Supplemental Material
Schulte-Cloos (2019): 'The effect of European Parliament elections on political socialisation'

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Do European Parliament (EP) elections have adverse effects on the political socialisation of individuals? Instilling a lasting political disaffection in impressionable voters, the supranational contest may have negative consequences for long-term political socialisation. Relying on a large cross-national dataset from 2004, I identify the causal effect of first-time eligibility and voting in the EP elections by exploiting the exogenous variation in adolescents' birth months. The results of a discontinuity design show that the elections do not politically disengage young voters or strengthen their party bonds to radical or Eurosceptic parties. Instead, the EP elections arouse their political interest in general and their European interest in particular; a long-lasting effect that persists for more than five years. Placebo tests and various robustness tests confirm the results. Considering that individuals are most receptive towards political socialisation stimuli during early adulthood, this study sheds light on the integrative potential of the EP elections.

Keywords: European integration, European Parliament elections, political interest, political socialisation, quasi-experiment, voting behaviour

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1 Descriptives

Table A1 lists the countries in the analysis along with the total number of adolescents and those treated, i.e. those who were eligible for the EP elections 2004. It also reports the mean and standard deviation of political interest by country. The EUYOUPART survey includes also Austria and Slovakia. As both countries held another state-wide election closely before the EP contest (presidential elections on 3 April 2004 in Slovakia and on 25 April 2004 in Austria), there are too few respondents left that came of age for the EP elections (10 respondents in Slovakia and 6 in Austria). Consequently, the analysis does not include both countries.

Table A1. Descriptive statistics of political interest across countries

Country	N	Eligible	Mean Pol. Interest	SD Pol. Interest
Estonia	126	52	2.25	0.64
Finland	130	62	2.25	0.75
France	103	47	2.17	0.93
Germany	169	85	2.47	0.77
Italy	116	56	2.48	0.80
United Kingdom	103	54	1.90	0.76

1.1 Countries and parties in the analysis

The EUYOUPART survey provides a measure of adolescents' partisan attachment to all significant parties within a country that competed for votes in the EP elections 2004 and/or the respective last national election within each country. Young individuals were asked: 'How close or distant do you feel to each of the following parties?'. The classification of parties for the analysis follows expert surveys as integrated in the ParlGov database (Döring and Manow 2018). Anti-European parties are all parties that are classified with values below 4, on the scale from 1-10. If there are two or more parties of the same party family within one country, I consider the respective party that is closest to an individual.

Table A2. Parties in the analysis

Country	Party	Abbr.
	Populist Radical Left	
Finland	Democratic Union | Left Alliance	DL|VAS
France	French Communist Party	PCF
France	Citizens' Movement	MDC
France	Revolutionary Communist League	LCR
Germany	The Left / PDS	Li/PDS
Italy	Proletarian Democracy	DP
Italy	Communist Refoundation Party	PRC
Italy	Party of the Italian Communists	PdCI
United Kingdom	Respect – The Unity Coalition	R

Table A2. Parties in the analysis (continued)

Country	Party	Abbr.
	Green Parties	
Finland	Green League	VIHR
France	Greens	V
Germany	Alliance 90 / Greens	B90/Gru
Italy	Federation of the Greens	FdV
United Kingdom	Green Party	GP
	Populist Radical Right	
Finland	Finnish Party – True Finns	TF
France	National Front	FN
Germany	National Democratic Party	NPD
Italy	North League	LN
United Kingdom	United Kingdom Independence Party	UKIP
	Anti-EU	
Finland	Christian Democrats	CD
Finland	Finnish Party – True Finns	TF
France	French Communist Party	PCF
France	Citizens' Movement	MDC
France	Revolutionary Communist League	LCR
France	National Front	FN
France	Hunting, Fishing, Nature and Tradition	CPNT
Germany	National Democratic Party	NPD
Italy	North League	LN
Italy	Communist Refoundation Party	PRC
United Kingdom	Conservatives	T
United Kingdom	United Kingdom Independence Party	UKIP

1.2 Summary statistics

Table A3 presents summary statistics of the different dependent variables and the covariates.

1.3 Balance statistics

Table A4 presents balance statistics between treatment and control group and tests for conditional independence of the treatment variable and the covariates within strata reporting standardized differences in means stratified by countries.

2 Empirical Extensions

2.1 Interest in European politics

Table B5 shows the effect of first-time EP eligibility (model 1 and 2) and first-time EP voting (model 3 and 4) on European political interest of young respondents.

Table A3. Summary statistics

Statistic	N	Mean	St. Dev.	Min	Max
Eligibile	747	0.48	0.50	0	1
Political Interest	747	2.28	0.79	1	4
European Political Interest	747	2.25	0.82	1	4
Voted in EP	698	0.22	0.41	0	1
Closeness Radical Left	524	2.37	1.11	1	5
Closeness Green Parties	533	2.67	1.13	1	5
Closeness Populist Right	533	1.91	1.06	1	5
Closeness Anti-EU Parties	546	2.36	1.18	1	5
Gender	747	0.52	0.50	0	1
Urban-Rural	747	2.88	1.09	1	5
Standard of Living	747	3.19	0.71	1	5
Religiousness	747	3.05	0.93	1	4
Higher Education Parents	747	2.69	0.99	1	4
Household with Parents	747	0.87	0.33	0	1
Education	747	0.79	0.40	0	1
Voting Habits Parents	747	4.22	1.15	1	5
Political Interest Parents	747	2.69	0.76	1	4
Civic Engagement in School	747	1.86	1.61	0	6
Estonia	747	0.17	0.37	0	1
Finland	747	0.17	0.38	0	1
France	747	0.14	0.35	0	1
Germany	747	0.23	0.42	0	1
Italy	747	0.16	0.36	0	1
United Kingdom	747	0.14	0.35	0	1

2.2 Selective attrition

As discussed in the main text, the quasi-experimental design should not be affected by differential attrition in the survey, i.e. the treatment condition of adolescents in the sample should not affect their likelihood to participate or respond to the survey (Mutz *et al.* 2018). To corroborate this assumption, I visualize the distribution of respondents who come of age in the year of the EP elections (and either receive the treatment or control condition) along with the distribution of respondents that came of age in other years covered in the study and are not affected by the treatment conditions (see Figure B1). Visualising the deviation from the expected value of the number of respondents born in each month, we find that there is some seasonality in the months of birth as more respondents reach full age during summer months. Importantly, however, the mean deviations from the expected value between the analysed quasi-random group of individuals in the study and individuals born in other years are not statistically different from each other (see Figure B1). This leaves us confident that the treatment or control condition did not prompt a differential attrition in the study and individuals' likelihood to participate in the survey was not affected by their treatment.

Table A4. Balance statistics

	Control	Treatment	Diff. in Means	Std. Diff.	
Urbanisation	2.89	2.84	-0.05	-0.05	
Gender	0.50	0.55	0.05	0.11	
Standard of Living	3.21	3.16	-0.05	-0.07	
Religiousness	3.07	3.04	-0.03	-0.04	
Parents' Higher Education	2.68	2.66	-0.02	-0.02	
Living with Parents	0.90	0.83	-0.07	-0.21	**
Education	0.81	0.77	-0.04	-0.09	
Voting Habit of Parents	4.35	4.06	-0.29	-0.25	***
Political Interest of Parents	2.67	2.64	-0.04	-0.05	
Civic Engagement in School	1.81	1.79	-0.02	-0.01	
Observations	391	356			

*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01. Tests for conditional independence of the treatment variable and the covariates within strata. Standardized differences in means stratified by countries.

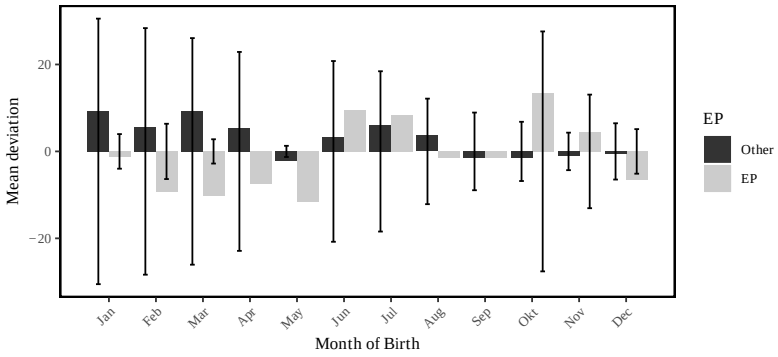

Figure B1. Mean deviation of actual number of respondents coming of age from expected value

2.3 Relative age effect

A number of studies in sociology and sports studies have documented that individuals who are born in the winter months of a year are less likely to perform as well in various disciplines as their peers who have been born in summer months (I would like to thank an anonymous reviewer for pointing to this literature). Given that the EP elections are held in June, and the main study relies on bandwidths of nine months while excluding the month of the EP elections (June), the sample of treatment first-time voters includes the month of July, August, September, October, November, December, January, February, March, while the sample of control individuals consists of the birth months of September, October, November, December, January, February, March, April, May. Thus, for the share of $7/9$ of all months included in the study, treatment and control condition are identical. The only difference between the set of months included in the treatment and control group relates to the fact that a fraction of the treated young individuals are born in July/August, while a fraction of the control young individuals are born in April/ May (all other birth months are represented both in treatment and control group).

Table B5. Effect of first-time EP eligibility and voting on European interest in politics

	Dependent variable: European political interest			
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Eligible	0.09*** (0.03)	0.10*** (0.03)		
Voting			0.19* (0.11)	0.20* (0.11)
Random. Inf. (p-value)	0.098	0.072		
Age	[17.25-18.75]	[17.25-18.75]	[17.25-18.75]	[17.25-18.75]
Method	OLS	OLS	IV	IV
Controls	x	✓	x	✓
Observations	747	747	698	698

*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01. Constant and country fixed-effects omitted from output. Model 3 and 4 show the causal average complier effect (CACE) from using the eligibility as instrument. Bell-McCaffrey bias adjusted robust SE in parentheses. P-values of two-tailed tests based on randomisation inference (permutation within countries). Inverse probability weights accounting for different probabilities of assignment to treatment and control conditions between country blocks.

Should this difference relate to unobserved characteristics between treatment and control individuals that could account for the higher level of political interest in the treatment group, we would find the same effect when analysing fictive EP elections in the non-EP years included in the study. The respective placebo test (see Table 3 and Figure B2) shows that this is not the case. The same sets of birth months for placebo-treatment and placebo-control respondents in the respective non-EP years covered in the EUYOUPART study do not yield the same results. The same holds for analysing a potential similar difference regarding European political interest, see Table B6.

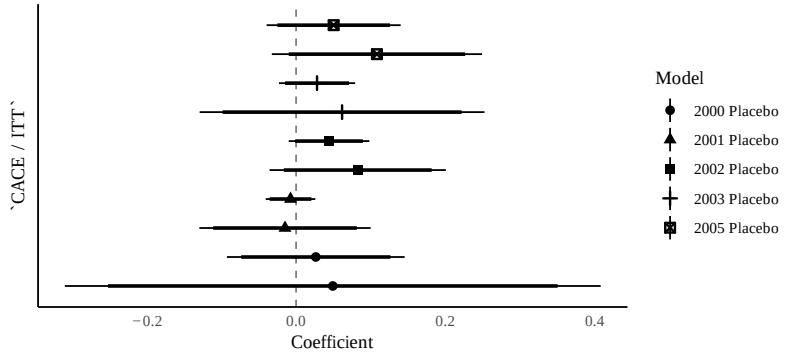

Figure B2. Effect of first-time placebo EP eligibility and voting on interest in politics

2.4 Placebo EP elections

Figure B2 graphically visualises the different coefficients of the ITT and the CACE estimates presented in Table 3 in the main body of the text. As can be seen in Figure B2, none of the fictive EP elections has a significant positive impact on young individuals' interest in politics. Should

the greater level of political interest among first-time EP voters only arise out of the fact that those young individuals are slightly older than their ineligible counterparts, we should, however, detect a statistically significant difference when analysing these placebo-EP elections. The ITT and CACE estimate from the actual EP elections is also substantively larger in size (0.12 and 0.24, respectively).

Table B6. Effect of eligibility and voting in placebo-EP years on European political interest

	Dependent variable: European political interest				
	2000	2001	2002	2003	2005
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Eligible (OLS)	0.05 (0.06)	−0.01 (0.04)	−0.005 (0.05)	0.03 (0.03)	0.05 (0.05)
Voting (IV)	0.10 (0.18)	−0.03 (0.15)	−0.001 (0.14)	0.05 (0.12)	0.10 (0.11)
Controls	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Observations	798	814	870	895	1,018

*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01. Constant and country-fixed effects omitted from output. Bell-McCaffrey bias adjusted robust SE in parentheses. Inverse probability weights accounting for different probabilities of assignment to treatment and control conditions between country blocks. Entries of eligibility present ITT estimates, entries of voting present CACE estimates.

2.5 Effects across bandwidths

Table B7 shows that the findings are robust across other bandwidths around the cut-off.

Table B7. Effect of EP eligibility and voting on interest in politics across different bandwidths

	Dependent variable: political interest									
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)
Eligible	0.12*** (0.03)		0.11*** (0.03)		0.14*** (0.03)		0.18*** (0.02)		0.22*** (0.03)	
Voting		0.24** (0.10)		0.21* (0.11)		0.27*** (0.09)		0.35*** (0.07)		0.40*** (0.12)
Random. Inf. (p-value)	0.052		0.076		0.034		0.02		0.01	
Age	[17.33-18.67]	[17.33-18.67]	[17.42-18.58]	[17.42-18.58]	[17.50-18.50]	[17.50-18.50]	[17.58-18.42]	[17.58-18.42]	[17.67-18.33]	[17.67-18.33]
Method	OLS	IV	OLS	IV	OLS	IV	OLS	IV	OLS	IV
Controls	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Observations	664	642	582	562	495	479	433	419	332	321

*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01. Constant and country-fixed effects omitted from output. Bell-McCaffrey bias adjusted robust SE in parentheses. Inverse probability weights accounting for different probabilities of assignment to treatment and control conditions between country blocks. Entries of eligibility present ITT estimates, entries of voting present CACE estimates. Age intervals rounded to two digits after decimal point.

Table B8. Effect of first-time EP eligibility and voting on interest in politics (matched dataset)

	Dependent variable: political interest			
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Eligible	0.11*** (0.03)	0.12*** (0.02)		
Voting			0.40* (0.22)	0.36** (0.16)
Random. Inf. (p-value)	0.048	0.034		
Age	[17.25-18.75]	[17.25-18.75]	[17.25-18.75]	[17.25-18.75]
Method	OLS	OLS	IV	IV
Controls	x	✓	x	✓
Observations	736	736	630	630

*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01. Constant and country fixed-effects omitted from output. Model 3 and 4 show the causal average complier effect (CACE) from using the eligibility as instrument. Bell-McCaffrey bias adjusted robust SE in parentheses. Inverse probability weights accounting for different probabilities of assignment to treatment and control conditions between country blocks.

2.6 Genetic optimal matching

I use a genetic optimal matching procedure (Diamond and Sekhon 2013) to maximise balance between the treatment and control units on those characteristics that may systematically relate to both the treatment variable (eligibility for the EP elections) and the outcome variable (political interest). In contrast to a simple multivariate regression, this approach has the advantage that we control for any differences between the groups in a non-parametric way. Hence, we do not need to specify how observable control covariates relate to the outcome (functional form) and, thus, avoid potential bias due to model dependence. I perform one-to-one matching as to obtain a control group of individuals that mirrors the treatment group in size. Table B8 show the estimate for the ITT and the CACE on the matched data.

2.7 Alternative classification of challenger parties

As to make sure that the results are not sensitive to the party classification used in the main analysis, Table B9 presents the respective effect of the EP elections on young voters' attachment to challenger parties according to three different classifications, namely parties that were not in government parties at the time of the 2004 EP elections, small parties that achieved less than ten percentage of the popular vote and small parties that were not among the two biggest parties. This classification corresponds to the one used in Dinas and Riera (2018).

Table B9. Effect of first-time EP eligibility and voting on partisan ties to challenger parties (alternative classification of challenger parties)

	Dependent variable: closeness to challenger parties		
	Non-Government Parties	Small Parties I	Small Parties II
	(1)	(2)	(3)
Eligible (OLS)	0.06 (0.05)	0.02 (0.07)	0.02 (0.05)
Voting (IV)	0.11 (0.15)	0.03 (0.21)	0.04 (0.15)
Random. Inf. (p-value)	0.43	0.866	0.824
Age	[17.25-18.75]	[17.25-18.75]	[17.25-18.75]
Controls	✓	✓	✓
Observations	650	648	651

*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01. Constant and country-fixed effects omitted from output. Bell-McCaffrey bias adjusted robust SE in parentheses. Inverse probability weights accounting for different probabilities of assignment to treatment and control conditions between country blocks. Entries of eligibility present ITT estimates, entries of voting present CACE estimates. Non-government parties are all parties who were not in government at the time of the EP election, Small I includes all parties with less than 10 percent of the popular vote while Small II includes all parties that were not one of the two biggest parties as operationalised in Dinas and Riera (2018).