



VOTING ON SOMEONE ELSE'S BEHALF?

AN ANALYSIS OF PROXY VOTING IN DUTCH ELECTIONS

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Voting on someone else's behalf?

An analysis of proxy voting in Dutch parliamentary elections.

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Abstract

Voting by proxy is a voting procedure in which a person who is unable to vote can allow another person to vote on his or her behalf. Voting by proxy has been accommodated in Dutch elections for some time often causing discussion regarding potential abuse. There is still much uncertainty about the driving factors behind the choice that people have between voting in the regular way, voting by proxy or and abstaining. The reasoned action approach was used to formulate an expectation about where the driving factors behind the choice to vote by proxy origin from. This choice to vote by proxy is expected to rely on a person's normative, behavioral and control beliefs. These beliefs were translated into three necessary conditions for a proxy vote to occur. These conditions are a person's willingness to vote, a person's inability to vote and the availability of a proxy holder. It was hypothesized that a person who is highly willing to vote, unable to vote and who has a proxy holder available is the most likely to vote by proxy. Data from the Dutch national election studies have been used to test this expectation. Willingness to vote was found to be determined by high self reported political interest, a high educational level and an apparent voting habit. Ability to vote is too some extent determined by the availability of resources where time is the most substantial and the availability of a proxy holder is mostly determined by the household a person lives in. The creation of an index in which the likeliness to vote by proxy was scaled lead to the conclusion that people who are willing and unable to vote are the most likely proxy voters provided that they have a proxy holder available.

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1 Background

Voters who are unable to vote by themselves in elections are often offered alternative ways of voting. In the Netherlands voters who are expecting to be unable to cast their vote by themselves have the possibility to vote by proxy. A proxy vote is a vote casted by a person who is authorized by the voter (Kieswet art. L 1). The aim of the introduction of proxy voting has been to create a complete and accurate representation of the electorate. This aim later changed into enhancing accessibility of elections as much as possible (Kiesraad, 2007). In this chapter the current rules and regulations are explained as well as the historical background of proxy voting in Dutch elections.

There are two ways in which a Dutch voter is able to transfer his or her vote to another person. The first option is the written proxy. To request a written proxy, the voter sends an application for a proxy vote, at least five days before the election, to the municipality where he or she lives on the day of the election (Kieswet art. L 8 and art. L 7.) The voter and the person he or she authorizes both have to fill in the form of application. The proxy holder, which is the person who actually votes, does not necessarily have to live in the same municipality as the proxy principal. If the application is granted the proxy holder receives an official certificate of authorization with which he or she can vote on behalf of another person in that specific election (Kieswet art. L 6 and Art. L 13).

The unwritten proxy, which is the second option, requires less administrative procedures. On the backside of each voting pass a direct authorization for a proxy vote can be granted. The potential proxy principal has to fill in his or her personal details on the voting pass, and both the principal and the holder of the proxy have to sign for authorization. To cast the proxy vote the proxy holder has to show both the voting pass and a copy of the proxy principals' identification. The proxy vote can only be casted at the same time the proxy holder casts its own vote (Kieswet art. L 3). While it does not matter in which municipality a proxy holders lives in the case of the written proxy, the holder of an unwritten proxy has to live in the same municipality as the proxy principal (Kieswet art. L 14). There is also a maximum of two proxy votes per proxy holder which applies to both the unwritten and written proxy (Kieswet art. L 4). An important remark that can be made to proxy voting is that the initiative to grant a proxy has to come from the voter and not the proxy holder. Any abuse of proxy voting is regarded as electoral offence (Elzinga, Kummeling, & Schipper-Spanninga, 2012, p. 187).

Proxy voting has not always been allowed in the same way it is now. The subject has often been reason for debate and over the last century many alteration to the regulations have occurred. The rules and regulation as they are now originate from the early 20th century. In the period 1917-1918 the electoral system in the Netherlands had undergone some extensive changes. 1917 was the year in which universal male suffrage was introduced in the Netherlands (Elzinga et al., 2012, pp. 8-9). Before that time voting was restricted to only a small part of society and was seen by a majority of those eligible to vote as a civic duty. Universal male suffrage increased the scale of elections which next to other electoral reforms changed the way elections were held (Oud, 1997, p. 219). Before 1917 it was very tempting to "buy" votes since a minor amount of votes had a large effect on the electoral outcome considering the unlikely but more probable decisive value of a single vote. Until this time proxy voting had been seen as a way of voting with potential probable abuse which held back its introduction (Kiesraad, 2007, pp. 3,4).

Another part of the 1917-1918 electoral reforms was the introduction of compulsory attendance at elections which obligated citizens to participate in elections (Elzinga et al., 2012, pp. 8-9). At this time citizens were only allowed to vote in their own municipality. This created difficulties for those who were not present in the municipality they were supposed to vote on the Election Day. There was a possibility to apply for a ballot in another municipality long before the elections, but this was not practical since many voters did not know where they would be on Election Day long before the elections. Since compulsory voting was introduced to enhance equal participation there had to be a way in which those unavailable at Election Day could still cast their vote. Since suffrage was seen as an obligation, proxy voting was introduced in 1928 (Elzinga et al., 2012, p. 9)

The initial rules regarding proxy voting were very restricted. Those who were absent on Election Day due to their profession or work as well as their spouses were allowed to apply for a proxy vote. It required those who wanted to make use of proxy voting to apply for it 6 months prior to the election. The permission to vote by proxy was only granted when sufficient evidence of absence was provided. Next to that only people who were enrolled in the same polling place as the proxy principal were allowed to be the proxy holder on the condition that they registered together with the proxy principal personally at the municipality (Kiesraad, 2007, p. 5).

In 1951 the electoral law regarding proxy voting was revised. The application for a proxy vote now had to be done at least two weeks before the election, and no proof of absence was required. The proxy holders no longer had to be enrolled in the same polling station, but only in the same electoral register. This easing of the rules was aimed at enhancing turnout and increased the amount of proxy votes casted rapidly (Kiesraad, 2007). This implied that there was possible abuse of the procedures leading to another change in 1954 which included that only a direct relative of the proxy principal was allowed to be the proxy holder, these family members did have to be registered in the same electoral register (Elzinga et al., 2012, p. 184). In 1957 laws were changed again restricting the amount of proxies per holder to two, and from 1965 on family members who lived outside the municipality of a proxy principal were allowed as proxy holders (Kiesraad, 2007, p. 7). In 1968 a law followed which made it possible to cast a proxy vote in a municipality different than the one the proxy principal was part of.

Nowadays the most used type of proxy is the unwritten proxy; this type does not require specific registration of the proxy holder. This possibility was introduced in 1976. The introduction of the unwritten proxy has been one of the most radical changes in the regulations regarding proxy voting (Elzinga et al., 2012). After the introduction of the unwritten proxy the abuse of proxy votes increased leading to alterations in the regulations which restricted the use of proxy voting in 1989 and 1993 and later in 2009 (Elzinga et al., 2012, p. 189). For many years proxy voting has been seen as a threat to the integrity of elections and abuse was frequently reported. Any empirical evidence on the scale of this abuse is however lacking (Kiesraad, 2007, p. 34).

Abuse of proxy votes has quite probably declined after the restriction on the amount of proxy votes casted by a proxy holder to two. Reported cases of abuse of proxy votes are often cases in which political actors visited voters to convince them to give away their voting passes. These voting passes would be distributed among affiliates of the group in the district which gave these groups huge amounts of votes (Elzinga et al., 2012, p. 185). These eventually lead to results which were skewed because of the proxy votes. An example of this occurred in the

1990 municipal where the election results from the municipalities of Rucphen, Lith, and Putte showed that in these municipalities more than twice as many proxy votes were casted than on average in the country (Kamer, 1992-1993). There has also been a case in which a radio station called for listeners to hand in certificates of authorization which would then be spread among those who wanted to cast multiple votes (Elzinga et al., 2012, p. 186).

In 1986 the electoral council proposed that abuse of proxy votes should be acknowledged as a crime as well as a rule which obliges proxy holders to cast their own vote at the same time of the proxy vote they held. This led to several judicial changes but in 2007 the electoral council found that even though there had been several restrictions on proxy voting, abuse was still present (Elzinga et al., 2012, p. 188). The last substantive change to electoral law regarding proxy voting was accepted in 2010 when identification became a requirement for voting. From 2010 on a proxy holder had to be able to show both its own identification as well as a copy of the identification of the proxy principal (Elzinga et al., 2012, p. 189). Voting by proxy has been a topic of discussion in the Netherlands for quite some time. In the most recent 2nd chamber elections it has been observed that there is still uncertainty in the electorate on how the procedures regarding proxy voting work (Kiesraad, 2012).

The Organization for security and cooperation in Europe (OSCE) has reported their concerns about the Dutch system of proxy voting. According to the OSCE proxy voting and specifically the way it is used in Dutch elections violates OSCE standards. The OSCE states the following: *“Proxy voting should be regulated to bring the legislation more in line with OSCE commitments and other international standards for democratic elections.”* (OSCE, 2012, pp. 7-8). The worries expressed by the OSCE concern the fact that proxy voting violates anonymous voting since the proxy principal has to tell the proxy holder what to vote for. According to the OSCE proxy voting also potentially enhances “group-“and “family voting“. Responding to these concerns the Dutch electoral council and the ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations (BZK) have started in 2012 with keeping track of the amount of proxy votes but no juridical changes have been made so far (Elzinga et al., 2012, p. 184).

2 Research Problem

Proxy voting is among other alternative voting methods such as postal voting or advanced voting an expansion to voting regulations which has proven to enhance turnout up to ten percent (Blais, Massicotte, & Dobrzynska, 2003). These alternative voting methods are aimed at making elections more accessible and enhancing turnout. The possibility to vote by proxy however is not available worldwide (Massicotte, Blais, & Yoshinaka, 2004, p. 141; Svensson & Leenes, 2003). Available regulations regarding proxy voting are not universal. In France for instance voters have to be able to provide sufficient evidence of absence on election day which includes a lot of administrative work (Schmeets, 2011, p. 149). The limited amount of countries in which proxy voting is available as well as the difference in rules and regulations among those countries which allow proxy voting limits the available knowledge about the effects of this voting method.

In the Netherlands proxy voting is widely supported by the electorate. A vast majority of Dutch voters is in favour of proxy voting even though it does not guarantee an important principal like anonymous voting (Schmeets, 2010). In 2012 the Dutch ministry of the interior and kingdom relations acknowledged that there was actually not much knowledge available about proxy voting and how it is being used. This has been the reason for a research on how those who make use of proxy voting can be characterized (Van der Vijver & Van der Veen, 2012). This research was limited to the 2012 second chamber elections. The findings of this research where that there were several factors such as ethnicity, physical disability and age which characterize those who make use of proxy voting. This descriptive study gives a good insight in how we can describe those who vote by proxy, but it lacks an explanation of the choice underlying voting by proxy or not.

The amount of proxy votes in Dutch elections varies between 8% and 12% (Schmeets, 2010). This amount of proxy votes assumedly consists primarily out of unwritten proxies¹. According to the population data on average around 9% of the total amount of all the votes casted in parliamentary elections is a proxy vote. Table 2-1 shows the population data on proxy voting with the distinction between voting by proxy, voting in the regular way and abstaining. It is shown here that between five and nine percent of the eligible voters actually votes by proxy.

Table 2-1: Voting choice per parliamentary election 1998-2012.

	1998	2002	2006	2010	2012
Voted by proxy	7,3%	5,9%	9%	6,5%	5,8%
Voted in regular way	66,2%	73,5%	72,1%	69,5%	68,8%
Abstained	26,5%	20,6%	18,9%	24%	25,4%

Note: Based on weighted population data from DNES 1998-2012, no sufficient data available on 2003 election. Data weighting is done to enhance representativeness of the population further explanation of data weighting for the DNES data used for this study is given in chapter 4.

¹ No data available on amount of written proxy votes within total amount of proxy votes. Considering the ease of use the amount of unwritten proxies is assumed to be the form of proxy votes that is used most of the time.

Since one in about every 10 votes in Dutch election is a proxy vote it is important find out why people make use of this possibility. We also do not quite know how substantial the effect of proxy voting on elections is. Next to that we also have no extensive evidence of which part of society are more likely to vote by proxy. For that matter we cannot be sure that proxy voting serves its main cause which is enhancing accessibility of elections for those who are unable to vote.

Recent research into Dutch proxy voting by Van der Vijver and Van der Veen (2012) and Van der Kolk (2014) give good explanations of why Dutch voters vote by proxy in specific elections. The research of Van der Vijver and Van der Veen (2012) was limited to the 2012 national elections, while Van der Kolk (2014) used data from the 1998 national elections and the 2014 municipal and European elections. The results from past research could be expanded by using a larger dataset to confirm which factors influence the use of proxy voting and it will contribute to the limited knowledge about the use of proxy voting in Dutch elections. In addition to that a larger dataset provides an opportunity to look at the underlying choice voters have between voting by proxy, voting regular or abstaining.

The Dutch national election studies (DNES) provide a large dataset which can be used to expand the knowledge on proxy voting in national elections. In this way the choice that people make on how to vote can be explained more thoroughly. The aim of this research is to find factors which influence in the decision of Dutch voters to vote by proxy in national elections between 1998 and 2012. Therefore the main research question is: *Which factors influence the choice of Dutch voters to vote by proxy in national elections between 1998 and 2012?*

3 Theoretical Framework

The possibility to vote by proxy adds one extra option to the choice between voting and abstention. Much research has been done on electoral turnout often focused at the choice between voting and abstention only. The availability of alternative voting methods was found to have a significant impact on turnout (Smets & Van Ham, 2013). It is therefore important to examine who are more likely to make use of these alternative methods, and how this choice is made. For this research the theory of reasoned action which was developed by Fishbein and Ajzen (1975) is used as a starting point in the explanation of the choice on how to vote. The theory provides a framework that helps to explain why voters make certain choices. The main additions to the initial theory are explained in the theory of planned behaviour (Ajzen, 1991) and the latest successor the reasoned action approach (Fishbein & Ajzen, 2011). Using these theories to predict voting behaviour goes beyond a description of voting behaviour on the basis of a set of demographic factors. The choice underlying the behaviour as well as the factors that influence the behaviour according to the reasoned action approach will therefore provide a better explanation of the choice that is being made.

3.1 The reasoned action approach

The reasoned action approach originates from the renowned theory of reasoned action. The theory of reasoned action states that people act on the basis of a behavioural intention which originates from both voluntary and controlled sources. The motivation to fulfil a task and to act in a certain way leads to a specific behaviour. The behavioural intention has proven to be an accurate predictor of behaviour itself which makes it a possible proxy for measuring behaviour. The sources that create this intention are attitude, subjective norms and behavioural control. In the theory of reasoned action and the theory of planned behaviour it is explained that behavioural intentions are caused by both attitudes and subjective norms (Ajzen, 1991; Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975). These two sources were at first considered voluntary and controlled. In an elaboration of this theory it was found that the factors that influence behavioural intentions are not always voluntary and controlled due to external circumstances which affect behaviour. Ajzen (1991) explained in the theory of planned behaviour the presence of a perceived and actual behavioural control. These factors account for both the confidence a person has on being able to perform a specific behaviour as well as the actual ability to perform behaviour. Behavioural intentions are therefore caused by; the attitude towards a behaviour, subjective norm and a perceived/actual behavioural control (Ajzen, 1991, p. 182). These sources influence the intention but these are not necessarily equally weighted in their formation of intentions. The most recent version of theory is the reasoned action approach (Fishbein & Ajzen, 2011) which can be seen as the most complete model for the prediction of behavioural intentions yet. The figure below gives an overview of the theory of reasoned action derived from the reasoned action approach.

Figure 3-1: Schematic presentation of the reasoned action model.

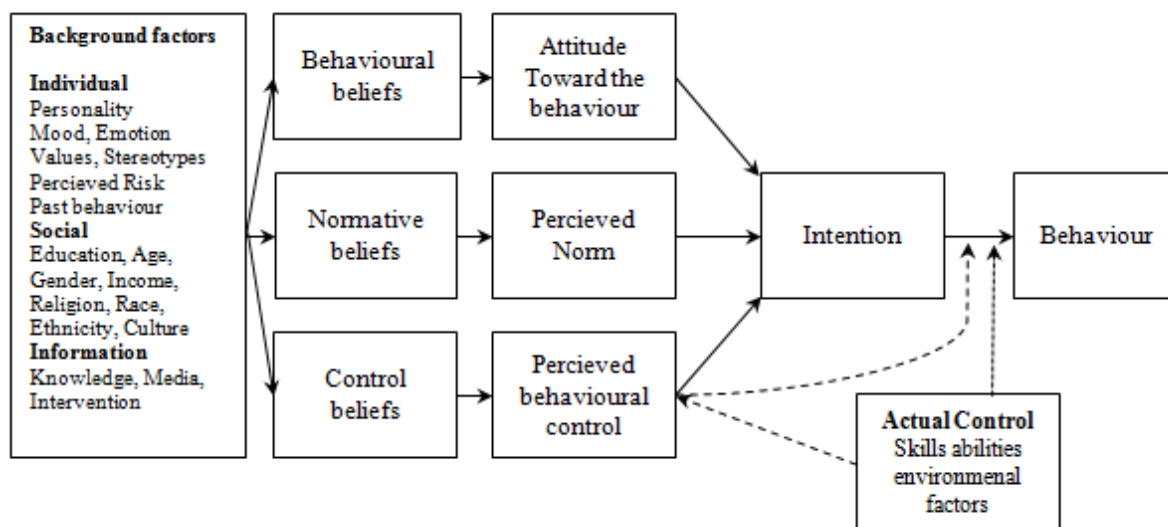


Figure 3-1. Schematic presentation of the reasoned action model. From: *Predicting and changing behavior: The reasoned action approach* (p.22) by Fishbein, M., & Ajzen, I., 2011, New York: Taylor & Francis group

The model illustrates that there are three main sources that influence behavioral intentions. These are all dependent on background factors which are different for every individual. The first of these sources is “attitude”. This is the sum of the behavioural beliefs about certain behaviour which determines the intention to perform that behaviour. Behavioural beliefs are explained as a person’s subjective probability that performing a certain behaviour will lead to a certain outcome (Fishbein & Ajzen, 2011, p. 221). Attitude is therefore the degree to which a person values the performance of behaviour. The factor attitude is a factor which in general explains what a person perceives as desirable behaviour. Attitude is intrinsic which means that attitude is personal and originates from a person itself rather than from external influences. People will find certain behaviour in reactance to a situation more preferable, for instance seeing voting as a civic duty (Jones & Hudson, 2000).

The motivation to go voting in elections is not always rational. This means that the attitudes towards voting do not consist merely out of logical choices. Lee (1988) explains that people do vote when they know the potential return is practically zero. People feel an importance is supporting that what they perceive as good. The support for those they want to see in office, and therefore the non-support for other candidates, is too some extent more valued than the actual outcome of the election. In voting the satisfaction from participating and expressing political preferences counts more than the expectation that a single vote will be decisive. This is also why rational choice theory often fails to predict voting behaviour and where.

Voting can additionally be seen as a habit because through repetition people become more comfortable with voting (Gerber, Green, & Shachar, 2003). This means that those who voted before are more likely to vote again. In this case the positive feedback from past behaviour is decisive in creating the attitude towards behaviour and thus the intention for future behaviour. Applying this to the choice on how to vote one could state that attitudes towards elections will weigh in on a person’s choice to vote, vote by proxy or abstain. People who have more positive attitudes towards voting and who intent to vote will be more likely to vote.

The second source of behavioural intention is the subjective- or “perceived” norm regarding a certain behaviour (Fishbein & Ajzen, 2011). This source encompasses the influence of external sources on the behaviour of people in a certain situation. The theory focuses on the way other people influence a person’s intention towards behaviour and therefore the behaviour itself. This occurs through for example encouragement, or support by others, as well as the behaviour of other people itself. This encouragement of others structures a situation for a person in a specific way which differs from person to person. Fishbein and Ajzen (2011, p. 22) therefore refer to it as “perceived norm” rather than the earlier found subjective norm (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975). A perceived norm for instance occurs in the influence a politically motivated person has on the political interest of his or her spouse (Stoker & Jennings, 1995) but also through other types of social pressure (Gerber, Green, & Larimer, 2008).

The third source of behavioural intentions is “perceived behavioural control” this source explains the degree of control a person believes to have over a specific behaviour while taking into account opportunities, available information and skills (Fishbein & Ajzen, 2011, pp. 154-155). The theory does not assume that people have complete control over their behaviour, which means these are factors which influence behaviour involuntarily. Gerber et al. (2003) explain this as a form of self confidence on a very specific level. The question “will I know how to work the voting machine?” (Gerber et al., 2003, p. 548; Green & Shachar, 2000, p. 570) is one example of such a perceived behavioural control consideration. Gerber et al. refer to what Fishbein and Ajzen call the conative aspect of attitudes Fishbein and Ajzen (1975, pp. 340-343). It is however not purely an aspect related to the earlier explained source attitude. In a recent revision of the theory Fishbein and Ajzen (2011, p. 64) define perceived behavioural control as: *“people’s perception of the degree to which they are capable of, or have control over, performing a given behaviour.”* This apprehensiveness on whether or not one is capable of voting also connects to certain aspects of attitude. The earlier mentioned perception of voting as a habit for instance can also relate to behavioural control aspects since a past behaviour can prove the control over the behaviour to a person.

There is also an influence of environmental aspects on voting which can be seen as a part of an additional source which affects both the perceived behavioural control and the behaviour itself. This influential factor is partially included in the actual behavioural control. The aspect of actual behavioural control is included to describe situations in which there are barriers to the opportunities to perform a behaviour (Fishbein & Ajzen, 2011, p. 405). Electoral laws could for instance affect behaviour since voting regulations are not necessarily always only facilitating accessibility of elections. A legal barrier which withholds someone from voting can be seen as part of an actual behavioural control factor. Here the dependence on perceived behavioural control gives an insufficient explanation. In the case of elections in the Netherlands however there are no compulsory voting laws which oblige people to vote, and elections are assumedly made accessible for all eligible voters. The actual behavioural control and the perceived behavioural control can be rather decisive. The actual behavioural control has a direct affect on behaviour since a lacking ability to perform a behaviour will potentially overrule a behavioural intention (Fishbein & Ajzen, 2011).

Another example of a factor that influences voting behaviour involuntarily, even though measures are taken to decrease the problem, relates to voters’ available resources. The lack of a resource like time, or lacking mobility can result in abstention even if a person’s behavioural intention had been voting. A lacking ability to vote might therefore affect behaviour without affecting the behavioural intention. Concerns about the act of voting itself

can therefore be explained through not only the perceived behavioural control but also the actual behavioural control which occurs without the interventions of behavioural intention (Fishbein & Ajzen, 2011, p. 217). Perceived and actual behavioural control also affect each other. The actual behavioural control can for instance be confirmative of the perceived behavioural control. This occurs when the actual behavioural control confirms or disproves the perceived behavioural control beliefs through an experienced behaviour.

Fishbein and Ajzen (2011) argue in their theory that there are three broad classes of beliefs that determine attitudes, subjective norms and behavioural control. These three classes are behavioural beliefs or outcome expectancies, normative beliefs and control beliefs. They acknowledge that these classes of beliefs can have significant overlap which suggest that certain factors can affect both attitude and subjective norms or behavioural control (Fishbein & Ajzen, 2011, pp. 203-204). Attitudes, subjective- or perceived norms and perceived behavioural control are the main determinants of a behavioural intention. The theory of reasoned action proves that these intentions are good predictors of behaviour itself. The theory of reasoned action can therefore be used to predict specific behaviour and explain why certain choices are more likely. This makes it very useful in explaining why people vote by proxy or not.

3.2 Necessary conditions for a proxy vote

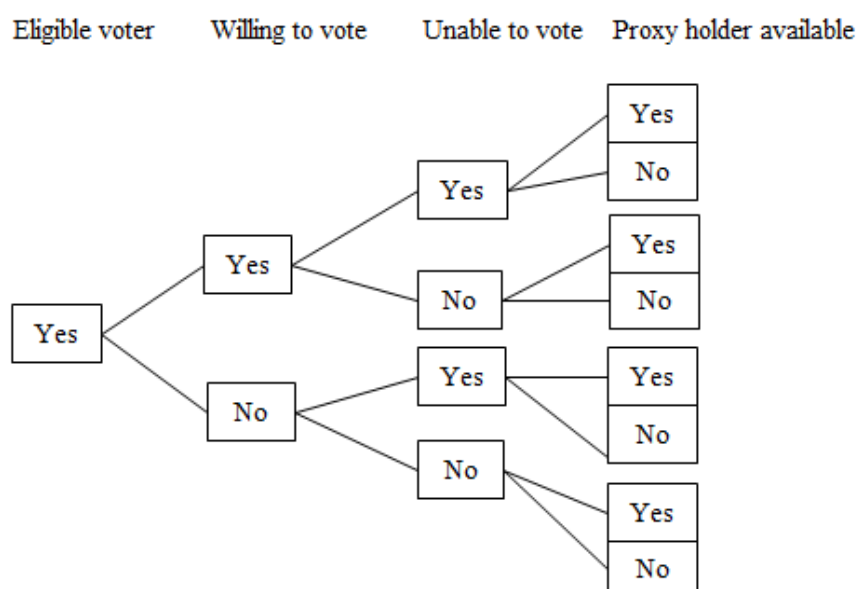
Voting is in general a behaviour that can be explained with the theory of reasoned action. The specific part of voting behaviour which is central in this study however has an extra aspect which has to be taken into consideration, this makes the use of the theory of reasoned action more complicated. This extra aspect is explained by van der Kolk who states that there are in fact three necessary conditions for a proxy vote to become probable (Van der Kolk, 2014, p. 5). First of all a person has to be *willing* to vote which translates into a positive behavioural intention towards voting caused by both behavioural and normative beliefs. Secondly a person has to be *unable* to vote by themselves and therefore have no “control” over the act of voting. Lastly a person has to be *able to find a proxy holder*. Because there are conditions in this case, which are to be fulfilled for behaviour to occur, predicting an intention is not enough. For a proxy vote to occur the intention has to be accompanied by a fulfilment of the factors. It is also not sufficient to accept the availability of a proxy holder as a control belief since the relation between proxy principal and proxy holder is more than a matter of being able to fulfil an intention since it has both legal implications and aspect of trust.

The reasoned action approach requires a certain degree of specificity which is not always possible in election studies. The conditions for a proxy vote require a lesser degree of specificity and can be constructed from aspects of the theoretical approach from Ajzen & Fishbein. Willingness to vote, as used in this study, contains intentions originating from both “attitude” and “subjective norms” where ability to vote contains aspects of behavioural control. The availability of a potential proxy holder is at first sight also an aspect of behavioural control since it determines whether or not one can operationalize the behavioural intention to vote by proxy. Availability of a potential proxy holder could however also include aspects of subjective norms since it does include actual behaviour and influence of other people. The proxy holder for instance also has to be willing and able to vote themselves for them to be able to cast a proxy vote. Some factors regarding voting like *civic duty* can explain both subjective norms and attitude aspects at the same time; therefore an overarching concept like willingness can be used to cope with this overlap. We can nevertheless use the essence of the theory of reasoned action to predict whether a person is willing and able to vote and has a third person available who could vote on their behalf.

A certain combination of these factors will make the choice of a voter to vote by proxy more likely. The aim here is to find out when a Dutch voters' behavioural intention is more likely to be; "vote by proxy" compared to "voting in the regular way" or "abstaining". The general expectation regarding the choice to vote by proxy is illustrated in figure 3-1. If we assume that a person will only vote by proxy if he or she is willing to vote, which means there has to be a positive behavioural intention. Combined with an inability to vote by themselves and the availability of a potential proxy holder there is only one situation in which proxy voting becomes more likely than voting regular or abstention. Therefore we look into when this situation occurs and what reasons people have to be willing to vote, unable to vote by themselves and under which circumstances a potential proxy holder is available.

Figure 3-2: Conceptual model

This model illustrates the conditional sequence leading to a choice on whether a Dutch voter votes by proxy, votes regular or abstains. A "Yes" means that this condition is fulfilled whereas a "No" means that this condition is not fulfilled. Even though theoretically illogical paths after "No" continue since in practice these situations are possible. The top path with consecutive "Yes" answers leads to a proxy vote being casted, all other paths will in theory not lead to this choice.



There are other combinations of circumstances possible. A person could for instance be willing to vote, able to vote and have a potential proxy holder available. In this situation however it is more likely that voters will vote by themselves. Not being willing to vote has been assumed to be a primary reason for abstention providing the ability to vote is present. A lacking ability to vote combined with a lacking availability of a potential proxy holders is also considered to lead to abstention. In practice a small amount of the proxy votes casted will be based on reasons that are considered illogical. From a theoretical point of view however a proxy vote will only be cast if a person is willing and unable to vote and is able to find a proxy holder.

3.3 Predicting proxy votes

To understand how these three sources influence the behavioural intention to vote by proxy either separately or simultaneously factors that can explain or indicate behavioural intentions regarding voting are used. These factors indicate the *willingness*, voting *ability* and the presence of *potential proxy holders* at Dutch voters. The reason behind this is that much research has been done on these separate factors which underlie voting behaviour in general,

but few have specifically questioned proxy voting in this combination. A good overview of factors that influence voting behaviour is given by Smets and Van Ham (2013) who state that there is no consensus among scientists about a core set of turnout determining factors even though there are factors that are consistently linked to individual turnout (Smets & Van Ham, 2013, p. 356). The selection of factors that have been proven to be influential in voting behaviour in previous work is dependent on sources that touch upon alternative voting methods. Next to that the data availability limits the choice of factors. The argument that people who are more *willing* to vote in general will also be more likely to vote by proxy will also be followed since this can be seen as the factor which is the start of a possible intention (Van der Kolk, 2014, p. 5). In addition aspects of the reasoned action approach will be used to find the catalysts to behavioural intentions and therefore possibly the behaviour.

As explained earlier it is improbable that a single factor will be decisive in the choice to vote by proxy, even though the variables are explained separately, there will always be a combination of factors. First variables which can explain the *willingness* to vote are assessed followed by those which can explain the possible *ability* to vote. Lastly variables which can explain the *availability of a proxy holder* are explained. Potentially some overlap between factors could occur since some variables could explain more than one of these three factors. Table 3-1 gives an overview of the variables that indicate behavioural intentions and to which beliefs they suit in the theory of reasoned action.

Table 3-1: Selected variables determining condition for proxy voting

Theory reasoned action terminology	Condition for proxy voting	Variable
Behavioural beliefs	Willingness to vote	Political interest
		Educational level
		Voting Habit
		Civic duty*
Normative beliefs	Willingness to vote	Political interest of social environment**
		Civic duty*
Control beliefs	Ability to vote	Age Voting regulation/process
	Availability of proxy holder	Household composition

* Civic duty can be seen as a hybrid between behavioural beliefs and normative beliefs. In both sense these are considered to represent willingness to vote

** The political interest of the social environment could describe the political interest of a potential proxy holder it could therefore also represent the availability of a proxy holder.

3.4 Willingness to vote

The use of the term willingness can be confusing in the prediction of behaviour. To some extent willingness and intention are similar constructs. In this study however the term willingness is used to describe intention. Fishbein and Ajzen (2011, pp. 42-43) explain that intention and willingness are indeed quite similar, but in the reasoned action approach the concept intention is used on a bigger scale which incorporates willingness.

A variable that is suited to explain willingness to vote is political interest. This is one variable that can partially be seen as a behavioural belief. Political interest of a person indicates whether a person believes participation in politics is a desirable thing to do. This variable has often been found to have a significant effect on turnout (Smets & Van Ham, 2013). High degrees of self reported political interest explain a high likelihood for a person to cast their vote in elections. The relationship between political interest and turnout is potentially reciprocal, where political interest enhances participation and participation further enhances political interest (Brady, Verba, & Schlozman, 1995).

A variable that in turn is found to explain high degrees of political interest is education. Hakhverdian, van der Brug, and de Vries (2012) found that those who have obtained a higher educational level are more likely to be civically engaged and more likely to vote. Education can be seen as a marker for political interest where the level of education underlies the interest a person has while political interest influences the willingness to vote (Campbell, 2009; Hooghe & Pelleriaux, 1998). In the theory of reasoned action this would translate into a positive attitude towards voting resulting in a positive behavioural intention. Denny and Doyle (2008) explain that political interest and education do not always correlate correctly in turnout models since they have common driving factors Denny and Doyle (2008, p. 309). Political interest is to some extent caused by education in the same way as civic engagement. They therefore argue that next to the common demographical factors that are used to describe turnout individual factors like personality and cognitive ability, for which education and political interest are often used as a proxy influence voting decisions. The explanatory strength of both education and political interest is however not denied, but the correlation between education and political interest should not be left unnoticed. Therefore the assumption that people who are characterized by high degrees of political interest and/or a high educational level are per definition more likely to vote in general can be followed. This positive attitude towards voting could also affect the behavioural intention which leads to the choice whether to vote by proxy or not which in turn depends on both the ability to vote and availability to find a proxy holder.

The reciprocal effect of political interest on turnout suggests some kind of habit formation among voters. Cutts, Fieldhouse, and John (2009) and Gerber et al. (2003) explain that voting can indeed be seen as a habit. People who vote in one election are more likely to vote again in the next election. Fishbein and Ajzen (2011, pp. 289-290) explain that intentions are not only determined by attitudes, subjective norms and perceived control, but also by past behaviour. In the case of a voting habit a “voting streak” is started at one point in time from which voters follow up similar behaviour. Non voters are therefore more unlikely to go to the polls which suggest a lower willingness to vote. A voting habit can occur both at regular voters and at proxy voters, the habit of voting among proxy voters is nonetheless dependent on the availability of a proxy holder as well who in return could get used to casting two votes at an election. Next to that there are cases possible in which a person is unable to vote which forces a habit of nonvoting. Overall however a voting habit could underlie one’s willingness to vote. It is however unknown is the type of election affects this habit. It might be that voters only vote every parliamentary election and not in the elections with lower salience that are usually held in-between two parliamentary elections.

One at first sight intrinsic factor that can explain an attitude in regard to voting is the sense of civic duty. The sense of civic duty is described by Orviska and Hudson (2003, p. 86) as “*the concept that people are motivated partially by a concern, by a loyalty if you like, for the wider state or the country.*”. The actual motivation as described here does not merely rely on self-

interest only but also on acceptance in society. To some extent this fulfilment of civic duty relies on acknowledgement from society, which makes it both intrinsic and extrinsic. Using the theory of reasoned action we could therefore state that there are aspects of attitudes but also of subjective norms. Where attitudes account for the strength of a belief and a positive outcome of the behaviour, the subjective norm share accounts for the motivation to comply and be a duty fulfilling citizen. As mentioned earlier people who have a strong feeling of civic duty are more likely to vote (Jones & Hudson, 2000). The behavioural intention of those who believe voting is a civic duty is therefore positive towards voting which makes those people *willing* to vote. Accordingly people who perceive voting as a civic duty are expected to be more likely to vote by proxy if they are unable to vote by themselves. Their initial willingness to vote is expected to be higher compared to those who do not believe in voting as a civic duty and vote.

The previously mentioned variables have a more intrinsic character and origin to a large extent from attitude. A less intrinsic influence comes from what Fishbein and Ajzen (2011, p. 130) call subjective norms, or more general; normative beliefs. This is more concretely explained as the perceived social pressure to perform certain behaviour. As mentioned earlier in the case of the perception of voting as a civic duty, social pressure can affect whether a person has the intention to vote in elections. There is however a slight difference between the pressure from *society* and pressure from people in the social environment of a person. In this study the distinction between these factors does not have to be made since both affect the overall *willingness* to vote. The close social environment of a person is nevertheless being considered as highly influential on voting behaviour.

There are both practical and motivational reasons why the close social environment of a person can affect whether one votes, votes by proxy or abstains. Encouragement for political participation could make people more likely to vote but does not necessarily affect the decision to vote by proxy, since a person could still vote by themselves. The decision to vote can however be influenced if a person is unable to vote, in this case delegating a vote to one's spouse or family member could be the easiest way to cast a vote. The influence of a person's social environment is therefore two sided; a motivational and a practical side. First we look at the motivational side of the influence of the social environment. The motivation to vote can be influenced by someone's peers. These might be colleagues, relatives, neighbors or anyone else in the social environment of a person. One of the more likely social ties that is ought to be influential on voting behaviour is household membership.

Nickerson (2008) argues that voting behaviour is often passed on from one person in a household to another. A positive effect of multi person household composition on turnout was also found by (Cutts & Fieldhouse, 2009). They found that turnout in two-electoral households is higher than in single- or multiple electoral households and that household context is very influential of voter participation. A partner or other relevant person in someone's social environment who is motivated to vote could be a decisive factor in the behavioural intention of a voter, since political interest of one could encourage the other which make that person more willing to vote. This encouragement is the perceived social pressure to perform a certain behaviour in the terminology of Ajzen (1991). The practical side of this aspect which is the presence of a potential proxy holder in the household is considered to be influencing the availability of a potential proxy holder rather than the willingness to vote.

3.5 Ability to vote

One of the reasons for abstention, but also for proxy voting is a lacking ability to vote. Not being able to vote would in the theory of reasoned action originate from control beliefs. Control beliefs affect behaviour in two ways. The first way is the perceived behavioural control which affects the behavioural intention where the second aspect, actual behavioural control, can also directly influence the behaviour of a person (Fishbein & Ajzen, 2011, p. 335). The control factors therefore affect a person's ability to vote through both the perceived and actual threshold concerning the act of voting. One of the determinants of a person's perceived behavioural control is the perceived ability to vote which is affected by the available resources a voter has. Time is regarded one of the main necessary resources for voting (Brady et al., 1995; Dyck & Gimpel, 2005). Since elections in the Netherlands are practically never held in the weekends, people with full time jobs possibly have the least time at hand to vote. To some extent this was also shown by Dubin and Kalsow (1996) in their study on absentee voting where they found that people without a job were more likely to vote in the regular way. The availability of time therefore partially depends on the amount of time someone works. People who work a high amount of hours a week could therefore be tempted to find a third person in their social sphere that has the time at hand to go voting.

Another reason for people to be unable to vote is lacking mobility; we can assume that there is a connection between age and mobility which starts from a certain age. Age is often associated with alternative voting methods in general (Dyck & Gimpel, 2005; Egmond, De Graaf, & van der Eijk, 1998). It is reasonable to state that people of a higher age are more likely to lack mobility. The likeliness of voting to be difficult for a person could therefore be higher, this changes the behavioral intention. The relationship between age and voting by proxy is therefore expected to occur only at higher age categories. Smets and Van Ham (2013, p. 5) explain that it is frequently hypothesized that electoral turnout rises in adulthood with a decline at a higher age. It is at this point of decline where mobility possibly declines as well and where the likeliness to vote by proxy increases. There is however also prove that people of a higher age are more likely to vote (Goerres, 2007). This suggests that older people are more willing to vote, together with a deterring mobility this could mean that proxy voting as an alternative to visiting the polling station can enhance electoral participation among those of a higher age.

(Fishbein & Ajzen, 2011) suggest that there are also external sources which affect the behavioural intentions of people which can be seen as the actual behavioural control. Voting nowadays is encouraged but not obligatory. The encouragement to vote can be regarded as part of the subjective norms of voting behaviour. Accessibility of elections can be limited by procedural regulations. These procedures can be encouraging or discouraging for voting (Blais et al., 2003). This accessibility is affected by voting methods such as the use of voting computers as well as voting procedures. We can test whether changes in procedures have had any effect on the use of proxy votes with the introduction of obligatory identification in elections in 2010. The threshold for voting by proxy has been raised slightly in 2010. Since 2010 elections in the Netherlands require the proxy holder to bring a letter of identification of the proxy principal along when executing the proxy vote². In elections prior 2010 it has therefore been *easier* to make use of proxy voting since there were less administrative actions needed.

² Before the 2010 national elections electronic voting was abolished and replaced by voting by paper. This is assumed to have no effect on the use of proxy voting.

3.6 Availability of proxy holder

The third essential condition for a proxy vote to be casted is the availability of a potential proxy holder. Here the influence of the social environment regarding practicality can be used as an indicator. People who find it difficult to find a suitable proxy holder have a negative perceived behavioural control on voting. Being married and/or living in a household with multiple eligible voters can make it easier to find a proxy holder. The positive influence of marriage on turnout has been explained by Straits (1990). Wolfinger and Wolfinger (2008) found that in US presidential elections marriage was an influential factor on turnout in general, since one person could act on behalf of both while taking care of registration and voting. The possibility that one eligible voter is likely to act on behalf of its partner assumedly is a reason to make use of proxy voting. Even though much practicality is involved in delegating a vote to one's spouse, one does not necessarily have to be married to, or live together with the proxy principal to be a proxy holder. Many of the people in the social sphere of a voter are potential proxy holders. The connection between the proxy principal and proxy holder is however still most likely to be based on family ties.

Massicotte et al. (2004) found that in most cases the proxy holder is direct family or part of the direct social environment of the proxy principal. This is confirmed by Van der Vijver and Van der Veen (2012). The choice between voting by proxy and voting by yourself could therefore be affected by the amount of close family members in a household of a voter and their willingness to vote. This has to some extent been proved to be one of the main reasons for the use of proxy votes (Van der Kolk, 2014; Van der Vijver & Van der Veen, 2012). The close social network of a voter therefore partially determines the ability to delegate one's vote.

We can expect that those who lack actual control over voting, but are willing, will be tempted to try and find another person to vote on their behalf which is likely to be someone who is in their close social environment. This is where household composition plays a role in determining whether one votes by proxy or not. Households with multiple eligible voters are more suited for proxy voters than single person or single parent households. If there is no one in the close social environment able or willing to vote as a proxy holder, the vote of the proxy principal will not be cast.

3.7 Hypothesis

The choice to vote in a regular way, vote by proxy or abstain is a very specific choice concerning political participation. The reasoned action approach by Fishbein and Ajzen (2011) provides a framework which helps explaining the behavioural intentions of voters. These intentions can explain why a person is willing and able to vote, and if there is a potential proxy holder available. The factors *willingness*, *ability* and *availability of a proxy holder* can be explained with the combinations of specific variables which have been proven to explain voting behaviour. The following hypothesis has been formulated:

Dutch voters who have a high willingness to vote, a low ability to vote and an available proxy holder will be more likely to vote by proxy than Dutch voters who do not have a high willingness to vote, a low ability to vote and an available proxy holder.

4 Methodology

This chapter will focus on the research design chosen for this study as well as the case selection data and the methods of data collection. First the main research design will be explained after which the case selection, the data and the data adjustments will be elaborate up on. The final part of this chapter describes the measurement methods used in this study.

4.1 Research design

In this study the units of analysis are Dutch voters in parliamentary elections. The aim is to find what underlies the choice on how to vote. The choice between voting, voting by proxy and abstaining can best be illustrated over a longer period of time since this choice should not be expected to be dependent on a context present at one single election. The study focuses on factors that occur on individual level at Dutch voters. Survey data are therefore considered to be the most suitable source. The most adequate way to test the hypothesis following the theoretical framework in this study is with cross sectional data that has been gathered at several points in time. This longitudinal design provides the opportunity to test comparable cases which have occurred over a larger period of time at once (Gerring, 2011). By using a large dataset consisting of survey data on voting behaviour a description of the reasons behind proxy voting can be assessed on a large scale this creates an opportunity to expand on previous research by including data from multiple elections instead of only one as done in earlier research on proxy voting in Dutch elections (Van der Kolk, 2014; Van der Vijver & Van der Veen, 2012).

The reasoned action approach by Fishbein and Ajzen (2011) is used as a basis for the prediction of behaviour. Due to restricted data availability this approach is not used to its full potential. To overcome the deficit in data availability factors from the reasoned action approach are grouped into the indexes willingness to vote, ability to vote and availability of a proxy holder which represent the factors which are influential on the choice on how to vote.

4.2 Case selection and use of secondary data

The main source of data for this research is a set of survey data from the Dutch national election studies (DNES³). This survey study has been conducted surrounding every parliamentary election in the Netherlands since 1971. The DNES aims at collecting valuable data on voting behaviour and background of voters in Dutch second chamber elections. The DNES is organized through collaboration between universities with the aim to create a dataset which can be used to study voting behaviour as well as political behaviour in the Netherlands. Surveying is the main method of data collections used by the DNES. These surveys are normally held in two waves, one prior and one after the election. The surveying methods include face to face interviews, questionnaires and telephone conversations. In 2012 the research consisted of only one wave after the 2012 2nd chamber election (SCP, 2014). The DNES primarily focuses on 2nd chamber elections. The frequency of surveys depends on how often 2nd chamber elections are held. The random sample consists of eligible voters in the Netherlands.

³ Also known as Dutch Parliamentary Election Studies (DPES)

The population selected from the DNES dataset for this research consists of respondents to the DNES surrounding the 2nd chamber elections of 1998, 2002, 2006, 2010 and 2012. There are several differences between elections which influence the attitude towards these specific elections. From elections prior the 1998 election there is no sufficient data on proxy voting available. Data from the 2003 parliamentary elections were not included due to lacking sufficient data on multiple variables used in this study. The selected elections do not have an equal interval. The 2nd chamber elections from 2012 were held following the fall of the cabinet in 2012 after only two years in office. This might affect behaviour towards voting, but is not expected to affect the choice to vote by proxy extensively since we assume that not only the motivational factor willingness but also the ability to vote and the availability of a proxy holder are determining factors.

During the time in which the selected DNES surveys were held some procedural changes regarding voting and proxy voting have occurred. The reintroduction of voting by paper and obligatory identification are two large changes in the procedure of voting. The effect of the latter is assessed to decide whether the different elections are indeed comparable. The effect of the reintroduction paper ballots is not seen as a significant change in the procedure regarding the aspect of proxy voting.

There are several considerations that have been made in the choice of using DNES data. Since the DNES in most cases uses two waved surveys testing effects might occur. A respondent could become more likely to vote because of the answers given in the first wave of the survey (Gerring, 2011, p. 251), this is expected to affect voting behaviour when it comes to party choice, but not when it comes to how and where to vote. An effect which origins from similar reasons as the testing effects is the stimulus effect (Voogt & Van Kempen, 2002). A stimulus or Hawthorne effect is the effect of being tested (Gerring, 2011). The difference from the testing effect here is that respondents (or even non respondents) might change their behaviour because of the test, for instance going out to vote after being contacted for the research while there was no intention to go voting if this was not the case. In two waved surveys this bias is more likely to occur than in single wave surveys. This is because people who are asked if they are going to vote could become more likely to vote (Greenwald, Carnot, Beach, & Young, 1987). In post election surveys this effect would therefore not occur. The data that is being used for this study consists of both two wave surveys and a single wave study. The stimulus effect might therefore be more likely in some of the data from elections than in others.

4.3 DNES Sampling

The DNES involves a complicated sampling method. Measures have been taken to create a representative sample of the Dutch electorate (Schmeets, 2011). According to Voogt and Van Kempen (2002) there are three potential biases that arise in survey research in general which applies to the DNES. The first of the biases they mention is the testing effect which is already mentioned. The second potential bias they recall is non-responsiveness. They explain that in many cases non-respondents differ significantly from those who do respond and therefore the population possibly becomes unrepresentative. This could for instance lead to over representation of voters and people with high degrees of political interest in the samples.

As a third potential bias Voogt and Van Kempen (2002) mention misreporting. Misreporting leads to a bias because the answers given by respondents do not reflect reality because of deficits in the reporting of these answers. This may be caused by several factors and has to be taken into consideration. One could however question whether these biases or research effects will have a substantial effect on the small parts of the DNES that are being used for this study.

It is acknowledged that the behaviour of respondents can change because of the fact that they are being interviewed (Van der Kolk, 2001, pp. 166-167). This influences the representativeness of the data. If we look at the percentage of respondents who stated they voted through proxy and the actual amount of proxy votes casted we see that the percentages differ between parliamentary elections⁴. If we look at the 2012 parliamentary elections amount of proxy votes in the 2012 parliamentary elections is according to the population data similar to the percentage found in 2012 by Van der Vijver and Van der Veen (2012)⁵. Therefore the data regarding proxy voting is considered to be reliable. For the factors regarding voting behaviour a weighting will be done. All in all the DNES data will provide a reliable source of data and provide an opportunity to contribute to the knowledge on voting behaviour.

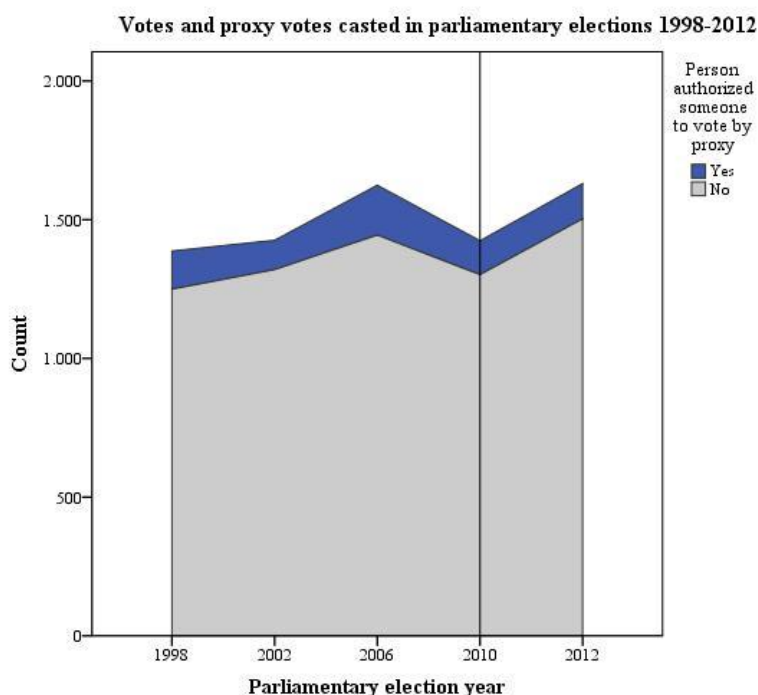
4.4 Data adjustments

The separate datasets which are being used have been collected over a long time period. During this period some procedural changes regarding voting have been introduced which could possibly affect the use of proxy voting. To test whether this change in procedure has affected the use of proxy voting turnout and turnout specified to proxy votes have been put in perspective over time. The strength of these effects also determines whether the separate elections are comparable. If the procedural change had any effect the expectation here would be that when procedures become more time consuming or more complicated people become more likely to avoid these procedures. The most substantial change in voting procedures occurred in 2010. In this year obligated identification was introduced which meant that a proxy holder can only cast a proxy vote when he or she can show a copy of an identification document of the proxy principal. After this point the voting procedure has possibly become more complicated and/or time consuming. Figure 4-1 shows turnout according to our population data with a specification of the amount of proxy votes.

⁴ See also table 2-1 Amount of proxy voter per election based on population data. 1

⁵ See Van der Vijver and Van der Veen (2012). Their research on proxy voting in the 2012 Dutch parliamentary was based on survey data. No actual counts of proxy votes per election were used.

Figure 4-1: Proxy votes along turnout parliamentary elections 1998-2012



The graph shows that the amount of proxy votes casted is roughly the same each parliamentary election. There is a sudden fall of turnout in 2010 which will be accounted for when the data is weighted. We cannot conclude that procedural change has had a substantial effect on whether or not people vote by proxy. The amount of proxy votes fluctuates slightly over time, but not enough data is available to confirm whether this is caused by any procedural change. Since no substantial differences between elections have occurred these separate points in time at which data is collected are considered to be comparable.

This study includes variables which are merged from three different DNES datasets, one that includes data from 1998-2006, and two from the individual elections 2010 and 2012. The differing origins of the variables have been the reason to alter these variables slightly into usable variables that have equal scales for all the selected cases. The difference between the 1998-2006 DNES data and the 2010-2012 data has been the most substantial. Some slight alterations to the categorizations made in the DNES created a comparable set of variables for these cases⁶. The data has been weighted to fit the population it represents better. The weight for the data has been provided by the CBS, and it is based on age, actual voting behaviour, sex, marital status, degree of urbanization and region. Because the 2010 DNES only includes a single wave survey data the weights and part of the variables that are being used are only available after the second wave the weighting factor post wave two is used for each DNES year. This affects the total population slightly since there is a regular degree of attrition after wave one.

⁶ Appendix A includes a merging overview of the variables used from the differing DNES datasets scaling is kept intact.

After the data is weighted for each of the elections separately the complete set has to be made representative. The next step is to equal out the effect of single elections by weighting the results of the elections equally so that there is no single elections with a higher effect on the results compared to other elections. This weighting factor is determined by calculating a factor which creates an equal effect for each of the separate DNES election studies results. The total N that is used has a size of 10931 divided over five elections. Therefore the average N per elections is ought to be 2186.2. By dividing the average N by the actual N of these elections the weighting factors for the elections are determined. In the table below the weighting factors for each of the elections are given. The weight factor provided by the DNES is multiplied with the calculated weight factor⁷. After the data has been weighted the analysis can be done. In this way the representativeness of the data has been improved.

4.5 Measurement

This study is built upon the reasoned action approach by Fishbein and Ajzen (2011), because of limited data and limitations regarding overlap between variables which is inherent to the use of secondary data in this study. The conditions for a proxy vote by Van der Kolk (2014) are used to link the reasoned action approach to the choice on how to vote. This choice on how to vote explains why people make the choice between voting in the regular way, voting by proxy or abstaining. There is not a certain time order that can be distinguished in this choice. The main dependent variable in this study therefore is the choice a voter has on how to vote. This dependent variable is a nominal variable with three values, voting in the regular way, which is going to the polling station and vote by yourself, voting by proxy and abstaining.

There are three main independent variables which are “Willingness to vote”, “Ability to vote” and “Availability of a proxy holder”. The independent variables are based on a composite measure, compiled from separate factors both willingness to vote and ability to vote are indexes⁸. Availability of a proxy holder consists of a single variable. The choice for an index rather than a scale rests on the possibilities the data give. The variables that have been selected provide an opportunity to count the number of indicators but not always the intensity of these indicators. A variable like political interest can for instance be measured on intensity, but voting habit as used in this study and household composition do not describe any measure of intensity. In the indexes each of the underlying variables of the construct determines whether a score in the index is high or low (Babbie, 2009, pp. 163-171). Each of the underlying variables is given a score and these scored add up to a total score which determines what the degree to which the variables add up to make a person more willing or less able to vote. All independent variables can have an association value separately, to see whether some variables stand out from the rest in explaining why people make a choice on how to vote Chi Square and Cramér’s V are used as a measure of association. These measures will indicate whether the variables are suitable to be used in the index.

4.5.1 Willingness to vote

The variable willingness to vote has been built up from three factors that separately have proven to be explanatory factors of electoral turnout. These factors are: political interest, educational level and voting habit. Political interest is measured on a three point scale ranking the most interested to least interested. Educational level is also measured on a five point scale

⁷ See appendix B for overview of weight factors per election.

⁸ All indexes are specified in appendix C

ranking the highest to lowest level of education completed. The scale for educational level is compressed into three point scale to enhance the comparability between elections since the terms used to describe a certain level differ slightly over time. Voting habit is measured on the basis of previous voting behaviour which either voted in previous election or abstained in previous election. In the DNES respondents have been asked if they voted in the previous election a positive answer in this case indicates a voting habit. This is the only basis for predicting whether someone has a voting habit or not. This variable has three values, either yes, not or not eligible to vote in previous election⁹.

The variables civic duty and political interest of the social environments cannot be included due to lacking availability of data. The amount of respondents who was asked whether they found voting to be a civic duty is relatively small (N=1747) and only includes respondents from the 2010 DNES. The amount of respondents who was asked whether people in their social environment were politically interested is also small and occurs only in the data from the 1998 parliamentary election. Therefore these variables are dropped from the index. This does pose a shortcoming in the model since this leaves out the normative believes aspect of the willingness to vote.

For the composition of the index the scores given to each of the variables are as follows: for each of the variables the value that is the most positive towards voting is given a score one from which every value more negative towards voting is given a score previous value plus one. The underlying principle is that those who posses multiple factors that are considered to be determining for a proxy vote are assumed to be more likely to vote by proxy. The scores in the index are divided into categories where scores up to four are considered most willing, scores between four and six are considered moderately or average willing and scores above six are considered to represent the part of the population which is most unwilling to vote. Those who score high on all three factors, meaning they are interested in politics, highly educated and have a habit of voting are considered to be the most willing voters. Those who are not interested in politics, not highly educated and who do not have a habit of voting are seen as the least willing to vote.

4.5.2 Ability to vote

The index variable ability to vote is a construct that is determined by two underlying variables. Employment and age are used as a proxy for the ability to vote. Employment is measured through the type of job which can be part-time, full time paid or self employed. Unemployed people are expected to have the most time at hand. While self employed people are expected to have the least amount of time to spend next to their work. This distinction is made to see whether the amount of hours spend on a job or having a job or not determines whether one is more able to go voting or not. The other determinant of ability to vote is age. A downside to using age as a measure for mobility is the fact that older people who are exceptionally mobile could be accounted for as less mobile. People aged 65 or older could for instance have been retired in the near past which leaves them in an in-between category of people who are unemployed and mobile. Age has been given an interval scale starting at 18 with intervals of 16. The categories will be ranked along the percentages of proxy votes per category.

⁹ Respondents could have been ineligible to vote in previous elections due to their age. This is considered to be abstention as well.

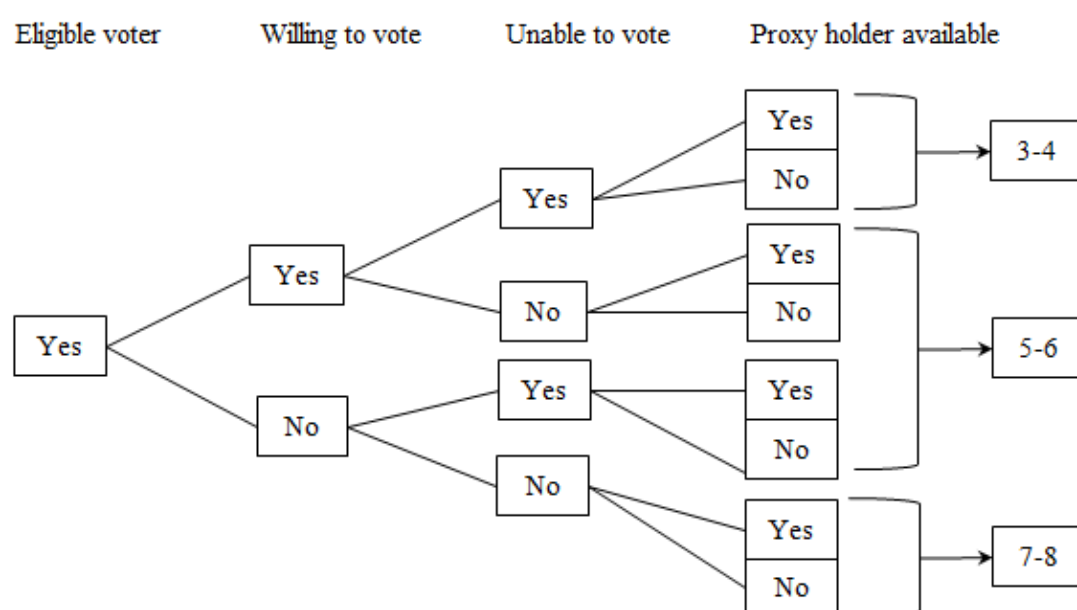
4.5.3 Availability of proxy holder

Because data on the political interest of significant people is not available for the entire population the availability of a potential proxy holder is based on the household composition of a respondent. People who are surrounded by multiple eligible voters are considered to be more capable of finding a proxy holder since it is assumedly more common to as a family member or close relative than a neighbour or colleague. This is translated into “Household composition” in which has a nominal scale with values 1 to 5, 1 stands for a single household, 2 and 3 for couples with or without children, 5 for single parent households and 4 for other types of households such as institutional households.

4.5.4 Complete index

To test the central hypothesis an index will be created by adding the separate index variables that have been created with the independent variables. This complete index will have scores varying from three to eight. A score of three means that someone is highly willing and unable to vote combined with a likely availability of a proxy holder. A score of eight means that a person is unwilling and able to vote combined with a low likeliness of an available proxy holder. Figure 4-2 shows a simplified scheme of how the indexes connect to the conceptual model¹⁰. The choices illustrated in figure 4-2 will in the index lead to a one for yes and three for no. If we only look at the minimum and maximum scores for each index we can see that the top path in the model will lead to a maximum score of four in the main index where the bottom path will lead to either seven or eight. The influence of moderate scores is limited. A score of four could for instance also be compiled from a moderate score on willingness, a score of one for ability and a score of one for the availability of the proxy holder. In this way the more extreme scores are considered to be decisive when combined with moderate scores. A person who can be considered highly willing and moderately able will therefore only be likely to cast a proxy vote if a proxy holder is available. Moderate scores combined will lead to a categorization as moderately likely to vote by proxy.

Figure 4-2: Conceptual model applied on index.



¹⁰ See appendix C for detailed explanation on index.

5 Data Analysis

The main hypothesis in this study is: *Dutch voters who have a high willingness to vote, a low ability to vote and an available proxy holder will be more likely to vote by proxy than Dutch voters who do not have a high willingness to vote, a low ability to vote and an available proxy holder.* This hypothesis overarching is tested by determining too which extent the constructed index variables willingness, ability and availability of a proxy holder explain the likeliness that a voter votes by proxy instead of voting regular or abstaining. Before an analysis can be done with the population merged from the different elections the effect of differences between these separate elections has to be assessed. The second step in the analysis is the creation of the index variables which are later added up into a main index which used to test the hypothesis.

5.1 Willingness to vote

Willingness to vote accounts for the degree to which motivational factors like attitude and perceived norms determine the choice on how to vote. The willingness to vote of a voter is determined here by combining the *political interest*, the *educational level*, and the *habit of voting* into an index. This index proves to show too some extent that these three variables have some effect on the choice people have on how to vote. This is shown in table 5-1.

Table 5-1: Voting choice by willingness to vote index.

	Most willing	Moderately willing	Most unwilling	Total
Voted by proxy	219 (8.2%)	313 (6.7%)	62 (4.5%)	594 (6.8%)
Voted in regular way	2295 (86.1%)	3389 (73.1%)	500 (36%)	6184 (71.1%)
Abstained	152 (5.7%)	936 (20.2%)	827 (59.5%)	1915 (22%)
Total	2666 (100%)	4638 (100%)	1389 (100%)	8693 (100%)

Note: Chi-square (4, N=8693) =1563, 16 P=0.00 Cramér's V 0.300

Willingness to vote as expressed through the index associates weakly to the choice between voting and abstention if we follow the Cramér's V value. We can however see some association. Out of the respondents who are characterized as most willing to vote only 5.7% did not vote compared to 59, 5% in the category most unwilling to vote. Those qualified as most willing to vote are also most likely to vote by proxy compared to others. It is shown here that people who are more willing to vote are more likely to vote either regular or by proxy. If we look at those who vote by proxy only we can see that those who are considered to be more willing to vote are much more likely to vote by proxy than others. Therefore willingness to vote as constructed here can be considered a determining factor in the choice between voting, voting by proxy and abstention. At this point we can also conclude that willingness on its own does not sufficiently describe what determine whether people vote or not.

The factors educational level, political interest and voting habit separately also associate with the choice that Dutch voters have between voting by proxy, voting in the regular way or abstaining. The association values separately are rather limited as shown in table 5-2:

Table 5-2: Chi-square statistic association willingness to vote with dependent variable

Variable ¹¹	Pearson's χ^2	P value	Cramér's V
Educational Level	$\chi^2(4, N=9336) = 363.23$	0.00	0.139
Political Interest	$\chi^2(4, N=9745) = 937.353$	0.00	0.219
Voting Habit	$\chi^2(2, N=9095) = 2576.05$	0.00	0.554

Voting habit has the strongest association with the dependent variable, this means that people who voted before were likely to vote again. Political interest and educational level, which are renowned determinants of turnout, only marginally associate with the dependent variable. These variables do also associate among each other which suggest that these variables point in the same direction. As already discussed in the theoretical framework educational level explains for a great deal whether a person is interested in politics or not. The association between these variables is apparent. Table 5-3 shows that respondents who are considered to have a voting habit are more often people who have also obtained a high educational level. These respondents also report high levels of political interest. Interest in politics in turn determined whether someone has a voting habit or not. Since the variables show similar patterns we can conclude that they are suitable to be used in an index together.

Table 5-3: Educational level by political interest by voting habit

		Voting habit						
		Yes			No			
		Political interest			Political interest			Total
		Very	Fairly	Not	Very	Fairly	Not	
Educational level	High	668	1826	159	36	170	80	2939
	%	(52%)	(34%)	(13%)	(38%)	(20%)	(9%)	(30%)
	Middle	445	2463	518	23	397	353	4199
	%	(34%)	(45%)	(42%)	(24%)	(47%)	(42%)	(43%)
	low	185	1147	544	37	272	414	2599
	%	(14%)	(21%)	(45%)	(39%)	(32%)	(49%)	(27%)
	Total	1298	5436	1221	96	839	847	9737
		(100%)	(100%)	(100%)	(100%)	(100%)	(100%)	(100%)

Note: Chi-square (4, N=9737) = 870,879 P=0.00, Cramér's V 0.211

¹¹ See also appendix D for overview dependent variables by independent variables individually.

5.2 Ability to vote

The ability to vote is determined by both the employment status of a person and its age. The expectation is that people who are older are more unable to vote due to lacking mobility and people who are employed less able to vote due to the time spend on working and commuting which leaves little time for voting. We can expect age to be too a certain extent explanatory for employment. The use of the variable age as a proxy for mobility does however not explain the whole concept of mobility since not only age causes deterioration in mobility. To prevent an error in the index the association between age and proxy voting is set out firstly. At this point there is no reason to doubt the effect of employment on whether or not a person votes by proxy.

The expected relation between age and voting by proxy on the basis is mobility cannot be proven at this point. While the expectation was that people of a higher age voted by proxy more often, these categories seem to vote by proxy the least. Young and middle aged people tend to vote by proxy more often than those aged over 69. While abstention rates are highest among people aged 69-84 the percentage of proxy votes is lowest. Therefore the index is filled in slightly different than expected. The ranking in the index is now determined by the percentages proxy voters per age category¹².

Table 5-4 shows the relation between the index on ability to vote and our dependent variable. The vast majority of the population is considered to be able to vote. This is possibly caused by the limited amount of specification that can be applied here. Only a marginal part is considered to be unable to vote. This suggests that age is indeed an insufficient determinant ability to vote on its own. There is nevertheless a slight pattern visible, the table shows that those considered to be most able are most likely to vote, while those considered most unable to vote are indeed the most likely to abstain.

Table 5-4: Ability to vote index by how to vote

	Most unable	Able	Most able	Total
Voted by proxy	8 (6.1%)	519 (7.4%)	144 (5.7%)	671 (6.9%)
Voted in regular way	71(53.8%)	4878 (69.2%)	2151(73.5%)	6792 (70.0%)
Abstained	53 (40.2)	1657 (23.5%)	601 (21.2%)	2244 (23.1%)
Total	132 (100%)	8026 (100%)	2886 (100%)	9707 (100%)

Note: Chi-square (4, N=9707) =37.65 P=0.00, Cramér's V 0.044

Table 5-5: Chi-square statistic and nominal association ability to vote

Variable	Pearson's χ^2	P value	Cramér's V
Age	$\chi^2(8, N=9740) = 104.92$	0.00	0.073
Employment	$\chi^2(6, N=9717) = 35.23$	0.00	0.043

¹² See table 0-4 for the cross table voting by proxy, regular or abstain by age.

The explanatory value of the ability to vote index is limited. Those who are considered most unable to vote do vote by proxy more often than those considered most able. If we look at both variables separately we can see that both indeed have very weak association values with the dependent variable. We can nevertheless state that age and employment do have an effect on whether a person voted by proxy or not since the table does show some differences.

At this point however is it not possible to sufficiently predict the exact effect of ability to vote on the choice between voting, voting by proxy or abstention but since the conceptual model is built up from combinations of variable including those which describe a degree of ability to vote the use of ability to vote in the main index is still useful. The factors Age and employment could for instance be an additional specification of factors that describe either willingness to vote or the availability to find a proxy holder.

5.3 Availability of proxy holder

The availability of a potential proxy holder is solely determined by the household composition of the household a person lives in. The type of household a person lives in changes over time. In general people start of in a household characterized as “couples with children” and live there until the move one into a different type of household. Age is therefore a factor that can explain this cycle. Age as used in the index on ability to vote can be expected to be influential on household composition since household composition changes over one’s lifecycle. Those aged up to 52 for example are more likely to live in household with children¹³. This potentially is one of the categories in which people are most likely to vote by proxy.

Because the availability no index is compiled, the DNES variable that is used is however altered from a five point scale into a dichotomy so that it will fit in the main index. This narrows down the categories to give a more general view on whether the availability of a proxy holder matters. What we can expect is that in single person or single parent households no proxy holder is available whilst there is one possibly available in households with two or more adults. Which would mean that those who live in a household where no proxy holder is available will be less likely to vote by proxy. Table 5-6 gives us an indication on whether or not this expectation holds.

Table 5-6: Voting choice by availability of proxy holder

	High likeliness of available proxy holder	Low likeliness of available proxy holder	Total
Voted by proxy	559 (7.8%)	114 (4.4%)	673 (6.9%)
Voted regular	5099 (71.5%)	1720 (65.8%)	6819 (70%)
Abstained	1478 (20.7%)	778 (29.8%)	2256 (23.1%)
Total	7136(100%)	2612 (100%)	9748 (100%)

Note: Chi-square (2, N=9748) =109.94 P=0.00 Cramér’s V 0.106

If we look at the difference between voting and non-voting among both categories we can see that eligible voters in single-parent households are the most unlikely to vote with 41% abstaining. Those who live in households together with one or more eligible voters which are

¹³ See table 0-6 for cross table proxy votes by age by household composition.

not children are the most likely to vote with over 80% of these people voting either in the regular way or by proxy¹⁴. If we specify these findings on voters into whether they voted by proxy or not we can see that the association between household composition and our dependent variable is weak¹⁵. This does however not fully disprove that people who live in households where no potential proxy holders are available do not vote by proxy. A proxy holder could also be someone outside of the household. As the index shows, people who have a potential proxy holder in their household are much more likely to vote by proxy compared to those who don't.

5.4 Proxy vote Index

To test the central hypothesis the following step is a test on whether our model can predict whether people vote by proxy, regular or abstain. By using the index created through constructed variables willingness to vote, ability to vote and availability of proxy holder we can see whether our hypothesis holds or not. To determine the values of the variables willingness, ability and availability of proxy holder are added up to create a new index. On this new index the minimal score is theoretically three. And the maximum score is eight. These scores are divided into three categories where the lowest three numbers in the score represent the highest probability to vote by proxy according to the model and the highest three scores represent the lowest probability to vote by proxy¹⁶. The table below has been constructed to show the association between the index and the dependent variable.

Table 5-7: Voting choice by proxy vote index

	High	Moderate	Low	Total
Voted by proxy	172 (10.2%)	381(6.5%)	41 (3.7%)	593 (6.9%)
Voted in regular way	1435(85.4%)	4090 (69.7%)	638(56.9%)	6164 (71.1%)
Abstained	73 (4.3%)	1393 (23.8%)	442 (39.4%)	1908(22%)
Total	1680 (100%)	5846 (100%)	1121 (100%)	8665 (100%)

Note: Chi-square (4, N=8665) =528.16 P=0.00 Cramér's V 0.175

Table 5-7 shows that those who were characterized as highly likely to vote by proxy did vote by proxy much more often compared to others, the table also shows that this category is by far the most likely to vote either by proxy or in the regular way with only 4.3% abstaining. This means that the expectation that these people are more likely to vote by proxy than abstain is holds. The overall pattern in the table is similar to the expectation formulated on beforehand.

¹⁴ See table 0-7 for cross table voting by proxy regular or abstain by household composition specified.

¹⁵ $\chi^2(8, N=7323) = 206.98 P=0.00$ Cramér's V 0.119.

¹⁶ See appendix C for index overview

6 Conclusion

There are multiple factors that influence the choice a voter has between turnout out to vote or not. Voting by proxy has been a way of voting that facilitates those who are unable to go to vote by themselves. There is however more to this. It is not only the inability to go to vote that motivates people to vote by proxy, it is also their own willingness to vote and the availability of a proxy holder which are in turn motivated by specific factors.

Willingness to vote can be explained through the political interest, the educational level of a person next to those who vote on a regular basis are more willing to vote. The willingness to vote can be the primary catalyst for electoral turnout. For people who are very much willing to vote an inability to vote can prevent them from voting. This inability can be explained by a lack of resources like time, but also through deteriorating mobility. It was found that a lack of time rather than deteriorating mobility due to aging was a cause of inability to vote. More research on the relationship between proxy voting and mobility could be done to see whether better indicators of mobility than age, as it was used in this study, can predict whether those who are not very mobile are indeed among those who tempt to vote by proxy. The population data show that it is not those of a higher age that vote by proxy more often, it is those of young and middle age who vote by proxy most frequently than those aged over 69. Age could therefore be more of a determinant for time than it is for mobility considering that people of a younger age are either student's or full time employed where people aged over the retirement age of 65 are quite frankly none of those two.

A third factor necessary for a proxy vote to be casted is the proxy holder. The availability of a proxy holder is most frequent with people who live in households with multiple adults. People who live on their own or who are single parents are unlikely to vote by proxy since they cannot find someone to vote on their behalf. Among these groups are also those who are most likely to abstain from voting. Availability of a proxy holder is therefore in that case a factor of actual behavioural control, one could be willing to vote, but inability to vote and lacking availability to vote makes votes seem impossible for them.

The main research question in this study has been: *Which factors influence the choice of Dutch voters to vote by proxy in national elections between 1998 and 2012?* We can answer this question by saying that factors which make people willing to vote are educational level, political interest and voting habits. Factors that cause inability to vote like lacking resources and the availability of a proxy holder are what make people proxy voters. A specification for the choice between voting by proxy and abstaining that relies on ability to vote and availability of a proxy holder cannot be made at this moment therefore we cannot state that proxy voting serves its cause which is to make voting possible for those who are unable to vote.

Making elections more accessible has been one of the reasons for proxy voting in Dutch elections in its current form. A change in the procedure like obligated identification could make procedures more complicated and therefore less accessible. The introduction of obligatory identification has however not had a significant effect on proxy voting. Population data show that the amount of proxy votes stays approximately the same proportion of the total amount of votes. Whether or not this change in procedure has made people more likely to abstain can however not be concluded.

The results of this study show that people are more likely to vote by proxy when they are already willing to vote, when they are unable to vote and when they are able to find a proxy holder. There are however still groups of people who voted by proxy even though they were qualified as unlikely to do so in this study. The model does quite a good job in predicting whether someone votes (either regular or by proxy) and abstains, this has however not been the aim of this study. There are quite possibly more factors that influence whether people vote by proxy or not. This study did for instance not include ethnicity as found by Van der Vijver and Van der Veen (2012) or the differences between the amount of proxy votes casted in different municipalities as discussed by Van der Kolk (2014).

There are several factors that influence turnout, in countries where proxy voting is not facilitated or where it can only be done after complicated procedures the choice between turnout and abstaining might be much more obvious. Proxy voting provides an opportunity to vote without much effort even if one is unable to vote. And if this is present people do tend to make use of this opportunity.

7 Discussion

The knowledge on why people vote by proxy in Dutch elections is still quite limited. The procedure has been under some criticism by the OSCE who would want to see regulation regarding proxy voting become more suited to international standards. Before a definite verdict on whether or not proxy voting is indeed decreasing the integrity of elections more research on how and why people use it has to be done.

The basic idea of this study is that people vote by proxy because of a combination of external factors and personal factors that can be identified with the reasoned action approach. Whether or not the reasoned action approach is suitable for explaining this specific part of voting behaviour cannot be concluded. The use of secondary data has restricted the application of the reasoned action approach. With sufficient data research built solely on the reasoned action approach can be done where the aspects of willingness, ability and availability could be expanded and represented more accurately.

The DNES data have proven to be very useful in the explanation of voting behaviour. However several aspects that are inherent to the use of these data have to be taken into consideration. The amount of proxy voters among respondent is low considering that people who are willing to participate in a survey like the DNES are likely to be those interested in politics. Next to that those who are likely to be unable to vote are also likely to be unable to participate in a survey like the DNES. The surveying methods do provide a possibility for people to participate from their homes, but this differs between separate DNES years.

This study focuses purely on the proxy principal side of the choice. In future research the effect of certain characteristics of the proxy holder could be taken into consideration. In this study proxy holders are considered to be neutral and have no effect on the proxy vote. But being a proxy holder is actually a matter of trust, it is up to the proxy holder to cast the vote of the principal as the principal would have done himself if he or she had been at the polling station. Since there is no feedback or evidence that the proxy holder did in fact cast the vote as assigned by the proxy principal a trust relation is necessary. This partially explains why proxy holders are often people from the household of the proxy principal. Next to the actual voting the political motivation of a proxy holder should be taken into consideration. Political motivation of significant others has proven to be a reason for people to be more politically active. This is the point at which the initiative to vote by proxy might shift. Because who takes the initiative, the holder or the principal?

Future research could also focus on the differences in the use of proxy votes between different elections. Is the amount of proxy votes equal in parliamentary, municipal, provincial and European elections for instance? The use of proxy votes could be depending on the salience of elections since elections other than the national elections are often considered to be less important, which shows in the lower turnout for these elections compared to parliamentary elections. And why is it possible for Dutch voters to vote by proxy in European elections while in other countries this is not facilitated in basically the same election?

All in all proxy voting, but also other alternative voting methods, could become more and more important in achieving equal participation. Therefore the effects of these methods should be studied to examine whether they serve their cause, which in turn can be a reply to the worries ousted by the OSCE.

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Appendix A Merging overview

Merging overview variables DNES 2010+2012 into integrated file 1971-2006

Variable	1971-2006	2010	2012	Into
Political interest	V1_4	V024	V014	Variable_1
Educational level	D37	V410	V344	Variable_2
Civic duty	N/A	V068	N/A	N/A
Household composition	D10	V438	V358	Variable_3
Employment	D13	V415	V349	Variable_4
Employment specific**	D13-D18	V415	V349	Variable_4A
Age	D2	V012	V340	Variable_5
Voted by proxy	V19_1	V530	V211	Variable_6
Voted	V15_1	V510	V210	Variable_7
DNES year	A1	*	*	Variable_8
Did (not) vote in previous election.	V14_1	V240	V150	Variable_9

* Case ID variable computed

** Employment specific is categorized on Employed, works less than 12 hours, self employed and unemployed.

Appendix B Weighting overview

DNES Year	N	Weight factor	Adjusted N
1998	2101	1,040552118	2186,2
2002	1907	1,146407971	2186,2
2006	2625	0,832838095	2186,2
2010	2621	0,834109119	2186,2
2012	1677	1,303637448	2186,2
Total	10931	5,15754475	10931

Appendix C Indexes

Willingness to vote

Educational level	Political interest	Voting habit	Scale
1: High	1: Very interested	1: voted in previous election	3-4: Most willing
2: Middle	2: Fairly interested	2: Did not vote in previous election	4-6: Moderately willing
3: Low	3: Not interested		6-8: Unwilling

Ability to vote

Age	Employment	Scale (scoreAge+scoreEmp.)
1: 18-34	1: Self Employed	1-2=Highly unable
2: 35-52	2: Paid job > 12 hours	3-6= Able
3: 53-68	3: Paid job < 12 Hours	6-9= Most able to vote by themselves
4: 69-84	4: Unemployed	
5: 85+		

Availability of proxy holder

Household composition

1: Couple or more persons with children	High chance of availability and use of proxy
2: Couple or more persons without children	High chance of availability of proxy holder.
3: Other ¹⁷	High chance of availability, high likelihood of use
4: Single person household	Low likelihood of availability
5: Single parent Household	Low likelihood of availability and low change of use.

Proxy vote index

Willingness to vote	Ability to vote	Availability of proxy holder	Total
1: Most willing	1: Highly unable	1:High chance	3-4 High
2: Moderately willing	2: Able	N/A	5-6 Medium
3: Unwilling	3: Most able	2: Low likelihood	7-8 Low

¹⁷ Other includes all that does not qualify for categories used.

Appendix D Tables independent variables

Table 0-1: Voted by proxy, regular or abstained by Educational level

	Educational level High	Educational level Middle	Educational level Low	Total
Voted by proxy	213 (8,0%)	292 (6,8%)	132 (5,5%)	637 (6,8%)
Voted regular	2155 (80,7%)	2971 (69,6%)	1455 (60,8%)	6581 (70,5%)
Abstained	304 (11,4%)	1007 (23,6%)	807 (33,7%)	2118 (22,7%)
Total	2672 (100,0%)	4270 (100,0%)	2394 (100,0%)	9336 (100%)

Table 0-2: Voted by proxy, regular or abstained by Political Interest

	Very Interested	Fairly Interested	Not Interested	Total
Voted by proxy	104 (7,6%)	436 (7,0%)	133 (6,1%)	673 (6,9%)
Voted regular	1124 (82,3%)	4673(75,3%)	1019 (46,9%)	6816 (69,9%)
Abstained	138 (10,1%)	1097 (17,7%)	1021 (47,0%)	2256 (23,2%)
Total	1366 (100,0%)	6206 (100,0%)	2173 (100,0%)	9745(100,0%)

Table 0-3: Voted by proxy, regular or abstained by Voting habit

	Yes	No	Total
Voted by proxy	571 (7,7%)	59 (3,5%)	630 (6,9%)
Voted regular	5975 (80,9%)	443 (25,9%)	6418 (70,6%)
Abstained	841 (11,4%)	1206 (70,6%)	2047 (22,5%)
Total	7387 (100,0%)	1708 (100,0%)	9095 (100,0%)

Table 0-4: Voted by proxy, regular or abstained by Age (ordinal variable)

	18-34	35-52	56-68	69-84	85+	Total
Voted by proxy	205	253	151	58	7	674
%	(7,5%)	(7,5%)	(6,7%)	(4,6%)	(5,4%)	(6,9%)
Voted regular	1737	2405	1672	914	86	6814
%	(63,5%)	(71,1%)	(74,6%)	(73,1%)	(66,7%)	(70,0%)
Abstained	794	726	418	278	36	2252
%	(29,0%)	(21,5%)	(18,7%)	(22,2%)	(27,9%)	(23,1%)
Total	2736	3384	2241	1250	129	9740
%	(100,0%)	(100,0%)	(100,0%)	(100,0%)	(100,0%)	(100,0%)

Table 0-5: Voted by proxy, regular or abstained by Employment

	Self employed	Paid Employment >12 hours	Part time <12 Hours	Does not work	Total
Voted by proxy	61(9,3%)	367 (7,5%)	37 (6,9%)	205 (5,7%)	670 (6,9%)
Voted regular	476 (72,7%)	3414 (69,7%)	343 (64,2%)	2564 (70,7%)	6797 (69,9%)
Abstained	118 (18,0%)	1120 (22,9%)	154 (28,8%)	858 (23,7%)	2250 (23,2%)
Total	655 (100,0%)	4901 (100,0%)	534 (100,0%)	3627 (100,0%)	9717 (100,0%)

Table 0-6: Proxy votes by age by household composition

		Couple or more persons with children	Couple or more persons without children	Other	Single Person household	Single parent household	
Counts and % voted by proxy	Age 18-34	100 (31,1%)	47 (20,1%)	2 (66,7%)	45 (47,9%)	10 (47,6%)	204 (30,3%)
	Age 35-52	185 (57,5%)	44 (18,8%)	1 (33,3%)	16 (17%)	8 (38,1%)	254 (37,7%)
	Age 56-68	36 (11,2%)	102 (43,6%)	0 (0,0%)	11 (11,7%)	2 (9,5%)	151 (22,4%)
	Age 69-84	1 (0,3%)	38 (16,2%)	0 (0,0%)	18 (19,1%)	1 (4,8%)	58 (8,6%)
	Age 85+	0(0,0%)	3 (1,3%)	0 (0,0%)	4 (4,3%)	0(0,0%)	7 (1,0%)
	Total	322 (100%)	234 (100%)	3 (100%)	94 (100%)	21 (100%)	674 (100%)

Note: Percentages are those who voted by proxy. Those who voted in the regular way or abstained are not included in the table.

Table 0-7: Voting by proxy regular or abstained by household compositions specific

	Single person household	Couple without children	Couple with children	Single parent household	other	Total
Voted by proxy	323 (8,1%)	234 (7,6%)	94 (4,7%)	20 (3,4%)	3 (5,1%)	674 (6,9%)
Voted regular	2827 (70,8%)	2242 (72,7%)	1361 (67,3%)	359 (60,7%)	30 (50,8%)	6819 (69,9%)
Abstained	842 (21,1%)	610 (19,8%)	566 (28%)	212 (35,9%)	26 (44,1%)	2256 (23,1%)
Total	3992 (100,0%)	3086 (100,0%)	2021 (100,0%)	591 (100,0%)	59 (100,0%)	9749 (100,0%)