

# LORE methodological note

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### Who comments surveys?

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#### ABSTRACT

Propensity to comment surveys varies widely across demographic groups. A set of logistic regressions reveal that age, education and political interest stand out as the most important factors, while gender is not as important.

#### Introduction

Survey practitioners have many different ways to gauge what respondents feel about surveys, of which the most obvious and easily accessible are unit and item nonresponse. Nonresponse is, however, a source of information that is difficult to use when identifying and analyzing survey quality problems. One common remedy is letting respondents vent the issues they have about the content of the survey in specific open-ended text boxes or other close-ended variants such as rating scales. This note describes who the typical survey commenters are in the Citizen Panel surveys.

#### Commenting surveys

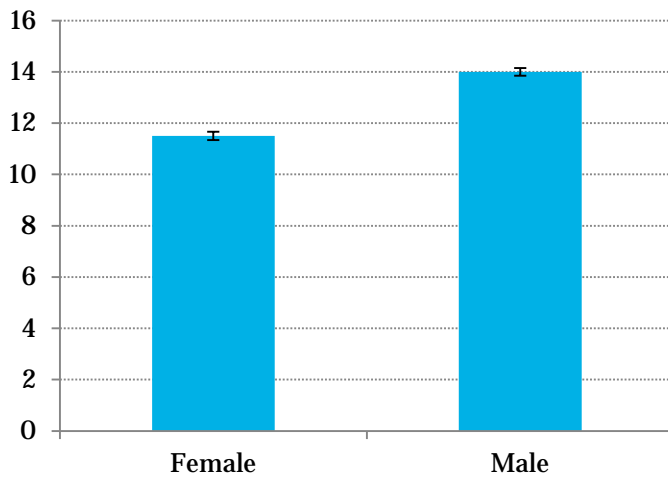
Citizen Panel wave 2 through wave 16 (MP2-MP16, collected December 2010 through June 2015) all included a text box on the last survey page with a general invitation to respondents to fill in any comments they have regarding the survey they had just answered (“If you have any opinions or other comments regarding this survey, please note them down below”). The percentage that entered any comment has varied between 7 percent and 16 percent (avg.: 12 percent, sd.: 2.6) with no clear trends over time. A quick look at comment length, which will not be examined closer in this note, reveals that the average length in terms of number of words for those who left any comment varies between 24 and 43. Comment length and percentage commenters also seem to be negatively related at the aggregate level, though the number of cases does not lend enough power to the calculation to be certain ( $r = -.33$ ,  $p = .23$ ,  $n=15$ ). An explanation could be that there is a core of commenters who usually give lengthier comments while

certain features of some surveys might entice or provoke comments from other types of panelists.

Figure 1 through 6 report the propensities in different demographic groups to enter a comment. In this analysis we include every panelist that has participated in at least one of the 15 surveys during this period. This gives us a total of 57,431 individual panelists that have participated in 3.7 surveys on average and have provided all in all 26,178 comments in 168,393 responses. In order to take into account that different panelists participate in different number of surveys, we first calculate the average number of comments for each person, next, based on these averages, we compute the average for different demographic groups.

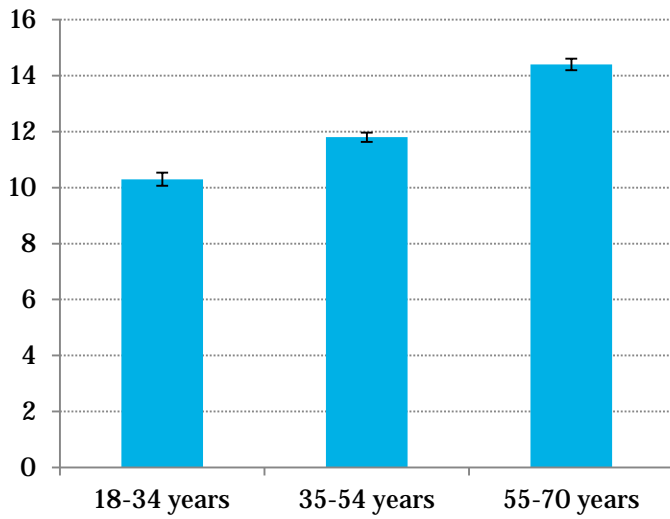
Univariate findings indicate that being male, older, having a higher education, being pensioner, politically interested and having low trust in politicians are all positively related to commenting the survey.

**Figure 1. Percent commenters by gender**



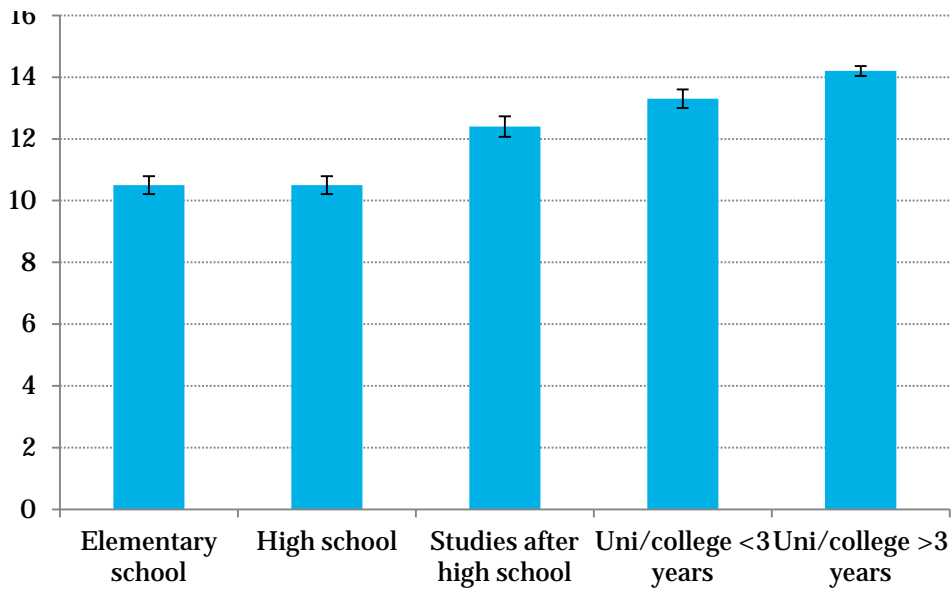
*Comment: N=56,059.*

**Figure 2. Percentage commenters/average length of comment in number of words by age group**



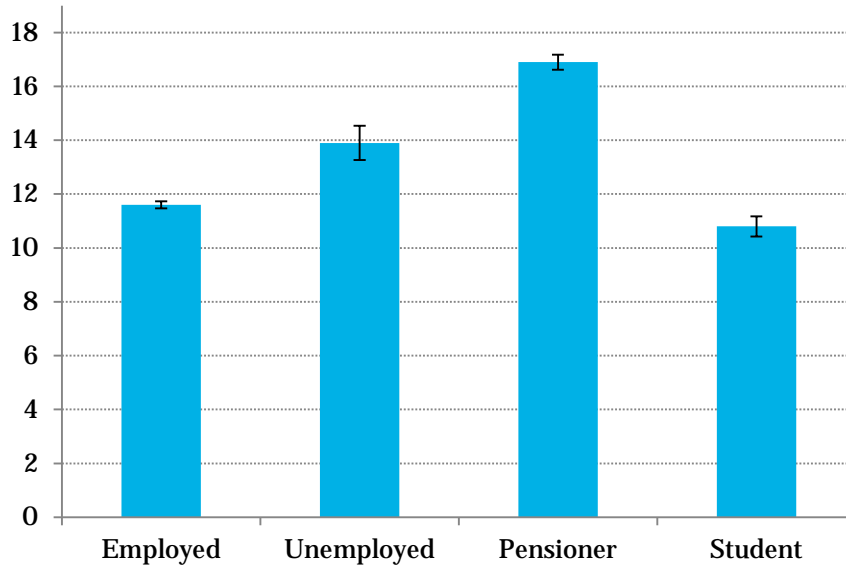
*Comment:* N=52,083

**Figure 3. Percent commenters by educational attainment**



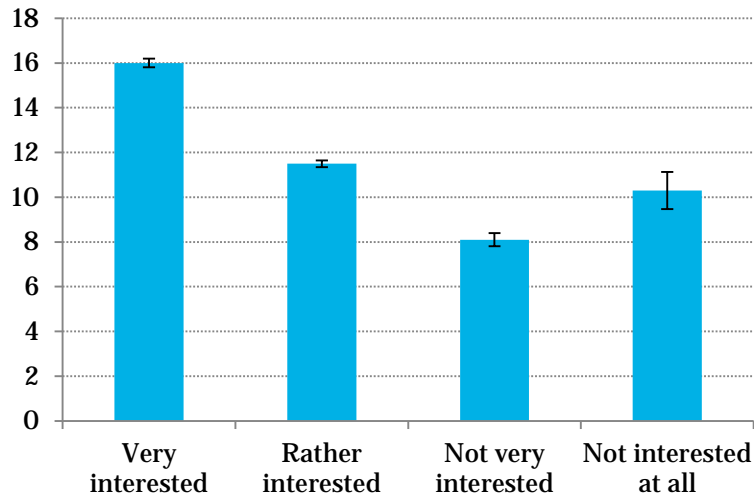
*Comment:* N=56,406

**Figure 4. Percent commenters by labor market situation**



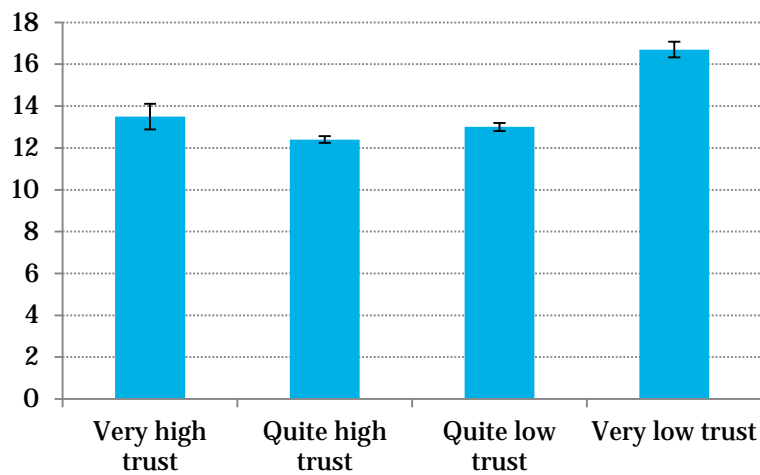
*Comment:* N=55,847

**Figure 5. Percent commenters by political interest**



*Comment:* N=56,125

**Figure 6. Percent commenters by trust in Swedish politicians**



*Comment:* N=54,515

Table 1 below reports odds ratios from a logistic regression for each wave of the Citizen Panel separately with whether they leave a comment or not as the dependent variable. Multivariate results point to gender being one of the least important factors of the studied variables, with males having only 10 percent higher odds on average and with only 4 out of 15 cases being significant at the 0.95-level or higher. All the other measures have a stronger relation where education, age and political interest for example stand out as very important aspects.

**Table 1. Odds of commenting by Citizen Panel wave, logistic regressions (odds ratios)**

	MP2	MP3	MP4	MP5	MP6	MP7	MP8	MP9	MP10	MP11	MP12	MP13	MP14	MP15	MP16	Avg. odds ratio	Cases w. sig. lower odds	Cases w. sig. higher odds
<i>Gender (ref cat: woman)</i>																		
Man	0.90	1.02	1.14	1.06	1.21	0.97	1.06	1.19**	1.24***	0.99	1.08	1.26***	1.08	1.20***	1.08	1.10	0/15	4/15
<i>Age (ref cat: 18-35 years)</i>																		
35-54 years	1.10	1.04	1.09	1.10	1.46*	1.28	1.34**	1.25*	1.19	1.13	1.42**	1.30***	1.18	1.15*	1.02	1.20	0/15	6/15
55-70 years	1.43*	1.24	1.30*	1.26*	1.50*	1.31	1.48***	1.44***	1.29**	1.57**	1.70***	1.52***	1.33**	1.30***	1.32**	1.40	0/15	13/15
<i>Edu (ref cat: elementary school)</i>																		
High school	1.06	1.14	0.87	1.08	1.72	0.99	1.13	1.08	1.17	1.67**	1.68**	1.28***	1.13	1.26**	1.06	1.22	0/15	4/15
Studies after high school	1.22	1.49	1.26	1.28	2.28**	1.16	1.34*	1.20	1.01	1.54*	1.49*	1.29***	1.02	1.14	1.45**	1.34	0/15	6/15
Uni/college <3 years	1.01	1.61*	1.17	1.64**	3.41***	1.38	1.64***	1.46**	1.20	1.49*	1.85***	1.40***	1.38**	1.45***	1.76***	1.59	0/15	11/15
Uni/college >3 years	1.24	1.64*	1.53**	1.62**	2.69***	1.35*	1.77***	1.68***	1.35**	1.90***	1.92***	1.38***	1.12	1.67***	2.15***	1.67	0/15	13/15
<i>Labor market situation (ref cat: employed)</i>																		
Unemployed	1.84**	0.78	1.23	1.34	1.95**	1.41	1.66***	1.52**	1.43*	1.04	1.34	1.29**	1.06	1.52***	1.36*	1.38	0/15	8/15
Pensioner	1.26	1.19	1.34*	0.97	1.42*	1.63***	1.32**	1.27*	1.11	0.97	1.04	1.34***	1.14	1.19**	1.14	1.22	0/15	7/15
Student	1.19	1.10	1.43*	1.30	1.35	1.25	1.20	1.50**	1.07	1.13	1.21	1.15	0.79	1.18	0.92	1.18	0/15	2/15
Other	2.00**	1.32	1.97***	1.91***	1.41	2.52***	2.11***	2.03***	1.63***	1.63*	1.97***	2.13***	1.39*	1.94***	1.92***	1.86	0/15	13/15

<i>Trust in politicians (ref cat: very low trust)</i>																		
Quite low trust	0.69*	0.61***	0.80	0.64***	0.77	0.60***	0.66***	0.76**	0.78**	0.65***	0.69***	0.81***	0.86	0.75***	0.85	0.73	11/15	0/15
Quite high trust	0.56***	0.56***	0.78*	0.60***	0.68**	0.55***	0.64***	0.69***	0.72***	0.53***	0.61***	0.75***	0.69***	0.64***	0.74***	0.65	15/15	0/15
Very high trust	0.62	0.39***	0.62*	0.61**	0.77	0.54**	0.55***	0.86	0.84	0.49**	0.70	0.77**	0.78	0.69**	0.95	0.68	8/15	0/15
<i>Interest in politics (ref cat: very interested)</i>																		
Rather interested	0.86	0.21	2.36*	0.29*	0.74	0.44	0.63	0.49*	1.00	1.07	0.50	0.42***	0.62	0.99	0.81	0.76	1/15	2/15
Not very interested	0.34***	0.75	0.62*	0.57***	0.52**	0.41***	0.49***	0.66***	0.59***	0.51***	0.56***	0.46***	0.47***	0.57***	0.51***	0.54	14/15	0/15
Not interested at all	0.58***	0.77**	0.78**	0.71***	0.72***	0.64***	0.67***	0.68***	0.77***	0.74***	0.77***	0.74***	0.66***	0.73***	0.78***	0.72	15/15	0/15
Constant	0.16***	0.11***	0.10***	0.17***	0.03***	0.14***	0.15***	0.10***	0.10***	0.14***	0.09***	0.13***	0.09***	0.11***	0.08***			
Pseudo R2	0.03	0.01	0.02	0.02	0.02	0.03	0.03	0.02	0.01	0.02	0.02	0.02	0.02	0.02	0.02			
N	4,519	5,905	6,129	6,862	6,351	7,252	9,722	9,965	13,194	5,644	7,060	28,157	17,973	25,101	14,559			

Comments: Each column represents a logistic regression where the dependent variable is whether a respondent has commented or not. The two rightmost columns report the number of cases out of the 15 where odds are significantly lower/higher than the reference category. \* p<.05, \*\* p<.01, \*\*\*p<.001.

The Laboratory of Opinion Research (LORE) is an academic web survey center located at the Department of Political Science at the University of Gothenburg. LORE was established in 2010 as part of an initiative to strengthen multidisciplinary research on opinion and democracy. The objective of the Laboratory of Opinion Research is to facilitate for social scientists to conduct web survey experiments, collect panel data, and to contribute to methodological development. For more information, please contact us at:

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