Why don’t ethnic minorities vote?

An examination of the role educational attainment and social capital play in voting behaviour in ethnic minorities and majorities

By Louk Verhofstadt

6578624

Abstract

This paper examines the effect of educational attainment and social capital on the likelihood of voting in both ethnic minorities and ethnic majorities in Europe, using the European Social Survey Round 9. It hypothesises an effect of social capital in both groups, and no effect of education in both groups. It, however, finds a significant effect for both predictors and finds a significant difference in the strength of these effects between the two populations.

Keywords: ethnic minority, ethnic majority, education, social capital, voting, voter turnout

Introduction

In the global west, democracy is seen as one of the highest values, and every country in the global west is governed democratically. One of the fundamental requirements for a functioning democracy, however, is that everyone can and does vote. Right now, this is not the case. In the Netherlands in 2017, 80,4% of those who are allowed to vote actually voted (CBS, 2017). This gets drastically lower when you only look at citizens with a non-western migration background, whose turnout rate was 58% in the last election. This jeopardizes representative democracy, because if 42% of a certain demographic background doesn't vote, there is no way to guarantee their interests will be served properly. This is the case internationally. In the United States 2016 election, overall turnout was 61,4%, while black voter turnout was 59,6%, and Hispanic voter turnout was 47,6%. (Pew Research Center, 2017). In the UK, white turnout was 67%, while minority turnout was 59% (Uberoi & Johnston, 2021). The existing data shows that ethnic minorities consistently vote less often than the ethnic majority. The data used for this paper, the European Social Survey Round 9 (2021), also supports this, with 70,7% of people who belong to an ethnic minority who are eligible to vote voting, as opposed to 80,7% in majority groups. In an OSCE briefing paper (2006), political participation of Roma and Sinti minorities in Europe were examined, and while there aren't any specific percentages, it does state that the voter turnout is low amongst these minorities. The charity Traveller Movement in the United Kingdom found the same for the Traveller, Gypsie (used in a reclaimed manner), and Roma communities in the United Kingdom and Ireland. These are all ethnic minorities, but are still considered part of the majority race in these countries, which is to say Caucasian.

This paper seeks to examine why this is the case. The previously mentioned OSCE briefing paper (2006) posits that for Roma and Sinti a lower level of education and a higher level of illiteracy is the reason, while some political scientists like Putnam (2000) argue that political participation is explained by social capital. As the theory chapter shows, there is a lot of research on the effects of both of these, yet very little on these effects for ethnic minority groups, even though they consistently vote less. This paper seeks to add to the existing body of science by asking the question "*Why do ethnic minorities vote less often than ethnic majorities?*" This question is answered with the following sub-questions: "*Does social capital matter for political participation in ethnic minorities?*", "*Does education level matter for political participation in ethnic minorities?*" and "*Do these factors matter for ethnic majorities as well?*"

For this paper, the European Social Survey round 9 will be used. The interviews for this round were taken in 2018, 2019 and 2020, with the majority being taken in 2018.

Theory

Social capital

Social capital is a complex concept researched by many studies, and it is most constructive to start with a definition of this concept. Putnam (1993) refers to it as "features of social organizations, such as networks, norms and trust that facilitate action and cooperation for mutual benefit." Later, he defined it as "citizen engagement in community affairs" (Putnam, 1995). This paper will be using Putnam's definition as closely as possible. The exact operationalisation of social capital can be found in the methodology chapter.

Berger, Galonksa and Koopmans (2007) have found a relationship between participation in ethnic and German organisations, and political activity in Italian, Turkish and Russian migrants but don't name any mechanisms explaining this relationship. Cassel (1999) finds a relationship between activity in associations (in this case voluntary and religious) and voter turnout in the general population, but is not able to explain the mechanisms behind this relationship. Fennema and Tillie (1999) analysed the voting patterns of Dutch Turks, Moroccans, Surinamese and Antillians living in Amsterdam, focusing on civic community and social trust. They defined civic community as within-group social capital, which they measured by participation in ethnic organisations. Fennema and Tillie (1999) found a correlation between political participation and civic community, and found civic engagement and social capital to be the strongest determinants of how strong a multicultural democracy is. Notably, they found that even civic engagement in organisations that are seen as anti-democratic, such as fundamentalist Muslim organisations, is good for political participation, due to the social capital attained there. Kim (2017) finds a positive effect of informal social contact on voting amongst immigrants in Korea. He does note that this is only the case for bridging social capital, which Putnam (2000) defined as social capital with an out-group. Bonding social capital (with an in-group), however, has a negative effect. Nakhaie (2006) finds a strong correlation between voter turnout and social capital in the general population. He mentions the effects of community rootedness, which Putnam (1993) also used, which refers to the networks people have within the community, and their involvement in the community. This rootedness is lower for those who have recently moved, similar to plants being repotted, whose root system is less expansive than plants who have been in the same pot

for a long time (Putnam, 1993). This involvement in the community would increase the social pressure to vote, but also give people more of the necessary information needed to vote, through social contact and discussions with people. Gaining information is also seen as a barrier to voter turnout (Berinsky, 2005), due to the effort required. Getting relatively effortless information through one's social network would then significantly increase voter turnout. Social capital also works to increase voter turnout through social pressure. In an experiment, Gerber et al. (2008) found a significant rise in turnout when they told subjects that they would inform the subject's neighbours about whether or not the subject voted, and the effect this kind of social pressure has is bigger if one's social capital is higher (Cheng, Chen, & Chen, 2019).

There are, however, also studies that find a negative effect of social capital on voter turnout. These studies find three different potential reasons for this. Firstly, Mutz (2002) found that social interactions present people with conflicting political views, which can cause uncertainty in one's voting choice, and can cause someone to not vote at all. Secondly, the factor of time is mentioned. Atkinson & Fowler (2012) proposed this as part of the explanation for their found effect, and Verba et al. (1995) also mention that time is necessary for political participation, and that social capital uses up that time. The last reason is that some people vote because they feel like they have a civic duty to vote, and social participation, in this case mainly volunteer work or organising a community event, like the Saint's Day Fiesta's Atkinson & Fowler (2012) researched. Theiss-Morse & Hibbing (2005) also find this effect. They also claim that participation in associations does not increase social trust, one of the components of social capital. This is because in heterogenous groups people still tend to interact with those they identify with, and not those outside of their group. Homogenous groups and organisations, like ethnic organisations, by definition, don't have any out-group contact attached to them. Cox (2003) doesn't find a relationship between voter turnout and interpersonal (also known as social) trust, but does find a relationship between institutional trust (trust for the institution being voted for) and voter turnout.

As discussed above, there is no definitive scientific consensus for the effect social capital has on voting. Since this paper focuses on ethnic minorities, this paper will base its hypothesis on the data that has also focused on ethnic minorities, such as Fennema and Tillie (1999), even if this means there is a smaller literature base to base the hypothesis on. The data on this points towards a positive effect between social capital and political participation. The

first hypothesis, then, is "*Social capital has a positive effect on voting turnout in ethnic minorities.*"

The second hypothesis is based on the data about the general population, which is mostly inconclusive. There does seem to be a stronger case for a positive effect of social capital on political participation than for a negative effect, and the data against the positive effect is mostly made in different contexts than Europe, which is the political context this paper uses. The positive effects, however, are mainly found in Europe. This is why the second hypothesis is "*Social capital has a positive effect on voting turnout in ethnic majorities*."

Education

As mentioned in the introduction, the OSCE report found that Roma and Sinti minorities are often less educated, and therefore less likely to vote. This falls under the so called "civic education theory" (Tenn, 2007). That theory states that when an individual obtains more schooling, they develop skills and knowledge that help with political engagement, and is therefore more likely to vote. This paper seeks to find if this effect can be proven empirically, as most research in Europe done on the effects of education on voter turnout has found no causal relation between the two. In the United States, the effects of education on voter turnout are often found (Sondheimer and Green, 2009; Gallego, 2010), but in the UK (Milligan, Moretti, and Oreopoulos, 2003) this effect has not been found. In a recent paper by Ahlskog (2021), this effect was not found for national elections in Sweden, but the Swedish turnout for the elections for the European parliament could be predicted using education. Furthermore, Borgonovi, d'Hombres and Hoskins (2010), using the first 4 waves of the European Social Survey, found no effect across 15 European countries. Tenn (2007), an American researcher, examined why this effect takes place. He found no direct proof for the civic education theory. He did find some support towards the selection bias theory, which simply states that there are confounding variables, such as family background characteristics that predict both education and voter turnout. Additionally, Brody (1978) observed that even though educational levels rose nationwide following the second World War, voter turnout did not. Tenn's paper (2007) could provide an explanation for this. Xu (2005), also an American researcher, did find the effect, and examined the difference between white people and different minority groups in the United States. He found that the effects of education on individual voter turnout were smaller for ethnic minorities, than for white people. Notably, with 0 years of education, white people had the lowest chance to vote, only rising above

minority groups later. For Asian Americans, he found that this difference in effect size would likely fully go away if the current voter registration laws in the United States were gone.

The relation between education and individual voter turnout has not been found in Europe, and research based in the United States had found that the effect of education is more likely due to confounding variables, such as background characteristics. This is why the third hypothesis is "*Education has no effect on majority voter turnout in Europe*". The found effect of education in the United States is smaller for minorities than for the majority, if this effect can even be attributed to educational attainment. This is why the fourth and final hypothesis is "*Education has no effect on minority voter turnout in Europe.*" This hypothesis goes against the OSCE (2006) report, but has a stronger scientific backing.

Data and method

The dataset used in this thesis is the European Social Survey (ESS). It's a longitudinal study, of which the ninth round was used. This survey was conducted over the years 2018, 2019, and 2020, though the majority (54,3%) was conducted in 2018, with 44,6% of the interviews conducted in 2019. It has 49519 respondents in 29 European countries. The respondents had to be 15 or older, and the sample had to be randomised, and representative for the population. A minimum of 1500 respondents was needed in countries with over 2 million inhabitants. The general target response rate was 70%, and interviewers had to call at least 4 times to try to make an appointment, to keep the non-response rate as low as possible. Interviews would take approximately an hour (ESS, 2019). After filtering out the respondents with missing values on the used variables, there are 35768 respondents left. SPSS will be used for the statistical analyses.

Operationalisation

Dependent variable

In this dataset, the dependent variable of this research is easily found. Question B13 asks whether the respondent voted in the last election. There's an option for 'yes', 'no', 'not eligible to vote' and several missing options 'refusal', 'don't know' and 'no answer'. Not eligible to vote will be counted among the missing values, as it's a non-voluntary reason to not vote, and this paper looks at voluntary turnout. This question originally has the variable

'vote' and is recoded into 'vote_2' with the proper values as missing. 1 represents "yes", while 0 represents "no".

Independent variables

The independent variable Education is formed with question F15, which gives the variable 'eisced' in the dataset. This variable ISCED (International Standard Classification of Education) level of education, which can be used to see what level of education a respondent has achieved. This variable has been recoded to Educ, where each value corresponds to an ISCED level, 0 to 8, where 0 corresponds to having no formal education or pre-primary education, such as kindergarten, 1 corresponds to primary education, 2 to lower secondary education, 3 to upper secondary education, 4 to post-secondary non-tertiary education, 5 short-cycle tertiary education, 6 bachelor's degree or equivalent, 7 master's degree or equivalent and 8 corresponds to having a doctorate (ISCED, 2011). The original variable had sublevels, corresponding to how well the level of education had been completed, and if the completion would grant access to a higher level of education. This recoding was done to have a clearer view of the effect of education, as each sublevel is only marginally different from each other.

The variable social capital is more complex, as it has to be comprised of multiple variables, some of which have different scales. Social capital will be comprised of level of social trust and whether or not someone has engaged in social activities and social meetings.

Social trust is measured with three statements (questions A4, A5, and A6, respectively), *Most people can be trusted or you can't be too careful, Most people try to take advantage of you, or try to be fair* and *Most of the time people helpful or mostly looking out for themselves*, and respondents could answer on an 11 point scale with 0 being least trusting to 10 being most trusting. Calculating a Cronbach's alpha for these three gives an Alpha of 0,800, which is relatively high, and thus, these three variables can be used together. If one is removed, the Alpha becomes 0,760, which means the reliability is higher if the three are used together. These three are averaged to calculate the variable for social trust.

Social activities is measured with the question C4:*Compared to other people of your age, how often would you say you take part in social activities?* There are 5 valid answer categories for this, *Much less than most, Less than most, About the same, More than most*, and *Much more than most*.

Social meetings uses the question C2: *How often do you meet socially with friends, relatives or colleagues* which has 7 valid answer categories, *Never, Less than once a month, Once a month, Several times a month, Once a week, Several times a week*, and *Every day*.

Because these 3 variables have different scales, Z-scores will be used to standardize them, and to add them together. Calculating a Cronbach's Alpha for this gives a reliability of 0,488, which is on the low end, but the Cronbach's Alpha uses a lower bound value for reliability, which means it often underestimates the reliability (Peterson & Kim, 2013). A better reliability test would be confirmatory factor analysis, but that is not possible in SPSS. This is why this paper will be going forward with this scale for social capital, albeit cautiously.

Control variables

Household income will be used as a control variable because it is a possible confounding variable with education, because they're often linked (Ashenfelter, 1991). For this controle variable question F41 from the questionnaire, which asks the respondent for the income decentile they're in, will be used. This makes it a viable variable to use across countries, as the GDP per capita in each country is different, but this variable scales with the income in the country. This means there is no recoding necessary, and thus the variable 'hinctnta' will be used.

Age will also be used as a control variable. This is calculated by the researchers who collected the data, using the date of the interview, and the question F3, which asks for the year of birth of the respondent. The variable used for this in the dataset is 'agea', which will be used for the analysis. Age is used because it has been found to be a strong predictor of individual turnout (Arzheimer, Evans & Lewis-Beck, 2016).

Sorting variable

The file will be split and sorted by the variable 'blgetmg', corresponding to question C26, which asks if the respondent is a part of an ethnic minority. Here, only the 'yes' and 'no' answers will be used, the rest ('refusal', 'don't know' and 'no answer') will be considered missing. This has been recoded into 'Eth_min'. 1 will represent yes, 0 will represent 0.

Method

First descriptives will be shown and examined, using a T-test to test the differences in means between ethnic minorities and ethnic majorities. Then, a regression will be done to test

the hypotheses with these independent variables, and a binary dependent variable, it is possible to do a logistic regression. The regression will be done in 5 models. Model 1 is the effect of social capital on voting, model 2 is the effect of education on voting, model 3 is these two added together, to control for each other, model 4 adds the control variables of household income and age. Model 5, finally tests if the found effects, if there are any, are significantly different from each other, using two interaction variables, ethnic minority*education and ethnic minority*social capital.

Results

Table 2.

Descriptives after filtering by Eth_min.

		N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Standard deviation
Ethnic majority	**Dependent variable**					
	Voted? (ref=no)	33817	0	1	0,8073	-
	Independent variables					
	Social capital	33817	-2,15	1,92	0,8073	0,66251
	ISCED level	33817	0	8	3,8753	1,85476
	Control variables					
	Age	33817	18	90	53,2107	17,33310
	Household income	33817	1	10	5,33	2,778
Ethnic minority	**Dependent variable**					
	Voted? (ref=no)	1951	0	1	0,7073	-
	Independent variables					
	Social capital	1951	-2,15	1,92	-0,1147	0,69159
	ISCED level	1951	0	8	3,5959	1,92845
	Control variables					
	Age	1951	18	90	49,0953	17,15672
	Household income	1951	1	10	4,60	2,709

The descriptives table (table 1, see appendix B) shows that the average age of the respondents (N=36002) is 53~~,0374~~ years, and the average educational level is 3,8555, which corresponds to a point between “upper secondary education” and “post-secondary non-tertiary education”. 5,47% of the respondents ~~is~~ are part of an ethnic minority. The mean for social capital is 2,0531, which is above the middle point between the lower and upper bounds (0 and 3 respectively, making the middle point 1,5). These descriptives, however, only tell us something about the full dataset, and not the two groups that will be compared to eachother.

The descriptives that give the first meaningful indication of the final results are found in table 2 (see above). Here, the dataset has been split by the variable Eth_min, showing the descriptives of ethnic majorities and minorities apart from each other. As visible here, the means for social capital, educational attainment, age and household income are lower for ethnic minorities. A T-test shows that these differences in means are significant. In this dataset, 80,73% of ethnic majorities, and 70,73% of ethnic minorities voted in the last national election in their country, which is also a significant difference.

Model 1, which only tests social capital, (table 3, appendix B) has an unstandardized Beta weight for the constant; B=0,938, SE=0,052 , Wald=327,076, p<0,001. The unstandardized beta weight for social capital: B=0,368, SE=0,014, Wald = 25,857, p<0,001. The estimated odds ratio points towards an increase of almost 45% [Exp (B) =1,446, 95% CI (1,254, 1,666)] for probability of voting every increase of 1 of social capital in the case of ethnic minorities. Ethnic majorities have a unstandardized Beta weight for the Constant; B=1,469, SE=0,014, Wald=10625,930, p<0,001. The unstandardized beta weight for social capital: B=0,592, SE=0,021, Wald=821,683, p<0,001. The estimated odds ratio points towards an increase of nearly 81% [Exp (B)=1,808, 95% CI (1,737, 1,883)] for the probability of voting every increase of 1 unit of social capital. The model is also significant (p<0,001), with a Chi-square of 830,249(df=1) for ethnic majorities, and 26,146(df=1) for ethnic minorities.

Model two (table 4, see appendix B), which tests education, has an unstandardized Beta weight for ethnic minorities for the constant; B=0,418, SE=0,104, Wald=16,023, p<0,001. The unstandardized beta weight for educational attainment is: B=0,133, SE=0,027, Wald=24,264, p<0,001. The estimated odds ratio points towards an increase of a little more than 14% [Exp (B)= 1,142, 95% CI (1,083, 1,205)] for probability of voting every increase of 1 unit of educational attainment. For ethnic majorities, the unstandardized Beta weight for the constant is: B=0,714, SE=0,031, Wald: 517,239, p<0,001. The unstandardized beta weight for educational attainment is: B=0,196, SE=0,008, Wald: 584,012, p<0,001. The estimated odds ratio points towards an increase of nearly 22% [Exp (B)=1,216, 95% CI (1,197, 1,236) for probability of voting every increase of 1 in educational attainment. The model is significant (p<0,001) for both groups, with a Chi-square of 625,638 for ethnic majorities, and 25,182 for ethnic minorities. This is 205,611(df=0) and 0,964(df=0) lower than the previous model.

In model 3, found in table 5 (appendix B), both variables are added together, which, in the case of ethnic minorities, gives an unstandardized Beta weight for the constant: B=0,551,

SE=0,110, Wald: 24,977, p<0,001. Education has a unstandardized Beta weight of: B=0,108, SE=0,028, Wald=15,083, p<0,001. The estimated odds ratio of education points towards an increase of a little over 11% [Exp (B)=1,114, 95% CI (1,055, 1,176) for probability of voting every increase of 1 in educational attainment. For social capital the unstandardized Beta weight is: B=0,301, SE=0,074, Wald=16,304, p<0,001. The estimated odds ratio points towards an increase of a little more than 35% [Exp (B)=1,351, 95% CI (1,167, 1,563) for probability of voting every 1 increase in social capital. For ethnic majorities there is a unstandardized Beta weight for the constant of: B=0,890, SE=0,033, Wald: 738,469, p<0,001. Education has a unstandardized Beta weight of: B=0,156, SE=0,008, Wald=354,424, p<0,001. The estimated odds ratio of education points towards an increase of almost 17% [Exp (B)=1,169, 95% CI (1,150, 1,188) for probability of voting every increase of 1 in educational attainment. For social capital the unstandardized Beta weight is: B=0,506, SE=0,021, Wald=571,704, p<0,001. The estimated odds ratio points towards an increase of almost 66% [Exp (B)=1,658, 95% CI (1,591, 1,728) for probability of voting every 1 increase in social capital. This model is also significant (p<0,001), with a Chi-square of 1201,856(df=2) for ethnic majorities, and 41,612(df=2) for ethnic minorities. This is 576,218(df=1) and 16,43(df=1) higher than the previous model.

Table 6

Regression of model 4

		B (SE)	Odds ratio	95% CI for the OR	
Part of an ethnic minority	Education	0,095 (0,030)**	1,099	1,036	1,167
	Social capital	0,366 (0,077)***	1,442	1,239	1,678
	Household income	0,073 (0,021)**	1,075	1,032	1,121
	Age	0,023 (0,003)***	1,024	1,017	1,030
	Constant	-0,836 (0,208)***	-		
Not part of an ethnic minority	Education	0,189 (0,009)***	1,208	1,186	1,230
	Social capital	0,593 (0,022)***	1,809	1,731	1,890
	Household income	0,090 (0,006)***	1,094	1,082	1,107
	Age	0,034 (0,001)***	1,034	1,033	1,036
	Constant	-1,412 (0,068)***	-		

Significance: *=p<0,05 **=p<0,01 ***= p<0,001

Model 4, which adds the control variables as well, (table 6, see above) the standardized Beta weight for the constant for ethnic minorities is: B=-836, SE=0,208,

Wald=16,244, p<0,001. Education has an unstandardized Beta weight of: B=0,095, SE=0,030, Wald=9,753, p=0,002. The estimated odds ratio of education points towards an increase of almost 10% [Exp (B)=1,099, 95% CI (1,036, 1,167) for probability of voting every increase of 1 in educational attainment. Social capital has an unstandardized Beta weight of: B=0,366, SE=0,077, Wald: 22,432, p<0,001. The estimated odds ratio of social capital points towards an increase of a little more than 44% [Exp (B)=1,442, 95% CI (1,239, 1,678) for probability of voting every increase of 1 in social capital. The control variable household income has a standardized Beta weight of: B=0,073, SE=0,021, Wald=11,713, p=0,001. The estimated odds ratio points towards an increase of 7,5% [Exp (B)=1,075, 95% CI (1,032, 1,121) for probability of voting every increase of 1 category in household income. The other control variable, age, has a standardized Beta weight of: B=0,023, SE=0,003, Wald=54,721, p<0,001. The estimated odds ratio points towards an increase of a little over 2% [Exp (B)=1,024, 95% CI (1,017, 1,030) for probability of voting every 1 increase in age. For ethnic majorities the standardized Beta weight for the constant is: B=-1,412 , SE=0,068, Wald=436,639, p<0,001. Education has an unstandardized Beta weight of: B=0,189, SE=0,009, Wald=405,214, p=0,001. The estimated odds ratio of education points towards an increase of almost 21% [Exp (B)=1,208, 95% CI (1,186, 1,230) for probability of voting every increase of 1 in educational attainment. Social capital has an unstandardized Beta weight of: B=0,593, SE=0,022, Wald: 698,325, p<0,001. The estimated odds ratio of social capital points towards an increase of almost 81% [Exp (B)=1,809, 95% CI (1,731, 1,890) for probability of voting every increase of 1 in social capital. The control variable household income has a standardized Beta weight of: B=0,090, SE=0,006, Wald=240,096, p<0,001. The estimated odds ratio points towards an increase of a little over 9% [Exp (B)=1,094, 95% CI (1,082, 1,107) for probability of voting every increase of 1 category in household income. The other control variable, age, has a standardized Beta weight of: B=0,034, SE<0,001, Wald=1428,745, p<0,001. The estimated odds ratio points towards an increase of a little over 3% [Exp (B)=1,034, 95% CI (1,033, 1,036) for probability of voting every 1 increase in age. The model is also significant (p<0,001) with Chi-squares of 2771,696(df=4) and 105,089(df=4) for ethnic majorities and ethnic minorities, respectively. This is 1569,839(df=2) and 63,477(df=2), respectively, higher than the previous model.

The results mentioned above mean that the first two hypotheses, "*Social capital has a*

Table 7

Regression of model 5 (dependent, independent, control and interaction variables)

	B (SE)	Odds ratio	95% CI for the OR	
Ethnic minority	0,003 (0,120)	1,003	0,793	1,268
Education	0,188 (0,009)***	1,207	1,185	1,229
Social capital	0,590 (0,022)***	1,803	1,726	1,884
Household income	0,089 (0,006)***	1,093	1,081	1,105
Age	0,033 (0,001)***	1,034	1,032	1,035
Ethnic minority*education	-0,091 (0,030)**	0,913	0,861	0,969
Ethnic minority*social capital	-0,182 (0,080)*	0,834	0,713	0,975
Constant	-1,364 (0,066)***	-		

Significance: *=p<0,05 **=p<0,01 ***= p<0,001

In model 5 (table 7), which includes the interaction effects, and the variable measuring whether someone is an ethnic minority, it becomes clear that the interactions *Ethnic minority*education* and *Ethnic minority*social capital* are both significant. This means that the effects for ethnic minorities are statistically significantly lower than the effects for ethnic majorities. What this means for the research question will be discussed in the conclusion.

Conclusion and Discussion

First the results will be discussed, and interpreted. Then the research question will be answered. After that, the weaker and stronger points of this paper will be discussed. The results from the data-analysis show that the first two hypotheses, "*Social capital has a positive effect on voting turnout in ethnic minorities.*" and "*Social capital has a positive effect on voting turnout in ethnic majorities*." are confirmed, and the last two are rejected. Social capital had, as hypothesised a significant positive effect on the probability of voting. This matches with Fennema and Tillie's (1999), Nakhaie's (2006) and the other authors' findings. This positive effect was significantly smaller for ethnic minorities than it was for ethnic majorities. There is, however, no prior research to this phenomenon, and it is thus difficult to theorise why this could be. This is an excellent jumping-off point for future research.

Education had, contrary to the hypotheses, *Education has no effect on majority voter turnout in Europe*". "*Education has no effect on minority voter turnout in Europe*, also a positive effect on the probability of voting. The effect of education was found in this dataset, even when controlling for household income. This matches with Sondheimer and Green's (2009) and Gallego's (2010) findings, who wrote articles finding a causal relation between education and voter turnout, but not with most others. Tenn's (2007) paper can offer an

explanation for this, with his findings that there are confounding variables, aside from household income and age, that could offer an explanation for the found effect of education. This, too, is a good jumping-off point for future research.

While the existing body of science, especially in Europe, has found no direct effect of education on voter turnout, and recent studies often point towards a confounding variable as an explanation, such as certain background characteristics that make one more likely to complete a higher education and also more likely to vote, no confounding variable has been theorised for the effect of social capital on whether or not someone votes.

This means that the found difference in effects could help explain part of why someone belonging to an ethnic minority is less likely to vote. Not only do ethnic minorities have a statistically significant lower mean, the effect is also significantly weaker for them.

The main research question "*Why do ethnic minorities vote less often than ethnic majorities?"* can then be answered. Ethnic minorities vote less often than ethnic majorities partly due to a statistically lower educational level, partly due to a lower social capital, and partly because the positive effects of these variables are weaker for ethnic minorities.

This paper does not examine why this effect would be lower, nor why ethnic minorities have a lower social capital or educational level. These, alongside any other possible predictors for voter turnout, such as political trust, and level of integration, are good questions for any future research into voter turnout in ethnic minority groups. The operationalisation used for social capital is also limited in this paper, as the Cronbach's Alpha for social capital was low and even though it has been criticized for underestimating reliability (Peterson & Kim, 2013), 0,488 is still very low, and this should be taken into account for future research, by, for example, using a dataset more focused on social capital. Furthermore, social activities, for example, had only one question in the dataset. There could also be merit in researching these effects in a smaller number of more similar countries. This paper examines 28 countries in the ESS dataset, countries that differ culturally. Some countries may value democracy more or less than others, and in some countries ethnic minorities may have better or worse chances to gain social capital or educational attainment. If the results are different throughout different cultural regions of Europe, it could tell us more about the mechanisms that cause these effects. A final point for attention is that this paper has not controlled for a lot of background characteristics that could confound with education. Household income has been used, and

education was still found significant, but any possible other background characteristics, like personal or family values, have not been used.

This paper has contributed to the existing body of science by researching the effects of social capital and education on voting, both of which are subjects where there is no general scientific consensus yet. It is furthermore one of the few papers focusing on ethnic minorities, instead of the general population, and the only paper comparing the effects of social capital of voting between ethnic minorities and ethnic majorities. With this, it can be a valuable start for meaningful discussions on how voter turnout among ethnic minorities can be explained.

Appendix A: References

Ahlskog, R. (2021). Education and voter turnout revisited: Evidence from a Swedish twin sample with validated turnout data. *Electoral Studies*, *69*, 102186. doi:10.1016/j.electstud.2020.102186

Anderson, K., & Ashenfelter, O. (Reds.). (2012). How convincing is the evidence linking education and income? In *Australia's Economy in its International Context* (pp. 337–347). Adelaide, Australia: University of Adelaide Press.

Arzheimer, K., Evans, J., & Lewis-Beck, M. S. (2016). *The SAGE handbook of electoral behaviour*. Thousand Oaks, Canada: SAGE Publications.

Atkinson, M. D., & Fowler, A. (2012). Social capital and voter turnout: Evidence from Saint's Day Fiestas in Mexico. *British Journal of Political Science*, *44*(1), 41–59. doi:10.1017/s0007123412000713

Beesley, C., & Bastiaens, I. (2020). Globalization and intention to vote: the interactive role of personal welfare and societal context. *Review of International Political Economy*, 1–23. doi:10.1080/09692290.2020.1842231

Berinsky, A. J. (2005). The perverse consequences of electoral reform in the United States. *American Politics Research*, *33*(4), 471–491. doi:10.1177/1532673x04269419

Berger, M., Galonska, C., & Koopmans, R. (2004). Political integration by a detour? Ethnic communities and social capital of migrants in Berlin. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, *30*(3), 491–507. doi:10.1080/13691830410001682052

Bevelander, P., & Pendakur, R. (2009). Social capital and voting participation of immigrants and minorities in Canada. *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, *32*(8), 1406–1430. doi:10.1080/01419870802298447

Borgonovi, F., d' Hombres, B., & Hoskins, B. (2010). Voter Turnout, Information Acquisition and Education: Evidence from 15 European Countries. The B.E. Journal of Economic Analysis & Policy, 10(1). doi:10.2202/1935-1682.2463

Brody, R.A. (1978). The puzzle of political participation in America. A. King (Ed.), *The New American Political System*, American Enterprise Institute, Washington, DC

Cassel, C. A. (1999). Voluntary associations, churches, and social participation theories of turnout. *Social Science Quarterly*, 504-517.

Cheng, F., Chen, T., & Chen, Q. (2019). Matching donations based on social capital in Internet crowdfunding can promote cooperation. *Physica A: Statistical Mechanics and its Applications*, *531*, 121766. doi:10.1016/j.physa.2019.121766

Cox, M. (2003). When trust matters: Explaining differences in voter turnout. *Journal of Common Market Studies*, 41(4), 757-770.

Fennema, M., & Tillie, J. (1999). *Political participation and political trust in Amsterdam: Civic communities and ethnic networks. Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies, 25(4), 703–726.* doi:10.1080/1369183x.1999.9976711

Gerber, A., Green, D., & Larimer, C. (2008). Social Pressure and Voter Turnout: Evidence from a Large-Scale Field Experiment. *The American Political Science Review*, *102*(1), 33-48. http://www.jstor.org/stable/27644496

Incantalupo, M. B. (2017). *The effects of unemployment on voter turnout in U.S. National Elections* . Working Paper. https://scholar.princeton.edu/sites/default/files/mincanta/files/incantalupo_turnout_0.pdf

Kim, H. H. S. (2017). In-Group and Out-Group Networks, Informal Social Activities, and Electoral Participation Among Immigrants in South Korea. *Journal of International Migration and Integration*, *18*(4), 1123–1148. doi:10.1007/s12134-017-0517-1

Nakhaie, M. (2006). Electoral Participation in Municipal, Provincial and Federal Elections in Canada. *Canadian Journal of Political Science*, *39*(2), 363-390. doi:10.1017/S000842390606015X

OSCE. (2006, december). *Contact Point for Roma and Sinti Issues*. https://www.osce.org/files/f/documents/b/c/22981.pdf

Peterson, R. A., & Kim, Y. (2013). On the Relationship between Coefficient Alpha and Composite Reliability. Journal of Applied Psychology,98(1), 194-8. doi:10.1037/a0030767

Putnam, R. D. (1993). What makes democracy work? *National Civic Review*, *82*(2), 101–107. doi:10.1002/ncr.4100820204

Putnam, R. D. (1995). Tuning in, tuning out: the strange disappearance of social capital in America. *PS: Political Science & Politics*, *28*(4), 664+.

Putnam, R. D. (2000). *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community* (1st ed.). New York, United States: Touchstone Books by Simon & Schuster.

Tenn, S. (2007). The Effect of Education on Voter Turnout. *Political Analysis, 15*(4), 446-464. http://www.jstor.org/stable/25791906

Theiss-Morse, E., & Hibbing, J. R. (2005). *CITIZENSHIP AND CIVIC ENGAGEMENT. Annual Review of Political Science, 8(1), 227–249.* doi:10.1146/annurev.polisci.8.082103.104829

Uberoi, E., & Johnston, N. (2021). *Political disengagement in the UK: Who is disengaged?* House of Commons Library. https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=&ved=2ahUKEwit0_nnvpLvAhWGCuwKHfnVCvkQFjAAegQIARAD&url=https%3A%2F%2Fresearchbriefings.files.parliament.uk%2Fdocuments%2FCBP-7501%2FCBP-7501.pdf&usg=AOvVaw1_nIOuR450SjA6sNP4xWrW

UNESCO. (2011). *International Standard Classification of Education*. Consulted at: http://uis.unesco.org/sites/default/files/documents/international-standard-classification-of-education-isced-2011-en.pdf

Xu, J. (2005). Why do minorities participate less? The effects of immigration, education, and electoral process on Asian American voter registration and turnout. *Social Science Research*, *34*(4), 682–702. Doi:10.1016/j.ssresearch.2004.11.002

Appendix B: Tables

Table 1.

Descriptives before filtering by Eth_min.

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Standard deviation
Dependent variable					
Voted? (ref=no)	35768	0	1	0,8018	0,39862
Independent variables					
Social capital	35768	-2,15	1,92	0,0103	0,66480
ISCED level	35768	0	8	3,8600	1,85991
Control variables					
Age	35768	18	90	52,9862	17,34848
Household income	35768	1	10	5,29	2,779
Filter variable					
Ethnic minority (ref=no)	35768	0	1	0,0545	0,22710

Table 2.

Descriptives after filtering by Eth_min.

		N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Standard deviation
Ethnic majority	**Dependent variable**					
	Voted? (ref=no)	33817	0	1	0,8073	-
	Independent variables					
	Social capital	33817	-2,15	1,92	0,8073	0,66251
	ISCED level	33817	0	8	3,8753	1,85476
	Control variables					
	Age	33817	18	90	53,2107	17,33310
	Household income	33817	1	10	5,33	2,778
Ethnic minority	**Dependent variable**					
	Voted? (ref=no)	1951	0	1	0,7073	-
	Independent variables					
	Social capital	1951	-2,15	1,92	-0,1147	0,69159
	ISCED level	1951	0	8	3,5959	1,92845
	Control variables					
	Age	1951	18	90	49,0953	17,15672
	Household income	1951	1	10	4,60	2,709

Table 3

Regression of model 1

		B (SE)	Odds Ratio	95% CI for the OR	
Part of an ethnic minority	Social capital	0,368 (0,072)***	1,446	1,254	1,666
	Constant	0,938 (0,104)***	-		
Not part of an ethnic minority	Social capital	0,592 (0,021)***	1,808	1,737	1,883
	Constant	0,1,469 (0,014)***	-		

Significance: *=p<0,05 **=p<0,01 ***= p<0,001

Table 4

Regression of model 2

		B (SE)	Odds ratio	95% CI for the OR	
Part of an ethnic minority	Education	0,133 (0,027)***	1,142	1,083	1,205
	Constant	0,418 (0,104)***	-		
Not part of an ethnic minority	Education	0,196 (0,008)***	1,216	1,197	1,236
	Constant	0,714 (0,031)***	-		

Significance: *=p<0,05 **=p<0,01 ***= p<0,001

Table 5

Regression of model 3

		B (SE)	Odds ratio	95% CI for the OR	
Part of an ethnic minority	Education	0,108 (0,028)***	1,114	1,055	1,176
	Social capital	0,301 (0,074)***	1,351	1,167	1,563
	Constant	0,551 (0,110)***	-		
Not part of an ethnic minority	Education	0,156 (0,008)***	1,169	1,150	1,188
	Social capital	0,506 (0,021)***	1,658	1,167	1,563
	Constant	0,890 (0,033)***	-		

Significance: *=p<0,05 **=p<0,01 ***= p<0,001

Table 6

Regression of model 4

		B (SE)	Odds ratio	95% CI for the OR	
Part of an ethnic minority	Education	0,095 (0,030)**	1,099	1,036	1,167
	Social capital	0,366 (0,077)***	1,442	1,239	1,678
	Household income	0,073 (0,021)**	1,075	1,032	1,121
	Age	0,023 (0,003)***	1,024	1,017	1,030
	Constant	-0,836 (0,208)***	-		
Not part of an ethnic minority	Education	0,189 (0,009)***	1,208	1,186	1,230
	Social capital	0,593 (0,022)***	1,809	1,731	1,890
	Household income	0,090 (0,006)***	1,094	1,082	1,107
	Age	0,034 (0,001)***	1,034	1,033	1,036
	Constant	-1,412 (0,068)***	-		

Significance: *=p<0,05 **=p<0,01 ***= p<0,001

Table 7

Regression of model 5 (dependent, independent, control and interaction variables)

	B (SE)	Odds ratio	95% CI for the OR	
Ethnic minority	0,003 (0,120)	1,003	0,793	1,268
Education	0,188 (0,009)***	1,207	1,185	1,229
Social capital	0,590 (0,022)***	1,803	1,726	1,884
Household income	0,089 (0,006)***	1,093	1,081	1,105
Age	0,033 (0,001)***	1,034	1,032	1,035
Ethnic minority*education	-0,091 (0,030)**	0,913	0,861	0,969
Ethnic minority*social capital	-0,182 (0,080)*	0,834	0,713	0,975
Constant	-1,364 (0,066)***	-		

Significance: *=p<0,05 **=p<0,01 ***= p<0,001