

Issues That Mobilize Europe

The role of key policy issues for voter turnout in the 2019 European Parliament elections

Authors:

Daniela Braun, LMU Munich: daniela.braun@gsi.uni-muenchen.de

Constantin Schäfer, University of Münster: constantin.schaefer@uni-muenster.de

Abstract:

Given the unexpectedly high levels of turnout in the 2019 EP elections, our paper seeks to explore whether policy issues had a mobilizing effect. We argue, that EU citizens had a higher tendency to participate in these elections when they attributed a greater relevance to one of the four central policy issues “climate change and environment”, “economy and growth”, “immigration” and “European integration”. Moreover, we maintain that people were more likely to turn out when their subjectively most relevant policy issues were also systemically salient in their country. We empirically test these propositions using two different data sets. The findings reveal the key role of major policy issues for political participation in EU politics as well as the different mechanisms in play.

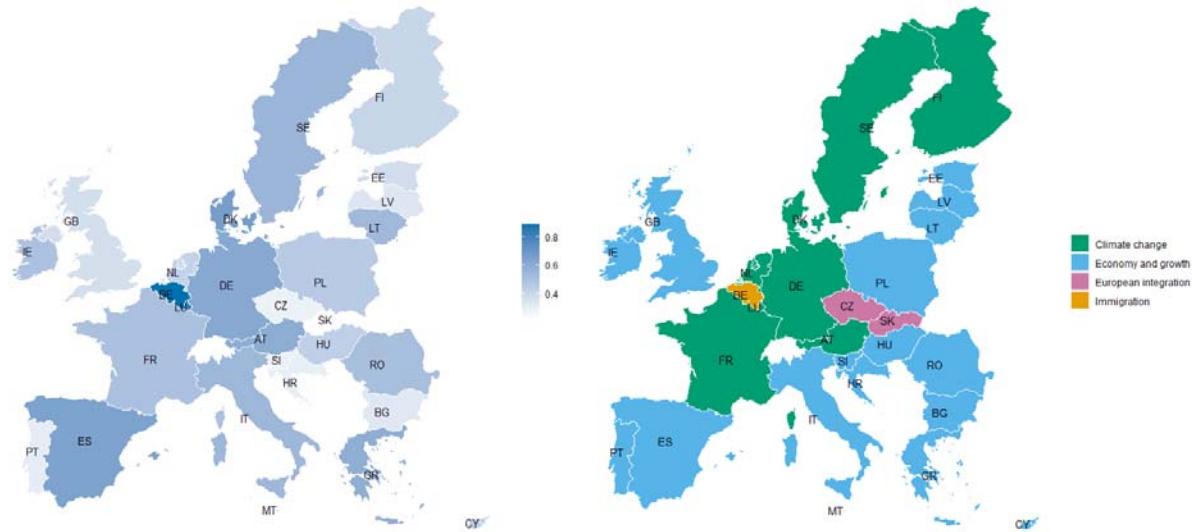
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1. Introduction

In recent years, the European Union (EU) has been and still is riddled by a multi-faceted crisis (Cotta and Isernia, forthcoming), permanently putting this political community “under stress” (Cramme and Hobolt, 2015). During that period, two critical elections at the European level of governance were held: the 2014 and the 2019 elections to the European Parliament (EP). While the 2014 EP election had been labelled the “this time it’s different” elections because of the introduction of lead candidates (*Spitzenkandidaten*) for the European Commission presidency (Hobolt, 2014), the 2019 EP elections were accompanied by the dictum that the future of Europe is at stake (Treib, 2020; ANONYMOUS). Although the *Spitzenkandidaten* process had only limited effects on election campaigns and citizens’ electoral mobilization in 2014 (Braun and Schwarzbözl, 2019; Gattermann et al., 2016; Schmitt et al., 2015; ANONYMOUS), the fear of the future of Europe being at stake seems to have led to a strong rise in EU-wide electoral participation in 2019. Voter turnout increased from 42.6% in 2014 to 50.7% in the 2019 EP elections. This number represents not only the highest turnout in the last 20 years, but it is also the first time that participation in EP elections has not decreased but increased. Although electoral contests at the European level of governance are still considered second-order elections (Boomgaarden, et al., 2016; Plescia, et al., 2020; Reif and Schmitt, 1980; Schmitt et al., 2020), where there is “less at stake” than in national elections, the 2019 elections might thus have been different in this regard. The presumption that more Europeans went to the ballot box to shape the future path of the EU is reinforced by some immediate analyses of the 2019 EP elections that attribute this increase in electoral participation to the higher politicization of EP elections (De Sio et al., 2019: 64) and see it as a sign of the increasing legitimacy of EU governance (Tallberg, 2019: 13).

The last line of argument suggests that a more salient debate over European political issues in the run-up to the elections had a positive impact on individual participation in these elections at the European level. A simple empirical observation during the 2019 EP election reinforces this assumption: despite the rise in turnout across Europe, there is still a huge variance in the absolute participation levels between the EU member states (see Figure 1, left panel). Importantly, this heterogeneity also applies to the most important mobilizing issues during the 2019 EP elections. When asked about “the issues which made you vote in the recent European Parliament elections”, the majority of people in most countries reported that it was the economy that incited them to participate. However, in other countries the strongest mobilizing issues were climate change, immigration, or European integration (see Figure 1, right panel). Observing such a variance in the most relevant mobilization issues might seem surprising to some, but it indicates the persisting second-order nature of EP election campaigns, where issues are discussed by national actors in national public spaces (Boomgaarden and de Vreese, 2016). Moreover, it supports scholarly work asserting that political conflict over European integration is structured by at least two distinct issue dimensions: a socio-economic and a socio-cultural dimension (Marks et al., 2006; Prosser, 2016; Schäfer et al., 2020).

Figure 1: Turnout levels and most important mobilizing issues in the 2019 EP elections across EU member states



Source: Left panel: Author's illustration based on official turnout data from the European Parliament (but see also over-time development for country groups, Figure A-1 in the Appendix). Right panel: Author's illustration based on the Eurobarometer 91.5 post-election study displaying the most mentioned item per country on the question "What are the issues which made you vote in the recent European Parliament elections?" (qg7) that was posed to respondents who reported having participated in the 2019 election.

But were these issues really relevant for voter turnout in the 2019 EP election, even when we control for other factors that traditionally explain participation in European elections? And if yes, which issues actually exerted the strongest mobilization power? And, how does such an issue mobilization actually work in the first place? To answer these questions, we need to shift the focus of the analysis from the macro-level to the individual level, by delving into the micro-foundations of the relationship between policy issues and electoral behaviour. Thus, our paper seeks to explore whether and through which mechanisms policy issues affect electoral participation. In particular, we investigate the impact of the key policy issues "economy", "immigration", "environment/climate change" and "European integration" on individual electoral participation. We argue, first, that EU citizens showed a higher tendency to participate in the 2019 European election when they attributed a greater relevance to one of these issues, which entails both the importance of an individual issue and the extremity of opinion that people hold on a policy issue. Second, we argue that people were more likely to turn out when the policy issues they subjectively assessed as most relevant were also systemically salient in their country.

Our empirical analyses comprise two different data sources: the large-scale post-election study of the Eurobarometer (EB 91.5) comprising all 28 EU member states (at the time of the election) as well as original survey data for seven selected EU countries taken from the H2020 project RECONNECT. The findings reveal the context-dependent nature of issue mobilization during European Parliament elections and bear important implications for the legitimizing role of EP elections today as well as for the future of the EU in general.

2. Policy issues and European elections

Although we know a lot about the factors fuelling and hindering citizens' participation in elections, much less is known about the particular link between policy issues and the decision to vote. Do citizens go to the ballot box because specific issues seem to be essential for them or for their country? In other words, do political issues mobilize citizens? And does such a relationship apply to the particular case of EP elections? In this part of the paper, we discuss previous research on the potential links between policy issues and turnout (section 2.1), continue with the role of key policy issues at stake in the 2019 EP elections (section 2.2), and conclude by forming theoretical hypotheses regarding the role of policy issues for voters in the 2019 EP elections (section 2.3).

2.1 Policy issues and the individual decision to vote

Does the personal and societal relevance of policy issues motivate voters to turn out in elections? From Down's (1957) famous insights on rational behaviour of voters, we would answer this question negatively, since we know that voters generally have rather low incentives to become informed about policy issues. Nonetheless, bearing in mind that elections are contests which "are fought over policies and issues that voters, parties, and leaders consider to be important and relevant at the time of the election" (Aardal and van Wijnen, 2005: 192), policy issues and turnout should be linked at least to some degree. One could even make a stronger claim: failing to account for policy issues in considerations about electoral participation would mean taking "politics out of elections" (Aardal and van Wijnen, 2005: 192).

Accordingly, the scholarly literature presents some empirical evidence indicating a relationship between policy issues and turnout. It has been found for the US that the probability of turning out in elections is higher if citizens perceive differences in terms of issue positions between candidates (Adams et al., 2006; Adams and Merrill, 2003; Leighley and Nagler, 2014; Zipp, 1985). Moreover, in countries with high electoral salience and competitiveness over political issues, higher turnout rates can be reported (Franklin, 1996; Pacheco, 2008). Equally impressive are more recent studies on policy representation illustrating that congruence of voters and political parties over particular and salient political issues affects electoral participation (Dinas et al., 2014; Lefkofridi et al., 2014; Reher, 2014). Finally, Kiouisis and McDevitt (2008) shed more light on the particular process behind the link between issue and turnout. They show that greater news attention during election campaigns leads not only to higher individual "issue importance" and "opinion extremity", but also to a higher likelihood of electoral participation.

For at least two reasons, the investigation of EP elections contributes to the reported findings on the relationship between policy issues and electoral participation. First, EP elections, in general, create an opportunity to investigate a simultaneously conducted set of elections in various countries and electoral contexts (Söderlund et al., 2011; Van der Eijk et al., 1996). Second, turnout in EP elections is traditionally rather low. This is mostly due to the lack of mobilization because there is "less at stake" compared to national first-order elections (Franklin and Hobolt, 2011; Reif and Schmitt, 1980; Schmitt and Mannheimer,

1991; Van der Eijk and Schmitt, 2009). If turnout rises, as was the case in the 2019 EP elections, this might be due to an increased mobilization of voters through key policy issues.

The latter argument is supported by some empirical findings from past EP elections. Although Clark (2014) shows that the lower salience of issues under the jurisdiction of the EU can explain the reduced turnout in European elections, many scholars from the “Europe matters” camp have found that the issue of European integration indeed plays a role in present-day European elections. Besides the well-known “EU issue voting” argument which is imperative for the decision to vote for a party (De Vries 2010; De Vries and Hobolt, 2016), EU attitudes are relevant for turnout as well. While pro-EU attitudes lead to a higher chance of electoral participation, non-voting in EP elections is motivated by Eurosceptic attitudes (Blondel et al., 1998; Clark, 2014; Hobolt and Spoon, 2012; Hobolt and Wittrock, 2011; Wessels and Franklin, 2009; ANONYMOUS). In a similar vein, more recent studies indicate that the representation of issues has an impact on turnout. Schäfer and Debus (2018) demonstrate that issue congruence between voters and political parties has a positive effect on participation in EP elections.

Against this backdrop, we argue that turnout rose in the 2019 EP elections because citizens were convinced that there was something more at stake than usual in these elections and that several policy issues on the EU level were highly politicized. The following sections seek to describe these key policy issues in the 2019 EP elections and to formulate in a subsequent step the particular mechanism that governs the links between policy issues and electoral participation.

2.2 The key mobilizing issues in the 2019 EP election

The 2019 EP elections took place in an environment where at least four EU-level policy issues – economic, environmental, immigration, and European integration issues – were particularly salient. First, *economic issues* were at the top of the public agenda in numerous countries that still found themselves in a period of economic hardship following the economic and sovereign debt crisis in Europe. The so-called “euro crisis” had severe repercussions on elections all over Europe (Hernández and Kriesi, 2016) and also affected the previous European elections in 2014 (Hobolt and de Vries, 2016; ANONYMOUS). Evidently, the fact that the economy is a primary concern for many voters is not a new insight, as the economic voting literature illustrates (Lewis-Beck and Stegmaier, 2000; Van der Brug et al., 2007). However, the role that the economy plays for electoral participation is still disputed, as previous findings have shown that economic conditions can be both mobilizing and demobilizing, but that these effects depend on other moderating factors (Gomez and Hansford, 2014; Rosenstone, 1982; Weschle, 2014). Nevertheless, it is certainly true that economic issues are still of crucial importance during elections, or in other (more famous) words: “When you think elections, think economics” (Tufte, 1978: 65).

Second, the *immigration issue* surely has become one of the most salient themes in Europe during recent years, especially with the so-called “migration crisis” or “refugee crisis” of 2015/16 (Grande et al., 2018; Green-Pedersen and Otjes, 2019; Van der Brug et al., 2015). Increasing immigration to Europe not only attracted

a great deal of media coverage and public debates but also led to a rise in the populist radical right in Europe, thereby transforming electoral competition in many EU member states (Abou-Chadi et al., 2020; Dennison and Geddes, 2019). Even more consequential, the salience of the immigration issue strongly contributed to the decision by an EU member state, for the first time ever, to leave the European Union (Goodwin and Milazzo, 2016; Hobolt, 2016). Even though the number of immigrants coming to Europe was decreasing during the year prior to the 2019 EP election, the struggle to find a common migration and asylum policy has remained a major and ongoing source of political conflict on the European level.

Third, concerns over climate change have brought *environmental issues* to the top of the public agenda in 2019. In the months leading up to the election, school strikes and the “Fridays for Future” protest movement demanded political action and dominated public debate in many EU member states. The protests culminated in an address to the European Parliament by the leading figure of this protest movement, Greta Thunberg, in April 2019 (Pearson and Rüdiger, 2020). Consequently, the EP elections resulted in a “green revolution” or “green wave” in many EU member states, especially in the northern and western countries.¹ In consequence, the electoral successes of Green parties and the increased salience of environmental issues and climate change pressed the new President of the European Commission, Ursula von der Leyen, to make a “European Green Deal” the top priority of the presidency (Von der Leyen, 2019).

Lastly, the *European integration issue* itself certainly vitalized the EP election campaigns in 2019, with many observers styling the electoral contest as “a battle over Europe’s future” (Treib, 2020: 1). While previous EP elections had been predominantly marked by Eurosceptic challenger parties from both the left and right ends of the political spectrum (ANONYMOUS), many mainstream-centre parties now started to engage in pro-European mobilization efforts. Eventually, explicitly pro-integration parties, such as Emmanuel Macron’s newly established “La République en Marche!”, successfully stopped further inroads by Eurosceptic parties. Moreover, it has also been shown that grassroots movements like “Pulse of Europe” and pro-European niche parties like “Volt!” and “DiEM25” can mobilize citizens who are in favour of European integration. All in all, it seems that the former “sleeping giant” (Van der Eijk and Franklin, 2004), namely the policy issue of European integration, has finally been awakened and is now more salient for voters in present-day European elections.

2.3 The link between policy issues and electoral participation

Based on findings from previous research on the link between policy issues and electoral participation (section 2.1), we argue that the link between the key policy issues outlined in section 2.2 and the populace’s decision to turn out during European elections is mainly constructed via a combination of individual-level and context-level issue relevance. A first important concept is labelled personal “issue salience” or “issue

¹ See also: <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2019/jun/02/european-parliament-election-green-parties-success> (28.06.2020). Overall, Green parties achieved double-digit shares of the vote in 11 countries and the Green-EFA political group in the EP increased its seat share from 6.9% to 9.5%.

importance” (Fournier et al., 2003), defined as the relevance that a person attaches to a policy issue. Personal issue salience can be understood as “a political attitude like any other” (Dennison, 2019: 443) that exerts direct and indirect effects on many forms of political behaviour, especially during elections. We can reasonably assume that personal issue importance is related to the presence of political awareness (Zaller, 1992) and political interest. From previous research, we know that the more individuals are politically interested and informed, the more they tend to participate in elections (Delli Carpini und Keeter, 1996; Lassen, 2005; Smets and van Ham, 2013) – the latter is also true with regard to EP elections (Bhatti, 2010; Hogh and Larsen, 2016; ANONYMOUS; ANONYMOUS). Accordingly, the more likely people are to be interested and competent in political matters should relate to how they form attitudes and attach importance to policy issues in general. The fact that a person perceives certain policy issues to be relevant – whether for herself or the country she lives in – should thus increase her tendency to follow political events, receive political information and participate in political decision-making processes. Consequently, in our first hypothesis we argue that the act of electoral participation can be understood as a means to put personally relevant policy issues on the agenda of the entity or institution a person votes for – in our case the EP or the EU more generally:

- H1:** If a person perceives a major policy issue at the time of the EP elections (economic, environmental, immigration, and European integration issues) as individually important, she is more likely to cast her vote in the 2019 EP election.

But it is not merely personal issue importance that is crucial here – its combination with systemic issue salience should in particular have an additional effect on a person’s electoral participation. Therefore, we assume that individual-level issue importance becomes particularly relevant for people’s electoral behaviour when their personally relevant issues are also relevant in the society they live in. People should feel incentivized to vote when they see other people around them sharing their personal concerns. Thus, as soon as people perceive a certain issue to be relevant in their country, their personal-level relevance (on the very same issue) should have a greater mobilizing effect. Hence, our second hypothesis considers the interaction between the individual-level mechanisms outlined above and the contextual-level issue salience:

- H2:** The more a major policy issue is systemically salient, the stronger is the mobilization effect of individual issue importance.

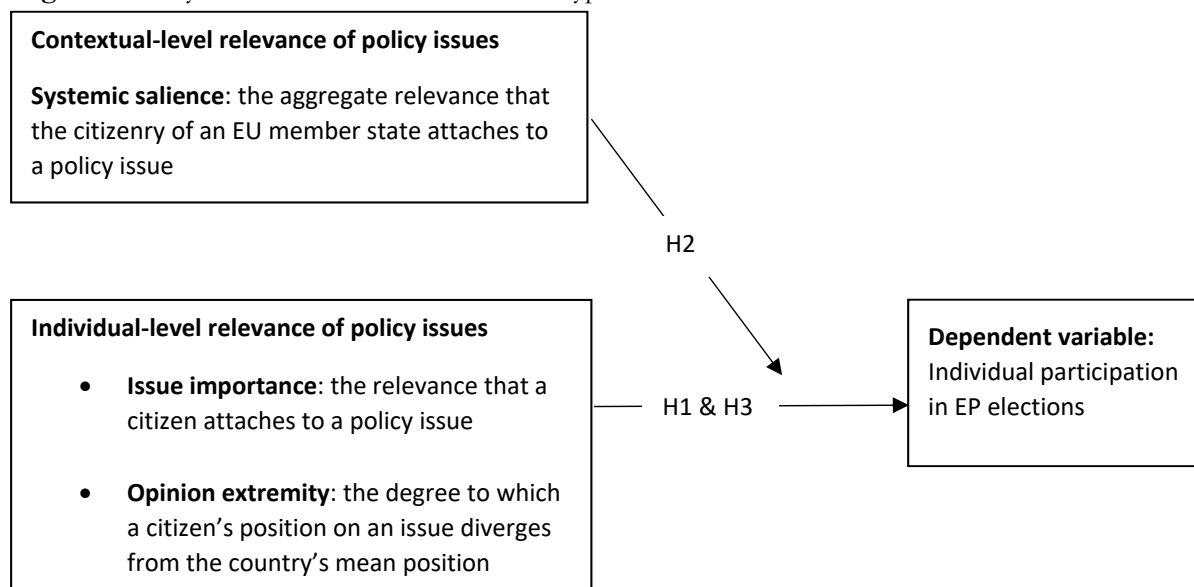
Finally, it is uncontested that actual attitudes towards a policy issue – often conceptualized by a position in a spatial understanding of issue dimensions – are crucial in electoral research. Citizens decide whether to participate and who to vote for, because they perceive differences in terms of issue positions between candidates or parties and take on political views congruent to them (Dinas et al., 2014; Lefkofridi et al., 2014; Reher, 2014). Although such approaches are often based on rational choice theory of electoral behaviour (Downs, 1957), issue preferences also matter for theories of expressive voting (Hamlin and Jennings, 2011). Building on the notion of opinion extremity (Kioussis and McDevitt 2008), we can assert that it is not only the personal relevance a person attaches to a particular policy issue which has an impact on her electoral participation, but also whether she has a strong opinion on a particular policy issue. It can,

therefore, be argued that voters feel incentivized to participate when they want to express a strong and personally relevant preference. In contrast, people with more ambivalent or indifferent opinions should have lesser incentives to participate in an election. This line of reasoning leads us to our final theoretical assumption:

H3: If a person holds a more extreme opinion on a major policy issue (economic, environmental, immigration, and European integration issues), she is more likely to cast her vote in the 2019 EP election.

Summarizing our theoretical assumptions within an integrated analytical framework, Figure 2 visualizes the theoretical assumptions of our study. As mentioned above, we conceptualize the relevance of policy issues at the individual level via two different theoretical ideas. One the one hand, we draw on the simple concept of personal issue importance and presume that the more relevant the person considers a policy issue, the more she will be motivated to see this policy issue addressed. And, to put it bluntly, the easiest way to make this happen is via turning out in elections (H1). Yet it is not only the personal relevance a person attaches to a particular policy issue that has an impact on her electoral participation, but also whether she has a strong opinion on a particular policy issue. This idea can be conceptualized via the extremity of the position towards the policy issue under consideration (H3). In addition to these direct links between issue salience and turnout, H2 aims at teasing out the individual importance of policy issues in combination with the societal-level relevance, i.e., the systemic salience of the policy issues under consideration (economy, immigration, environment/climate change, and European integration).

Figure 2: Analytical framework and theoretical hypotheses



3. Empirical analysis

To test our theoretical assumptions, we use two different datasets (Eurobarometer 91.5 and RECONNECT). In the following sections, we describe in a first step the two datasets before outlining the operationalization of our key variables. In a second step, we present our empirical findings.

3.1 Data and operationalization

The empirical analysis is conducted in two steps, in each of which we test a subset of our theoretical hypotheses with a different post-electoral survey dataset. The reason for this is that there are several EP election studies available that vary in their scope and scale, which implies that we cannot test all of our theoretical propositions with a single dataset in a fully representative manner. In a first step, we test hypotheses H1 and H2 with the large-scale Eurobarometer post-election study that contains respondents from all 28 EU member states and guarantees high representativeness due to a multi-stage random sample. In the second step, we test all three hypotheses with original post-electoral survey data from the RECONNECT project, which covers seven EU member states and that was conducted online.²

The EB 91.5 was carried out by KANTAR for the EP between June 7-26, 2019. It includes a large “post-electoral study” module and covers the population of all EU member states aged 15 years and over (Zalc et al., 2019). The dataset includes 27,464 respondents, i.e., roughly 1,000 per country. The sample was drawn in a multi-stage random (probability) process, and households were selected by a standard “random route” procedure, starting from an initial random address. In each household, the respondent was drawn at random following the “closest birthday rule”, and all interviews were conducted face-to-face in people’s homes and in their respective national language. Concerning the data capture, CAPI (Computer Assisted Personal Interview) was used in those countries where this technique was available. The panel study of the Horizon 2020 project RECONNECT includes a pre- and post-campaign online survey in seven different EU member states: Denmark, France, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Poland, and Spain (Plescia et al., 2020). In our analysis, we make use only of the post-electoral panel wave (W2), which was conducted between May 27 and June 26, 2019. Respondents were sampled from pre-existing online panels provided by IPSOS. To participate in the study, respondents had to be at least 18 years old and eligible to vote in the 2019 European Parliament elections. National quota sampling was employed based upon the key demographics age, gender, education, and region. In total, 8,780 respondents took part in both panel waves, while the number per country ranges from between 908 (Denmark) and 1,393 (Spain) respondents.³

² Another available dataset for all 28 EU member states is the European Election Study 2019 (Schmidt et al. 2019). However, the early release package of this survey does not cover some central variables of interest (e.g. the MII question). In addition, the respondents of the EES 2019 were selected from an online access panel, which led to a significant over-representation of well-educated citizens and a comparably high over-reporting in turnout (+22 points compared to only +5 points in the EB 91.5, see also table A-1 in the appendix), which is another reason why we decided to focus on the EB survey in our analysis.

³ Originally, 14,104 respondents took part in the first wave (around 2,000 per country), which means that 62.25% of the pre-election sample could be questioned a second time after the election.

The dependent variable in our analyses is the reported electoral participation in the 2019 EP election. In both surveys, respondents were asked whether they had participated (1) or not (0) in the previous European election. Comparing the reported turnout on the aggregate level with the official numbers shows that there was significant over-reporting in both surveys.⁴ However, while the average over-reporting is rather small in the EB 91.5 (+5 points), it is much larger in the RECONNECT survey (+26 points). This difference possibly stems from the fact that the Eurobarometer survey was carried out as a proper random sample from all member state populations, whereas the RECONNECT survey took a stratified sample from an online access panel.

The three main independent variables – personal “issue importance”, “systemic issue salience”, and “opinion extremity” – are measured with different yet similar indicators. *Issue importance* and *systemic issue salience* are both operationalized with the “most important issue” (MII) question that is typically asked in voter studies. Although this indicator is not without problems (Johns, 2010; Jennings and Wlezien, 2011), it appears to be the most adequate item in the post-election surveys at hand. Moreover, “aggregate MII appears to broadly reflect what actually matters to the typical voter” (Bartle and Laycock, 2012: 687). Therefore, we use the MII questions both for the voter level (as *individual issue importance*) as well as – in their aggregated form – for the country level (as *systemic issue salience*).⁵

The EB 91.5 asked respondents for the MII on three different levels, namely *personal* issues, *country* issues, and *European/EU* issues, with largely similar response options to all three items, from which respondents were asked to select three at most for each level. Therefore, we have created an additive index that ranges from 0 (the issue is not among the most important on any level) to 1 (the issue is among the most important issues on all three levels).⁶ The RECONNECT survey posed the MII question only for the country level, implying that the resulting variable ranges from 0 (the issue is not among the most important country issues) to 1 (the issue is among the most important country issues). Importantly, we group the single issues into the issue areas “economy” (economic growth, unemployment, inflation, taxation, finances), “environment” (environment, climate change), “immigration” (immigration, asylum) and “EU integration” (European integration, the euro).⁷ It should be noted that EU integration issues are only provided as response categories in the RECONNECT survey and are hence not included in the models based on the EB dataset. Taken together, the EB 91.5 survey provides a more comprehensive picture of individual issue salience as it asks for different (political) levels where a policy issue can be regarded as relevant. In contrast, the

⁴ See table A-1 in the appendix for the actual and reported EP election turnout per country.

⁵ Although the systemic salience of a policy issue could also be measured with elite-level, manifesto or media data, we opted for aggregated survey data for several reasons. Each of the mentioned data sources underlies its own logics and leads to different conceptualizations of issue salience at the systemic level. We assume that aggregated survey data roughly reflects public opinion and, thus, the societal-issue agenda in an appropriate way. Moreover, neither manifesto nor media data has as yet been made available for the 2019 EP election for all EU member states.

⁶ This operationalization implies that we assign the value 0.33 for each level where respondents mention as the most important theme a policy issue that belongs to the respective issue area of the index.

⁷ We also grouped issues relating to security (crime, terrorism) and social issues (health care, housing, pensions, education), but decided rather to treat these as control variables, in order to focus here on the main mobilization issues of the 2019 EP elections.

RECONNECT dataset is more one-dimensional, but its advantage lies in the additional inclusion of European integration issues.

We operationalize a country's *systemic issue salience* via the aggregated country mean of the individual issue importance taken from the Eurobarometer survey. For each of the three major policy issues economy, environment/climate change, and immigration, the variable ranges from 0 to 1. During the European Parliament elections, *economic issues* were very salient in many southern and eastern EU member states, especially in Greece (0.82) and Italy (0.75), but not as salient in northern Europe, especially in Denmark (0.24). The variation in systemic salience regarding *environmental issues* is even higher. While these are relatively salient in several northern and western European countries, especially in Sweden (0.48) and Denmark (0.45), this is less the case for the rest of the EU member states (except Malta), and is exceptionally low in Greece (0.05). Systemic salience regarding *migration issues* is more homogeneous, with values ranging around 0.2 (albeit with exceptions).⁸

Individual *opinion extremity* has been operationalized in two steps. First, we extract a respondent's view on basic policy conflicts that relate to the issue areas mentioned above. For all four policy issues, respondents were confronted with two opposing policy statements and asked to position themselves on a scale from 0 to 10, where the two extremes represent the two opposing statements. Regarding the issue of *economy*, we used an item asking for people's opinion on the redistribution of wealth from the rich to the poor (in favour vs. opposed). Opinion extremity regarding *migration* is measured via a person's view on whether or not immigrants take jobs away from fellow nationals. For the issue of *environment*, people are asked whether they prefer protection of the environment at the cost of economic growth or if they support economic growth even at the cost of damage to the environment. Lastly, for the *EU integration* issue we relied on a question asking respondents whether European unification has already gone too far or should be implemented further. Second, we computed the absolute difference between a respondent's own preferred policy position and the respective country mean on the same item. The new scales can in theory take values from 0 to 10.⁹

Apart from our main variables discussed above, we also included a series of control variables in our regression models. These comprise attitudes towards the EU and other institutions (EU support, trust in the European Parliament, support for the national government) as well as socio-psychological dispositions (political interest, EU-specific knowledge, socio-tropic economic evaluations) and socio-demographic information (age, gender, education, social class/income). To avoid omitted variable bias on the country level, we include country dummies (for the fixed effects models) and the official turnout figure of the 2019 EP election (for the multi-level models).¹⁰

⁸ In Figure A-2 in the appendix, which shows the systemic salience of the three policy issues, the stark differences between countries become obvious.

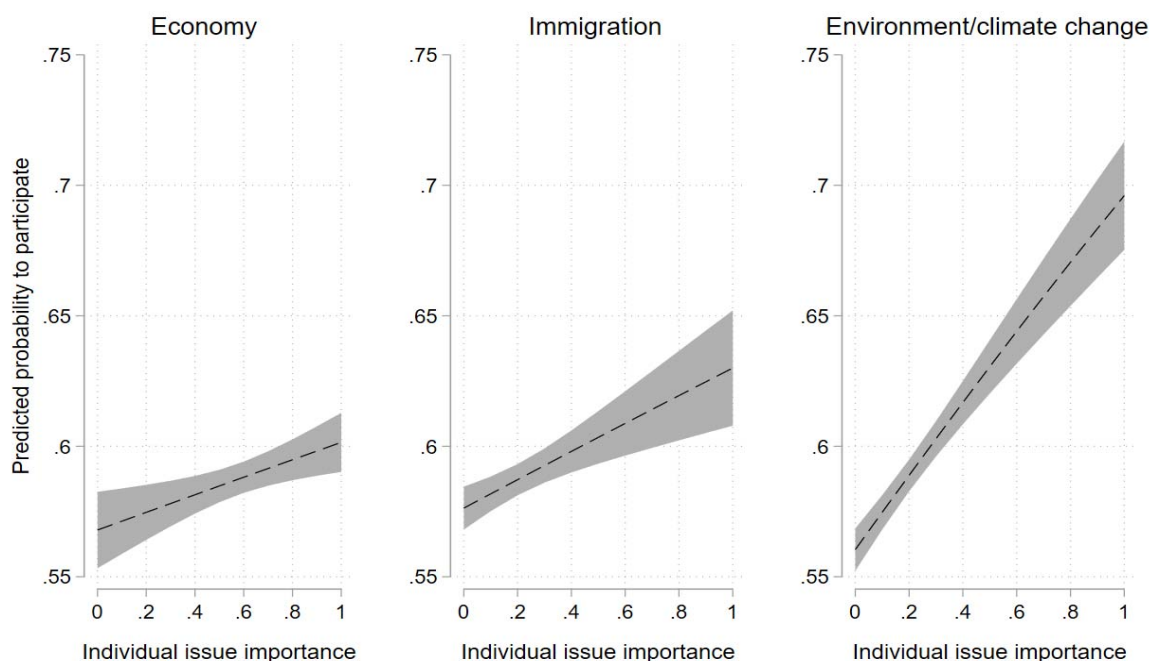
⁹ However, as the country means do not take extreme values, the absolute differences between the respondent and his/her country mean range between 0 and 6.5 (economy), 6.4 (migration), 7.4 (environment), and 6.8 (EU integration).

¹⁰ The choice to include the official 2019 EP election turnout as a control variable is a means to avoid including multiple contextual variables that affect participation in European elections. This is done because the multi-level models contain only a small number of higher-level units (28 countries) and thus exhibit a very limited number of degrees of freedom.

3.2 Empirical analyses

We estimate four logistic regression models based on the EB dataset (see table A-2 in the appendix for the full regression results). Overall, our theoretical hypotheses receive empirical support from these data. As H1 suggested, individual issue importance has a significant mobilizing effect for all policy issues under consideration. This is particularly true for environment and climate change. People who attribute great relevance to these issues had a remarkably higher likelihood of participating in the 2019 EP elections, even when we control for a series of other individual-level and country-level factors. As can be seen in Figure 3, the predicted probability of casting a vote is around +13 percentage points higher for citizens who attach high salience to the environment and climate change compared to people who do not attribute any importance to these issues. This difference is much stronger than the difference for the economy (+3 points) and immigration (+5 points) issues.

Figure 3: Predicted probabilities to participate in the 2019 EP election over three major policy issues

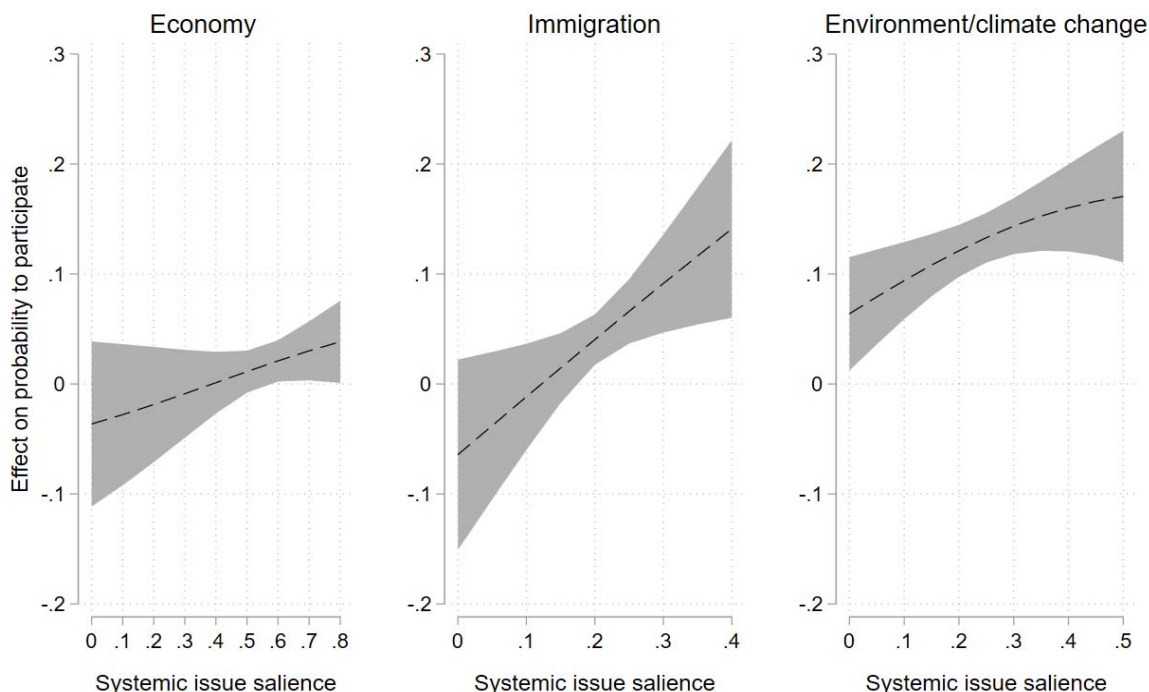


Notes: The model predictions refer to the “individual model” (FE model M2), based on the Eurobarometer (EB 91.5) post-election study; the shaded areas represent 95% confidence intervals.

The marginal cross-level interaction effects of personal issue importance as a function of the systemic salience of the same policy issue are displayed in Figure 4. All three effects are positive, which is in line with H2. Interestingly, although the interaction effect is insignificant for economic issues, the marginal effect of individual issue importance begins to exert a slightly significant effect, once the systemic issue salience of economic issues is high. The same is true for both the immigration and the environment issues, though the effect is even stronger in the area of immigration. Here, we can conclude that personal issue importance does not mobilize voters in low salience contexts but does exert quite a strong mobilizing effect in countries where immigration is of high salience. In contrast, personal issue importance of environmental and climate

change issues mobilizes people in all contexts. But here as well, the effect becomes significantly stronger with an increase in systemic issue salience.

Figure 4: Marginal effects of individual issue importance on the probability to participate in the 2019 EP elections over three major policy issues



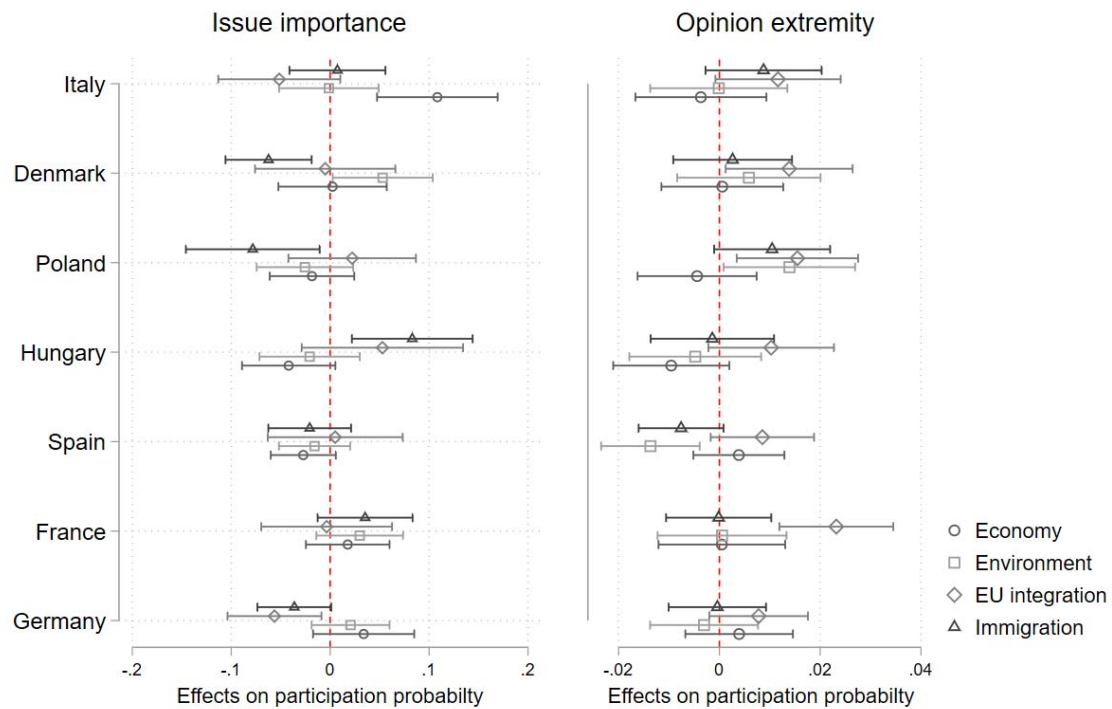
Notes: The model predictions refer to the “interaction model” (ML model), based on the Eurobarometer (EB 91.5) post-election study; the shaded areas represent 90% confidence intervals.

In the second step, we turn to the country-specific analysis of the RECONNECT survey data. This analysis allows us, first, to test all four hypotheses in a joint model and, second, to include the issue of European integration – both options had not been possible with the EB survey data. We estimate regression models for all seven countries separately (see the results in table A-3) and a unified regression model for all countries with interaction terms between the country dummies and the central variables (see the results in table A-4). The overall picture is very heterogeneous, as it becomes clear that the relational pattern between issue salience and electoral participation varies significantly by country. Figure 5 illustrates this country heterogeneity by displaying the marginal effects of our two individual-level issue salience indicators across the seven EU member states in which the survey was conducted.¹¹ First, the graph paints a more nuanced picture regarding individual issue importance (left panel), relating to our hypotheses H1 and H2. The effects of the different major policy issues on individual electoral participation are not uniform across the seven countries. While the economy is a mobilizing issue only in Italy, the environment and climate change issue

¹¹ These marginal effects are computed based on a joint logistic regression model that includes the main issue variables, all individual-level control variables, country-fixed effects as well as interaction effects between the country dummies and the main issue variables shown in Figure 7. See Table A-4 for the full results of seven different logistic regression models (one per country).

exerts significant mobilization effects only in Denmark. Since these are exactly the issues that are most salient in these two countries, this observation confirms the validity of H1 but also lends further support to H2.

Figure 5: Marginal effects of issue importance and opinion extremity on the probabilities to participate in the 2019 EP elections (per country)



Notes: Displayed are marginal effects (with 90% confidence intervals) based on a single logistic regression model with country-fixed effects and interaction terms between the country dummies and the issue variables; $N=7,634$; Pseudo $R^2=0.113$.

Secondly, Figure 5 also reveals that individual opinion extremity (right panel) is hardly a predictor of participation in EP elections. Having a strong view on the three issues economy, environment, and immigration does not exert any mobilization effects. However, this is indeed the case for the issue of European integration. Being strongly in favour of or against further European integration has a persistent positive effect on electoral participation in all seven EU member states. In the unified model, the predicted marginal effects are statistically significant at the 90% level in three countries: France, Denmark, and Poland. When looking at the regression results for the seven country models (see Table A-3), the effect of opinion extremity is statistically significant in four out of seven countries: Germany, France, Hungary, and Denmark. Therefore, our hypothesis H3 receives qualified support, in that it only applies to one single issue. Of course, the broader implication of this finding is that it contributes to the EP election literature that asserts “Europe matters” in present-day European elections. Both Europhile and Eurosceptic voters apparently feel incentivized to express their views at the ballot box during electoral contests on the EU level.

4. Conclusion

The surprising increase in EU-wide voter turnout in the 2019 EP election has been widely attributed to the greater degree of politicization of EP elections and crucial EU-level policy issues, such as economic and environmental issues as well as immigration and European integration itself. Against this backdrop, we investigated whether European citizens have been indeed mobilized through these major policy issues in the 2019 EP elections. Using survey data from two different sources, we assessed our research questions from a cross-national perspective. Overall, we conclude that the four key issues under investigation all play a role in mobilizing European citizens to cast a vote. We also found strong evidence for three different effects of issue relevance or issue salience.

First, the primary pathway of issue mobilization is the direct effect exerted by personal issue importance. The more relevant a person perceives the issues of economy, environment, and immigration, the more likely she is to feel incentivized to participate in European elections. This effect speaks for the mobilizing impact of political awareness more generally. Yet it is especially strong for environment and climate change issues, which proved to have a high mobilization capacity in the 2019 EP election. Second, we have observed a significant interaction between personal issue importance and systemic issue salience. People are more mobilized to vote when the issue that they perceive as most relevant is also publicly salient in the country they live in. This has been shown by the analysis of the large-scale Eurobarometer dataset, but has also been supported by the more fine-grained analysis using the RECONNECT data. We have seen that issues of high systemic salience – such as the economy in Italy or climate change in Denmark – have contributed to luring to the ballot box those people who perceived these issues also as personally relevant. An obvious implication is the high relevance of the national context for the relationship between issues and electoral participation.

Third, having a particularly strong or divergent opinion on one of the three issues mentioned above (economy, climate change/environment, and immigration) has virtually no mobilizing effect in European elections. However, we *have* found such an effect for the issue of EU integration. This observation implies that citizens use European elections to express their opinion on the process of further European integration. It also contributes to our knowledge about the different ways in which “Europe matters” to people in present-day European Parliament elections. Also, in 2019, EP elections might still be second-order elections, because they are perceived as less important compared to national first-order elections, but the latter finding also illustrates that the consequences of European integration “become politically more important and more contested” (Van der Brug and van der Eijk, 2007: 226). Since European issues seem to play a role in electoral participation, future studies should ultimately consider the multi-faceted nature of European issues and, for instance, at least distinguish between so-called EU policy and EU polity issues (Braun et al., 2016). It is

highly probable that different types of EU issue have different consequences for electoral participation in each of the EU member states.¹²

Lastly, what are the implications of our study for the future of EP elections and their legitimizing function? Our results show that the debate and electoral campaigns over crucial policy issues have the potential to increase turnout in European elections. Maybe it is through this channel that EP elections can finally get rid of their second-order character and establish “the missing link” between voters and parties on the European level. It is important to note that these political issues do not necessarily need to be explicitly related to European integration itself but can be of European-wide concern – such as environmental or economic issues which cannot be resolved at the national level alone. Future research should investigate the potential of political actors at the different levels of the EU multi-level system to increase turnout via an intensified debate over relevant policy issues. This could finally transform European elections into ones as important as national first-order elections.

¹² Some tentative conclusions can be taken from a preliminary analysis of an additional dataset (results not shown) illustrating that EU budgetary questions have an effect on electoral participation in Austria, whereas in Germany this is the case for EU immigration, and in France and Sweden for EU taxation.

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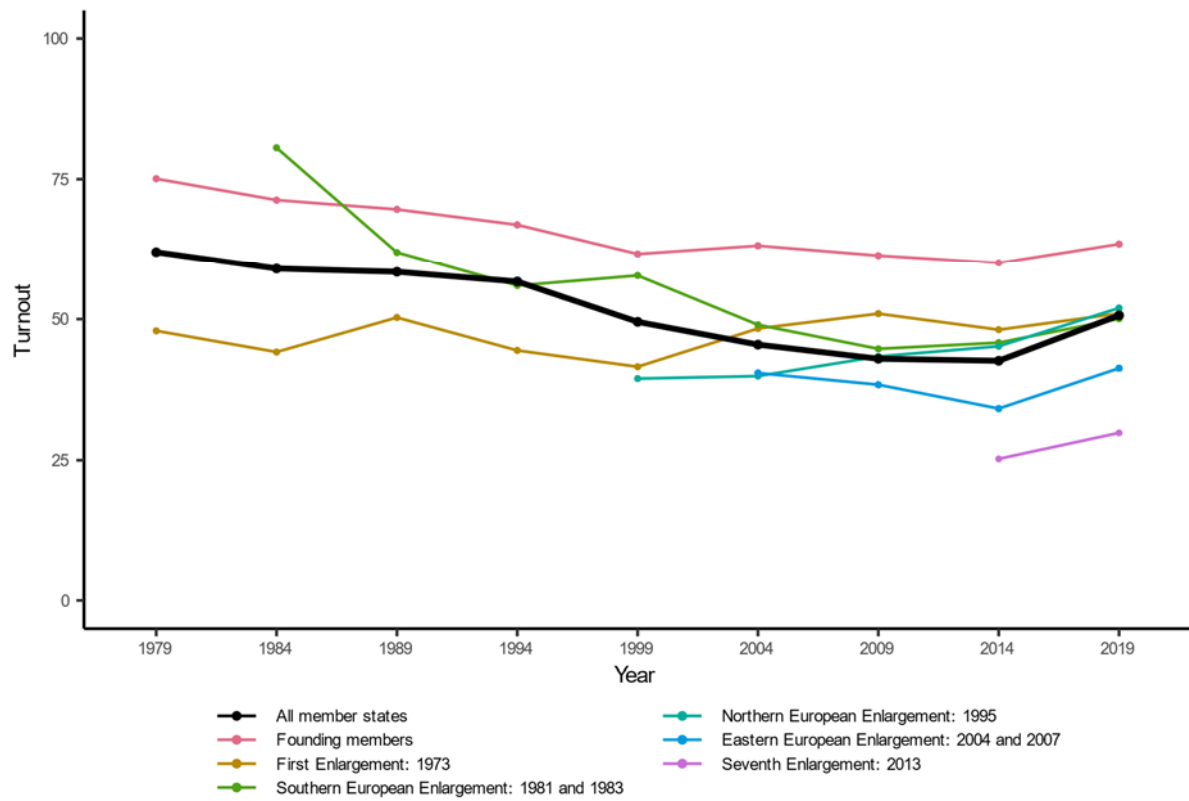
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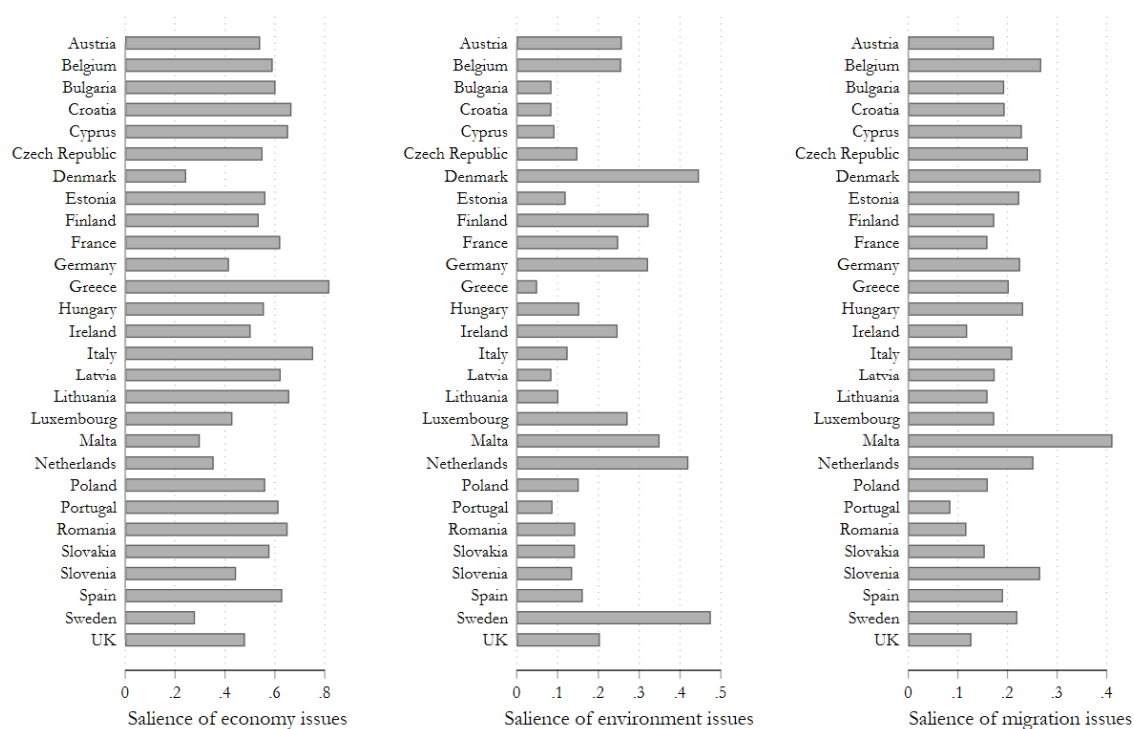
Appendix

Figure A-1: Turnout in EP elections (all EU member states per enlargement round)



Source: Own illustration based on official turnout data from the European Parliament (<https://europarl.europa.eu/election-results-2019/en/turnout/>, 24.06.2020).

Figure A-2: Systemic salience of three major policy issues across EU member states



Source: Own illustration based on survey data from the Eurobarometer 91.5, aggregated values of the MII index.

Table A-1: Actual and reported EP election turnout per country over the different datasets

Country	Official turnout	EB 91.5 (mean)	Over-reporting	RECONNECT (mean)	Over-reporting	EES 2019 (mean)	Over-reporting
Austria	0.60	0.57	-0.02			0.78	0.18
Belgium	0.88	0.81	-0.07			0.87	-0.01
Bulgaria	0.33	0.54	0.21			0.61	0.28
Croatia	0.30	0.37	0.08			0.59	0.29
Cyprus	0.45	0.39	-0.06			0.55	0.10
Czech Republic	0.29	0.39	0.11			0.59	0.30
Denmark	0.66	0.78	0.12	0.85	0.19	0.77	0.11
Estonia	0.38	0.55	0.17			0.67	0.29
Finland	0.41	0.55	0.14			0.59	0.18
France	0.50	0.41	-0.09	0.78	0.28	0.70	0.20
Germany	0.61	0.64	0.03	0.87	0.26	0.82	0.20
Greece	0.59	0.62	0.03			0.83	0.24
Hungary	0.44	0.56	0.12	0.73	0.29	0.71	0.28
Ireland	0.50	0.55	0.05			0.65	0.16
Italy	0.55	0.55	0.01	0.82	0.28	0.82	0.27
Latvia	0.34	0.42	0.08			0.60	0.26
Lithuania	0.53	0.56	0.02			0.77	0.24
Luxembourg	0.84	0.54	-0.30			0.87	0.03
Malta	0.73	0.51	-0.21			0.83	0.11
Netherlands	0.42	0.77	0.35			0.67	0.25
Poland	0.46	0.53	0.07	0.74	0.28	0.78	0.32
Portugal	0.31	0.31	0.00			0.68	0.37
Romania	0.51	0.54	0.03			0.86	0.34
Slovakia	0.23	0.42	0.19			0.56	0.33
Slovenia	0.29	0.41	0.12			0.52	0.23
Spain	0.64	0.55	-0.09	0.87	0.23	0.84	0.20
Sweden	0.55	0.86	0.31			0.70	0.15
UK	0.37	0.44	0.07			0.67	0.30
Mean	0.49	0.54	0.05	0.81	0.26	0.71	0.22

Table A-2: Predictors of participation in the 2019 EP election (regression results, EB 91.5)

	Fixed effects models		Multi-level models	
	M1 <i>Control model</i>	M2 <i>Individual model</i>	M3 <i>Context model</i>	M4 <i>Interaction model</i>
EU ambivalence	-0.02 (0.05)	-0.04 (0.05)	-0.04 (0.05)	-0.05 (0.05)
EU support	0.34*** (0.06)	0.31*** (0.06)	0.31*** (0.06)	0.30*** (0.06)
Trust in European Parliament	0.34*** (0.04)	0.33*** (0.04)	0.33*** (0.04)	0.33*** (0.04)
Government support	0.26*** (0.04)	0.25*** (0.04)	0.25*** (0.04)	0.25*** (0.04)
Political interest	0.45*** (0.02)	0.44*** (0.02)	0.44*** (0.02)	0.44*** (0.02)
EU-specific knowledge	0.52*** (0.06)	0.51*** (0.06)	0.51*** (0.06)	0.51*** (0.06)
Macro-economic evaluations	0.10*** (0.02)	0.09*** (0.02)	0.09*** (0.02)	0.09*** (0.02)
Age	0.05*** (0.00)	0.05*** (0.00)	0.05*** (0.00)	0.05*** (0.00)
Age ²	-0.00*** (0.00)	-0.00*** (0.00)	-0.00*** (0.00)	-0.00*** (0.00)
Gender (female)	-0.03 (0.03)	-0.04 (0.03)	-0.04 (0.03)	-0.04 (0.03)
Education	0.17*** (0.03)	0.15*** (0.03)	0.16*** (0.03)	0.16*** (0.03)
Social class	0.14*** (0.02)	0.13*** (0.02)	0.13*** (0.02)	0.13*** (0.02)
Issue importance (economy)		0.17** (0.06)	0.17** (0.06)	-0.18 (0.25)
Issue importance (immigration)		0.27*** (0.07)	0.27*** (0.07)	-0.26 (0.26)
Issue importance (environment)		0.69*** (0.07)	0.69*** (0.07)	0.36* (0.15)
Issue importance (security)		0.08 (0.07)	0.08 (0.07)	-0.33 (0.32)
Issue importance (social issues)		0.29*** (0.06)	0.29*** (0.06)	0.44 (0.33)

Systemic salience (economy)			1.76 (1.12)	1.59 (1.14)
Systemic salience (immigration)			1.09 (1.32)	0.37 (1.34)
Systemic salience (environment)			2.38 (1.22)	2.05 (1.23)
Systemic salience (security)			3.52 (1.98)	3.07 (2.00)
Systemic salience (social issues)			0.30 (1.55)	0.76 (1.58)
Issue importance * systemic salience (economy)				0.64 (0.45)
Issue importance * systemic salience (immigration)				2.65* (1.22)
Issue importance * systemic salience (environment)				1.40* (0.56)
Issue importance * systemic salience (security)				2.56 (1.86)
Issue importance * systemic salience (social issues)				-0.41 (0.91)
Constant	-3.47*** (0.16)	-3.83*** (0.17)	-6.48*** (1.40)	-6.31*** (1.40)
EP election turnout 2019			1.20* (0.54)	1.22* (0.54)
Country dummies	Yes	Yes	No	No
Country-level variance (random intercept)			0.10*** (0.03)	0.10*** (0.03)
N	21,482	21,482	21,482	21,482
Pseudo R²	0.136	0.140		

Notes: Displayed are logit coefficients with standard errors in parentheses; significance levels: * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$.

Table A-3: Predictors of participation in the 2019 EP election in seven EU member states (regression results of single country models, RECONNECT survey)

	Germany	France	Spain	Hungary	Poland	Denmark	Italy
Issue importance (economy)	0.27 (0.33)	0.17 (0.19)	-0.28 (0.21)	-0.13 (0.19)	-0.10 (0.17)	0.08 (0.32)	0.57** (0.23)
Issue importance (environment)	0.07 (0.24)	0.35* (0.20)	-0.16 (0.22)	-0.15 (0.19)	-0.16 (0.19)	0.43 (0.29)	-0.04 (0.20)
Issue importance (EU integration)	-0.59** (0.30)	0.07 (0.31)	0.12 (0.43)	0.26 (0.32)	0.10 (0.25)	0.09 (0.43)	-0.30 (0.25)
Issue importance (immigration)	-0.37 (0.24)	0.15 (0.22)	-0.09 (0.26)	0.51** (0.25)	-0.49* (0.26)	-0.49* (0.27)	-0.07 (0.20)
Issue importance (security)	-0.46* (0.24)	0.03 (0.21)	-0.33 (0.25)	0.08 (0.25)	-0.19 (0.20)	0.29 (0.34)	0.04 (0.20)
Issue importance (social issues)	-0.13 (0.28)	0.11 (0.23)	-0.06 (0.25)	-0.01 (0.28)	-0.47* (0.24)	-0.36 (0.34)	-0.00 (0.19)
Opinion extremity (economy)	0.03 (0.07)	-0.01 (0.06)	0.04 (0.06)	-0.07 (0.04)	-0.03 (0.05)	0.00 (0.07)	-0.03 (0.05)
Opinion extremity (environment)	-0.03 (0.07)	0.01 (0.06)	-0.15** (0.06)	-0.01 (0.05)	0.09* (0.05)	0.07 (0.08)	0.01 (0.05)
Opinion extremity (EU integration)	0.14** (0.06)	0.14** (0.06)	0.08 (0.07)	0.09* (0.05)	0.08 (0.05)	0.18** (0.08)	0.06 (0.05)
Opinion extremity (immigration)	0.01 (0.06)	0.01 (0.05)	-0.09* (0.05)	0.01 (0.05)	0.08* (0.05)	0.03 (0.07)	0.05 (0.05)
EU ambivalence	0.67** (0.31)	0.02 (0.26)	0.55* (0.33)	0.16 (0.34)	0.12 (0.34)	0.68* (0.36)	0.20 (0.26)
EU support	1.06*** (0.32)	0.07 (0.26)	1.01*** (0.30)	0.61* (0.34)	0.12 (0.34)	0.80** (0.36)	0.35 (0.26)
Trust in European Parliament	0.10 (0.07)	0.00 (0.06)	0.01 (0.05)	0.10*** (0.03)	0.09*** (0.03)	0.10 (0.06)	-0.03 (0.04)
Government support	-0.00 (0.06)	0.02 (0.06)	-0.03 (0.04)	0.05 (0.04)	-0.01 (0.03)	-0.03 (0.05)	0.07 (0.04)
Political interest	0.75*** (0.15)	0.48*** (0.11)	0.63*** (0.11)	0.42*** (0.10)	0.53*** (0.11)	0.44*** (0.16)	0.30*** (0.11)
EU-specific knowledge	0.24 (0.22)	0.04 (0.22)	0.01 (0.22)	0.47*** (0.17)	0.39** (0.19)	0.11 (0.30)	0.21 (0.18)
Macro-economic evaluations	-0.12 (0.14)	-0.00 (0.11)	0.08 (0.11)	-0.05 (0.08)	0.07 (0.08)	0.01 (0.15)	-0.25** (0.11)
Age	0.07 (0.05)	0.06* (0.03)	0.10** (0.04)	0.15*** (0.04)	-0.04 (0.04)	0.01 (0.05)	0.04 (0.03)

Age ²	-0.00 (0.00)	-0.00 (0.00)	-0.00** (0.00)	-0.00*** (0.00)	0.00* (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)	-0.00 (0.00)
Gender (female)	0.38* (0.21)	0.02 (0.18)	0.11 (0.18)	0.19 (0.16)	-0.23 (0.16)	-0.08 (0.25)	0.21 (0.16)
Income	0.24* (0.14)	0.25* (0.14)	0.03 (0.12)	0.34*** (0.13)	0.09 (0.12)	-0.18 (0.18)	0.11 (0.13)
Education	0.15 (0.17)	0.11 (0.15)	0.05 (0.12)	0.47*** (0.15)	0.22 (0.15)	0.20 (0.18)	-0.06 (0.13)
Constant	-3.38** (1.39)	-3.17*** (0.99)	-2.18** (1.10)	-6.74*** (1.04)	-1.12 (0.90)	-1.12 (1.32)	-1.39 (0.94)
N	1,125	1,011	1,239	1,171	1,127	773	1,188
Pseudo R²	0.14	0.10	0.09	0.19	0.11	0.11	0.04

Notes: Displayed are logit coefficients with standard errors in parentheses from seven separate regression models; significance levels: * $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$.

Table A-4: Predictors of participation in the 2019 EP election in seven EU member states (regression results of a unified all-country model with interaction terms, RECONNECT survey)

	All country model
France	-1.04 (0.64)
Spain	0.72 (0.64)
Hungary	-0.72 (0.61)
Poland	-0.56 (0.59)
Denmark	-0.32 (0.76)
Italy	-1.23** (0.62)
Issue importance (economy)	0.33 (0.32)
France*issue importance (economy)	-0.20 (0.37)
Spain*issue importance (economy)	-0.60 (0.38)
Hungary*issue importance (economy)	-0.58 (0.36)
Poland*issue importance (economy)	-0.45 (0.36)
Denmark*issue importance (economy)	-0.31 (0.45)
Italy*issue importance (economy)	0.39 (0.39)
Issue importance (environment)	0.20 (0.23)
France*issue importance (environment)	0.02 (0.30)
Spain*issue importance (environment)	-0.36 (0.32)
Hungary*issue importance (environment)	-0.32 (0.29)
Poland*issue importance (environment)	-0.36 (0.30)
Denmark*issue importance (environment)	0.30 (0.36)
Italy*issue importance (environment)	-0.21 (0.31)
Issue importance (EU integration)	-0.55* (0.29)
France*issue importance (EU integration)	0.52 (0.42)
Spain*issue importance (EU integration)	0.60 (0.50)
Hungary*issue importance (EU integration)	0.86** (0.41)
Poland*issue importance (EU integration)	0.69*

	(0.38)
Denmark*issue importance (EU integration)	0.50
	(0.50)
Italy*issue importance (EU integration)	0.21
	(0.38)
Issue importance (immigration)	-0.35
	(0.23)
France*issue importance (immigration)	0.62**
	(0.32)
Spain*issue importance (immigration)	0.15
	(0.34)
Hungary*issue importance (immigration)	0.85***
	(0.32)
Poland*issue importance (immigration)	-0.14
	(0.34)
Denmark*issue importance (immigration)	-0.24
	(0.35)
Italy*issue importance (immigration)	0.40
	(0.30)
Issue importance (security)	-0.43*
	(0.24)
France*issue importance (security)	0.45
	(0.31)
Spain*issue importance (security)	0.08
	(0.34)
Hungary*issue importance (security)	0.38
	(0.33)
Poland*issue importance (security)	0.19
	(0.31)
Denmark*issue importance (security)	0.68*
	(0.41)
Italy*issue importance (security)	0.56*
	(0.31)
Issue importance (social issues)	-0.11
	(0.27)
France*issue importance (social issues)	0.19
	(0.35)
Spain*issue importance (social issues)	0.04
	(0.36)
Hungary*issue importance (social issues)	0.03
	(0.37)
Poland*issue importance (social issues)	-0.46
	(0.36)
Denmark*issue importance (social issues)	-0.20
	(0.43)
Italy*issue importance (social issues)	0.13
	(0.33)
Opinion extremity (economy)	0.04
	(0.06)
France*opinion extremity (economy)	-0.03
	(0.09)
Spain*opinion extremity (economy)	0.00
	(0.08)
Hungary*opinion extremity (economy)	-0.09

	(0.08)
Poland*opinion extremity (economy)	-0.07
	(0.08)
Denmark*opinion extremity (economy)	-0.03
	(0.09)
Italy*opinion extremity (economy)	-0.06
	(0.08)
Opinion extremity (environment)	-0.03
	(0.06)
France*opinion extremity (environment)	0.03
	(0.09)
Spain*opinion extremity (environment)	-0.11
	(0.09)
Hungary*opinion extremity (environment)	0.00
	(0.08)
Poland*opinion extremity (environment)	0.12
	(0.08)
Denmark*opinion extremity (environment)	0.09
	(0.10)
Italy*opinion extremity (environment)	0.03
	(0.08)
Opinion extremity (EU integration)	0.08
	(0.06)
France*opinion extremity (EU integration)	0.10
	(0.08)
Spain*opinion extremity (EU integration)	0.01
	(0.09)
Hungary*opinion extremity (EU integration)	-0.02
	(0.07)
Poland*opinion extremity (EU integration)	0.02
	(0.07)
Denmark*opinion extremity (EU integration)	0.06
	(0.09)
Italy*opinion extremity (EU integration)	0.00
	(0.08)
Opinion extremity (immigration)	-0.00
	(0.06)
France*opinion extremity (immigration)	0.00
	(0.07)
Spain*opinion extremity (immigration)	-0.07
	(0.08)
Hungary*opinion extremity (immigration)	-0.00
	(0.07)
Poland*opinion extremity (immigration)	0.07
	(0.07)
Denmark*opinion extremity (immigration)	0.03
	(0.09)
Italy*opinion extremity (immigration)	0.06
	(0.07)
EU ambivalence	0.28**
	(0.11)
EU support	0.50***
	(0.11)
Trust in European Parliament	0.05***

	(0.02)
Government support	0.01
	(0.02)
Political interest	0.49***
	(0.04)
EU-specific knowledge	0.29***
	(0.08)
Macro-economic evaluations	-0.01
	(0.04)
Age	0.07***
	(0.01)
Age ²	-0.00***
	(0.00)
Gender (female)	0.10
	(0.07)
Income	0.13***
	(0.05)
Education	0.14***
	(0.05)
Constant	-2.40***
	(0.59)
N	7,634
Pseudo R²	0.11

Note: Displayed are logit coefficients with standard errors in parentheses, * $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$.