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Research Note

Measuring Issue Ownership. A Comparative Question Wording Experiment

ABSTRACT

Issue ownership, or the idea that some parties are considered by the public to be better able or more committed to dealing with specific issues, is increasingly used in studies of electoral choice. Yet, various scholars have argued that if measures of issue ownership are confounded with party choice, this raises concerns regarding their usability to predict electoral choice. This research note examines to what extent various measures of issue ownership are confounded with voters' party preferences and voters' agreement with the party's position on the issue. Relying on an online survey-embedded question wording experiment fielded in two countries, Belgium and Denmark, we examine question wording effects for two dimension of issue ownership: competence issue ownership and associative issue ownership. We find that in both countries, the two associative issue ownership measures were less affected by party preference and positional agreement. The most used competence issue ownership measures are most confounded with party choice and positional agreement in our experiment. Results in the two countries are largely similar, the main exception being that one of the two associative measures performs worse in Denmark. The results imply that scholars should take care in using measures of especially competence issue ownership to predict the vote, but that also country differences affect the validity of issue ownership measures.

Measuring Issue Ownership. A Comparative Question Wording Experiment.

Issue ownership refers to voter's perception of the competence and the commitment of parties regarding specific issues. Research on the role of issue ownership in voting and party studies is strongly on the rise during the last decade (Lefevere, Tresch, & Walgrave, 2015). With voters becoming more volatile and parties scrambling to replace ideological bonds with issue cues, scholars have increasingly relied on issue ownership theory to study voting behavior (e.g. Egan, 2013) and parties' strategic issue emphases (e.g. Holian, 2004).

Within this recently burgeoning research agenda, worries about the precise meaning of issue ownership have risen. Is issue ownership a matter of voter's perception of the *competence* of parties to deal with an issue or rather of their perception of parties' *commitment* towards an issue? The initial conceptualizations by Budge and Farlie (1983) and by Petrocik (1996) were ambivalent and contained both competence and commitment elements. Recently, Walgrave, Lefevere and Tresch (2012) coined the labels of 'competence issue ownership' and 'associative issue ownership' to refer to these two dimensions. While scholars initially mostly measured the competence aspect (going back to the influential question wording used by the American National Election Study) a good deal of recent studies has used questions that tap into the associative aspect (e.g. Meyer & Müller, 2013; Kleinnijenhuis & Walter, 2014; Lachat, 2014; Lutz & Sciarini, 2016).

Despite these conceptual advances, a number of issues keep plaguing the field. First, from the start of issue ownership research onwards, there have been doubts as to issue ownership's potential *endogeneity*. Many have criticized in particular the existing competence issue ownership measures for being confounded with party preference and voting, or for being indistinguishable from positional agreement (see for example: Kuechler, 1991; van der Brug, 2004; Stubager & Slothuus, 2013; Therriault, 2014; Wagner & Zeglovits, 2014). To an extent,

the very nature of competence issue ownership would lead us to assume that there is at least some overlap with party preference, as voters naturally prefer parties that are better able to handle issues. Yet, as issue ownership is increasingly used to predict electoral choice at the individual level, such empirical overlap is problematic. On the one hand, we need to be able to empirically separate issue ownership from party choice, but endogeneity also raises doubts regarding the direction of the causal relationship (see Evans & Chzhen, 2016 for a more general discussion of this issue related to the valence model of electoral choice). The question therefore arises as to whether there is any difference in the overlap between party choice and position and each of the two dimensions of issue ownership, association or competence, and which is then more conflated with party choice and position.

Second, and linked to the previous point, many studies have used different *question wordings* tapping into issue ownership. A recent systematic review identified dozens of different question wordings used in published studies (Walgrave, Lefevere, & Tresch, 2015). Though some studies examine differences between two dimensions of issue ownership (Lachat, 2014; Lutz & Sciarini, 2016; Walgrave et al., 2012), only Therriault (Therriault, 2015) and Walgrave et al. (2015) examined the impact of different question wordings on the distribution of issue ownership perceptions within a single country.

Third, the contemporary literature on issue ownership is overwhelmingly national. There is hardly any published *comparative* research (we only know of two exceptions: Bellucci, 2006; Seeberg, 2016). No studies compare issue ownership's dimensions across countries, nor are there studies that tackle the endogeneity issue comparatively, or studies that compare question wordings across countries. Yet, survey literature showed that similar question wordings may elicit dissimilar answers in different countries (e.g. Harkness, van de Vijver, & Mohler, 2003). Political differences between countries as well may contribute to systematic differences in response to similar questions. The endogeneity problem of issue

ownership may, hence, differ across nations and different question wordings may attenuate or exacerbate the problem across counties.

This study tackles these three issues. We draw on a comparative question wording experiment that was fielded in two similar countries: Denmark and Belgium, more specifically its largest region of Flanders. Both countries have fragmented party systems with various new parties (Deschouwer, 2009; Jungar & Jupskås, 2014), so issue ownership perceptions can vary substantially between issues – strong ownerships are possible, but more evenly distributed perceptions are equally feasible. Moreover, the large number of parties ensures that issue agreement varies between voters. As such, we expect similar results regarding the impact of question wordings, as voters in both countries can choose from a relatively large number of parties. Comparatively across countries, we examine to what extent different measures of associative and competence issue ownership are conflated with party choice and positional considerations.

METHODS

In Belgium and Denmark we ran similar survey-embedded question wording experiments on large groups of respondents. The experiments in the two countries included four identical questions, two question wordings for each dimension of issue ownership. Our first competence issue ownership question is the original and most frequently used wording incorporated in the ANES and used by Petrocik (1996): ‘*Which party do you trust to do a better job handling issue x?*’ The second competence issue ownership question has been suggested by Therriault (2014) and reads: ‘*Which party is best qualified to handle issue x?*’. The first associative issue ownership question is taken from Walgrave et al (2012): ‘*When you think about issue x, which party do you spontaneously think about?*’. Van der Brug (2004) inspired the second question tapping association between parties and issues: ‘*When you think*

about issue x, which party pays most attention to it?'. For all question wordings, the answer categories were identical including a list of the main political parties, 'other party', 'none of the parties', 'all parties equal', and 'don't know'. Our analyses only use respondents picking one of the main parties. Each condition presented only one competence and one associative issue ownership question in a full 2x2 design, and respondents were randomly assigned to conditions. The exact question wording in the original languages is presented in the appendix¹.

Both the Belgian and Danish experiments drew participants from existing online panels. The Belgian (Flemish) survey participants were recruited mainly through an existing panel maintained by the University of Antwerp. To increase diversity of respondents, we also recruited respondents through a mass mailing to a commercial database maintained by Pebblemedia. In total, 1,511 respondents answered our questionnaire (62% response rate) between October 17th and November 20th, 2013. The Belgian sample does not form a representative sample of the population: subjects are more male, higher educated, and more interested in politics. The Danish sample does aim to be a representative sample of Danish voters. Participants were recruited through Epinion's so-called 'Denmark panel', which is a standing panel of respondents from which participants for a given survey can be drawn². The survey was fielded during the period September 4th to October 3rd, 2013. A total of 876 respondents took part (66% response rate).

¹ To make sure the translations were as comparable as possible, we first agreed on the English wording. Then, from this 'baseline' English wording, we developed the Dutch and Danish versions, continually checking whether nuances in the question wordings were interpreted (and thus translated) in the same fashion. That said, differences in the grammatical structure of the languages does cause some differences. Two translation issues in particular are noteworthy: 1) for the ANES wording, both translated versions slightly alter the wording, as 'trust to do' is translated as 'think will do'. 2) in the Appendix, the attentive reader will notice that in the Danish 'Pays most attention' wording the party is mentioned *before* the issue while this is different in the Dutch (and original English) wording. Yet, the substantive meaning of the question is fully identical. We reckon that this slight difference had no effect on the results.

² Respondents in this panel are recruited onto the panel from other surveys either online or over the phone with special measures taken to recruit specific hard-to-get groups.

Thus, both samples were recruited through existing online panels, and not through probability samples. Although our samples are not of the same quality as probability samples, samples drawn from ongoing panels are considerably more diverse than traditional online samples (e.g. Berinsky, Huber, & Lenz, 2012). To minimize differences, we weight the data based on gender, age, and education (analyses of the unweighted dataset yield almost identical results). The design of the two experiments does differ in one important respect: Danish respondents were randomly assigned to one of three, not four, conditions: The Danish design did not include the fourth condition where respondents were asked to answer the ‘Best qualified’ version of the competence question and the ‘Pays most attention’ version of the associative question. Table 1 shows the N per condition for both countries.

<Table 1 about here>

Respondents were thus asked to indicate the associative and competence owner for a series of issues. The Belgian survey included six issues: environment, state reform, family, defense³, immigration and employment. These six issues vary according to their issue salience⁴ for and their being position (state reform, immigration) or valence (environment, employment, family) issues. Additionally, they vary in the strength of their ownership with some issues for which voters predominantly marked one party as being most competent or committed (e.g. environment) and with other issues displaying a much larger spread over different parties (e.g. employment). The Danish survey featured four issues, two of which overlapped with the Belgian survey: immigration, unemployment, economy, and taxes. The same criteria as in Belgium applied to the selection of the issues in Denmark⁵.

³ Due to a programming error, we do not have data for the defense issue on the ‘handling’ question wording in Belgium.

⁴ We asked respondents to indicate, for these six issues, whether they considered them rather important, or rather unimportant on a 5-point likert scale. The following percent of respondents indicated that the issue was important for them: Environment (78%), Employment (92%), Immigration (70%), Defense (16%), Family (66%), State Reform (43%).

⁵ The following percent of respondents indicated that the issue was important for them: Immigration (69%), Unemployment (81%), Economy (87%), Taxes (75%).

Our analysis includes two additional variables, namely positional agreement and party choice. In Belgium, positional agreement was measured through the question: ‘*When you think about each of the following issues, can you indicate with which parties (and their points of view) you agree? You can choose multiple parties per issue*’. In Denmark, the question ran: ‘*To what extent do you agree or disagree with the parties’ policies when it comes to issue x. Please use this scale where 0 means “Completely disagree” and 10 means “Completely agree”*’. These measures were converted into dichotomous variables tracking whether a voter agreed with a party on an issue (1) or not (0)⁶. Party choice was assessed by asking respondents who they would vote for if elections were to be held today.

We draw on logistic regression models predicting whether a specific party owns a specific issue (1) or not (0). To achieve this, we use a dataset with one data entry for each respondent’s answer for a specific issue-party combination. In a first analysis, we assess the extent to which party choice and positional evaluations affect issue ownership by comparing the *expected percentage correctly predicted (EPCP)* of two models, one including party choice and positional agreement, and another excluding these two variables⁷. EPCP is highly similar to the more conventional way of reporting a model’s *percentage correctly predicted* cases (PCP), but EPCP is more conservative as it takes into account the inherent uncertainty in classifying cases (see Herron, 1999 for a more elaborate discussion of this problem as it relates to PCP). The tables below report the *difference* in EPCP between the baseline model (only sociodemographics (sex, age, education) and party dummies) and the full model (adding party choice and positional agreement) per issue⁸. Following Herron (1999), we used bootstrapping to calculate confidence intervals for the differences in EPCP, which enables us

⁶ The Danish 11-point scale was split into two, with scores lower than 5 out of 10 being considered as disagreement between voter and party, and scores of 5 and up being considered as agreement.

⁷ All models use clustered standard errors to account for correlated errors within each respondent.

⁸ Because vote choice and positional agreement might be correlated, we have checked all models for multicollinearity. However, the VIF scores did not indicate any problems, as they were almost always smaller than 2. The maximum VIF score for vote choice and positional agreement was 2.34.

to assess the significance of these differences. The larger the difference between the baseline and the full models, the more issue ownership is explained by, and thus conflated with, party and positional considerations. We always provide EPCP differences for each issue as well as the average across the issues. In a second step, we examine the separate impact of vote choice and positional considerations by comparing the EPCP of a baseline model which includes either vote choice or positional agreement, and another model which adds the remaining variable.

RESULTS

Table 2 reports on the conflation of issue ownership measures and party choice and positional agreement in the two countries.

<Table 2 about here>

The evidence strongly suggests that, compared to the associative issue ownership measures, the competence measures are more affected by party choice and positional agreement. For all models on both competence wordings, the differences in EPCP between the baseline models and the full models that add party preference and positional agreement, are significant. On the other hand, we see that the EPCP improvement on associative issue ownership is not always significant (indicated by the non-bolded figures), and significantly less sizeable compared to the EPCP improvements on competence issue ownership (indicated by the different superscript indexes). Take for instance the ‘1,1’ entry in the upper left corner of the table. It means that the estimated amount of cases that are correctly classified as either associatively owning (1) or not owning (0) immigration using the ‘Spontaneous’ wording by including party choice and positional agreement is only 1,1% larger compared to a baseline model excluding these two variables. In comparison, on the same issue, party choice and position make a much more substantial 10,1% difference for the ‘Handling’ competence issue

ownership wording. For all Belgian issues adding party preference and position to the model has significantly less impact in predicting associative measures compared to predicting the competence measures. In Denmark, we see a similar pattern, though on employment the ‘attention’ wording does not differ significantly from the ‘handling’ wording in terms of EPCP difference. Yet, overall the pattern that competence issue ownership is more confounded with party preference and issue agreement seems quite robust across both countries and issues.

Second, in both countries, the size of the impact of party choice and positional agreement on both competence wordings is almost identical: The differences in EPCP improvement between the two competence question wordings are never significant. Whether one measures competence issue ownership by asking for the best party to ‘handle’ an issue or for the party that is most ‘qualified’ to deal with an issue does not make a difference. Both the classic measure of Petrocik and ANES (Handling) as the new measure proposed by Therriault (Qualified) are conflated with other attitudinal constructs.

Third, the evidence highlights a difference between the two countries regarding the associative issue ownership measures. Belgian and Danish subjects react differently to the ‘Attention’ wording cue. While the Danish’ answers to this question are significantly more affected by party and position considerations compared to the ‘Spontaneous’ wording this is not the case in Belgium. In sum, in Denmark, the ‘Spontaneous’ wording seems to be less conflated with position and party preference than the ‘Attention’ wording while both measures perform equally well in Belgium.

These issue specific differences seem to be a general pattern in the data. In Belgium, the associative measures are more impacted by party choice and position on the issues of family and especially employment. In Denmark the issue of the economy is the only one

where both associative question wordings are impacted equally, and substantially, by party preference and issue agreement.

This finding substantiates that issue-specific and cross-national differences matter and may lead to significantly different answers to identical questions. Somehow, when asked about the attention parties devote to issues, Danes take their own party preference and their perception of the parties with whom they agree into account while Belgians seem to answer this same question irrespective of the party they like or think they agree with positionally.

We now take our exploration one step further by testing the *separate* influences of party choice and positional agreement. Table 3 presents the results.

<Table 3 about here>

The more detailed evidence shows again that both competence issue ownership measures are more affected by party choice *and* by positional agreement compared to both associative measures. So, the overall better performance (lower figures) of the associative measures is not due to their being less affected by only one of the confounding constructs but by their being less conflated with both. The evidence tells us that greater confoundedness of the ‘Attention’ wording of associative issue ownership in Denmark is due to the conflation with party choice (2,2%) and less to the conflation with positional agreement (0,7%). Interestingly, this distorting impact of party choice is a constant for all Danish question wordings: for all wordings, be it competence or associative, it is party choice that causes (oftentimes significantly) larger drops in EPCP. Conversely, in Belgium, we see a reverse pattern, with mainly position accounting for issue ownership perceptions, especially in the competence wordings. Though we have no explanation for these different findings, the overall pattern is that within countries the variations in question wordings matter relatively little, and that the competence measures are much more confounded with party choice and with positional agreement than the associative measures.

CONCLUSION

With issue ownership research booming, the study finds that the two dimensions of issue ownership, associative and competence issue ownership, differ in terms of their conflation with issue position and party preference at the level of the individual voter. Competence and associative issue ownership perceptions are differently affected by party choice and positional considerations. When people are asked to indicate the party that is most competent to deal with almost any issue they tend to draw on their party preference and the extent to which they agree with the parties. In contrast, when people are asked to name the party that they spontaneously associate with an issue, or that is more attentive to an issue, they provide an answer that is much less correlated with their own party preference and positional overlap with parties. This pattern held robustly across the two countries and across the four question wordings. The larger independence of associative issue ownership from adjacent attitudinal constructs such as party and positional preferences makes this dimension of issue ownership less affected by potential endogeneity issues.

Previous studies found competence and associative issue ownership to have a different effect on the vote. Thus, Lutz and Sciarini (2016) find that both associative and competence issue ownership have a direct effect on the vote, but that the competence dimension exerts a stronger influence on the vote. Walgrave et al. (2012) also found a direct effect of competence issue ownership on the vote, but only an indirect effect of associative issue ownership in combination with high issue saliency. Similarly, Lachat (2014) found associative issue ownership to affect voting only in interaction with positional agreement while, again, he found competence issue ownership to exert a direct and unconditioned effect. Our results here suggest that the direct voting effects of competence issue ownership may be due to the endogeneity of competence issue ownership: it may be partly the *consequence* of party preference and it is confounded with positional considerations.

Additionally, the concrete measures and question wordings matter. Our comparative evidence suggests that both competence measures we tested behave similarly. Maybe the classic ‘Handling’ wording fares slightly worse but the alternative ‘Qualified’ measure surely does not perform much better. Regarding the two associative measures, we observe differences, but only in Denmark. In Belgium, asking for the party one spontaneously thinks about when thinking about an issue or asking for the party that devotes most attention to that same issue leads to largely similar results. In Denmark, the ‘Attention’ wording is more affected by party and positional preferences than the ‘Spontaneous’-wording. This highlights the need for caution when comparing the same, let alone different, measures of issue ownership across nations. The measures applied in the different countries may differ quite strongly in the extent to which they are affected by position and party preference⁹.

Our study does have several limitations. For one, only two issues were measured in both countries; greater overlap in terms of issues would, thus, have strengthened our ability to make clear-cut comparisons. Related to this, we can only examine how party choice and issue agreement relate to respondents’ answers to these various ownership questions at a single point in time: this is suggestive of endogeneity issues, but not conclusive evidence. Panel data would be needed to ascertain whether answers to certain question wordings would be more likely to be caused by, rather than causing, vote choice (Evans & Chzhen, 2016). Finally, the Danish and Belgian samples were both recruited through existing online samples, so they are not true probability samples. This might have influenced our findings, but apart from weighting there is not much we can do to address this problem.

In sum, our findings about issue ownership’s dimensions, conflation, wordings and cross-national differences should be helpful for issue ownership research to keep its present momentum in voter and party studies. We hope they are especially helpful in further

⁹ Note that the differences between question wordings may be most problematic for comparative studies of *voter* behavior: it is at the micro level that we find differences between wordings. Yet, at the macro level clearly owned issues are probably oftentimes owned by the same party, regardless of the exact question wording.

theorizing about what issue ownership actually *is* and via which mechanisms it affects voting behavior.

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Table 1: Conditions and the number of respondents

Condition		Belgium	Denmark
1	Competence – Trust do a better job	386	302
	Associative – Spontaneously think		
2	Competence – Trust do a better job	362	255
	Associative – Pays most attention		
3	Competence – Best Qualified	373	319
	Associative – Spontaneously think		
4	Competence – Best Qualified	390	N.A.
	Associative – Pays most attention		

Table 2: Difference in Expected Percentage Correctly Predicted (EPCP) cases when adding the party choice *and* positional agreement dummies to logistic regressions predicting whether a party is competence or associative issue owner.

	Associative Issue Ownership		Competence Issue Ownership	
Belgium	‘Spontaneous’-wording	‘Attention’-wording	‘Handling’-wording	‘Qualified’-wording
Immigration	1.1%(0.3)¹	1.1%(0.3)¹	10.1%(0.8)²	9.1%(0.7)²
Environment	0.6%(0.4) ¹	0.1%(0.1) ¹	4.2%(0.7)²	3.5%(0.5)²
State Reform	1.7%(0.4)¹	1.1%(0.3)¹	10.2%(0.8)²	9.6%(0.7)²
Defense	0.3%(0.2) ¹	0.2%(0.2) ¹	/	7.0%(0.8)²
Family	2.5%(0.5)¹	3.7%(0.5)¹	7.3%(0.8)²	7.7%(0.7)²
Employment	7.2%(0.6)¹	7.6%(0.7)¹	10.7%(0.9)²	10.2%(0.7)²
<i>Mean</i>	2.2%	2.3%	8.5%	7.9%
Denmark	‘Spontaneous’-wording	‘Attention’-wording	‘Handling’-wording	‘Qualified’-wording
Immigration	0.1%(0.1) ¹	1.4%(0.4)²	7.2%(0.5)³	8.4%(0.9)³
Taxes	0.8%(0.2)¹	4.3%(0.8)²	8.4%(0.6)³	8.1%(0.9)³
Employment	0.3%(0.1)¹	4.9%(0.8)²	7.4%(0.6)^{2,3}	8.9%(0.9)³
Economy	3.8%(0.5)¹	5.9%(0.8)¹	8.6%(0.6)²	8.6%(0.8)²
<i>Mean</i>	1.3%	4.1%	7.9%	8.5%

Note: figures in parentheses are bootstrapped standard errors (1000 iterations). Differences in bold are significantly different from zero ($p < .05$).

Within each row, differences with the same superscript index do not differ significantly from each other ($p < .05$)

Table 3: Difference in expected percentage correctly predicted when adding party preference *or* positional agreement dummies to logistic regression predicting whether a party is competence or associative issue owner.

	Associative Issue Ownership				Competence Issue Ownership			
	‘Spontaneous’		‘Attention’		‘Handling’		‘Qualified’	
Belgium	Party	Position	Party	Position	Party	Position	Party	Position
Immigration	0.2%(0.1) ¹	0.4%(0.1)¹	0.5%(0.2)¹	0.1%(0.1) ¹	1.9%(0.3)²	3.3%(0.4)^{2,3}	1.9%(0.3)²	3.7%(0.4)³
Environment	0.1%(0.1) ^{1,2,3}	0.4%(0.2) ^{2,3}	0.0%(0.0) ¹	0.1%(0.1) ^{1,2,3}	0.3%(0.1)³	3.0%(0.5)⁴	0.4%(0.2)³	2.0%(0.3)⁴
State Ref.	0.5%(0.2)¹	0.2%(0.1) ¹	0.3%(0.2) ¹	0.1%(0.1) ¹	2.1%(0.5)²	2.1%(0.4)²	2.1%(0.4)²	1.6%(0.3)²
Defense	0.0%(0.0) ¹	0.2%(0.2) ^{1,2}	0.0%(0.1) ¹	0.1%(0.1) ¹	/	/	1.1%(0.3)²	3.7%(0.5)³
Family	0.3%(0.2) ¹	1.2%(0.3)^{2,3}	0.7%(0.2)^{1,2}	1.4%(0.3)^{2,3}	1.5%(0.3)³	3.2%(0.4)⁴	1.1%(0.3)²	3.1%(0.4)⁴
Employment	1.4%(0.3)¹	2.3%(0.4)^{1,2}	1.4%(0.3)¹	2.1%(0.3)^{1,2}	2.2%(0.4)^{1,2}	2.9%(0.5)²	2.0%(0.3)^{1,2}	2.9%(0.4)²
<i>Mean</i>	<i>0,4%</i>	<i>0,8%</i>	<i>0,5%</i>	<i>0,7%</i>	<i>1,6%</i>	<i>2,9%</i>	<i>1,4%</i>	<i>2,8%</i>
Denmark	Party	Position	Party	Position	Party	Position	Party	Position
Immigration	0.1%(0.1) ^{1,2}	0.0%(0.0) ¹	0.7%(0.3)²	0.3%(0.3) ^{1,2}	2.7%(0.4)³	2.0%(0.3)³	3.7%(0.6)³	2.0%(0.4)³
Taxes	0.7%(0.2)¹	0.0%(0.0) ²	2.3%(0.6)^{3,4}	0.7%(0.2)¹	4.4%(0.5)⁵	1.2%(0.2)^{1,3}	4.3%(0.7)^{4,5}	0.9%(0.2)^{1,3}
Employment	0.2%(0.1) ^{1,3,5}	0.0%(0.0) ¹	2.7%(0.6)^{2,6}	0.7%(0.3)^{3,4}	3.8%(0.5)⁶	1.2%(0.2)⁴	5.0%(0.7)⁶	0.9%(0.3)^{4,5}
Economy	2.6%(0.4)^{1,5}	0.3%(0.1)²	2.9%(0.6)^{1,5}	1.0%(0.3)^{2,4}	5.1%(0.5)³	0.9%(0.2)⁴	4.0%(0.7)^{3,5}	1.5%(0.3)^{1,4}
<i>Mean</i>	<i>0,9%</i>	<i>0,1%</i>	<i>2,2%</i>	<i>0,7%</i>	<i>4,0%</i>	<i>1,3%</i>	<i>4,3%</i>	<i>1,3%</i>

Note: figures in parentheses are bootstrapped standard errors (1000 iterations). Differences in bold are significantly different from zero ($p < .05$).

Within each row, differences with the same superscript index do not differ significantly from each other ($p < .05$).

Competence wording 1 (handling)

- English: *Which party do you trust will do a better job handling issue x?*
- Danish: *Hvilket parti er efter din mening bedst til at håndtere emne x?*
- Dutch: *Welke politieke partij zal volgens u het thema x het best aanpakken?*

Competence wording 2 (qualified)

- English: *Which party is best qualified to handle issue x?*
- Danish: *Hvilket parti er efter din mening bedst kvalificeret til at håndtere emne x?*
- Dutch: *Welke politieke partij is het meest bekwaam om het thema x aan te pakken?*

Associative wording 1 (spontaneous)

- English: *When you think about issue x, which party do you spontaneously think about?*
- Danish: *Når du tænker på emne x, hvilket parti kommer du så umiddelbart til at tænke på?*
- Dutch: *Wanneer u denkt aan het thema x, aan welke politieke partij denkt u dan spontaan?*

Associative wording 1 (attention)

- English: *When you think about issue x, which party pays most attention to it?*
- Danish: *Hvilket parti er efter din mening mest opmærksomt på emne x?*
- Dutch: *Wanneer u denkt aan het thema x, welke politieke partij schenkt daar dan het meeste aandacht aan?*