*You Either Got It or You Don't? The Stability of Political Interest over the Life Cycle*

**Appendix I**

**Testing for Panel Effects**

This appendix reports in detail several checks for panel effects. In some datasets, political interest is marginally higher among the most dedicated panelists than in new samples. For datasets that include new random samples of the population, Figure 1 displays political interest for respondents who remained on panels for their full tenure (dotted lines) and for respondents who were asked first in cross-sectional surveys (solid lines). In the SHP, panelists who ended up completing all eight panel waves were more interested in 1999 than the average respondent. The difference of 3.7 points represents only one eighths of a standard deviation, however. After the first interviews in 1999, the SHP also interviewed fresh cross-sections in 2004 and 2005. Political interest increased more among panelists than according to the cross-sectional data, but the difference is small.

The first panel wave for the BHPS generates a cross-sectional estimate for 1991 uncontaminated by any possible panel effects. This estimate, which includes respondents who were never successfully interviewed again, is 48.1 on the 0-100 scale (N=9893). This is essentially the same level of political interest as among panelists who completed all 11 waves with political interest questions (48.2). Reassuringly, respondents who remained on the panel for 14 years were on average just as politically interested in 1991 as respondents who did not complete another interview after that year.

In the BES, a more significant discrepancy between panel and cross section appears to occur in 2001, but the comparison may in fact be somewhat misleading. The cross-sectional data in Figure 1a come from post-election surveys in 1997 and 2005, but from the pre-election interview in 2001. Political interest was not asked in the 2001 cross section conducted after the election. The 2001 panel wave that included the political interest question was conducted after the election, however. In other words, Figure 1a compares a 2001 pre-election cross-section to a 2001 post-election panel wave. Perhaps British people were in fact more interested after the 2001 election than before. The BHPS, after all, shows no indication of a drop in

interest between 1996 and 2001. Even if respondents were in fact as interested after the 2001 election as after the elections of 1997 or 2005, the *increase* in political interest among BES panelists between 2000 and 2001 still suggests the presence of mild panel effects. (The BES interviews in 2001 were conducted before September 11.)

As Figure 1b demonstrates, there are barely any differences between the panelists and new cross-sectional samples in the SOEP. Cross sections in 1998, 2000, and 2006 report essentially the same political interest levels as the panelists who completed all 23 waves of Panel A or all 18 waves of Panel C. Similar small increases in political interest occur in this period in both of those panels, in the 1994-2002 Panel (run by different researchers using a different interest question), and in the cross-sectional data.

Not only are the differences between panel and cross-section small, but they do not necessarily indicate panel effects. Instead, they could be explained by the aging of the panel members which should lead to a slight increase in political interest because of the positive association between interest and age. In 2004, for example, the SHP panelists with full participation were at least 19 years old. When the cross-sectional samples for 2004 and 2005 are limited to the same age range, political interest is 2 points higher than the values shown in Figure 1, which leaves only about 2 points attributable to panel effects.

Among respondents who were eligible in the first panel wave, the comparison between panelists who completed all waves and those who completed at least one of them is not affected by the aging of the panel. In all studies used here panelists with complete political interest data have, on average, very similar interest levels as those who left the panel. In the BHPS, 4,275 citizens completed all 11 waves with political interest questions, whereas between 9,782 (in 1991) and 5,274 (in 2004) of the initially eligible respondents completed at least one question. Differences between the two sets of respondents never exceed 1 point on the 0-100 scale. In the longest SOEP panel (Sample A), the biggest difference between complete panel participants and all eligible respondents occurs in 2004. Political interest in the former group is 46.5 (N=1,978) compared to 42.6 (N=4,961) in the latter group—are relatively small difference of less than 4 points. In the guestworker sample (Sample B), only 317 out of an initial 2,479 first-wave

respondents completed all waves, but the biggest difference between the complete panelists and eligible panelists is 3.6 points (in 1999). In the remaining SOEP samples, the respective differences are 3.6 (Sample C), 1.8 (Sample E), and 2.1 (Sample F). The equivalent differences are 4 points in the SHP, less than 2 points in the German 1994-2002 panel, and just over 2 points in the Jennings panels.

To gauge the influence of panel effects for stability estimates more directly, Figure 2 shows stability statistics for dedicated panelists as well as more casual participants. The solid lines show the percentage of respondents reporting the same interest level in pairs of waves among respondents who completed all panel waves. The dotted lines show the same statistic for respondents who completed (at least) the two waves for which stability is assessed. The difference between these two (overlapping) sets of respondents provides one indication of the extent to which panel effects bias stability estimates. If respondents with stable political interest are more likely to remain in the panel, the two lines should diverge. By this indicator, panel effects are a minor concern. The two sets of estimates are always within 3 percentage points of each other and often much closer.

Figure 3 does not even show the equivalent trends for incomplete panel participants in the SOEP because their close correspondence with the complete panelists would make the figure unreadable. The average absolute difference in rates of identical interest reports for the two populations varies between .8 points (in Sample F) and 2.7 points (in Sample B).[1]

In another test, I compare Pearson correlations between pairs of panel waves for respondents who completed all panel waves to the same correlations for respondents who did not complete all waves. Hence, the two sets of respondents do not overlap at all. Panel effects are indicated by large differences

[1] A few years show slightly greater divergence. In Sample A, stability is 4.4 points higher among complete panelists in the first three wave pairs. In Sample E, one divergence is as high as 4.2 points. Panel effects are largest in Sample B, not only on average, but also in terms of maximum divergence—which is 8 points for the 1985-99 stability estimate. Yet, the second largest divergence, 6.2 points for 1985-90, occurs because stability among complete panelists is 6.2 points *lower*. The bias from panel effects is not always in the same direction, and may therefore reflect sampling error in this small sample (317 respondents with complete panel data). For rates of remaining within one category of the initial response, panel effects are not apparent with average absolute divergence under 2 points for all samples and maximum divergence under of 4 points in Sample B and less than 3 points in all other samples.

between correlations for the same wave pairs among the two sets of respondents. The full correlation matrices are shown in Table A2 below. The average absolute differences are summarized in Table A1. They range from .018 (SOEP, Sample F) to .071 (BES).

[Table A1 about here]

If panel effects are present, difference between correlations in the two respondent groups should be systematically in one direction. Yet for several datasets, the average signed difference is smaller than the absolute difference, indicating that sampling error explain some of the deviations. In the SOEP's Sample B, for example, the absolute signed difference is near zero, so panelists with complete data do not exhibit systematically different correlations. The largest difference for any wave pair in that dataset is a sizable .23. But with 22 panel waves, the correlation matrix has 231 elements, so a few large outliers could emerge by chance. And with only 317 panelists with complete data, chance variation is larger than in most other samples used here.

Judging by the average signed difference in correlations in Table A1, panel effects are not a big concern for most datasets used here. Only the BES panel shows some signs of systematic differences between respondents with complete and incomplete panel participation. But even in that dataset, the largest difference in correlations, .16 for the 1998-2001 wave pair, is based on only 112 observations with incomplete data, and thus barely different from zero at conventional levels of significance.

Table A1. Differences between Stability Correlations of Complete and Incomplete Panelists

| Panel Study | Average absolute difference | Average signed difference | Largest difference | No. of Correlations |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| SOEP, Sample F | .018 | .002 | .04 | 28 |
| SHP | .022 | .020 | .06 | 28 |
| German Panel | .026 | .026 | .04 | 2 |
| SOEP, Sample A | .036 | -.032 | .14 | 253 |
| SOEP, Sample E | .044 | -.028 | .10 | 45 |
| BHPS | .046 | .046 | .09 | 55 |
| SOEP, Sample C | .047 | .044 | .19 | 153 |
| Jennings Student Panel | .052 | -.033 | .10 | 3 |
| SOEP, Sample B | .052 | -.007 | .23 | 231 |
| BES | .071 | .065 | .16 | 10 |

*Note*: The number of correlations refers to the number of elements below the diagonal in the correlation matrix with sufficient number of observations. Correlation matrices are shown in Table A2. Positive signed differences indicate that panelists with complete panel participation have higher correlations, on average, panelists with incomplete participation.

Table A2. Correlations of Political Interest between Waves

*(a) SHP*

| | No Missing Waves | | | | | | | Some Missing Waves | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 1999 | 2000 | 2001 | 2002 | 2003 | 2004 | 2005 | 1999 | 2000 | 2001 | 2002 | 2003 | 2004 | 2005 |
| 2000 | .78 | | | | | | | .76 | | | | | | |
| 2001 | .75 | .77 | | | | | | .73 | .77 | | | | | |
| 2002 | .75 | .77 | .76 | | | | | .72 | .76 | .76 | | | | |
| 2003 | .74 | .75 | .76 | .79 | | | | .71 | .74 | .75 | .79 | | | |
| 2004 | .73 | .75 | .74 | .78 | .81 | | | .70 | .73 | .73 | .76 | .79 | | |
| 2005 | .71 | .73 | .73 | .76 | .78 | .81 | | .65 | .72 | .68 | .76 | .72 | .78 | |
| 2006 | .72 | .73 | .73 | .77 | .80 | .82 | .80 | .69 | .75 | .71 | .73 | .76 | .81 | .81 |

Note: Unweighted data. 2,222 panelists completed the interest question in all 8 waves. The number of observations for panelists with less than 8 waves ranges from 3,475 (1999-2000 wave pair) to 348 (2005-06).

*(b) BHPS*

| | No Missing Waves | | | | | | | | | | Some Missing Waves | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 1992 | 1993 | 1994 | 1995 | 1996 | 2001 | 2002 | 2003 | 2004 | 2005 | 1992 | 1993 | 1994 | 1995 | 1996 | 2001 | 2002 | 2003 | 2004 | 2005 |
| 1992 | .70 | | | | | | | | | | .66 | | | | | | | | | |
| 1993 | .69 | .72 | | | | | | | | | .63 | .66 | | | | | | | | |
| 1994 | .66 | .68 | .72 | | | | | | | | .61 | .65 | .68 | | | | | | | |
| 1995 | .66 | .67 | .71 | .73 | | | | | | | .61 | .65 | .67 | .69 | | | | | | |
| 1996 | .65 | .67 | .70 | .72 | .75 | | | | | | .60 | .64 | .65 | .68 | .71 | | | | | |
| 2001 | .59 | .60 | .63 | .63 | .65 | .66 | | | | | .52 | .58 | .55 | .57 | .59 | .62 | | | | |
| 2002 | .59 | .60 | .63 | .62 | .65 | .66 | .71 | | | | .55 | .56 | .59 | .61 | .59 | .62 | .69 | | | |
| 2003 | .59 | .60 | .62 | .63 | .65 | .65 | .71 | .72 | | | .55 | .55 | .54 | .58 | .58 | .63 | .67 | .68 | | |
| 2004 | .58 | .59 | .62 | .62 | .65 | .65 | .70 | .72 | .74 | | .51 | .56 | .53 | .58 | .56 | .58 | .65 | .66 | .73 | |
| 2005 | .58 | .58 | .61 | .61 | .63 | .64 | .69 | .71 | .71 | .73 | .52 | .50 | .53 | .56 | .60 | .61 | .68 | .68 | .70 | .71 |

Note: Unweighted data. 4,275 panelists completed the interest question in all 11 waves. The number of observations for panelists with less than 11 waves ranges from 4,164 (1991-92 wave pair) to 348 (1993-2004).

Table A2. Correlations of Political Interest between Waves (cont.)

*(c) SOEP, Sample A*

| | **No Missing Waves** | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 85 | 86 | 87 | 88 | 89 | 90 | 91 | 92 | 93 | 94 | 95 | 96 | 97 | 98 | 99 | 00 | 01 | 02 | 03 | 04 | 05 | 06 |
| 1986 | .70 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 1987 | .66 | .69 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 1988 | .66 | .66 | .68 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 1989 | .60 | .64 | .66 | .70 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 1990 | .63 | .65 | .65 | .68 | .69 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 1991 | .58 | .61 | .63 | .65 | .65 | .68 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 1992 | .59 | .61 | .63 | .63 | .63 | .67 | .67 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 1993 | .54 | .59 | .58 | .62 | .61 | .64 | .63 | .69 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 1994 | .57 | .60 | .62 | .64 | .64 | .68 | .66 | .70 | .68 | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 1995 | .57 | .61 | .62 | .62 | .62 | .68 | .65 | .70 | .68 | .73 | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 1996 | .55 | .59 | .59 | .60 | .61 | .63 | .64 | .66 | .67 | .72 | .71 | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 1997 | .55 | .57 | .58 | .57 | .60 | .62 | .61 | .65 | .62 | .68 | .70 | .72 | | | | | | | | | | |
| 1998 | .55 | .56 | .57 | .59 | .59 | .64 | .61 | .64 | .61 | .68 | .68 | .69 | .69 | | | | | | | | | |
| 1999 | .53 | .55 | .57 | .58 | .58 | .62 | .60 | .64 | .61 | .67 | .66 | .68 | .67 | .70 | | | | | | | | |
| 2000 | .51 | .52 | .53 | .55 | .54 | .59 | .58 | .60 | .60 | .63 | .65 | .64 | .64 | .65 | .66 | | | | | | | |
| 2001 | .53 | .55 | .56 | .57 | .55 | .61 | .57 | .61 | .61 | .64 | .64 | .67 | .65 | .67 | .66 | .68 | | | | | | |
| 2002 | .54 | .56 | .55 | .57 | .57 | .61 | .60 | .61 | .60 | .64 | .64 | .66 | .64 | .66 | .66 | .68 | .70 | | | | | |
| 2003 | .49 | .51 | .54 | .54 | .55 | .59 | .57 | .59 | .59 | .62 | .63 | .64 | .62 | .64 | .66 | .65 | .69 | .70 | | | | |
| 2004 | .51 | .51 | .54 | .54 | .54 | .59 | .55 | .58 | .59 | .60 | .61 | .63 | .60 | .63 | .64 | .63 | .66 | .69 | .70 | | | |
| 2005 | .49 | .49 | .52 | .52 | .51 | .54 | .55 | .58 | .56 | .60 | .60 | .62 | .60 | .62 | .62 | .64 | .65 | .68 | .67 | .70 | | |
| 2006 | .49 | .50 | .53 | .53 | .51 | .56 | .56 | .58 | .57 | .59 | .60 | .60 | .58 | .62 | .62 | .63 | .63 | .67 | .67 | .07 | .69 | |
| 2007 | .48 | .48 | .51 | .51 | .50 | .55 | .54 | .56 | .56 | .58 | .59 | .60 | .58 | .60 | .60 | .60 | .63 | .65 | .66 | .67 | .67 | .71 |

Table A2. Correlations of Political Interest between Waves (cont.)

*(c) SOEP, Sample A (cont.)*

| | Some Missing Waves | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 85 | 86 | 87 | 88 | 89 | 90 | 91 | 92 | 93 | 94 | 95 | 96 | 97 | 98 | 99 | 00 | 01 | 02 | 03 | 04 | 05 | 06 |
| 1986 | .65 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 1987 | .61 | .66 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 1988 | .59 | .63 | .65 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 1989 | .57 | .62 | .62 | .67 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 1990 | .55 | .60 | .60 | .64 | .66 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 1991 | .54 | .58 | .59 | .61 | .65 | .67 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 1992 | .53 | .58 | .58 | .62 | .62 | .65 | .66 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 1993 | .53 | .56 | .55 | .58 | .61 | .64 | .63 | .68 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 1994 | .52 | .56 | .56 | .59 | .60 | .62 | .62 | .66 | .67 | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 1995 | .53 | .55 | .54 | .58 | .59 | .63 | .63 | .66 | .66 | .69 | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 1996 | .53 | .55 | .55 | .58 | .61 | .62 | .63 | .64 | .65 | .70 | .71 | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 1997 | .50 | .54 | .54 | .57 | .59 | .59 | .59 | .63 | .63 | .67 | .67 | .69 | | | | | | | | | | |
| 1998 | .53 | .55 | .55 | .59 | .60 | .61 | .60 | .62 | .64 | .66 | .67 | .70 | .69 | | | | | | | | | |
| 1999 | .51 | .53 | .54 | .55 | .58 | .57 | .58 | .59 | .62 | .64 | .64 | .68 | .65 | .71 | | | | | | | | |
| 2000 | .49 | .51 | .53 | .55 | .58 | .55 | .58 | .59 | .59 | .63 | .6 | .63 | .64 | .66 | .69 | | | | | | | |
| 2001 | .47 | .48 | .49 | .54 | .57 | .54 | .58 | .58 | .59 | .64 | .61 | .64 | .66 | .68 | .67 | .74 | | | | | | |
| 2002 | .44 | .47 | .49 | .50 | .54 | .51 | .54 | .55 | .54 | .59 | .54 | .59 | .57 | .61 | .64 | .66 | .69 | | | | | |
| 2003 | .45 | .48 | .52 | .54 | .54 | .51 | .54 | .56 | .55 | .60 | .56 | .57 | .58 | .61 | .62 | .65 | .69 | .72 | | | | |
| 2004 | .42 | .42 | .44 | .47 | .48 | .47 | .51 | .47 | .5 | .57 | .51 | .53 | .55 | .57 | .59 | .59 | .65 | .67 | .68 | | | |
| 2005 | .39 | .43 | .49 | .49 | .53 | .48 | .52 | .51 | .51 | .59 | .55 | .58 | .60 | .61 | .62 | .59 | .65 | .67 | .69 | .69 | | |
| 2006 | .42 | .46 | .47 | .48 | .47 | .47 | .51 | .44 | .51 | .56 | .52 | .50 | .54 | .55 | .57 | .57 | .59 | .60 | .65 | .69 | .66 | |
| 2007 | .39 | .46 | .45 | .49 | .47 | .45 | .53 | .50 | .51 | .61 | .54 | .61 | .62 | .60 | .61 | .59 | .60 | .63 | .66 | .70 | .70 | .67 |

Note: Unweighted data. 1,978 panelists completed the interest question in all 23 waves. The number of observations for panelists (eligible in the first wave) with less than 23 waves ranges from 4,765 (1985-86 wave pair) to 336 (2006-07).

Table A2. Correlations of Political Interest between Waves (cont.)

*(d) SOEP, Sample B*

| | **No Missing Waves** | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 85 | 86 | 88 | 89 | 90 | 91 | 92 | 93 | 94 | 95 | 96 | 97 | 98 | 99 | 00 | 01 | 02 | 03 | 04 | 05 | 06 |
| 1986 | .54 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 1988 | .50 | .52 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 1989 | .39 | .49 | .64 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 1990 | .44 | .45 | .58 | .64 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 1991 | .38 | .43 | .57 | .60 | .59 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 1992 | .40 | .40 | .51 | .57 | .54 | .60 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 1993 | .44 | .41 | .50 | .57 | .54 | .56 | .60 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 1994 | .42 | .42 | .50 | .55 | .49 | .56 | .50 | .56 | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 1995 | .37 | .35 | .54 | .57 | .55 | .56 | .57 | .50 | .63 | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 1996 | .35 | .44 | .53 | .63 | .49 | .51 | .59 | .54 | .62 | .63 | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 1997 | .34 | .36 | .44 | .47 | .47 | .47 | .51 | .51 | .53 | .57 | .52 | | | | | | | | | | |
| 1998 | .42 | .40 | .51 | .48 | .48 | .50 | .60 | .47 | .59 | .59 | .50 | .60 | | | | | | | | | |
| 1999 | .44 | .40 | .57 | .58 | .53 | .50 | .62 | .50 | .59 | .56 | .58 | .54 | .56 | | | | | | | | |
| 2000 | .33 | .34 | .51 | .47 | .51 | .55 | .61 | .49 | .48 | .55 | .53 | .46 | .58 | .55 | | | | | | | |
| 2001 | .32 | .35 | .51 | .52 | .52 | .51 | .58 | .50 | .49 | .58 | .57 | .54 | .58 | .56 | .64 | | | | | | |
| 2002 | .33 | .34 | .42 | .44 | .50 | .49 | .52 | .42 | .47 | .49 | .48 | .54 | .52 | .53 | .53 | .61 | | | | | |
| 2003 | .32 | .27 | .44 | .43 | .43 | .49 | .54 | .48 | .44 | .50 | .45 | .48 | .55 | .49 | .58 | .63 | .63 | | | | |
| 2004 | .36 | .33 | .51 | .49 | .48 | .54 | .58 | .51 | .52 | .51 | .52 | .50 | .55 | .53 | .6 | .62 | .56 | .65 | | | |
| 2005 | .29 | .33 | .40 | .44 | .46 | .49 | .49 | .46 | .45 | .48 | .49 | .52 | .51 | .49 | .55 | .62 | .59 | .62 | .62 | | |
| 2006 | .35 | .36 | .47 | .45 | .50 | .48 | .52 | .50 | .39 | .43 | .48 | .49 | .44 | .46 | .53 | .60 | .62 | .61 | .60 | .64 | |
| 2007 | .39 | .33 | .46 | .45 | .46 | .50 | .50 | .53 | .52 | .52 | .45 | .56 | .55 | .46 | .55 | .62 | .57 | .63 | .63 | .64 | .65 |

Table A2. Correlations of Political Interest between Waves (cont.)

*(d) SOEP, Sample B (cont.)*

| | **Some Missing Waves** | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 85 | 86 | 88 | 89 | 90 | 91 | 92 | 93 | 94 | 95 | 96 | 97 | 98 | 99 | 00 | 01 | 02 | 03 | 04 | 05 | 06 |
| 1986 | .55 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 1988 | .48 | .55 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 1989 | .45 | .52 | .60 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 1990 | .43 | .52 | .60 | .63 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 1991 | .41 | .48 | .54 | .58 | .62 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 1992 | .39 | .43 | .50 | .54 | .61 | .65 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 1993 | .40 | .45 | .52 | .51 | .57 | .59 | .62 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 1994 | .33 | .43 | .46 | .51 | .55 | .60 | .58 | .57 | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 1995 | .42 | .44 | .50 | .50 | .54 | .58 | .58 | .56 | .60 | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 1996 | .38 | .42 | .48 | .50 | .55 | .55 | .54 | .53 | .57 | .63 | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 1997 | .34 | .38 | .42 | .42 | .48 | .51 | .50 | .55 | .55 | .55 | .58 | | | | | | | | | | |
| 1998 | .39 | .43 | .49 | .50 | .58 | .61 | .56 | .57 | .56 | .55 | .63 | .59 | | | | | | | | | |
| 1999 | .33 | .32 | .42 | .45 | .48 | .47 | .45 | .50 | .48 | .52 | .58 | .45 | .62 | | | | | | | | |
| 2000 | .36 | .34 | .40 | .46 | .53 | .51 | .43 | .51 | .42 | .47 | .55 | .52 | .65 | .60 | | | | | | | |
| 2001 | .42 | .38 | .49 | .50 | .55 | .54 | .53 | .57 | .50 | .57 | .55 | .56 | .65 | .53 | .60 | | | | | | |
| 2002 | .45 | .37 | .48 | .50 | .55 | .58 | .55 | .52 | .50 | .55 | .59 | .55 | .66 | .55 | .64 | .67 | | | | | |
| 2003 | .37 | .35 | .46 | .49 | .48 | .58 | .51 | .53 | .46 | .53 | .56 | .54 | .60 | .52 | .62 | .70 | .63 | | | | |
| 2004 | .45 | .29 | .43 | .42 | .47 | .50 | .50 | .47 | .46 | .58 | .55 | .51 | .63 | .56 | .59 | .64 | .63 | .67 | | | |
| 2005 | .48 | .28 | .43 | .46 | .49 | .48 | .42 | .47 | .43 | .54 | .54 | .43 | .56 | .56 | .57 | .63 | .62 | .60 | .63 | | |
| 2006 | .51 | .36 | .52 | .45 | .43 | .54 | .52 | .44 | .37 | .55 | .48 | .45 | .59 | .61 | .57 | .58 | .65 | .62 | .76 | .61 | |
| 2007 | .36 | .36 | .46 | .36 | .41 | .36 | .39 | .44 | .35 | .41 | .64 | .33 | .56 | .60 | .47 | .52 | .50 | .49 | .56 | .66 | .64 |

Note: Unweighted data. 318 panelists completed the interest question in all 22 waves. The number of observations for panelists (eligible in the first wave) with less than 22 waves ranges from 1,745 (1985-86 wave pair) to 96 (1985-2007).

Table A2. Correlations of Political Interest between Waves (cont.)

*(e) SOEP, Sample C*

**No Missing Waves**

| | 90 | 91 | 92 | 93 | 94 | 95 | 96 | 97 | 98 | 99 | 00 | 01 | 02 | 03 | 04 | 05 | 06 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1991 | .59 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 1992 | .57 | .66 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 1993 | .52 | .58 | .67 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 1994 | .54 | .59 | .68 | .68 | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 1995 | .52 | .58 | .66 | .66 | .70 | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 1996 | .50 | .57 | .62 | .64 | .66 | .72 | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 1997 | .49 | .55 | .62 | .60 | .67 | .68 | .70 | | | | | | | | | | |
| 1998 | .47 | .55 | .59 | .60 | .65 | .68 | .67 | .70 | | | | | | | | | |
| 1999 | .50 | .56 | .63 | .61 | .65 | .67 | .69 | .69 | .71 | | | | | | | | |
| 2000 | .47 | .55 | .57 | .60 | .62 | .65 | .67 | .67 | .68 | .72 | | | | | | | |
| 2001 | .47 | .54 | .58 | .60 | .62 | .66 | .66 | .65 | .69 | .70 | .73 | | | | | | |
| 2002 | .48 | .52 | .58 | .58 | .60 | .63 | .65 | .65 | .66 | .69 | .72 | .76 | | | | | |
| 2003 | .48 | .53 | .57 | .58 | .59 | .64 | .63 | .64 | .66 | .68 | .69 | .72 | .75 | | | | |
| 2004 | .48 | .54 | .59 | .57 | .61 | .62 | .66 | .66 | .66 | .70 | .69 | .71 | .73 | .74 | | | |
| 2005 | .45 | .51 | .55 | .55 | .59 | .60 | .63 | .64 | .63 | .67 | .67 | .68 | .70 | .71 | .75 | | |
| 2006 | .44 | .49 | .52 | .53 | .55 | .56 | .61 | .62 | .60 | .65 | .67 | .65 | .67 | .71 | .72 | .71 | |
| 2007 | .44 | .50 | .54 | .55 | .57 | .58 | .60 | .61 | .60 | .61 | .63 | .65 | .66 | .69 | .70 | .70 | .71 |

**Some Missing Waves**

| | 90 | 91 | 92 | 93 | 94 | 95 | 96 | 97 | 98 | 99 | 00 | 01 | 02 | 03 | 04 | 05 | 06 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1991 | .54 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 1992 | .53 | .61 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 1993 | .47 | .55 | .63 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 1994 | .49 | .57 | .60 | .63 | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 1995 | .49 | .59 | .61 | .67 | .69 | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 1996 | .50 | .58 | .61 | .63 | .66 | .69 | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 1997 | .48 | .58 | .60 | .63 | .64 | .66 | .70 | | | | | | | | | | |
| 1998 | .49 | .54 | .59 | .59 | .63 | .67 | .68 | .72 | | | | | | | | | |
| 1999 | .49 | .54 | .57 | .57 | .64 | .65 | .66 | .67 | .68 | | | | | | | | |
| 2000 | .49 | .51 | .57 | .57 | .61 | .64 | .64 | .66 | .68 | .70 | | | | | | | |
| 2001 | .44 | .53 | .53 | .55 | .54 | .61 | .61 | .63 | .64 | .66 | .68 | | | | | | |
| 2002 | .46 | .46 | .50 | .45 | .54 | .56 | .57 | .59 | .60 | .64 | .65 | .67 | | | | | |
| 2003 | .49 | .47 | .48 | .49 | .55 | .60 | .61 | .61 | .65 | .64 | .65 | .69 | .68 | | | | |
| 2004 | .43 | .45 | .52 | .47 | .53 | .59 | .61 | .59 | .64 | .65 | .66 | .69 | .67 | .68 | | | |
| 2005 | .44 | .43 | .54 | .49 | .51 | .60 | .61 | .65 | .66 | .63 | .65 | .67 | .65 | .65 | .73 | | |
| 2006 | .38 | .39 | .44 | .44 | .50 | .54 | .56 | .55 | .54 | .59 | .58 | .64 | .59 | .68 | .67 | .69 | |
| 2007 | .30 | .33 | .43 | .36 | .43 | .44 | .55 | .59 | .55 | .51 | .53 | .59 | .58 | .59 | .56 | .64 | .65 |

Note: Unweighted data. 1,418 panelists completed the interest question in all 18 waves. The number of observations for panelists (eligible in the first wave) with less than 18 waves ranges from 2,382 (1990-91 wave pair) to 262 (1991-2007).

Table A2. Correlations of Political Interest between Waves (cont.)

*(f) SOEP, Sample E*

| | No Missing Waves | | | | | | | | | Some Missing Waves | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 1998 | 1999 | 2000 | 2001 | 2002 | 2003 | 2004 | 2005 | 2006 | 1998 | 1999 | 2000 | 2001 | 2002 | 2003 | 2004 | 2005 | 2006 |
| 1999 | .63 | | | | | | | | | .62 | | | | | | | | |
| 2000 | .60 | .63 | | | | | | | | .62 | .64 | | | | | | | |
| 2001 | .62 | .59 | .66 | | | | | | | .53 | .63 | .63 | | | | | | |
| 2002 | .58 | .56 | .64 | .67 | | | | | | .58 | .61 | .63 | .68 | | | | | |
| 2003 | .57 | .54 | .56 | .59 | .66 | | | | | .53 | .61 | .61 | .64 | .72 | | | | |
| 2004 | .53 | .52 | .57 | .57 | .63 | .62 | | | | .58 | .60 | .57 | .51 | .61 | .64 | | | |
| 2005 | .53 | .56 | .58 | .58 | .61 | .63 | .65 | | | .63 | .58 | .66 | .64 | .68 | .64 | .74 | | |
| 2006 | .57 | .54 | .60 | .59 | .61 | .62 | .65 | .72 | | .55 | .56 | .62 | .62 | .66 | .66 | .70 | .69 | |
| 2007 | .54 | .56 | .57 | .59 | .63 | .63 | .63 | .68 | .71 | .63 | .64 | .65 | .69 | .68 | .66 | .62 | .70 | .69 |

Note: Unweighted data. 733 panelists completed the interest question in all 10 waves. The number of observations for panelists with less than 10 waves ranges from 672 (1998-99 wave pair) to 77 (1999-2007).

*(g) SOEP, Sample F*

| | No Missing Waves | | | | | | | Some Missing Waves | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 2000 | 2001 | 2002 | 2003 | 2004 | 2005 | 2006 | 2000 | 2001 | 2002 | 2003 | 2004 | 2005 | 2006 |
| 2001 | .67 | | | | | | | .66 | | | | | | |
| 2002 | .66 | .69 | | | | | | .64 | .68 | | | | | |
| 2003 | .63 | .68 | .69 | | | | | .62 | .66 | .69 | | | | |
| 2004 | .62 | .65 | .67 | .69 | | | | .61 | .64 | .65 | .70 | | | |
| 2005 | .63 | .64 | .66 | .68 | .71 | | | .62 | .64 | .64 | .65 | .71 | | |
| 2006 | .60 | .62 | .64 | .66 | .67 | .71 | | .58 | .63 | .64 | .64 | .66 | .67 | |
| 2007 | .57 | .60 | .60 | .63 | .65 | .67 | .69 | .65 | .63 | .60 | .64 | .67 | .70 | .71 |

Note: Unweighted data. 4,405 panelists completed the interest question in all 8 waves. The number of observations for panelists with less than 8 waves ranges from 3,231 (2000-01 wave pair) to 416 (2001-07).

Table A2. Correlations of Political Interest between Waves (cont.)

*(h) BES*

| | **No Missing Waves** | | | | **Some Missing Waves** | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 1997 | 1998 | 1999 | 2000 | 1997 | 1998 | 1999 | 2000 |
| 1998 | .63 | | | | .57 | | | |
| 1999 | .63 | .69 | | | .57 | .61 | | |
| 2000 | .62 | .66 | .72 | | .58 | .51 | .62 | |
| 2001 | .59 | .65 | .67 | .70 | .57 | .49 | .66 | .73 |

Note: Unweighted data. 2,089 panelists completed the interest question in all 5 waves. The number of observations for panelists with less than 5 waves ranges from 639 (1997-98 wave pair) to 112 (1998-2001).

*(i) German Panel*

| | **No Missing Waves** | | **Some Missing Waves** | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 1994 | 1998 | 1994 | 1998 |
| 1998 | .53 | | (n=9) | |
| 2002 | .46 | .54 | .44 | .50 |

Note: Data are weighted because panel includes some quota sampling and panel augmentation. 1,390 panelists completed the interest question in all 3 waves. The number of observations for panelists with less than 3 waves is 578 for the 1994-2002 wave pair and 1,682 for the 1998-2002 wave pair.

*(j) Jennings Socialization Study*

| | *Student Sample* | | | | | | *Parent Sample* | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **No Missing Waves** | | | **Some Missing** | | | **No Missing** | | **Some Missing** | |
| | 1965 | 1973 | 1982 | 1965 | 1973 | 1982 | 1965 | 1973 | 1965 | 1973 |
| 1973 | .32 | | | .42 | | | .43 | | .48 | |
| 1982 | .31 | .42 | | .29 | .47 | | .42 | .48 | (n=0) | (n=0) |
| 1997 | .32 | .39 | .51 | (n=3) | (n=2) | (n=0) | | | | |

Note: Unweighted data. 931 student panelists completed the interest question in all 4 waves. The number of observations for panelists with less than 4 waves ranges from 200 (1973-82 wave pair) to 416 (1965-73 wave pair). In the sample of parents, 895 completed all three waves. An additional 283 completed only the 1965-73 waves.

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## Appendix II

### Measurement Model:

### Allowing Different Stability Estimates among Young and Old Panelists

Table A3. Measurement Models for Stability in Political Interest, by Age (except SOEP)

| | BHPS | | SHP | | BES Panel | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Age* | *under 30* | *over 29* | *under 30* | *over 29* | *under 30* | *over 29* |
| $\beta_{1,2}$ | .94 (.04) | .95 (.02) | .91 (.05) | .93 (.02) | .91 (.08) | .83 (.03) |
| $\beta_{2,3}$ | 1.00 (.03) | 1.01 (.02) | .87 (.05) | .91 (.02) | 1.02 (.07) | 1.01 (.03) |
| $\beta_{3,4}$ | .89 (.03) | 1.00 (.02) | 1.00 (.05) | 1.00 (.02) | .99 (.06) | .96 (.02) |
| $\beta_{4,5}$ | .99 (.03) | .96 (.02) | .96 (.05) | 1.05 (.02) | 1.01 (.06) | .98 (.03) |
| $\beta_{5,6}$ | .99 (.03) | 1.01 (.02) | .93 (.04) | .95 (.02) | | |
| $\beta_{6,7}$ | .83 (.03) | .88 (.02) | .98 (.04) | .98 (.02) | | |
| $\beta_{7,8}$ | .99 (.03) | .99 (.02) | .94 (.04) | 1.02 (.02) | | |
| $\beta_{8,9}$ | 1.00 (.03) | 1.04 (.02) | | | | |
| $\beta_{9,10}$ | 1.03 (.03) | .99 (.02) | | | | |
| $\beta_{10,11}$ | .94 (.03) | .95 (.02) | | | | |
| Corrected $\chi^2$ [df] | 58.6 [81] | | 21.5 [31] | | 6.6 [8] | |
| p-value | .97 | | .90 | | .58 | |
| CFI | 1.00 | | 1.00 | | 1.00 | |
| RMSEA [90% c.i.] | .007 [.000; .015] | | .016 [.000; .029] | | .016 [.000; .042] | |
| N | 1075 | 3200 | 314 | 1908 | 269 | 1820 |

Note: Robust ML estimates using post-stratification weights. Models allow error variances and covariances to vary. Constraints are relaxed separately for both age groups. Analyses of citizens only.

Table A4. Measurement Models for Stability in Political Interest, by Age (SOEP)

| | Sample A | | Sample C | | Sample F | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Age* | *under 30* | *over 29* | *under 30* | *under 36* | *over 35* | *over 29* |
| $\beta_{85,86}$ | .95 (.08) | .96 (.05) | | | | |
| $\beta_{86,87}$ | .99 (.06) | .92 (.05) | | | | |
| $\beta_{87,88}$ | .94 (.05) | .99 (.04) | | | | |
| $\beta_{88,89}$ | 1.04 (.08) | .98 (.04) | | | | |
| $\beta_{89,90}$ | .95 (.08) | 1.04 (.04) | | | | |
| $\beta_{90,91}$ | .97 (.06) | .95 (.04) | .83 (.14) | .88 (.05) | | |
| $\beta_{91,92}$ | .99 (.05) | .95 (.04) | .73 (.10) | .93 (.04) | | |
| $\beta_{92,93}$ | .86 (.04) | 1.01 (.04) | 1.02 (.10) | .83 (.03) | | |
| $\beta_{93,94}$ | 1.04 (.05) | 1.05 (.04) | 1.07 (.08) | 1.02 (.04) | | |
| $\beta_{94,95}$ | .99 (.05) | .92 (.04) | .80 (.10) | .97 (.03) | | |
| $\beta_{95,96}$ | 1.02 (.05) | .97 (.03) | 1.05 (.12) | .94 (.03) | | |
| $\beta_{96,97}$ | .90 (.04) | .96 (.03) | 1.03 (.11) | 1.02 (.04) | | |
| $\beta_{97,98}$ | 1.05 (.05) | 1.03 (.04) | .99 (.06) | 1.02 (.03) | | |
| $\beta_{98,99}$ | .91 (.05) | .99 (.03) | 1.04 (.06) | .98 (.03) | | |
| $\beta_{99,00}$ | 1.00 (.04) | .96 (.03) | 1.02 (.07) | .94 (.03) | | |
| $\beta_{00,01}$ | 1.05 (.04) | .96 (.03) | 1.02 (.06) | 1.03 (.04) | 1.19 (.10) | 1.03 (.03) |
| $\beta_{01,02}$ | .96 (.05) | 1.06 (.04) | .90 (.08) | 1.01 (.03) | .86 (.06) | .96 (.03) |
| $\beta_{02,03}$ | .99 (.05) | .99 (.03) | .99 (.05) | 1.00 (.03) | 1.03 (.05) | 1.00 (.02) |
| $\beta_{03,04}$ | .97 (.04) | .93 (.03) | 1.08 (.10) | .98 (.03) | 1.03 (.06) | .99 (.02) |
| $\beta_{04,05}$ | .95 (.05) | 1.05 (.03) | 1.06 (.15) | .99 (.03) | .85 (.06) | .98 (.02) |
| $\beta_{05,06}$ | 1.04 (.05) | .98 (.03) | .88 (.07) | .93 (.03) | 1.01 (.06) | .94 (.02) |
| $\beta_{06,07}$ | .95 (.04) | .93 (.03) | 1.06 (.07) | .96 (.03) | 1.04 (.06) | .94 (.02) |
| Corr. $\chi^2$ | 433.3 | | 227.9 | | 23.2 | |
| df | 448 | | 253 | | 35 | |
| p-value | .68 | | .87 | | .94 | |
| CFI | 1.00 | | 1.00 | | 1.00 | |
| RMSEA | .000 | | .000 | | .000 | |
| [90% c.i.] | [.000; .009] | | [.000; .008] | | [.000; .004] | |
| N | 547 | 1431 | 315 | 1103 | 566 | 3839 |

Note: Weighted robust ML estimates. Models allow error variances and covariances to vary. Constraints are relaxed separately for both age groups. Citizens only.