

Preconceived Notions and Political Tolerance

How the source affects tolerance and opinion

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Introduction

Since Stouffer's ground-breaking research in the 1950s political tolerance has been the subject of many different studies in the political science literature. So far in the literature much has already been said about the political tolerance of the electorate toward objectionable groups. Citizens must have some level of tolerance to the values, norms and practices of an objectionable group or their least-liked group. The "least-liked" or objectionable group is chosen in the measurement of tolerance because studies have shown that citizens express very high levels of tolerance for democratic freedoms like freedom of expression and freedom of assembly in the abstract, but express rather little incentive to give these liberties to groups or members of groups with which they disagree with in a number of ways (Sullivan et al 1979, 1981; Gibson 1982; Peffley and Rohrschneider 2003). In order to be tolerant citizens must, on the other hand, recognise and support the civil liberties rights to take part in and profit from democratic processes of their least-liked group.

The measurement of political tolerance is the subject of many different studies and many different variations have been tried. However, the most commonly used measurement of political tolerance are the questions Sullivan (1979, 1981) has implemented in many of his studies in which he builds forth on the work done by Stouffer (1955). Using these standard questions about tolerance and associating them with one's "least-liked" group, which will be described in the theoretical framework section, political tolerance has been linked to numerous different variables. For instance, differences in levels of tolerance has been associated with education, gender, age, class, year, group membership and even a certain context of situation (Bobo and Licari 1989; Sullivan et al 1982, 1985; Gibson 1987; Marcus et al 1995). These are all important factors which showed to have significantly affected political tolerance positively or negatively.

Some studies also looked at the relationship between framing issues in a certain way and political tolerance. Framing the issue a group participated in showed to have a significant effect on political tolerance (Nelson, 1997). Therefore, it could be concluded that issue-framing plays has a significant role in political tolerance levels. However, apart from Druckman (2001a) giving attention to the credibility of the source, not much has been said about how the source of the framing influences tolerance levels toward civil liberties of groups and how the source influences opinions on certain issues.

This study attempts to add to this literature and contains a survey experiment in which I expose certain respondents to claims and party manifesto statements associated with a controversial source and expose other respondents to the same claims and party manifesto statements, but associate it either with an uncontroversial source or with no source at all.

For the sources in this experiment I have chosen two political parties in Dutch politics. The controversial source is represented by the *Partij voor de Vrijheid* (PVV, “Party for Freedom”) of controversial Dutch Member of Parliament Geert Wilders and the uncontroversial source is represented by D66 and its party leader Alexander Pechtold. The PVV is considered as a far-right political party whereas D66 is considered as a centre-left political party. According to Cole (2005) far-right parties are the subject of most controversy and intolerance issues in contemporary politics.

Opinion poll data show that the Dutch electorate have very little confidence in Wilders and give very low grades to him, especially after the collapse of the Dutch government in April 2012. Almost half of the Dutch electorate thinks Wilders is to blame for the collapse of the government (De Hond 2012a). Table 1 demonstrates that Wilders receives the lowest rating of all the party leaders with an average score of 3.6. Note that voters from the coalition partners VVD and CDA showed the biggest decline in confidence in Wilders; a decline of respectively 2.2 and 2.5 (De Hond, 2012b). Pechtold on the other hand scores an average of 5.2 which gives him third place right behind the party leaders of the VVD and the SP. D66 (i.e. Pechtold) is chosen because it is a centre-left party without a strong left or right affiliation, thus its statements could appeal to people from the left and people from the right of the political spectrum which serves as a good uncontroversial source and as a good comparison with the controversial PVV.

My objective is not necessarily to show that people respond with more prejudice toward the PVV (or D66). Instead my objective has a broader scope and the purpose of this study is to measure whether people’s tolerance toward the statement is affected by the respondent’s preconceived notions about who makes that statement and to measure people’s tolerance toward the sources of the statements. The aforementioned survey experiment shall be used to find an answer to this question.

Table 1. Confidence and grades of political party leaders in the Netherlands.

				Voting House of Representatives the Netherlands						
Grades	Jan-12	5-4-2012	31-5-2012	PVV	VVD	CD A	D66	Pvd A	SP	GLnks
Emile Roemer	6,5	6,6	5,7	4,6	4,5	5,1	5,6	7,0	8,0	7,1
difference May-April			-0,9	-0,9	-1,6	-1,4	-1,4	0,0	-0,2	-0,1
Mark Rutte	6,4	6,0	5,4	4,1	7,6	6,8	5,7	3,9	3,0	4,4
difference May-April			-0,6	-2,1	-0,1	-0,2	-0,1	-0,7	-0,7	-0,8
Alexander Pechtold	5,8	5,9	5,2	2,4	5,6	6,0	7,7	5,2	4,2	6,3
difference May-April			-0,7	-1,7	-0,4	-0,1	0,3	-1,4	-1,4	-0,5
Sybrand van Haersma Buma	4,8	5,1	4,9	3,0	6,0	7,0	5,2	4,2	3,3	4,5
difference May-April			-0,2	-1,9	0,0	0,5	0,4	-0,1	0,0	0,1
Arie Slob	4,8	5,3	4,8	3,3	5,0	6,0	5,5	4,9	4,2	4,9
difference May-April			-0,5	-1,2	-0,5	-0,2	-0,1	-0,3	-0,5	-0,3
Diederik Samsom		5,7	4,7	2,8	3,2	4,7	5,2	6,8	5,7	6,0
difference May-April			-1,0	-1,6	-2,0	-0,9	-1,3	0,0	0,0	-0,5
Jolande Sap	5,0	5,0	4,4	2,6	4,3	5,6	5,8	4,6	3,9	5,8
difference May-April			-0,6	-1,1	-0,4	0,5	0,0	-0,8	-1,2	-0,3
Kees van der Staaij	4,6	4,9	4,4	3,8	4,8	6,2	3,8	3,7	3,3	3,6
difference May-April			-0,5	-0,8	-0,7	-0,2	-1,1	-0,3	-0,6	-0,5
Marianne Thieme			4,0	3,4	3,3	3,3	4,2	4,5	4,7	5,0
Geert Wilders	3,8	4,4	3,6	8,0	3,6	2,4	2,5	2,2	2,4	1,8
difference May-April			-0,8	0,9	-2,2	-2,5	-0,4	-0,4	-0,1	-1,0
Hero Brinkman			3,6	3,2	4,3	4,5	3,6	3,3	2,9	3,1

Source: De Hond, M. (2012b) 'De stemming van 3 juni 2012' <www.peil.nl> (4 June 2012)

Theoretical framework

Before discussing the measurement of political tolerance and before giving attention to how framing the issue can trigger people's preconceived notions about who is associated with the issue it is necessary to define the concept of political tolerance. In this section I will pave the way to the general research question and hypotheses and discuss the important findings many political tolerances authors have found and on which this study builds upon.

On the subject of political tolerance much has already been written, many points of view explored and many theories already created, criticized and improved upon. The literature seems to have one thing in common; the general idea that political tolerance is important for democracy to function properly. To be able to speak of "tolerance" citizens must have some degree of tolerance toward the values, norms and practices of the groups from which they

differ. They have to recognise and support the civil liberties rights of these groups to both take part and profit from democratic processes. When talking about these rights in the abstract many citizens express very high levels of support for democratic freedoms like freedom of speech and freedom of assembly, but when these rights are associated with groups or members of groups that they disagree with ideologically or in any other way they express far less tolerance (Sullivan 1979, 1981; Gibson 1982; Peffley and Rohrschneider 2003). People's prejudice toward certain groups significantly affects their incentive and their ability to give the same liberties to everyone in society.

This study does not necessarily deal with "least-liked" groups to measure political (in)tolerance in the way Sullivan, Piereson and Marcus (1979) did and does not focus solely on civil liberties, but rather deals with the question if people's preconceived notions about groups influence their tolerance toward these groups and influences their opinion on certain issues. This study associates a source with a particular frame and identifies a group, in this case a controversial political party, which I expect people will react to with intolerance. This intolerance is measured and compared to the (in)tolerance people express toward the uncontroversial source. If tolerance levels change depending on the source of certain statements or ideas, despite what is said being identical one could assume that the source plays a significant factor in forming opinion. If this is the case then one could say that content is not the be all and end all in creating opinions and that the source affects political tolerance and people's opinions. By preselecting a group that I expect will receive intolerance in the Netherlands this study uses a similar method Stouffer used in the 1950s to measure political tolerance in the United States.

Measuring political tolerance

The ground-breaking method Stouffer used in the 1950s to measure political tolerance shaped all forthcoming measurement strategies and dominated political tolerance research for decades. For instance, it is still used today in the General Social Survey in the United States. This approach preselects several groups which are assumed to be relatively unpopular. All respondents are then asked a series of questions concerning civil liberty rights and whether they would tolerate these groups to exercise these rights and participate in certain activities. Many of the groups Stouffer used were on the left of the political spectrum (atheists, communists, socialists, etc.), these groups reflected the general out-groups during the years of McCarthyism in the United States (Gibson 1992). In contemporary politics those groups are

either not considered relevant or are not greeted with intolerance in a significant manner. Therefore using the time-bound Stouffer measures in contemporary politics could create distorted levels of tolerance, which is also a critique heard by Sullivan *et al.* (1979). The General Social Survey thus now selects a more broad range of contemporary significant groups from both the far-left and far-right of the spectrum.

Sullivan *et al.* (1979) give another critique to this approach. This critique concerns their definition of intolerance: “Tolerance implies a willingness to ‘put up with’ those things that one rejects. Politically, it implies a willingness to permit the expression of those ideas or interests that one opposes” (Sullivan *et al.*, 1979: 784). Therefore, intolerance necessitates aversion toward the group which is targeted. If one does not dislike the targeted groups, and thus aversion is absent, one cannot speak of “tolerance”. It is impossible for a person to tolerate groups that he or she does not find objectionable. The approach Stouffer uses to measure tolerance preselects presumably objectionable groups, but in cases where respondents disagree with this selection and find the groups inoffensive the measurement fails.

The “least-liked” approach by Sullivan *et al.* (1979) gives the respondents the chance to select their least-liked group themselves. When a least-liked group is selected a series of statements is given about this group with which they could agree or disagree:

- 1) Members of the _____ should be banned from being president of the United States.
- 2) Members of the _____ should be allowed to teach in the public schools.
- 3) Members of the _____ should be outlawed.
- 4) Members of the _____ should be allowed to make a speech in this city.
- 5) The _____ should have their phones tapped by our government.
- 6) The _____ should be allowed to hold public rallies in our city.

The blanks are filled with the groups selected by the respondents. Even though respondents can select different groups, conceptually it is alike because all the respondents chose their least-liked groups. Thus this least-liked and content-controlled approach is a good way to measure tolerance.

According to Gibson (1992) both these approaches are well suited to measure political tolerance and that there is not a single “best way” to do this. However, according to Gibson (1992) there are two disputes that arise after measuring political tolerance with these two approaches. At first there is a dispute on how much tolerance there actually is (particularly in the United States). Using the Stouffer approach, intolerance has decreased since the fifties. Using the least-liked approach intolerance has not necessarily decreased much between the 1950s and 1970s, rather the groups that were treated with intolerance shifted to different and new groups (Sullivan *et al.* 1979). For instance, Communists as characteristic objectionable group got replaced by neo-Nazi’s which is a more contemporary least-liked group. A second dispute between the two approaches concerns the causes of political tolerance, particularly the effects of education. When using the Stouffer approach, the more educated people are more tolerant. The least-liked approach does not find a direct relationship between intolerance and level of education. This is a quite striking and drastic different result.

For the purpose of this study, to measure in what way people’s preconceived notions about political actors affect the way those people respond (i.e., with more or less tolerance) toward those actors – regardless of the content of the statement, a similar approach to Stouffer’s is used. There are two main reasons for this. First, since this study is framing the issues by assigning different sources to the same content and measuring any differences in tolerance toward statements, letting respondents choose their own least-liked group would simply not work in what this study is trying to achieve. Secondly, two contemporary groups, one controversial and one uncontroversial, are chosen and are associated with identical statements. One of the criticisms of the Stouffer approach is that it is time-bounded and assumes that the groups chosen are the only important objectionable groups in the society, and therefore it would also be difficult to observe changing levels of tolerance over time (Sullivan *et al.*, 1979). Nevertheless, for the purpose of this study a well suited objectionable and controversial group, as well as a well suited uncontroversial group in contemporary politics are chosen as sources. This suffices for what this study is trying to achieve; to measure whether people’s preconceived notions about the source have effect on how people respond to certain statements and issues.

Political tolerance and the importance of the source

Many studies have measured the effects of framing on political tolerance and came to the conclusion that public opinion can be significantly influenced by which frames are used. Almost every time studies look for framing effects, they have found them (Druckman, 2001a). For instance, Nelson (1997) examined the effects of two different news frames on tolerance towards the Ku Klux Klan (KKK). First he had participants watch one of two local news stories about a KKK rally. One story had the rally framed as a free speech issue, the other story had it framed as a public order story. Participants who watched the KKK rally through the free speech frame expressed more tolerance for the KKK than participants who watched the public order story.

Framing effects can be of significant importance, but the source of the framing plays a significant role too. According to Druckman (2001a) there is widespread concern about framing being a limitless manipulation tool by political elites who can use frames to manipulate public opinion. For example, Kinder and Herzog (1993: 870) are worried that framing “can become freewheeling exercises in pure manipulation.” Druckman (2001a) is less worried and claims that there are clear limits on framing effects and on who can use frames to their advantage. One important moderator of framing effects that is mentioned is the credibility of the source. People “only believe frames that come from sources they perceive to be credible” (Druckman, 2001a; 1045) and trustworthy. Frames used by sources that are perceived to be noncredible are not taken seriously and thus framing effects are constrained. In this case the limiting of framing effects is something positive, but preconceived thoughts about the source could have a negative effect on tolerance and make arguments less important.

Significant studies have shown that in a lot of situations people use cues or heuristics to process and understand information (Kuklinski and Hurley 1994; Mondak 1993). Using cues in order to judge information is more efficient than assessing arguments. In the judgement of political issues, the source cues seem of particular importance (Carmines and Kuklinski 1990; Mondak 1993). According to Mondak (1993) people are able to reduce the use of cognitive resources by transferring their judgement concerns about political actors to the policies associated with them. For instance, many studies have found partisan cues to have significant influence on people’s judgement (Dalton *et al*, 1998; Watts *et al*, 1999; Zaller 1994; Druckman 2001b). When individuals heuristically process information, they do not give much

attention to determining or evaluating the validity of the source's statement (Kuklinksy and Hurley 1994). Thus as Kuklinski and Hurley (1994: 732) observe, it is "very possible that citizens-as-cue-takers focus so heavily on the 'who' that the 'what' recedes to the background." Consequently, if this is the case, people's preconceived notions about the source become more important than the content, which could have significant effects on political tolerance. If this bias toward the source is negative, this could lead toward intolerance.

These effects are exactly what this study intends to measure. This study applies these theories to the Dutch political sphere and attempts to measure whether people's prejudice toward the source, in this case two political parties, affects their tolerance toward statements – regardless of the content of these statements. The PVV is a controversial party in the Netherlands and is seen as a threat to established political parties in the Netherlands, this effect might possibly be greater after being responsible for the collapse of the Dutch government at the time the survey experiments were held. The PVV lost credibility as governing party and its trustworthiness was hurt. Politicians, especially those of the coalition fiercely blamed the PVV for the collapse of the Dutch government. Dutch Minister of Economic Affairs Maxime Verhagen from governing partner CDA said Wilders let down the entire nation. Despite 'just' 43% of the electorate agreeing with his statement, most people (49%) specifically blamed Wilders for the collapse of the government (De Hond, 2012a).

In many cases and for a lot of citizens, describing the activities and nature of conceivably unpopular groups has a big influence on their tolerance levels towards these groups and their actions and ideas (Marcus et al. 1995). If such groups are framed in a way in which they are violating normative expectations, in this case framed as a threat to political stability, then a lot of citizens, even those who are tolerant in nature, will greet these groups with intolerance. If such groups are framed as a properly behaving group, then far more citizens, regularly a majority, will greet these groups and its activities with tolerance, even though the group might have an extremist and/or unpopular image (Marcus et al. 1995). After the collapse of the government the national media helped the established political parties with framing the PVV as the scapegoat. The declining credibility and trustworthiness of the PVV under the Dutch electorate, and politicians and the media making the most of this trend by framing the PVV as a scapegoat and a threat to political stability could negatively influence the cues and heuristics people use when judging policies associated with the party of Geert Wilders. Simply associating statements with the PVV could create higher levels of intolerance compared to statements associated with D66 or no source at all. In sum, the first hypothesis is that people

exposed to statements associated with the PVV show higher levels of intolerance toward those statements than people who are exposed to identical statements associated with D66 or no source. The second hypothesis is that people exposed to the PVV survey show higher levels of intolerance than people who are exposed to the other surveys.

Not only do I expect people to show more intolerance toward the PVV, I expect people to show more intolerance toward statements associated with political parties in general than toward statements not associated with any source. One could argue that not giving a source creates credibility problems like Druckman (2001a) described, but nevertheless, I expect cynicism toward political parties to have a stronger effect on intolerance than low source credibility has. In a multi-party system like in the Netherlands, where political parties need to both compete and work together to accomplish their goals, negotiations often fail. This often leads to cynical public opinion about these political parties and politics in general. After the collapse of the Dutch government cynicism about politics was apparent. A majority (66%) of the Dutch electorate had enough of party politics and 61% of the electorate blamed them for the failing policy negotiations that led to the collapse of the government (De Hond, 2012a). Capella and Jamieson (1997) introduced the concept of “spiral of cynicism” wherein the media helps create this cynical environment surrounding politics and especially political parties by framing politics in a horse-race and competitive style. This could lead to higher levels of intolerance and more negative opinions about issues when they are framed as coming from specific political parties and their statements, compared to the same statements not attributed to any political party. In sum, the third hypothesis is that people show higher levels of intolerance toward political parties and statements associated with them than people who are exposed to statements not associated with political parties.

However, there are some moderators that could make people less susceptible to let their preconceived notions about the source influence their judgment. These moderators affect people’s ability to set aside their biases about the actor and judge the statements based on their merit. Level of education is said to have a strong positive effect on political tolerance for a “wide array of groups and even among those explicitly opposed to the target group” (Bobo and Licari, 1989: 303). I assume that people with a higher education are better suited to set aside their preconceived notions about the actor and judge the statement on its merit. Therefore, the fourth hypothesis is that people with a higher level of education show a higher level of tolerance than people with lower education. Another important moderator is political participation or group membership. Cigler and Joslyn (2002) describe the significant and

positive role group membership has on political tolerance. The democratic socialization process that occurs when being part of a group enhances tolerance toward objectionable and controversial groups in society. According to Cigler and Joslyn (2002) political tolerance is both needed and enhanced by being part of a group. As members of a group people get to know different points of view and need to compromise and respect these views. Members of political organizations even showed higher tolerance than some members of other groups (Cigler and Joslyn, 2002). Therefore the final hypothesis is that people that are a member of a political party show a higher level of tolerance than people who are not a member.

Research methods and methodology

To measure whether people's preconceived notions about particular political actors affects tolerance toward those actors and any statements associated with them I implement survey experiments with three identical surveys only differentiated by the source. This allows me to control both the content and the attribution of sources within the surveys to which the respondents are exposed to. Therefore I can test for any biases people have that could affect tolerance and opinions toward issues. A total of 300 respondents were randomly recruited and exposed to three framed surveys. While most respondents were students, there is no reason to doubt the ability to generalize the sample to the Dutch public. Even though student respondents are influenced easier (Sears, 1986), they do not behave significantly different than non-student respondents (Kühberger, 1998). Finally, the respondents' demographics and characteristics show that the three samples are quite heterogeneous, in particular the variables that the hypotheses gives attention to (see appendix A).

There are two main reasons why the Netherlands was chosen as a case for this study. The first reason being, that I am a resident of this country. Not only did this make the recruiting of the respondents easier, but since I have greater knowledge about the politics in this country than about any other political aspects of other countries it was a logical decision to make. The second and more important reason is that the Netherlands should express itself as a politically tolerant country. It is a well-established democracy with a multi-party system, with as many as ten political parties, where many different believes and political ideas are to be seen and to be taken into account. Political parties in the Netherlands range from the left to the far-right. Therefore, citizens get to know many different views on certain issues and would react with greater tolerance to issues they do not necessarily agree with. In well-established and stable democracies the strength of far-right parties in their political system might have a positive

effect on democratic values. Just as diverse political cleavages influence political tolerance, increases in the diversity of political ideologies might also positively influence tolerance by “legitimizing broad political diversity” (Duch and Gibson 1992). Even though the presence of these political parties may make it harder to govern, the collapse of the Dutch government is proof of that, they might have a positive effect in helping a political climate be more tolerant. This research questions this theory and its design differs from earlier studies, because it aims to measure the influence of the source on opinions and political tolerance. Differences in levels of tolerance and opinions could be explained by the different source, thus coming to the conclusion that people’s opinion is at least partly explained by some bias towards the source and that values and content are not the be all end all in forming opinion. If this would be the case then we could question the fact as to how tolerant the Netherlands really is and in particular when it comes to politics.

Measuring political tolerance

In order to measure whether people’s preconceived notions about political actors affects the way in which those people respond toward those actors (i.e. tolerant or intolerant) – regardless of the content of the statement, and whether or not values supersede the source, three mostly identical surveys were made. They were spread to the masses via the internet and on the streets. Respondents were recruited from family, friends and acquaintances and the surveys were also spread on social networks like Facebook and Twitter where they went viral which led to more respondents. In this way 200 respondents were recruited. Since these respondents so far were mostly friends and acquaintances from the same age group and mostly students, about a 100 more respondents were randomly recruited on the street. In total 300 respondents filled in the surveys. These respondents were randomly assigned to surveys framed as coming from the PVV, D66 or no source at all, thus every survey was filled in by a group of 100 respondents. The three groups of 100 respondents showed similar demographics (see appendix A). Because of the nature of the survey there were no missing data or any data that needed to be thrown away.

The dependent variable political tolerance was measured in a number of ways. First, within the three surveys political tolerance was measured by letting respondents react to 16 different party manifesto statements with which they could agree or disagree. All these statements were generally uncontroversial and no statements were chosen that could be easily identified as coming specifically from particular sources which could jeopardize the experiment (see

appendix B for the party manifesto statements with their genuine sources). From these 16 statements 6 are solely PVV statements, 6 are statements from both the PVV and D66, and 4 are solely D66 statements. Tolerance toward these statements was measured with a Likert scale from 1 to 7, from strongly disagreeing to strongly agreeing with the party manifesto statements. Respondents then had to answer “yes” or “no” questions similar to Sullivan’s (1979) about giving certain civil liberty rights toward the actor in the survey. The four statements concerning tolerance that were asked are as follows:

- 1) _____ Members of parliament should be allowed to teach in the public schools.
- 2) _____ Members of parliament should be allowed to hold public rallies or a speech in your neighbourhood.
- 3) _____ Members of parliament should be allowed to have their phones tapped by our government.
- 4) _____ Members of parliament with a criminal record should be allowed to stay in parliament.

Depending on which survey the respondents received the blanks were either filled in with “PVV”, “D66”, or the statements were left as they were and not associated with any political party. Respondents had to answer these with either a “yes” or a “no”. These statements about tolerance toward members of parliament may seem straightforward, but the various responses that were given justify using these questions, thus in the entire picture of this research it gives us valuable insight into political tolerance. These questions were also combined into one political tolerance index variable with scores from 0 to 4 from low to high levels of tolerance, and achieving one point per positively answered question.

Up until now we have looked at how each survey measures political tolerance on its own, but there is also, as mentioned before, a bigger picture to this research design. The three individual surveys and the items within were framed and attributed to a particular source. Other than the source the surveys were exactly alike, containing the same 16 party manifesto statements and the same four tolerance questions. One survey framed it as coming from the PVV, a far-right controversial party, one survey framed it as coming from the centre-left D66, and the third survey did not attribute the issues and statements to any source at all. Thus there are two treatments groups, the PVV and D66 surveys, and there is one control group which is the anonymous survey. The variables to measure tolerance and opinion in the control group

survey would be the control variables (see Appendix C for measurement independent variables). Thus, any differences in attitude or tolerance towards the issues shown in the survey could be attributed to the source. If this would be the case it would show that the source, in this case political parties, has an influence on people's opinions and levels of tolerance.

Analyses techniques

To test my prediction that people's bias about political actors influence political tolerance and opinions I shall examine the responses to the individual party manifesto statements from the differently framed surveys by looking at the mean scores and perform several regression analyses to measure political tolerance toward the source. This should give a good indication on how political tolerance and opinion differs depending on the source.

First, I will examine the responses to the party manifesto statements from the surveys framed as being about PVV statements, D66 statements or about political statements in general. Both the responses to the individual manifesto statements and the responses to the manifesto in general shall be measured by calculating the mean scores. To measure the score for the manifesto in general, participants' responses toward the individual statements shall be added up and divided by the amount of statements. This gives me the opportunity to calculate the mean score and responses toward the manifesto in general. Attention is also given to how voters from both the right and the left respond toward the statements in all three surveys. The difference in mean scores between the three surveys shall be measured and compared with each other. I will then look at how the PVV and D66 voters respond to the statements in the differently framed surveys. Secondly, I will measure political tolerance toward the source of the statements by performing several regression analyses. First an ordinal probit regression shall be performed with as dependent variable the political tolerance index that was created and as independent variables the "PVV", "D66", and "Anonymous" surveys, as well as the control variables "Age", "Gender", "Education", "Income", "Member of Party" and "Party Affiliation Strength". Then, four logit regressions shall be performed, one for each individual tolerance question. All in all, this should give insight on whether or not people's preconceived notions about the source affect political tolerance, regardless of the content.

However, there are some things to keep in mind. As mentioned earlier the three surveys are identical in every way, but the source, thus any differences in political tolerance between surveys, and certainly between the political tolerance questions, could be attributed to the source. Differences in opinion with the party manifesto statements could also be attributed to the source, especially since the demographics and characteristics of the separate groups of respondents assigned to the three surveys are fairly similar and were completely randomly obtained. Even though this could give us a good indication of political tolerance fluctuations between sources, it could, however, also just simply represent people's real opinion on those issues without the bias the source gives them. This should be kept in mind when drawing conclusions from the results of the analysis and would be something for further research to iron out.

Results

To get things started, table 2 shows the results of measuring the overall responses toward the party manifesto statements. The results show support for the hypothesis that people exposed to statements associated with the PVV show higher levels of intolerance toward statements than people who are exposed to identical statements associated with D66. The first column shows the mean scores toward the individual statements associated with the PVV. The mean score of the responses toward the statements associated with D66 are shown in column three. Apart from one statement ("children may go to school from 2.5 years of age"), every statement associated with the PVV (mean score = 4.19) show lower scores than statements associated with D66 (mean score = 4.68). The biggest difference in tolerance is expressed regarding the statements "Introduction binding referendum" (difference of 1.18) and "Stronger, thus larger, municipalities which take over many tasks of the state" (difference of 0.90). Thus, the expectations of the first hypothesis can be confirmed.

Column two shows the mean scores of voters from the left and the right of the political spectrum toward the statements associated with the PVV. All scores from voters from the left are lower than the overall mean score. All scores from voters on the right are higher than the overall mean score. The same cannot be said when looking at columns four and six, which show that voters from the left and from the right respond both higher and lower than the overall mean scores of statements associated to D66 or no party at all. Finally, the results show that respondents express more tolerance toward party manifesto statements associated

with D66 (mean = 4.68) than toward statements not associated with specific parties or other sources (mean = 4.35). Thus, the expectations of the second hypothesis cannot be confirmed.

In table 3, I show the responses of PVV and D66 voters toward the party manifesto

Table 2. Mean Scores Party Manifesto Statements and left-right dimension

Source and left-right voters:	PVV	left-right	D66	left-right	Anonymous	left-right
Weak performing schools	3.92	3.28 - 4.64	4.37	4.58 - 4.95	4.15	3.75 - 4.57
School from 2.5 years of age	3.72	2.81 - 3.79	3.34	3.37 - 3.30	3.10	3.57 - 2.61
Tuition fees foreign students	4.23	3.34 - 5.23	4.80	4.60 - 5.10	4.52	3.84 - 5.22
Elected mayor and Prime Minister	4.49	3.91 - 5.15	5.13	4.88 - 5.50	4.51	4.49 - 4.53
Introduction binding referendum	3.69	3.00 - 4.47	4.87	4.78 - 5.00	3.94	3.86 - 4.02
Larger, stronger municipalities	3.53	3.13 - 3.98	4.43	4.48 - 4.35	3.95	4.12 - 3.78
More police officers on streets	5.26	4.70 - 5.89	5.62	5.67 - 5.55	5.20	4.90 - 5.51
Stimulate growth Schiphol	4.63	3.75 - 5.62	5.37	5.55 - 5.10	4.77	4.61 - 4.94
Abolish the Senate	2.92	2.15 - 3.79	3.09	3.18 - 2.95	3.30	3.24 - 3.37
Budget cuts rehabilitation	3.36	2.51 - 4.32	3.58	3.57 - 3.60	3.59	4.53 - 5.12
More austere prison cells	4.54	3.55 - 5.66	4.56	4.60 - 4.50	4.90	4.43 - 5.39
Welfare benefits scrapped after fraud	5.32	4.49 - 6.26	5.89	5.55 - 6.40	5.60	5.08 - 6.14
More promotion Dutch culture	3.94	3.92 - 3.96	4.68	5.10 - 4.05	3.93	4.31 - 3.53
Arranged marriages punishable	5.22	4.83 - 5.66	5.39	5.65 - 5.00	5.27	4.86 - 5.69
Stop reintegration projects	4.68	3.75 - 5.72	5.07	4.78 - 5.50	4.82	4.53 - 5.12
Budget cuts public broadcasting	4.09	3.28 - 5.00	4.26	4.10 - 4.50	4.10	3.98 - 4.22
Average	4.19	3.53 - 4.95	4.68	4.65 - 4.71	4.35	4.17 - 4.55

N = 300

Note: People could respond to these party manifesto statements by using a 1-7 Likert Scale (1 = strongly disagree, 7 = strongly agree). Attention is also given to how voters from the left and right respond.

statements. The results shown in the first column demonstrate that PVV voters respond very positive to manifesto statements associated with their own party (mean = 5.81). Columns two and three show that PVV voters respond less positive toward statements associated with D66 or no source. The statements concerning the Senate, rehabilitation, prison cells and public broadcasting all drop with two points. Statements about the Senate and rehabilitation both drop more than two points and are met with negativity when associated with D66, which is striking since they both are genuinely PVV statements. Column five shows that D66 voters, like PVV voters, respond very positive to statements associated with their own party, albeit slightly less positive (mean = 5.18). However, when the same statements are associated with the PVV they respond substantially more negative (mean = 3.54). Overall, letting D66 voters respond to statements associated with the PVV has a slightly larger effect than letting PVV voters respond to statements of D66. Like with the PVV voters, some party manifesto statements genuinely from D66 get treated with substantial negativity when associated with another party, in this case the PVV. For instance, the manifesto statements concerning

municipalities and public broadcasting both decline with more than two points when being associated with the PVV instead of D66. Overall, it shows that people's opinion fluctuates between sources and that on some issues this effect is substantial.

Table 4 shows the regression analyses for both the tolerance index and all of the individual tolerance questions. Statistically significant results are marked with asterisks. Row one demonstrates that respondents exposed to the PVV survey express significantly high levels of intolerance toward the PVV. The more exposed a person is to the PVV, the less tolerant the person is. Intolerance is shown toward PVV members with a criminal record, although this effect is not significant. Very high levels of intolerance are shown toward the prospect of members of the PVV teaching in schools and holding a rally in one's neighbourhood. Comparing rows one and two demonstrates that respondents exposed to the PVV survey are likely to express significantly more intolerance than respondents exposed to the D66 survey. Row two shows that the more respondents are exposed toward D66, the less tolerant they become, however this effect is not significant and substantially smaller than the effect

Table 3. Mean Scores D66 and PVV voters toward Party Manifesto Statements

	PVV			D66		
	PVV	D66	Anonymous	PVV	D66	Anonymous
Weak performing schools	5.68	5.00	5.14	3.35	4.88	3.69
School from 2.5 years of age	4.58	3.93	1.64	2.88	3.96	3.73
Tuition fees foreign students	6.37	4.93	5.79	3.94	5.12	3.96
Elected mayor and Prime Minister	6.27	5.93	5.50	4.18	5.60	4.73
Introduction binding referendum	5.47	5.07	4.07	3.24	5.20	4.31
Larger, stronger municipalities	4.68	4.50	4.43	2.71	5.12	4.12
More police officers on streets	6.84	5.71	5.79	4.29	5.84	5.15
Stimulate growth Schiphol	5.95	4.93	4.50	3.94	5.52	4.92
Abolish the Senate	5.16	3.07	3.57	2.00	3.68	3.12
Budget cuts rehabilitation	5.42	3.29	5.21	2.59	4.40	2.92
More austere prison cells	6.58	4.14	5.29	3.18	4.76	4.38
Welfare benefits scrapped after fraud	6.63	6.50	6.57	4.53	5.92	5.54
More promotion Dutch culture	4.26	4.36	3.29	4.41	5.76	4.77
Arranged marriages punishable	6.53	4.36	6.00	5.06	6.20	5.15
Stop reintegration projects	6.63	5.57	5.86	3.41	5.80	5.23
Budget cuts public broadcasting	5.95	3.64	5.07	2.88	5.12	4.23
Average	5.81	4.68	4.86	3.54	5.18	4.37
N = 115	19	14	14	17	25	26

Note: People could respond to these party manifesto statements by using a 1-7 Likert Scale (1 = strongly disagree, 7 = strongly agree).

exposure to the PVV has. The effect of the anonymous survey was redundant. Overall, it shows that the expectations of the second hypothesis can be confirmed.

Several control variables were also included in the regression analyses. Row six shows that education hardly has any effect on political tolerance in general. As education increases people become slightly more tolerant toward letting members of Parliament teach in school, holding rallies in one’s neighbourhood and the rights to not have their phones tapped. Support for members of Parliament with a criminal record declines as education increases. Overall, education has very little and insignificant effect on political tolerance and thus the expectations of the education hypothesis cannot be confirmed. Row eight shows that as members of a political party increases, intolerance increases too. Members of political parties do express tolerance toward letting members of Parliament teach in schools. Nevertheless, all results from being a member of a political party come out insignificant. Thus, the party member hypothesis cannot be confirmed either.

Finally, party affiliation strength does show to have a significant effect on political tolerance. The stronger people feel affiliated to their party of choice, the more tolerant they are. This contrasts the intolerance party members showed, even though the effect did turn out to be insignificant it is striking because it would be easy to assume that members of political parties feel strongly connected to their own party. Not much attention to this effect was given in this

Table 4. Regression Analysis of Tolerance Toward the Source.

	Tolerance Index		Tolerance Toward Teaching		Tolerance Toward Rally		Tolerance Toward Taps		Tolerance Toward Record	
	B	Std. E	B	Std. E	B	Std. E	B	Std. E	B	Std. E
PVV	-.768**	.168	-1.762**	.384	-1.851**	.500	-.920*	.432	-.386	.327
D66	-.058	.160	-.973**	.373	-.082	.556	.482	.498	.312	.300
Anonymous	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Gender	.173	.148	-.023	.318	.148	.410	-.044	.404	.498	.294
Age	-.007	.007	.004	.014	.040	.027	.009	.021	-.041**	.015
Education	.003	.046	.184	.097	.013	.131	.109	.129	-.106	.089
Income	.159	.086	.146	.184	.300	.271	.224	.240	.283	.168
Member of Party	-.210	.233	.573	.573	-.254	.740	-.790	.672	-.517	.451
Party Affiliation Strength	.411*	.111	.470	.246	.790*	.337	1.076**	.326	.275	.214
Constant			.595	.722	1.372	.998	2.561**	.972	.822	.275

N = 300 *p < .05; **p < .01.

study. However, it is very suitable for future studies to examine this effect on political tolerance.

Discussion

The goal of this study was to measure whether people's prejudice toward political actors affects people's opinions and level of tolerance toward those actors – regardless of the statements they make. These biases toward the source have been the subject of many studies on political tolerance. Druckman (2001a) gave much importance to the credibility of the source, coming to the conclusion that people believe frames coming from credible sources and disregard frames coming from noncredible sources. The results in this study show that people's preconceived notions about the source affect political tolerance and even affect opinion in, at times, staggering ways. The more people are exposed to PVV statements, the more intolerance they express.

Associating party manifesto statements with D66 resulted in more positive scores than when the same statements were associated with the PVV or no source at all. This could partially be explained by the PVV being a controversial party and after the collapse of the Dutch government perceived to be lacking in credibility. Statements associated with D66 scoring more positive than statements not associated with any source could have to do with source credibility; since no source is given people might find it to be less credible. Thus, in this case source credibility is given more importance than people's bias against political actors. The left-right distribution of responses toward statements from the PVV and D66 are self-explanatory since the PVV is a far-right party, voters on the right show more support than voters on the left. Since D66 is a centre-left party, the responses are equally distributed with exactly half of the statements scored more positively by voters on the right, and the other half scored more positively by voters on the left.

Whereas, being exposed to the PVV showed to have a significant effect on political tolerance, education and being a member of a political party did not show to have any significant effect. Therefore, this study comes to similar conclusions as the “least-liked” approach Sullivan *et al.* (1979) adopts in many of his studies where a direct relationship between intolerance and level of education is not found. Rather, the strength of people's party affiliation shows to have significant effect on political tolerance. The stronger people feel connected to their party of

choice, the more tolerant they are. This is a striking result because members are deemed to feel strongly connected to their party too, yet their membership has an insignificant effect on tolerance and even causes slight intolerance. This might be the result of their biased opinion and show lower political tolerance to members of out-groups. This is something other studies could investigate in the future.

Future studies can build on this work in numerous ways. I have showed how people's preconceived notions about political actors affected political tolerance and opinion by exposing respondents to identical surveys framed as coming from different sources. The respondents were randomly recruited and exposed to the surveys in a natural environment. Therefore, I did not maintain control over respondents' demographics and characteristics which makes comparisons between survey groups slightly problematic. Future research could apply a laboratory setting and control for respondents' demographics and characteristics and thus make better comparisons between treatment and control groups. Replicating this study in different countries, both with and without a far-right or controversial party and perhaps controlling for the respondents' demographics would be a good addition to this study. Nevertheless, this study moves things in the right direction by showing that people's preconceived notions about (controversial) political actors affect political tolerance and opinion despite the content being identical.

Appendix A

Respondents' demographics

- PVV survey: gender: male 72%, female 28%,
 average age: 33.
 education: highschool 24%, MBO 13%, HBO 29%, WO 34%
 member of party: 10%
 left-right voters: 53% - 47 %
- D66 survey: gender: male 78%, female 22%,
 average age: 26.
 education: highschool 32%, MBO 4%, HBO 39%, WO 25%
 member of party: 10%
 left right voters: 60% - 40 %
- Anonymous survey: gender: male 71%, female 19%,
 average age: 26.
 education: highschool 27%, MBO 6%, HBO 15%, WO 52%
 member of party: 12%
 left-right voters: 51% - 49%

Appendix B

Party Manifesto Statements

- Close very weak performing schools after one year (PVV, D66).
Children may go to school from 2.5 years of age (D66).
Foreign students have to pay their own tuition fees (PVV).
Elected mayor and Prime Minister (PVV, D66).
Introduction binding referendum (PVV).
Stronger, thus larger, municipalities which take over many tasks of the state (PVV, D66).
Police officers away from their desks and onto the streets (PVV, D66).
Stimulate the growth of Schiphol (PVV, D66).
Abolish the Senate (PVV, D66).
Budget cuts on rehabilitation (PVV).
More austere prison cells (PVV).
Welfare benefits scrapped with the use of fraud (PVV).
Dutch art and culture should be more promoted abroad (D66).
Arranged Marriages should be punishable (D66).
Stop with costly and ineffective reintegration projects (PVV).
Budget cuts on public broadcasting by merging public broadcasters and abolishing international broadcasting (D66).

Appendix C

Independent variables

PVV: coded 1 if the respondent was given the PVV-associated survey, coded 0 if the respondent was given either the D66 or no-party survey.

D66: coded 1 if the respondent was given the D66-associated survey, coded 0 if the respondent was given either the PVV or no-party survey.

Anonymous: coded 1 if the respondent was given the survey without any party affiliation, coded 0 if the respondent received either the PVV or D66 survey.

Member of Party: 1: yes, 0: no.

Gender: 1: male, 0: female.

Age: 2012 – date of birth.

Education: 1: Elementary school
 2: VMBO/MAVO
 3: MAVO
 4: HAVO
 5: VWO
 6: HBO
 7: WO

Party Affiliation Strength: -1: Not strong.
 1: Strong.
 2: Very strong.

Income: 0: No income.
 1: Less than €1450 per month.
 2: €1450 - €2500 per month.
 3: €2500 - €5000 per month.
 4: €5000 or more.

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