



LORE

NEWSLETTER

December 2014

Welcome to the second newsletter from LORE during this never ending super-election year. Having barely finished many large scales data collections related to the 2014 election, it now seems that we soon have to start all over again. Nevertheless, this busy year has been a very successful year for the Laboratory of Opinion Research. I am particularly happy that we, in addition to all standard data collections and activities, to mention a few things have managed to triple the number of respondents in the Citizen Panel and also published more than 20 methodological reports. These two major achievements make me very optimistic about the coming years. This said, it is indeed time for Christmas break.

Johan Martinsson
Research Director
LORE



LORE SPECIFICS

Following the energetic spirit of the spring, LORE has been busy collecting data from the Citizen Panel, which has more than tripled in size within the last year, and is now to our knowledge the world's largest academically run web panel. The panel currently consists of 53,027

respondents out of which 44,959 are opt-ins, i.e. recruited from for example newspaper websites and links on our webpage, and 8,068 are probability based respondents, i.e. recruited by sending postcards to random samples of the Swedish population.

Three major surveys were launched to the Citizen Panel this fall. The 11th wave of the Citizen Panel was launched shortly prior to the September parliamentary election and the 12th wave of the Citizen Panel was distributed in October. The 13th wave of the Citizen Panel was launched in the end of November to almost 53,000 respondents and thus by far breaks any previous record when it comes to number of respondents.

The open call for proposals during the fall resulted in 18 applications to use the panel, out of which seven have been approved for the 13th and 14th waves of the Citizen Panel. A total of 24 studies have been included in the Citizen Panel this fall. A new aim for LORE is to turn the Citizen panel into a resource for a limited number of students collecting data for their master thesis. Two studies from students were accepted in the 13th wave, as a pilot study to evaluate the selection process, implementation and costs.



LORE has reviewed accepted research projects in the Citizen Panel and found that of all accepted projects do only 28 percent have a female main investigator. LORE takes this seriously and works on improving the gender balance among accepted research projects.

To evaluate the Citizen Panel and LORE, an evaluation was sent to researchers participating with questions in the Citizen Panel 5 to 8, i.e. with more than one year since data collection. The evaluation shows that 77 percent of the projects got results consistent with initial expectations, 74 percent found significant results and 69 percent of the projects have been presented at a seminar or conference. Since the process of publishing articles is very slow in the social sciences, so far only 9 percent (i.e. 3) of the projects receiving data one year ago have been published or accepted for publication. However, have 26 percent submitted a manuscript based on their LORE data for review. This last number is perhaps the most interesting since the share of published studies probably need more time than one year to be properly evaluated. This said, that only one out of four data collections results in a submitted manuscript one year after data delivery is a cause for concern. We will follow up on this number and its future development closely and try to make sure that data collected by LORE is analyzed and used within a reasonable time frame.

One major challenge facing survey methodologists today is the increasing number of respondents using smartphones to answer web surveys. Today approximately 12 percent of respondents in the Citizen Panel use a smartphone to answer the surveys (see LORE Mini Note 2014:11). The main problem with smartphones is that long scales, especially 11-point scales, adapt poorly to the smartphone's display and are difficult to answer without scrolling or zooming. Since this increases the response burden in an unwanted manner, LORE has adapted a policy to minimize the items using these long scales whenever possible. However, apart from this concern the data quality received from smartphone respondents do not seem to be especially problematic

(see LORE Mini Note 2014:12).



PUBLISHED

Jenny de Fine Licht was the first to defend a PhD thesis based on data from the Citizen Panel. The thesis "Magic Wand or Pandora's Box? How transparency in decision making affects public perceptions of legitimacy" was defended on September 19th and opponent was Dr Benjamin Worthy, Birkbeck, University of London.

One of the most important achievements of LORE during this year has been our methodological reports. In addition to the longer Methodological Notes started last year we have now, as a complement, started a new series with shorter mini-notes with the aim to document all methodological experiments carried out in the Citizen Panel and also to provide an outlet for this kind of short and to the point reports within the field of survey methodology. So far 20 mini-notes have been published on our website covering topics as panel recruitment topics, effects of reminder/invitation timing and frequency, and device used to respond to surveys. Currently the staff working at LORE is the main contributors to the series, but the intention is to open up the series to other methodologically interested researchers, and LORE Mini Notes and Methodological Notes do not have to be based on data from LORE. If you have any suggestions or ideas for possible mini-notes you would like to contribute to, just contact LORE Research Director Johan Martinsson who currently serves as series editor.



2014 ELECTIONS

In collaboration with Kieskompas in the Netherlands LORE constructed the Aftonbladet vote compass (also known as VAA – voting advice application) for the European parliamentary election in May and the national parliamentary

election in September 2014. The vote compass reached a world record in terms of the highest share of the electorate using a VAA with more than 2,000,000 people using the application. This is more than 25 percent of Sweden's eligible voters.

The collaborations with Kieskompas and Af-tonbladet has been fruitful for LORE in many ways since it has led to more than 30,000 new respondents recruited to the Citizen Panel and has extended the LORE network to a European group of scholars working with similar data and using opt-in panels for data collections. The recruitment effort was unusually successful and resulted in more representative respondents compared to the Swedish population than previous opt-in recruitments have done due to Af-tonbladet's broad outreach in the population. Technically, the recruitment was performed through a voluntary extra survey placed at the end of the election compass when users saw their results. In total, more than 130,000 of the respondents that answered the vote compass also choose to answer the extra survey, which probably makes it the biggest election survey in Sweden up to date in terms of number of responses.

To further cover the opinion, and opinion changes, several different subpanels of the Citizen Panel have focused on the 2014 elections. There have been three strictly election and politics oriented election panels; one powered by Stefan Dahlberg, one in collaboration with Kieskompas as part of a European wide comparative study, and one more long term election panel which has been in use since March 2013 and is powered by LORE. The September referendum also marked the end of the long term panel regarding congestion charges which has been running since June 2012.

To further understand the political landscape and what happens during election years a comparative study was simultaneously fielded to the Panel of Politicians, the Panel of Journalists and the Citizen Panel in order to measure the relationship between citizens, their representatives and the journalists covering the political process.



COLLABORATIONS

In June, the European Candidate Study 2014 was fielded to more than 300 candidates of the election to the European parliament, and in November, the Candidate Study of the Parliament was fielded to 4,000 candidates. These two studies are part of the Comparative Candidate Survey (CCS) which is an international research project on election campaigns. More than 20 universities in Europe, North America and Asia are involved in the project and Principal investigator for the Swedish Candidate Studies is Patrik Öhberg.

For more information about what is going at LORE please visit our websites:

www.lore.gu.se

www.medborgarpanelen.gu.se

www.mod.gu.se