections have been held every five years. The Netherlands and Germany both have been members of the EU since the very beginning in the 1950's. In both countries turnout for the European elections has always been significantly lower than in their respective national elections. It would be nice to be able to say exactly why this is the case, but the complexity of voting behavior makes this question an extremely difficult one to answer. Because of the complexity of this question it makes sense to first explore several possible explanatory factors. Lack of information has been indicated to be a reason to withhold from voting by 58% of the people questioned in the Eurobarometer survey of 2009. Therefore it makes sense to explore this aspect. This research focuses on how being informed about the EU influences peoples decision to vote.

As I have said voting behavior is quite complex and people take lots of aspects into account when making the decision to vote. It is even possible that people are themselves not aware of these factors, making the question even more complex. But in trying to answer the question we have to start somewhere. When looking for examples of reasons not to vote in the Eurobarometer survey of 2009, the number one reason for not voting seems to be the fact that people don't think it will make a difference. But when looking at this reason and the other reasons in the top three, they all seem to be linked to information. It is not hard to imagine that underestimating the impact of your vote, not knowing enough about the parliaments function and not being interested in the European Elections might be linked with a lack of information about the role of the EU and of the European parliament. Therefore the influence of information is a logical place to start in unraveling the matter of the extraordinary low European turnout.

The focus of this research is on the influence of information. Focusing on only one aspect prohibits me from taking all other explaining factors into account. Yet this focus also enables me to distillate the effect of information on the decision to vote. By doing so we will end up with one piece of the puzzle of the bigger question that this research is part of. Other factors could be researched In a similar way, eventually leaving us with possibly a clearer picture of why the European turnout is this dramatically low in many countries. I will focus my attention on Germany and the Netherlands. Germany and the Netherlands are suitable countries to perform this research in, since they both have significantly lower turnout for the European elections than for their national elections. Another reason is that they both have been members since the beginning of what eventually became the EU. Therefore they both have a historic connection with the EU and a both share a history of declining European election turnout.

The reason why this topic is an interesting subject to research is that the declining of the turnout in European elections seems rather surprising at first. The influence, size and impact of the EU has grown substantially, and enters our daily lives to a greater extent than ever. Yet people do not seem to care more about it and refrain from casting their votes in an almost epic way. This is a very paradoxical phenomenon. Being the rational species that we are, making all sorts of calculations, we should be sure to see the necessity to vote for such an influential democratic institution, shouldn't we? The existence of such a massive disinterest in an institution - that for instance brought us emission based taxes on our cars, Polish workers working for a nickel and a dime in construction sites and lifted the German Reinheitsgebot for beer (surely Germans must care about this) – is astonishing. Therefore assuming the role of explorer of this paradoxical behavior is on itself interesting.

By conducting this research I hope to learn if an informed person is more likely to vote than an uninformed person. Even if a person has just a glimpse of information about the direct influence of the EU on his daily live and individual interests, would that make him or her more likely to vote? And do different kinds of people react different to different kinds of information? I will use data from a survey that I created with three other students. I have created three versions of this survey to be able to provide different information to the respondents. Two third of the respondents were manipulated in this way to find out if information about the EU will make people more likely to vote and if it matters what kind of information people receive and how different groups of people react to different kinds of information.

I will start in the second chapter with some theories that exist concerning the topic of this research. Then I will give an overview of the hypotheses I am going to test. In the third chapter I will discuss the design of the research in detail. I will explain how the survey was created and how the data was used to test the hypotheses. The analysis of the data will be discussed in the fourth chapter. This chapter provides an overview of all the results of the tested hypotheses. I will conclude this thesis with some concluding remarks in the fifth chapter.

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

In this chapter I will lay out some of the existing theories on voting behavior. The first paragraph will mainly serve the purpose of making clear what is already known about this research field. In the second paragraph I will go more into the specific topic of this research, the influence of information.

2.1 The context of this research.

Explanations for turnout rates can be found in several directions. This research focuses mainly on the individual side of the explanation. The other side of the explanation should also be acknowledged since it is very likely that in the case of the European elections this side also contributes to the low turnout rates throughout most of the EU countries. What I am referring to is the institutional factors that surround the elections in each country. Several theorist have already compared numerous of factors in several countries with their respective turnout rates. I will address some of these factors. The first factor has proven most significant in several studies in explaining turnout. When voting is compulsory, turnout is significantly higher, (Powell, 1982 and Franklin, 1996). But unfortunately perhaps, in most countries elections for the European Parliament are not compulsory. In countries where it is compulsory to vote, turnout is indeed higher. Secondly in proportional representation systems, turnout is higher, (Blais and Carty 1990). In the case of the EU which uses a proportional representation system, this does not seem to be the case. Most importantly it is claimed that the more power the elected will have, the higher turnout will be (Jackman, 1987). Strangely, only 26% of the respondents in the Eurobarometer (2009) indicated that they felt the European parliament does not have sufficient power. So far none of these institutional factors can explain the low turnout for the Netherlands and Germany. An answer is provided by Reif and Schmitt (1980) who compare the European Elections with local and regional elections which they all call *second-order elections*. Norris (1997) states that '*as long as the national political systems decide most of what there is to be decided politically, and everything really important, European elections are additional national second-order elections.*' It is known that turnout for local elections is also lower than the national elections (Blais, 2000). The reputation of the European elections could be part of the reason for the low turnout.

Above I have listed some major institutional factors that contribute to turnout rates, now I will turn to the individual side of the explanation. There are several socioeconomic characteristics that influence turnout. Wolfinger and Rosenstone (1980) investigated these socioeconomic characteristics in the US and found that education is most closely associated with voting. The second most important characteristic is age. The propensity to vote increases as a person gets older. Blais (2006) also concludes that age and education are strongly correlated in several other democracies.

But according to the research of Van der Eijk and Oppenhuis (1990) age and education are only weakly correlated with voting in the European Union.

A characteristic that is also import to take into consideration is the interest that a person has in politics. Not only can this effect one's likelihood to vote, it also might indicate that the level of information that these persons have is higher. If the respondents level of information is higher, this might result in a lesser effect of my stimulus, the information I provide. Respondents that already know the facts that I provide, in a rather biased way, might already know these facts and also compromise that the information is somewhat biased. In contradiction to this, research by Zaller (1992) demonstrated that, well-informed citizens are *ceteris paribus* more likely than less informed citizens to reconsider their attitudes according to new information. The influence of information thus can go both ways.

As I have said I will focus my research on the individual level of the explanation. The theory that one could consider the outer edge of this puzzle is the theory of rational choice. This theory does not only apply to voting behavior but can be applied to the broad spectrum of all human actions. Because of the almost infinite actions that this theory covers it makes sense to start out with the assumptions that this theory has with respect to voting behavior. The core of the theory is that humans make calculations and evaluations about their behavior and their environment. What this means for voting behavior is that it assumes that people are aware of all their possible options, or candidates, and know what the consequences of their vote are. People evaluate their current utility satisfaction, and seek to enhance this utility satisfaction, (Downs, 1957). The utility is an abstract term for the range of preferences that people can have, money for instance. The actions that this rational person take are all purposeful in the sense that they aim to enhance their utilities. These actions are guided by a certain degree of certainty about the outcomes and can be both directed on short-term utility maximization or long-term maximization (Gill and Gainous, 2002).

The amendment on the rational choice theory made by Aldrich (1993) is that politicians make it very easy for people to vote. They try to make making a choice easier by supplying voters with information about their views. They thereby reduce the opportunity costs that people would have to make in deciding how to vote. In our case a dominating reason not to vote for the European elections is that people feel not sufficiently informed to go vote, (Eurobarometer, 2009). This amendment seems in line with my own reasoning that supplying information can increase turnout.

The reason that rational choice theory is relevant for my research is that it describes the foundation on which I base my assumptions. Information can on one hand decrease the perceived costs of voting and on the other hand increase the perceived benefits of voting, thereby making voting a purposeful action. The next paragraph will focus on my hypothesis that information can influence the rational choice of people.

2.2 Information as decisive reason to vote

In this paragraph I discuss why information can be a decisive reason in the decision to vote. I will present this argument in four steps and explain on which theories I base my hypothesis.

2.2.1 People vote for a reason.

The first assumption might seem a little self-evident. Yet, as the article of Duvall Jacobitti (1979) suggest, this relationship is not that obvious in reality. Duvall Jacobitti rightfully argues that what a person might give as a reason for his vote is not necessarily the cause for his action. The act of voting is more likely to be influenced by a number of forces or reasons. Voting is thus not a completely rational action, because not all reasons are explicitly known and evaluated by the actor. What a voter would give as his reason is simply a rationalization and not the real reason for his vote (Duvall Jacobitti 1979 p.10). A rationalization is a reason or a list of reasons by which an actor explains an action that, in fact, was not performed because of that reason (Duvall Jacobitti 1979 p.16). This means that saying that a person voted for a specific reason is hard to prove and not very likely. In our case this means that our stimuli, information, is not the sole reason why the respondents are going to vote or not. It simply means that it would add a reason to his own list of reasons.

Duvall Jacobitti further suggest that research about reasons for voting follow her approach. She argues to first divide the respondents in at least two groups, according to how 'rational' they voted. Meaning, voters that do know why they voted and can give a logic explanation, and voters that cannot give a logic explanation (pp. 19-20).

Oppenhuis *et al.* (1996) have also argued that voters vote strategically and not necessarily for logic reasons. What we can agree on is there *is* a reason for people to vote, but this is not always a reason that followed from a logic reasoning but rather from a combination of different reasons. One of those reasons is information.

2.2.2 Information is a reason to vote

There are several reasons why information is a reason for people to vote. The first reason is just a common sense reason. It is not hard to imagine that voting for something of which you know nothing and hear little about is not a very appealing action. Voting takes time and effort and voting is a not a purposeful effort because the chance that your vote will make a difference is practically zero, (Downs, 1957). I argue that having little information about an institute contributes to seeing voting as a useless action, further decreasing the perceived benefits of voting. The stimulus might be the incentive for the respondents to believe that the act of voting is more useful and therefore more important, thereby leading to an overestimated benefit for the individual. So on one hand information decreases perceived costs, while on the other hand it increases the perceived benefit, making it rational to vote.

The second reason is provided by the Copenhagen experiment of Lassen. In this experiment four out of fifteen districts in Copenhagen where given information about the effects of decentralization. The other eleven districts acted as a control group. The four districts that did receive information yielded a significantly higher turnout in the referendum about decentralization than the control group. The Copenhagen experiment proves that there is a causal effect of being informed on the propensity to vote in a referendum setting, (Lassen, 2005). The effects of the elections were in this case more direct and less complex than in the setting of the European elections, yet it does show that information can have a significant effect on the probability of voting. This experiment also showed a relatively large indirect effect of the educational level. The research showed that people with a higher education acquire more information, and are therefore more likely to vote if they have been informed. Information is thus not only a part of the reason to vote, but this experiment has shown that it can be a decisive reason. In the preceding chapter we have already seen that educational levels are positively correlated with vote propensity, but what the Copenhagen experiment has shown is that peoples characteristics influence the way they react to information.

In the research of Brockington (2003) the effect of information on voting is also shown. In his research he looked at the effect of information in a multi-candidate ballot. This research clearly showed that there is a direct link between what information people have and how they vote. Normally people vote for the highest ranked candidate on the list, however when citizens have additional information on a lower ranked candidate they too receive a part of the votes. So not only the place of the name on the ballot decides the number of votes the candidate of a party will receive,

also candidates of the same party that people are more informed about. In the case of the 2006 Dutch national elections it was very clear that information about a lower ranked party member from the liberalist party, the VVD was a *reason to vote* for, in this case, her. Rita Verdonk, second on the ballot, received 60.000 more votes that the number one on the list (Europa-nu.nl, 2009)

The causal effect of information is also show in the article of Lupia (1994). In his experiment the link between voting behavior and information is studied in a different way, but it does show the relevance of information for making a rational vote. The research was about the effect of information on direct legislation and to what extent the vote actually resembled the preferences of the voter. So it was not about European elections, but it did also use information as a stimulus to influence voting behavior. Lupia concluded that being informed influences voting strategies. Information is thus part of the reason behind a vote.

2.2.3. People react different on different types of information.

Research has shown that humans react stronger to negative impulses than to positive impulses (Yuan, 2007). Therefore especially supplying negative information is interesting since the effect of positive information is likely to go in one direction, that of increasing the likelihood to vote. But there are two possible effects for supplying negative information. It is possible that people that receive negative information are less likely to vote because of this negative stimulus. It is also possible that the likelihood of voting increases because of the increase in information, even though it is only negative information.

2.2.4. Information about the EU is generally scarce

If information is a reason for people to vote than we arrive at the fourth assumption. If we look at the extraordinary low turnout in the last three decades one might assume that information supply about the influence of the EU is generally scarce. This is illustrated by the fact that 85% of the Dutch did not know in which *year* the elections for the European parliament where held one year prior to the elections (Eurobarometer, 2008).

Other Eurobarometer reports also illustrate that people in the EU are very ill-informed. The Eurobarometer 70 (2008) report showed that a lot of people answered ‘don’t know’ too many of the questions in the questionnaire. And when looking at the top five reasons why people did not vote, three of the reasons are directly linked to a lack of information about the EU (Eurobarometer, 2008).

The scarcity of information might be caused by the fact that people think of the elections as a second-order election. Because of the fact that still a lot of the political decisions are made at the national level, The European elections are additional national second-order elections, (Norris, 1997). The difference in information on European elections and national elections that citizens receive is the reason why people vote differently in European elections and the reason why turnout is low according to Tóka (2005). Because of these differences people see European elections as less important and are therefore less interested in it. It is because of this second-order reputation that not much information is supplied by the media and papers and news programs spend more attention to the national elections.

2.3 Research questions and Hypotheses

The reason why I believe that information about the EU will make people more likely to vote is mainly because it causes a shift on the cost/benefit balance. The information will increase the perceived benefits and therefore make the action more purposeful. Previous research by Lassen (2005), Brockington (2003) and Lupia (1994) has already shown that information has an effect on people in a voting context. There is less known about how different types of information influence people. Research in Neuropsychologia by Yuan et al. (2007) has shown that people react stronger to negative information. Taking all above theories in account, I've formulated two main research questions:

Does information about the EU make people more likely to vote?

Does negative information influence people different than positive information?

There is many literature about how different individual characteristics are correlated with vote propensity. Blais (2000) has compared many of these studies and provided a comprehensive overview of how individual characteristics correlate with vote propensity. I've formulated a third question that focuses on differences for these two research questions between different people:

How do people with different characteristics react to information?

To answer my research questions I will test these six hypotheses:

1) *People that received additional information about the EU are more likely to vote than people that did not receive additional information about the EU;*
2) *People that received negative information about the EU are less likely to vote than people who received no additional information;*
3) *People that received positive information about the EU are more likely to vote than people who received no additional information;*
4) *The effect of (negative and positive) information will be greater for people with a higher education;*
5) *The effect of (negative and positive) information will be greater for people with a higher interest in politics.*
6) *The effect of (negative and positive) information will be greater for younger people.*

3. RESEARCH DESIGN

The individual respondents are my units of research. They consist of people of at least eighteen years old, with mainly a Dutch or German nationality. Other nationalities are also possible but since the survey is held in Germany and the Netherlands these nationalities will be more common.

The data that I will use for my analysis is derived from several similar surveys. The surveys where created by a team of researches that all had different, but related research questions. The first survey was launched two days prior to the EU elections. This has resulted in a Dutch pre-election paper and on-line version, a German pre-election paper and on-line version, a Dutch post-election on-line version and a German post-election paper and on-line version. Table 1 gives an overview of these versions, the surveys that I used are in bold letters.

Country	Netherlands		Germany	
Pre	On-line	Paper	On-line	Paper
EU Elections	June 4th 2009		June 7th 2009	
Post	On-line		On-line	Paper

Table 1 Overview of survey versions

Each of these surveys was a split ballot survey, meaning that for each survey three different versions exists. Split ballots are used to provide different versions of a similar survey. It offer researchers great opportunities to introduce stimuli. Sniderman and Grob (1996) have rightfully pointed out that it can be a constraint of split ballot survey designs that they can only vary on a very limited number of factors, especially in a printed version. In our case this is no constraint, since I only need there to be one variation between the three samples, that being the information. A Split ballot survey is therefore an excellent way for me to introduce the stimuli. By using a split ballot design each survey creates three different groups: one that is influenced negatively, one that is influenced positively and one that will act as a control group and is not influenced whatsoever.

To create three different experimental groups three different version where printed and distributed randomly in order to reach as many different people as possible. This is important for the diversity of the population and the generalizability of the research . In the on-line version people were divided into three different groups by asking them at the end of the demographic questions their *month* of birth. Since it is very unlikely that this is an important characteristic it is a good way to randomly divide people between the three different experimental conditions. In the pre-election survey this was done with a 33,33% / 33,33% / 33,33% distribution to create equally large groups. In the post-election version it was done with a 25% / 25% / 50% distribution to create a larger neutral group.

This was necessary for the research of another researcher using the same survey. After a respondent was assigned to a experimental group they immediately received the stimulus.

For my analysis I will use all available pre-election survey versions: the Dutch paper and on-line version and the German paper and on-line version. The number of respondents for the pre-election population is 326 with 103 negatively informed respondents, 101 positively informed respondents and 123 non informed respondents.

I have chosen not to use the post election because of the hypothetical formulation. In the post-election survey people were asked 'if there were EU elections held next week, how likely would it be that you will vote?' This formulation is to weak and the strength of the stimuli is lost in this way.

The distribution of the survey was done in several ways, the paper versions where divided between the researchers and then either send to several institutions or randomly distributed over several locations. Some examples of these locations are railway stations, a local gym and a hospital. The link to the online version was distributed by e-mail, using a snowball effect to reach as many respondents as possible. With the Dutch post-election survey I also experimented with posting it on several forums. I have chosen not to use the data from this sample, since it became very clear in an early stage that in this way of distribution only people with a very high interest in the topic participated.

The main advantage of the collaboration with other researchers is that the questions can be put into a larger questionnaire in such a way that it does not seem awkward to the respondents when I introduce the information. What is also a benefit of putting the questions in a larger questionnaire is that the demographics are also asked in a way that will feel natural to the respondents. These characteristics should vary as much as possible, namely age, education and interest in politics are important for my own research, since literature suggest that these might be correlated with the propensity to vote. As I've said mainly the educational level is import for my research. Furthermore several questions were introduced as indicators for interest in politics. Combining these allowed me to create a more accurate indicator for political interest.

3.1 Measures

In this chapter every variable that I am using in my analysis is discussed. For each of these variables I will explain how it was obtained and in some cases transformed. In Appendix A there is detailed descriptions of how each variable was created from which question and how it was transformed.

Age is a simple characteristic to measure, by asking the year of birth of the respondents I can compute their age, and decide in some cases to erase them. Respondents younger than 18 years old were excluded from the analysis because they are not allowed to vote. People that did not fill in their age were erased to exclude the possibility that these respondents are younger than 18 years old. The respondents were than divided into 3 groups: 18-24, 25-44 and 45+.

The political interest of the respondents was measured by using four questions in the survey. What people do when other people talk about politics, their own indication of their interest and how often they read news articles about national and international politics. These scores where combined and subtracted from the highest possible total (18). This results in scores ranging from 0 to 14 and a Cronbach's Alpha of 0,836. This 'political interest index' is used to measure the political interest of the respondents. People that filled in 'don't know' are indicated as missing values. To make the analysis of this variable more clear I divided the interest indexes into 3 groups ranging from low (1) to high (3) interest levels. Appendix A gives a detailed description of how these groups where created.

To measure educational levels respondents where simply asked to indicate their highest achieved school diploma. To be able to use the Dutch and German pre-election data simultaneously, the different diploma's where first compared and matched to equal levels and then given the same values ranging from 1 'low or basic' to 6 'university'. The different Dutch and German educational levels where then divided into two groups: lower (1,2,3) and higher (4,5,6) educated. Then they were combined into one variable. Missing values were replaced with the mean level.

The dependent variable that I want to measure is the vote propensity of the respondents. Respondents were asked to indicate on a seven point scale ranging from 'very unlikely' to 'very likely' how likely it will be that they will vote. This was done right after the stimuli.

3.2 The stimuli

An assumption of rational choice theory is that voters are purposeful. The action of voting is directly related to obtaining that increase in utility. If they do not perceive voting as purposeful, they are more likely not to vote, (Gill and Gainous, 2002 p.385). In the case of the EU providing purposeful information might be more problematic than in the Copenhagen experiment that Lassen (2005)

studied, because the EU is larger and the distant to the voter is greater. This means that the supplied information should be about meaningful subjects that will make the respondents feel that it voting for European elections is a purposeful action.

The questions that I have created for the stimuli are both about institutional elements of the EU and socioeconomic influences of the EU. I have searched for meaningful topics that will appeal to most people. The topics are parliament seat distribution, spending of the EU, Economic consequences of EU membership, emancipation of woman and the disappearance of borders. In the negative version all information is formulated in such a way that it can only be interpretated in a negative way. The positive version actually uses mostly exactly the same information, but is formulated in a different way so that it all makes the EU look good. By doing so I will evade the risk that the difference in information is creating an effect. Because this survey is held both in the Netherlands and in Germany I've created similar question for both countries, also to keep the information as constant as possible. An example from the Dutch survey will illustrate this.

Negative formulation: The Netherlands have less than the average number of seats in the European parliament.
Positive formulation: The Netherlands belong to the eight countries with the most seats in the European parliament.
Both are true, but the distribution of seats is very unequal distributed causing the Netherlands to fall just below the average number of seats and still only seven of all other 26 countries have more seats.

For the German Survey a similar statement was used:

Negative formulation: Germany has got the least seats per inhabitant of all member states.
Positive formulation: Germany has got the most seats in the European parliament.
Again, both statements are true. Germany had 99 seats and has lost 3 seats in the 2009 redistribution of seats, still leaving the Germans with 96 seats, which is still the largest number of seats of the entire parliament.

Six of these statements where put after each other, asking the respondents if they have heard about these statements before (See Appendix B for all statements). By doing so the impact of the information in trying to influence the state of mind of the respondents is maximized

3.3 Data issues

In this chapter I will discuss some issues that bias our sample. For each of these I will explain what the issue is, what causes it and what the consequences are for the analysis. Detailed descriptives for vote probabilities for each variable can be found in Appendix C.

It is common for a survey on political topics to wield a higher turnout than the true turnout. Our pre-election data wields a turnout of 67,5% while the average in the entire EU was 43,1%. For our pre-election sample (47% German, 53% Dutch) the true turnout should be around 39,9%. Literature suggest that this is because those who choose not to participate in the survey often are the very same people that did not vote (Brehm 1993). This is probably the case with our survey. The fact that it took respondents quite an amount of time, on average 11,3 minutes, to complete the survey (only measured for on-line survey's) is likely to contribute to the problem. When doing the analysis I will have to keep in mind that our sample is overrepresented by people that are likely to vote.

Another issue is less common for this type of research and is very likely to have been caused by the method of distribution of the survey. By using largely the researchers own private networks to start the 'e-mail snowball' the age group of the research team (18-24) is overrepresented in the survey population (54%). Compared to the German and Dutch population at large, the sample numbers differ enormously from the age distribution of both counties The variable age is therefore difficult to use as a variable for my analysis.

When looking at the created interest indexes (see Appendix C), we can see that the interest levels of the survey population is relatively high. This is most likely caused by the method of distribution, and because of the reason that people with a high interest in politics are more like to participate in these kind of surveys. It is import to have an representative distribution of this factor since it is extremely likely that this variable is correlated with knowledge about politics. Because the stimuli consists of information, people with a higher interest in politics are perhaps less likely to be influenced by the stimuli. Therefore I have chosen to group the interest levels by creating roughly equal group sizes. This method differentiates more between the higher interest scores.

Political interest	Scores	Percentage of total
Low	1,2,3,4,5,6,7	27,6 %
Average	8,9,10	35,6 %
High	11,12,13,14	26,8 %

Table 2 Grouping the interest scores using equal group sizes

The educational level shows similar problems as the interest level. In both versions the higher educated are a bit overrepresented. Table 3 shows the difference between the Dutch educational levels as measured by the CBS and the levels of our Dutch pre-election sample. The overrepresentation of higher educational levels is very clear. Especially in the pre-election German survey the distribution is very biased, the Abitur and university levels are both far greater than in the German population at large. The large number of 'Abitur' level respondents is probably linked to the high number of respondents in the age group that fits this educational level, mostly students at a university.

There were far less lower educated people that filled in the survey. Especially in the category 'no or basic'. There were only 2 respondents with this level. But since I divided the educational levels into two groups (lower and higher) I will still be able to do reliable two sample t-tests for the different educational levels.

Educational Level	Netherlands* %	Sample %	Difference %.
1	7,71	1,2	-6,51
2	30,66	11,8	-18,86
3	28,53	22,5	-6,03
4	8,91	27,2	+18,29
5/6	15,50	27,2	+11,70
6	8,69	10,1	+1,41

Table 3: Comparing educational levels of sample with Dutch population (* CBS, 2008)

When distributing the paper versions I and the other researchers noticed that people thought the six stimuli statements where a quiz. Apparently people did not read the question properly, asking them if they heard about it, not if the statements where true or false. Some remarks of respondents written on the paper version also indicate that some people did not read the question properly. Since the intension is just to create a state of mind by influencing the respondents with some information it is not necessarily a problem that people saw the statements as a quiz. However it might have been better to create different answer categories that would made it have looked less like a quiz.

4. ANALYSIS OF SURVEY DATA

To determine what the effects of the stimuli are, I will test the six hypotheses I formulated earlier. First I will I will compare the means on vote probability of both experimental groups with the means on vote probability of the control group. Then I will compare the means on vote probability for each experimental group with the means on vote probability of the control group.

By comparing the means for vote probability I can see if there is a difference in the probability of voting for each version. To determine whether these differences are significant I will conduct several t-tests. By doing so I will be able to determine if the different experimental groups have significant differences in their propensity to vote.

To find out what effect the individual characteristics have I will also conduct independent sample t-tests for each educational level, level of political interest and age group. I will look at how the different characteristics have an influence on how the respondents reacted to the stimuli. Because I do not know exactly in what direction these effects will be, I will us a two-tailed t-test.

4.1 Comparing the three stimuli groups.

Table 4 shows the different means and standard deviations (Sd.) of the probability to vote. We clearly see that the negatively influenced group scores lower than the not influenced group. We also see that the positively influenced group scores higher than both other groups. Yet all means are fairly close to each other and considering that I used a seven point scale all scores are still relatively high.

Stimuli group	Mean	Sd.
Negative	5,04	2,512
Positive	5,58	2,080
Neutral	5,34	2,328

Table 4: Means and SD's of vote probability of three stimuli groups

What we've seen so far is that the means in all the different populations are very high. We also see that there are differences between the different stimuli and that these differences are in line with theory that information influences peoples propensity to vote. We clearly see that the positively informed people showed the highest propensity to vote. To determine whether the stimuli had a significant effect on the respondents I've tested the following three hypotheses using two sample t-tests. For each of these counts that the hypothesis that the mean of population 1 ($\mu 1$) is greater than the mean of population 2 ($\mu 2$) is tested against the alternative hypothesis that the means of both populations ($\mu 1$ and $\mu 2$) are equal.

Hypotheses	N1	N2	μ1	μ2	μ2 - μ1	t	P	α
Hypothesis 1: μ1 informed vs. μ2 not informed	202	113	5,3	5,3	0,0	-0,13	0,45	0,1
Hypothesis 2: μ1 negative vs. μ2 not informed	103	113	5,0	5,3	0,3	-0,90	0,37	0,1
Hypothesis 3: μ1 positive vs. μ2 not informed	99	113	5,6	5,3	-0,2	0,79	0,43	0,1

Table 5: Comparing vote probability means for Hypotheses 1, 2 and 3.

Keeping in mind the sample size is 315 and the fact that the propensity to vote of both test samples is already a lot higher than of the population at large, using a 90% confidence level is acceptable (α=0,1). This means that we can be 90% sure that the differences are indeed caused by the stimuli. The results of the t-tests are shown in table 5 above. When looking at the combined data none of the hypotheses are confirmed at the 90% confidence level. In the following paragraphs I will look deeper into these results by comparing different educational level, political interest levels and different age groups.

4.2 Comparing educational levels

Previous work on the relationship between information and the propensity to vote has already shown that higher educated people absorb the information better and are therefore more able to fully understand it and react to it differently than lower educated people (Lassen, 2005). Therefore it is interesting to compare the means of the different educational levels and see if they react differently to the stimuli. To test this hypothesis I will conduct the same t-tests as I did for hypotheses 1, 2 and 3. Now I will do this for low and high educational levels. Table 6 shows the results of these tests, as well as the means for each population and the difference of the means of both populations

Hypothesis D	Education	N1	N2	μ1	μ2	μ2 - μ1	t	P	α
Hypothesis 1:	Low	43	27	3,9	3,4	-0,5	0,83	0,41	0,1
μ1 informed vs.	High	159	86	5,7	6,0	0,3	-0,98	0,33	0,1
μ2 not informed	ANOVA			0,00	0,00				0,01
Hypothesis 2:	Low	26	27	3,3	3,4	0,1	-0,09	0,93	0,1
μ1 negative vs.	High	77	86	5,6	6,0	0,3	-1,02	0,31	0,1
μ2 not informed	ANOVA			0,00	0,00				0,01
Hypothesis 3:	Low	17	27	4,8	3,4	-1,4	1,83	0,07	0,1
μ1 positive vs.	High	82	86	5,7	6,0	0,2	-0,70	0,49	0,1
μ2 not informed	ANOVA			0,08	0,00				0,01

Table 6: Comparing vote probability means for two education levels on Hypotheses 1, 2 and 3.

We clearly see that there are huge differences between the educational levels. When looking at the means, the lower educated (L) show far lower propensities to vote for each stimuli group than the higher educated (H). Differences in means between the stimuli group were tested using an ANOVA test. Both in the negative and neutral group differences are proven significant at a 99% confidence level. In the positive group differences are proven significant at a 90% confidence level. This proves that different educational levels differ in their propensity to vote. Our the data clearly shows that lower educated people are less likely to vote.

To find out whether they react differently to the stimuli I've conducted two-tailed t-tests for each educational level and for each of the three hypotheses 1, 2 and 3. The data in table 6 shows that the lower educated people have a far stronger reaction to the positive stimuli. For this group, the positively influenced showed a higher propensity to vote than the other two groups. Significant at a 95% confidence level. The reaction to the negative stimuli is not significant for both educational levels, but the higher educated do show a greater response to it than the lower educated. This means that the hypothesis that lower educated people show a greater reaction to information than the higher educated people and the hypothesis that lower educated people show a greater reaction

to negative information than the higher educated people is rejected. The hypothesis that lower educated people show a greater reaction to positive information than the higher educated people is confirmed.

These results tell us that the way positive information influences the costs/benefits calculation in the decision to vote is different for people with a lower education. Perhaps it is easier to influence the perceived benefits for the lower educated. Rational Choice theory often discusses individuals as if they all make the same kind of costs/benefits calculation. It is not hard to imagine that making such calculations is more difficult for lower educated people than for higher educated people. The effect of positive information on the costs/benefits calculation depends on the perceived benefits that are suggested by the information. The analyzed data show that the effect on the costs/benefits calculation depend on the level of education of a person.

4.3 Comparing political interest levels

To test if political interest has an influence on how people react to the stimuli I will conduct the same t-tests as I did for hypotheses 1, 2 and 3. Now I will do this for each political interest level. The results are shown in table 7.

Hypothesis E	Political interest	N1	N2	μ1	μ2	μ2 - μ1	t	P	α
Hypothesis 1:	Low	52	36	3,6	4,0	0,4	-0,78	0,44	0,1
μ1 informed vs.	Average	75	38	5,5	5,8	0,3	-0,62	0,54	0,1
μ2 not informed	High	75	39	6,3	6,1	-0,1	0,38	0,70	0,1
	ANOVA			0,00	0,00				0,01
Hypothesis 2:	Low	33	36	3,4	4,0	0,6	-1,01	0,32	0,1
μ1 negative vs.	Average	35	38	5,3	5,8	0,5	-0,97	0,34	0,1
μ2 not informed	High	35	39	6,3	6,1	-0,2	0,50	0,62	0,1
	ANOVA			0,00	0,00				0,01
Hypothesis 3:	Low	19	36	3,9	4,0	0,1	-0,11	0,91	0,1
μ1 positive vs.	Average	40	38	5,7	5,8	0,0	-0,09	0,93	0,1
μ2 not informed	High	40	39	6,2	6,1	-0,1	0,17	0,87	0,1
	ANOVA			0,00	0,00				0,01

Table 7: Comparing vote probability means for three political interest levels on Hypotheses 1, 2 and 3.

What becomes immediately clear is that the means for propensities to vote increase as the interest level increases. An ANOVA test shows that these differences are significant at confidence levels greater than 99% for all three stimulus groups. The differences between these groups with respect to their reaction to the stimulus are not significant for any of the hypotheses. What is striking is that for the high interest group the direction of the mean difference is always different than the other two groups. The high interest groups has a higher mean when influenced negative, and a lower mean when influenced positive. Differences in response between different interest levels are still too small to confirm the hypothesis that the effect of information will be greater for less politically interested people. The hypotheses that politically interested people are more effected by information, positive and negative information is rejected. Vote propensities do not differ significantly between the three levels of political interest. However, the way highly interest people react to the stimuli does differ from the other two groups. The fact that they react opposite to the other two groups is probably due to the fact that they already knew the information. Therefore it is more difficult to influence their costs/benefits calculation with the stimuli.

4.4 Comparing age groups

I hypothesize that the effect of information will be greater for younger people. To test this hypothesis I will conduct the same t-tests as I did for hypotheses 1, 2 and 3. Now I will do this for each age groups. Literature suggests that age is positively correlated with voting propensity. Therefore it is also interesting to compare the results for each age group. Table 8 below shows the results of these tests, as well as the means on vote probability for each population and the difference in those means.

Hypothesis F	Age group	N1	N2	μ1	μ2	μ2 - μ1	t	P	α
Hypothesis 1:	18-24	107	65	5,5	5,4	-0,2	0,50	0,62	0,1
μ1 informed vs.	25-44	55	27	4,5	5,4	1,0	-1,70	0,09	0,1
μ2 not informed	45+	40	21	5,8	5,1	-0,7	1,19	0,24	0,1
	ANOVA			0,00	0,90				0,01
Hypothesis 2:	18-24	52	65	5,5	5,4	-0,1	0,24	0,81	0,1
μ1 negative vs.	25-44	32	27	4,1	5,4	1,3	-2,02	0,05	0,1
μ2 not informed	45+	19	21	5,4	5,1	-0,3	0,37	0,71	0,1
	ANOVA			0,00	0,90				0,01
Hypothesis 3:	18-24	55	65	5,3	5,4	0,1	0,60	0,55	0,1
μ1 positive vs.	25-44	23	27	5,7	5,4	-0,3	-0,77	0,45	0,1
μ2 not informed	45+	21	21	5,8	5,1	-0,6	1,61	0,12	0,1
	ANOVA			0,14	0,90				0,01

Table 8: Comparing vote probability means for three age groups on Hypotheses 1, 2 and 3.

When we compare the age groups, we see that the youngest age group showed the least effect on any kind of information. The age group 25-44 has the lowest mean of all three age groups. This age group shows a significant effect for Hypothesis 1, informed vs. not informed, with a 90% confidence level. The group also shows a significant effect with a 95% confidence level for Hypothesis 2, negatively informed vs. not informed. The oldest age group shows a stronger reaction on the positive stimulus with a confidence level of 88%. This means that the hypothesis that the effect of information will be greater for younger people is rejected. The youngest age group was in fact the least affected by the information. Surprisingly the differentiation in between age groups has provided the most interesting results with significant effects for all hypotheses.

These results give grounds to argue that age is a factor in the costs/benefits calculation of voters. The way information is perceived and is able to influence the costs/benefits calculation is possibly dependent on the age or life phase of the rational voter. The perceived benefits for middle aged group were significantly influenced by negative information, while for the eldest age group the perceived benefits were significantly influence by positive information.

5. CONCLUDING REMARKS

The aim of this research was to find out what the effect of information about the EU was on voters. This was done by using a split ballot survey in which two kinds of information were given. Negative and positive information to the experimental groups and no information to the control group. The vote propensities of the three groups were compared using a series of t-tests. Existing literature on the topic of voters behavior and turnout different aspects have been included to further investigate the effect of information for different groups of people. In this chapter I will start with a summary of the findings of this research. After this I will discuss what these findings tell us and why they are useful.

5.1 Summary of findings

When comparing the different stimuli groups no significant differences were found. Yet when I dug deeper into the results by differentiating between different characteristics I found more interesting results. The educational level of people for instance really seems to make a differences. Lower educated people showed a significant response to the positive stimuli, whereas they were hardly influenced by the negative stimuli. Higher educated people showed far greater propensities to vote than lower educated people, but were hardly influenced by the information. Surprisingly, the positive information made them actually slightly less likely to vote.

The political interest levels showed no significant effects for any hypothesis. What is interesting to note is that for the highly interested people the direction of the reaction to the stimulus was always the opposite of the reaction of both other groups. When given negative information for instance, the highly interested people's propensity to vote goes up, while the propensity of both other groups goes down. So the way that people react to different types of information is different for highly interested people. This has probably something to do with the fact that they already knew the information provided in the stimuli.

Comparing three different age groups provided the most interesting results. The middle age group showed a significant response to the negative stimulus, while the oldest age group showed a significant response to the positive stimulus. The data shows that the age of a person influences the way they respond to either negative or positive information.

5.2 What these results tell us

What these results tell us is that information about the EU has an effect on peoples propensities to vote. It also tells us that there are differences between people in the way that they respond to information. There are people that are very responsive to information and people that are not very responsive. They also differ in the degree in which they respond to negative and positive stimuli. Especially education makes a difference in how people respond to information about the EU. As Lassen (2005) already found out, people with a higher education interpretate information differently than lower educated people. This means that if, for instance, the EU wants to influence people with information they should first think about which group they want to influence and then adjust the amount and content of the information to the target group.

Age is also a characteristic that is very interesting to look at when discussing the influence of information. The results of this research showed that age is a factor in how people react to information. Rational Choice Theory does not differentiate between different ages. Perhaps the degree of rationality or perception of rationality changes throughout someone's life. This means that what is considered a significant benefit in a rational choice calculation in someone twenties in not necessarily a benefit when they are fifty. Finding out how rationality changes throughout different ages is perhaps interesting material for future studies.

I have to acknowledge however that lower educated people were underrepresented and the age distribution does not reflect the population at large. Therefore the results are not a hundred percent generalizable to all of the Netherlands, Germany or Europe. However the results give reason to further investigate the ability of information to effect peoples propensities to vote. It would perhaps be interesting to perform a similar but more exhaustive investigation in 2010, when the Dutch national elections are held. Maybe it is possible to do the same kind of experiment as Lassen did in Coopenhagen, giving more information to some municipalities or perhaps cities and less too other municipalities or cities and then compare turnout.

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APPENDIX A. MEASURES FOR PRE-ELECTION SAMPLE

Age

Question used: What is your year of birth? Answer categories: 1920 / 2000

The year of birth was then used to compute age in years. These ages where then divided into 3 age groups:

Group	Range	Percentage of total
1	18-24	54,0 %
2	25-44	25,5 %
3	45+	20,6 %

Interest Groups

Questions used to create variables, and computing of index:

Interest1: If you are with friends or family and they talk about politics, what do you usually do? 1) Taking part in the conversation 2) Listening with interest 3) Listening, but without interest 4) Not listening 5) Don't know (missing value)
Interest2: How strongly are you interested in politics? 1) Very interested 2) Fairly interested 3) Somewhat interested 4) Not interested 5) Don't know (missing value)
Read1: If the newspaper reports on national news, for example about government problems, how often do you read this? 1) (almost) always 2) often 3) sometimes 4) (almost) never 5) never read a newspaper
Read2: If the newspaper reports on international news, for example about the European Union, how often do you read this? 1) (almost) always 2) often 3) sometimes 4) (almost) never 5) never read a newspaper
Highest possible score = 4+4+5+5= 18, Lowest possible score = 1+1+1+1= 4 Interest index = 18-(Interest1 + Interest2 + Read1 + Read2) Highest possible score= 18 -4 = 14 Lowest possible score= 18-18= 0 Cronbach's Alpha of index: 0,836

Distribution of Interest group

Interest Group	Score	Percentage of Total
Low	1,2,3,4,5,6,7	27,6
Average	8,9,10	35,6
High	11,12,13,14	36,8

Grouping of educational levels.

Question used: What is your highest achieved diploma?

German levels	Description	Grouping	Description	Dutch levels
1 Kein Schulabschluss	No school leaving certificate at all	1 No or Basic	Basic Education	1 Basisschool (lager onderwijs, speciaal onderwijs)
2 Hauptschulabschluss	Lower secondary school, After 10 years of school, minimum requirement for (vocational) training	2 Lower secondary school	Secondary school. Vocational orientation	2 Lager beroepsonderwijs (bijv. LTS, LHNO, LEAO, huishoudschool)
3 Realschulabschluss	After 10 years of school, qualification for (vocational) training		Secondary school lower levels. Needed for MBO	3 Middelbaar algemeen onderwijs (bijv. VMBO, ULO, MULO, MAVO, VMBO)
4 Abgeschlossene Ausbildung	People who left school after 10 years, then 3 years of practical work, (vocational) training	3 Vocational training	Vocational education after lower secondary school	4 Middelbaar beroepsonderwijs (bijv. MTS, MEAO, MHNO, MBO)
6 Abitur	Secondary school higher levels needed for WO	4 Higher secondary school	Secondary school higher levels needed for HBO and WO	5 Voortgezet algemeen onderwijs (bijv. HBS, MMS, HAVO, VWO, gymnasium)
5 Fachhochschulreife	High school graduation	5 Higher Vocational training	High school graduation	6 Hoger beroeps onderwijs (bijv. HTS, HEAO, HHNO, HBO)
7 Abgeschlossenes Studium (Bachelor/Vordiplom)	University diploma (bachelor or master)	6 University	University diploma (bachelor or master)	7 Wetenschappelijk onderwijs (WO)
8 Abgeschlossenes Studium (Master/Diplom)				
9 Abgeschlossenes Studium (Promotion)				

Classification of educational levels in to two categories.

Groups	Classification
1,2,3	Lower
4,5,6	Higher

Voting Probability

Question used: How likely is it that you will vote for the European Elections this week?

Very unlikely 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 Very likely

APPENDIX B. STATEMENTS

Negative Dutch Statements

Als mensen praten over de Europese Unie, dan hebben ze het over verschillende zaken. Kunt u van de volgende zaken aangeven of u erover gehoord heeft?	Ja	Nee	Ik weet het niet
Nederland heeft minder zetels dan het gemiddelde van alle landen in het Europees parlement.			
Het Europees parlement reist heen en weer tussen Brussel en Straatsburg, dit kost 200 miljoen euro per jaar.			
Ondanks de strijd voor gelijke rechten, verdienen vrouwen in de Europese Unie gemiddeld nog altijd veel minder dan hun mannelijke collega's.			
Door de introductie van de Euro zijn de prijzen in de winkels sterk gestegen.			
Nederland ontvangt minder van de Europese Unie dan het aan de Europese Unie betaalt.			
De Europese Unie heeft het gemakkelijk gemaakt voor goedkope arbeiders uit Oost-Europa om in Nederland te komen werken.			

Positive Dutch Statements

Als mensen praten over de Europese Unie, dan hebben ze het over verschillende zaken. Kunt u van de volgende zaken aangeven of u erover gehoord heeft?	Ja	Nee	Ik weet het niet
Nederland behoort tot de acht landen met de meeste zetels in het Europese parlement.			
De Europese Unie heeft een standaard, die bijna elke mobiele telefoon vandaag de dag gebruikt, mogelijk gemaakt.			
De verhouding tussen het aantal mannelijke en vrouwelijke leden van het Europees parlement is evenrediger geworden.			
Door de introductie van de Euro kan de Europese Unie goed concurreren met de Amerikaanse Dollar.			
Het lidmaatschap van de Europese Unie heeft geleid tot een toename van het inkomen van de Nederlander met 2000 euro per jaar.			
De totstandkoming van de Europese Unie heeft het reizen tussen landen veel makkelijker gemaakt			

Negative German Statements

Wenn Menschen über die Europäische Union sprechen, erwähnen sie verschiedene Themen. Bitte geben Sie an, von welchen Fakten Sie schon einmal gehört haben.	Ja	Nein	Ich weiß nicht
Deutschland hat weniger Sitze im Parlament pro Einwohner als andere Staaten.			
Das Europäische Parlament pendelt zwischen Brüssel und Strasbourg, dies verursacht ca. 200 Millionen Euro pro Jahr.			
Obwohl in der EU für Gleichberechtigung gekämpft wird, verdient eine Frau durchschnittlich weniger (in der selben Position) wie ein Mann.			
Durch die Einführung des Euro sind die Preise in den Geschäften gestiegen.			
Deutschland bezahlt mehr Geld an die Europäische Union, als es erhält			
Durch die Grenzöffnungen der EU ist es leichter für "billige Arbeiter" nach Deutschland zu kommen.			

Positve German Statements

Wenn Menschen über die Europäische Union sprechen, erwähnen sie verschiedene Themen. Bitte geben Sie an, von welchen Fakten Sie schon einmal gehört haben.	Ja	Nein	Ich weiß nicht
Deutschland hat die meisten Sitze im Europäischen Parlament.			
Die EU hat einen Standard für Handys eingeführt, den inzwischen fast alle verwenden.			
Die Nummer der weiblichen und männlichen Abgeordneten in Europa hat sich immer stärker angeglichen in den letzten Jahren.			
Durch die Einführung des Euro kann Europa mit dem amerikanischen Dollar konkurrieren.			
Durch die EU haben sich die deutschen Exporte in den vergangenen 8 Jahren um mehr als 25% erhöht.			
Die EU macht das Reisen in Europa sehr viel einfacher und schneller.			

APPENDIX C. DESCRIPTIVES

Survey descriptives of variables.

	Pre-election sample			
	N	Mean	Max	Sd.
Vote probability	315	5,314	7	2,320
Educational level	324	4,213	6	1,138
Interest Index	319	9,163	14	3,083
Age	326	31,101	88	14,153

Pre-election Educational levels Vote probability descriptives

	All			Negative			Positive			Neutral		
	N	mean	sd	N	Mean	Sd.	N	Mean	Sd.	N	Mean	Sd.
Low	70	3,686	2,505	26	3,308	2,478	17	4,765	2,195	27	3,370	2,604
High	245	5,780	2,043	77	5,623	2,254	82	5,744	2,029	86	5,953	1,859

Pre-election Interest index Vote probability descriptives

	All			Negative			Positive			Neutral		
	N	Mean	Sd.	N	Mean	Sd.	N	Mean	Sd.	N	Mean	Sd.
Low	88	3,784	2,447	33	3,424	2,398	19	3,947	2,392	36	4,028	2,547
Averge	113	5,593	2,077	35	5,257	2,466	40	5,725	1,768	38	5,763	2,006
High	114	6,219	1,828	35	6,343	1,765	40	6,200	1,843	39	6,128	1,908

Pre-election Age groups Vote probability descriptives

	All			Negative			Positive			Neutral		
	N	Mean	Sd.	N	Mean	Sd.	N	Mean	Sd.	N	Mean	Sd.
18-24	172	5,465	2,285	52	5,462	2,405	55	5,600	2,131	65	5,354	2,341
25-44	82	4,793	2,463	32	4,125	2,697	23	4,957	2,225	27	5,444	2,242
45+	61	5,590	2,140	19	5,421	2,168	21	6,190	1,632	21	5,143	2,496