



The effect of gender on the communication between representatives and citizens

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Abstract

Descriptive representation, as described by Pitkin (1967), requires that representatives resemble those who they represent. One of most the important assumptions of descriptive representation is that it has the potential to strengthen communication between citizens and representatives, because of a feeling of a linked fate. While this has been tested in the context of race, this thesis aims to analyze this effect in the context of gender. I expect that the gender of a citizen has a direct impact on the gender of the parliament member they choose to contact, but also that this effect is strengthened by the subject about which a parliament is contacted and the party ideology of the citizen. The results show that women are consistently more likely to contact female representatives, while men are only more likely to do so when the subject of the contact is a traditional women's issue. The results for party ideology are not significant.

Inhoudsopgave

Abstract	1
Chapter 1. Introduction	4
Chapter 2. Theoretical framework	8
2.1 Descriptive representation	10
2.2 The effect of descriptive representation on women	15
2.3.1 Hypotheses	16
2.3.2 Women's issues	18
2.3.3 The role of political parties	19
Chapter 3. Methods and data	23
3.1 The Netherlands as context	23
3.3 Experiment design	26
3.4 Data	30
3.4.1 Variables	30
3.4.2 Representativeness of the data	33
3.5 Methods	36
Chapter 4. Results	38
Chapter 5. Conclusion and discussion	42
5.1 Limitations	44
5.2 Recommendations for future research	45
References	47
Appendix	55
Appendix I: Survey flow	55
Appendix II: Survey	57
Appendix III: SPSS Output	75

Chapter 1. Introduction

In 1918, Suze Groeneweg became the first woman to be elected into the Dutch House of Representatives (Parlement.com, n.d.-a). More than a hundred years later, the 2021 national elections saw a record number of ten female candidates at the top of the party lists (Keultjes, 2021), both on the left side of the political spectrum with Lilian Marijnissen of the Socialist Party (SP) and on the right side with Caroline van der Plas of the Farmer's Party (BoerBurgerBeweging).

However, this does not mean women are seen as part of the norm in the political arena. The aforementioned female candidates received less media attention than their male colleagues, potentially negatively affecting their chances of getting votes (Aaldering & Van der Pas, 2021). On social media, ten percent of all tweets aimed at Dutch female politicians has hateful or aggressive content. Most of these tweets are specifically focused on the gender of these politicians (Saris & van de Ven, 2021).

Further showing that politics is still a male-dominated world, women are still underrepresented in not only the Dutch parliament, but parliaments around the world (Inter-Parliamentary Union). Several reasons have been offered for women staying behind in the political arena, such as stereotypes in the media (e.g., Aaldering & Van der Pas, 2020; Bligh, Schlehofer, Casad & Gaffney, 2012), women seeing themselves as less qualified to run for office (e.g., Fox & Lawless, 2011; Elder, 2004) or a gender bias in the candidate selection (e.g., Fox & Lawless, 2010; Cheng & Tavits, 2011).

Women in general are less likely to participate in politics, with the exception of voting, where they are close to men or even outperform them in some countries (e.g., Carreras, 2018; Wolak, 2015). In the Netherlands, women are half as likely to be a member of a political party or to contact a politician (Schmeets, 2017). This lack of participation has been attributed in part to socialization, leading women to see politics as a domain for men (Wolak, 2019).

However, participation is an important part of effective democratic representation (Dahl, 1989). As Dovi (2002) argues, policy is not just determined by what political actors do, but also by who they know. Meanwhile, research finds that without hearing from citizens, representatives have a hard time estimating what their constituents want if they have not communicated with them (Broockman & Skovron, 2013; Butler & Nickerson, 2011). Butler and Nickerson (2011)

find that when representatives receive survey results about the opinions of their constituents, they are much more likely to act in line with them. This shows that a lack of responsiveness does not mean that representatives are unwilling to act according to the opinions of citizens, but rather an inability to guess their constituents' opinions. In sum, if politicians do not hear from certain groups, they will not be able to correctly represent their interests.

A possible solution offered for this problem is descriptive representation (Mansbridge, 1999). Descriptive representation entails the idea that the characteristics of a parliament member matter for the decisions they make, because they have an intrinsic motivation to help their own group (e.g., Philips, 2020, Mansbridge, 1999, Pitkin, 1967). Therefore, the composition of a legislature should correspond with the nation as a whole (Pitkin, 1967). Mansbridge (1999) argues that descriptive representation can provide more trust between politicians and citizens, making communication easier. This thesis aims to test whether this is the case, by conducting an online survey experiment in the Netherlands. Because the focus of this thesis is on gender, the research question is the following: "What is the effect of gender on the communication between citizens and parliament members?".

The idea that descriptive representation would benefit communication has been examined in the context of race, where research finds that citizens are less likely to communicate with representatives that are of a different race (Broockman, 2014). Bowen and Clark find that constituents are slightly more likely to contact their member of Congress if they share descriptive characteristics (2014, p. 701). This relationship between communication and descriptive representation in the context of gender has, as far as I can tell, only been examined once, by Haynes. She found that women are not more likely to contact their representative if their district is being represented by a woman (in Mansbridge, 1999, pp. 641-642). However, there are several reasons why this relationship deserves more attention.

First of all, both of the abovementioned contexts for the relationship between adequate communication and descriptive representation were examined in the U.S., with a district system. This leaves the choice of contacting a man or not contacting a representative at all. In a political system such as the Netherlands, citizens can contact any of the hundred fifty parliament members. When citizens are not constricted by districts, gender may become of greater importance when deciding which representative to contact.

Secondly, there are theoretical reasons to believe there is a relationship between women's representation and communication. Research on descriptive representation has shown that women are more likely to feel more included in the political system when there are more women in politics (Fridkin & Kenney, 2014; Koning, 2009; Campbell & Wollbrecht, 2006). Under certain conditions, having more women in politics promotes political engagement amongst female citizens (Atkeson, 2003).

Thus, researching the effect of gender on the communication between citizens and parliament members can contribute to the literature on descriptive representation, by either strengthening or questioning Mansbridge's (1999) assumption about communication. This assumption is one of the reasons why descriptive representation "works" and therefore testing it is important for the theory as a whole. More practically, if this assumption proves to be true, it provides an argument for how having more women in parliament contributes to a better democracy and more legitimacy, because citizens' opinion will be more important to the policy process.

There are three parts to my expectation that gender affects communication between citizens and parliament members. First of all, I expect that there will be a direct effect of the gender of a citizen on which parliament member they choose to contact. There are three potential trends for this effect: (1) in line with the theory of descriptive representation, women will be more likely to contact female representatives, (2) because of bias against women, men are more likely to contact male representatives, or (3) because of stereotypes of women being more people-oriented, both men and women are more likely to contact a female representative.

Secondly, I expect that the topic about which a citizen wishes to contact a parliament influences their decision, where female representatives are contacted more about topics which are traditionally seen as women's issues. Lastly, I expect that party ideology plays a role when citizens make a decision between a male and a female representative. I expect that left-wing progressive voters will be more likely to contact a female representative.

This thesis is structured as follows. The following chapter, chapter 2, provides an overview of the relevant literature on descriptive representation, focusing specifically on the effect on women, and then specifies the hypotheses tested in this thesis. Chapter 3 looks at the data collection and the research methods used to test the hypotheses formulated in chapter 2. Since there was not yet a suitable dataset for testing my research question, I conducted an online

survey experiment. The choices made when creating this survey experiment, the variables used for the analysis and the representativeness of the dataset are also discussed in chapter 3. Chapter 4 will report the results of the binary logistic regression I used to test my hypotheses. Lastly, chapter 5 will discuss the implications of the results, as well as potential limitations and provide suggestions for future research.

Chapter 2. Theoretical framework

This chapter will outline the most important theoretical concepts for answering the question whether descriptive representation has an impact on the contact between a representative and citizens, by starting broad and zooming in. First, it will look at descriptive representation as a whole. Then, it will present an overview on the literature of descriptive representation in the context of gender and explain its implications for communication. Lastly, it will discuss the hypotheses by considering three factors of influence: gender, the type of issue and party ideology.

In order to understand the concept of descriptive representation, a closer look at the meaning of representation itself is needed. One of the most cited works on representation is *The Concept of Representation* (1967) by Hanna Pitkin, in which she defines representation as ‘the making present of something which is not actually there’ (p. 9). It is a way to establish democratic institutions as being legitimate and to give governments incentives to be responsive to their citizens, because failing to represent leads to a loss of votes (Dovi, 2018). There are five components to representation. First of all, there is an actor that is representing. In politics, these are most often parliament members. However, Saward (2006) argues that claiming to be a representative is what leads to representation, rather than elections. In this view, activists, organizations or celebrities can also be representatives if they claim to be and their audience accepts this to be true. Second, there is an actor that is being represented, such as a citizen or a specific group of citizens. Third, something substantive is being represented, such as the opinion on a policy issue. Fourth, there is a political context in which the representation takes place, for instance a parliament or congress. Lastly, something (substantive) is not being represented in that it is left out, meaning the opinions or perspectives that are not voiced (Dovi, 2018). In line with Saward (2006), Rehfeld (2006) argues that political representation happens because an audience deems an individual fit to stand in for a group, performing the specific function at hand. According to Rehfeld, representation is therefore not necessarily democratic, because an NGO might represent women’s rights without being elected.

Pitkin (1967) defines four views on representation. The first is formalistic representation, which looks at how a representative obtained his status and the mechanisms that ensure responsiveness. Institutions, in combination with rules and norms, structure how a representative acts. A representative, in this view, can be anyone who has been given a certain job title, such as parliamentarian or congressman. Second, descriptive representation

concentrates on the resemblance that a representative has with the person they are supposed to represent, such as both being women or having the same ethnic background. Third, symbolic representation looks at the meaning of a representative being there and whether that makes others feel represented. Pitkin distinguishes between “standing for” and “acting for”, with symbolic representatives standing for the represented. Fourth, substantive representation looks at representatives as acting for others by seeing what is in their best interests (Pitkin, 1967).

Pitkin’s (1967) work has played an important part in the literature on representation (Dovi, 2018). However, there are also limitations to her theory. Dovi (2015) argues that Pitkin focusses too much on the electoral relationship, leaving out other mechanisms of accountability. Furthermore, elections are not the only way through which representation can occur (Warren & Castiglione, 2004 in Dovi, 2015), which is in line with Rehfeld’s (2006) argument that not all representation is democratic. NGO’s, but also supranational organizations such as the UN, perform a representative function without being elected. Another point of criticism is that Pitkin leaves out certain aspects of representation, such as bureaucracy mediating the relationship between representatives and their constituents (Dovi, 2015).

This paper uses Pitkin’s (1967) definition for political representatives: people acting and/or standing for others who are not there. Jane Mansbridge (2003) argues that these representatives get chosen because they are assumed to be better at making decisions and negotiating. Although some research focusses on representation at different levels (Rehfeld, 2006), this thesis confines itself to national representatives. Moreover, the words representatives, politicians and parliamentarians are used interchangeably to make the text readable.

The next section will start with the working definition of descriptive representation for this research and the reasons why descriptive representation works and for which groups it works best. Then, it will elaborate on the four functions of descriptive representation as outlined by Mansbridge (1999): (1) normalizing a group’s ability to rule, (2) enhancing the de facto legitimacy of a group, (3) improving communication and (4) provide representation on issues that are not yet crystallized. These functions show that descriptive representation can provide an addition to substantive representation that will enhance democracy, because it can ensure that citizens that do not historically have the resources to participate in politics are heard. Because of this importance, the basic of assumptions within these functions need to be examined further, which is what this thesis aims to contribute to by looking at the function of

enhanced communication in the context of descriptive representation. Lastly, the following section will also take into consideration the critiques that descriptive representation faces.

2.1 Descriptive representation

Descriptive representation entails the idea that true representation requires the composition of the legislature to correspond with the nation as a whole (Pitkin, 1967, p.60). The underlying argument is that the experience that comes with being part of a particular societal group enables and constrains the way in which one understands political issues and that there can be no substitute for this experience (Phillips, 2020). For instance, Broockman (2013) conducts an experiment to find whether it is intrinsic motivation or electoral incentives that lead politicians to be more responsive to constituents of their own group. He finds that black representatives are more likely to keep responding to black constituents, even if they are outside their district (and can therefore not vote for them), indicating that there is an intrinsic motivation to help these constituents because of a feeling of shared experience. Lowande, Ritchie and Lauterbach (2019) find similar results for women and veterans, who are more likely to follow up with the policy interests of their own group. In the context of ethnic minority groups, Sobolewska, McKee and Campbell (2018) divide this intrinsic motivation into two parts, with the first, in line with Broockman's (2013) article, being a feeling of responsibility to represent minority interests. This feeling is linked to the feeling of solidarity within groups, which is explained below, but serves a different goal. While linked fate is important for substantive representation, especially when new situations arise, it is a feeling of responsibility that is necessary for communication (Mansbridge, 1999).

The second part of intrinsic motivation as described by Sobolewska, McKee and Campbell (2018) is a linked fate, which they argue is easier operationalized than the concept of shared experience often used in the literature, as this can be different within groups. A linked fate however, captures the perception of sharing an experience and entails the understanding that an individual's opportunities and chances in life are intrinsically connected to the group as a whole (Gay & Tate, 1998). Because of this linked fate, there is a sense of injustice at the position a group has within society and the fact that it has a systemic rather than individualistic explanation (Sobolewska, McKee & Campbell, 2018), which Dovi (2002) argues allows descriptive representatives to express group interests and makes it easier to form relationships with other members of the group, on the basis of trust. This component of the motivation to

represent is the most important for enhancing communication between representatives and citizens, as suggested by Mansbridge (1999).

Another possible explanation is an extrinsic motivation to representation, which is the possibility that electoral gain is a reason for representatives to focus on minority interests (Sobolewska, McKee & Campbell, 2018; Broockman, 2013). This approach emphasizes the rational decisions of vote-seeking representatives, who have finite resources that they will want to focus on what they believe to be most important to their constituents. Mansbridge (2003) calls this anticipatory representation, where representatives act in a way which they think will lead their constituents to vote for them in the next election. This means that in districts with more ethnic minorities, representing the interests of groups may be an effective way to ensure being re-elected (Sobolewska, McKee & Campbell, 2018). Furthermore, it might be harder for women or minority groups to secure the votes outside of their own group because of stereotypes (Fowler & McClure, 1989 in Broockman, 2013). Sobolewska, McKee and Campbell (2018) find that all three components (a feeling of responsibility, a linked fate and electoral incentives) add to the motivation to represent. These factors, in conclusion, help us understand why descriptive representation does what it promises to do.

With descriptive representation, the composition of the legislature is more important than its outcomes. However, this is only because the composition is expected to influence the activities of a legislature (Pitkin, 1967). Mill (1861) argues that because the purpose of a legislature is to control the government, all criticisms must be represented (p.69). Most of the research on the descriptive characteristics influencing political decisions have focused on race (e.g., Broockman, 2014; Tate, 2001) and gender (e.g., Espírito-Santo, Freire & Serra-Silva, 2020; Bratton & Ray, 2002; Thomas & Welch, 1990). However, there are many other factors that can influence policy preferences, such as occupation (e.g., Carnes & Lupu, 2015; Carnes, 2012), education (e.g., Schakel & Hakhverdian, 2018; Aaldering, 2017), having a disability (Reher, 2021) or being part of the LGBTQIA+ community (e.g., Hansen & Treul, 2015; Reynolds, 2013; Haider-Markel, 2007). This does not mean that every characteristic needs to matter in representation, only the characteristics that are politically relevant (Sapiro, 1981).

Nonetheless, disadvantaged groups can particularly benefit from descriptive representation. Dovi (2002) argues that descriptive representation is especially important for those who have had their interests overlooked, because their participation could enhance democracy by pointing

out which norms and processes hurt them. The benefits for disadvantaged groups become clear when looking at the functions of descriptive representation that go beyond substantive representation, as Mansbridge (1999) outlines. First of all, descriptive representation can normalize a group's ability to rule, when this ability might have been questioned throughout history. Representatives of minority groups can serve as role models, encouraging others to also run for office (Ladam, Harden & Windett, 2018; Phillips, 1998). However, Alexander (2012) finds that an increase of women in national parliaments across the world improve women's beliefs in women's ability to govern, but not men's beliefs. Therefore, the effect of this normalization might be limited to the group itself.

As a second function, when members of an underrepresented group become part of the policy process it can enhance *de facto* legitimacy, because they can make citizens feel as though they were part of the deliberation themselves. Citizens will feel more represented by 'one of their own' (Mansbridge, 1999). Studies have found that descriptive representation can lead to a more positive evaluation of the responsiveness of a government to its citizens preferences (e.g., Banducci, Donovan & Karp, 2004; Bobo & Gilliam, 1990) and also makes it easier for citizens to accept decisions (Arnesen & Peters, 2018).

Furthermore, there are two functions where descriptive representation enhances substantive representation. Descriptive representation might be of help when issues arise that are relatively uncrystallized. Because parties will not yet have a position on these issues, the best way to ensure representation is to elect someone who would make similar decisions to the voter. An example of this is the current Covid-19 crisis, where the needs of senior citizens and the younger part of the population are very different. When discussing the measures to battle Covid-19, it would be in the interests of the senior citizens to be very strict, as it is the safest option. For the younger generations, on the other hand, it is important that the economy can keep running as much as possible. This difference in preference shows how representatives of different ages could contribute to making policy that is best for both age groups, rather than being dominated by one age group. Secondly, when representatives and the citizens they represent have the shared experience that comes from being part of a group, this can improve their communication. Being a part of the same group allows for more trust between the representatives and their voters (Mansbridge, 1999). This communication is important for a well-functioning democracy and for translating citizens' preferences into policy, which is further discussed in the following section.

However, descriptive representation also faces criticism. First of all, descriptive representation makes governing harder, because of the amount of voices that need to be included. This limits the ability to make quick choices (Pitkin, 1967, p. 64). In line with this, Mansbridge (1999) argues that especially the deliberative function of democracy, which has the goal of finding the policies that society as a whole can benefit from, can benefit from descriptive representation. On the one hand, in order to have policies that are best for everyone, every group in society should ideally have a representative, because it is harder to represent perspectives of other people. The aggregative function of democracy, on the other hand, is when the interests of a group can also be represented by members from outside this group, because this function of democracy comes down to making practical choices, even when there are conflicting interests (Mansbridge, 1999, pp. 634-635).

A second potential downside of descriptive representation is essentialism, which is the assumption that being part of a group comes with an essential identity shared exclusively by all members of that group (e.g., Phillips, 2020; Phillips, 2010; Mansbridge, 1999). This leads to the idea that all group members will have similar policy preferences just because they are part of the group (Phillips, 2020). However, as Crenshaw (1991) argues, there are differences within groups that make it so that group members become the victim of the policy that was supposed to help them, because their perspectives were not taken into account. In her article, she gives the example of a Latina woman in the United States being unable to find shelter after domestic violence, because the shelter required English-proficiency to ensure she would not feel isolated. Because of this rigid rule, the woman and her son lived on the street for several days while being in danger of being killed by either her husband or someone wanting to rob her and the shelter fails to perform its duty of protecting women (Crenshaw, 1991, pp. 1262-1265). Besides this assumption of homogeneity, Meier and Severs (2018) argue that there is a risk of role models becoming the standard for what members of a group should be like, while just sharing the appearance of having similar experiences does not necessarily lead to advocating for the interests of every individual in the group.

Moreover, Dovi (2002) argues that because of the diversity within a group, there are also differences in the understanding of who should represent a group. She establishes a criterion for judging descriptive representatives, which consists of two components. The first is mutual relationships, where the representatives and the members of a group have to mutually recognize

each other as both belonging to a disadvantaged group and having a common understanding of the interests of the group. Dovi (2002) suggests that assessments of descriptive representation should take into account whether these representatives connect to the historically disadvantaged group they appear to represent or whether they distance themselves from them. This is especially important in the context of improving communication. The second component is that the relationships should be with subgroups of historically disadvantaged groups, meaning groups that are unjustly excluded from the political process and therefore lack the resources to be effectively represented (Dovi, 2002). Potential characteristics of dispossessed subgroups are, according to Dovi (2002): “class, sexuality, drug use, geographic location, relationships to welfare, criminal records, and religion” (p. 739).

Other potential costs of descriptive representation include backlash and reduced accountability (Mansbridge, 1999). As Haider-Markel (2007) points out, higher LGBT representation also leads to more anti-LGBT legislation. Moreover, descriptive representation can lead voters to believe they are being represented substantively even when they are not (Mansbridge 1999). However, Jones (2014) argues that women are more likely to know about their representative’s policy record when they are represented by a woman and that they judge this record more heavily. While these downsides of descriptive representation should be taken into account, there is a lot of research to show for the benefits of descriptive representation as outlined by Mansbridge (e.g., Ladam, Harden & Windett, 2018; Banducci, Donovan & Karp, 2004). Furthermore, as shown above, the literature offers potential solutions for most of the downsides. Moreover, there is no alternative for achieving the benefits that descriptive representation accomplishes. Therefore, it important to research these benefits and ensure their foundations are solid, which is what this thesis aims to do by looking at the benefit of enhanced communication.

The next section will outline the importance of descriptive representation specifically for women and continues by arguing why the effect of gender on communication is theoretically plausible. Women are very prevalent in the literature on descriptive representation (e.g., Phillips, 1998; Sapiro, 1981), but the effect of female representatives on communication with citizens has not been researched. However, women make up a large part of the electorate, which is why ensuring their preferences are heard is important for a well-functioning democracy.

2.2 The effect of descriptive representation on women

Phillips (1998) outlines four groups of arguments in favor of the descriptive representation of women. The first argument is the justice argument, meaning that it is simply fair to even the score and elect women into parliament, because they have just as much right as men to participate in politics (Phillips, 1998). This is in line with Mill's (1861) argument that all viewpoints have a right to be represented.

Second, Phillips (1998) highlights the argument that representatives need to be female in order to stand up for women's interests. She sees three conditions to this argument: (1) women must have specific and separate interest because they are women, (2) men cannot represent these interests and (3) electing women ensures that these interests get looked after. Research shows that these conditions are met, as certain policy areas, such as education and healthcare, are of more interest to female representatives (e.g., Palaguta, 2019; Thomas, 1999; Sapiro, 1981). As a consequence, electing more women leads to more policies in favor of these interests (e.g., Mechkova & Carlitz, 2021; Bratton & Ray, 2002; Swers, 1998), although Wittmer and Bouché (2013) find that male legislators sponsoring a bill increase the likelihood of a bill being passed.

A third argument for the descriptive representation of women is that it will revitalize democracy, because it will cause representatives to act differently (Phillips, 1998). For instance, Swers (1998) finds that women will cross party lines when it comes to voting on women's issues. Women are more likely to be cooperative in their leadership style (Rosenthal, 2008). Furthermore, Anzia and Berry (2011) show that women are more effective representatives. They argue this is because of a bias against female politicians, making it so that only the best reach the point of being national representatives. Studies on gender quotas have found that increasing the number of women can increase the quality of a representative body, because less competent men no longer become part of it (Besley, Folke, Persson & Rickne, 2017; Baltrunaite, Bello, Casarico & Profeto, 2014).

Lastly, Phillips (1998) also briefly mentions the role model argument, but she does not find it politically relevant because of its mostly symbolic function. However, research shows that being represented by women affects how female citizens interact with politics. For instance, Koning (2009) finds with data from the Netherlands that having more women in politics makes female citizens feel more included in the political system. Furthermore, studies show that

women who are represented by women participate in politics more often than women who are represented by men (Fridkin & Kenney, 2014; Campbell & Wollbrecht, 2006; High-Pippert & Comer, 1998), although there are also studies that prove the contrary (e.g., Wolak, 2019; Wolak, 2015; Dolan, 2006).

If descriptive representation makes women more politically involved, this could also apply to communication with representatives. As explained earlier, Mansbridge (1999) argues that being part of the same group allows for trust between representatives and those they represent, which in turn improves communication. This communication is important for the representation politicians can provide, because they can only represent the citizens they hear (Broockman, 2014). Without communication with their constituents, politicians often miscalculate the preferences of citizens (Broockman & Skovron, 2013; Butler & Nickerson, 2011). For instance, Broockman and Skovron (2013) find that conservative legislators are likely to overestimate the support for conservative legislation among citizens. This is a problem for democracy, because it might lead to representatives voting against the wishes of their constituents. However, research shows that gap between how a representative votes and the preferences of their constituents is not on purpose, because once politicians know what citizens prefer, they are also likely to act on it (Bergan and Cole, 2015; Butler and Nickerson, 2011). This shows the importance of communication between citizens and their representatives.

On the basis of other literature on constituent-legislator relationships (e.g., Costa, 2020; Broockman, 2014). I define contact as citizens reaching out to representatives in any form, for example via e-mail or social media. The goal should be to inquire about or give feedback on anything politically relevant, for instance the actions of a representative, their party, or the parliament as a whole.

2.3.1 Hypotheses

As Mansbridge (1999) suggests, a feeling of trust between people of the same group allows for better communication. Voters make interpretations about how a politicians' background will influence policy (Arnesen, Duell & Johannesson, 2019) and having certain descriptive characteristics sends a signal to citizens that their interests will be represented (Bianco, 1994 in Gay, 2002). This has been researched in other contexts, such as race. For instance, Gay (2002) finds that black constituents are more likely to contact their legislator when they are also black.

Similarly, Broockman (2014) finds that both black and white constituents are less likely to communicate to a representative that is of a different race.

With relation to gender, Hayes found that women are not more likely to contact their representative if their district is being represented by a woman (in Mansbridge, 1999). However, note that these studies were done in the United States, where there is a district system for electing both senators and members of the House of Representatives. As is stated on the website of the US Senate (n.d.), most senators will acknowledge messages from citizens outside of their own constituency but will not respond out of professional courtesy. This means that there is only a choice between contacting a male representative and contacting no one, whereas in a system without districts such as the Netherlands, there is a choice between several representatives.

Another reason to expect an effect on communication with regards to women's descriptive representation is in-group bias (Rudman & Goodwin, 2004). Women are more conscious than men about what the gender of their representative is (Rosenthal, 1994) and generally prefer a female representative (Martin, 2019). Altogether, this leads to the following hypothesis:

H1a: Women are more likely to contact female representatives.

For men, it is harder to estimate who they are more likely to contact. Men are shown to have less in-group bias (Rudman & Goodwin, 2004), meaning they do not necessarily seek out other men for virtue of being men. However, they might be biased against women. For instance, Wolak (2015) finds that men are less likely to vote or participate in a campaign when a woman is running for their preferred party. Men can even show lower levels of trust in government when more women are elected (Ulbig, 2007). Female politicians are also likely to face backlash from their male colleagues when their numbers increase (O'Brien & Piscopo, 2019, pp. 62-63). I expect this bias against women to lead to men preferring to contact a male politician instead:

H1b: Men are more likely to contact male representatives.

Still, there is also reason to believe that it is not just women who feel more comfortable contacting a female representative. Stereotypes often lead to women being seen as more compassionate, sensitive and people-oriented (e.g., Dolan, 2010; Lawless, 2004; Huddy &

Terkildsen, 1993), but Schneider and Bos (2014) find that female representatives might not be seen this way. Rather, they are seen as a subtype of women, who are more characterized by lacking certain masculine traits, such as leadership and competence, then by having the aforementioned positive attributes (Schneider & Bos, 2014). Bligh, Schlehofer, Casad and Gaffney (2012) argue that this is because of the media focus on a female politician's personality, with negative messages leaving to a belief that female politicians are not warm, but instead cold and competent. Additionally, Koch (2002) states that citizens are more likely to use the stereotypes about women to determine a female politician's standpoint, but that they do not have the same reaction to male politicians. These arguments would suggest that female politicians do not profit from possible positive stereotypes, such as compassion. However, as Costa (2020) suggests, citizens hold female representatives to a higher standard when it comes to communication with their constituents. Moreover, although Schneider and Bos (2014) found female representatives to lack positive feminine traits in the eyes of the public when contrasted with women as a whole, they still scored higher than male politicians. This combination of high expectations and performing higher in comparison to male representatives might be enough for a bias to form, where female representatives are seen as more approachable.

Furthermore, research shows that men can also be positively affected by having a female representative. For instance, Wolak (2019) shows that when represented by a female representative, both men and women know more about politics and that female representatives are better known by their constituents. Next to this, Verge, Wiesehomeier and Espírito-Santo (2015; 2020) find that not just women feel more positive about the political system when there are more female representatives, but that this effect is also visible in men. This could point to men also feeling more comfortable with female politicians. I therefore posit the following hypothesis. Naturally, if the data supports H1b, H1c can no longer hold.

H1c: Both men and women are more likely to contact female representatives.

The following sections will focus on two factors that can further influence the effect of gender on the communication between representatives and citizens.

2.3.2 Women's issues

One of the main reasons for descriptive representation is the difference of interests between women and men, because of their differences biologically and socially (Sapiro, 1981). O'Brien

and Piscopo (2019) summarize that these interests are usually defined by scholars as “either those that directly affect women *as women* (e.g., reproductive health and gender-based violence), those connected to women’s traditional roles as caregivers (e.g., children), or those tied to the social sphere more broadly (e.g., health care and education)” (p. 54). However, just viewing women’s interests as being the opposite of men overlooks the differences between women (Palaguta, 2020). First of all, Crenshaw (1991) emphasizes the effect of the different aspects of one’s social identity, such as gender, race and class, on their interests. Secondly, Celis and Childs (2012) argue that there can also be ideological differences between women, where conservative women are seen as being against feminist issues.

Still, citizens expect women to be more competent at handling women’s issues such as childcare and education, while being less capable of making decisions regarding defense or foreign policy (e.g., Lawless, 2004; Matland, 1994). Huddy and Terkildsen (1993) attribute this expectation to the aforementioned stereotype of women being more sensitive and warmer. Because of this expectation, there is a preference for women in elections when the most important issues are associated with female characteristics (Lammers, Gordijn & Otten, 2009), which could also be true for communication. Therefore, I formulate the following hypothesis:

H2: Female representatives are more likely to be contacted about women’s issues.

2.3.3 The role of political parties

Women tend to be more progressive and left-wing than men, even within their own party (De Geus & Shorrocks, 2020; Campbell & Childs, 2015; Swers, 1998). For instance, Childs and Webb (2012, in Greene & O’Brien, 2016) find that female Conservative MP’s are more likely to adopt progressive and left-leaning position when compared to men. Furthermore, Greene and O’Brien (2016) find that a higher number of female politicians on a party list makes it more likely for a party to shift to the left.

There are several possible explanations for this gender gap in ideology. First of all, women might be more left-wing and progressive because right-wing conservative parties are generally more focused on ‘traditional values’, which go against women’s emancipation (Rampell, 2014; Norris, 1999). This is especially of importance in a time where post-materialistic issues such as gender equality and self-expression are more salient (Inglehart & Norris, 2000). Related to this, Norrander and Wilcox (2008) suggest that women and men consider different issues when

choosing their ideological standpoints, so that even when their positions on issues are similar, they might differ on overall decisions. Women focus more on issues such as LGBTIQ+ rights and the defense of equal hiring procedures because they have different implications for women than they do for men (Kaufmann, 2002). These kinds of issues are more central to leftist, progressive parties. A third explanation offered by the literature is that women tend to act more altruistic than men (Lehman Scholzman et al., 1995). Lastly, women often deal with greater economic instability, because they are at risk of becoming divorced, leaving them less well off financially, and in general more susceptible to labor market inequalities, making them more likely to profit from left-leaning policies (Abendschön & Steinmetz, 2014; Edlund & Pande, 2002), although this explanation has been contested (Campbell and Childs; 2015, Inglehart and Norris, 2000).

Left-wing parties, for their part, are also more catered to women than right-wing parties. They are historically more inclusive (Beckwith, 1992) and focused on groups previously excluded from power (Matland & Studlar, 1996). For example, their party lists often have more women on them (Crowder-Meyer & Lauderdale, 2014; Caul, 1999). Furthermore, left-wing progressive parties have taken the lead in the introduction of gender quotas (Bystydzienski, 1995, in Santana & Aguilar, 2019), which they have also complied better with in comparison to right-wing parties (Davidson-Schmich, 2006).

In line with these observations, left-wing voters seem to prefer having a female representative. For instance, in the United Kingdom, Labour party supporters found females to be better MPs, while Conservatives thought males would be better at arguing for their preferred policies. In the United States, Sanbonmatsu and Dolan (2009) find that Democrats are more likely to see women as having an advantage on issues such as education, when compared to Republicans. Republicans are also more likely to see women as not emotionally suited for politics (Ibid.). In the Netherlands, the effects of the '*Stem op een Vrouw*' campaign, which encourages voters to vote for a woman who is just short of getting a seat in the *Tweede Kamer*, is especially noticeable when looking at progressive parties (Al Ali, 2021). Furthermore, Mariani, Marschall and Matthews-Schultz (2015) find that the role model effect of seeing woman run for office is stronger for Democrats. Based on this research, I suggest the following hypothesis:

H3: Voters of left-wing progressive parties are more likely to contact female representatives.

In sum, this chapter has argued that descriptive representation has the potential to enhance communication between representatives and citizens, because linked fate and in-group bias allow for more trust. Therefore, I expect that when given the choice between a male and a female representative, women will choose to contact a female representative. Other possible outcomes might be that this in-group bias also holds for males or that the stereotypes of women being more approachable leads men to also prefer contacting a female representative. I have argued that I expect these effects to be bigger when the contact is about issues that are traditionally associated with females or with voters of left-wing parties. Figure 1 shows a schematic overview of these hypotheses.

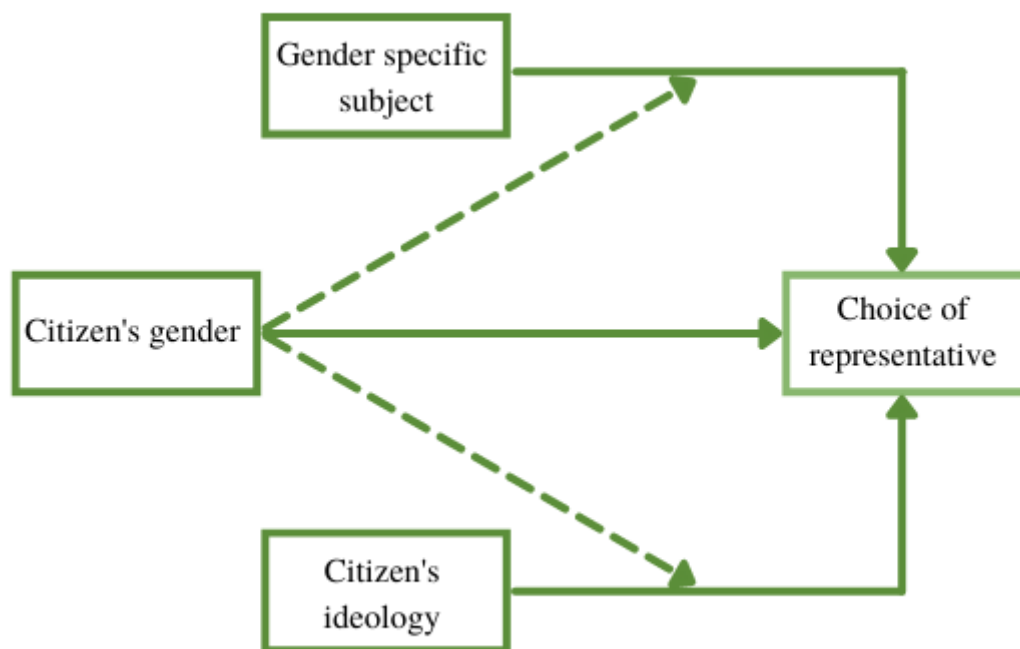


Figure 1: Schematic overview of hypotheses

As suggested in H1, a citizen's gender directly influences their choice of representative on the basis of gender. Secondly, the subject about which a citizen wants to contact a representative effect which representative they will approach. Lastly, I expect that a citizen's ideology will influence whether they are more likely to contact a woman or a man. However, I also expect that the effect of gender has an impact on these factors. For instance, a progressive woman will be more likely to contact a female representative than a conservative woman, who will be more

likely to contact a female representative than a conservative man. The following chapter will outline the experiment conducted to research these hypotheses.

Chapter 3. Methods and data

In order to answer the question whether the gender of a representative is relevant for the communication between representatives and their constituents, a vignette survey experiment was conducted. Survey experiments are a combination of a vignette experiment as the core element with a traditional survey for additional measurements, where vignettes are short, carefully written descriptions of a person or situation (Atzmüller & Steiner, 2010). They are used to uncover how citizens make decisions and for identifying causal relationships. A benefit is that they can reduce social desirability effects (Gaines, Kuklinski & Quirk, 2007), which is especially useful when testing bias.

Survey experiments have often been used in research on descriptive representation because they can determine effects of specific characteristics (e.g., Arnesen, Duell & Johannesson, 2019; Carnes & Lupu, 2016; Aguilar, Cunow & Desposato, 2015). For instance, Campbell & Cowley (2014) ask respondents to rate two candidates on the basis of short biographies, in order to study the impact sex, religion, age, education, occupation and location on this ranking.

This chapter will start by giving a brief overview of the political landscape and a short introduction into how female representatives are perceived in the Netherlands, to provide context for both the survey questions and the thesis as a whole. Then, it will outline the survey flow of the survey experiment and the reasoning behind it. Lastly, this chapter will review the variables used for the binary logistic regression and provide an overview of the data as a whole.

3.1 The Netherlands as context

As mentioned in the previous chapter, the effect of descriptive representation on communication between politicians and citizens has been mostly examined in the United States (e.g., Broockman, 2014; Gay, 2002), which has a district system where citizens have to contact their own representative, meaning there is not always the possibility of choosing on the basis of descriptive characteristics. In the Netherlands, on the other hand, the entire country is treated as one electoral district (Andeweg & Irwin, 2014). Therefore, although we should account for party preference and a parliament members expertise, which section 3.3 will expand upon, it is more likely that citizens will be able to reach out to a representative with the gender of their preference. This is why the Netherlands is a good case to study this effect.

Because of the importance of political parties for both the structure of the experiment and testing H3, I will now give a brief overview of the Dutch political landscape. One way to do this is by using political spaces, defined by dimensions (Andeweg & Irwin, 2014). The dimensions used in this thesis are left-right and progressive-conservative, both because of their popular use in Dutch politics and because of their fit with the literature as described in chapter two. The chart below is based on Kieskompas (2021), a voting advice application and research organization, and shows how the Dutch parties in parliament after the 2021 elections fit into the political landscape.

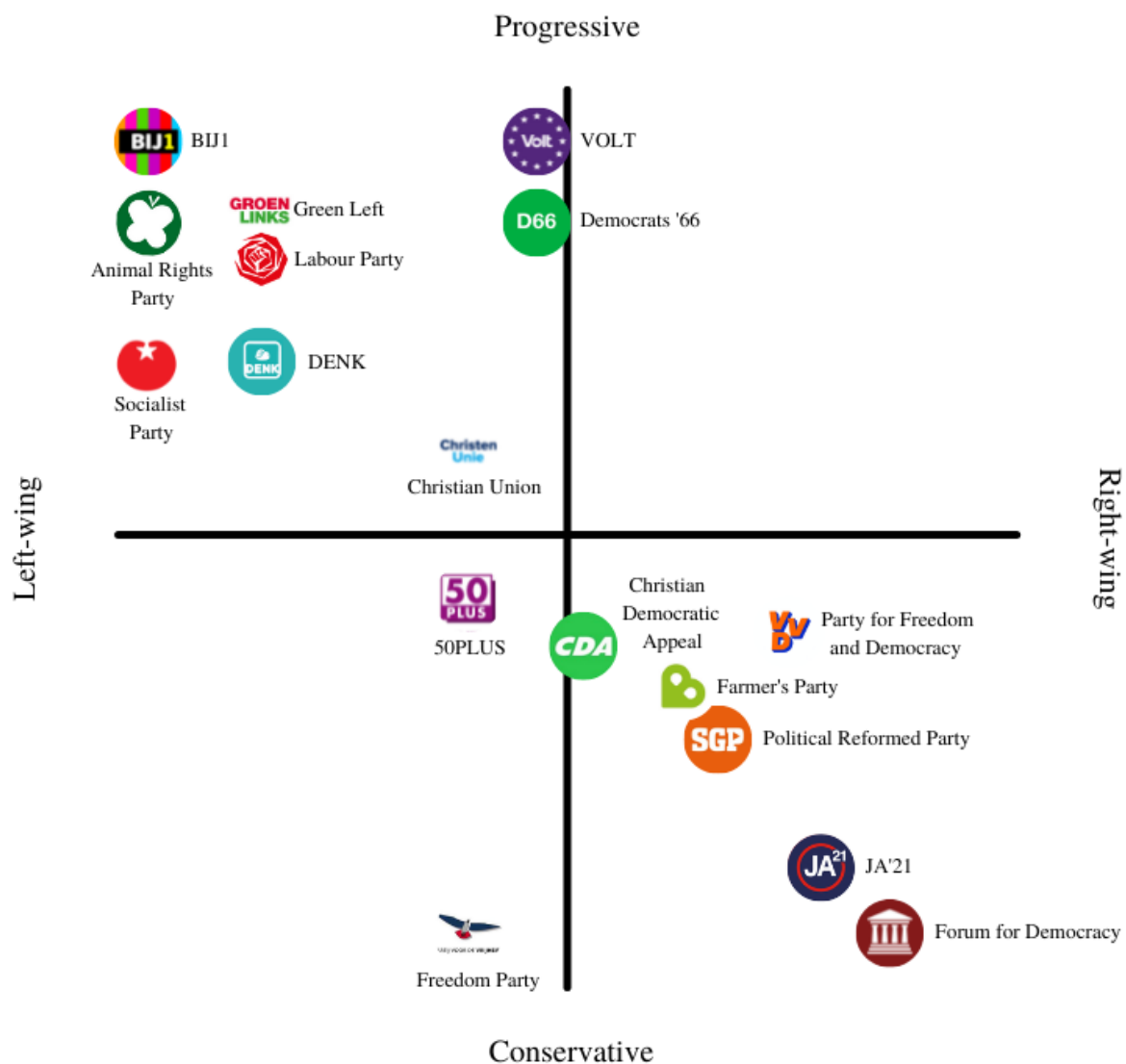


Figure 2: Dutch political landscape

During the survey, respondents had to choose a party they closest to (closest to, because of the impracticality of including all of the eighteen groups currently in parliament) for reasons which will be explained below. The options were the Party for Freedom and Democracy (VVD), Democrats '66 (D66), the Freedom Party (PVV), Christian Democratic Appeal (CDA), the Labour Party (PvdA) and GreenLeft (GroenLinks). These parties were chosen because they are the six biggest parties after the 2021 elections, with the exception of GroenLinks. However, the actual sixth party, the Socialist Party (SP), only has three female parliament members, with one being the leader of the party (Lilian Marijnissen) and another gaining a lot of media attention after uncovering a scandal (Renske Leijten). For this reason, it is likely that Dutch citizens who follow the news even a little will recognize these politicians. This is demonstrated by the fact that both of Lilian Marijnissen and Renske Leijten are among the top fifteen candidates for the 2021 election who received the most tweets between October 1st 2020 and February 26 2021, in a list with only two other female politicians on it (Veerbeek, 2021). To reduce bias on the basis of likability or substantive arguments when respondents make a decision, it is important that the parliament members are relatively unknown amongst the Dutch population. A frequently used alternative is to make respondents choose between fictional politicians (e.g., Arnesen, Duell & Johannesson, 2019; Carnes & Lupu, 2016; Campbell & Crowley, 2014). However, using real politicians strengthens the external validity, because it provides respondents with more context. Therefore, SP was taken out and replaced with GroenLinks.

Besides being the biggest, most of these parties also have the advantage of being equally divided between the left-wing progressive (D66, PvdA, GroenLinks) and right-wing conservative (VVD, CDA) spaces. The PVV is harder to classify in this manner. Although the literature is consistent in calling it a radical right party because of its views on cultural equality and nationalism (e.g., Mudde, 2017; Otjes & Louwerse, 2015; De Lange & Art, 2011; Lucardie, 2009), the party increasingly views itself as economically to the left (Rooduijn, 2021; Otjes, 2019). However, PVV-voters generally place themselves more on the right side of the left-right scale (Rooduijn, 2021). Furthermore, voting behavior in parliament shows that the PVV largely votes in line with right-wing parties (Otjes & Louwerse, 2015). Therefore, PVV is treated as right-wing conservative for the purpose of this thesis.

Another aspect of the context in which this research was conducted, is how Dutch female parliament members are perceived. In general, the Netherlands ranks high in international indexes on gender equality, such as the Gender Equality Index of the European Union, although

this ranking also acknowledges that most improvement can be achieved in the domain of power (European Institute for Gender, 2020). However, female politicians in the Netherlands are not immune to sexism. They are more often addressed by their first name or by derogatory terms such as girl (*meisje*), receive more hate tweets and interviews they give are more likely to include words such as ‘daughter’ or ‘mother’, while men’s interviews are more likely to include words such as ‘finance’ and ‘coalition’ (Saris & van de Ven, 2021). These examples show that the gender of a parliament member is not the non-issue that some Dutch parties believe it to be (Verloo, 2018).

3.3 Experiment design

There was not yet a suitable dataset for testing the hypotheses in this thesis. Therefore, an online survey experiment, consisting of twelve questions, was conducted using Qualtrics. These twelve questions were broadly divided into three sections. First, the respondent was asked demographic questions. Then, they were shown one of the sixteen options for the experiment itself, depending on their party choice and the randomization. Lastly, several questions were asked about the experiment to serve as manipulation checks, such as whether respondents remembered the topic of the vignette they read. A complete version of the survey (in Dutch) and the survey flow are included in the appendix.

There are several downsides to the use of online surveys. First of all, because the researcher is not in the room with the respondent, there is no way to give extra instructions when questions are not clear (Evans & Mathur, 2005). This can have the potential of a question not measuring the right thing or respondents quitting because they get frustrated. To account for this, I had several people test my survey and check whether all the questions were clear.

In line with the risk of difficult questions, there is a risk of low-quality data because respondents have little incentive to take the questions seriously. This can lead to speeding, where respondents answer too quickly to give their answers much thought, and straightlining, meaning respondents give identical answers to a series of statements to reduce their effort (Zhang & Conrad, 2014).

Another downside of using an online survey and distributing it on social media platforms is that respondents themselves decide to participate. This can potentially lead to selection bias, because certain groups are hard to reach on Facebook or the internet in general or because those

whose attention is grabbed by a survey might already be more interested in the topic. This creates a difference in how respondents and non-respondents might react to real-life situations, potentially leading to measurement errors and making generalization harder (Baltar & Brunet, 2011). In order to account for this selection bias, demographic questions were added.

There are, however, also many advantages to the use of internet surveys. First of all, they are low in cost and respondents have the choice to answer them whenever suits them best (Couper, 2008). They are also less intrusive than interviews (Pforr & Dannwolf, 2017) and because there is no interviewer involved, respondents generally give less socially desirable answers (Ansolabehere & Schaffner, 2018). This is especially important in the context of this research, as unintentional bias is a large part of what is being examined.

Furthermore, online survey software such as Qualtrics allows for a lot of flexibility within the survey itself (Evans & Mathur, 2005). In the survey conducted for this thesis, this flexibility was particularly useful because it allowed for different surveys to be taken by different respondents through the use of randomizers.

Moving to the flow of the survey, the respondent was first asked several demographic questions to check whether the research sample is diverse. An overview of the data will be provided in the next section. After these questions, the respondent had to choose a party they felt closest to. This question was added so that voters would not have to choose between parliament members who stand too far from their own political preferences, which could have several consequences. Respondents could perceive choosing between politicians from parties they would never vote for as unrealistic and take the question less seriously or quit the survey altogether. Furthermore, this question serves as a variable to test H3. As previously mentioned, respondents had a choice between the following parties: VVD, D66, PVV, CDA, PvdA and GroenLinks.

Within the subgroups created by party preference, the respondents were randomly assigned one of three vignettes and had to pick which representative they would be most likely to contact in the described situation. This randomized approach is an important part of experimental research, as it ensures homogeneous groups (Gaines, Kuklinski & Quirk, 2007) and therefore adds to the external validity of the experiment. Blocks in Qualtrics were needed to ensure each vignette was assigned in roughly equal amount for each party, instead of, for instance, voters of a certain party only getting the female vignette. The literature on vignette survey experiments

advises using a within-subject design, in order to ensure that respondents have enough context to accurately make their decisions (Atzmüller & Steiner, 2010). However, in this thesis, a pattern might be noticeable to respondents when presented with several vignettes that are purposely gendered, causing them to give socially desirable answers. Therefore, all participants were shown just one vignette.

As formulated in H1a, H1b and H1c, I expect gender to have an effect on the decision between contacting a male or a female parliament member. The first vignette seeks to establish this effect by simply asking which parliament member the respondent would prefer to contact, without attaching a scenario to it. This group also functions as a control group, because between-subject designs have a risk of lacking the context to place responses in (Atzmüller & Steiner, 2010). Control groups allow for a baseline to test whether using a female or male vignette has an effect, because comparing the two groups runs the risk of finding a difference between the two, even while one of the treatments has no effect (Gaines, Kuklinski & Quirk, 2007). When using multiple vignettes, as mentioned above, there is a smaller chance of measurement errors because respondents have answered questions on the basis of several scenarios, making it easier to compare between the effect of scenario.

As stated in H2, I expect the type of issue to affect the decision between a male and a female parliament member. Specifically, I expect women to be contacted more on social issues such as healthcare, childcare and education. Therefore, the second vignette is the following (translated from Dutch, see appendix II for original):

Jens is an eight-year-old boy with a mental disability, which means he requires assistance during the day. His parents have been trying to find Jens suitable long-term care, but are faced with long-waiting lists and bureaucracy within the municipality. As a friend of Jens' parents, you would like to contact a parliament member in order to draw attention to this problem. Indicate which parliament member you are most likely to contact.

Men, on the other hand, are more likely to be contacted about issues such as defense, foreign affairs and financial policy. Therefore, the third vignette is the following (translated from Dutch, see appendix II for original):

The military is planning to build a military radar close to your neighborhood, in order to protect the airspace from attacks. This radar falls into the most severe environmental category and not much is known about the possible long-term effects of the radiation produced by the radar. Furthermore, the plan is to build the radar closer to a populated area than is legally allowed. The city council has no way to prevent the radar from being build. In order to raise awareness about this problem, you wish to contact a parliament member. Indicate which parliament member you are most likely to contact.

All respondents were given four answer options in the form of pictures with names, two female representatives and two male representatives, from the party they chose in the previous question. The answer options were sorted alphabetically. As stated before, the representatives need to be relatively unknown in order to reduce bias on the basis of (dis)likability. This was determined by looking at the number of votes each parliament member received in the 2021 election, with the parliaments member who had gotten the least votes being chosen for the survey.

In the Netherlands, party factions divide the policy subjects the Tweede Kamer deals with, such as agriculture or education, among their parliament members. The responsibility on a subject is called a '*portefeuille*'. Holding a *portefeuille* means a parliament member is responsible for the party's positions on that subject, as well as the communication on the subject both in the Tweede Kamer and in the media (Parlement.com-b). This means that parliament members are experts on certain policy issues and are more likely to be contacted by citizens about these issues. Therefore, the goal was to include representatives in the survey who do not hold the *portefeuilles* mentioned in either of the vignettes, to reduce the chance of respondents choosing a parliament member on the basis of being an expert. Nevertheless, for both PvdA and GroenLinks, there was no other option but to include female representatives in charge of defense. However, on average, political knowledge in the Netherlands is low (Hakhverdian, 2013; van den Dool, 2012). Therefore, there is a low probability of respondents knowing not just who a relatively unknown parliament member is, but also which *portefeuille* they hold.

After the vignettes, respondents were asked several questions serving as manipulation checks, as suggested by Mutz & Pemantle (2015). Their purpose is to establish whether the treatment had a theoretically relevant effect (Mutz & Pemantle, 2015). Respondents were asked whether they were familiar with the parliament members used in the experiment, whether they

remembered the reason for contacting and whether they had ever contacted a parliament member before.

3.4 Data

The survey data was collected between June 30th and August 7th. Respondents were acquired through social media networks, such as Facebook, What's App and SurveyCircle, an online platform meant specifically for swapping surveys with other students or companies. The survey could be filled in by anyone who is eligible to vote in the Netherlands, because respondents would need to understand the identity of the different Dutch political parties in order to answer the party preference question.

In total, 272 respondents completed the survey. However, one respondent took only 37 seconds to complete the twelve-question survey and was taken out to account for the aforementioned speeding. Furthermore, 27 respondents indicated they had chosen to contact a politician whom they already knew. Therefore, it is unlikely that gender bias played a role in their decisions and their responses are not reliable data in the context of this study, so they were also taken out. There were also 5 respondents who answered they had known one of the parliament members, but did not contact this specific parliament member. With three other parliament members still to choose from, there is still a chance these respondents chose on the basis of gender. Therefore, they were not taken out of the dataset. Lastly, 35 respondents were taken out because they did not remember the reason for contacting a parliament member. Because respondents who had been given a neutral vignette were overrepresented in this group, possibly because they could not remember a reason since there was none, answering "I don't know" also counted as correct for this group. After these modifications, a dataset with 209 respondents remained. The next section will explain the variables used in the analysis.

3.4.1 Variables

The following part of this chapter describes the variables used for the analysis. First, it will look at the dependent variable, the gender of the parliament member who the respondent has chosen to contact. Then, it will move on to the independent variables, which are the gender of the respondent, the subject of the vignette and party ideology. Lastly, it will discuss the control variables.

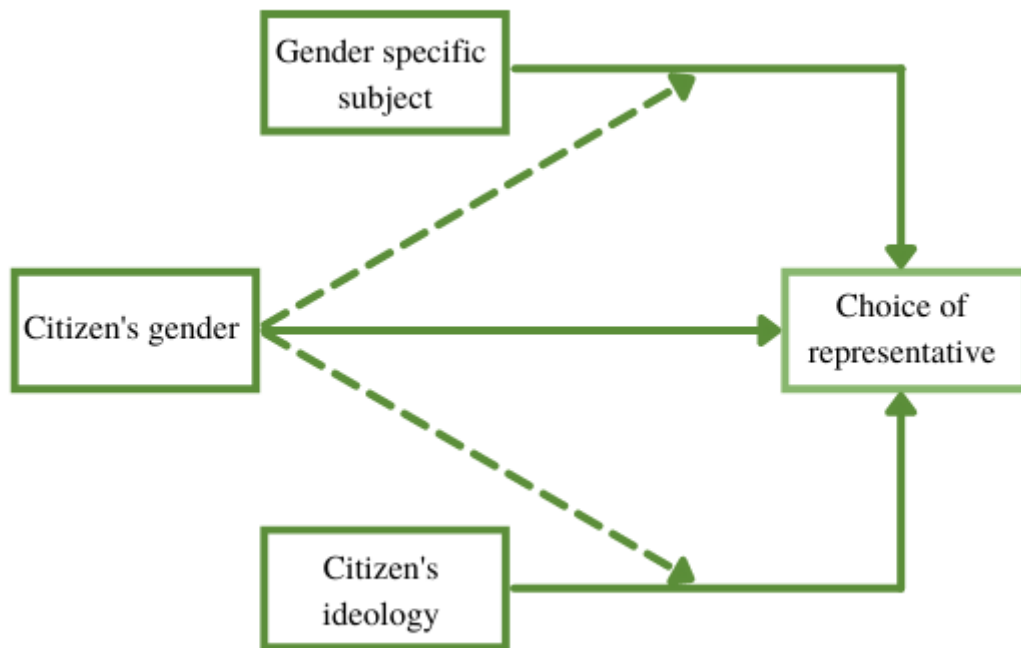


Figure 1: Schematic overview of hypotheses

The schematic overview of the hypotheses in figure 1 depicts which variables are needed for the analysis. The dependent variable is the gender of the Dutch parliament member a respondent chooses to contact. Because of the different parties and the different vignettes, the output of the Qualtrics survey spread the data for a representative's gender over sixteen different variables. For instance, if a respondent had chosen VVD and was then presented with a male vignette, their answer would be one of the four VVD parliament members and would be stored in a variable specifically for all VVD voters who had been presented with male vignettes. After combining the data from the different variables, *gender of a representative* becomes a dichotomous variable, with the options of male or female.

For the purpose of this research, which specific parliament member a respondent chose does not matter, only the gender of this parliament member. However, as previously mentioned, for both PvdA and GroenLinks, a parliament member in charge of defense was chosen as one of the answer options. This created a potential risk of respondents recognizing these parliament members as experts and choosing them for that reason. Looking at the data, this does not seem to be the case. Kati Piri, the PvdA parliament member, was not chosen once by respondents after reading the male vignette about a military radar. Laura Bromet, the GroenLinks parliament

member, was chosen a few times, but no more than her colleagues. Therefore, if there was any effect from their *portefeuille*, it was very minimal.

Moving on to the independent variables, there are three, as shown in figure 1. The first, citizen's gender, was easily acquired by asking respondents about their gender. It is a dichotomous variable, with options male or female.

The second independent variable, the topic about which a representative would be contacted, could be gathered from the same data that was used to make the variable for gender of a representative. Respondents only answer one of the sixteen vignette questions, based on their party preference and a randomizer, so whichever question they answered is the vignette they received. After combining this data, the variable *vignette topic* becomes a categorical variable with the values of "male vignette", "female vignette" and neutral vignette. In order to prepare for a regression analysis, dummy variables were created for the male vignette and female vignettes, with the neutral vignette as reference.

The third and last independent variable is party ideology. As explained earlier in this chapter, respondents were asked to indicate which party they feel closest to, so that they would not have to choose a parliament member they felt no connection with. To test H3, the data from this question was used to make a new variable, *party ideology*, a dichotomous variable, with the values "conservative" and "progressive". The parties VVD, PVV and CDA were changed into the value "conservative" and the parties D66, PvdA and GroenLinks were changed into the value "progressive".

Besides these variables, I included several control variables, which overlap with the demographic variables used to describe the data below. They are age, education and living area. Respondents were asked to type out their age in numbers in the survey. Therefore, the variable age is ordinal/ratio.

For education, respondents were asked which education they had completed and had a choice between answering elementary school (basisschool), high school (middelbare school), post-secondary vocational education (mbo), bachelor's, master's or PhD. These categories were combined to create a new, dichotomous variable with the values "low" and "high" to make it more suitable for the binary logistic regression.

Lastly, living area is a categorical variable with the values “urban”, “suburban” and “rural”. I created dummy variables for this variable, with urban as reference. The next section will look more closely at the composition of the data itself.

3.4.2 Representativeness of the data

Mullinix, Leeper, Druckman and Freese (2015) describe convenient samples as drawn from easy to reach groups, such as undergraduate students or social media websites, leading to the kind of self-selection bias that has been discussed in 3.3. In comparison, population-based samples are drawn from a representative sample of the population and are therefore preferable (Mutz, 2011). However, population-based samples are costly (Mullinix et al., 2015) and beyond the scope of this thesis. Furthermore, Mullinix et al. (2015) find that results from convenience samples are a good estimate of the effects found by studying population-based samples.

Because there is a potential for homogeneity in a convenient sample dataset, the following section will take a closer look at the distribution of respondent’s characteristics among the three vignettes. It will also briefly touch upon the reasons for including characteristics. Starting with gender, it is important to note that women are in general overrepresented in the dataset. There are 125 female respondents and 84 male respondents. The following histogram shows the distribution of respondents on the basis of gender among the three vignettes.

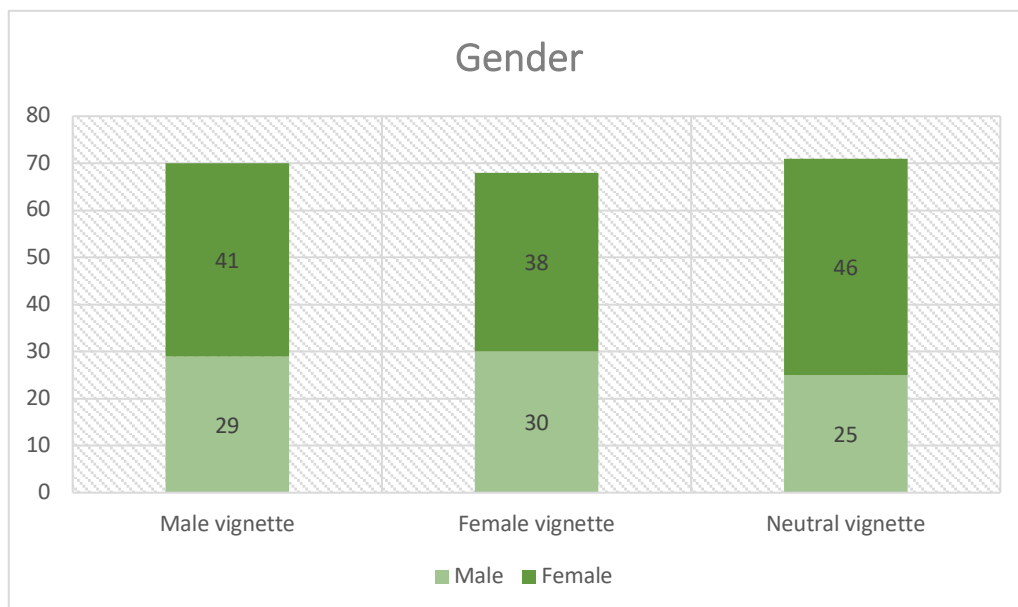


Figure 3: Gender distribution per vignette

The second demographic factor to consider is age, which can influence gender attitudes in several ways. First of all, there is evidence that although political beliefs stay relatively stable during one's life, people are more likely to become more conservative rather than more progressive (Peterson, Smith & Hibbing, 2020). Furthermore, studies find a generational gap in beliefs about gender equality, where younger generations are more likely to support mothers pursuing a career (Scarborough, Fessenden & Sin, 2021). However, Scarborough, Fessenden and Sin (2021) also find that baby-boomers are slightly more supportive of female leadership.

Young people are overrepresented in the dataset, as nearly half of the respondents are 25 years of age or younger. The following histogram shows the distribution of respondents on the basis of age among the three vignettes. For clarity reasons, the ages have been grouped together in the histogram. However, this is not the case in the database.

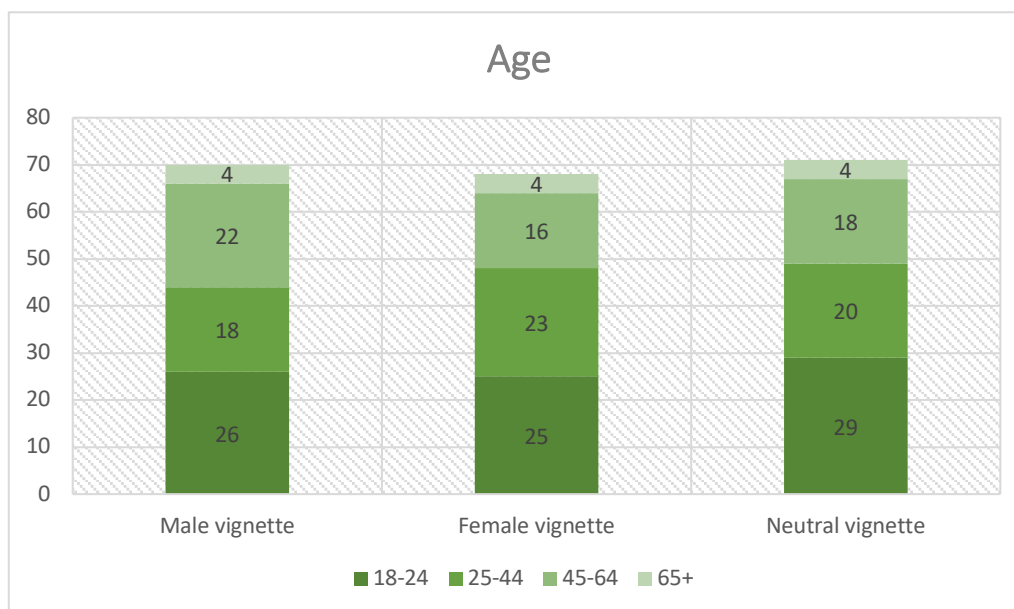


Figure 4: Age distribution per vignette

Education is the third demographic factor to consider when looking at the heterogeneity of this dataset. Although there is no research on the effect of education on gender beliefs in modern democracies, there is an education gap in when it comes to other political issues, such as multiculturalism (Schakel & Hakhverdian, 2018).

Higher educated people are overrepresented in the dataset, making up 77% percent of the sample. The following histogram shows the distribution of respondents on the basis of education among the three vignettes.

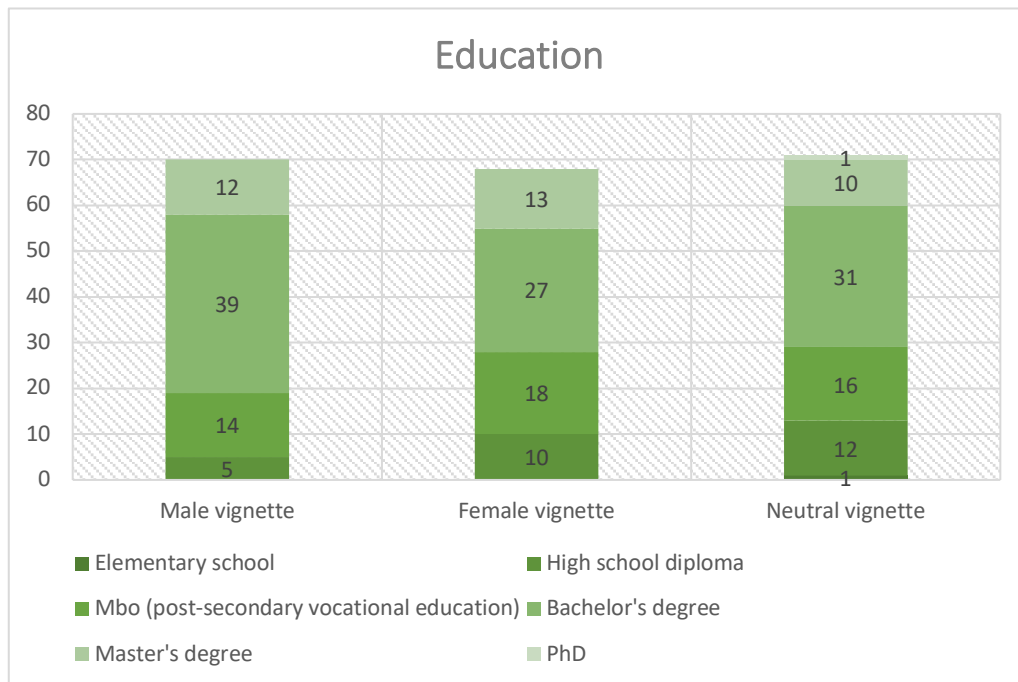


Figure 5: Education distribution per vignette

Lastly, respondents were asked about their living area. This could either be urban, suburban or rural. A person's living area influences their beliefs, with people living in densely populated areas generally being more progressive and tolerant (Gimpel et al., 2020).

Around half of the people in the dataset live in urban areas (51%), meaning they are overrepresented. However, people from rural areas make up a desired one third of the dataset, meaning mainly those from suburban areas are underrepresented. The following histogram shows the distribution of respondents on the basis of living area among the three vignettes.

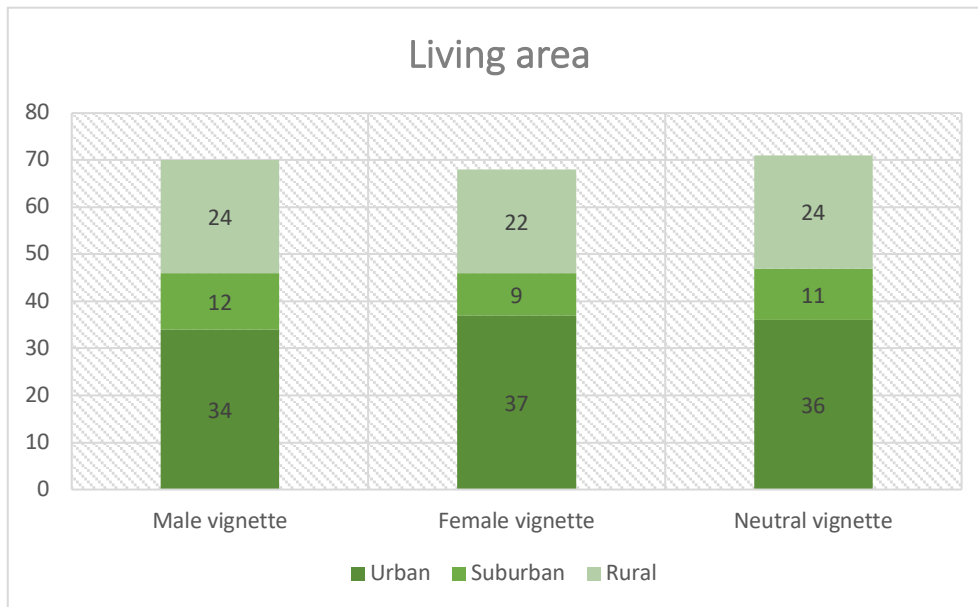


Figure 6: Living area distribution per vignette

These figures show that although there are some groups overrepresented in the data as a whole, characteristics are generally well-spread over the three different vignettes, ensuring heterogenic groups.

3.5 Methods

A binary logistic regression was conducted to analyze the collected data. Logistic regression can be used when the dependent variable is categorical and the independent variable is continuous or categorical. It assesses whether a certain set of independent variables can predict being part of one of the two groups that the dependent variable holds (Field, 2015).

There are several assumptions to be met when it comes to logistic regression. First of all, binary logistic regression assumes that the dependent variable is dichotomous (Field, 2015). Because the dependent variable of this research is the gender of a representative, which can either be male or female, this assumption is met. Secondly, logistic regression assumes that observations are independent (Field, 2015; Peng, Lee & Ingersoll, 2002). This is the case with the observations in the dataset used for this study, since there are no repeated measurements. Thirdly, there should be no multicollinearity among the independent variables because it can lead to bias (Field, 2015).

To test for the whether the independent variables contain multicollinearity, I looked at the collinearity diagnostics in SPSS as recommended by Field (2015). First, the variance inflation

factor (VIF), shows whether an independent variable has a strong linear relationship with the other independent variables. In general, VIF values should be below 10 (Field, 2015). As can be seen in appendix III, this is the case for the model. Secondly, the tolerance is related to the VIF and should be higher than 0.1 (Field, 2015). In the case of the model used for this thesis, the tolerance for every variable is above 0.9. Therefore, there is no multicollinearity among the independent variables used in this model.

Lastly, the assumption of ordinary regression that the outcome has a linear relationship with the predictors is violated in logistic regression, because the outcome is categorical. Instead, we assume a linear relationship between the predictors and the logit of the outcome variable, which can be tested with the Hosmer-Lemeshow test (Field, 2015). This functions as a goodness of fit test for logistic regression, where a small p indicates an inadequate model (Osborne, 2008). For the data used in this research, the Hosmer-Lemeshow test shows a Chi-square of 10.386 with 8 df and a p-value of 0.239, meaning this assumption has been met.

The following chapter will report on the results from the binary logistic regression analysis that was conducted.

Chapter 4. Results

This chapter will present the results of the binary logistic regression, as described in the previous chapter. Starting with the first hypothesis formulated in chapter two, it states that the gender of respondent will have a direct influence on the gender of the representative they choose to contact, in one of three ways: women are more likely to contact a female representative (H1a), men are more likely to contact male representatives (H1b) or both men and women are more likely to contact female representatives (H1c).

The results show that the effect of gender is significant for contacting a female representative ($\text{Exp}(B)=8.414$, $p=0.002$). In the case of binary logistic regression, the odds ratio ($\text{Exp}(B)$) is the easiest way to interpret the results. The odds ratio divides the probability that something will happen by the probability that it will not. A value greater than 1 indicates that a change in independent variable will increase the chances of an event happening (Field, 2015). For gender, female respondents are more than eight times more likely to contact a female representative than males are.

The data as a whole shows how more male respondents chose a female representative to contact ($\chi^2=10.050$, $p=0.002$, $df=1$) as can be seen in the table below.

		Gender representative		
		Male	Female	Total
Gender respondent	Male	32	52	84
	Female	23	102	125
Total		55	154	209

Table 1: Gender representative*gender respondents

However, if this data is divided to control for the vignettes, it becomes a different story. While women consistently choose female representatives independent of the vignette they read, men are just as likely to choose a male representative in a neutral setting. This means that H1b and H1c are both rejected, while H1a holds true.

Vignette			Gender representative		
			<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>	<i>Total</i>
Neutral	Gender respondent	<i>Male</i>	13	12	25
		<i>Female</i>	8	38	46
		<i>Total</i>	21	50	71
Male		<i>Male</i>	17	12	29
		<i>Female</i>	10	31	41
		<i>Total</i>	27	43	70
Female		<i>Male</i>	2	28	30
		<i>Female</i>	5	33	38
		<i>Total</i>	7	61	68

Table 2: Gender representative*gender respondents per vignette

This difference between vignettes is also telling for the second hypothesis, which is that female representatives are more likely to be contacted about women's issues. This effect is significant ($\text{Exp}(B)=19.360$, $p<0.001$), meaning that those who read the female vignette are nineteen times more likely to contact a female representative than those who read the neutral vignette. For the male vignette, there are no significant effects.

In line with the direct effect of a vignette on the choice of representative, I also tested for interaction effects between gender and the topic of the vignette. For the female vignette, this effect is significant ($\text{Exp}(B)=0.073$, $p=0.014$), meaning that women are 92% less likely to contact a female representative when it comes to female issues than a man. Nevertheless, this does not take away from the fact that the second hypothesis holds true, as female representatives to get contacted about women's issues more often.

The last hypothesis states that voters of left-wing progressive parties are more likely to contact women. The results for this hypothesis are not significant, both for the direct effect ($\text{Exp}(B)=2.387$, $p=0.115$). and the interaction effect ($\text{Exp}(B)=0.478$, $p=0.333$).

Variables	95% CI for Exp(B)					
	B	S.E.	p	Exp(B)	Lower	Upper
Step 1						
Gender						
<i>Male</i>	Reference	Reference	Reference	Reference	Reference	Reference
<i>Female</i>	1.004	0.322	0.002	2.729	1.452	5.131
Step 2						
Gender						
<i>Male</i>	Reference	Reference	Reference	Reference	Reference	Reference
<i>Female</i>	1.884	0.700	0.007	6.582	1.669	25.957
Vignette						
<i>Neutral</i>	Reference	Reference	Reference	Reference	Reference	Reference
<i>Male</i>	-0.250	0.559	0.655	0.779	0.261	2.330
<i>Female</i>	2.904	0.856	<0.001	18.246	3.406	97.743
Party ideology						
<i>Conservative</i>	Reference	Reference	Reference	Reference	Reference	Reference
<i>Progressive</i>	0.723	0.533	0.175	2.060	0.724	5.861
Gender*vignette						
<i>Neutral</i>	Reference	Reference	Reference	Reference	Reference	Reference
<i>Male</i>	-0.190	0.773	0.806	0.827	0.182	3.763
<i>Female</i>	-2.587	1.057	0.014	0.075	0.009	0.597
Gender*party						
<i>Conservative</i>	Reference	Reference	Reference	Reference	Reference	Reference
<i>Progressive</i>	-0.515	0.726	0.478	0.598	0.144	2.480
Step 3						
Gender						
<i>Male</i>	Reference	Reference	Reference	Reference	Reference	Reference
<i>Female</i>	2.130	0.737	0.004	8.414	1.984	35.687
Vignette						
<i>Neutral</i>	Reference	Reference	Reference	Reference	Reference	Reference
<i>Male</i>	-0.275	0.566	0.627	0.760	0.251	2.304
<i>Female</i>	2.963	0.863	<0.001	19.360	3.570	104.996
Party ideology						

<i>Conservative</i>	Reference	Reference	Reference	Reference	Reference	Reference
<i>Progressive</i>	0.870	0.553	0.115	2.387	0.808	7.055
Gender*vignette						
<i>Neutral</i>	Reference	Reference	Reference	Reference	Reference	Reference
<i>Male</i>	-0.246	0.782	0.753	0.782	0.169	3.624
<i>Female</i>	-2.624	1.065	0.014	0.073	0.009	0.585
Gender*party						
<i>Conservative</i>	Reference	Reference	Reference	Reference	Reference	Reference
<i>Progressive</i>	-0.739	0.764	0.333	0.478	0.107	2.134
Control variables						
Age	0.008	0.012	0.543	1.008	0.983	1.032
Education						
<i>Low</i>	Reference	Reference	Reference	Reference	Reference	Reference
<i>High</i>	0.437	0.405	0.282	1.547	0.699	3.425
Living area						
<i>Urban</i>	Reference	Reference	Reference	Reference	Reference	Reference
<i>Suburban</i>	0.181	0.532	0.733	1.198	0.423	3.397
<i>Rural</i>	-0.66	0.435	0.879	0.936	0.399	2.197

Table 3: Output binary logistic regression

A complete overview of the results can be found in table 3. This also shows that none of the control variables were significant, meaning the results stay robust even when controlling for demographic factors. The following chapter will discuss the implications of the results and go into potential caveats of this research.

Chapter 5. Conclusion and discussion

This chapter will discuss the results as described in the previous chapter. First, it will look into the results per hypothesis and their implications for the theory of descriptive representation. Then, it will go over the limitations of this research. Lastly, it will provide suggestions for future research.

The aim of this thesis was to find an answer to the question gender has an effect on the communication between citizens and representatives. The results for the first hypothesis show that this is the case, with women being significantly more likely to approach a female parliament member. This is in line with Mansbridge (1999), who suggests that descriptive representation improves communication between citizens and their representatives. It therefore strengthens the assumption of descriptive representation that descriptive characteristics are important for how citizens are represented, for which Gay (2002) and Brookman (2014) had already found evidence in similar research focused on race.

Vignette			Gender representative		
			<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>	<i>Total</i>
Neutral	Gender respondent	<i>Male</i>	13	12	25
		<i>Female</i>	8	38	46
		<i>Total</i>	21	50	71
Male		<i>Male</i>	17	12	29
		<i>Female</i>	10	31	41
		<i>Total</i>	27	43	70
Female		<i>Male</i>	2	28	30
		<i>Female</i>	5	33	38
		<i>Total</i>	7	61	68

Table 2: Gender representative*gender respondents per vignette

The other parts of the first hypothesis focus not just on women but on men as well. Ttable 2 shows that men contact female representatives at roughly the same rate as they do male representatives. The exception to this is when they are dealing with women's issues, which will be discussed below. This rejects the hypothesis that men are biased against female parliament members. However, the data also implies that stereotypes of women being more approachable do not necessarily make both men and women contact a female representative. This is in

accordance with previous research, which argues that members of disadvantaged groups can especially profit from descriptive representation (Phillips, 2020; Dovi, 2002; Mansbridge, 1999).

Moving on to the second hypothesis, the data shows that gendered issues have a big impact on which parliament members a respondent decides to contact. Because of this difference, we can also assume that the vignettes were sufficient in providing respondents with the background needed to make a decision, although using a male vignette did not seem to have a similar effect. Especially men seem to be very susceptible to which topic a parliament member needs to be contacted about. However, this is partly because women are more consistently choosing a female representative, as can be seen in table 2. This is likely the reason why testing for an interaction effect between the gender of the respondent and the topic vignette leads to women being (very) less likely to contact a female representative.

Lastly, the results for the third hypothesis, the influence of party ideology, were not significant. However, this does not necessarily mean there is no relation at all. Of the progressive voters, 77% chose to contact a female representative, against 68% of conservative voters. This might not seem like a big gap, but dividing the data by vignette shows that conservative voters were especially likely to contact a female when it came to women's issues, with 90% choosing a female parliament member. However, for the neutral vignette, 55% chose to contact a female, while 57% did so for the male vignette. Amongst progressive voters, on the other hand, 85% chose to contact a female for both the neutral and the female vignette, while 75% chose a female parliament member for the male vignette. This does not take away from the fact that a majority of conservative voters chose to contact a female representative, but it does show a difference. Similarly, 56% of progressive voters indicated that gender had played a role in their decision to choose a parliament member, against 38% of conservative voters.

These results demonstrate an effect between the gender of citizens and the parliament member they choose to reach out to, moderated by the subject of the contact, which answers the main research question of this thesis: "What is the effect of gender on the communication between citizens and parliament members?". This strengthens the argument that women in parliament are needed to ensure communication between citizens and parliament members. Furthermore, it also provides the argument that men also profit from more women in parliament, as they then

have the option to reach out to women when they feel the context calls for it. The following part will look at which limitations should be considered for this thesis.

5.1 Limitations

Several limitations of this research need to be taken into account. First of all, due to constraints in time and resources, it was not possible to use a population-based sample, as explained in 3.4.2, for this thesis. Therefore, the sample used is small, with only 209 usable responses and should ideally be larger in order to make inferences about Dutch voters in general. Furthermore, while the party choices were combined for the analysis for both theoretical and practical reasons, the differences between parties should be taken into account. For instance, there are only nine PVV-voters included in the dataset, while there is reason to believe that PVV-voters have a different view from other right-wing voters.

The PVV is often classified as a populist right party (e.g., Verloo, 2018; Mudde, 2017; Otjes & Louwerse, 2015). These parties have a core ideology in common with combines three elements. The first is a combination of nationalism and xenophobia, called nativism by populist scholars. The second is the idea authoritarianism, referring to the assumption that society should be strictly ordered (Mudde, 2017). In line with this authoritarianism, populist parties reject the concept of equality, believing that inequalities between individuals are natural (Betz, 1994, in De Lange & Mügge, 2015). The last element of the core ideology is populism, which is the notion that society is separated into two homogeneous groups, the people and the elite (Mudde, 2004).

These three elements contribute to the way populist right-wing parties view gender equality. In the case of the PVV, the party largely views gender equality as a non-issue (Verloo, 2018; De Lange & Mügge, 2015) and there is no specific mention of it in their recent election program, although they do state they are against diversity policies in general (PVV, 2021). The PVV believes that gender equality has already been achieved, but is threatened by the Islam, which does not respect gender equality (Verloo, 2018; De Lange & Mügge, 2015). On more classical gender issues however, such as economic participation and reproductive rights, the PVV remains silent (De Lange & Mügge, 2015). For this reason, Verloo (2018) argues that the PVV mainly use women's rights standpoints to attack the Muslims, rather than to support women. If these are the standpoints of the party, there is a possibility that PVV-voters have similar views.

This has negative implications for the generalizability of the results, specifically on the progressive/conservative divide.

A last limitation to be taken into account is the fact that it was not possible to include all Dutch parties in the experiment, both for practical reasons and because some parties do not have enough (relatively unknown) parliament members to be included. However, as the example of the PVV has already shown, there are differences between parties in their beliefs on gender, even if their views on other policy issues are similar. Therefore, this thesis can only provide a rather black and white picture of the relationship between party ideology as some progressive voters might have chosen a conservative party, or the other way around, because their preferred party was not part of the experiment and they place an emphasis on specific issues of parties to determine their choice. For instance, the Socialist Party in the Netherlands can be classified as a populist party (Otjes & Louwerse, 2015) and is quite Eurosceptic (SP, n.d.), which is a stark contrast with D66, PvdA and GroenLinks, which are the left-wing parties included in the experiment. However, chances are slim this applies to a lot of the respondent.

5.2 Recommendations for future research

As shown by both the results and the arguments in the previous section, future research is needed to establish the relationship between the role of gender when contacting a parliament member and party ideology. It should take the role of populist parties into account, because they might lead to a larger distinction between left progressive and right conservative parties. In line with this, a population-based sample would ensure that the data as a whole is more representative. It would also provide the possibility to add an extra question about the actual party a respondent has voted for, so that the data can be looked at a party level. This could contribute to the understanding of voters' views on gender and whether this is in line with the (sometimes rather extreme) views of their preferred party.

Another aspect future studies should look at is the topics of contact. In this thesis, healthcare was used as a women's issue and was shown to have a large impact on the decision made by male respondents regarding the gender of the parliament member they chose to contact. However, healthcare, especially in the context of children as used in this research, is a very emotional topic. Therefore, further research should test whether this effect still remains when focusing on other women's issues which are less emotional and not as directly tied to women's role as mothers, such as education. In line with this, other traditional male topics should also be

taken into consideration for future research to see whether there are subjects that are seen as traditionally belonging to males that do have an influence on the choice between a male and a female representative. While the military radar provided an example that respondents could easily relate to, it was also more people-oriented than for instance military missions abroad or financial policy.

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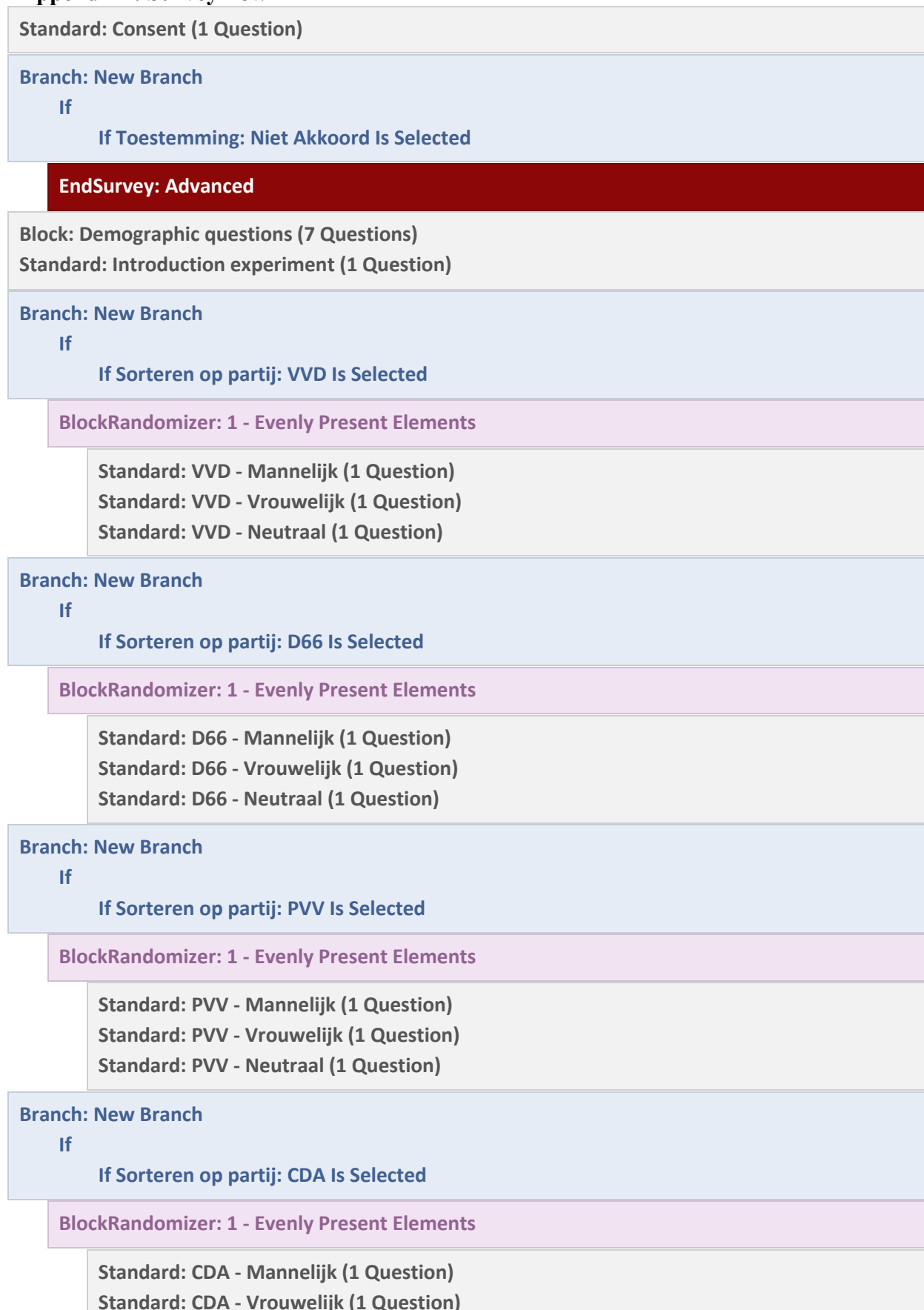
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Appendix

Appendix I: Survey flow



Standard: CDA - Neutraal (1 Question)
Branch: New Branch If If Sorteren op partij: PvdA Is Selected
BlockRandomizer: 1 - Evenly Present Elements
Standard: PvdA - Mannelijk (1 Question) Standard: PvdA - Vrouwelijk (1 Question) Standard: PvdA - Neutraal (1 Question)
Branch: New Branch If If Sorteren op partij: GroenLinks Is Selected
BlockRandomizer: 1 - Evenly Present Elements
Standard: GroenLinks - Mannelijk (1 Question) Standard: GroenLinks - Vrouwelijk (1 Question) Standard: GroenLinks - Neutraal (1 Question)
Standard: Post-experiment questions (4 Questions)
EndSurvey: Advanced

Appendix II: Survey

Start of Block: Introduction

Bedankt voor uw deelname aan dit onderzoek! Deze vragenlijst gaat over politieke participatie en is opgezet als deel van mijn masterscriptie voor de opleiding politicologie aan de Radboud Universiteit. De vragenlijst neemt ongeveer 5 minuten tijd in beslag. Deelname aan dit onderzoek is vrijwillig en anoniem. De verzamelde gegevens worden enkel gebruikt voor onderzoeksdoeleinden. Vragen of opmerkingen over deze vragenlijst kunt u mailen naar marjolijn.vanzonneveld@student.ru.nl Door op akkoord te klikken, bevestigt u bovenstaande informatie gelezen te hebben en geeft u toestemming voor het verwerken van uw gegevens. Nogmaals dank voor uw medewerking!

☐ Akkoord

☐ Niet Akkoord

End of Block: Introduction

Start of Block: Demographic questions

Wat is uw gender?

☐ Man

☐ Vrouw

☐ Anders, namelijk _____

Page Break



Wat is uw leeftijd?

Page Break

Wat is uw hoogst afgeronde opleiding?

- ☐ Basisonderwijs
- ☐ Middelbare school
- ☐ Mbo
- ☐ Bachelor
- ☐ Master
- ☐ PhD

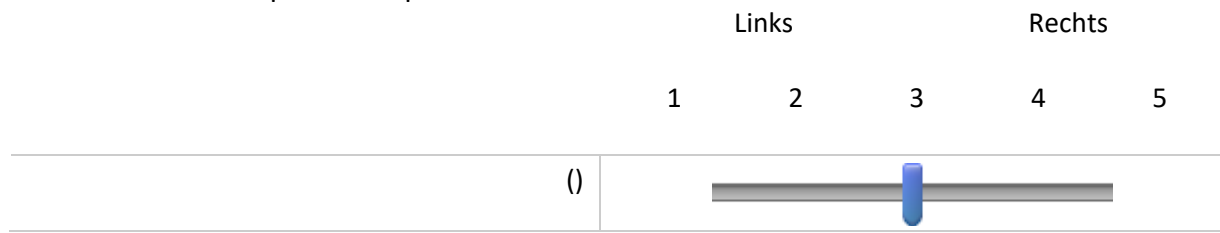
Page Break

In wat voor omgeving woont u?

- ☐ Stedelijk
- ☐ Voorstedelijk
- ☐ Landelijk

Page Break

Waar zou u zichzelf plaatsen op de links-rechts schaal?



Page Break

Hoe vaak volgt u politiek nieuws?

- ☐ Elke dag
- ☐ Een paar keer per week
- ☐ Een paar keer per maand
- ☐ Zelden tot nooit

Page Break

Welke van de volgende politiek partijen komt het dichtst bij uw politieke voorkeur?

- ☐ VVD
- ☐ D66
- ☐ PVV
- ☐ CDA
- ☐ PvdA
- ☐ GroenLinks

End of Block: Demographic questions

Start of Block: Introduction experiment

Op de volgende pagina wordt kort een situatie beschreven. Lees de situatie goed door, voordat u een keuze maakt.

End of Block: Introduction experiment

Start of Block: VVD - Mannelijk

Defensie heeft het plan om in de buurt van uw woonplaats een militaire radartoren te bouwen, die het luchtruim moet beschermen tegen aanvallen uit de lucht. De radar valt onder de zwaarste milieucategorie en er is nog niet veel bekend over de lange termijngevolgen van de straling die hierbij vrijkomt. Daarnaast is het plan om de radar dichterbij woonhuizen in de buurt te bouwen dan is toegestaan. Het gemeentebestuur heeft geen mogelijkheden om de bouw van de radar tegen te houden. Om dit probleem onder de aandacht te brengen, wilt u contact opnemen met een Tweede Kamerlid. Welk kamerlid zou uw voorkeur hebben?

- ☐ Folkert Idsinga (VVD)
- ☐ Ingrid Michon (VVD)
- ☐ Judith Tielen (VVD)
- ☐ Pim van Strien (VVD)

End of Block: VVD - Mannelijk

Start of Block: VVD - Vrouwelijk

Jens is een jongen van 8 met een verstandelijke beperking, waardoor hij gedurende de hele dag begeleiding nodig heeft. Zijn ouders proberen al een aantal jaren om geschikte langdurige zorg voor Jens te vinden, maar krijgen te maken met lange wachtlijsten en bureaucratie binnen de gemeente. U bent bevriend met de ouders van Jens en wilt contact opnemen met een Tweede Kamerlid om dit probleem onder de aandacht te brengen. Welk kamerlid zou uw voorkeur hebben?

- ☐ Folkert Idsinga (VVD)
- ☐ Ingrid Michon (VVD)
- ☐ Judith Tielen (VVD)
- ☐ Pim van Strien (VVD)

End of Block: VVD - Vrouwelijk

Start of Block: VVD - Neutraal

U heeft een prangend probleem en wilt contact opnemen met een Tweede Kamerlid. Welk kamerlid zou uw voorkeur hebben?

- ☐ Folkert Idsinga (VVD)
- ☐ Ingrid Michon (VVD)
- ☐ Judith Tielen (VVD)
- ☐ Pim van Strien (VVD)

End of Block: VVD - Neutraal

Start of Block: D66 - Mannelijk

Defensie heeft het plan om in de buurt van uw woonplaats een militaire radartoren te bouwen, die het luchtruim moet beschermen tegen aanvallen uit de lucht. De radar valt onder de zwaarste milieucategorie en er is nog niet veel bekend over de lange termijngevolgen van de straling die hierbij vrijkomt. Daarnaast is het plan om de radar dichterbij woonhuizen in de buurt te bouwen dan is toegestaan. Het gemeentebestuur heeft geen mogelijkheden om de bouw van de radar tegen te houden. Om dit probleem onder de

aandacht te brengen, wilt u contact opnemen met een Tweede Kamerlid. Welk kamerlid zou uw voorkeur hebben?

- ☐ Alexander Hammelburg (D66)
- ☐ Hanneke van der Werf (D66)
- ☐ Jeanet van der Laan (D66)
- ☐ Joost Sneller (D66)

End of Block: D66 - Mannelijk

Start of Block: D66 - Vrouwelijk

Jens is een jongen van 8 met een verstandelijke beperking, waardoor hij gedurende de hele dag begeleiding nodig heeft. Zijn ouders proberen al een aantal jaren om geschikte langdurige zorg voor Jens te vinden, maar krijgen te maken met lange wachtlijsten en bureaucratie binnen de gemeente. U bent bevriend met de ouders van Jens en wilt contact opnemen met een Tweede Kamerlid om dit probleem onder de aandacht te brengen. Welk kamerlid zou uw voorkeur hebben?

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- ☐ Jeanet van der Laan (D66)
- ☐ Joost Sneller (D66)

End of Block: D66 - Vrouwelijk

Start of Block: D66 - Neutraal

U heeft een prangend probleem en wilt contact opnemen met een Tweede Kamerlid. Welk kamerlid zou uw voorkeur hebben?

- ☐ Alexander Hammelburg (D66)
- ☐ Hanneke van der Werf (D66)
- ☐ Jeanet van der Laan (D66)
- ☐ Joost Sneller (D66)

End of Block: D66 - Neutraal

Start of Block: PVV - Mannelijk

Defensie heeft het plan om in de buurt van uw woonplaats een militaire radartoren te bouwen, die het luchtruim moet beschermen tegen aanvallen uit de lucht. De radar valt onder de zwaarste milieucategorie en er is nog niet veel bekend over de lange termijngevolgen van de straling die hierbij vrijkomt. Daarnaast is het plan om de radar dichterbij woonhuizen in de buurt te bouwen dan is toegestaan. Het gemeentebestuur heeft geen mogelijkheden om de bouw van de radar tegen te houden. Om dit probleem onder de aandacht te brengen, wilt u contact opnemen met een Tweede Kamerlid. Welk kamerlid zou uw voorkeur hebben?

- ☐ Danai van Weerdenburg (PVV)
- ☐ Harm Beertema (PVV)
- ☐ Teun van Dijck (PVV)
- ☐ Vicky Maijer (PVV)

End of Block: PVV - Mannelijk

Start of Block: PVV - Vrouwelijk

Jens is een jongen van 8 met een verstandelijke beperking, waardoor hij gedurende de hele dag begeleiding nodig heeft. Zijn ouders proberen al een aantal jaren om geschikte langdurige zorg voor Jens te vinden, maar krijgen te maken met lange wachtlijsten en bureaucratie binnen de gemeente. U bent bevriend met de ouders van Jens en wilt contact opnemen met een Tweede Kamerlid om dit probleem onder de aandacht te brengen. Welk kamerlid zou uw voorkeur hebben?

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- ☐ Harm Beertema (PVV)
- ☐ Teun van Dijck (PVV)
- ☐ Vicky Maijer (PVV)

End of Block: PVV - Vrouwelijk

Start of Block: PVV - Neutraal

U heeft een prangend probleem en wilt contact opnemen met een Tweede Kamerlid. Welk kamerlid zou uw voorkeur hebben?

- ☐ Danai van Weerdenburg (PVV)
- ☐ Harm Beertema (PVV)
- ☐ Teun van Dijck (PVV)
- ☐ Vicky Maijer (PVV)

End of Block: PVV - Neutraal

Start of Block: CDA - Mannelijk

Defensie heeft het plan om in de buurt van uw woonplaats een militaire radartoren te bouwen, die het luchtruim moet beschermen tegen aanvallen uit de lucht. De radar valt onder de zwaarste milieucategorie en er is nog niet veel bekend over de lange termijngevolgen van de straling die hierbij vrijkomt. Daarnaast is het plan om de radar dichterbij woonhuizen in de buurt te bouwen dan is toegestaan. Het gemeentebestuur heeft geen mogelijkheden om de bouw van de radar tegen te houden. Om dit probleem onder de aandacht te brengen, wilt u contact opnemen met een Tweede Kamerlid. Welk kamerlid zou uw voorkeur hebben?

- ☐ Agnes Mulder (CDA)
- ☐ Henri Bontenbal (CDA)
- ☐ Hilde Palland-Mulder (CDA)
- ☐ Pieter Heerma (CDA)

End of Block: CDA - Mannelijk

Start of Block: CDA - Vrouwelijk

Jens is een jongen van 8 met een verstandelijke beperking, waardoor hij gedurende de hele dag begeleiding nodig heeft. Zijn ouders proberen al een aantal jaren om geschikte langdurige zorg voor Jens te vinden, maar krijgen te maken met lange wachtlijsten en bureaucratie binnen de gemeente. U bent bevriend met de ouders van Jens en wilt contact

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- ☐ Agnes Mulder (CDA)
- ☐ Henri Bontenbal (CDA)
- ☐ Hilde Palland-Mulder (CDA)
- ☐ Pieter Heerma (CDA)

End of Block: CDA - Vrouwelijk

Start of Block: CDA - Neutraal

U heeft een prangend probleem en wilt contact opnemen met een Tweede Kamerlid. Welk kamerlid zou uw voorkeur hebben?

- ☐ Agnes Mulder (CDA)
- ☐ Henri Bontenbal (CDA)
- ☐ Hilde Palland-Mulder (CDA)
- ☐ Pieter Heerma (CDA)

End of Block: CDA - Neutraal

Start of Block: PvdA - Mannelijk

Defensie heeft het plan om in de buurt van uw woonplaats een militaire radartoren te bouwen, die het luchtruim moet beschermen tegen aanvallen uit de lucht. De radar valt onder de zwaarste milieucategorie en er is nog niet veel bekend over de lange termijngevolgen van de straling die hierbij vrijkomt. Daarnaast is het plan om de radar dichterbij woonhuizen in de buurt te bouwen dan is toegestaan. Het gemeentebestuur heeft geen mogelijkheden om de bouw van de radar tegen te houden. Om dit probleem onder de

aandacht te brengen, wilt u contact opnemen met een Tweede Kamerlid. Welk kamerlid zou uw voorkeur hebben?

- ☐ Barbara Kathmann (PvdA)
- ☐ Gijs van Dijk (PvdA)
- ☐ Joris Thijssen (PvdA)
- ☐ Kati Piri (PvdA)

End of Block: PvdA - Mannelijk

Start of Block: PvdA - Vrouwelijk

Jens is een jongen van 8 met een verstandelijke beperking, waardoor hij gedurende de hele dag begeleiding nodig heeft. Zijn ouders proberen al een aantal jaren om geschikte langdurige zorg voor Jens te vinden, maar krijgen te maken met lange wachtlijsten en bureaucratie binnen de gemeente. U bent bevriend met de ouders van Jens en wilt contact opnemen met een Tweede Kamerlid om dit probleem onder de aandacht te brengen. Welk kamerlid zou uw voorkeur hebben?

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- ☐ Gijs van Dijk (PvdA)
- ☐ Joris Thijssen (PvdA)
- ☐ Kati Piri (PvdA)

End of Block: PvdA - Vrouwelijk

Start of Block: PvdA - Neutraal

U heeft een prangend probleem en wilt contact opnemen met een Tweede Kamerlid. Welk kamerlid zou uw voorkeur hebben?

- ☐ Barbara Kathmann (PvdA)
- ☐ Gijs van Dijk (PvdA)
- ☐ Joris Thijssen (PvdA)
- ☐ Kati Piri (PvdA)

End of Block: PvdA - Neutraal

Start of Block: GroenLinks - Mannelijk

Defensie heeft het plan om in de buurt van uw woonplaats een militaire radartoren te bouwen, die het luchtruim moet beschermen tegen aanvallen uit de lucht. De radar valt onder de zwaarste milieucategorie en er is nog niet veel bekend over de lange termijngevolgen van de straling die hierbij vrijkomt. Daarnaast is het plan om de radar dichterbij woonhuizen in de buurt te bouwen dan is toegestaan. Het gemeentebestuur heeft geen mogelijkheden om de bouw van de radar tegen te houden. Om dit probleem onder de aandacht te brengen, wilt u contact opnemen met een Tweede Kamerlid. Welk kamerlid zou uw voorkeur hebben?

- ☐ Bart Snels (GroenLinks)
- ☐ Laura Bromet (GroenLinks)
- ☐ Senna Maatoug (GroenLinks)
- ☐ Tom van der Lee (GroenLinks)

End of Block: GroenLinks - Mannelijk

Start of Block: GroenLinks - Vrouwelijk

Jens is een jongen van 8 met een verstandelijke beperking, waardoor hij gedurende de hele dag begeleiding nodig heeft. Zijn ouders proberen al een aantal jaren om geschikte langdurige zorg voor Jens te vinden, maar krijgen te maken met lange wachtlijsten en bureaucratie binnen de gemeente. U bent bevriend met de ouders van Jens en wilt contact

opnemen met een Tweede Kamerlid om dit probleem onder de aandacht te brengen. Welk kamerlid zou uw voorkeur hebben?

- ☐ Bart Snels (GroenLinks)
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- ☐ Senna Maatoug (GroenLinks)
- ☐ Tom van der Lee (GroenLinks)

End of Block: GroenLinks - Vrouwelijk

Start of Block: GroenLinks - Neutraal

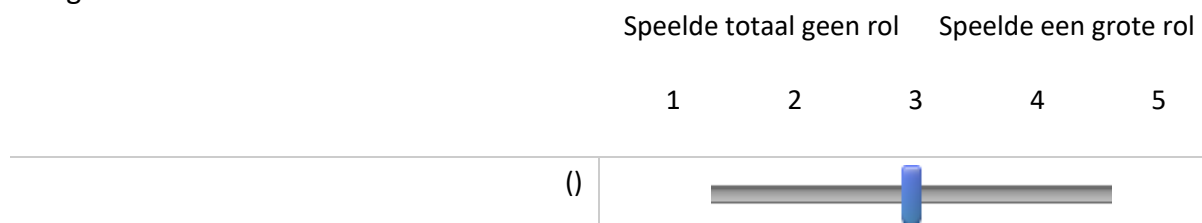
U heeft een prangend probleem en wilt contact opnemen met een Tweede Kamerlid. Welk kamerlid zou uw voorkeur hebben?

- ☐ Bart Snels (GroenLinks)
- ☐ Laura Bromet (GroenLinks)
- ☐ Senna Maatoug (GroenLinks)
- ☐ Tom van der Lee (GroenLinks)

End of Block: GroenLinks - Neutraal

Start of Block: Post-experiment questions

In hoeverre speelde gender een rol bij uw keuze voor een Tweede Kamerlid in de vorige vraag?



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U kreeg de vraag welk Tweede Kamerlid u zou benaderen in een beschreven situatie. Waar ging deze situatie over?

Het kan ook zijn dat u geen situatie kreeg, kies dan voor 'Geen reden'.

- ☐ Kinderopvangtoeslag
- ☐ Militaire radartoren
- ☐ Verhoging maximale snelheid op snelwegen
- ☐ Passende zorg
- ☐ Geen reden
- ☐ Weet ik niet

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Was u bekend met de Tweede Kamerleden uit de vraag met het scenario?

☐ Ja, namelijk met _____

☐ Nee

Page Break

Heeft u ooit eerder een Tweede Kamerlid benaderd? Hierbij kunt u denken aan een mail sturen, maar ook een bericht via sociale media zoals Facebook of Twitter.

- ☐ Ja, meerdere keren
- ☐ Ja, eenmaal
- ☐ Nee, nooit

End of Block: Post-experiment questions

Appendix III: SPSS Output

Output for the collinearity statistics

		Coefficients ^a					Collinearity Statistics	
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients B	Std. Error	Standardized Coefficients Beta	t	Sig.	Tolerance	VIF
1	(Constant)	.487	.066		7.326	<.001		
	Gender	.198	.062	.221	3.204	.002	.935	1.069
	Partij op basis van progressief/conservatief	.046	.062	.052	.752	.453	.938	1.066
	Vignette	.105	.036	.195	2.915	.004	.993	1.007

a. Dependent Variable: Gender Tweede Kamerlid

Output for block 1 of the model

Omnibus Tests of Model Coefficients

		Chi-square	df	Sig.
Step 1	Step	9.916	1	.002
	Block	9.916	1	.002
	Model	9.916	1	.002

Model Summary

Step	-2 Log likelihood	Cox & Snell R Square	Nagelkerke R Square
1	230.992 ^a	.046	.068

a. Estimation terminated at iteration number 4 because parameter estimates changed by less than .001.

Hosmer and Lemeshow Test

Step	Chi-square	df	Sig.
1	.000	0	.

Output for block 2 of the model

Omnibus Tests of Model Coefficients

		Chi-square	df	Sig.
Step 1	Step	26.751	6	<.001
	Block	26.751	6	<.001
	Model	36.666	7	<.001

Model Summary

Step	-2 Log likelihood	Cox & Snell R Square	Nagelkerke R Square
1	204.241 ^a	.161	.235

a. Estimation terminated at iteration number 5 because parameter estimates changed by less than .001.

Hosmer and Lemeshow Test

Step	Chi-square	df	Sig.
1	1.044	7	.994

Output for block 3 of the model

Omnibus Tests of Model Coefficients

		Chi-square	df	Sig.
Step 1	Step	1.571	4	.814
	Block	1.571	4	.814
	Model	38.238	11	<.001

Model Summary

Step	-2 Log likelihood	Cox & Snell R Square	Nagelkerke R Square
1	202.670 ^a	.167	.244

a. Estimation terminated at iteration number 5 because parameter estimates changed by less than .001.

Model Summary

Step	-2 Log likelihood	Cox & Snell R Square	Nagelkerke R Square
1	202.670 ^a	.167	.244

a. Estimation terminated at iteration number 5 because parameter estimates changed by less than .001.