

# Fading boundaries?

*International Relationships and the Interest in  
Local, National, European and World Politics*



Wendy Oude Vrielink

S2198223

w.a.m.oude.vrielijk@student.rug.nl

Master Thesis Population Studies

University of Groningen

Supervisors: C. van Mol & H.A.G. de Valk

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## Abstract

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As international institutions such as the European Union gain importance, opposition against international integration has been demonstrated as well. Some parts of the society see internationalization as undemocratic or as a threat for their national and local autonomy. To legitimate common decision making, there should be some social cohesion on every political level. This study examines the effect of international social contact on cohesion within and between countries, by analysing the effect of being in a European bi-national couple on the interest in politics at four levels: the city, the country, the European Union and the world. The analysis is based on Dutch data from the EUMARR project, comparing persons in couples consisting of one Dutch person and one non-Dutch European to those in couples with two native Dutch partners, all living together in the Netherlands. The findings show that persons in a European bi-national couple are more likely to be interested in international politics, including both European and world politics. The interest in local and national politics is not found to be different for those in a bi-national couple compared to uni-national Dutch couples, except for the fact that non-Dutch persons are less likely to be interested in national politics. These findings suggest that international contact as reflected in love relations and thus in a society at large improves the legitimacy of international institutions without reducing local and national connectedness.

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## List of abbreviations

EU	European Union
EU-NL	Non-Dutch European person with a Dutch partner
NL	Netherlands/Dutch
NL-NL	Dutch person with a Dutch partner
NL-EU	Dutch person with a non-Dutch European partner
UN	United Nations
SES	Socio-economic status

# 1 Introduction

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## 1.1 Background and problem statement

Over the latest decades, the world has become increasingly connected. This process of globalization is seen in economics, as well as in social and cultural life and in political institutions. Countries are more connected by cooperating in international institutions, such as the European Union (EU) and the United Nations (UN). Nevertheless, the legitimacy of those international institutions, in particular the European Union, is often discussed and seems to be decreasing (Keman, 2014). This legitimacy is defined as the 'popular compliance with and acceptance of political authority' (Beetham 1994; in Keman, 2014, p. 310) and is essential for good governance (Keman, 2014). After all, in creating common decision-making, there needs to be a connected community with common interests. The decrease in legitimacy is reflected, for example, in low voter turnouts and high dissatisfaction with European decision-making. Voter turnout for the European Parliament has constantly been decreasing from 62.0% at the first elections in 1979, to a point of only 42.6% in the elections of 2014 (European Parliament, 2014). In addition, strong negative views about internationalization are heard and seem to have increased in the past few years. This Euroscepticism is on the rise in many of the EU member states (Mammone, Godin & Jenkins, 2012; Wodak, KhosraviNik & Mral, 2013; Demetriou, 2015). The highest increase in scepticism towards the European Union is found in the Netherlands (Lubbers & Scheepers, 2010), where voter turnouts for the European Parliament elections are also lower than the European average (European Parliament, 2014). At the same time, many people have expressed fears of losing national and regional identity (WRR, 2007; Entzinger & Dourleijn, 2008). In the Netherlands, 40% of the population considers the European Union a threat for their culture and identity (WRR, 2007). This is worrying, as the level of peacefulness and legitimacy of modern states is highly dependent on the sense of identity among their citizens (Díez Medrano & Gutiérrez, 2010). Some theories claim that global identities enforce the local identity (Castells, 1997; Díez Medrano & Gutiérrez, 2010), but others find a negative relationship (Inglehart, 1997; Duchesne & Frogner, 1995 in Díez Medrano & Gutiérrez, 2010). Social cohesion, however, is needed on all political levels to legitimate decision-making.

The effects of the European Union on different groups in society and their attitudes towards it have been extensively researched (i.e. Hakhverdian, Van Elsas, Van der Brug & Kuhn, 2013; Lubbers & Scheepers, 2010; Kuhn, 2011; Mammone et al., 2012; Demetriou, 2015). Overall, these studies have focused on the effect of European integration on the European level, such as differences in attitudes towards the European Union, in feelings of European identity and in personal profits of the European Union. Although some fear exists that European integration might affect local and national societies as well, there is still very little scientific understanding of the effects of Europeanization on other political levels. Therefore, this thesis will examine part of how European integration affects social cohesion on multiple political scales, by analysing its effect on the amount of interest in politics at different spatial levels. Interest in politics is a concept with varying definitions: It can be seen as a fight over the power, with campaign strategies and elections, but also as the decisions made that will

influence society (Campbell & Winters, 2008). In this study, political interest is defined as the later one: the interest that someone has in the common issues that play a role in the society. This interest in politics is a component of social cohesion and is needed to have public support for common decision-making. Insights on the effect of international contact on the interest in different political scales in the Netherlands can be useful in, for example, understanding how to deal with the issues of increasing Euroscepticism. Therefore, this thesis will focus on people's interest in politics on various political scales.

Existing studies mainly focused on the national population and their demographic characteristics, without diversifying them in terms of their social bonds with other Europeans. But, nationality provides the highest level of segregation within a society, since race and ethnicity are, of all human characteristics, the strongest dependents for connections between people (McPherson, Smith-Lovin & Cook, 2001). This segregation limits the social environment of people in such a way that it causes differences in the attitude towards each other (McPherson et al., 2001). Knowing this, the effects of international connections should be included when examining the public opinion on multinational integration.

Marriages between individuals from different European nationalities (intermarriages) can be expected to reflect these patterns of European connectedness. After all, a love relationship is one of the strongest and most structural contacts between two individuals belonging to different (national) groups (Kalmijn 1998). According to the intergroup contact theory (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006), contact between individuals of two different groups will reduce intergroup prejudice. Similarly, the structural opportunity theory (Blau, 1977) postulates that structural interaction will provide positive relations and acceptance of each other. Therefore, it can be expected that European intermarriages enforce the connections between two groups and decrease boundaries. As such, these couples would be the forerunners of European integration and have most affiliation with the European project. Nevertheless, studies about intermarriage within the European Union only recently started to emerge (de Valk & Díez Medrano, 2014). Van Mol, de Valk & van Wissen (2014), for example, found that although people in a European bi-national couple are more likely to identify as a European, they do not show more solidarity towards other European countries. Yet, there is no clear picture on the effects of European integration on the feelings of connectedness on different spatial levels. There is little scholarly evidence about how structural contact with a European partner might lead to changes in individuals' political interests, and hence contribute to social cohesion. Therefore this thesis will contribute to the knowledge about the impact of the European integration project by focusing on the differences between persons in bi-national relationships and those in uni-national relationships in the Netherlands when it comes to the interest in politics, including both international politics and politics of lower scales.

## 1.2 Objective & research questions

The objective of this thesis is to examine how bi-national unions are related to political interest at different spatial scales. In this way we can start unravelling the effect of European integration on the social cohesion within and between member states. The main research question to reach this objective is: *How do individuals in a European bi-national relationship differ from those in a uni-national relationship when it comes to the interest in politics at different levels?*

The following questions will be answered in order to answer the main question:

- What factors influence the political interest of a person?
- To what extent do people in bi-national couples differ from those in uni-national couples when it comes to politics within the country (including local and national politics)?
- To what extent does the interest in international (including European and world) politics differ between persons in a bi-national couple and those in a uni-national couple?

## 2 Theoretical framework

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To get a background on how political interests can differ among uni- and bi-national couples, this thesis will first examine theories of how political interest, overall and on different spatial levels, is affected by different factors and individual characteristics. Second, theories and conceptualizations about transnationalism will be discussed, to show the sociological effects of cross-border interaction, and in particular bi-national love relationships, within the European Union.

### 2.1 Political interest

Several scholars argue that the interest and involvement in politics is stratified among the society. For example, older individuals, highly educated people, males and individuals with a higher socioeconomic status appear to be more active in politics than others (Stolle & Hooghe, 2010; Van Baal & Mares, 2002). Downs (1957) developed a rational theory on political involvement, starting from the assumption that political engagement, such as being informed about political issues, participating in public debate and voting, is costly in time and effort. According to this theory, an individual will be more likely to involve in politics when the personal benefits of political engagement outweigh the costs, in terms of effort that is needed to understand these political topics. So, political interest is created by the personal utility of politics on one hand, and the ability to understand politics on the other hand. The effect of utility on political interest is seen, for example, in the way life-cycle activities influence political interest (Quintelier, 2007; Smets, 2010). Smets (2010) shows that delay in certain life-cycle events, such as leaving school and starting a family, leads to lower voter turnout. This confirms Quintelier's (2007) reasoning that political decisions are less important for young people who for example do not own a house or do not have yet a job, and who pay fewer taxes. These disparities in utility lead to a positive relation between age and political interest.

On the other hand, political interest is assumed to be higher for individuals for whom it is easier to understand public issues. To describe the ability to understand political issues, Inglehart (1970) uses the concept of cognitive mobilization, which is the process of increasing political skills that give a person the ability to relate to more distant situations. These political skills are acquired by exposure to information about more remote and abstract political communities. According to Inglehart (1970), some people have better facilities to receive and absorb information on distant political issues than others, through, for example, education and the availability of mass media. This leads to different levels of cognitive mobilization and political interest among different groups in the society. For example, higher educated persons and higher socioeconomic classes seem to be more involved in politics because they have better facilities to absorb information about public issues than others (Inglehart, 1970; Scheufele, Shanahan & Kim, 2002). Research has proven that highly educated people seem to have the more interest in politics (Van Baal & Mares, 2000) and also have more knowledge of politics (Fraile, 2013). According to Luskin (1990), education is a reflection of intelligence and occupation, and therefore increases the level of political cognition and the interest in politics. A higher socioeconomic status seems to lead to cognitive mobilization as well, since wealthier people have better access to information.

According to Inglehart (1970) exposure to public information leads to a better understanding of and thus more interest in politics. Engagement in public issues, by means of mass media, social networks and daily activities, enhances the interest in those public issues. Several studies show that exposure to political information via mass media increases the involvement in politics (eg. Scheufele et al., 2002; Koopmans, 2007; Gerhard & Hans, 2014). Social contacts also seem to be an important factor. Social networks provide easy access to information and varying viewpoints on public issues, leading to a higher ability and motivation to be informed about politics (Scheufele et al., 2002). Discussion of political issues, especially with family, peers or in a voluntary association, has a large influence on the development of adolescents' political engagement (Quintelier, 2015). According to Inglehart (1970) these discussions will lead to more cognitive mobilization when they cover issues that are harder to relate to for a person. Quintelier (2015) supports this, by stating that especially discussions in heterogeneous groups lead to higher political engagement. Furthermore, exposure to political issues may arise from activities in an individual's daily life. This is supported by the results of Fraile (2014) which suggest that differences in exposure to public issues are a cause of the existing gender gap in political knowledge. In traditional gender roles, women are responsible for the private life, whereas men are in charge of the more public issues. This might explain the fact that political interest is higher among men than among women. This assumption is strengthened by Fraile's (2014) results: she did not detect the gender gap in topics about education, which can be seen as a more feminine subject. Moreover, the gender gap is smaller among younger and more educated people, who may be assumed to have less traditional gender roles.

#### 2.1.1 Scale differences in political interest

Inglehart (1970) argues that higher spatial levels of politics are harder to understand than lower political levels, since they are more abstract and have less direct relations to the citizens. Because of this, cognitive mobilization is needed more when it comes to high spatial scales of politics. Coffé (2013) discusses that interest in politics, as discussed previously, is mainly seen as interest in national politics, whereas politics on other scales might show other patterns. Therefore, the literature on local and international politics will be discussed separately.

On the local scale, political interest seems to be less dependent on the demographic characteristics. Coffé (2013) only finds an effect on interest in local politics for age and religion, as well as for political efficacy if taken into account. Whereas gender, education and occupation are determinants of the overall political interest, they do not have a significant effect on the interest in local politics. For example, at the national and global scale, men are more interested in politics than women, but at the local level this is not the case (Coffé, 2013). Inglehart's (1970) reasoning that cognitive mobilization is especially needed on the higher political levels, could give some explanation for these findings. Since gender, education and occupation are expected to influence levels of exposure to remote issues, they increase cognitive mobilization. However, since local politics are less abstract, the involved issues are understandable without high levels of cognitive mobilization. Age, on the other hand, relates to the level of utility and is therefore still relevant on the local level.

Scheufele et al. (2002) found that local ties are strongly related to the interest in local politics. People who lived in their community longer and people who own a house were found to be more likely to involve in the politics of the community (Scheufele et al., 2002). Besides, those who mainly work in the local area show more attachment to and involvement in the local community (Rotherbuhler et al., 1996; in Scheufele et al., 2002). This might also explain the positive effect of religion on interest in local politics (Coffé, 2013): religion gives opportunities of social contact and discussion within the neighbourhood or the city. These local ties provide access to heterogeneous social networks, resulting in a variety of viewpoints and a positive influence on involvement in local politics (Scheufele et al., 2002). In addition, local ties and networks are likely to increase the utilitarian reasons to be interested in local politics.

In contradiction to the local level, cognitive mobilization is an important factor in political interest on the international level (Coffé, 2013). People who have more skills and understanding of remote issues seem to be more familiar to and less threatened by international and European integration (Inglehart, 1970). Koopmans (2007) argues that the political system makes it hard to engage in European politics, meaning that European integration is mainly a project of the political elites and benefitting especially those elites. Hakhverdian et al. (2013) reinforces Inglehart's (1970) theory about cognitive mobilization by stating that especially the highly educated are the winners of globalization, since these people have the ability to be mobile. Other researchers support this by finding that education increases the interest in politics and global issues (Gerhards and Hans, 2014), the amount of cross-border activities (Kuhn, 2011) and feelings of being a European (Rechhi and Salamonska, 2014). Besides highly educated, other influential groups, which are mostly men and upper class citizens, are also found to be more likely to have a positive image of the European Union and to feel more European (Rechhi and Salamonska, 2014). Other winners of the European integration are the younger generations, because they are more involved in cross-border activities than older people (Kuhn, 2011), leading to more benefits and understanding. Individuals and groups who have limited influence in the European Union are often more critical and less supportive towards the European Union (Koopman, 2007).

In line with Inglehart (1970), Gerhards and Hans (2014) argue that the interest in European issues is positively related to participation in a transnational public sphere, such as following international media. Multilingualism has a positive effect on the interest in European issues as well, since it improves the ability to do be involved with international media. People with a migrant background also seem to be more engaged with international issues (Gerhards and Hans, 2014). It can be assumed that the same accounts for transnational exposure within a bi-national marriage.

## 2.2 Transnationalism

Globalization and European integration have provided increasing opportunities for Europeans to come in contact with more distant nationalities and cultures. By making more connections between the member countries, the European Union was expected to stimulate peace, the values and the wellbeing of her residents (De Pater, 2009). Studies like Deutsch, Burrell, Kann & Lee (1957) and Deutsch (1967; in Kuhn, 2011) argue that cross-border transactions should be institutionalized

among the member states in order to create security communities: groups of people who become integrated and therefore believe that social problems must and can be solved in peaceful change. According to Deutsch's transactionalist approach, people who are involved in cross-border transactions will be more open to welcome other nationalities and the overall integration process (Kuhn, 2011). Later on, studies on cross-border practices used the concept 'transnationalism' to define involvement in cross-border transactions.

Glick Schiller, Basch and Blanc-Szanton (1992) used the concept of transnationalism for the first time in migration studies, defined as 'the processes by which immigrants build social fields that link together their country of origin and their country of settlement' (p. 1). At the time of migration, the migrant identifies with the home country but as time passes the migrant will build bridges with the host society and increase identification with this society. In the end those trans-migrants are connected to multiple societies because of their behaviour, concerns and social networks, which leads to increased transnational links such as material flows and personal travels. This process, however, takes some time: it is seen that place attachment gets higher as someone lives longer at the place of residence (Kasarda & Janowitz, 1974) and social networks of migrants, especially of those of the first generation, are found to be smaller than those of native Dutch citizens (Van Tubergen, 2014).

Other scholars have elaborated the use of transnationalism to a concept which is not limited to migrants only. In the era of globalization, social integration can arise from activities other than migration, such as doing business internationally, traveling and having online social contacts. With this broader definition, transnationalism can be seen as a complex web of practices and habits which makes a connection across national borders between different social and life worlds (Sandu, 2014). In this broader concept, migration experiences are still of major impact: Sandu (2014) argues that Europeans create their transnational social networks mainly by migration experiences of themselves or their social network. According to Kuhn (2011), transnationalism is reflected in three dimensions: a transnational background, transnational practices and transnational human capital. Linked to those dimensions, the individuals in a bi-national relationship are per definition acting highly transnational: a transnational background, such as dual citizenship or being born in another country, is present for at least one of the partners, since someone has to live outside the country of his or her nationality to cohabit. Due to the daily international contact, with the partner and presumably with the network of the partner, being in a bi-national relationship can be seen as a transnational practice. Lastly, transnational human capital is the ability to act transnational, for example by speaking foreign languages and adaptability to other cultures. This human capital is needed in a bi-national couple, to understand the other.

Van Bochove (2012) argues that the focus of transnationalism should refer to the international links that are 'really' transnational, instead of bi-national. The distinction is made between horizontal and vertical transnationality: horizontal links are those between the two nations of a migrant, whereas vertical links transcend all nations by linking with the world as a whole rather than with separate countries. Van Bochove (2012) finds that issues at the vertical transnational level are of major importance in the lives of migrants in the Netherlands. Those migrants link their identity

to their ideology or religion, rather than to a place. This results in, for example, political practices such as boycotts for the concern of universal human rights or in special attachment to cosmopolitan and religious places. According to Kuhn (2011), cross-border experiences leads to the willingness to engage with the other and seeing the world independently of its nations, also known as a cosmopolitan attitude (Mau, Mewes & Zimmerman, 2008), because of social and utilitarian reasons. Firstly, because of interaction people feel more connected with members of other countries. New international interactions and relationships will foster mutual understanding, empathy and respect (Mau et al., 2008). This will give the sense of community which Deutsch (1957) referred to, so that people become more integrated with others and more supportive for this integration. Secondly, the integration with other countries will give them new possibilities and therefore utilitarian reasons to support processes of supranational integration. For example, the economic benefits received from the European Union play an important role in an individual's support for the European Union and feelings of European identity (Verhaegen, Hooghe & Quintelier, 2014). Having transnational activities can be assumed to increase personal benefits of supranational integration and lead to political interest in the supranational level.

Although transnational experiences will make individuals more open, tolerant and conscious towards the rest of the world (Robertson, 1992; in Mau et al., 2008), it should be noted that transnational attitudes do not automatically replace locality. Studies on international professionals (Nowicka, 2005; in Favell, Recchi, Kuhn, Jensen & Klein, 2012) and Swedish frequent travellers (Gustafson, 2009) show that both local places and cosmopolitan attitudes can go together. Gustafson (2009), for example, shows that frequent travellers have the same local ties and attachment as the rest of the population, although they are more likely to move to another country or hold European identity. The possibility to have both local and international ties is also reflected in the theory of nested identities, which states that it is possible to have lower- and higher-order identities in the same time as long as the multiple identities have different functions and a positive image (Díez Medrano & Gutiérrez, 2010). In case of nested identities, attachment will be greatest to the identity giving the highest sense of control, which is most likely the lower-order identity (Lawler, 1992; in Díez Medrano & Gutiérrez, 2010). This is supported by Van Bochove (2012), who finds that besides transnational links, the local ties within the country of residence are important in the lives of migrants. Attachment with the Netherlands, in contrast, is associated with being born in the Netherlands (Van Bochove, 2012). Similar results are found by Entzinger & Dourleijn (2008) and Groenewold (2008), who state that Turkish and Moroccan youngsters in the Netherlands are more likely to identify with the city they live in than with being Dutch, whereas native Dutch youngsters are more likely to identify with the country (Entzinger & Dourleijn, 2008; Groenewold, 2008).

#### 2.2.1 Patterns of new European transnationalism

Although European integration provides many opportunities for transnational activities, still a large part of the population is not involved in transnational processes (Kuhn, 2011). These individuals who act solely on a local or national level are more likely to feel threatened by processes of integration when the world around them acts increasingly on an international level. According to the European

Commission (2011), more than half of the Europeans can be seen as 'old' Europeans, who have their ties within their home country. It can be assumed that the lower levels of transnational exposure of these 'old' Europeans relate to a lower level of interest in international issues.

But, there is also an emerging group of 'New Europeans', who have connections with more than only the country of residence. These Europeans are more likely to attach to other countries and to move abroad. A migration background and international ties from other experiences are the main dependents for being a 'New European' with cross-border interactions (European Commission, 2011). Identification with Europe is expected mostly among these intra-European migrants and citizens with a high level of cross-border activities (Favell et al., 2012).

New migration opportunities offered by the European Union, might lead to migrant types that are different from the ones in most studies. One of the main distinctions that is made is that new migrants are seen as temporary knowledge workers (Van Bochove, 2012), who are assumed to be more geographically mobile and stay only temporary. This assumption of a temporary stay was, however, also made for the traditional labour migrants from for example Turkey and Morocco, who were expected to return to their home countries after some time. Van Bochove (2012) argues that the two types, traditional labour migrants and new knowledge workers are more similar than expected; both migrant types feel strong ties with the home country and have vertical transnational ties. Secondly, European migration increasingly involves non-economic reasons (Recchi, Salamońska, Rossi & Baglioni, 2014). The traditional motive to migrate in search for lower skilled labour is not that present in the new European patterns, whereas highly skilled labour, study, retirement and 'quality of life' migration are more present (Braun, 2008). Within these new kinds of migration, the most mentioned motive is love, which is even more important nowadays than the opportunity for labour (Fernández, Antonia, Baldoni & Albert, 2009). Of these love migrants, the major part moves to start a live with a partner of different nationality, opposing to the traditional idea of love migration as family reunification.

### 2.2.2 The relationship effect

Bi-national couples can be seen as pioneers in internationalization, as they show integration with other nationalities and provide new opportunities for international contact. Differences between social groups provokes segregation within a society, as people are more likely to form bonds with others who are alike them (McPherson et al., 2001). The theory of homogamy states that the characteristics an individual searches for in a partner are often based on the possibility to have a common lifestyle with someone, in which there is social confirmation and affection (Kalmijn, 1998). Cultural differences, for example, can have negative effects on a relationship, such as misunderstandings and disagreement (Brahic, 2013). Because of this, most relationships occur between people with cultural, demographic and socioeconomic similarities, such as sharing the same values, opinions, behaviour and language (Kalmijn, 1998; Haandrikman & van Wissen, 2012). So, bi-national relationships show that the distance between groups is not that big and therefore bi-national relationships can be seen as an indicator of integration between immigrants and the host society (van Wissen & Heering, 2014).

Besides, being in an intermarriage can also help fading away boundaries, since it causes exposure to different cultures, ideas and lifestyles. As mentioned before, contact between individuals of two different groups will enhance understanding of each other (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006) and can provide a positive relation between the people of two different groups, which increases the acceptance of each other (Blau, 1977). So, intermarriages do not only reflect group boundaries, but are also influencing them and bringing groups closer (Kalmijn, 1998). Following this line of reasoning, it can be assumed that the interests and ideology of individuals within a bi-national partnership are more similar to these of migrants and other transnationalists than is the case for those in uni-national unions. Correspondingly, Van Mol et al. (2014) show that persons in a European bi-national relationship are more likely to identify as European than persons within a uni-national relationship. However, it is unclear whether the international contact causes the identification as European, or that people who feel more European are more likely to become part of a bi-national couple.

Most research on intermarriages within the European Union has been based on the EUMARR project (de Valk & Díez Medrano, 2014). This research project considered the influence of the European Union on the number of marriages with different European nationalities. Despite the new opportunities, hardly any increase in European bi-national marriages is found, and the overall conclusion is that Euro-marriages are still rather rare (de Valk & Díez Medrano, 2014). In the Netherlands, around 10% of the marriages between 1995 and 2007 was bi-national, a percentage that was rather stable. (Van Wissen & Heering, 2014). Of these bi-national marriages, around 28% was with a partner of another EU-12 country. A small decrease has been found in the number of EU-12 marriages, mainly explained by the tendency to cohabite rather than to marry.

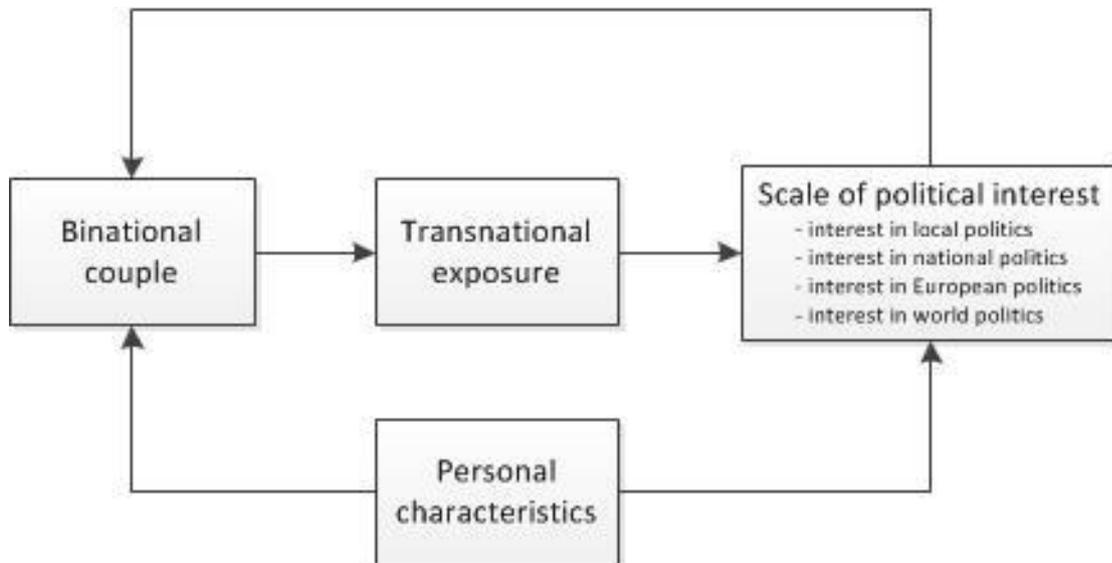
Within the population of the Netherlands, it are mainly the men who marry people from other nationalities; 60% of the EU-12 marriages in 2007 consisted of a Dutch male and a non-Dutch female, as well as 75% of the bi-national marriages with a partner from outside the EU-12 (Van Wissen & Heering, 2014). These gender differences are partly due to the different preferences and different sex ratios of the preferred immigrant groups, but still not everything can be explained. Furthermore, it is seen that most Dutch persons within a European marriage had a partner from one of the neighbouring countries, namely Germany, Great Britain or Belgium.

Other studies found a link between bi-national marriages and education: In Spain (Díez Medrano, Cortina, Safranoff & Castro-Martín, 2014) and in Sweden (Haandrikman, 2014), less educated people are more often involved in intermarriages than high educated people. This can be explained by the results of the studies in Spain (Díez Medrano et al., 2014) and in Belgium (Koelet & de Valk, 2014), which state that most bi-national marriages were with traditional, lower educated, labour migrants. When it comes to the marriages within the older European member countries only, the educational level is often much higher (Díez Medrano et al., 2014; Haandrikman, 2014; Schroedter & Rössel, 2014). Furthermore, Haandrikman (2014) found that transnational experiences matter: natives who have lived abroad have a higher chance to marry bi-national.

## 2.3 Conceptual model

The following model shows a simplification of the connections between being in a bi-national couple and the scale of political interest that can be expected from the existing theory and literature.

Figure 2 1: Conceptual Model



The conceptual model shows a causal relation from being in a bi-national couple to political interest, with transnational exposure as mediator. From the literature on transnationalism and bi-national relationships, it is seen that being in a bi-national couple leads to transnational exposure, such as transnational contact, human capital and, in case of love migration, a transnational background. Living in a bi-national couple outside the home country is assumed to lead to even more transnational exposure. As Inglehart (1970) states, this exposure to remote issues enhances understanding of political issues, which according to Downs (1957) subsequently leads to more political interest. Heterogeneous social networks, such as created by being in a bi-national couple, are seen as a main reason to be involved in political issues (Scheufele et al., 2002; Quintelier, 2015). It is assumed that international social networks mainly lead to discussion of international issues, whereas social networks on a local or national level mainly result in exposure to domestic issues. Thus, transnational exposure within a binational couple might change the political interest differently for the distinguished political levels.

Previous research shows that besides the social network, political interest is affected by certain personal characteristics, such as gender, age and education. At the same time, some of those characteristics influence the likelihood a person becomes part of a bi-national couple. These personal characteristics are thus affecting the link between being in a bi-national couple and political interest as confounding variables.

Furthermore, the chance of forming a bi-national couple is also influenced by the interests of a person, as seen in the theory of homogamy (Kalmijn, 1998). Therefore, the link between being in a bi-national couple and political interest might be bi-directional.

## 2.4 Hypotheses

The existing literature indicates that love relationships might have an effect on the interest in different political scales. From the theory on political interest (Downs, 1957; Inglehart, 1970; Scheufele et al., 2002) and the structural opportunity theory (Blau, 1977), it is seen that social contact provides different world views and possibilities for discussion, which leads to a better understanding and more political interest. Furthermore, the principle of homophily (McPherson et al., 2001) postulates that the interest of a person can influence his or her social network as well. Thus, the interests of a person are closely related to those of his or her social network, both due to the social network affecting interest and vice versa. Based on the background experiences and opportunities for exposure within the couple, two main hypotheses are drawn on the link between bi-national relationships and political interest at different scales:

- *Persons in bi-national couples are less interested in domestic (local and national) politics than those in uni-national couples.*
- *Persons in bi-national couples are more interested in international (European and world) politics than those in uni-national couples.*

These links are expected to remain when controlled for certain background characteristics, namely age, gender, education, socioeconomic status and city of residence, as well as when controlled for an indicator of overall political interest. To make the associations better measurable and explainable, the hypotheses are subdivided into sub-hypotheses. Paragraph 2.4.1 and 2.4.2 elaborate on these hypotheses.

### 2.4.1 Bi-national couples and domestic politics

The first main hypothesis states that persons in bi-national couples are less interested in domestic politics, which involves both politics of the city and politics of the country. The expected association between this interest and forming a bi-national couple stems from three separate arguments, in which the first two hypotheses make assumptions on the political interest of non-nationals in a bi-national couple, whereas the third explains how this affects the interest of Dutch persons within a bi-national couple.

Firstly, it is seen that place attachment (Kasarda & Janowitz, 1974) and social networks (Van Tubergen, 2014) grow over time, leading to more interest in and understanding of what happens at that certain place. Because of their lack of background experience, migrants have been less exposed to issues on the local and national scale in the Netherlands, and might therefore be less understanding and less involved when it comes to issues at these lower levels. This leads to the first hypothesis that: *“Non-Dutch individuals living in a bi-national union in the Netherlands are less likely to be interested in Dutch politics at the local (H1.1) and national (H1.2) level than Dutch individuals within a uni-national couple.”* (H1)

Van Bochove (2012) finds that for both traditional migrants and knowledge workers, social ties are more present at the local level than at the national level. As there seems to be a link between social networks and political interest, it can be hypothesized that: *“Being non-Dutch in a bi-national*

*couple has a stronger negative effect on the interest in national politics than it has on the interest in local politics” (H2).*

According to the theory of homogamy (Kalmijn, 1998), relationships are more likely to occur when there is a possibility for discussion of common (political) interests. Furthermore, the discussion that results from these common interests leads to more exposure to political issues and thereby increases political interest. Discussions within bi-national couples might have other subjects than uni-national discussions, leading to the assumption that of the Dutch persons, those in bi-national couples have interests that are closer to the interests of non-Dutch Europeans than those in uni-national couples. Therefore, the last hypothesis on domestic politics states that: *“Dutch persons with a non-Dutch partner have lower interest in local (H3.1) and national (H3.2) politics than Dutch persons with a Dutch partner” (H3).*

#### 2.4.2 Bi-national couples and international politics

The interest in international politics involves politics of the European Union and politics of the world. Being in a bi-national relation can be seen as a form of transnationalism; it provides transnational contacts and human capital. This means that persons in bi-national relationships get more easily exposed to international issues, which leads to more cosmopolitan attitudes with more interest at the supranational political levels. Besides, being in a bi-national relationship might increase utilitarian reasons for transnational interest: international institutions can arrange legal regulations, such as the freedom of movement within the European Union, which make it easier to be in a bi-national couple. At last, according to the theory of homogamy, individuals with transnational interests are more likely to end up in a bi-national couple. So, it can be assumed that *“Individuals in a bi-national couple are more interested in the politics of the European Union (H4.1) and the world (H4.2) than those in a Dutch uni-national couple” (H4).*

The theory shows that migration is one of the strongest forms of transnationalism, because it provides a transnational background, practices and social networks. As the non-Dutch partners in a bi-national couple live outside their home country, it is assumed that: *“Non-Dutch persons in a bi-national couple are more interested in the politics of the European Union (H5.1) and the world (H5.2) than Dutch nationals in a bi-national couple (H5).*

## 3 Data & Methodology

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### 3.1 Data

The objective of this thesis is to examine the relation between bi-national unions and political interest at different spatial levels. This will be done using the survey data from EUMARR Netherlands. According to McLafferty (2010), surveys are useful for data collection when the characteristics, behaviour and opinions of groups of people will be compared, which makes it a good method to compare persons in bi-national couples with persons in uni-national couples. Because of the data availability, the study will be based on cross-sectional data: persons within the different couple types will be compared at one moment of time. The disadvantage of a cross-sectional study is that it cannot give definite information about the causality of the relations (Babbie, 2013). Conducting a new survey to obtain retrospective data could give more information on causality, but is not done due to limitations in time and budget

The EUMARR project is an international research project that examines the trends in bi-national partnerships between citizens of the European Union, as well as their living conditions and attitudes. This thesis is based on the Dutch data within this project, which was collected in 2012. The survey sample consisted of people in a bi-national couple with a Dutch and a non-Dutch European partner as well as a control group of Dutch nationals with a Dutch partner. All respondents live together with their partner in two internationally oriented cities, namely Amsterdam and The Hague. A sample of 2,551 individuals was selected from the municipal population registers (GBA's) of both cities. All the individuals within the sample had an age of 30 to 45 years old at the time of the survey. This sample has received a request to fill in the web survey, with the opportunity to answer the survey on paper and in Dutch, English or French. The total respondent rate was 37.1%, of which 48.3% living in Amsterdam and 51.7% in The Hague. After removing some respondents who did not fit the criteria, the final number of cases was 898, of which 24.9% are Dutch respondents in a uni-national couple, 36.5% Dutch respondents in a bi-national couple and 38.5% non-Dutch respondents with a Dutch partner.

### 3.2 Variables

#### 3.2.1 Dependent variable: Political interest

The dependent variables in this thesis are the political interests at four different levels: local, national, European and world. These variables are all based on the question: “*Generally speaking, how interested are you in politics in...?*”, which was answered separately for the politics in (1) *The Hague/Amsterdam*, (2) *The Netherlands*, (3) *the European Union*, (4) *the rest of the world*”. This questions were answered on an ordinal scale consisting of five answer possibilities, namely: (1) “Not at all”, (2) “Slightly”, (3) “Moderately”, (4) “Very”, (5) “Extremely”, (6) “Don’t Know”, (7) “Not applicable”. The outcome frequencies of this question are shown in Table 3.1 and the missing values in Table 3.2.

As Campbell & Winters (2008) note, asking for general interest in politics does not give a clear understanding of whether this includes only partisan politics or all political issues. Although it would have been better to give a more elaborated question to the respondents, this is assumed not to be a problem here, since the purpose of this thesis is to compare the groups of couple types over the different spatial levels, rather than to explain political interest.

Table 3.1: Outcome frequencies political interest, Valid percent (n=898)

Given answer	Final category	Local	National	European	World
Not at all	Low	6.8	2.1	4.1	3.6
Slightly		31.1	11.4	23.6	24.1
Moderately	Middle	46.2	43.7	43.9	48.4
Very	High	14.8	38.1	25.6	21.2
Extremely		1.1	4.5	2.9	2.8

Data source: EUMARR Netherlands

Table 3.1 shows that, at all spatial levels, most respondents seem to be moderately interested in politics and only few appear to have the lowest or the highest possible interest. Because of the low number of cases that are “not at all” or “extremely” interested, the variables are transformed into ordinal variables with three categories; the first two answer possibilities are merged into the category “Low interest”, moderately interest is seen as “Middle interest” and the two highest answer possibilities are changed in “High interest”. Thus, the analysis uses the variables with three categories.

Table 3.2: Missing values political interest, percent (n=898)

Category	Local	National	European	World
<b>Total missing</b>	<b>6.8</b>	<b>6.6</b>	<b>6.6</b>	<b>7.0</b>
• Incomplete	4.9	4.9	4.9	4.9
• “Not applicable”	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3
• No answer	0.9	0.9	0.9	1.3
• “Don’t know”	0.7	0.4	0.4	0.4
<b>Total answered</b>	<b>93.2</b>	<b>93.4</b>	<b>93.4</b>	<b>93.0</b>

Data source: EUMARR Netherlands

The percentages of missing values for all dependent variables are shown in Table 3.2. On average, around 6.8% of the four questions were not answered. Since the questions on political interest were asked at the end of the survey, it can be assumed that 44 people (4.9%), which are coded as

'incomplete', stopped answering the questionnaire for any reason not related to this question. In this case, these dropouts will probably not lead to bias and can be excluded from the analysis. As shown in the remaining three rows of missing values, another 1.7% till 2.1% said the question was not applicable, did not know the answer or did not answer the question for another reason. Since this is only a small percentage of the sample, it is expected not to affect the outcome.

3.2.2 Independent variable: Nationality & couple type

As the aim of this study is to explore differences between uni-national and bi-national couples, the nationality of the respondent and his or her partner are used as the independent variable. The question that is used to determine the nationality of the respondent is: *“Which is your current nationality, that is, the one in your passport/ID? You can list more than one, if applicable, make sure that you list first the one which is most important to you?”*. A similar question was asked for the nationality of the respondent’s partner, including an option to give the answer *“Don’t Know”*. Both questions were answered without missing values and without use of the option *“Don’t Know”*. Of those answers, the respondents have been divided into three categories on the basis of their and their partners’ first nationality: Dutch respondents with a Dutch partner (NL-NL respondents), Dutch respondents with a non-Dutch partner (NL-EU respondents) and non-Dutch respondents with a Dutch partner (EU-NL respondents). Table 3.3 shows an overview of the construction of this variable, which is referred to as ‘couple type’.

Table 3.3: Categorization of couple type

Couple type		First nationality partner	
		Dutch	Other European
First nationality respondent	Dutch	NL-NL respondent	NL-EU respondent
	Other European	EU-NL respondent	

Since 52 respondents (5.8%) stated to have a second nationality and 52 other respondents stated to have a partner with a second nationality, the role of second or third nationalities should be considered. As the respondents get to choose which nationality is most important to them, and second or third nationalities might be only present for legal reasons, the first nationality is considered to be representative. However, there were 13 persons (1.4%) who choose Dutch as their first nationality whereas they have only had this nationality since adulthood; these persons are not included in the analysis, because their interests might be significantly different from those of the average Dutch person.

3.2.3 Control variables

From the literature on political interest and participation, it is seen that political interest differs by age, gender, education and socioeconomic status. In order to control for the effect of these background characteristics, they are included in the analysis.

Although age is already controlled for by taking a sample of respondents aged 30 to 45, this range is still great enough to possibly impact political interest. The survey gives data on the year of birth, from which the age at the start of 2012 was calculated, which is the year of the data collection.

The second variable controlled for is gender, since men appear to be more interested in politics at all spatial levels except for the local level. Besides, Dutch men are also found to be more likely to intermarry than Dutch women. This is also seen in the bi-national couples in our data set, in which 62.8% of the NL-EU respondents are men, and 71.1% of the EU-NL respondents are women. This distribution will presumably affect the results, if not controlled for gender.

Thirdly, the literature and theory shows that individuals with a higher education are more likely to be interested in politics. In the same time, they are more mobile, which might lead to a more transnational attitude and a higher chance to meet a partner from another nationality. To control for education, the respondents were divided into three groups, based on their level in the International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED). Because of the high average of education, the category “low education” contains ISCED level 0 to 4, “middle education” contains ISCED level 5 & 6 and “high education” contains ISCED level 7 & 8.

The last background characteristic which is controlled for is the socio-economic status (SES) of the respondent. Literature shows that wealthier people are more likely to be interested in politics and have more opportunities to act transnational. According to Tucker, Pacek & Berinsky (2002; in Kuhn, 2011) the self-assessed economic position is more important than the objective position. The subjective socioeconomic status is controlled for, using the question: *“On the following scale, step “0” corresponds to “the lowest level in the society of The Netherlands”, step “10” corresponds to “the highest level in the society of The Netherlands”. When you consider your household income from all sources and the wealth you and your partner may have accumulated, could you tell me on which step you would place yourself?”*. This information is recoded in an ordinal variable with three categories with approximately the same size, namely ‘lower than average’, ‘average’ and ‘higher than average’, in which step 7 was defined as average. Although the data could, under some assumptions, have been interpreted as an interval variable, the ordinal levels are used since they are found to fit the model better.

As the data is collected in two different cities in the Netherlands, namely Amsterdam and The Hague, the local context is different for both groups. Furthermore, The Hague is the political capital of the Netherlands, possibly leading to higher interest in national politics. Therefore the effects of the city of residence are controlled for in the analysis. To be consistent and to make the analyses comparable, this is done at all the different political scales.

### 3.3 Analysis

Firstly, the distribution of the three ordinal levels of political interest over the different couple types and spatial levels has been analysed, using descriptive statistics, chi-square statistics and spearman’s correlation coefficient.

Thereafter, several ordinal regressions are carried out with the three-point ordinal variables of respectively interest in local politics, interest in national politics, interest in European politics and

interest in world politics as dependent variable. In the first step, only the variable couple type is included in the regression, with NL-NL persons as the reference category. Secondly, the control variables age, gender, education of the respondent, socioeconomic status and city of residence are included to check whether the potential outcomes are caused by differences in background characteristics between the groups or not.

Then, the political interest at another spatial level is added to the model in order to control for the overall interest in politics. Unfortunately, the questionnaire did not include a question for the overall interest, so national political interest is used as indicator of overall interest in politics, since national politics are often seen as the main politics (Coffé, 2013). In analysing national politics, interest in European politics is used, because this is assumed to be closest to overall politics if national interest cannot be used.

In the last models, the interaction between the couple type and the education of the respondent's partner is added, to get some more information on the role of the partner in a person's political interest. From the literature, it is seen that higher educated people are more likely to be interested in politics, and especially in politics of higher levels. It can be assumed that higher educated partners are more likely to discuss politics with their partners, resulting in higher effects of being in a bi-national couple whenever the partner has a higher education. This effect would indicate that discussion in a relation leads to political interest, and thus suggest that the direction of the link is from a bi-national relation to political interest. However, as it was not possible to draw conclusions from these interactions, the statistical outcomes of this last step are not included in the results but only in the appendix.

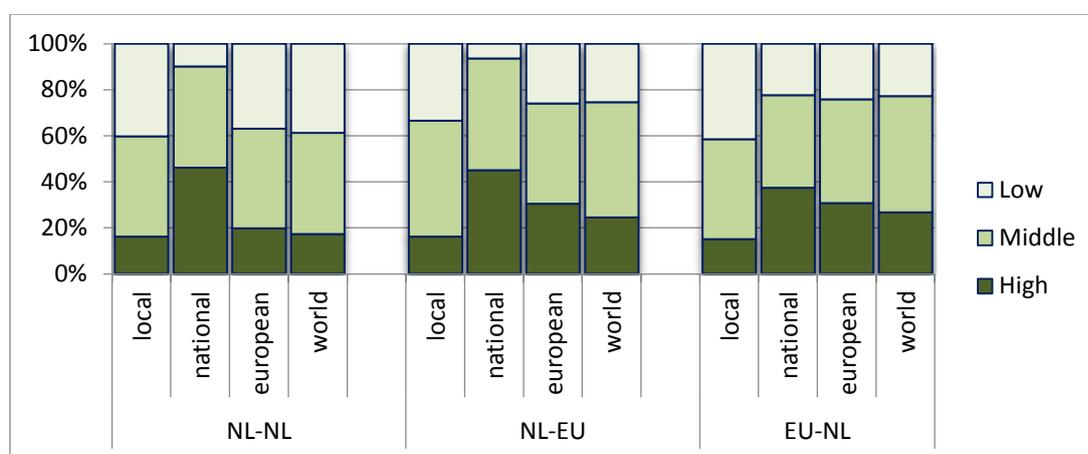
To check whether there are significant differences between Dutch and non-Dutch persons within a binational couple, which is assumed in hypothesis 5, the first three models are run a second time with EU-NL as the reference category of the variable couple type.

## 4 Results

### 4.1 Descriptive statistics: Distribution of political interest over couple type.

Figure 4. shows the percentages of low, middle and high interest over the distinguished political levels and couple types.

Figure 4.1: Distribution of political interest at different levels by couple type (%)



Data source: EUMARR Netherlands

The figure shows that all couple types appear to be most interested in national politics. However, among non-Dutch respondents the proportion of people with low interest in national politics is greater, resulting in smaller differences between interest in politics of the Netherlands and other levels. Moreover, people in a bi-national couple seem to have higher levels of interest in international politics (i.e. politics of Europe and the world) than people in Dutch-Dutch couples. So far, the data supports the main hypotheses that people in bi-national couples are more interested in international politics and less interested in domestic politics compared to Dutch people in a uni-national couple. On the local level, on the other hand, the interest in politics is relatively low and does not show clear differences between individuals in uni-national and bi-national couples.

### 4.2 Bivariate analysis: Link between couple type and political interest

To check whether political interest is significantly different for the distinguished couple types, chi-square statistics and spearman correlation coefficients are calculated from the cross tabulations between political interest and couple type. Table 4.1 shows the results of these statistical analyses between couple type and the interest on different scales of politics. As an ordinal variable is needed

to calculate the spearman correlation coefficient, both types of individuals in a bi-national couple were compared with respondents in a uni-national couple separately.

Table 4.1: Analysis of relation between couple type and political interest: chi-square & spearman correlation

Relation	Couple type	NL-EU (compared to NL-NL)		EU-NL (compared to NL-NL)	
	Chi-square	Chi-square	Correlation	Chi-square	Correlation
Local politics	5.166	1.813	.038	.490	-.030
National politics	37.559***	3.511	-.003	13.589**	-.141**
European politics	13.928**	7.199*	.118**	9.399**	.131**
World politics	17.757**	10.283**	.132**	16.162***	.164***
* p < 5%, ** p < 1%, *** p < 0.1%					

Data source: EUMARR Netherlands

The chi-square statistics show that there is a link between the couple type and the interest in politics of the Netherlands, the European Union and the world. The interest in local politics does not appear to differ for the distinct couple types, in accordance with the descriptive data in Figure 4..

For the interest in national politics, there seems to be no difference between Dutch persons in a bi-national couple and those with a Dutch partner. Thus, the link between couple type and interest in politics is caused by the difference between Dutch and non-Dutch respondents: a small negative correlation ( $\rho=-0.141$ ) has been found between interest in national politics and being EU-NL respondent, compared to being a NL-NL respondent.

The interest in European and world politics seems to be higher when an individual is part of a bi-national couple: a small positive correlation is found between political interest and being in a bi-national couple, for both Dutch and non-Dutch persons in a bi-national union. This association seems to be slightly higher for persons who are non-Dutch than for those who are Dutch in a bi-national couple, which maintains the assumption that non-Dutch individuals in a bi-national couple are more interested in international politics than Dutch persons within a bi-national couple.

Ordinal regression can test whether these associations hold when controlled for the background characteristics of the respondents.

### 4.3 Ordinal regression of political interest at the four levels

Ordinal regressions were carried out for the four different scales of political interest. This paragraph describes the findings of the ordinal regressions and their implications for the hypotheses.

#### 4.3.1 Local politics

In the previous analyses, no significant difference is seen between the distinguished couple types in interest in local politics. This is confirmed by the ordinal regression, which can be seen in Table 4.2, since including couple type does not improve the model fit. When controlled for background characteristics, the only variable that is found to affect local political interest is city of residence:

People in Amsterdam are more interested in local politics than citizens from The Hague. The low impact of the background characteristics on interest in local politics is in line with a study by Coffé (2013), who found that gender, education and occupation do not have an effect on the interest in local politics. No effect for age is found, presumably due to the limited age range of our respondents.

Table 4.2: Ordinal regression of interest in local politics, regression coefficients and standard errors

	Model I β (S.E.)	Model II β (S.E.)	Model III β (S.E.)
Couple type (ref: NL-NL)			
➤ NL-EU	.204 (.174)	.090 (.179)	.073 (.192)
<i>NL-EU (ref: EU-NL)</i>	<i>.267 (.150)~</i>	<i>.122 (.163)</i>	<i>-.215 (.179)</i>
➤ EU-NL	-.063 (.172)	-.031 (.181)	.285 (.201)
City (ref: Amsterdam)		-.493 (.137)***	-.830 (.152)***
Age		.023 (.017)	.015 (.018)
Gender (ref: Female)		.218 (.145)	-.110 (.160)
Education (ref: Low)			
➤ Middle		-.024 (.209)	-.452 (.237)~
➤ High		-.082 (.199)	-.892 (.237)***
Socioeconomic status (ref: Under)			
➤ Average		.200 (.170)	.095 (.188)
➤ Above average		.305 (.181)~	.132 (.200)
National political interest (ref: Low)			
➤ Middle			3.127 (.376)***
➤ High			4.509 (.392)***
X <sup>2</sup> (model fit)	3.37	25.33**	269.16***
Nagelkerke R <sup>2</sup>	.005	.036	.332
* p < 5%, ** p < 1%, *** p < 0.1%, ~ p < 10%			

Data source: EUMARR Netherlands

When the interest in national politics is kept constant, a negative relation is found between being highly educated and interest in local politics: within a group of people with the same level of interest in national politics, highly educated people are less interested in local politics compared to lower educated people. As expected, higher levels of interest in national politics are related to higher levels of interest in local politics.

However, in none of the models a link is found between being in a bi-national relationship and interest in local politics. This means that hypothesis 1.1, which expected the interest in local politics to be lower for non-Dutch persons, is not confirmed by the results. Since the interests of Dutch persons in a bi-national couple are assumed to be relatively similar to those of non-Dutch in a bi-national couple, hypothesis 3.1 assumed the Dutch respondents in a bi-national couple to have

lower interest in local politics than those in a uni-national couple. This difference is not seen in the analysis, which makes sense as European respondents do not show lower levels of interest either.

Finally, an interaction between education of the partner and couple type is added (see Table 7.1 in appendix 7.1). However, as might have been expected from the similarities between the couple types, adding this interaction shows no new significant results.

#### 4.3.2 National politics

For the interest in national politics, the results in Table 4.3 show that Europeans with a Dutch partner are less likely to be interested in the politics of the Netherlands than people who have Dutch as their first nationality ( $p=0.2\%$ ). For Dutch respondents, however, having a partner of another nationality does not have a significant effect on the interest in national politics. Including the control variables does not change the effect that is shown for couple type. To control for overall political interest, the interest in politics of the European Union was included in the third model. Holding the interest in European politics constant results in an even greater negative effect of being non-Dutch, but does not lead to a significant difference between Dutch persons in bi-national couples and those in a uni-national couple.

Adding an interaction effect between the education of the partner and the couple type does not give any additional significant relationships, which can be seen in Table 7.2 in appendix 7.1.2. In fact, by including the interaction means that non-Dutch respondents are not significantly different anymore from the reference category, as part of the small variation explained by being non-Dutch respondent is now explained being a non-Dutch respondent with a partner who has certain education.

In line with the existing literature and assumptions, citizens of The Hague, male, people with higher levels of education and persons of whom the socioeconomic status is above average appear to be more interested in national politics. The effects of city of residence, gender, higher education and higher socioeconomic status get weaker when the interest in European politics is hold constant, because European interest now explains part of the variation that was explained by the background characteristics.

So, the results confirm hypothesis 1.2: non-Dutch Europeans with a Dutch partner appear to be less likely to be interested in national politics compared to Dutch nationals within a uni-national couple. At the same time, hypothesis 2 *“Being non-Dutch in a bi-national couple has a stronger effect at the interest in the national level than it has on the interest at the local level”* is confirmed, since an effect is found at the national level, but not at the local level.

Dutch nationals in a bi-national union, however, show the same amount of interest in national politics than those with a Dutch partner. Because of this, the hypothesis that the interest of Dutch nationals is lower when they are in a bi-national couple (H3) is not confirmed. Although Dutch citizens within a bi-national couple might get fewer chances to discuss national politics within their relationship, their interest in national politics is not lower than this of their fellow nationals.

Table 4.3: Ordinal regression of interest in national politics, regression coefficients and standard errors

	Model I β (S.E.)	Model II β (S.E.)	Model III β (S.E.)
Couple type (ref: NL-NL)			
➤ NL-EU	.031 (.176)	-.037 (.186)	-.326 (.205)
NL-EU (ref: EU-NL)	.577 (.152)***	.409 (.167)*	.789 (.184)***
➤ EU-NL	-.546 (.174)**	-.447 (.186)*	-1.115 (.208)***
City (ref: Amsterdam)		.336 (.140)*	.280 (.153)~
Age		.010 (.017)	-.008 (.019)
Gender (ref: Female)		.733 (.150)***	.389 (.165)*
Education (ref: Low)			
➤ Middle		.521 (.211)*	.520 (.226)*
➤ High		1.176 (.205)***	.702 (.222)**
Socioeconomic status (ref: Under)			
➤ Average		.323 (.171)~	.402 (.185)*
➤ Above average		.490 (.185)**	.350 (.201)~
European political interest (ref: Low)			
➤ Middle			1.834 (.196)***
➤ High			3.803 (.262)***
X <sup>2</sup> (model fit)	17.08***	106.80***	371.36***
Nagelkerke R <sup>2</sup>	.024	.144	.430
* p < 5% , ** p < 1% , *** p < 0.1% , ~ p < 10%			

Data source: EUMARR Netherlands

### 4.3.3 European politics

Table 4.4 shows the results of the first three steps of the ordinal regression of interest in politics of the European Union.

The results of the ordinal regression confirm hypothesis 4.1: people in bi-national couples appear to be more likely to be interested in politics of the European Union than Dutch nationals with a Dutch partner, even when controlled for the background variables and interest in national politics. Although these results confirm the hypothesis, it should be noted that the variable couple type only explains around two percent of the variation within the interest in politics in the European Union.

Furthermore, the regression coefficients of couple type in the third model show that, when controlled for interest in national politics, EU-NL respondents are more interested in European politics than NL-EU respondents. However, this effect falls just outside the 95% confidence level when not controlled for national political interest; when the analysis is done with EU-NL respondents as reference category, the difference between being a Dutch respondent within a binational couple compared to being a non-Dutch within a binational couple has a p-value of 7.9%. So, although hypothesis 5.1 cannot be confirmed by this analysis, it is shown to be likely that European migrants

within a bi-national couple are more interested in politics of the European Union than Dutch persons within a bi-national couple.

Table 4.4: Ordinal regression of interest in European politics, regression coefficients and standard errors

	Model I β (S.E.)	Model II β (S.E.)	Model III β (S.E.)
Couple type (ref: NL-NL)			
➤ NL-EU	.545(.172)**	.474 (.180)***	.591 (.192)**
NL-EU (ref EU-NL)	-.046 (.148)	-.287 (.163)~	-.675 (.181)***
➤ EU-NL	.591 (.170)***	.760 (.184)***	1.266 (.204)***
City (ref: Amsterdam)		.183 (.136)	.027 (.147)
Age		.033 (.017)*	.030 (.018)
Gender (ref: Female)		.774 (.147)***	.520 (.158)***
Education (ref: Low)			
➤ Middle		.243 (.210)	-.170 (.229)
➤ High		1.147 (.203)***	.584 (.220)**
Socioeconomic status (ref: Under)			
➤ Average		-.023 (.169)	-.191 (.183)
➤ Above average		.340 (.181)~	.132 (.195)
National political interest (ref: Low)			
➤ Middle			1.970 (.265)***
➤ High			3.939 (.294)***
X <sup>2</sup> (model fit)	13.78**	114.50***	377.19***
Nagelkerke R <sup>2</sup>	.019	.150	.425
* p < 5% , ** p < 1% , *** p < 0.1% , ~ p < 10%			

Data source: EUMARR Netherlands

The regression further shows that older persons (if not controlled for national interest), males and highly educated are more likely to be interested in European politics, which is supported in the existing literature. Socioeconomic status nonetheless does not significantly affect the interest in European politics.

Eventually, the interaction between education of the partner and couple type was added (Table 7.3, appendix 7.1.3), with the result that Dutch in a bi-national couple were not significantly different from those in a uni-national couple anymore. Instead of this, the results of the interaction indicate that Dutch nationals with a middle or higher educated non-Dutch partner show higher interest in European politics than those with a lower educated partner, though this effect is not significant ( $p_{\text{middle}}=0.117$ ,  $p_{\text{high}}=0.089$ ). Notwithstanding that no conclusions can be done on these outcomes, it suggests that discussion with a non-national partner matters for the interest in European politics

#### 4.3.4 World politics

The analysis of interest in world politics (see

Table 4.5) confirms hypothesis 4.2 that both Dutch and non-Dutch respondents within an international couple are more likely to be interested in world politics than Dutch respondents with a Dutch partner. When controlled for the background characteristics, it appears that the European partners within a bi-national couple are significantly more interested in world politics than the Dutch partner within a bi-national couple. This means that hypothesis 5.2 can be confirmed as well. When the interaction between couple type and education of the partner is included, the significant effect of being a Dutch person in a bi-national relationship disappears (see Table 7.4, appendix 7.1.4. This might be explained by the suggested higher interest of Dutch respondents with a highly educated international partner ( $p=0.142$ ).

Furthermore, the control variables being male, higher education and higher interest in national politics increase the interest in world politics, whereas age and socioeconomic status show no effect. All in all, the interest in world politics follows a similar pattern as the interest in European politics, except for the fact that for the interest in world politics, the difference between NL-EU respondents and EU-NL respondents is significant at the 95% confidence level.

Table 4.5: Ordinal regression of interest in world politics, regression coefficients and standard errors

	Model I $\beta$ (S.E.)	Model II $\beta$ (S.E.)	Model III $\beta$ (S.E.)
Couple type (ref: NL-NL)			
➤ NL-EU	.557(.175)**	.454 (.183)***	.493 (.190)**
<i>NL-EU</i>	-.131 (.150)	-.339 (.166)*	-.612 (.176)***
➤ EU-NL	.689 (.173)***	.793 (.186)***	1.106 (.198)***
City (ref: Amsterdam)		.134 (.138)	.007 (.143)
Age		.026 (.017)	.023 (.018)
Gender (ref: Female)		.702 (.149)***	.466 (.155)**
Education (ref: Low)			
➤ Middle		.439 (.213)*	.211 (.224)
➤ High		1.329 (.208)***	.950 (.217)***
Socioeconomic status (ref: Under)			
➤ Average		-.122 (.171)	-.271 (.178)
➤ Above average		.156 (.182)	-.008 (.190)
National political interest (ref: Low)			
➤ Middle			1.243 (.238)***
➤ High			2.699 (.259)***
$\chi^2$ (model fit)	16.54**	107.90***	255.05***
Nagelkerke $R^2$	.023	.144	.312

\*  $p < 5\%$ , \*\*  $p < 1\%$ , \*\*\*  $p < 0.1\%$ , ~  $p < 10\%$

*Data source: EUMARR Netherlands*

## 5 Conclusion & Discussion

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This thesis showed that there are statistical significant differences between people in bi-national couples and those in uni-national couples when it comes to political interest at the four distinguished political scales. From these results, the overall conclusions of this thesis will be given, showing how individuals in European bi-national relations differ from those in a uni-national relation when it comes to the interest in politics at different spatial levels. Paragraph 5.2 elaborates on these findings and discusses their implications. In the last paragraph, some limitations of this study will be mentioned, leading to recommendations for further research.

### 5.1 Conclusion

The goal of this thesis was to examine how being in a bi-national couple relates to the interest in politics at different spatial levels. The findings show that persons in a bi-national couple have higher interest in international politics compared to people in uni-national couples. This effect is found for Dutch persons with a European partner and even more for non-Dutch individuals living in the Netherlands with a Dutch partner. Moreover, the link remains when controlled for background characteristics of the respondent as well as for interest in national politics.

At the domestic levels, however, being in a bi-national union seems to have no clear effect on political interest. The only association that has been found between being in a bi-national couple and interest in local and national politics is that non-Dutch persons in a bi-national marriage are less interested in national politics than Dutch persons in a uni-national couple. Since no difference in national political interest could be detected between Dutch persons with a Dutch partner and those with an international partner, it can be concluded that the interest in national politics is influenced by the nationality of the individual, rather than by being in a bi-national couple. Furthermore, this link between being in a bi-national couple and political interest does not exist for the interest in local politics, which implies that European immigrants integrate more easily on the local level than they do at the national level.

All in all, the results imply that international contact within a society improves the legitimacy of international institutions without reducing local and national connectedness.

### 5.2 Discussion

This paragraph will elaborate and reflect on the conclusions stated above. First, the results on the interest in local and national politics will be analysed. Thereafter, the results on international interest will be discussed, ending with implications for the effect of international contact on connectedness and legitimacy within and between member states of the European Union.

#### 5.2.1 Bi-national relationships and domestic politics

Because of the differences in background and place attachment between European immigrants and nationals, the first hypothesis stated that non-Dutch persons in a bi-national couple

are less likely to be interested in local and national politics than Dutch individuals. The interest in national politics indeed appears to be lower for non-Dutch partners within a bi-national marriage, confirming that nationality relates to the interest in national politics. At the local level, however, nationality does not seem to influence the interest in politics. This is striking, as having an international background and the associated differences in culture and language, appear to give no problem in the understanding of issues within the cities of The Hague and Amsterdam.

Although some effect was expected at both domestic levels, the negative effect of having an international background was indeed assumed to be less strong at the local level compared to the national level (H2). The existing literature leads to the presumption that integration happens mainly at the local level; earlier studies of non-European immigrants show that migrants identify rather with their city of residence than with the country (Entzinger & Dourleijn, 2008; Groenewold, 2008) and have their social ties in the host country mainly within the city (Van Bochove, 2012). The results on political interest support the idea that, for those with a native partner, integration mainly takes place at the local level. However, another possible reason for the similarity in local interest is that having a national background does not directly relate to a city, whereas it does relate to the country. Just like non-Dutch nationals, Dutch persons might have only lived in Amsterdam/The Hague for a short time yet and therefore they might feel only limited connectedness to the city of residence, explaining that the interest in local politics is relatively low for all groups. Unfortunately, the data did not include information on how long a respondent had lived in the city of residence, so no clear conclusion can be drawn about how the time of living in a place influences the local political interest for Dutch and non-Dutch persons.

Based on the theory of homogamy and the different opportunities for discussion of domestic politics between the couples, it is assumed that the interest of Dutch persons with a European partner are more alike those of non-Dutch persons than those of Dutch in uni-national couples; therefore hypothesis 3 stated that compared to those in uni-national couples, Dutch persons in bi-national couples are less interested in local and national politics. This hypothesis is however not confirmed: both in local and in national politics no difference in interest is found between Dutch persons with a Dutch partner and those with a non-Dutch European partner. For the local politics, this result is logical, as the interest of non-Dutch individuals in a bi-national couple appears to be the same as this of Dutch in uni-national couples. The interest in national politics, however, is lower for non-Dutch parts of a bi-national couple and would hence be assumed to be slightly lower for Dutch with a non-Dutch partner as well. If this link would exist, it appears to be so small that it is hardly measurable. From this it can be concluded that a bi-national relationship does not affect the interest in local and national politics. This suggests that the exposure to domestic issues within a bi-national couple is the same as within a uni-national couple.

Unfortunately, the analysis does not show how the interest of European immigrants in local and national issues is affected by having a Dutch partner. Although it can be expected that immigrants with a native partner are more integrated within the country of residence and have more interest in domestic politics than other immigrants, no conclusions can be drawn on this as the data did not include non-Dutch persons without a Dutch partner.

### 5.2.2 Bi-national relationships and international politics

Since being in a bi-national couple is seen as a strong form of transnational contact, it is assumed to create exposure to international issues and lead to higher levels of interest in international politics. Indeed, the analysis shows that people in bi-national couples are more interested in both politics of the European Union and politics of the world. This association holds for both Dutch and non-Dutch persons in a bi-national couple, as well as when controlled for the background characteristics of the partner. So, the results support the idea that regular exposure to international contact leads to more interest in international politics. Unfortunately, the analysis cannot confirm whether higher interest in international politics is actually caused by having a bi-national relationship, or if people with more international interests are more likely to form a bi-national couple. Longitudinal data on this subject is needed to give a clear answer on the causality of this link.

Furthermore, the analysis shows that when controlled for the background characteristics, the Non-Dutch persons within a bi-national couple are more interested in world politics and presumably in European politics as well, compared to Dutch within a bi-national couple. This shows that besides having a partner from another nationality, having a migration background might increase the interest in international politics as well.

### 5.2.3 Implications

As we have seen, people in bi-national couples are more likely to be interested in politics of the world and Europe, but do not necessarily have different levels of interest in local and national politics. Those conclusions imply that international contact does not limit social cohesion, but only enforces it. Despite the fact that a part of the population fears losing regional and national identity by internationalization (WRR, 2007), this thesis does not find any prove that international contact reduces the local or national interest. As interest in common issues can be seen as both a component and an indicator of the feelings of connectedness within a society, this suggests that internationalization does not impede social cohesion. So, the results on political interest do not show any problem of international contact for the legitimacy of local and national politics. However, as European immigrants show to be less interested in national politics, immigration from other EU member states leads to a population in which the average national interest and feelings of national connectedness are reduced. Although the involvement of European migrants in the city is assumed to be good, integration at the country-scale might need some more assistance.

Meanwhile, the high interest in international politics of persons in binational couples suggests that the connectedness at the level of the European Union and the world enhances due to contact with other European nationalities. The conclusions of this thesis imply that structural international contact leads to more involvement in international politics and thus has a positive effect on the legitimacy of the European Union and international institutions as well as on the feelings of connectedness with other countries.

Furthermore, the results suggest that active involvement in a spatial level is more important to the interest in politics than the amount of opportunities to discuss the issues of this spatial level. As the non-Dutch persons are found to be less interested in national politics, Dutch persons within a binational couple might have fewer opportunities to discuss the national politics with their partner than those with a Dutch partner. However, the results show that national political interest does not differ between Dutch persons with a Dutch partner and those with a non-Dutch European partner. This suggests that exposure to political issues by discussion with the partner does not have a great effect on political interest, and can be compensated by for example discussion with others or a division of tasks in which the more interested partner is in charge of the government matters, such as tax declaration. Contrary, an effect for being in a binational couple is found for the interest in international politics. As international contact does not only increase opportunities for discussion, but also personal involvement in international issues, the conclusions imply that daily contact changes political interest rather by utility and active involvement in those issues than by the opportunity for discussion within the social network only. However, couple data and data on the amount of discussion is needed to give explicit conclusions on the role of discussion in political interest.

### 5.3 Reflection and recommendations for further research

Although the conclusions of this thesis are more or less in line with the existing theory and literature, some limitations have to be considered. First, the reader should bear in mind that in the cases an association is found, this correlation is weak and explains only a small part of the variation in political interest. In explaining interest in different political levels, other factors than having a bi-national relationship might be more decisive.

Secondly, the data on the political interest is based on a limited measure of one unspecified question, which does not give a definition of politics. As Campbell & Winters (2008) note, interest in politics can be interpreted in different ways. Including a definition of what is meant by political interest would have given more accurate results. Besides, data on the overall political interest of the respondent would have been useful to determine better whether variations political interest at certain scales exist due to the connections with that spatial level or mainly due to differences in overall interest in politics. Moreover, additional questions about political involvement, such as the amount of discussion with the partner, could reveal what aspects of international contact are related to the political interest.

Furthermore, the data sample only included people in a couple with at least one Dutch person. To give a more complete view of the effects of being in a bi-national couple on immigrants, couples of which both partners are non-Dutch should be included in future studies. This would create the opportunity to compare European immigrants with a Dutch partner with those without a Dutch partner, and in that way give some interesting information on the effect of having a native partner on the interest in domestic politics and the integration of European immigrants.

Furthermore, as the analysis used cross-sectional data, it does not allow interpreting causal links. Most likely, being in a bi-national couple can lead to differences in political interest. However,

the direction of the effect could also be the other way around, as people with certain interests might be more likely to end up in a love relation (Kalmijn, 1998). A longitudinal study would be needed to confirm the direction of this link.

Finally, the conclusions are based on a sample of persons aged 30 to 45 living in the internationally oriented cities The Hague and Amsterdam. As euroscepticism varies over Europe (Lubbers & Scheepers, 2010), interest in international politics might vary over place as well, not to mention how the interest in local and national politics is affected by place. Involvement in the different scales of politics is also seen to differ over age. Thus, research among different age groups, and residents of other municipalities or countries might show different results.

This study was meant to give some idea of the effect of the European Union on the social cohesion within and between member states. The results of this thesis on political interest in the Netherlands imply that international contact increases international cohesion, without affecting the local and national bonds of citizens. However, differences in political interest only do not provide a full picture of social cohesion. Therefore, other components of social cohesion, such as feelings of connectedness, solidarity, understanding of others and collective identity, need to be researched in order to get a clear understanding of how European contact changes social cohesion within and between countries.

## 6 References

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## 7 Appendix

### 7.1 Ordinal regression models of political interest

#### 7.1.1 Interest in local politics

Table 7.1: Ordinal regression of interest in local politics (complete model)

	Model I β (S.E.)	Model IIA β (S.E.)	Model IIB β (S.E.)	Model IIIA β (S.E.)	Model IIIB β (S.E.)
Couple type (ref: NL-NL)					
➤ NL-EU	.204 (.174)	.090 (.179)	.183 (.385)	.073 (.192)	.350 (.421)
<i>NL-EU (ref: EU-NL)</i>	<i>.267 (.150)~</i>	<i>.122 (.163)</i>		<i>.215 (.179)</i>	
➤ EU-NL	-.063 (.172)	-.031 (.181)	-.071 (.388)	.285 (.201)	.162 (.434)
City (ref: Amsterdam)		-.493 (.137)***	-.491 (.139)***	-.830 (.152)***	-.830 (.154)***
Age		.023 (.017)	.020 (.017)	.015 (.018)	.015 (.019)
Gender (ref: Female)		.218 (.145)	.212 (.146)	-.110 (.160)	-.108 (.161)
Education (ref: Low)					
➤ Middle		-.024 (.209)	-.068 (.223)	-.452 (.237)~	-.528 (.252)*
➤ High		-.082 (.199)	-.124 (.223)	-.892 (.237)***	-.928 (.255)***
Socioeconomic status (ref: Under average)					
➤ Average		.200 (.170)	.199 (.171)	.095 (.188)	.090 (.188)
➤ Above average		.305 (.181)~	.288 (.183)	.132 (.200)	.128 (.202)
Couple type * Education partner (ref: Low)					
➤ NL-NL * Middle			.202 (.370)		.323 (.405)
➤ NL-NL * High			.103 (.395)		.094 (.433)
➤ NL-EU * Middle			.050 (.328)		-.115 (.350)
➤ NL-EU * High			.019 (.315)		-.155 (.337)
➤ EU-NL * Middle			.137 (.329)		.427 (.375)
➤ EU-NL * High			.225 (.320)		.294 (.358)
National political interest (ref: Low)					
➤ Middle				3.127 (.376)***	1.978 (.267)***
➤ High				4.509 (.392)***	3.925 (.296)***
X <sup>2</sup> (model fit)	3.37	25.33**	25.53*	269.16***	271.46***
Nagelkerke R <sup>2</sup>	.005	.036	.035	.332	.334
* p < 5%, ** p < 1%, *** p < 0.1%, ~ p < 10%					

### 7.1.2 Interest in national politics

Table 7.2: Ordinal regression of interest in national politics (complete model)

	Model I β (S.E.)	Model IIA β (S.E.)	Model IIB β (S.E.)	Model IIIA β (S.E.)	Model IIIB β (S.E.)
Couple type (ref: NL-NL)					
➤ NL-EU	.031 (.176)	-.037 (.186)	-.059 (.391)	-.326 (.205)	-.127 (.416)
<i>NL-EU (ref: EU-NL)</i>	<i>.577 (.152)***</i>	<i>.409 (.167)*</i>		<i>.789 (.184)***</i>	
➤ EU-NL	-.546 (.174)**	-.447 (.186)*	-.110 (.390)	-1.115 (.208)***	-.642 (.415)
City (ref: Amsterdam)		.336 (.140)*	-.359 (.143)*	.280 (.153)~	.285 (.156)
Age		.010 (.017)	.009 (.018)	-.008 (.019)	-.009 (.019)
Gender (ref: Female)		.733 (.150)***	.720 (.152)***	.389 (.165)*	.392 (.166)*
Education (ref: Low)					
➤ Middle		.521 (.211)*	.476 (.225)*	.520 (.226)*	.499 (.240)*
➤ High		1.176 (.205)***	1.034 (.227)***	.702 (.222)**	.633 (.245)**
Socioeconomic status (ref: Under average)					
➤ Average		.323 (.171)~	.298 (.173)~	.402 (.185)*	.381 (.187)*
➤ Above average		.490 (.185)**	.426 (.187)*	.350 (.201)~	.300 (.203)
Couple type * Education partner (ref: Low)					
➤ NL-NL * Middle			.187 (.377)		.313 (.402)
➤ NL-NL * High			.463 (.410)		.421 (.445)
➤ NL-EU * Middle			.329 (.335)		.038 (.362)
➤ NL-EU * High			.337 (.322)		.131 (.351)
➤ EU-NL * Middle			-.381 (.329)		-.442 (.351)
➤ EU-NL * High			.072 (.823)		-.116 (.342)
European political interest (ref: Low)					
➤ Middle				1.834 (.196)***	
➤ High				3.803 (.262)***	
X <sup>2</sup> (model fit)	17.08***	106.80***	109.70***	371.35***	369.00***
Nagelkerke R <sup>2</sup>	.024	.144	.149	.430	.430
* p < 5% , ** p < 1% , *** p < 0.1% , ~ p < 10%					

### 7.1.3 Interest in European politics

Table 7.3: Ordinal regression of interest in European politics (complete model)

	Model I β (S.E.)	Model IIA β (S.E.)	Model IIB β (S.E.)	Model IIIA β (S.E.)	Model IIIB β (S.E.)
Couple type (ref: NL-NL)					
➤ NL-EU <i>NL-EU (ref: EU-NL)</i>	.545(.172)** -.046 (.148)	.474 (.180)*** -.287 (.163)~	.132 (.391)	.591 (.192)** -.675 (.181)***	.234 (.422)
➤ EU-NL	.591 (.170)***	.760 (.184)***	.771 (.389)*	1.266 (.204)***	1.088 (.425)*
City (ref: Amsterdam)		.183 (.136)	.224 (.139)	.027 (.147)	.062 (.149)
Age		.033 (.017)*	.035 (.017)*	.030 (.018)	.030 (.018)~
Gender (ref: Female)		.774 (.147)***	.744 (.148)***	.520 (.158)***	.498 (.159)**
Education (ref: Low)					
➤ Middle		.243 (.210)	.212 (.223)	-.170 (.229)	-.197 (.243)
➤ High		1.147 (.203)***	1.022 (.224)***	.584 (.220)**	.494 (.242)*
Socioeconomic status (ref: Under average)					
➤ Average		-.023 (.169)	-.023 (.170)	-.191 (.183)	-.182 (.184)
➤ Above average		.340 (.181)~	.298 (.183)	.132 (.195)	.122 (.197)
Couple type * Education partner (ref: Low)					
➤ NL-NL * Middle			-.078 (.373)		-.139 (.405)
➤ NL-NL * High			.313 (.397)		.117 (.429)
➤ NL-EU * Middle			.519 (.331)		.441 (.351)
➤ NL-EU * High			.540 (.317)~		.422 (.337)
➤ EU-NL * Middle			.026 (.324)		.207 (.353)
➤ EU-NL * High			.155 (.316)		.227 (.341)
National political interest (ref: Low)					
➤ Middle				1.970 (.265)***	1.978 (.267)***
➤ High				3.939 (.294)***	3.925 (.296)***
X <sup>2</sup> (model fit)	13.78**	114.50***	117.88***	377.19***	375.08***
Nagelkerke R <sup>2</sup>	.019	.150	.155	.425	.426
* p < 5% , ** p < 1% , *** p < 0.1% , ~ p < 10%					

Data source: EUMARR Netherlands

### 7.1.4 Interest in world politics

Table 7.4: Ordinal regression of interest in world politics (complete model)

	Model I β (S.E.)	Model IIA β (S.E.)	Model IIB β (S.E.)	Model IIIA β (S.E.)	Model IIIB β (S.E.)
Couple type (ref: NL-NL)					
➤ NL-EU <i>NL-EU (ref: EU-NL)</i>	.557(.175)** -.131 (.150)	.454 (.183)*** -.339 (.166)*	.356 (.399)	.493 (.190)** -.612 (.176)***	.455 (.420)
➤ EU-NL	.689 (.173)***	.793 (.186)***	.985 (.396)*	1.106 (.198)***	1.200 (.419)**
City (ref: Amsterdam)		.134 (.138)	.154 (.140)	.007 (.143)	.015 (.146)
Age		.026 (.017)	.028 (.017)*	.023 (.018)	.024 (.018)
Gender (ref: Female)		.702 (.149)***	.669 (.150)***	.466 (.155)**	.440 (.156)**
Education (ref: Low)					
➤ Middle		.439 (.213)*	.383 (.227)~	.211 (.224)	.170 (.237)
➤ High		1.329 (.208)***	1.187 (.228)***	.950 (.217)***	.849 (.239)***
Socioeconomic status (ref: Under average)					
➤ Average		-.122 (.171)	-.141 (.172)	-.271 (.178)	-.279 (.179)
➤ Above average		.156 (.182)	.122 (.185)	-.008 (.190)	-.022 (.192)
Couple type * Education partner (ref: Low)					
➤ NL-NL * Middle			-.182 (.379)		.163 (.401)
➤ NL-NL * High			.472 (.403)		.356 (.425)
➤ NL-EU * Middle			.271 (.335)		.142 (.347)
➤ NL-EU * High			.472 (.322)		.321 (.333)
➤ EU-NL * Middle			.022 (.328)		.164 (.341)
➤ EU-NL * High			.045 (.319)		.042 (.331)
National political interest (ref: Low)					
➤ Middle				1.243 (.238)***	1.256 (.240)***
➤ High				2.699 (.259)***	2.702 (.261)***
X <sup>2</sup> (model fit)	16.54**	107.90***	108.46***	255.05***	253.41***
Nagelkerke R <sup>2</sup>	.023	.144	.146	.312	.312
* p < 5% , ** p < 1% , *** p < 0.1% , ~ p < 10%					

Data source: EUMARR Netherlands