

A Glance at the Political Interest in Cyprus-Evidence of the European Social Survey

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Abstract

This article discusses the importance of European Social Survey and explains the methodology behind it. Furthermore, the article concentrates on Cyprus results, more specifically discussing the level of political interest and satisfaction on key institutions of the state, as these are derived from European Social Survey - 5th wave explaining how the political interest in Cyprus may impact electoral participation.

Key Words: European Social Survey, turnout, Cypriot, abstinence, political interest

Introduction

This paper portrays that European Social Survey is a unique, academically driven social survey that has a major impact from different angles. The paper starts by citing a theoretical background explaining exactly what European Social Survey is and emphasizing its importance. Furthermore, the paper provides the methodology used in the survey explaining in detail how the survey is organized, sampled, executed and analyzed. The last part of the paper provides an analysis and presentation on specific topics, concentrating mainly on the change in the political interest in Cyprus the last couple of years. Based on the results of the 5th wave, Cypriots' interest on politics compared with two years earlier has declined. The financial, social and energy crisis that the country has undergone seems to have resulted in a changing political climate affecting Cypriots' interest in politics but also dropping the confidence on institutions such as on the political parties, politicians, United Nations, Cypriot and European Parliaments, Police and Justice.

European Social Survey – A glance at the political interest in Cyprus

1. Theoretical Background

European Social Survey, about ESS, (2009), notes that ESS, is an academically-driven social survey, designed to explain the interaction between Europe's changing institutions and the attitudes, beliefs and behavior patterns of its diverse populations. Stoop, Jowell, and Mohler (2002) noted back then that European Social Survey was a conceptually, well-anchored and methodologically difficult but precise survey that aimed to establish a standard methodology for cross-national attitude surveys that only the best national studies usually aspire to. Obviously this is true as the survey has run 5 times so far and has established its self on the survey map. Today the preparation of the survey involves a wide range of international experts on methodological and substantive issues as well as a long hour questionnaire. European Social Survey intends to measure changing social attitudes and values in 28 European different nations and is considered a very important study. As of September 4th, 2012, European Social Survey, project instructions, (2010) highlights the uniqueness of European Social Survey. As it states, the survey is a pan-European, time series study designed to measure contemporary social attitudes and how they change over time. Subjects covered in the questionnaire include participation in society, religious and political beliefs, views about work as well as attitudes towards the police and courts. The data gathered in all 5 rounds have been used extensively by the European Commission, national governments, policy analysts, think tanks, politicians, journalists and academics, as well as being of interest to the general public across Europe. In fact, as of May 2010, there were almost 31,800 registered users of the European Social Survey data. As the European Social Survey, project instructions, (2010) note, the highest number of users is in Germany, the UK and Belgium. With data from the European Social Survey, people can make detailed comparisons between individual countries on a wide range of social issues.

Another factor which makes the European Social Survey unique in cross-national research is its aim to meet the highest methodological standards. In order for the information gathered to be truly comparable across all the different countries involved, the survey employs the highest standards in its approach to sample design, response rates, questionnaire design, fieldwork procedures and many other across all the participating countries.

2. Methodology

2.1. Research type

European Social Survey is a quantitative approached survey with the task to discover and calibrate cross cultural and cross-national differences in people's responses. In its project instructions (2010) European Social Survey explains well the survey's two elements. The survey consists of two elements, a main interview questionnaire conducted by paper and pencil interview and a supplementary questionnaire which either carries on from the main interview or takes the form of a self-completion supplement for each respondent to fill in after the interview. Around one half of the long questionnaire is a core element comprising key repeat questions to measure change in a range of social and demographic characteristics, attitudes and behavior patterns. This core contains questions on occupation and social structure, social exclusion, religious affiliation and identity, ethnic and national identity, political trust, party affiliation, multilevel governance and voting behavior, media consumption and value orientations. The other half of the questionnaire is a rotating element that consists of two topic-specific modules per round to measure particular academic and policy concerns and debates that require examination in depth. These modules are selected via an international competition. In addition to the long face-to-face interview questionnaire, a short self-completion questionnaire provides further questions on topics not covered in the main, as well as some variations on questions already asked during the interview designed to quantify the reliability and validity of certain measures in the interview. The main interview lasts on average about an hour while the supplementary questionnaire needs a further 5-10 minutes to be completed.

2.2. Sample Size and Structure

According to European Social Survey, sample designs (2009), the objective of the ESS sampling strategy is the design and implementation of workable and equivalent sampling strategies in all participating countries. The requirement is for random probability samples with comparable estimates based on full coverage of the eligible residential populations aged 15+. The actual method of achieving this requirement varies considerably between participating countries, depending on their access to sampling sources and other considerations. But it is based on the same basic principles of strict probability and representativeness. In Cyprus, a total of 1600 sampling points are set up front. The sample is representative of all individuals aged 15 and over from 1600 households, who are permanent residents, regardless of nationality, citizenship, language or legal status. The selection of people who respond to the questionnaire from every household is done with the method of the last birthday so that representativeness is ensured. Households are randomly selected and then one person from each household is drawn again also randomly and anonymously. This means that households and individuals that are drawn across the country cannot be exchangeable with others.

Once an individual has been selected, under no circumstances can be substituted by another individual. Interviewers must attempt to make contact at every household or with every individual in their assignment except those notified as refusals. Interviewers must make a personal visit on a minimum of 4 occasions, at different times of the day and spread across the fieldwork period before they classify the household or individual as unproductive. At least one of these personal visits should be in the evening and one at the weekend. A high response rate is essential in order to ensure that the people interviewed in the survey accurately represent the population, so a target minimum response rate of 70% has been set. In Cyprus - round 5 out of the 1600 sampling points we had succeeded a sample of 1083 individuals aged 15+ out of which 55% are female and 45% are male. The results of this paper are based on this sample. Considering the Cyprus population, the maximum margin of error at a 95% confidence level associated with the aforementioned sample size, is plus / minus 2.97% at an overall level.

2.3. Gathering Data

European Social Survey, project instructions (2010), note that the mode of European Social Survey data collection in all countries is face-to-face interviewing, since it is best placed to boost response rates and achieve consistent data quality across diverse nations.

Maximum assignment sizes for interviewers are pre-specified, as are minimum proportions of back-checks. Furthermore, in their paper Stoop et al. (2002) emphasize that European Social Survey aims at reducing possible bias caused by nonresponse and outline the steps taken to achieve this. First, a minimum target national response rate of 70% is set up front recognizing that the target will not universally be achieved. Since response rates cannot be forecasted, the survey insists instead on certain fieldwork procedures in all countries that help maximize the chances of recruiting. For instance, to reduce refusals, the survey insists on personal briefings of all interviewers in doorstep interactions and the consideration of a range of response maximization techniques, such as advance letters. In addition, at least four visits have to be made before abandoning a sampling unit as non-productive, with calls spread across times of day and days of week. Similarly, to ensure that difficult to contact or busy people are consistently pursued, a minimum fieldwork duration of 30 days has been specified, but at the same time to reduce seasonal effects, a maximum time window of four months has been set. Most importantly, outcome codes are completed for each contact at each address on standardized contact forms. These include interviewer recorded observations of the household and its neighborhood. This enables response patterns to be identified and subsequently response rates and nonresponse to be consistently documented and calculated across countries.

2.4. Analysis

Data is analyzed in SPSS (Statistical Package of Social Sciences). Analyses employ both descriptive and inductive. Descriptive analysis involves the examination of frequencies and inductive employs the use of Hypothesis Testing for verification of the results. To provide some evidence of the degree of validity, the research design utilizes face validity. Face validity refers to the subjective agreement of professionals that a scale logically appears to be accurately reflecting what it purports to measure and is just based on a close reading and study of the question. Validity is also achieved through the use of the short self-completion questionnaire that provides further questions on topics not covered in the main, as well as some variations on questions already asked during the interview, designed to exactly quantify the reliability and validity of certain measures in the interview.

Hypothesis Testing - The Empirical Verification of Results

Hypothesis testing enables the validation of the findings of the study by empirical means. The rationale behind this decision is grounded to the need of using inferential statistics in order to verify the results and make inferences about the population under investigation. For the purpose of this paper, a decision was made to adopt Hypothesis Testing. The rationale behind this decision was made after reviewing the relevant literature and considering views by leading scholars such as Zikmund (2003) and Norusis (1999). “In marketing theory a hypothesis is an unproven proposition or supposition that tentatively explains certain facts or phenomena—it is a statement of assumption about the nature of the world. In its simplest form, the hypothesis is a guess” (Zikmund, 2003).

With statistical techniques we are able to decide whether or not our theoretical hypothesis is confirmed by the empirical evidence. This is basically done by testing the null and alternative hypotheses. A null hypothesis is a statement that asserts that any change from what has been thought to be true will be due entirely to random sampling error (no significance). The true purpose of setting up the null hypothesis is to provide an opportunity for nullifying it. The alternative hypothesis states the opposite of the null hypothesis. One of the things we wish to test in this project is whether interest in politics or satisfaction on institutions is indeed low. A hypothesis that interest or satisfaction is low is a null hypothesis, that is, it describes a hypothetical but exact state of affairs. The alternative hypothesis describes the situation when the null hypothesis is false. When we statistically test a hypothesis, we assume that the null hypothesis correctly describes the state of affairs. The null hypothesis is the frame of reference against which we will judge our sample results.

What Is Hypothesis (Significance) Testing

We generally assign the symbol H_0 to the null hypothesis and the symbol H_1 to the alternative hypothesis. The purpose of hypothesis testing is to determine which of the two hypotheses is correct. The t- tests provides a method by which we can compare two data sets. Conducting a t- test informs us whether the degree of difference between the two data sets could be due to factors other than sampling error. If the results indicate that the difference between the groups is not likely due to sampling error, we believe that the two data sets probably do not come from the same population, or else are not equal with each other (are statistically significant).

In significance testing we set a critical value which our observed t- statistic value should exceed if we are to say that the means are **SIGNIFICANTLY DIFFERENT FROM EACH OTHER**. When the t statistic values are extreme we think the two samples are from different populations (reject the null hypothesis and accept the alternative hypothesis). We say the two sample means are statistically significantly different from each other (there is a real significant difference between them, therefore we can generalize about our population). Regarding the analysis in this paper, the variables that are used are the following: political interest, satisfaction on key institutions, age and gender.

2.5. Ethical Considerations

Great emphasis is given to the ethical aspect of the study. As Zikmund (2003) points out, ethical issues in survey research are of primary importance. As he notes, the respondent's right to privacy, use of deception, the respondent's right to be informed about the purpose of the research, the need for confidentiality, the need for honesty and objectivity in collecting and reporting data, and other issues are factors in the design and execution of surveys. According to European Social Survey, project instructions (2010), to ensure that the survey is in line with European laws and directives on data protection, three main points are conveyed to respondents, whether in written or oral form. First, participation in the European Social Survey is voluntary and second the data are stored at and are available from the Norwegian Social Science Data Services. They are released for statistical purposes only from the Norwegian Social Science Data Services that takes all necessary steps to make it impossible for any user to directly identify any of the individuals who supplied the data. Third, an advance letter is always sent to each selected household. Respondents prefer having an advance letter which provides them with advance notice and enables interviewers to avoid a refusal.

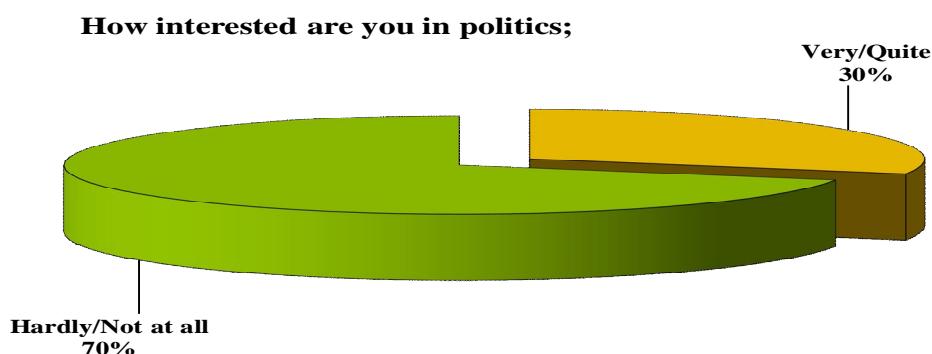
3. Analysis

The analysis provides a descriptive analysis of the results followed by a Hypothesis Testing for verification of the results.

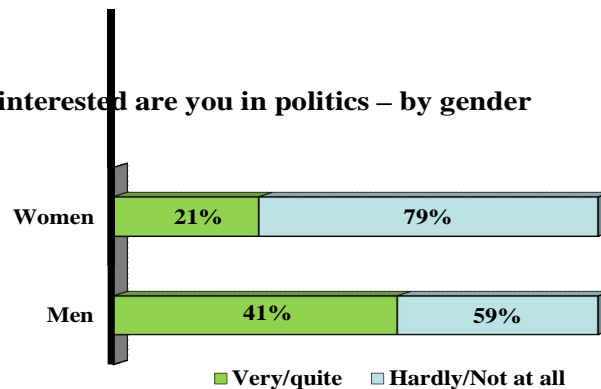
3.1. Interest in Politics

Timeless and much debated question is whether or not there is an interest in politics in Cyprus and to what extent. The survey lists a reduced interest in politics in 2011. According to the survey, 3 out of 10 Cypriot citizens note to be very or quite interested in politics. It is worth noting that within the period of September - December 2009, the Cypriot society was split in half regarding interest in politics, with 45% showing an interest. Obviously the social, economic and energy crisis which has been taking place in Cyprus has led to more scorn towards politics and has led to a reduction in interest.

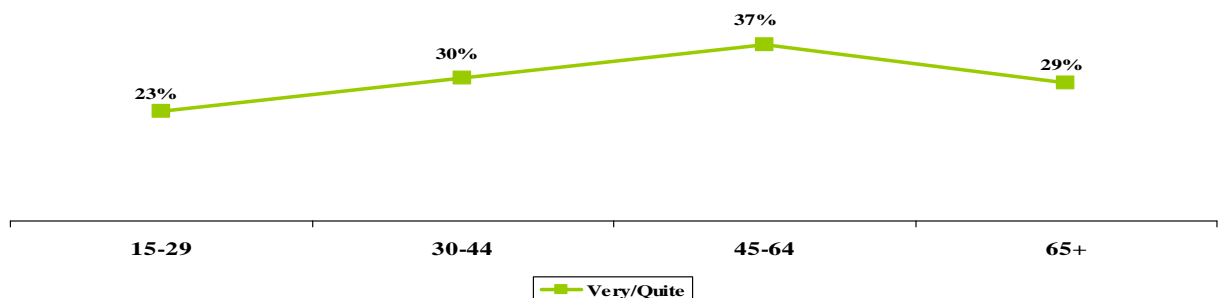
Figure I



Interestingly, the gender breakdown shows that interest in politics within gender has also decreased. 4 in 10 men, in contrast to nearly 2 in 10 women have a keen interest in politics. In 2009 the percentage of males was recorded at 55%, while for women at 35%.

Figure II**How interested are you in politics – by gender**

Furthermore, the relationship of age and interest in politics is bidirectional, since as the age increases so does the interest. Specifically, lower interest in politics is noted in people aged 15-29 with interest reaching 23%, while the interest rate rises to 30% for those aged 30-44 following even rise as age increases, with interest decreasing slightly at older ages. Generally, however, compared with 2009 interest is reduced among all different age groups. In 2009 the interest for ages 30-64 exceeded 40%, whereas at ages 45 + was even recorded at 54%, something that proves that the reduction of interest is widespread in the Cypriot society. Regarding young people, is rather logical that their interests are not focused on politics, but rather in their minds there is a concern for exams at a university, the military, etc. Please note that individuals under 18 do not yet have voting rights, therefore "political consciousness" is still incomplete. By being integrated into the society and acquiring a voting right, the involvement in politics increases.

Figure III**How interested are you in politics - by age -*****The Chi-Square test for Goodness of Fit***

Significance level is defined as the level at which we are significant (5%), the level which is considered too low to warrant support of the null hypothesis so we have to reject it. Additionally, confidence level is defined as the percentage that indicates the long-run probability that the results will be correct. Traditionally, researchers have used the 95% confidence level. Testing a hypothesis about a mean, requires interval data or ratio data. When we wish to work with a nominal scale such as with a Yes or No answer, because of the type of scale, we may use the Chi-square approach. The chi-square test allows us to test for significance in the analysis of frequency distributions. Thus categorical data on variables such as sex, education, or dichotomous (yes or no) answers may be statistically analyzed.

Test 1

At this point i wish to test the null hypothesis for the questions discussed earlier. Firstly, I wish to test whether the number of people who are interested in politics equals the number of people who are not interested in politics.

Ho: $\mu_1 = \mu_2$

H1: $\mu_1 \neq \mu_2$

Our frequency distribution (based on our sample) suggests that the majority of the population (70%) is hardly or not at all interested in politics. The computed chi-square value needs to be compared with the critical chi-square value associated with the .05 probability level with 1 degree of freedom (remember, degrees of freedom refers to the number of observations that can be varied without changing the constraints or assumptions associated with a numerical system = $df = k - 1$ where k = the number of categorical responses - thus $df = 2 - 1 = 1$). From the chi-square table the chi-square critical value is 3.84. Since the calculated chi-square (172) is way higher than the tabular one, the null hypothesis – that the number of people who are interested in politics equals the number of people who are not interested in politics – IS REJECTED. Therefore we conclude that on a 95% confidence level there is enough evidence to support that the number of individuals hardly or not at all interested in politics is higher than the number of those who are very or quite interested.

Therefore on this we can generalize on the population.

TABLE 1 - Chi-Square Test for Interest in Politics

How interested in politics			
	Observed N	Expected N	Residual
Very/Quite	325	541,0	-216,0
Hardly/Not at all	757	541,0	216,0
Total	1082		

Test Statistics

	How interested in politics
Chi-Square	172,481 ^a
df	1
Asymp. Sig.	,000

a. 0 cells (.0%) have expected frequencies less than 5. The minimum expected cell frequency is 541.0.

Test 2

In the following test i wish to test the null hypothesis that interest in politics is equal by gender.

Ho: $\mu_1 = \mu_2$

H1: $\mu_1 \neq \mu_2$

Using the same procedure we see that the calculated chi-square (53) is way higher than the tabular one, 3.84, so the null hypothesis – that interest in politics is equal by gender – IS REJECTED. Therefore we conclude that on a 95% confidence level there is enough evidence to support that males are more interested in politics than females. Therefore on this we can generalize on the population.

TABLE II - Chi-Square Test for Interest in Politics by gender

How interested in politics * Gender Crosstabulation					
			Gender		Total
			Male	Female	
How interested in politics	Very/Quite	Count	199	124	323
		% within Gender	41,3%	20,9%	30,1%
		% of Total	18,5%	11,5%	30,1%
	Hardly/Not at all	Count	283	468	751
		% within Gender	58,7%	79,1%	69,9%
		% of Total	26,4%	43,6%	69,9%
Total	Count	482	592	1074	
	% within Gender	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	
	% of Total	44,9%	55,1%	100,0%	

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. [2-sided]
Pearson Chi-Square	52,269 ^a	1	,000
Continuity Correction ^b	51,307	1	,000
Likelihood Ratio	52,334	1	,000
Linear-by-Linear Association	52,221	1	,000
N of Valid Cases	1074		

a. 0 cells (.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 144.96.

b. Computed only for a 2x2 table

Test 3

In the same way i tested the null hypothesis that high interest in politics is equal by age.

Ho: $\mu_1 = \mu_2$

H1: $\mu_1 \neq \mu_2$

Using the same procedure we see that the calculated chi-square (13) is higher than the tabular one, 7.8, so the null hypothesis – that high interest in politics is equal by age – IS REJECTED. Therefore we conclude that on a 95% confidence level there is enough evidence to support that as age increases interest in politics also increases. Therefore on this we can also generalize on the population.

TABLE III - Chi-Square Test for Interest In Politics By Age

How interested in politics * Age Crosstabulation							
			Age				Total
			15-29	30-44	45-64	65+	
How interested in politics	Very/Quite	Count	52	78	123	72	325
		% within Age	22,9%	29,5%	36,9%	28,7%	30,2%
		% of Total	4,8%	7,3%	11,4%	6,7%	30,2%
	Hardly/Not at all	Count	175	186	210	179	750
		% within Age	77,1%	70,5%	63,1%	71,3%	69,8%
		% of Total	16,3%	17,3%	19,5%	16,7%	69,8%
Total	Count	227	264	333	251	1075	
	% within Age	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	
	% of Total	21,1%	24,6%	31,0%	23,3%	100,0%	

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. [2-sided]
Pearson Chi-Square	13,215 ^a	3	,004
Likelihood Ratio	13,274	3	,004
Linear-by-Linear Association	3,776	1	,052
N of Valid Cases	1075		

a. 0 cells (.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 68.63.

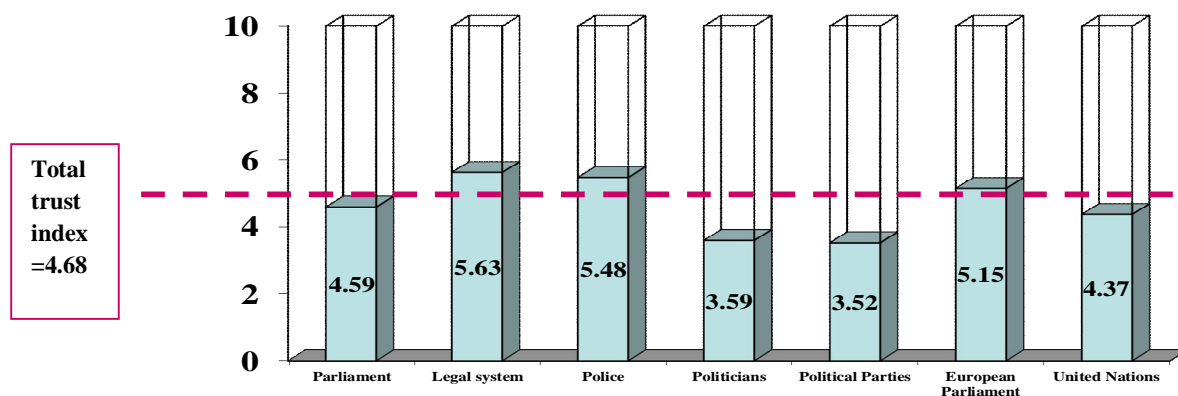
3.2. Trust on Key Institutions

Disappointing are the results related to the degree of trust on key institutions of the state. On a scale of 0-10 overall trust index barely reaches 4.68 and expresses a moderate trust for the Cypriot citizen concerned institutions (note that the overall trust index represents the overall - average trust for the institutions under investigation). In the period between September - December 2009 the index stood at 5.26, so the overall trust of the Cypriot citizen to various institutions has declined. Very low trust is noted for “political parties”, “politicians” and the “United Nations” with trust recording the lowest score just 3.59, 3.52 and 4.37 respectively, which is below the overall trust index (4.68).

The low degree of confidence in the United Nations shakes things up since one might expect that as a peacekeeping force should have shown better trust. “Justice”, “Police” and the “European Parliament” are the only institutions that exceed the overall trust index (4.68), even though are moderately trusted by Cypriots.

Figure IV

**How much do you personally trust each one of the following institutions?
– Average Mean–**



Hypothesis Testing

The null hypothesis is that trust on each of the institutions is not on the moderate side.

$H_0: \mu=0$

$H_1: \mu \neq 0$

As already mentioned, the significance level is a critical probability in choosing between the null and the alternative hypotheses. The level of significance determines the probability—say, .05 or .01—that is to be considered too low to warrant support of the null hypothesis (we reject the null hypothesis).

In our question, at 5% significance level the critical value is 1.96 and the $t_1=61.802$, $t_2=...$ respectively, so since the t-statistic falls in the rejection region we REJECT the null hypothesis, that trust is not on the moderate side and we accept the alternative hypothesis. So we conclude that, on a 95% confidence level, trust on each of the institutions is ON the moderate side.

TABLE IV - Significance testing for trust

One-Sample Test				
	Test Value = 0			
	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference
Trust in country's parliament	61,802	1015	,000	4,591
Trust in the legal system	71,196	1044	,000	5,633
Trust in the police	69,565	1055	,000	5,485
Trust in politicians	49,365	1022	,000	3,594
Trust in political parties	47,941	1020	,000	3,522
Trust in the European Parliament	61,082	927	,000	5,154
Trust in the United Nations	51,591	949	,000	4,375

Testing differences among more than two groups – Analysis of Variance (ANOVA)

We turn now to a more general version of the t-test situation when there are more than two groups to compare. SPSS includes a special one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) procedure, which allows a single predictor or independent variable. For a t-test with only two groups, this decision is unambiguous; if the result is significant, which mean is higher and which is lower is obvious. When using more than two groups a statistically significant result tells us only that it is unlikely that all of the group means in the population are the same, but not which groups are different from each other. The post hoc, or multiple comparison tests, provide this information. Post hoc tests are used to determine which means are statistically different from the means in the categories of the factor variable. These tests are used only after the overall F test indicates that population differences exist. In this example we will use the Bonferroni, a less conservative test to provide a contrast.

The analysis of variance (ANOVA) table provides a test of the further hypothesis that there is a relationship between each of the key institutions and age groups. In analysis of variance, an F statistic is computed and used to test the null hypothesis of no difference in the means. For our purposes the F test is significant at 0.05 level for all institutions except “Trust in the European Parliament”. Therefore, we conclude that there is a statistically significant difference in mean trust on key institutions across age groups, except only for the “Trust in the European Parliament”.

TABLE VI – ANOVA Test

ANOVA						
		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Trust in country's parliament	Between Groups	214,527	3	71,509	13,167	,000
	Within Groups	5463,410	1006	5,431		
	Total	5677,937	1009			
Trust in the legal system	Between Groups	173,008	3	57,669	8,979	,000
	Within Groups	6647,742	1035	6,423		
	Total	6820,751	1038			
Trust in the police	Between Groups	393,958	3	131,319	21,040	,000
	Within Groups	6522,119	1045	6,241		
	Total	6916,076	1048			
Trust in politicians	Between Groups	222,186	3	74,062	14,128	,000
	Within Groups	5305,301	1012	5,242		
	Total	5527,487	1015			
Trust in political parties	Between Groups	201,036	3	67,012	12,531	,000
	Within Groups	5406,340	1011	5,348		
	Total	5607,375	1014			
Trust in the European Parliament	Between Groups	48,332	3	16,111	2,450	,062
	Within Groups	6037,105	918	6,576		
	Total	6085,437	921			
Trust in the United Nations	Between Groups	77,190	3	25,730	3,797	,010
	Within Groups	6369,301	940	6,776		
	Total	6446,490	943			

The overall F test demonstrates clearly that the means on the key institutions across ages are indeed true to the population, except of course for European Parliament. Had the F test indicated that there was no significant difference, then we could not get further comparisons of the means so we could not turn to the post hoc tests. The key column is the “Sig.” column which contains the significance value of the various tests.

TABLE VII – ANOVA test

Bonferroni							
Multiple Comparisons							
Dependent Variable	(I) Age	(J) Age	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
						Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Trust in country's parliament	15-29	30-44	-.145	.219	1,000	-.72	.43
		45-64	-.546	.208	.052	-1.09	.00
		65+	-1.246*	.222	.000	-1.83	-.66
	30-44	15-29	.145	.219	1,000	-.43	.72
		45-64	-.401	.197	.255	-.92	.12
		65+	-1.101*	.212	.000	-1.66	-.54
	45-64	15-29	.546	.208	.052	.00	1.09
		30-44	.401	.197	.255	-.12	.92
		65+	-.700*	.201	.003	-1.23	-.17
	65+	15-29	1.246*	.222	.000	.66	1.83
		30-44	1.101*	.212	.000	.54	1.66
		45-64	.700*	.201	.003	.17	1.23
Trust in the legal system	15-29	30-44	-.137	.233	1,000	-.75	.48
		45-64	-.389	.222	.479	-.97	.20
		65+	-1.111*	.238	.000	-1.74	-.48
	30-44	15-29	.137	.233	1,000	-.48	.75
		45-64	-.252	.211	1,000	-.81	.31
		65+	-.974*	.228	.000	-1.58	-.37
	45-64	15-29	.389	.222	.479	-.20	.97
		30-44	.252	.211	1,000	-.31	.81
		65+	-.723*	.216	.005	-1.29	-.15
	65+	15-29	1.111*	.238	.000	.48	1.74
		30-44	.974*	.228	.000	.37	1.58
		45-64	.723*	.216	.005	.15	1.29
Trust in the police	15-29	30-44	-.353	.230	.753	-.96	.26
		45-64	-.773*	.218	.003	-1.35	-.20
		65+	-1.722*	.233	.000	-2.34	-1.11
	30-44	15-29	.353	.230	.753	-.26	.96
		45-64	-.420	.208	.260	-.97	.13
		65+	-1.369*	.223	.000	-1.96	-.78
	45-64	15-29	.773*	.218	.003	.20	1.35
		30-44	.420	.208	.260	-.13	.97
		65+	-.949*	.211	.000	-1.51	-.39
	65+	15-29	1.722*	.233	.000	1.11	2.34
		30-44	1.369*	.223	.000	.78	1.96
		45-64	.949*	.211	.000	.39	1.51
Trust in politicians	15-29	30-44	-.106	.214	1,000	-.67	.46
		45-64	-.629*	.203	.012	-1.16	-.09
		65+	-1.235*	.218	.000	-1.81	-.66
	30-44	15-29	.106	.214	1,000	-.46	.67
		45-64	-.523*	.193	.041	-1.03	-.01
		65+	-1.129*	.209	.000	-1.68	-.58
	45-64	15-29	.629*	.203	.012	.09	1.16
		30-44	.523*	.193	.041	.01	1.03
		65+	-.606*	.197	.013	-1.13	-.08
	65+	15-29	1.235*	.218	.000	.66	1.81
		30-44	1.129*	.209	.000	.58	1.68
		45-64	.606*	.197	.013	.08	1.13
Trust in political parties	15-29	30-44	-.049	.216	1,000	-.62	.52
		45-64	-.431	.205	.216	-.97	.11
		65+	-1.168*	.220	.000	-1.75	-.59
	30-44	15-29	.049	.216	1,000	-.52	.62
		45-64	-.382	.194	.299	-.90	.13
		65+	-1.119*	.210	.000	-1.67	-.56
	45-64	15-29	.431	.205	.216	.11	.97
		30-44	.382	.194	.299	-.13	.90
		65+	-.737*	.200	.001	-1.26	-.21
	65+	15-29	1.168*	.220	.000	.59	1.75
		30-44	1.119*	.210	.000	.56	1.67
		45-64	.737*	.200	.001	.21	1.26
Trust in the European Parliament	15-29	30-44	-.073	.246	1,000	-.72	.58
		45-64	-.208	.235	1,000	-.83	.41
		65+	-.637	.258	.083	-1.32	.05
	30-44	15-29	.073	.246	1,000	-.58	.72
		45-64	-.135	.225	1,000	-.73	.46
		65+	-.564	.249	.143	-1.22	.10
	45-64	15-29	.208	.235	1,000	-.41	.83
		30-44	.135	.225	1,000	-.46	.73
		65+	-.430	.238	.429	-1.06	.20
	65+	15-29	.637	.258	.083	-.05	1.32
		30-44	.564	.249	.143	-.10	1.22
		45-64	.430	.238	.429	-.20	1.06
Trust in the United Nations	15-29	30-44	-.117	.249	1,000	-.78	.54
		45-64	-.247	.238	1,000	-.88	.38
		65+	-.797*	.259	.013	-1.48	-.11
	30-44	15-29	.117	.249	1,000	-.54	.78
		45-64	-.130	.225	1,000	-.73	.47
		65+	-.680*	.247	.036	-1.33	-.03
	45-64	15-29	.247	.238	1,000	-.38	.88
		30-44	.130	.225	1,000	-.47	.73
		65+	-.550	.236	.120	-1.17	.07
	65+	15-29	.797*	.259	.013	.11	1.48
		30-44	.680*	.247	.036	.03	1.33
		45-64	.550	.236	.120	-.07	1.17

*. The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

The analysis of variance (ANOVA) results depicts those pair wise comparisons between trust in key institutions across age groups that fail or not to reject the null hypothesis of no difference. The analysis of variance (ANOVA) table provides a test of the further hypothesis that there is a relationship between trust and age groups. The null hypothesis test tells us for which comparisons there is a relationship. For example, if we examine “Trust in Politicians” between ages 15-29 and 65+ we see that the test is significant at 0.05, so we reject the null hypothesis and conclude that, there is enough evidence to support that the mean trust in politicians is higher for ages 65+ (4.32) than it is for ages 15-29 (3.08). In simple words, older people in Cyprus seem to trust politicians more than younger ones. The same goes for all other institutions for which trust is higher in older people. Using the same procedure we can test all comparisons.

TABLE V – ANOVA test for key institutions across age groups

		Descriptives			
		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error
Trust in country's parliament	15-29	209	4,10	2,364	,163
	30-44	249	4,24	2,296	,146
	45-64	318	4,64	2,361	,132
	65+	234	5,34	2,294	,150
	Total	1010	4,59	2,372	,075
Trust in the legal system	15-29	218	5,22	2,535	,172
	30-44	257	5,36	2,563	,160
	45-64	326	5,61	2,506	,139
	65+	238	6,34	2,542	,165
	Total	1039	5,64	2,563	,080
Trust in the police	15-29	217	4,76	2,573	,175
	30-44	258	5,11	2,551	,159
	45-64	329	5,53	2,553	,141
	65+	245	6,48	2,291	,146
	Total	1049	5,49	2,569	,079
Trust in politicians	15-29	212	3,08	2,216	,152
	30-44	251	3,19	2,249	,142
	45-64	322	3,71	2,378	,133
	65+	231	4,32	2,273	,150
	Total	1016	3,59	2,334	,073
Trust in political parties	15-29	210	3,10	2,319	,160
	30-44	253	3,15	2,233	,140
	45-64	321	3,54	2,336	,130
	65+	231	4,27	2,359	,155
	Total	1015	3,52	2,352	,074
Trust in the European Parliament	15-29	202	4,94	2,660	,187
	30-44	235	5,01	2,567	,167
	45-64	293	5,14	2,387	,139
	65+	192	5,57	2,716	,196
	Total	922	5,15	2,570	,085
Trust in the United Nations	15-29	199	4,09	2,766	,196
	30-44	241	4,21	2,538	,163
	45-64	299	4,34	2,483	,144
	65+	205	4,89	2,687	,188
	Total	944	4,37	2,615	,085

4. Discussion

The findings of the analysis point out that political interest in Cyprus has been dropped during the last few years. On the same path, satisfaction on key institutions has also declined. The question that lies before us is how does political interest affect elections and whether it impacts electoral participation, what we call voter turnout? According to Prior (2008), political interest is a strong predictor of political behavior, including election turnout and other forms of political involvement. In addition, Denny and Doyle (2005 citing Verba, Scholzman and Brady 1995 p2) note that voters with a greater interest in politics are shown to have higher turnout rates and that numerous studies have found a positive relationship between political interest and electoral participation.

According to Denny and Doyle (2005) the theoretical and empirical literature have identified two main reasons why interest in politics may affect turnout. First, people with a high interest in politics are likely to possess more information about the political system, this in turn lowers the cost of voting and therefore increases the probability of voting. Second, Denny and Doyle (2005 citing Feddersen and Pesendorfer 1996 p12) highlight the game-theoretic model of voting to show that it can be optimal for an uninformed voter to abstain from voting even if they care about the outcome of the election, as by abstaining they defer the decision to the informed voters who, by definition, should vote for the correct policy. Another theoretical model developed by Matsusanka (1995) demonstrates how the decision to vote depends on how confident a voter feels about their choice. If voters believe their choice of party or candidate is correct then they derive a higher utility from voting. Therefore an individual with a greater interest in politics may believe that their choice is more informed which will increase their utility from voting i.e. the benefits, and hence their probability voting.

In Cyprus, abstinence has become a phenomenon under investigation for analysts, pollsters and political parties. It is a phenomenon which has traditionally not existed in Cyprus, but in recent years has followed an upward trend. In the 2004 elections, abstention recorded at 27.5% and was considered reasonable for European elections, while in the 2006 parliamentary elections it was recorded at 11%. From there on it exploded. In the 2009 European elections out of an electoral of 526,060 registered voters, 312,479 turned out to vote (59.40%) while 213,581 (40.60%) abstained. In the 2011 parliamentary elections, where traditional abstinence was low, a total of 113216 voters abstained, a percentage of 21.3%. In the last Municipality elections abstinence was recorded at 35%, a total of 152483 voters. Abstinence is higher in younger people, as a consequence of the fact that younger people tend to trust political parties and politicians less. Abstinence is even higher in older people. Older people in Cyprus are more conservative in contrast to younger people that have other interests. It seems that younger people are enjoying other means of social networks, like the internet and especially facebook or Twitter. Political interest is not within their hobbies. In the above content, with the decrease in political interest in Cyprus and especially with the lower trust of youngsters in political parties and politicians, it appears that electoral participation in elections will probably drop.

5. Conclusion

Clearly, politics should have been an idea that represented everybody. Instead, research conducted in Cyprus shows that people, especially young, describe politics as an idea that does not represent them, and that even though is able to influence older people and drug them in the ballot to cast a vote, it is not good enough to influence younger people. The main explanation derived from research leads to the same result, low interest with which voters pursue the elections. Concluding, we all recognize that interest in politics keeps decreasing at dangerous levels. The challenge that lies before us as a country and as a political system is to find ways to resolve this problem.

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