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RESEARCH NOTE

Different Surveys, Different Results? A Comparison of Two Surveys on the 2009 European Parliamentary Election

STEFAN DAHLBERG and MIKAEL PERSSON

The European Election Survey (EES) is carried out in all member states at the time of each European Parliament election. The mode of data collection (mainly telephone interviews) and the sampling procedure (achieving 1,000 interviews in each country) raise doubts about the data quality. Until now knowledge has been lacking about the extent to which the mode of data collection and the sampling procedure bias the results. In one European country an independently designed election survey is carried out: The Swedish National European Parliament Election Study (SNES). The survey consists of face-to-face interviews of a random net sample of 2,682 individuals (response rate 67 per cent compared to 11.2 in the Swedish EES survey). In addition, SNES includes a large number of variables from official register data (including validated voting) that facilitates analyses without any non-responses generating missing data. This quasi-experimental methodological set up is used to compare the data from the two surveys for voter turnout, left–right placement and party choice. Results show that EES overestimates turnout levels more than SNES. EES also has a large overrepresentation of highly educated respondents, and thus underestimates differences in turnout between highly and less educated citizens. As for left–right placement, respondents in EES place both themselves and the parties on more extreme positions. Regarding party choice, the main difference between the surveys is that the EES largely underestimates the share of Social Democratic voters.

The European Election Survey (EES) is a world unique source of data that has pushed the boundaries of research on electoral behaviour. Carried out simultaneously in all European Union countries, the unique design of the EES has facilitated important studies comparing electoral behaviour in second order elections in a wide range of nations with different political and social contexts (e.g. Hix and Marsh 2008; Marsh 1998; Reif and Schmitt 1980; van der Eijk and Franklin 2009).

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However, the mode of data collection (mainly telephone interviews) and the sampling procedure (achieving 1,000 interviews in each country) raise doubts about the data quality. Until now it has not been known whether and to what extent the mode of data collection and the sampling procedure bias the results. Fortunately, in one European country an independently designed election survey is carried out: the Swedish National European Parliament Election Study (SNES). The survey consists of face-to-face interviews of a random net sample of 2,682 individuals (response rate 67 per cent). In addition, SNES includes a large number of variables from official register data (including validated voting) that facilitates analyses of turnout without any non-responses generating missing data. We make use of this quasi-experimental methodological set up to compare the data quality from the two surveys.

Face-to-face surveys represent something of a 'gold standard' in survey research since interviewers can make sure that the respondents understand the questions and interviewers can control the interview setting. In addition, surveys with high response rates are likely to be more reliable than surveys with low response rates (Groves and Peytcheva 2008). Since the SNES survey lives up to these criteria for a high-quality survey it is relevant to evaluate whether results derived from the data from the EES can even approximate those from a high-quality survey such as SNES. Since the two surveys differ both as regards the sampling procedures and the modes of data collection, we cannot of course say for sure which one of these two factors has caused potential differences in the results between the surveys. Our aim is much more modest, i.e. to test whether data from the EES can be useful in the absence of high-quality survey data or if the estimates obtained are seriously biased in comparison with data from a high-quality survey.

From previous research we know that respondents provide more accurate responses when there is less interaction with the interviewer (Díaz de Rada 2011), i.e. responses are more accurate in postal and Internet surveys than when using face-to-face and telephone interviews (Kreuter *et al.* 2008). This suggests that there might be social desirability bias in the responses of, for example, the turnout variable in both EES and SNES. Moreover, research also shows that non-response bias is more likely to occur when response rates are low (Groves and Peytcheva 2008). Taking the low response rate of the EES data into account (11.2 per cent in the Swedish part of EES and 12.4 per cent overall in EES, compared to 67 per cent in the SNES), this could be a potential problem for the data quality. But previous research provides little guidance on exactly what to expect in terms of how these factors might affect the results in EES compared to SNES. Hence, systematic comparisons are warranted.

For that reason we aim to provide some detailed comparisons that might hopefully also be of importance for scholars in other countries than Sweden using the EES. Whenever possible we also compare the surveys with register data on the Swedish population. The article will proceed as follows. First, we describe the survey methodology applied in the EES and SNES respectively. Second, we compare the composition of respondents in the datasets on

equivalent sets of variables. Third, we perform analyses of voter turnout and party choice in the EES and SNES respectively to compare the results from the two surveys.

Data

The 2009 European Elections Voter Study was administered by the Department of Political Science at the University of Amsterdam, together with the 2009 European Election Candidate Study team at the WZB in Berlin, and the 2009 European Election Media Study team at the University of Amsterdam and the University of Exeter. Gallup carried out the fieldwork from the first working day after the election to 9 July 2009. The mode of interview was computer-assisted telephone interviewing (CATI) in most countries, including Sweden. The study is a random sample of the Swedish voting age population. However, the EES does not draw on fixed samples in each of the countries. Instead, they aim to collect (at least) 1,000 interviews (in most of the countries). This implies that the sample is expanded until enough interviews are accomplished. In Sweden 9,063 phone numbers were used to collect the 1,002 interviews, which yields an effective response rate of about 11 per cent. Table 1 presents

TABLE 1
RESPONSE RATE FOR EES

	Completed interviews	Total phone numbers used	Response rate
Austria	1,000	14,954	6.7
Belgium	1,002	9,289	10.8
Bulgaria	300	1,788	16.8
Cyprus	1,000	12,497	8.0
Czech Republic	300	3,047	9.8
Germany	1,004	13,833	7.3
Denmark	1,000	7,465	13.4
Estonia	300	1,875	16.0
Greece	1,000	15,398	6.5
Spain	1,000	9,362	10.7
Finland	1,000	4,758	21.0
France	1,000	15,540	6.4
Hungary	300	1,957	15.3
Ireland	1,001	4,230	23.7
Italy	1,000	9,252	10.8
Lithuania	300	2,995	10.0
Luxembourg	1,001	10,769	9.3
Latvia	300	1,644	18.2
Malta	1,000	4,980	20.1
Netherlands	1,005	13,852	7.3
Poland	302	3,059	9.9
Portugal	1,000	5,016	19.9
Romania	303	4,382	6.9
Sweden	1,002	9,063	11.1
Slovenia	1,000	11,405	8.8
Slovakia	301	1,741	17.3
United Kingdom	1,000	8,003	12.5
Average	767.4	7,487.2	12.4

the response rates in each of the countries. This information shows that Sweden is no outlier as regards response rate in the EES.

The Swedish National European Parliament Election Study of 2009 was conducted in collaboration between the Department of Political Science at the University of Gothenburg and Statistics Sweden (SCB). The study is carried out as post-election face-to-face interviews of a random net sample of 2,682 individual voters living in Sweden, in the ages 18 to 80. The response rate was 67 per cent. The majority of the non-responses were due to refusal (22 per cent). Other reasons for non-response were sickness (3 per cent) and that Statistics Sweden could not get in touch with the respondents (7 per cent). The interviews were conducted between 8 June and 29 September 2009. The median time for the interview was 56 minutes. The respondents' electoral participation has been validated against the official electoral register. In addition, variables measuring education, gender, age and income are also taken from the official register data (for further information, see Oscarsson and Holmberg 2010: 211–15).

Results

Composition of Respondents

We begin by looking more closely at the composition of the respondents. Table 2 presents the age, educational levels, gender, place of residence, marital status, occupational status, political interest and the attitudes towards the Swedish membership in the European Union for the respondents in EES and SNES respectively. Regarding the composition of the respondents in terms of age cohorts, the EES sample consists of a somewhat lower number of young first-time voters (4 per cent) while having more older people aged 71 or older (15.1 per cent). In SNES we find a different composition (8.3 per cent of younger people and 9.5 per cent of older people).

As for education, the proportion of respondents with gymnasium education is about the same in the two surveys. However, in SNES there is a larger proportion of respondents with only compulsory education (24.4 per cent compared to 14.5 per cent in the EES). In the EES, however, there are more respondents with post-gymnasium education (56.3 per cent compared to 44.1 per cent in SNES).

Regarding place of residence, we find a larger proportion of respondents living in cities in the EES (26.8 per cent compared to 15.5 per cent in SNES), while there are more respondents living in suburbs/large population centres in SNES (48.0 per cent compared to 15.7 per cent in EES). Concerning marital status as well as occupational status the composition in EES and SNES is quite similar except that the EES sample has a larger proportion of retired people (29.9 per cent compared to 20.9 per cent in the SNES). Supposedly, old and retired people are easier to contact than young people with telephone interviews, the survey mode used by the EES.

Regarding interest, for political interest in general as well as regarding more specific interest in the elections to the European Parliament, there are

TABLE 2
COMPOSITION OF RESPONDENTS IN EES AND SNES (PERCENTAGES)

		EES	SNES	Official censusdata
Age*	18–22	4	8.3	8.3
	23–30	10.1	12.5	12.5
	31–40	13.7	17.2	17.2
	41–50	15	18.7	18.7
	51–60	21.1	17.1	17.1
	61–70	21	16.7	16.7
	>71	15.1	9.5	9.5
Education	Compulsory	14.5	24.4	21.7
	Gymnasium	29.2	31.5	46.0
	Post gymnasium	56.3	44.1	32.3
Gender*	Women?	47.8	50	50
	Men	52.1	50	50
Place of residence	Rural	23.5	14.5	–
	Small population centre	34	22	–
	Suburb/Large population centre	15.7	48	–
	City	26.8	15.5	–
Marital status	Married/cohabitant	30.9	29.9	43.9
	Single	69.1	70.1	56.1
Occupational status	Employed	59	62.5	–
	Unemployed	4.2	4.8	–
	Student	4.4	6.5	–
	Retired	29.2	20.9	–
	Other	3.2	5.3	–
Political interest	Interested	72.3	53.9	–
	Not interested	27.7	46.1	–
Political interest EU	Interested	55	39.8	–
	Not interested	45	60.2	–
For or against EU	For EU membership	78.8	77.1	–
	Against EU membership	21.2	22.9	–
Proximity (mean)	Left–right	1.2	1.3	–

*Age and gender is not included in the SNES surveys as questions in the questionnaire but based on official census data.

rather large discrepancies between the EES and the SNES. For both survey questions the EES has a larger proportion of interested respondents (72.3 per cent of politically interested respondents in the EES compared to 53.9 in the SNES). This could be a factor explaining the difference between the two surveys. The difference in political interest between the EES and the SNES suggests that sample bias might originate at the point at which people are selected into the sample.

Voter Turnout

Table 3 presents reported turnout from EES, SNES and validated turnout from SNES together with the official turnout level. In Sweden the actual turnout in the European Parliament election of 2009 was 45.5 per cent. Among the respondents in the EES study the level of turnout is 82.3 per cent compared to a turnout level of 56.8 among the respondents participating in the SNES survey. When voter turnout is validated against the official register, the level of turnout in SNES is 47.0 per cent (in the net sample including also those who did not participate in the survey), i.e. close to the actual turnout level.

It is obvious that the substantial difference with respect to reported turnout suggests that the EES is of little use to obtain valid point estimates of voter turnout in the population. The question of interest is of course whether this is due to survey mode or sampling bias. The problem is that it is not possible to determine which of these factors has caused these differences since the two surveys differ with respect to *both* mode and sampling. However, while we cannot for certain say which of these two factors has caused the bias in the EES data, we believe that it is nonetheless important to point out that the estimates from the EES are seriously biased (although we do not know the exact reason for this bias).

The fact that respondents tend to over-report their electoral participation in election studies is a well-known phenomenon (Granberg and Holmberg 1988; Holmberg 2000; Holmberg and Oscarsson 2004; Karp and Brockington 2005). However, it is not the only reason why surveys overestimate turnout. The other reason is that voter turnout is correlated with survey participation. In SNES individual non-responses occur more frequently among non-voters (44 per cent) than among voters (21 per cent); 6 per cent of the respondents in the SNES data were over-reporters, i.e. respondents who said that they voted when the validation against the official register prove that in fact they did not. In EES the overestimation of turnout is most likely due to both over-reporting and the fact that survey participation correlates with turnout. However, since there is no information on validated voting in EES it is impossible to investigate which factor explains the overestimation of voter turnout in the data.

We continue by estimating a restricted model with a small number of factors that previous research has shown affect turnout (e.g. Franklin 2004), such as age, education, gender and marital status. The reason for limiting the analysis to these four factors is that we have information about these factors

TABLE 3
VOTER TURNOUT

	EES	SNES	SNES (validated voting)	Official
Yes	82.3	56.8	47.0	45.5
No	17.4	43.1	53.0	54.5
Refusal/don't know	0.3	0.1	—	—

TABLE 4
EFFECTS ON TURNOUT, RESULTS FROM LOGIT

	EES	EES	EES	EES	SNES	SNES	SNES	SNES
	Sample	Edu.	Turnout	Turnout	Turnout	Turnout	Turnout	Official
	weight	weight	weight	weight	weight	weight	weight	census
								data
Age	0.027*** (0.005)	0.029*** (0.003)	0.029*** (0.004)	0.029*** (0.004)	0.027*** (0.004)	0.028*** (0.004)	0.028*** (0.004)	0.012** (0.004)
Education	0.843*** (0.246)	0.906*** (0.148)	0.943*** (0.193)	0.943*** (0.193)	1.470*** (0.160)	1.493*** (0.158)	1.493*** (0.158)	1.464*** (0.146)
Gender	0.106 (0.175)	0.098 (0.093)	0.088 (0.135)	0.088 (0.135)	0.057 (0.115)	0.061 (0.114)	0.061 (0.114)	0.080 (0.102)
Marital status	0.120 (0.186)	0.183 (0.099)	0.159 (0.145)	0.159 (0.145)	0.174 (0.127)	0.172 (0.125)	0.172 (0.125)	0.382** (0.128)
Constant	-0.511 (0.376)	-0.653** (0.207)	-2.457*** (0.319)	-2.457*** (0.319)	-1.819*** (0.253)	-2.309*** (0.255)	-2.309*** (0.255)	-1.408*** (0.201)
n	954	952	954	954	1400	1400	1400	1744
Pseudo R2	0.038	0.043	0.047	0.047	0.062	0.064	0.064	0.062

Note: Standard errors in parentheses. * $p < 0.1$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$. See Table 2 for response categories.

from the official Swedish census register data for the SNES sample. Hence, we can compare both SNES and EES with a source of data relying solely on register information.

Moreover, in the EES data two different weight variables are included, one population weight and one cross-national comparable education weight. Regarding the population weight variable, the purpose is to compensate for dissimilarities between the sample and the target population. The weighting factor has, according to the data report, been calculated on the basis of four factors: age, gender, region and education (PIREDEU 2010). Since voter turnout is correlated with survey participation we also provide turnout weights for both the EES and SNES (voters and non-voters are weighted in accordance with the proportions of voters and non-voters in the electorate). Table 4 presents results from logistic regression models with the respective turnout variables as dependent variables. The first column shows the coefficients for age, education, gender and marital status on electoral participation from the EES data. The second to fourth columns show the results from the EES while using the provided sample, educational and the constructed turnout weights respectively. (We have also tested for different combinations of weight variables but the improvements were marginal and were therefore excluded from the table). The fifth column shows the results from the SNES while the sixth column shows results from SNES with the turnout weight and the last column shows the SNES results by only using the official census data.

Logistic regression coefficients are not directly interpretable or comparable in the same way as OLS coefficients. Part of the reason is that logit coefficients are confounded with residual variation (unobserved heterogeneity). Given this problem, we try to focus more on the statistical significance of the effects (comparing whether equivalent variables are statistically significant in different logit models is possible using the straightforward approach of comparing the significance of the coefficients) than the size of the effects (which is problematic given the problem of unobserved heterogeneity). When we discuss effect sizes we try instead to discuss the predicted probabilities rather than the coefficients whenever possible. For that reason we have estimated predicted probabilities of voting using the MARGINS command in STATA12 (due to space constraints we do not report all predicted probabilities here but present the main findings in the text). In terms of predicted probabilities the register data from SNES yields a probability of voting of 0.49 for individuals at age 18 and 0.63 for individuals at age 68. In the SNES survey sample the corresponding numbers are 0.42 and 0.74. For 18 year olds the predicted probability is 0.67 with no weights included and 0.69 with sample and educational weight included. While the predicted probability for individuals at age 68 are 0.89 with no weights included, 0.83 with sample weights and 0.90 with education weight. Hence, using the sample weights in EES corrects the results somewhat towards the true levels; however the effect still has a strong upward bias.

As for education, the effect is significant in all models except when the sample weight is included in the EES. The effect size in both models drawing on SNES is close to each other. In the register data from SNES the predicted probability of voting for less educated individuals is 0.36 and 0.71 for more highly educated individuals. In the survey results from SNES the corresponding probabilities are 0.41 and 0.75, i.e. the survey results have a slight upward bias compared to the register data of the entire sample. However, in the EES probabilities of voting are much higher for all respondents and the difference between more highly and less educated individuals is much smaller. The predicted probability for the less educated to vote is 0.73 and 0.87 for the highly educated. Using the weights changes the predicted probabilities only marginally. Hence, the difference in turnout between the less and more highly educated is notably underestimated in the EES data.

Looking at the effects of gender we find no significant effects in any of the models. As for marital status, none of the coefficients from the survey data are significant. However, the model drawing on SNES register data shows a significant effect of marital status.

The important finding here is that analyses of turnout, drawing on both EES and SNES survey questions, are likely to underestimate the effect of marital status while overestimating the effect of age. Last but not least, the more severe difference is, as mentioned, the rather large underestimation of the effect of education in the EES. In the SNES data the effect of education is about the same when analysed with survey questions and when using register data while the difference between the more highly and less educated is smaller in the EES. It should also be noted that using the turnout weights makes a very marginal difference.

Are the above estimated differences between the EES and SNES *significantly* different from each other? As mentioned previously, a problem in this respect is that one cannot directly compare logistic coefficients between models and between samples, even though the variables being used are identical (Mood 2010; Williams 2009). In order to get around this problem we have pooled the two datasets into one single dataset with a dichotomous identifier included for study type, i.e. whether a respondent is derived from the EES or the SNES. By this approach we have the opportunity to interact variables of interest with study type. When it comes to the effect on turnout we find the greatest difference between the studies from the effect of education. This is also the only difference that is significantly different between the two datasets (results available upon request). To conclude, it seems that the over-representation of highly educated citizens in the EES seems to be the factor that has the most significant impact on the estimates. Even though there are other substantial differences as well, these are not as influential as one can expect when it comes to predicting turnout among voters.

Left-Right Placement

We now turn to look at the respondents' self-placement on the left-right scale in SNES and EES respectively. Figure 1 shows the respondent's self-placement on an 11 point left-right scale for the two datasets. What appears is that the respondents in the EES are more polynomially distributed on the left-right scale with a greater dispersion in general and with far more respondents placing themselves on the extreme flanks, both to the left as well as to the right. The respondents in the SNES, on the other hand, are more normally distributed. A relevant question in this respect is whether these differences in voters' left-right self-placement between the two datasets has any implications for the subjective congruence between voters' self-position and their respective placement of the parties they have voted for. As expected, Figure 2 shows that the respondents in the EES tend to place *both* themselves and their parties more at the extremes.

FIGURE 1
VOTERS' SELF-PLACEMENT ON THE LEFT-RIGHT SCALE: EES (LEFT) SNES (RIGHT)

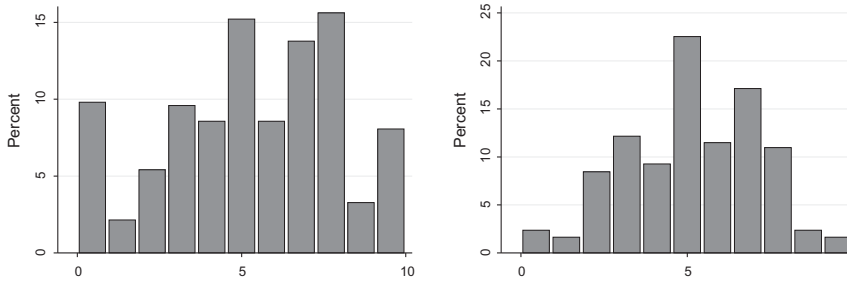
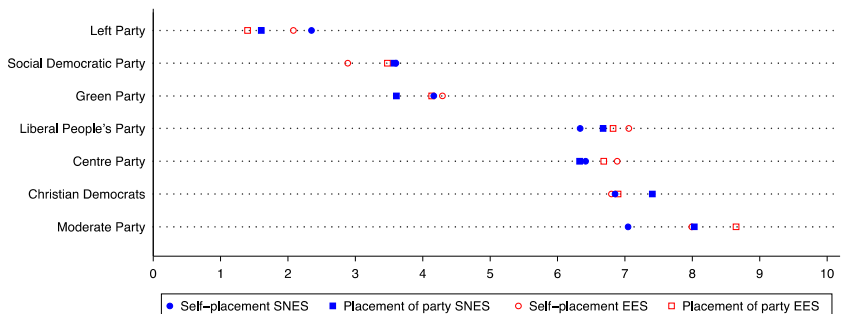


FIGURE 2
VOTERS' LEFT-RIGHT SELF-PLACEMENT AND THEIR PERCEPTIONS OF THE LEFT-RIGHT PLACEMENT OF THE PARTY THEY VOTED FOR (MEAN VALUES FROM EES AND SNES)



Party Choice

As for party choice we restrict our analyses to socioeconomic variables comparable to those from the census register since these constitute a most valuable benchmark. Table 5 presents the proportion of votes for each party in EES and SNES as well as the difference between the official results. Both EES and SNES underestimate the votes for the Left Party and the Green Party by about 1 percentage point. Most remarkably, however, the EES underestimates the vote share for the Social Democrats by 7.5 percentage points, while SNES underestimates it by 1 percentage point. The second largest party, the Moderate party, is also underestimated in the EES with -4.2 per cent, compared to an overestimation of 1.4 in the SNES.

Table 6 presents results from a multinomial logit model in which the dependent variable is party choice. We use only the seven established parties represented in the Swedish parliament at the time of the survey and the other parties make up the reference category. We present estimates of five demographic factors for EES with and without weights and for SNES with the survey data (with and without the turnout weight and a constructed weight for party choice – based on the parties' actual votes) and register data. We also tested applying different combinations of weights but these made a very marginal difference on average and for that reason we have chosen not to present them here. We begin with looking at the effects of age. Age has a significant effect on all party choices except for the Green Party in the SNES register data. The EES data shows this effect on all parties as well, with only one exception, the Left Party. Education has a significant effect on four of the parties drawing on the register data. However, neither SNES nor EES picks up the significant effect of education on voting for the Social Democrats (when weights are not applied). The inclusion of the provided educational weight in the EES or the use of the party

TABLE 5
PARTY CHOICE

	EES	Diff.	SNES	Diff.	OFFICIAL
V	5	-0.7	5	-0.7	5.7
S	16.9	-7.5	23.4	-1	24.4
MP	10	-1	10.5	-0.5	11
C	3.5	-2	6.4	0.9	5.5
KD	4	-0.7	3.6	-1.1	4.7
FP	12.5	-1.1	11.8	-1.8	13.6
M	14.6	-4.2	20.2	1.4	18.8
PP	5	-2.1	7.8	0.7	7.1
SD	1.1	-2.2	1.6	-1.7	3.3
Average	-	-2.4	-	-0.4	-

Note: V: Left party, S: Social Democratic party, MP: Green party, C: Center party, KD: Christian Democratic party, FP: Liberal party, M: Moderate party, PP: Pirate party (not represented in the national parliament in 2009 but gained two mandates in the European parliament in 2009), SD: Sweden Democratic party (neither represented in the national parliament nor the European parliament in 2009).

TABLE 6
 A COMPARISON BETWEEN EES AND SNES SURVEY QUESTION WITH REGISTER DATA ON SWEDISH VOTERS REGARDING THE EFFECT OF AGE, EDUCATION, GENDER AND MARITAL STATUS ON PARTY CHOICE FOR THE SEVEN MAIN PARTIES

	EES	EES Sample weight	EES Edu. weight	EES Turnout weight	EES Party choice weight	SNES	SNES Turnout weight	SNES Party choice weight	SNES Official census data
Left Party									
Age	0.0128 (0.0108)	0.0109 (0.0111)	0.0147*** (0.00561)	0.0128 (0.0146)	0.0120 (0.00937)	0.0372*** (0.0113)	0.0372*** (0.0126)	0.0375*** (0.0103)	0.0447*** (0.0124)
Education	1.104** (0.552)	0.724 (0.501)	1.346*** (0.336)	1.104 (0.745)	1.099** (0.487)	-0.0184 (0.475)	-0.0184 (0.531)	-0.00742 (0.432)	0.144 (0.461)
Gender	-0.405 (0.357)	-0.112 (0.347)	-0.425** (0.181)	-0.405 (0.482)	-0.403 (0.309)	-0.244 (0.356)	-0.244 (0.398)	-0.258 (0.324)	-0.212 (0.329)
Marital	0.370 (0.381)	0.872** (0.402)	0.279 (0.192)	0.370 (0.513)	0.358 (0.332)	-0.550 (0.367)	-0.550 (0.410)	-0.557* (0.333)	-0.227 (0.402)
Constant	-2.332*** (0.808)	-2.428*** (0.725)	-2.559*** (0.448)	-2.332** (1.089)	-2.946*** (0.700)	-2.368*** (0.762)	-2.368*** (0.852)	-2.645*** (0.700)	-2.987*** (0.671)
Social Democratic Party									
Age	0.0254*** (0.00753)	0.0347*** (0.00741)	0.0221*** (0.00404)	0.0254** (0.0102)	0.0251*** (0.00557)	0.0329*** (0.00779)	0.0329*** (0.00871)	0.0331*** (0.00698)	0.0209** (0.00846)
Education	-0.450 (0.345)	-0.232 (0.347)	-0.348* (0.201)	-0.450 (0.465)	-0.482* (0.255)	-0.482* (0.318)	-0.482* (0.356)	-0.466* (0.281)	-0.603*** (0.301)
Gender	-0.138 (0.254)	-0.0214 (0.242)	-0.253* (0.134)	-0.138 (0.343)	-0.138 (0.189)	-0.153 (0.233)	-0.153 (0.261)	-0.175 (0.208)	-0.177 (0.218)
Marital	0.439* (0.263)	0.410 (0.251)	0.406*** (0.140)	0.439 (0.354)	0.433** (0.196)	0.543** (0.264)	0.543* (0.295)	0.535** (0.238)	0.838*** (0.279)
Constant	-0.812 (0.544)	-1.478*** (0.492)	-0.633** (0.298)	-0.812 (0.733)	-1.201*** (0.404)	-1.163** (0.502)	-1.163** (0.561)	-1.526*** (0.456)	-0.556 (0.403)

(Continued)

TABLE 6. (Continued).

	EES	EES Sample weight	EES Edu. weight	EES Turnout weight	EES Party choice weight	SNES	SNES Turnout weight	SNES Party choice weight	SNES Official census data
Center party									
Age	0.0386*** (0.0128)	0.0472*** (0.0119)	0.0282*** (0.00677)	0.0386** (0.0172)	0.0379*** (0.00980)	0.0401*** (0.0106)	0.0401*** (0.0119)	0.0405*** (0.0107)	0.0477*** (0.0118)
Education	-0.287 (0.526)	-0.687 (0.545)	0.228 (0.334)	-0.287 (0.710)	-0.332 (0.404)	-0.128 (0.419)	-0.128 (0.468)	-0.116 (0.415)	0.142 (0.429)
Gender	-0.184 (0.406)	0.0823 (0.375)	-0.430* (0.217)	-0.184 (0.547)	-0.183 (0.313)	-0.490 (0.316)	-0.490 (0.354)	-0.511 (0.317)	-0.300 (0.305)
Marital	0.897* (0.461)	1.034** (0.430)	0.807*** (0.248)	0.897 (0.621)	0.884** (0.358)	0.329 (0.358)	0.329 (0.401)	0.322 (0.362)	0.166 (0.381)
Constant	-3.554*** (0.978)	-3.960*** (0.889)	-3.198*** (0.530)	-3.554*** (1.318)	-3.822*** (0.752)	-2.564*** (0.719)	-2.564*** (0.804)	-3.127*** (0.736)	-3.104*** (0.641)
Liberal party									
Age	0.0506*** (0.00889)	0.0666*** (0.00980)	0.0435*** (0.00445)	0.0506*** (0.0120)	0.0492*** (0.00742)	0.0549*** (0.00917)	0.0549*** (0.0102)	0.0552*** (0.00817)	0.0404*** (0.0102)
Education	1.965*** (0.437)	2.189*** (0.432)	2.216*** (0.269)	1.965*** (0.590)	1.930*** (0.373)	1.632*** (0.389)	1.632*** (0.435)	1.651*** (0.346)	1.463*** (0.396)
Gender	-0.410 (0.281)	-0.393 (0.307)	-0.447*** (0.141)	-0.410 (0.379)	-0.400* (0.231)	-0.156 (0.269)	-0.156 (0.301)	-0.165 (0.239)	-0.0667 (0.257)
Marital	0.676** (0.304)	0.599* (0.333)	0.632*** (0.152)	0.676* (0.409)	0.645** (0.254)	0.645** (0.317)	0.645* (0.354)	0.640** (0.284)	0.998*** (0.336)
Constant	-4.375*** (0.703)	-5.336*** (0.732)	-4.117*** (0.376)	-4.375*** (0.948)	-4.963*** (0.601)	-4.376*** (0.649)	-4.376*** (0.726)	-4.652*** (0.586)	-3.772*** (0.578)

(Continued)

TABLE 6. (Continued).

	EES	EES Sample weight	EES Edu. weight	EES Turnout weight	EES Party choice weight	SNES	SNES Turnout weight	SNES Party choice weight	SNES Official census data
Moderate Party									
Age	0.0355*** (0.00807)	0.0455*** (0.00827)	0.0321*** (0.00419)	0.0355*** (0.0109)	0.0344*** (0.00624)	0.0466*** (0.00809)	0.0466*** (0.00905)	0.0469*** (0.00749)	0.0291*** (0.00880)
Education	0.990*** (0.376)	1.157*** (0.370)	1.109*** (0.223)	0.990* (0.507)	0.958*** (0.292)	0.891*** (0.332)	0.891*** (0.372)	0.910*** (0.304)	0.645*** (0.322)
Gender	0.0332 (0.263)	0.0551 (0.263)	0.0685 (0.136)	0.0332 (0.357)	0.0389 (0.205)	-0.137 (0.240)	-0.137 (0.268)	-0.148 (0.221)	0.135 (0.225)
Marital	0.878*** (0.289)	0.755*** (0.288)	0.939*** (0.150)	0.878** (0.390)	0.860*** (0.228)	0.580** (0.274)	0.580* (0.306)	0.576** (0.257)	0.887*** (0.284)
Constant	-2.905*** (0.613)	-3.380*** (0.580)	-2.877*** (0.331)	-2.905*** (0.826)	-3.355*** (0.481)	-2.884*** (0.544)	-2.884*** (0.608)	-3.371*** (0.515)	-2.070*** (0.454)
Christian Democratic Party									
Age	0.0459*** (0.0126)	0.0434*** (0.0133)	0.0448*** (0.00644)	0.0459*** (0.0171)	0.0448*** (0.0110)	0.0410*** (0.0129)	0.0410*** (0.0144)	0.0414*** (0.0112)	0.0248* (0.0150)
Education	1.209** (0.582)	1.637*** (0.603)	1.142*** (0.341)	1.209 (0.784)	1.174** (0.507)	0.487 (0.520)	0.487 (0.581)	0.503 (0.449)	0.411 (0.557)
Gender	-0.0861 (0.400)	-0.266 (0.431)	0.0421 (0.204)	-0.0861 (0.540)	-0.0818 (0.347)	-0.293 (0.389)	-0.293 (0.435)	-0.305 (0.337)	-0.239 (0.382)
Marital	0.408 (0.426)	0.365 (0.463)	0.484** (0.219)	0.408 (0.575)	0.385 (0.371)	0.246 (0.438)	0.246 (0.489)	0.241 (0.379)	1.168** (0.521)
Constant	-4.662*** (0.999)	-4.645*** (0.970)	-4.671*** (0.530)	-4.662*** (1.347)	-5.194*** (0.873)	-3.608*** (0.897)	-3.608*** (1.002)	-3.753*** (0.779)	-3.448*** (0.828)
Green Party									
Age	-0.0106 (0.00894)	-0.00474 (0.00970)	-0.0128*** (0.00456)	-0.0106 (0.0121)	-0.0113 (0.00754)	0.0286*** (0.00909)	0.0286*** (0.0102)	0.0292*** (0.00832)	0.00661 (0.0105)

(Continued)

TABLE 6. (Continued).

	EES	EES Sample weight	EES Edu. weight	EES Turnout weight	EES Party choice weight	SNES Turnout weight	SNES Party choice weight	SNES Official census data
Education	1.763*** (0.491)	1.945*** (0.457)	1.835*** (0.282)	1.763*** (0.661)	1.799*** (0.431)	1.668*** (0.436)	1.673*** (0.404)	1.336*** (0.406)
Gender	-0.411 (0.288)	-0.355 (0.289)	-0.411*** (0.144)	-0.411 (0.389)	-0.411* (0.241)	-0.723*** (0.281)	-0.721*** (0.258)	-0.641** (0.262)
Marital	0.161 (0.301)	0.269 (0.308)	0.146 (0.150)	0.161 (0.405)	0.156 (0.253)	-0.148 (0.295)	-0.144 (0.270)	0.648** (0.325)
Constant	-0.923 (0.633)	-1.476** (0.576)	-0.870** (0.344)	-0.923 (0.854)	-1.613*** (0.534)	-2.449*** (0.610)	-2.832*** (0.568)	-1.637*** (0.527)
Observations	747	709	2883	411	1047	676	936	953
Pseudo R2	0.056	0.072	0.047	0.056	0.055	0.049	0.052	0.046

Note: Standard errors in parentheses, * $p < 0.1$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$. $n = 956$ (EES), 1353 (SNES), Pseudo $R^2 = 0.067$ (EES), 0.078 (SNES), Base category = did not vote for any of the parties in the Swedish parliament See Table 2 for response categories.

TABLE 7
THE EFFECT OF IDEOLOGICAL PROXIMITY ON VOTE CHOICE

	EES	SNES
Left–right proximity	–0.569*** (0.030)	–0.553*** (0.002)
Constant	–1.040*** (0.362)	–1.475*** (.055)
Standard deviation of error at individual level	0.000 (0.059)	0.000 (0.065)
Number of stacks	6721	9144
Number of individuals	970	1331
Log likelihood	–1853.1	–2222.0

Note: Standard errors in parentheses, * $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$.

choice weights for both EES and SNES do, however, mitigate this problem to some extent. Except for that, a roughly equivalent education effect is found in the models, with the exception of a significant effect of education on voting for Christian Democrats which is not visible in the SNES. As for gender, the SNES register data shows a significant effect only on the Green Party (women vote more frequently for the Greens), which is also picked up by the SNES survey data and the EES data with the educational weight included. Other effects of gender are absent with the exception that EES with education weights shows effects of gender on the Left Party, the Social Democrats and the Centre Party that are not visible in the SNES survey data. As for marital status we also find some differences between the surveys. Some of the EES results show significant effects of marital status on the Left Party, Social Democratic Party, Centre Party and Christian Democrats that are not present in the results from SNES. The significant effect of being married on probability of voting for the Liberal Party and the Moderate Party are, however, consistent across both surveys. It should be noted that using the turnout or the party choice weights affected the results only marginally.

We end with looking more closely at the effect of left–right proximity on party choice in Table 7. We have already mentioned that the distribution of left–right self-placement is different in the EES and SNES. In studies of party choice, left–right proximity is an important independent variable. Do the different distributions on the left–right scale alter the impact of ideological proximity on vote choice?

To test this we stacked the data to the form of voter–party dyads. The dependent variable is dichotomous (0 = not voted for the party; 1 voted for the party). We use only one independent variable: the distance between the self-placement and each party. The further the distance from the party, the less likely it should be that the respondent voted for it. Results from Table 7 show that left–right proximity has a significant effect in both the EES and SNES data. Hence, even though both self-placement on the left–right scale as well as placement of the parties differ significantly in EES and SNES, this does not

alter the impact of ideological proximity on vote choice very much due to the fact that both voters and parties are placed more on the extremes in the EES compared to in SNES.

Discussion

We have evaluated the European Election Survey (EES) and the Swedish National European Parliament Election Survey (SNES) of 2009. Both surveys provided over-estimated turnout rates, 82.3 in EES and 56.8 in SNES compared to 45.5 which was the actual turnout in the 2009 election in Sweden. A comparison of the datasets in terms of the demographic and socioeconomic composition of the respondents revealed that the EES has an overestimation of older and retired respondents as well as respondents with higher levels of education.

We then turned to evaluate the effects of these background characteristics on individual-level turnout. Throughout the analyses there was specifically one aspect of the EES that stood out and that was the underestimation of the impact of education on turnout. Moreover, results showed that EES respondents placed both themselves and their parties on more extreme positions. As for party choice, we found a large underestimation of Social Democratic voters in the EES. The weights provided with EES mitigate some problems while exaggerating others and the education weight only has a modest impact on the results. In this respect weighting seems not to be the solution, at least not with the provided weight variables. Researchers using the EES data from Sweden and other European countries should be aware of these potential problems with the data.

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