

Lab 2: Electoral Turnout

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Introduction

This document provides the tables and graphs for the lab session on Electoral Turnout. In the introductory sessions to this module, we've recognised that although this is an important form of participation, studies suggest electoral turnout is in decline. Are these fears justified? Does the evidence fit the "facts"? These are the key questions we answered in the **second** lab. The exercises enabled us to give evidence-based answers that went directly to the data itself. They are provided here for you to consolidate your knowledge. Rather than produce colour graphs, I've made them black and white for readability.

Turnout in Europe

We start by looking at turnout across our six democracies *combined*: (Austria, Switzerland, France, Germany, U.K. and the Netherlands). What are the overall levels of participation? They are provided below:

Table 1: Electoral Turnout in European Democracies

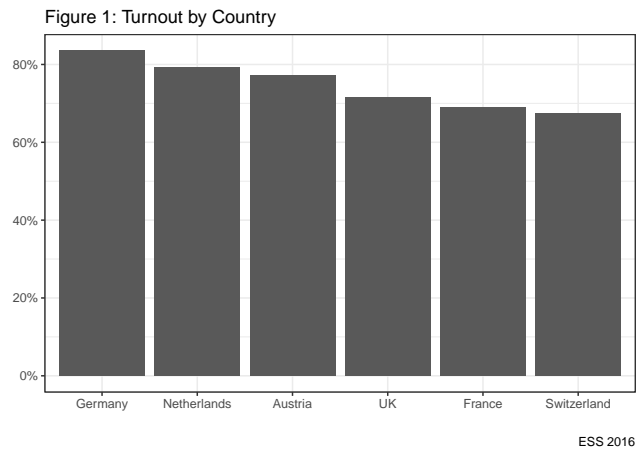
voted	N	%
did not vote	2717	24.2
voted	8511	75.8

We develop this further, breaking the figures down for the six countries:

Table 2: Electoral Turnout in European Democracies

Country	Voted	N	%
Austria	did not vote	381	22.8
Austria	voted	1289	77.2
Switzerland	did not vote	373	32.6
Switzerland	voted	771	67.4
Germany	did not vote	462	16.5
Germany	voted	2344	83.5
France	did not vote	522	31.1
France	voted	1159	68.9
UK	did not vote	608	28.5
UK	voted	1525	71.5
Netherlands	did not vote	371	20.7
Netherlands	voted	1423	79.3

We also presented this graphically to make it clear. Should you have difficulty seeing colour, I've included a black and white version along side it:



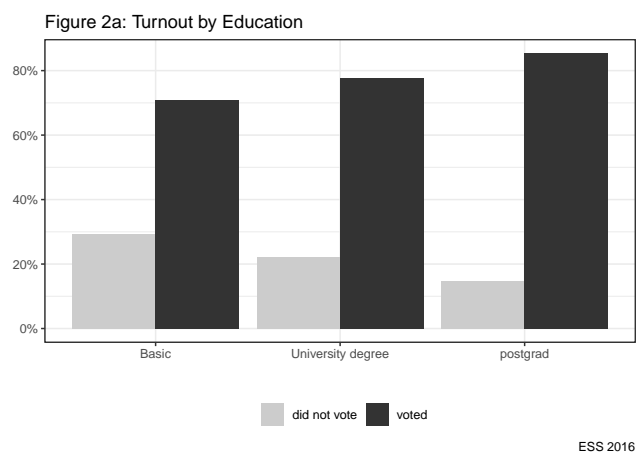
Testing Theories with evidence

In the lab, we also looked at the evidence about our theories. Here are the outputs, beginning with **socio-economic** resources:

Table 3: Education and Electoral Turnout

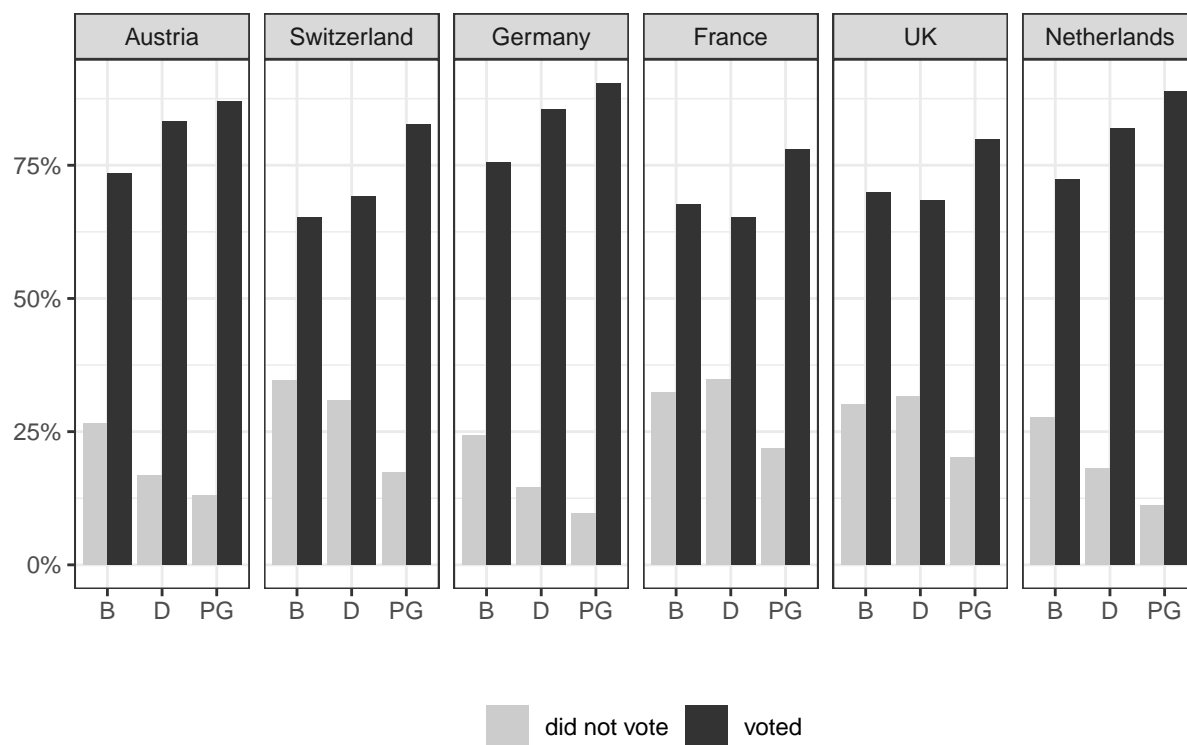
Education	Voted	N	%
Basic	did not vote	1551	29.2
Basic	voted	3759	70.8
University degree	did not vote	820	22.2
University degree	voted	2875	77.8
postgrad	did not vote	318	14.7
postgrad	voted	1851	85.3

We also graphed these relationships to make the key points stand out:



We also looked at how this varied across countries and political systems:

Figure 3: Turnout by Education and Country



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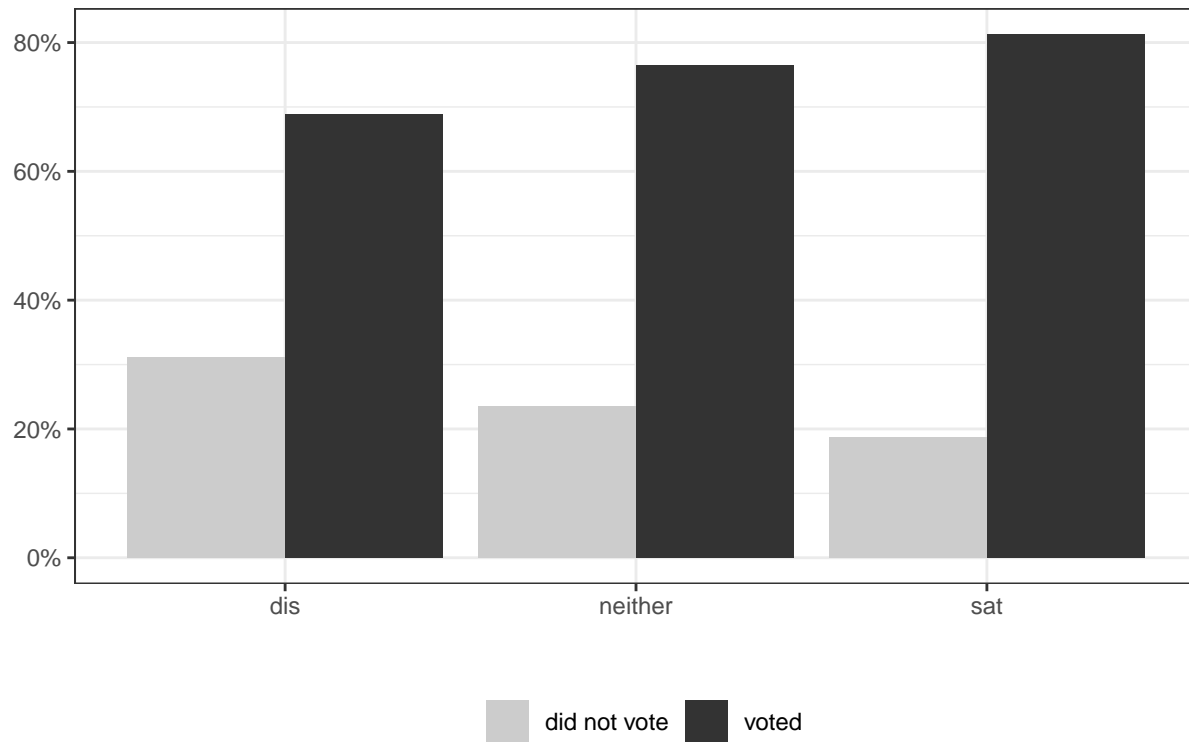
Does rationality matter?

Table 4: Perceptions of the Economy and Electoral Turnout

Economic Perceptions	Voted	N	%
dissatisfied	did not vote	895	31.2
dissatisfied	voted	1978	68.8
neither dissatisfied nor satisfied	did not vote	1085	23.5
neither dissatisfied nor satisfied	voted	3538	76.5
satisfied	did not vote	674	18.8
satisfied	voted	2919	81.2

Again, we graphed these relationships to make them clearer:

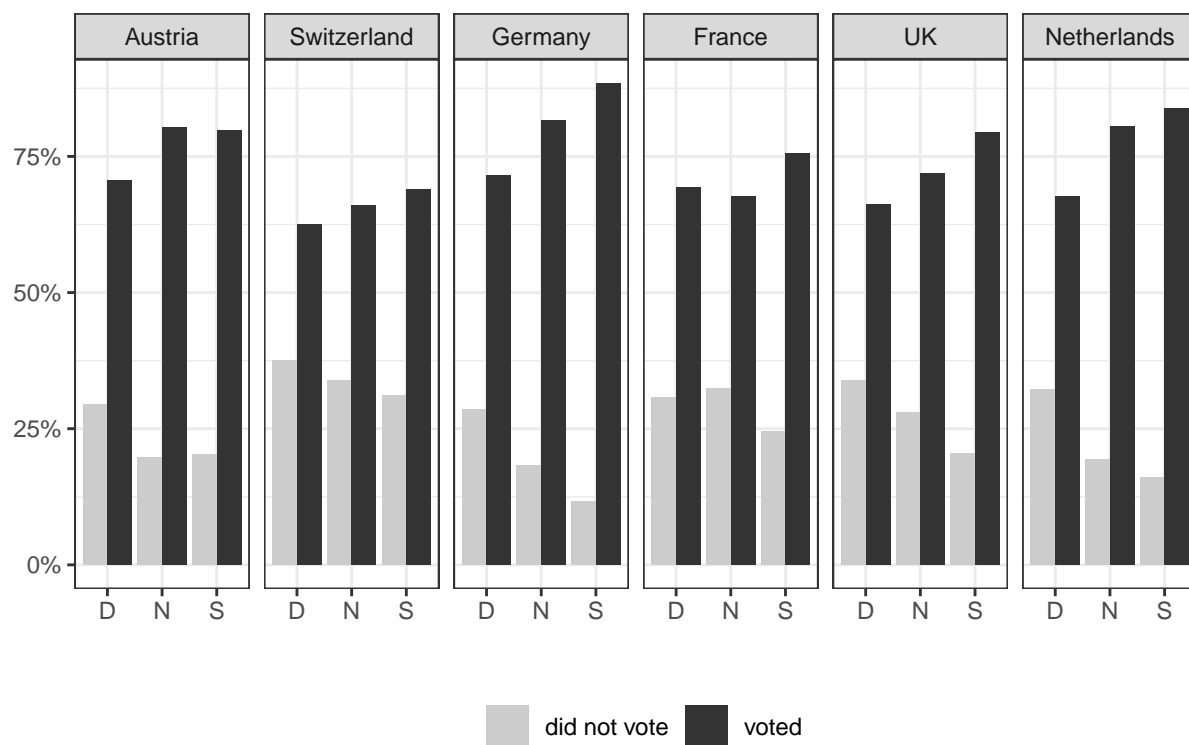
Figure 4: Turnout by Perceptions of the Economy



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We looked at if this varied between countries. Please note: to make the x-axis of the following graphs clearer, I have made some abbreviations. Dissatisfied = **D**, neither dissatisfied nor satisfied = **N**, and satisfied = **S**.

Figure 5: Turnout by Economic Satisfaction and Country



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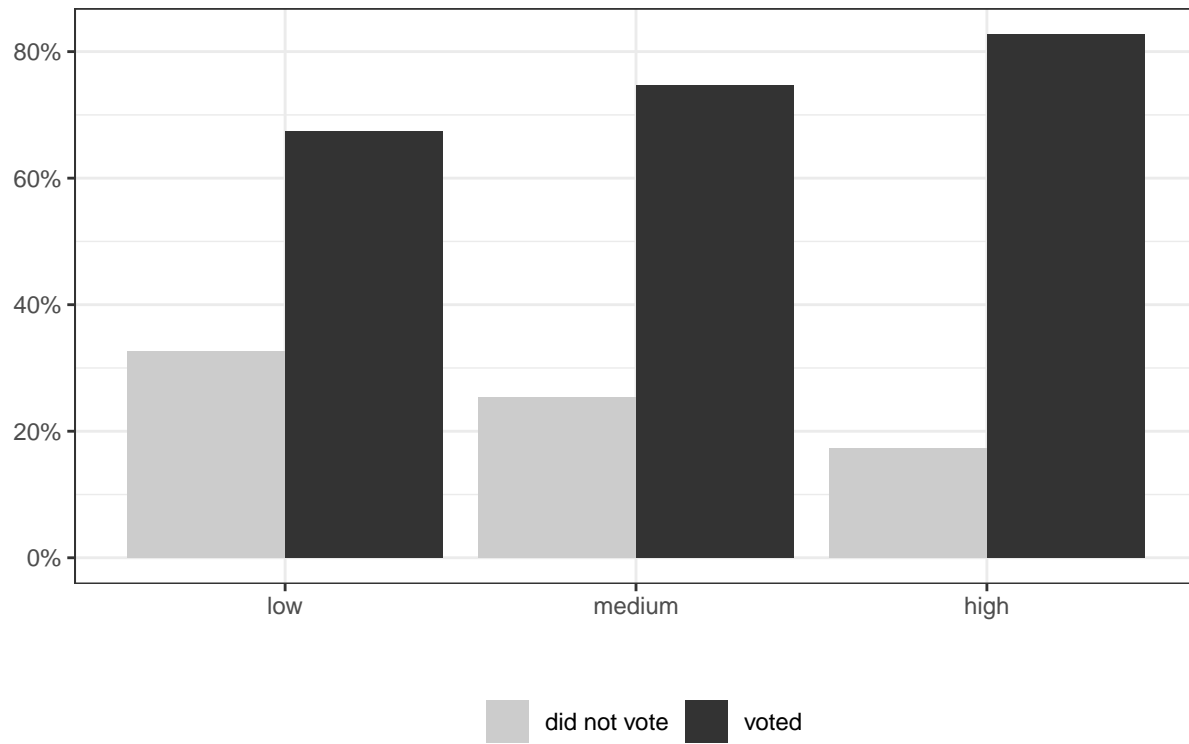
Finally, we looked at if culture matters:

Table 5: Trust in Politics and Electoral Turnout

Trust	Voted	N	%
low	did not vote	779	32.7
	voted	1606	67.3
medium	did not vote	1271	25.4
	voted	3736	74.6
high	did not vote	662	17.3
	voted	3164	82.7

We graphed this to make it clearer:

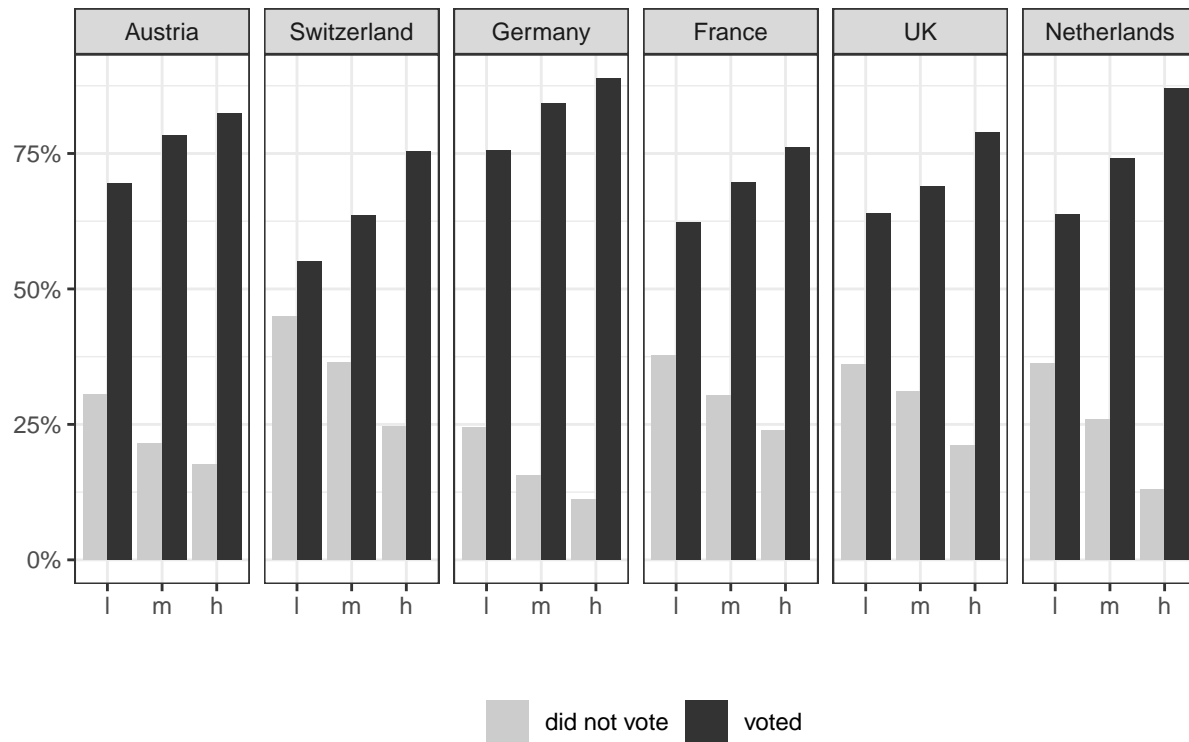
Figure 6: Turnout by Trust in Politics



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And we looked at the data across countries to track any variation. Again, to make the x-axis readable it was abbreviated to Low = **l**, medium = **m**, high = **h**.

Figure 7: Turnout by Trust in Politics



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Conclusion

Clearly, all theories work. But do they work *equally* well in all countries? To answer this, you're going to have to review the data for yourself and make some decisions. This demonstrates that the exercise is as much *subjective* as it is *objective*. The data can provide a basis from which you can offer an interpretation. But the interpretation is your own.