

Success and failure of recruitment of respondents into an international web panel

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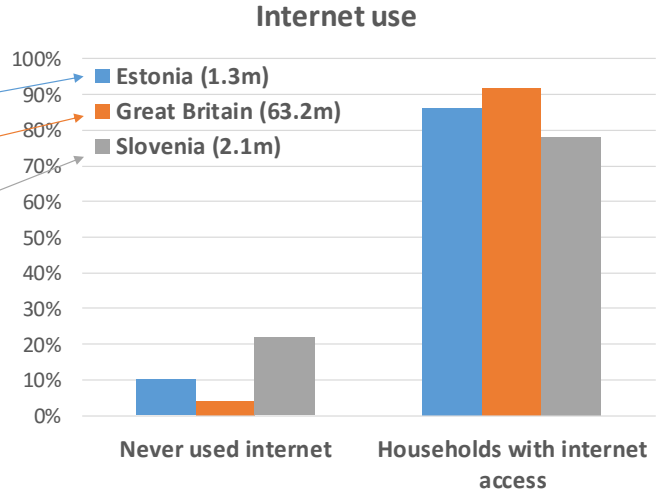
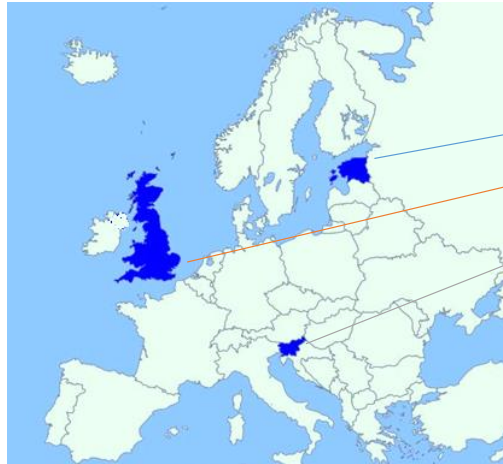


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Research question

- Popularity of web surveys on the rise, but representativeness is still a challenge
- Several international surveys consider going online, plans of international e-registers of data (eHealth)
- What are the obstacles and opportunities of **recruiting** and **maintaining** (= avoiding attrition) a representative **international web panel**?

CRONOS: The case of Estonia



Villar et al 2017; Internet use estimates from Eurostat 2016

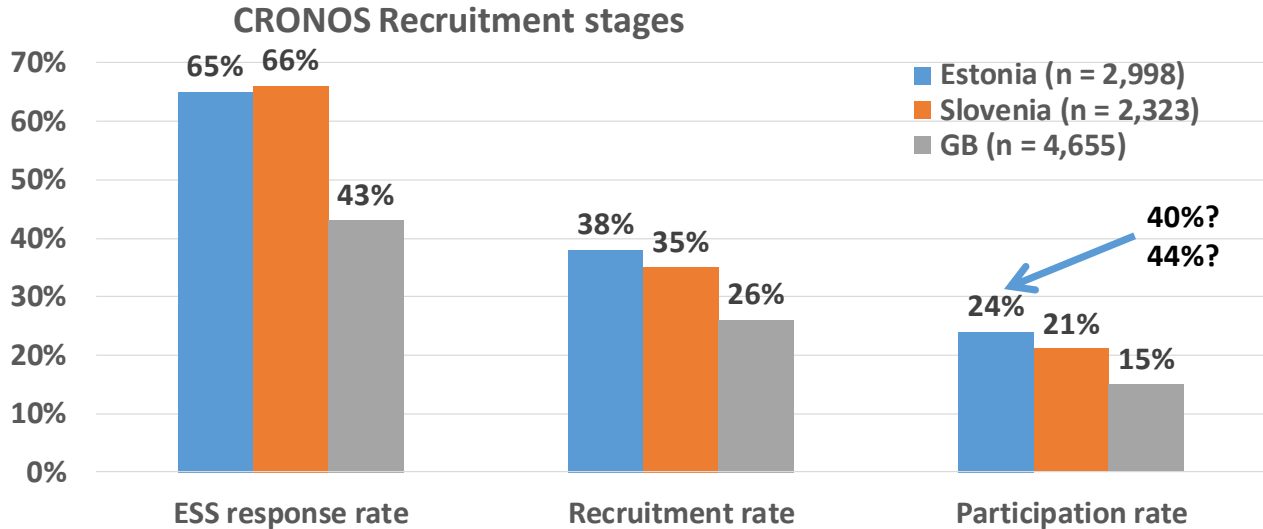
CROss-National Online Survey (CRONOS)

- Part of the SERISS project
- Six 20-minute surveys every two months in a period of one year
- Various topics: questions about values and opinions on family life, work, social and political issues, health, etc.
- Recruitment by piggy-backing on ESS8 respondents (Oct 2016 - Jan 2017)
 - Welcome survey to stay in touch
- £5/€5 incentives per survey invitation
- Respondents without internet access were offered a tablet with internet
- Contacts per wave: invitation + three reminders

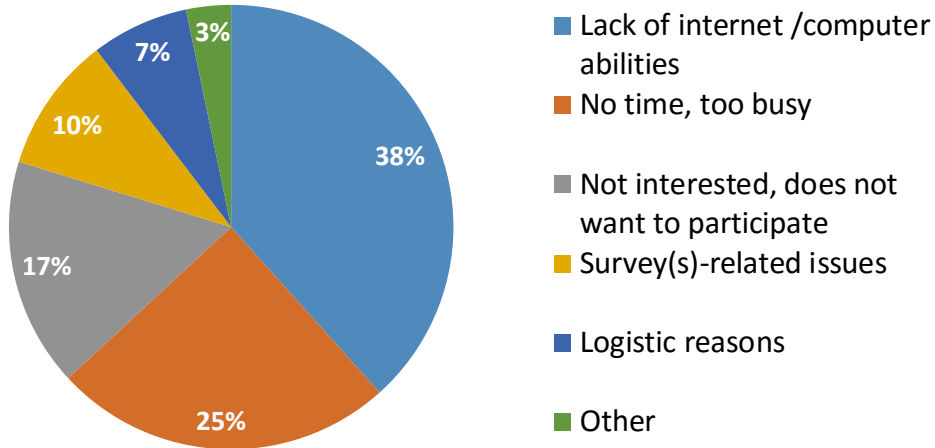
CRONOS Recruitment Procedure

- About an hour after the start of ESS8 interview
- Brief verbal description of the panel (panel duration, time burden, topics, incentives, tablet offer to eligible respondents) along with a leaflet
- Tablet offer
 - Initial design (UK & SI): probe 18+ respondents whether they have access to internet outside of work; if not, include the tablet offer
 - Adapted design (EE): present the tablet offer to 18+ respondents who stated they never use the internet
- Unconditional (pre-paid) incentives
 - e-gift cards of a supermarket chain
 - €10 in every other wave (1st, 3rd, 5th wave)

CRONOS Recruitment Stages



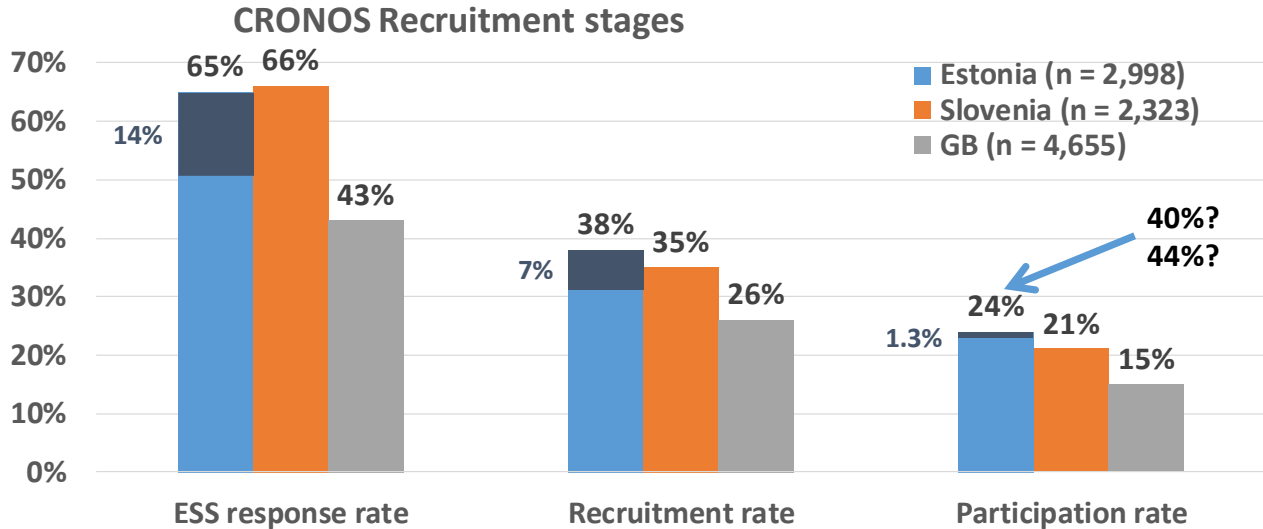
CRONOS Recruitment: Reasons for not participating



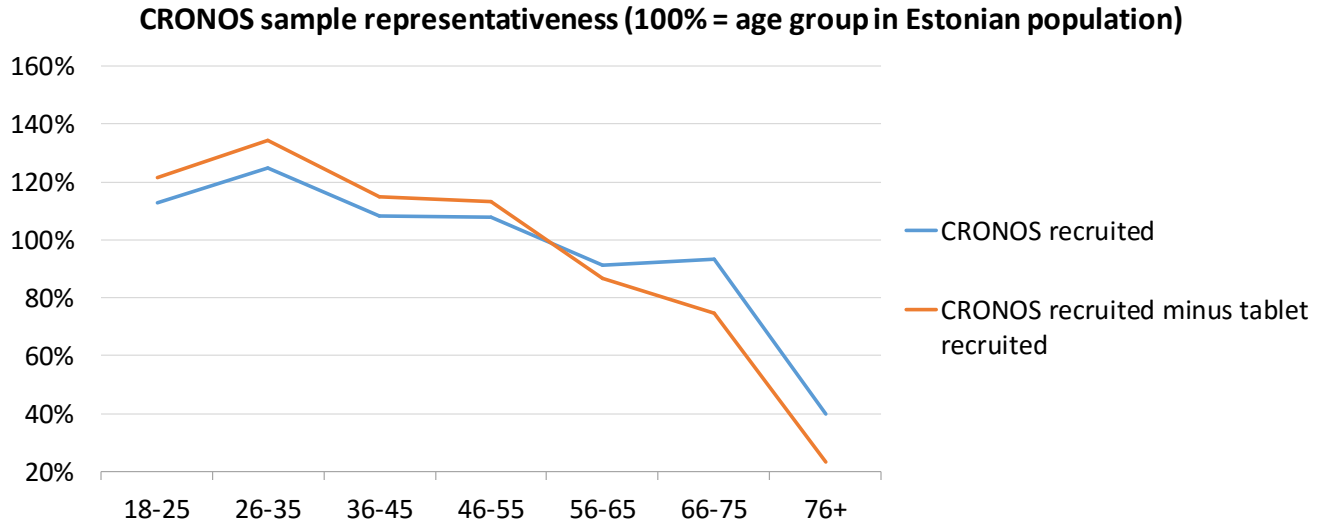
Recruitment Step 2: Consent for international data transfer

- Asking for respondents' consent for storing personal data on Questback in Germany, allowing access to NSD in Norway
- Email asking for consent a few weeks after recruitment, reminder (identical email) a week later, phone call if no answer
- 2,4% of the emailed respondents dropped out due to concerns over the data going abroad
- Not all respondents replied, not all who withdrew gave a reason => Percentage of dropping out due to concerns over data going abroad likely to be twice as high

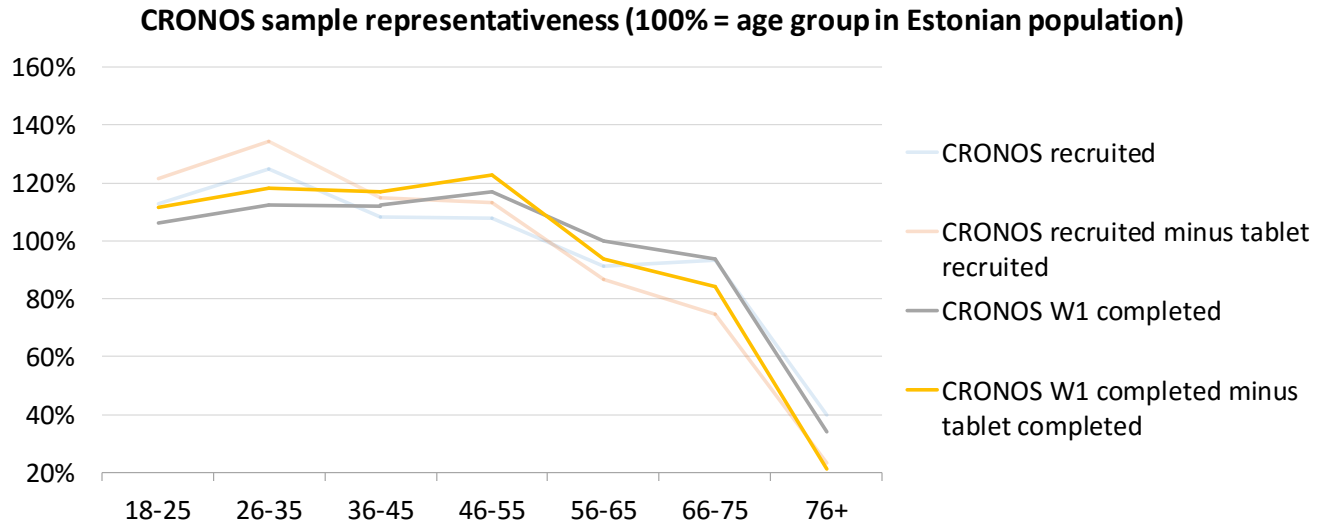
CRONOS Recruitment Stages



CRONOS sample w/ and w/o tablet respondents



CRONOS sample w/ and w/o tablet respondents



CRONOS Recruitment Procedure: Tablet sample

- 428 ESS8 respondents (out of 1948) eligible for a tablet
- 82 were recruited during ESS8 interview (12 of them actually had access to internet)
- 46 confirmed recruits after follow-up calls
- 38 eventually accepted the tablet

Tablet issues

- Samsung Galaxy Tab A6 LTE in all 3 countries
 - Central purchase of tablets – more obstacles than expected
- Average age of participating tablet respondents: 70 years
- Measures to avoid attrition
 - Setting up tablets ASAP – as simple as possible
 - Instruction during tablet delivery, help sheets, helpline
 - Despite that, unforeseeable / difficult-to-handle problems come up

Selectivity: MLR model

Dep Var	CRONOS recruited
Indep Vars	
Intercept	2.553***
Age	-.049***
Male	-1.152***
Male*Age	.017**
Education	
Primary	-.882***
Vocational	-.470***
Secondary	-.477**
Life satisfaction	.087***
Generalised trust	.052*
Model χ^2	319.2, p < .001
Nagelkerke Pseudo R ²	.204
n	1944

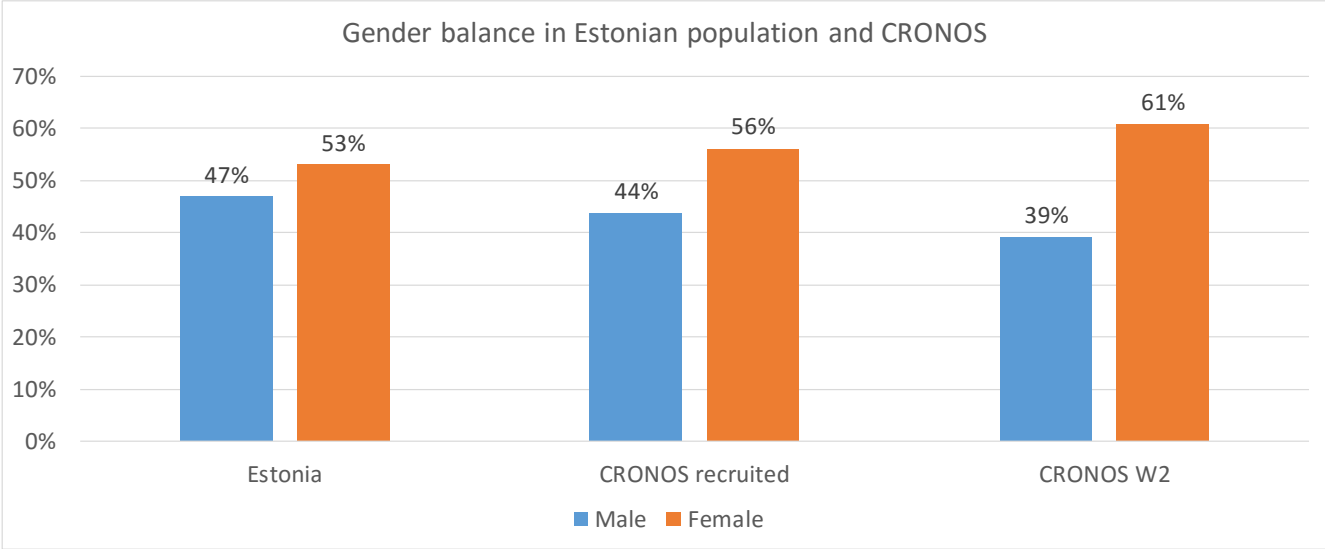
Selectivity: MLR model

Dep Var	CRONOS recruited	Wave 1 completed	Wave 2 completed
Indep Vars			
Intercept	2.553***	.266	.058
Age	-.049***	-.030***	-.026***
Male	-1.152***	-1.199***	-1.221***
Male*Age	.017**	.019**	.018**
Education			
Primary	-.882***	-1.239***	-1.460***
Vocational	-.470***	-.587***	-.668***
Secondary	-.477**	-.360*	-.405**
Life satisfaction	.087***	.089**	.063*
Generalised trust	.052*	.109***	.121***
Model χ^2	319.2, p < .001	217.9, p < .001	206.0, p < .001
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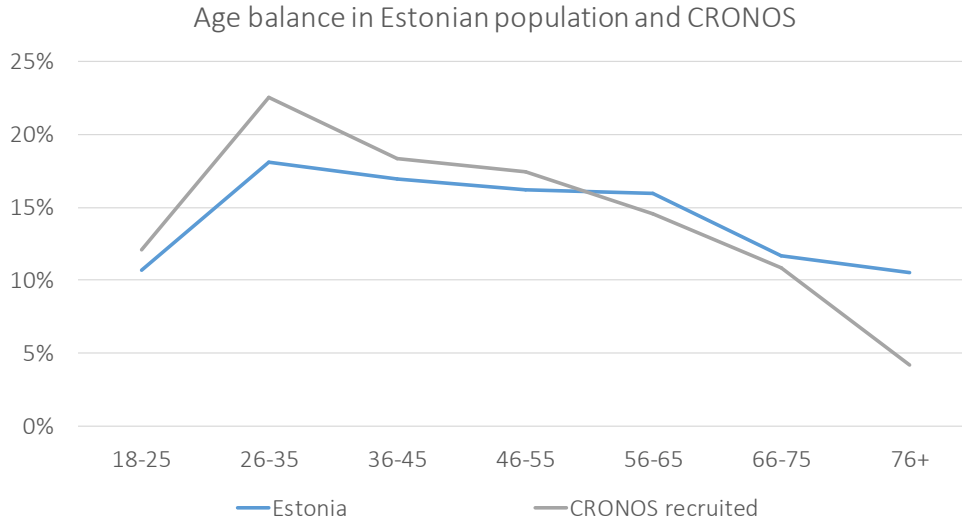
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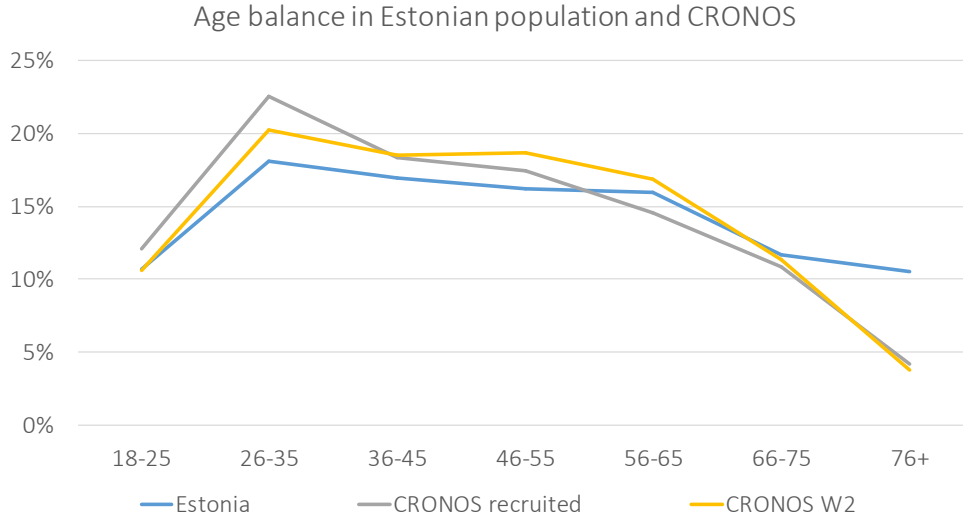
Selectivity: Gender



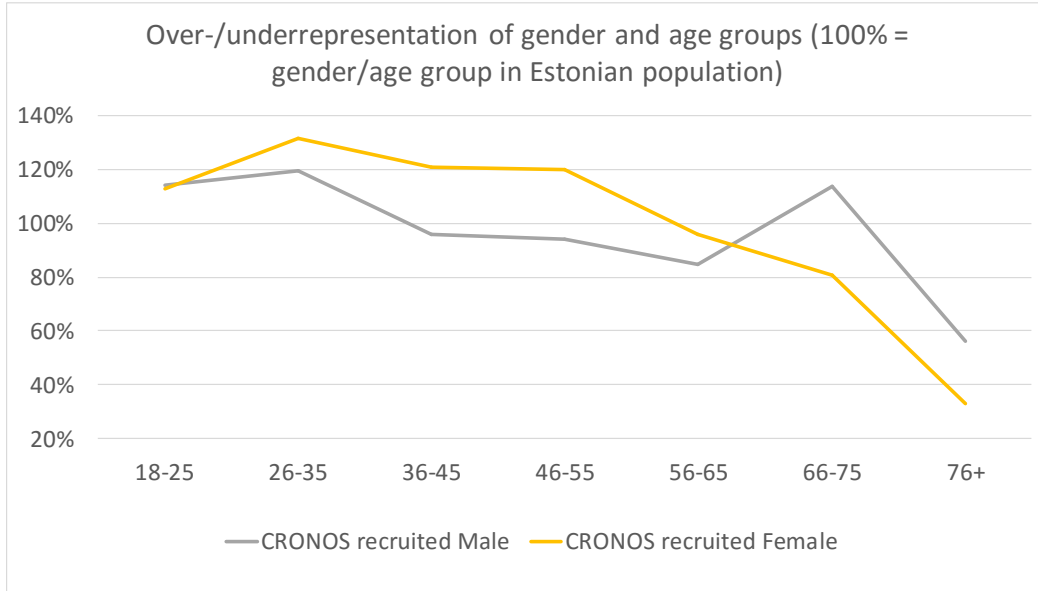
Selectivity: Age



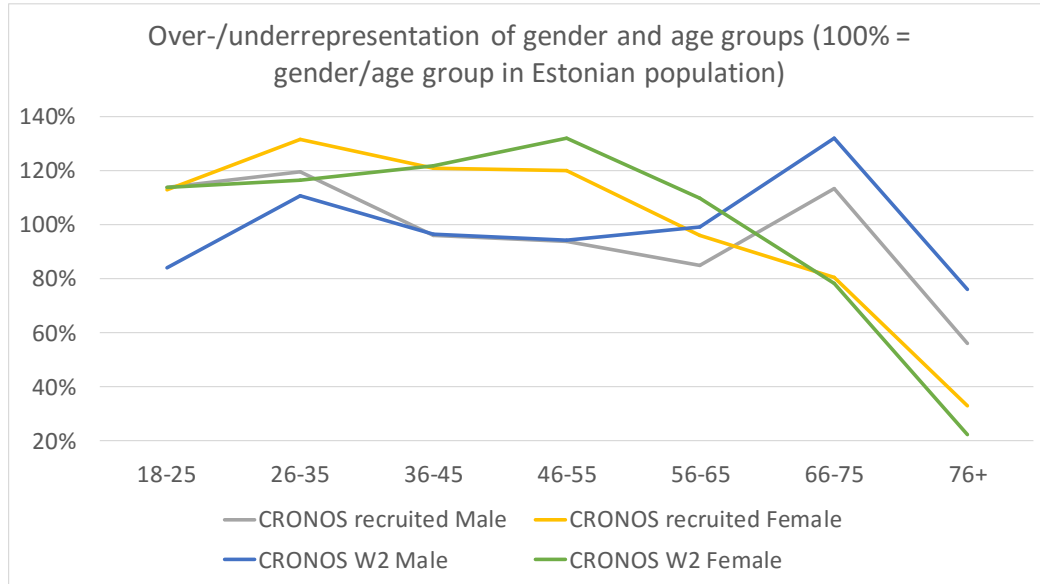
Selectivity: Age



Selectivity: Age & Gender

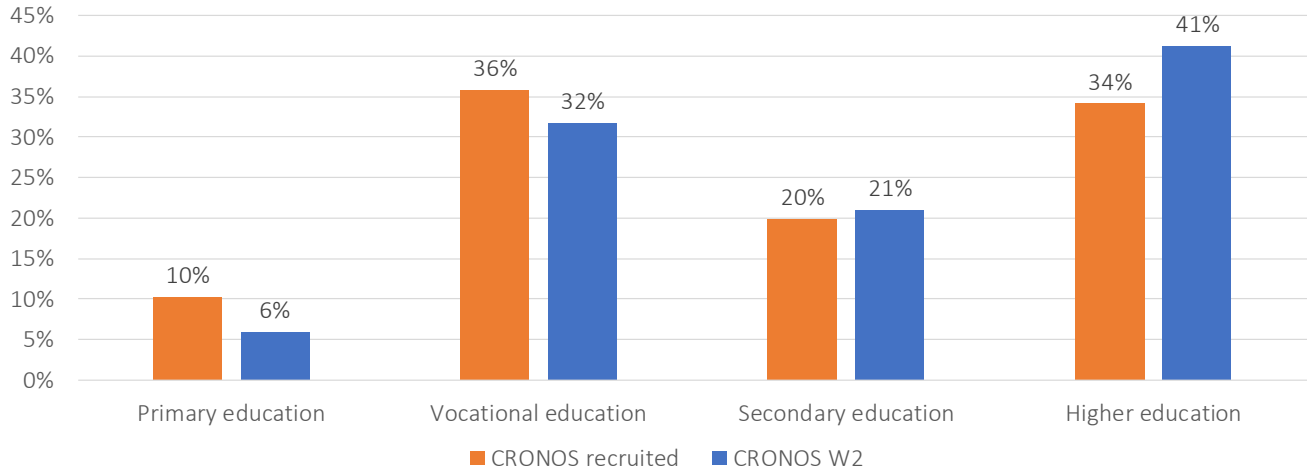


Selectivity: Age & Gender



Selectivity: Education

Educational balance in CRONOS



Challenges of international surveys

- Organisational and methodological difficulties multiply (because of societal differences, difficulties to guarantee methodologically equal treatment)
- Data protection and privacy regulations become a bigger challenge and may have an additional effect on the centrally coordinated sample
- Panel sample management requires a lot of communication at the local level – needs coordination, but cannot be carried out fully automated
- Incentives
 - Difficult to achieve comparability in terms of type (cash vs different types of vouchers), value (real and subjective value), and distribution (by email vs post)
 - Can create market distortions

Positive sides

- 20% response rate is good, could be higher
- Respondents who took up participation are committed, high completion rates so far (after 6 months)
- Although the sample is not perfectly representative (overrepresentation of more positive and trustworthy persons, underrepresentation of 76+ population) it has better representativity of younger and middle-aged population, men than in traditional F2F surveys
- More data from each respondent (panel waves + F2F)
- Quicker?

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