*Appendix for:*

*“Exposure to Online Abuse of Politicians Does Not Scare Citizens Away From Politics”*

Contents

[Appendix A: Survey Questionnaire 2](#_Toc165895263)

[- English version of questionnaire (translated from original) 2](#_Toc165895264)

[- Danish version of questionnaire (original) 6](#_Toc165895265)

[Appendix B: The Danish case 10](#_Toc165895266)

[Appendix C: Sample and populations characteristics 12](#_Toc165895267)

[Appendix D: Models 15](#_Toc165895268)

## Appendix A: Survey Questionnaire

### - English version of questionnaire (translated from original)

q1:

If there were a parliamentary election tomorrow, which party would you vote for?

* Social Democrats
* Social Liberals
* Conservative People’s Party
* New Right
* Socialist People’s Party
* Liberal Alliance
* Moderates
* Danish Peoples’ Party
* Liberals
* Denmark Democrats
* Unity List
* The Alternative
* Other Party /Independent Candidate
* Would not vote
* Would cast a blank ballot
* Don’t know

q2:

In politics, one often talks about left and right. Where would you place yourself on this scale, where 0 means very left-leaning, and 10 means very right-leaning?

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 0  - Very left-leaning | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10  - Very right-leaning | Don’t know |
| 🔾 | 🔾 | 🔾 | 🔾 | 🔾 | 🔾 | 🔾 | 🔾 | 🔾 | 🔾 | 🔾 | 🔾 |

q3:

How interested would you say you are in politics?

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 0  - Not interested at all | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10  - Very interested | Don’t know |
| 🔾 | 🔾 | 🔾 | 🔾 | 🔾 | 🔾 | 🔾 | 🔾 | 🔾 | 🔾 | 🔾 | 🔾 |

q4:

Here are a number of statements about arguments. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Strongly disagree | Disagree | Neither agree nor disagree | Agree | Strongly agree | Don’t know |
| [q4a] I hate arguments | 🔾 | 🔾 | 🔾 | 🔾 | 🔾 | 🔾 |
| [q4b] I find conflicts exciting | 🔾 | 🔾 | 🔾 | 🔾 | 🔾 | 🔾 |
| [q4c] I enjoy challenging the opinions of others | 🔾 | 🔾 | 🔾 | 🔾 | 🔾 | 🔾 |
| [q4d] Arguments don’t bother me | 🔾 | 🔾 | 🔾 | 🔾 | 🔾 | 🔾 |
| [q4e] I feel upset after an argument | 🔾 | 🔾 | 🔾 | 🔾 | 🔾 | 🔾 |

[Experiment on Abuse and Prospective Political Participation:   
participants are randomly assigned to one of three groups, with equal probability]

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| [Group 1 - Control] | [Group 2 - Neutral/Mild criticism] | [Gruppe 3 – Abusive message] |
| [Participants sorted into group 1 are not shown any messages. They are instead directly sent to q6] | On the following pages, we will show you a series of messages from citizens to politicians on social media.  All the messages are real messages sent to real politicians in Denmark (in some cases, messages have been shortened or have had a few words changed, in order to ensure anonymity etc.) | |
| [q5]  *A politician receives this comment on one of their posts:*  *[random message from table 1, column A]* | [q5]  *A politician receives this comment on one of their posts:*  *[random message from table 1, column B]* |
| How unacceptable or acceptable do you think that the comment from the citizen is?   |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | | 0 – Completely unacceptable | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 – Completely acceptable | Don’t know | | 🔾 | 🔾 | 🔾 | 🔾 | 🔾 | 🔾 | 🔾 | 🔾 | 🔾 | 🔾 | 🔾 | 🔾 | | |
| [The participant is asked q5 three times, each time with a new random message from table 1, column **A**] | [The participant is asked q5 three times, each time with a new random message from table 1, column **B**] |

[Table 1: Messages to politicians]

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | **A** [Questioning/Mildly critical messages] | **B** [Abusive messages] |
| *1* | *Are you willing to invest more funds in mental health services?* | *Hope I don’t see you on the street, because my fists are ready* |
| *2* | *Are you going to vote for tax cuts for the people at the top?* | *One can only hope that you will wise up before the election, because you are stupid as shit* |
| *3* | *Remember the ones that are retired and have done their duty to society. We are forgotten every time.* | *You deserve an acid bath while your kids watch* |
| *4* | *I cannot help reminding you that nothing major happened in this area when you were in power for many years.* | *If you don’t shut your mouth we will come and shut it for you* |
| *5* | *I’m tired of hearing about what others don’t do and promise. Concentrate on your own politics and deliver on them* | *Fuck you, drug whore* |
| *6* | *Please let me hear your opinion about the bridge across Kattegat* | *You and your child deserve to die! Preferably your disgusting offspring first so that you may suffer, and then years later, after living in a dark depression, you must die a slow and painful death* |
| 7 | *Will your party soon present a thoroughly worked out disability policy? 😊* | *You should have been an abortion* |
| 8 | *Yes, it's a start. BUT. There must be specific actions to back it up. And far more than you suggest* | *Get some respect for other people, or I'll knock some into your head* |
| 9 | *Can we get a statement from you in relation to the installation of new wind turbines?* | *Wish the same happened to you, you nasty bitch. Denmark would have a better chance of becoming a better place without you, you nasty bitch.* |
| 10 | *Actually think that you are painting a slightly too rosy picture that does not quite match reality.* | *You have blood on your hands! How does it feel to have stood there like the corrupt satan you are. Holy shit, you are a disgrace to your family and your country* |
| 11 | *How about not cutting school budgets?* | *Please do the world a favor and hang yourself, you fucking whore”* |
| 12 | *Wish that you tried to talk to ordinary people in the real world.* | *I feel like I am going to throw up every time I see you on TV* |

q6:

Imagine that your preferred party encouraged you to run as a candidate at the next local election. How likely is it that you would accept the offer?

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 0 – Extremely unlikely:  I would definitely not run as a candidate | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 – Extremely likely:  I would definitely run as a candidate | Don’t know |
| 🔾 | 🔾 | 🔾 | 🔾 | 🔾 | 🔾 | 🔾 | 🔾 | 🔾 | 🔾 | 🔾 | 🔾 |

q7:

Imagine that you come across a post on Facebook from a Danish politician about a political topic that interests you. How likely is it that you would do the following?

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | 0 – Extremely unlikely | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 – Extremely likely | Don’t know |
| [q7a] Write a comment to the post. | 🔾 | 🔾 | 🔾 | 🔾 | 🔾 | 🔾 | 🔾 | 🔾 | 🔾 | 🔾 | 🔾 | 🔾 |
| [q7b] Share the post | 🔾 | 🔾 | 🔾 | 🔾 | 🔾 | 🔾 | 🔾 | 🔾 | 🔾 | 🔾 | 🔾 | 🔾 |
| [q7c] ”Like” the post | 🔾 | 🔾 | 🔾 | 🔾 | 🔾 | 🔾 | 🔾 | 🔾 | 🔾 | 🔾 | 🔾 | 🔾 |

q8:

Imagine that the city council in your municipality is going to make a decision on a political issue that is very important to you. This could, for example, be a school closure, a change in the municipal tax rate or another issue, which is of great importance to you. How likely is it that you would do the following:

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | 0 – Extremely unlikely | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 – Extremely likely | Don’t know |
| [q8a] Write a letter or email to one or several politicians in the municipality. | 🔾 | 🔾 | 🔾 | 🔾 | 🔾 | 🔾 | 🔾 | 🔾 | 🔾 | 🔾 | 🔾 | 🔾 |
| [q8b] Write a post on social media, about your opinion on the issue | 🔾 | 🔾 | 🔾 | 🔾 | 🔾 | 🔾 | 🔾 | 🔾 | 🔾 | 🔾 | 🔾 | 🔾 |
| [q8c] Take part in a demonstration related to the issue | 🔾 | 🔾 | 🔾 | 🔾 | 🔾 | 🔾 | 🔾 | 🔾 | 🔾 | 🔾 | 🔾 | 🔾 |
| [q8d] Discuss the issue privately with your friends or family | 🔾 | 🔾 | 🔾 | 🔾 | 🔾 | 🔾 | 🔾 | 🔾 | 🔾 | 🔾 | 🔾 | 🔾 |
| [q8e] Write a letter to the editor in a newspaper | 🔾 | 🔾 | 🔾 | 🔾 | 🔾 | 🔾 | 🔾 | 🔾 | 🔾 | 🔾 | 🔾 | 🔾 |
| [q8f] Sign a petition on the issue | 🔾 | 🔾 | 🔾 | 🔾 | 🔾 | 🔾 | 🔾 | 🔾 | 🔾 | 🔾 | 🔾 | 🔾 |
| [q8g] Participate in discussions about the issue on Facebook or other social media | 🔾 | 🔾 | 🔾 | 🔾 | 🔾 | 🔾 | 🔾 | 🔾 | 🔾 | 🔾 | 🔾 | 🔾 |

q9:

Imagine that there were a municipal election tomorrow. How likely is it that you would vote?

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 0 – Extremely unlikely | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 – Extremely likely | Don’t know |
| 🔾 | 🔾 | 🔾 | 🔾 | 🔾 | 🔾 | 🔾 | 🔾 | 🔾 | 🔾 | 🔾 | 🔾 |

[Participants subsequently participated in another experiment, not included here]

[Debrief]

Thank you for your participation in this survey. For the record, we would like to point out that many politicians - despite the abuse - are still happy to be in politics. For example, more than 80 percent of all municipal politicians wish to seek re-election when their term expires. We would also like to draw attention to the fact that politicians do not only receive negative comments on social media. They also receive support and praise.

### - Danish version of questionnaire (original)

q1:

Hvilket parti ville du stemme på, hvis der var folketingsvalg i morgen?

* Socialdemokratiet
* Radikale Venstre
* Det Konservative Folkeparti
* Nye Borgerlige
* SF - Socialistisk Folkeparti
* Liberal Alliance
* Moderaterne
* Dansk Folkeparti
* Venstre
* Danmarksdemokraterne
* Enhedslisten
* Alternativet
* Andet parti/kandidat uden for partierne
* Ville ikke stemme
* Ville stemme blankt
* Ved ikke

q2:

I politik taler man ofte om venstre og højre. Hvor vil du placere dig selv på en skala, hvor 0 betyder meget venstreorienteret og 10 betyder meget højreorienteret?

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 0  - Meget venstreorienteret | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10  - Meget højreorienteret | Ved ikke |
| 🔾 | 🔾 | 🔾 | 🔾 | 🔾 | 🔾 | 🔾 | 🔾 | 🔾 | 🔾 | 🔾 | 🔾 |

q3:

Hvor interesseret vil du sige, at du er i politik?

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 0  - Slet ikke interesseret | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10  - Meget interesseret | Ved ikke |
| 🔾 | 🔾 | 🔾 | 🔾 | 🔾 | 🔾 | 🔾 | 🔾 | 🔾 | 🔾 | 🔾 | 🔾 |

q4:

Her kommer en række udsagn omkring det at diskutere. Hvor enig eller uenig er du i følgende udsagn?

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Helt uenig | Delvist uenig | Hverken enig eller uenig | Delvist enig | Helt enig | Ved ikke |
| [q4a] Jeg hader diskussioner | 🔾 | 🔾 | 🔾 | 🔾 | 🔾 | 🔾 |
| [q4b] Jeg synes, konflikter er spændende | 🔾 | 🔾 | 🔾 | 🔾 | 🔾 | 🔾 |
| [q4c] Jeg synes, det er spændende at udfordre andres mening | 🔾 | 🔾 | 🔾 | 🔾 | 🔾 | 🔾 |
| [q4d] Diskussioner generer mig ikke | 🔾 | 🔾 | 🔾 | 🔾 | 🔾 | 🔾 |
| [q4e] Jeg føler mig ked af det efter en diskussion | 🔾 | 🔾 | 🔾 | 🔾 | 🔾 | 🔾 |

[Eksperiment om chikane og fremtidig politisk deltagelse:   
Deltagere tilfældigt fordelt i en af tre grupper, med lige sandsynlighed]

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| [Gruppe 1 - kontrol] | [Gruppe 2 - Neutral/Mild kritik] | [Gruppe 3 – Chikane] |
| [Respondenter i gruppe 1 eksponeres ikke for opslag. De sendes videre til spørgsmål q6] | Vi vil på de følgende sider vise dig en række kommentarer fra borgere til politikere på sociale medier.  Alle de beskeder, du ser, er rigtige beskeder, som er sendt til rigtige politikere i Danmark (i nogle tilfælde har vi dog forkortet beskederne eller ændret enkelte ord, blandt andet for at sikre anonymitet). | |
| [q5]  *En politiker får denne kommentar på et af sine opslag:*  *[Tilfældig besked fra tabel 1, kolonne A]* | [q5]  *En politiker får denne kommentar på et af sine opslag:*  *[Tilfældig besked fra tabel 1, kolonne B]* |
| Hvor uacceptabel eller acceptabel mener du borgerens kommentar er?   |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | | 0 –Fuldstændig uacceptabel | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 –Fuldstændig acceptabel | Ved ikke | | 🔾 | 🔾 | 🔾 | 🔾 | 🔾 | 🔾 | 🔾 | 🔾 | 🔾 | 🔾 | 🔾 | 🔾 | | |
| [Respondent får q5 i alt 3 gange, hver gang med ny, tilfældig besked fra tabel 1, kolonne **A**] | [Respondent får q5 i alt 3 gange, hver gang med ny, tilfældig besked fra tabel 1, kolonne **B**] |

[Tabel 1: Beskeder til politikere]

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | **A** [Spørgende/Mildt kritiske] | **B** [Chikanerende] |
| *1* | *Er I villige til at spytte nogle flere kroner i psykiatrien?!* | *Du skal ikke håbe, jeg ser dig på gaden, for så kommer min hånd til at sidde løst* |
| *2* | *Stemmer I for skattelettelser til toppen ?* | *Man kan da håbe, at du bliver klogere inden valget, for du er jo dum som lort* |
| *3* | *Husk lige dem der er færdige på arbejdsmarkedet, og som har gjort deres del til samfundet, vi bliver glemt hver gang.* | *Du fortjener et syrebad mens dine børn kigger på* |
| *4* | *Kan ikke lade være med at minde jer om at der ikke skete det helt store på det her område da I igennem mange år havde regeringsmagten.* | *Hvis du ikke holder kæft, så kommer vi og lukker den for dig* |
| *5* | *Er træt af at høre på hvad de andre ikke gør og lover. Koncentrer jer om jeres egen politik og opfyld dette.* | *Fuck dig, narkoluder* |
| *6* | *Lad mig venligst høre din holdning til Kattegat-forbindelsen* | *Du og dit barn fortjener at dø! Helst dit klamme afkom først, så du kan lide, og først flere år senere, efter du har levet i mørk depression, da skal du dø en langsom og smertefuld død* |
| 7 | *Kommer der snart en gennemarbejdet handicappolitik fra jeres parti 😊* | *Du skulle have været en abort* |
| 8 | *Ja det er en start. MEN. Der skal konkret handlinger bag. Og langt mere end du lægger op til* | *Få dig noget respekt for andre mennesker, ellers skal jeg nok banke noget ind i hovedet på dig* |
| 9 | *Kan vi ikke få en udmelding fra dig i forhold til opstilling af nye vindmøller?* | *Ville ønske du fik samme tur, din nævenyttige so. Danmark ville have en større chance for at blive et bedre sted uden dig din nævenyttige so* |
| 10 | *Synes faktisk, at du tegner et lidt for rosenrødt billede som ikke passer helt til virkeligheden.* | *Du har blod på hænderne! Hvordan føles det at have stået der som den købte satan du er. Føj for satan, du er en skændsel for din familie og dit land* |
| 11 | *Hvad med at lade være med at spare på skoleområdet?* | *Vær venlig at gør verden en tjeneste og hæng dig selv, din fucking luder* |
| 12 | *Ville ønske du prøvede at tale med almindelige mennesker i den virkelige verden.* | *Jeg får bræk fornemmelser hver gang jeg ser dig på tv* |

q6:

Forestil dig, at dit foretrukne parti opfordrede dig til at stille op som kandidat ved næste kommunalvalg. Hvad er sandsynligheden for, at du ville sige ja til at være kandidat?

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 0 – Ekstremt usandsynligt: Jeg ville helt sikkert ikke stille op | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 – Ekstremt sandsynligt: Jeg ville helt sikkert stille op | Ved ikke |
| 🔾 | 🔾 | 🔾 | 🔾 | 🔾 | 🔾 | 🔾 | 🔾 | 🔾 | 🔾 | 🔾 | 🔾 |

q7:

Forestil dig, at du ser et opslag fra en politiker på Facebook om et politisk emne, som du interesserer dig for. Hvor sandsynligt er det, at du ville gøre følgende:

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | 0 – Ekstremt usandsynligt | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 – Ekstremt sandsynligt | Ved ikke |
| [q7a] Skrive en kommentar under opslaget | 🔾 | 🔾 | 🔾 | 🔾 | 🔾 | 🔾 | 🔾 | 🔾 | 🔾 | 🔾 | 🔾 | 🔾 |
| [q7b] Dele opslaget | 🔾 | 🔾 | 🔾 | 🔾 | 🔾 | 🔾 | 🔾 | 🔾 | 🔾 | 🔾 | 🔾 | 🔾 |
| [q7c] ”Like” opslaget | 🔾 | 🔾 | 🔾 | 🔾 | 🔾 | 🔾 | 🔾 | 🔾 | 🔾 | 🔾 | 🔾 | 🔾 |

q8:

Forestil dig, at kommunalbestyrelsen i din kommune skal træffe en beslutning om et politisk spørgsmål, som du synes er meget vigtigt. Det kunne eksempelvis være en skolelukning, en ændring af kommunens skatteprocent eller et andet spørgsmål, som betyder noget for dig. Hvor sandsynligt er det, at du ville gøre følgende:

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | 0 – Ekstremt usandsynligt | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 – Ekstremt sandsynligt | Ved ikke |
| [q8a] Skrive et brev eller en mail til en eller flere politikere i kommunen | 🔾 | 🔾 | 🔾 | 🔾 | 🔾 | 🔾 | 🔾 | 🔾 | 🔾 | 🔾 | 🔾 | 🔾 |
| [q8b] Skrive et opslag på sociale medier om din holdning til spørgsmålet | 🔾 | 🔾 | 🔾 | 🔾 | 🔾 | 🔾 | 🔾 | 🔾 | 🔾 | 🔾 | 🔾 | 🔾 |
| [q8c] Deltage i en demonstration om spørgsmålet | 🔾 | 🔾 | 🔾 | 🔾 | 🔾 | 🔾 | 🔾 | 🔾 | 🔾 | 🔾 | 🔾 | 🔾 |
| [q8d] Diskutere spørgsmålet privat med venner eller familie | 🔾 | 🔾 | 🔾 | 🔾 | 🔾 | 🔾 | 🔾 | 🔾 | 🔾 | 🔾 | 🔾 | 🔾 |
| [q8e] Skrive et læserbrev til en avis om spørgsmålet | 🔾 | 🔾 | 🔾 | 🔾 | 🔾 | 🔾 | 🔾 | 🔾 | 🔾 | 🔾 | 🔾 | 🔾 |
| [q8f] Skrive under på en underskriftsindsamling om spørgsmålet | 🔾 | 🔾 | 🔾 | 🔾 | 🔾 | 🔾 | 🔾 | 🔾 | 🔾 | 🔾 | 🔾 | 🔾 |
| [q8g] Deltage i diskussioner om spørgsmålet på Facebook eller andre sociale medier | 🔾 | 🔾 | 🔾 | 🔾 | 🔾 | 🔾 | 🔾 | 🔾 | 🔾 | 🔾 | 🔾 | 🔾 |

q9:

Forestil dig, at der blev afholdt kommunalvalg i morgen. Hvor sandsynligt er det, at du ville stemme?

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 0 – Ekstremt usandsynligt | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 – Ekstremt sandsynligt | Ved ikke |
| 🔾 | 🔾 | 🔾 | 🔾 | 🔾 | 🔾 | 🔾 | 🔾 | 🔾 | 🔾 | 🔾 | 🔾 |

[Deltagere deltog efterfølgende i andet eksperiment, ikke inkluderet her]

[Debrief]

Tak for din deltagelse i denne undersøgelse. For en god ordens skyld vil vi gøre opmærksom på, at mange politikere – på trods af chikane – stadig er glade for at være i politik. Det er eksempelvis over 80 procent af alle kommunalpolitikere, der ønsker at genopstille, når deres valgperiode udløber. Vi vil også gøre opmærksom på, at politikere ikke kun får negative kommentarer på sociale medier. De får også støtte og ros.

## Appendix B: The Danish case

Our survey experiment was carried out in Denmark. Denmark is a Scandinavian welfare state that, compared to most other countries, has a culturally and ethnically homogenous population, a high degree of redistribution, and a high level of income equality. Further, Denmark has a multiparty and proportional electoral system with elected bodies at the municipal, regional, and national level, with the national parliament (*Folketinget*) retaining all legislative powers. Governments are typically minority coalitions, who depend on the support of other parties, and major policy reforms are often based on broad majorities in parliament. Hence, in comparative terms, Danish politics is characterized by cross-party cooperation and compromises. Although the electorate remains divided over redistributive and immigration issues (Stubager et al., 2021), Danish politics has undergone the same general developments as the rest of Western Europe, where social cleavages and partisanship have become less important in structuring mass and elite behavior (Thomassen, 2005).

Of particular importance with regards to political participation and abusive behavior towards politicians, the level of affective polarization in the population is relatively modest compared to countries such as the US and the UK (Boxell, Gentzkow, and Shapiro 2024; Iyengar et al. 2019). Despite this, politicians in Denmark increasingly report being subject to abusive behavior from citizens, not least on social media. For example, a 2022-survey showed that 72% of the participating politicians had experienced personal insults and 30% had received outright threats and 38% of female politicians and 23% of male politicians had experienced sexist remarks (Pedersen et al., 2023).

*References to Appendix B*

Pedersen, R. T., N. B. G Petersen, & M. Thau. 2023. *Online Abuse of Politicians: Experimental Evidence on Politicians’ Own Perceptions*. https://doi.org/10.21203/rs.3.rs-3376832/v1

Stubager, R., Hansen, K. M., Lewis-Beck, M. S., & Nadeau, R. 2021. *The Danish voter: Democratic ideals and challenges*. Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press.

Thomassen, J. J. (Ed.). (2005). *The European voter: a comparative study of modern democracies*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Boxell, L., Gentzkow, M., & Shapiro, J. M. (2024). Cross-country trends in affective polarization. *Review of Economics and Statistics*, 106(2), 557-565.

Iyengar, S., Lelkes, Y., Levendusky, M., Malhotra, N., & Westwood, S. J. (2019). The origins and consequences of affective polarization in the United States. *Annual Review of Political Science*, 22, 129-146.

### 

## Appendix C: Sample and populations characteristics

*Table A1: Characteristics of sample and population*

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Sample |  | Population |
| Gender (female) | 49.0 % |  | 50.7 % |
| Age in years, mean (SD) | 52.0 (17.0) |  | 49.8 (19.3) |
| Education, highest completed level: |  |  |  |
| 9 or 10th grade | 14.2 % |  | 17.4 % |
| High school | 19.2 % |  | 11.2 % |
| Vocational | 21.4 % |  | 30.4 % |
| Short-term higher education | 9.4 % |  | 5.7 % |
| Medium-term higher education | 23.2 % |  | 20.2 % |
| Long-term higher education | 12.2 % |  | 13.8 % |
| Other/missing | 0.7 % |  | 1.3 % |
| Left-Right Position, 0-10 (SD) | 5.0 (2.4) |  | n.a. |
| Political interest, 0-10 (SD) | 6.3 (2.6) |  | n.a. |
| Conflict avoidance, 0-10 (SD) | 3.5 (1.7) |  | n.a. |
| Overall Prospective political participation, 0-10 (SD) | 3.7 (1.8) |  | n.a. |
| Social media prospective political participation, 0-10 (SD) | 2.7 (2.5) |  | n.a. |
| non-SoMe prospective political participation, 0-10 (SD) | 4.9 (1.8) |  | n.a. |
| Willingness to run for office, 0-10 (SD) | 1.6 (2.5) |  | n.a. |

Note: Population data from Statistics Denmark.   
Data for entire adult population (18+ years), except education (20-65 years)

***Figure A1: Histograms with kernel density plots (Epanechnikov)*

*Table A2: Values of dependent variables by experimental conditions*

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Group 1, Control  (n=627) | Group 2, Questioning/ Mildly critical  (n=700) | Group 3, Abusive  (n=686) |
|  | Mean (SD) | Mean (SD) | Mean (SD) |
| Overall Prospective political participation | 3.620 (1.838) | 3.745 (1.754) | 3.819 (1.745) |
| Social media prospective political participation | 2.642 (2.571) | 2.751 (2.467) | 2.783 (2.433) |
| non-SoMe prospective political participation | 4.836 (1.910) | 4.945 (1.829) | 5.051 (1.802) |
| Willingness to run for office | 1.414 (2.513) | 1.697 (2.615) | 1.596 (2.494) |

## Figure A2: Reactions to individual comments (Exploratory)

Note: Estimates of mean acceptability ratings with 95% confidence intervals. Scale ranges from 0 (“Completely unacceptable”) to 10 (“Completely acceptable).

## Appendix D: Models

*Models used for testing hypothesis 1(preregistered)*

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Overall participation | SoMe participation | non-SoMe Pol Part. | Running for election |
|  | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) |
|  | Prereg. | Prereg. | Prereg. | Prereg. |
| Mildly critical comments | 0.08 | 0.07 | 0.06 | 0.20 |
|  | (0.09) | (0.14) | (0.10) | (0.14) |
|  |  |  |  |  |
| Abusive comments | 0.16 | 0.12 | 0.17 | 0.12 |
|  | (0.09) | (0.14) | (0.10) | (0.14) |
|  |  |  |  |  |
| Woman | 0.08 | 0.05 | 0.22\*\* | -0.74\*\*\* |
|  | (0.08) | (0.11) | (0.08) | (0.11) |
|  |  |  |  |  |
| Age of participant (sd) | -0.12\*\* | -0.11 | -0.10\* | -0.38\*\*\* |
|  | (0.04) | (0.06) | (0.04) | (0.06) |
|  |  |  |  |  |
| Political interest (0-10) | 0.23\*\*\* | 0.19\*\*\* | 0.26\*\*\* | 0.21\*\*\* |
|  | (0.01) | (0.02) | (0.02) | (0.02) |
|  |  |  |  |  |
| Constant | 2.51\*\*\* | 1.75\*\*\* | 3.43\*\*\* | 1.65\*\*\* |
|  | (0.16) | (0.23) | (0.16) | (0.23) |
| Observations | 1971 | 1972 | 1981 | 1948 |
| *R*2 | 0.115 | 0.040 | 0.128 | 0.097 |

Standard errors in parentheses

\* *p* < 0.05, \*\* *p* < 0.01, \*\*\* *p* < 0.001

*Models used for additional testing of hypothesis 1(Exploratory)*

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Overall participation | | SoMe participation | | non-SoMe Pol Participation | | Running for election | |
|  | (5) | (6) | (7) | (8) | (9) | (10) | (11) | (12) |
| Mildly critical comments | 0.12 | 0.08 | 0.11 | 0.11 | 0.11 | 0.05 | 0.28\* | 0.21 |
|  | (0.10) | (0.10) | (0.14) | (0.14) | (0.10) | (0.09) | (0.14) | (0.14) |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Abusive comments | 0.20\* | 0.14 | 0.14 | 0.13 | 0.21\* | 0.16 | 0.18 | 0.09 |
|  | (0.10) | (0.10) | (0.14) | (0.14) | (0.10) | (0.10) | (0.14) | (0.14) |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Woman |  | 0.23\*\* |  | 0.23\* |  | 0.37\*\*\* |  | -0.63\*\*\* |
|  |  | (0.08) |  | (0.12) |  | (0.08) |  | (0.12) |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Age of participant (sd) |  | -0.11\*\* |  | -0.07 |  | -0.10\* |  | -0.39\*\*\* |
|  |  | (0.04) |  | (0.06) |  | (0.04) |  | (0.06) |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Political interest |  | 0.17\*\*\* |  | 0.14\*\*\* |  | 0.19\*\*\* |  | 0.15\*\*\* |
|  |  | (0.02) |  | (0.02) |  | (0.02) |  | (0.03) |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Left-Right placement |  | -0.04\*\* |  | -0.03 |  | -0.07\*\*\* |  | 0.02 |
|  |  | (0.02) |  | (0.02) |  | (0.02) |  | (0.02) |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Conflict avoidance |  | -0.22\*\*\* |  | -0.22\*\*\* |  | -0.22\*\*\* |  | -0.26\*\*\* |
|  |  | (0.03) |  | (0.04) |  | (0.03) |  | (0.04) |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Constant | 3.62\*\*\* | 3.82\*\*\* | 2.64\*\*\* | 2.78\*\*\* | 4.84\*\*\* | 4.94\*\*\* | 1.41\*\*\* | 2.85\*\*\* |
|  | (0.07) | (0.22) | (0.10) | (0.32) | (0.07) | (0.21) | (0.10) | (0.32) |
| Observations | 1983 | 1784 | 1985 | 1782 | 1993 | 1783 | 1959 | 1766 |
| *R*2 | 0.002 | 0.130 | 0.001 | 0.053 | 0.002 | 0.151 | 0.002 | 0.112 |

Standard errors in parentheses

\* *p* < 0.05, \*\* *p* < 0.01, \*\*\* *p* < 0.001

*Models used for additional testing of hypothesis 1, exploratory single-item tests*

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | (13) | (14) | (15) | (16) | (17) | (18) |
|  | Comments Facebook | Share Facebook | Like Facebook | Write letter | Write SoMe post | Demonstrate |
| Mildly critical comments | -0.07 | 0.10 | 0.25 | 0.26 | 0.09 | 0.05 |
|  | (0.16) | (0.16) | (0.19) | (0.15) | (0.15) | (0.16) |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Abusive comments | 0.04 | 0.09 | 0.19 | 0.35\* | 0.32\* | 0.10 |
|  | (0.16) | (0.16) | (0.19) | (0.15) | (0.15) | (0.16) |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Woman | -0.16 | 0.14 | 0.61\*\*\* | 0.02 | -0.23 | 0.33\* |
|  | (0.13) | (0.13) | (0.16) | (0.13) | (0.13) | (0.13) |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Age of participant (sd) | 0.07 | 0.06 | -0.42\*\*\* | -0.09 | -0.03 | -0.29\*\*\* |
|  | (0.07) | (0.07) | (0.08) | (0.06) | (0.06) | (0.06) |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Political interest (0-10) | 0.20\*\*\* | 0.16\*\*\* | 0.29\*\*\* | 0.23\*\*\* | 0.18\*\*\* | 0.23\*\*\* |
|  | (0.03) | (0.03) | (0.03) | (0.02) | (0.02) | (0.03) |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Constant | 1.19\*\*\* | 1.06\*\*\* | 2.78\*\*\* | 1.29\*\*\* | 1.18\*\*\* | 2.10\*\*\* |
|  | (0.27) | (0.28) | (0.33) | (0.26) | (0.26) | (0.27) |
| Observations | 1883 | 1862 | 1866 | 1927 | 1922 | 1931 |
| *R*2 | 0.038 | 0.024 | 0.058 | 0.048 | 0.036 | 0.047 |

Standard errors in parentheses

\* *p* < 0.05, \*\* *p* < 0.01, \*\*\* *p* < 0.001

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | (19) | (20) | (21) | (22) | (23) | (24) |
|  | Discuss privately | Write to Newspaper | Petition | Discuss, SoMe | Vote | Run for election |
| Mildly critical comments | 0.18 | 0.18 | 0.15 | 0.03 | -0.09 | 0.20 |
|  | (0.14) | (0.14) | (0.17) | (0.16) | (0.11) | (0.14) |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Abusive comments | 0.11 | 0.45\*\* | 0.35\* | 0.10 | -0.11 | 0.12 |
|  | (0.14) | (0.14) | (0.17) | (0.16) | (0.11) | (0.14) |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Woman | 0.47\*\*\* | -0.26\* | 0.75\*\*\* | 0.07 | 0.22\* | -0.74\*\*\* |
|  | (0.11) | (0.12) | (0.14) | (0.13) | (0.09) | (0.11) |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Age of participant (sd) | -0.41\*\*\* | 0.09 | -0.36\*\*\* | -0.19\*\* | 0.33\*\*\* | -0.38\*\*\* |
|  | (0.06) | (0.06) | (0.07) | (0.07) | (0.05) | (0.06) |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Political interest (0-10) | 0.36\*\*\* | 0.20\*\*\* | 0.29\*\*\* | 0.20\*\*\* | 0.25\*\*\* | 0.21\*\*\* |
|  | (0.02) | (0.02) | (0.03) | (0.03) | (0.02) | (0.02) |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Constant | 5.46\*\*\* | 0.57\* | 4.60\*\*\* | 1.72\*\*\* | 6.40\*\*\* | 1.65\*\*\* |
|  | (0.23) | (0.24) | (0.30) | (0.27) | (0.20) | (0.23) |
| Observations | 1937 | 1922 | 1919 | 1930 | 1954 | 1948 |
| *R*2 | 0.134 | 0.058 | 0.068 | 0.032 | 0.125 | 0.097 |

Standard errors in parentheses

\* *p* < 0.05, \*\* *p* < 0.01, \*\*\* *p* < 0.001

*Models used for testing hypothesis 2 (Preregistered)*

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | (25) | (26) | (27) | (28) |
|  | Overall participation | SoMe participation | Non-SoNe pol part. | Running for election |
| Mildly critical comments | 0.08 | 0.05 | 0.05 | 0.35 |
|  | (0.13) | (0.19) | (0.13) | (0.19) |
|  |  |  |  |  |
| Abusive comments | 0.16 | 0.19 | 0.07 | 0.26 |
|  | (0.13) | (0.19) | (0.14) | (0.19) |
|  |  |  |  |  |
| Woman | 0.08 | 0.08 | 0.14 | -0.54\*\* |
|  | (0.14) | (0.20) | (0.14) | (0.20) |
|  |  |  |  |  |
| Mildly critical comments × Woman | -0.00 | 0.06 | 0.04 | -0.31 |
|  | (0.19) | (0.27) | (0.19) | (0.27) |
|  |  |  |  |  |
| Abusive comments × Woman | -0.00 | -0.13 | 0.19 | -0.27 |
|  | (0.19) | (0.27) | (0.19) | (0.27) |
|  |  |  |  |  |
| Age of participant (sd) | -0.12\*\* | -0.11 | -0.09\* | -0.38\*\*\* |
|  | (0.04) | (0.06) | (0.04) | (0.06) |
|  |  |  |  |  |
| Political interest (0-10) | 0.23\*\*\* | 0.19\*\*\* | 0.26\*\*\* | 0.21\*\*\* |
|  | (0.01) | (0.02) | (0.02) | (0.02) |
|  |  |  |  |  |
| Constant | 2.51\*\*\* | 1.73\*\*\* | 3.47\*\*\* | 1.55\*\*\* |
|  | (0.17) | (0.25) | (0.17) | (0.25) |
| Observations | 1971 | 1972 | 1981 | 1948 |
| *R*2 | 0.116 | 0.041 | 0.128 | 0.097 |

Standard errors in parentheses

\* *p* < 0.05, \*\* *p* < 0.01, \*\*\* *p* < 0.001

*Models used for testing hypothesis 3 (Preregistered)*

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | (29) | (30) | (31) | (32) |
|  | Overall participation | SoMe participation | Non-SoMe pol part. | Running for election |
| Mildly critical comments | -0.05 | -0.12 | -0.04 | 0.10 |
|  | (0.21) | (0.31) | (0.22) | (0.31) |
|  |  |  |  |  |
| Abusive comments | -0.15 | -0.15 | -0.12 | -0.27 |
|  | (0.22) | (0.32) | (0.22) | (0.32) |
|  |  |  |  |  |
| Conflict avoidance (0-10) | -0.24\*\*\* | -0.24\*\*\* | -0.22\*\*\* | -0.29\*\*\* |
|  | (0.04) | (0.06) | (0.04) | (0.06) |
|  |  |  |  |  |
| Mildly critical comments × Conflict avoidance | 0.03 | 0.06 | 0.03 | 0.03 |
|  | (0.05) | (0.08) | (0.06) | (0.08) |
|  |  |  |  |  |
| Abusive comments × Conflict avoidance | 0.08 | 0.07 | 0.08 | 0.11 |
|  | (0.06) | (0.08) | (0.06) | (0.08) |
|  |  |  |  |  |
| Woman | 0.17\* | 0.16 | 0.33\*\*\* | -0.63\*\*\* |
|  | (0.08) | (0.11) | (0.08) | (0.11) |
|  |  |  |  |  |
| Age of participant (sd) | -0.10\*\* | -0.08 | -0.07 | -0.35\*\*\* |
|  | (0.04) | (0.06) | (0.04) | (0.06) |
|  |  |  |  |  |
| Political interest (0-10) | 0.19\*\*\* | 0.15\*\*\* | 0.21\*\*\* | 0.16\*\*\* |
|  | (0.02) | (0.02) | (0.02) | (0.02) |
|  |  |  |  |  |
| Constant | 3.53\*\*\* | 2.73\*\*\* | 4.35\*\*\* | 2.86\*\*\* |
|  | (0.22) | (0.32) | (0.22) | (0.32) |
| Observations | 1961 | 1960 | 1968 | 1939 |
| *R*2 | 0.144 | 0.055 | 0.152 | 0.118 |

Standard errors in parentheses

\* *p* < 0.05, \*\* *p* < 0.01, \*\*\* *p* < 0.001

*Figure A3: Main effects on political participation (Preregistered and exploratory)*

Note: Estimates with 95% confidence intervals. Based on models 1-12, appendix D