



Disponible en ligne sur

**ScienceDirect**  
www.sciencedirect.com

Elsevier Masson France

**EM|consulte**  
www.em-consulte.com/en



Original article

## When implicit fails: Explicit but not implicit attitudes predict choices of decided and undecided voters



### *Quand l'implicite échoue : les attitudes explicites (mais pas implicites) prédisent le choix des votants décidés et indécis*

V. Berthet\*, L. Barthélémy, J.-L. Kop

Université de Lorraine (Nancy 2), UFR Connaissance de l'Homme, 3, place Godefroy-de-Bouillon BP3397, 54015 Nancy cedex, France

## ARTICLE INFO

## Article history:

Received 14 May 2013  
Received in revised form  
25 September 2014  
Accepted 30 September 2014

## Keywords:

Voting intention  
Implicit attitudes  
Undecided voters  
Implicit Association Test

## Mots clés :

Intention de vote  
Attitudes implicites  
Votants indécis  
Test d'associations implicites

## ABSTRACT

**Introduction.** – A recent study (Frieze et al., 2012) involving two major political elections in the US and Germany reported that voting behavior was better predicted by explicit than implicit attitudes for both decided and undecided voters and that when voting behavior was predicted by implicit attitudes, the prediction was better for decided than undecided voters.

**Objective.** – We conducted a comparable study for the 2012 French presidential election using voter volatility as a measure of voter decidedness, in order to test the generalizability of the findings of Frieze et al. (2012).

**Method.** – Participants' voting intention, explicit and implicit attitudes towards the candidates Sarkozy and Hollande were collected during the 2 weeks separating the two rounds of the election.

**Results.** – Our findings confirm that explicit attitudes outperform implicit attitudes when predicting voting choice, but not that the relationship between implicit attitudes and voting intention is moderated by voter decidedness.

**Conclusion.** – Further research is needed in order to test whether the moderation of implicit attitudes by voter decidedness is a robust finding or not.

© 2014 Elsevier Masson SAS. All rights reserved.

## R É S U M É

**Introduction.** – Une récente étude (Frieze et al., 2012) portant sur deux élections politiques majeures aux États-Unis et en Allemagne a montré que le comportement de vote était mieux prédit par les attitudes explicites que par les attitudes implicites à la fois chez les votants décidés et les votants indécis et que lorsque l'on prédit le comportement de vote uniquement par les attitudes implicites, la prédiction est meilleure pour les votants décidés que pour les votants indécis.

**Objectif.** – Nous avons réalisé une étude comparable pour l'élection présidentielle française de 2012 en opérationnalisant le caractère décidé des votants par la volatilité du vote entre les deux tours, afin de tester le caractère généralisable des résultats de Frieze et al. (2012).

**Méthode.** – L'intention de vote ainsi que les attitudes explicites et implicites des participants envers les candidats Sarkozy et Hollande ont été recueillies durant les deux semaines séparant les deux tours de l'élection.

**Résultats.** – D'un côté, nos résultats confirment que les attitudes explicites prédisent mieux le choix de vote que les attitudes implicites. En revanche, lorsque les attitudes implicites sont utilisées comme unique prédicteur de l'intention de vote, la prédiction est aussi bonne pour les votants décidés que pour les votants indécis.

**Conclusion.** – Des recherches supplémentaires doivent être menées pour tester si l'influence des attitudes implicites sur l'intention de vote est réellement différente entre les votants décidés et les votants indécis.

© 2014 Elsevier Masson SAS. Tous droits réservés.

\* Corresponding author at: Laboratoire InterPsy, Université de Lorraine - EA 4432, Nancy, France.  
E-mail addresses: vksberthet@gmail.com, vincent.berthet@univ-lorraine.fr (V. Berthet).

Predicting voting behavior based on attitudes represents a serious challenge for psychologists. This issue has been largely addressed using explicit attitudes, but with the advent of implicit social cognition (Greenwald & Banaji, 1995) and the Implicit Association Test (IAT) of Greenwald, McGhee, and Schwartz (1998), implicit attitudes can now be added as predictor of voting choice (Gawronski & Galdi, 2011; Nosek, Graham, & Hawkins, 2010).

The present paper investigated the role of implicit and explicit political attitudes in the prediction of voting choice for decided and undecided voters. Several studies have already scrutinized how voting behavior can be predicted based on attitudes. While most of these studies did not differentiate decided and undecided voters (Karpinski, Steinman, & Hilton, 2005; Friese, Bluemke, & Wänke, 2007; Roccoato & Zogmaister, 2010; Greenwald, Smith, Sriram, Bar-Anan, & Nosek, 2009), two notable recent studies included this distinction. The first one is that of Galdi, Arcuri, and Gawronski (2008) even though it did not truly involve voting choice but rather participants' opinions. In their study, Galdi et al. measured explicit and implicit attitudes in residents of the city of Vicenza (Italy) towards the enlargement of a US military base in their city. Importantly, participants' attitudes were assessed twice, the two measurement occasions being separated by 1 week. When performing multiple logistic regression analyses with participants' opinions measured at time 2 as criterion and implicit and explicit attitudes measured at time 1 as predictors separately for decided and undecided voters, Galdi et al. showed that while explicit but not implicit attitudes predicted *decided* participants' opinions, conversely, implicit but not explicit attitudes predicted *undecided* participants' opinions. One should note that these findings are related to participants' opinions (rather than participants' voting) on a local politics issue (rather than a major political issue such as a national election).

The second relevant study on that topic was done recently by Friese, Smith, Plischke, Bluemke, and Nosek (2012) who investigated whether the findings of Galdi et al. (2008) extend to the context of two national political elections, the 2008 US presidential election and the 2009 German parliamentary election. Friese et al. did not really seek to replicate the results of Galdi et al. but rather to investigate the role of implicit and explicit political attitudes in future choices of decided and undecided voters. They framed this problematic through four claims:

- implicit attitudes predict voting behavior better than explicit attitudes for undecided voters;
- explicit attitudes predict voting behavior better than implicit attitudes for decided voters;
- implicit attitudes predict voting behavior better for undecided than decided voters;
- explicit attitudes predict voting behavior better for decided than undecided voters.

Note that the findings of Galdi et al. are related to claims 1 and 2. On one hand, the results of Friese et al. covered the four claims though they particularly addressed the first three claims. Performing logistic regression analyses with voting behavior as criterion and implicit and explicit attitudes as predictors separately for decided and undecided voters, Friese et al. showed on one hand that explicit attitudes alone predicted voting behavior better than implicit attitudes alone, for *both* types of voters. This result corroborates claim 2 but not claim 1 and hence is not in line with the conclusions of Galdi et al. In addition, when the two predictors were entered simultaneously in the regression, implicit attitudes did not much improve the accuracy of the prediction of voting behavior as compared to that obtained with explicit attitudes alone. This means that the incremental validity of implicit attitudes over explicit attitudes was virtually non-existent, though slightly higher

for undecided as compared to decided voters (in Study 2 but not in Study 1). On the other hand, when performing logistic regression analyses with all subjects together (decided and undecided voters), Friese et al. reported that voter decidedness moderated the influence of implicit attitudes on voting behavior in a direction such that implicit attitudes predicted voting behavior better for *decided* as compared to undecided voters (note that this interaction was found when explicit attitudes were not controlled for). This finding is actually opposite to claim 3.

Friese et al. (2012) assumed that this result could be accounted for by the moderating influence of the degree of cognitive elaboration of political attitudes on the implicit-explicit correspondence. The explanatory scheme is that:

- the higher the degree of elaboration of political attitudes, the higher implicit and explicit attitudes will be correlated;
- the higher the implicit-explicit correlation, the more implicit attitudes will be predictive but the less they will be predictive *incrementally* (Greenwald, Poehlman, Uhlmann, & Banaji, 2009).

Assuming that political attitudes are more elaborated among decided voters than among undecided voters, the implicit-explicit correspondence should be higher among decided voters as compared to undecided voters, and therefore the predictive validity of implicit attitudes should be higher among decided voters.

## 1. Goals of the present research

The discrepancy between the findings of Galdi et al. (2008) and those of Friese et al. (2012) regarding the prediction of the vote of decided and undecided voters calls for further investigation of that topic. We independently conducted a study similar to Friese et al. in the context of the 2012 French presidential election, which opposed the incumbent *Sarkozy* (representing the right-wing) and *Hollande* (representing the left-wing). Therefore, our study is a conceptual replication of that of Friese et al. and allows one to test the generalizability of their findings. In fact, there were several methodological differences between our respective studies. Firstly, while Friese et al. considered participants' actual vote, we considered participants' voting intention. Secondly, while Friese et al. measured voter decidedness directly through self-report, we used voter volatility as an indirect indicator of voter decidedness. In fact, the French presidential election takes place through a two-round voting system. In the first round, voters choose among several candidates (10 in the 2012 election). The second round involves only the two leading candidates of the first round and it takes place 2 weeks after the first round. Such an election system allows one to define voter volatility, which refers to whether a voter has selected the same candidate in both rounds or not. It is frequently argued that non-volatile voters can be characterized as decided ones while volatile voters correspond to undecided ones (e.g., Bybee, McLeod, Luetscher, & Garramone, 1981). As in the study of Friese et al. (2012), our study also included an attitude IAT related to the candidates and an attitude IAT related to their respective political camps (*UMP: Union pour un Mouvement Populaire* for Sarkozy and *PS: Parti Socialiste* for Hollande).

In sum, the two hypotheses we tested were:

- explicit attitudes alone predicted voting behavior better than implicit attitudes alone for both decided and undecided voters;
- implicit attitudes predicted voting behavior better for decided than undecided voters (voter decidedness moderated the influence of implicit attitudes on voting behavior).

Download English Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/en/article/895421>

Download Persian Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/article/895421>

[Daneshyari.com](https://daneshyari.com)