Why vote when you cannot choose?

EU intervention and political participation in times of constraint

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Abstract

This article analyses how economic intervention affects individuals' political behaviour by assessing the impact of intervention on aggregate and individual turnout. The intervention of the European Union in a selection of member states is viewed as having negative consequences for democratic choice, reducing the ability of voters to select between distinct policy alternatives, resulting in the absence of the primary benefit of voting: choice. It is argued that when voters are faced with electoral choices without the ability to shape policy alternatives, they are less likely to vote. Moreover, the negative effect of intervention is found to be conditioned by both individuals' level of education and ideological identification. Voters on the centre and the left who feel abandoned by left-leaning parties, who have prioritised being responsible to their European paymasters, are significantly more likely to abstain when exposed to intervention. Empirical support for the argument is found via the analysis of aggregate turnout as well as individual level data from the European Social Survey data from across fifteen Western European states.

Keywords: Election turnout, Eurozone crisis, political participation, Troika, voting

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Introduction

If 'only voting that facilitates popular choice is democratic' (Riker, 1982: 5) how do individuals react when they are allowed to vote but they are presented with very limited choice? The economic intervention of the European Union (EU) has been found to exhibit a constraining effect on democratic regimes by reducing their room to manouvre responsiveness of state governments to citizens' preferences (Alonso, 2014; Ruiz-Rufino and Alonso, 2017). This has resulted in 'democracy without choice' (Alonso, 2014) within the intervened-in member states whereby voters continue to vote but are robbed of choice. Recent work has studied the effect of the economic intervention on electoral outcomes (Alonso and Ruiz-Rufino, 2018); political protests (Genovese et al., 2016); party politics (Turnbull-Dugarte, 2020); satisfaction with democracy (Armingeon and Guthmann, 2014; Devine, 2019; Ruiz-Rufino and Alonso, 2017; Schraff and Schimmelfennig, 2019), political trust (Foster and Frieden, 2017), as well as the democratic legitimacy of member states and EU institutions (Alonso, 2014; Laffan, 2014; Sánchez-Cuenca, 2017). We know very little, however, regarding how EU intervention affects voter turnout. Steiner (2010, 2016) argues that economic integration limits the scope for choice, depressing turnout as a result. Häusermann et al. (2018) shows the same in the case of hard economic times. This article asks: does the economic intervention of the EU impact individual political participation in national elections?

In the following, I present a simple difference-in-difference model of aggregate turnout data and the analysis of individual-level data from the European Social Survey (ESS) to

demonstrate that EU intervention negatively influences political participation. The results suggest that the premium of the EU's intervention in maintaining the financial stability of fiscally handicapped member states has come at the cost of a reduction in the propensity of individuals to turn out to vote on election day. The suppressive nature of intervention on turnout is conditioned, however, by both political sophistication, much in the same way as economic hardship (Häusermann et al., 2018), and also by voters' ideological placement on the left-right dimension. The main empirical and theoretical contribution is to demonstrate that intervention may only affect individual political participation amongst centrist and left-leaning voters. The perception of an imposing externality tying the hands of their government is less likely to be present for right-leaning individuals, given that the conditionality requirements mirror the policy preferences that tend to be advocated for by right-leaning political parties. Voters on the left, on the other hand, are more likely to view the democratic utility of their vote as being undermined because social democratic and left-wing parties are conceding to supranational demands and adopting structural reforms and internal devaluation measures that their core electoral constituencies are opposed to.

This study adds to existing work that assesses how EU intervention negatively impacted voter attitudes towards the EU and satisfaction with democracy (Armingeon and Guthmann, 2014; Devine, 2019; Ruiz-Rufino and Alonso, 2017; Schraff and Schimmelfennig, 2019), and how intervention shaped aggregate electoral behaviour (Alonso and Ruiz-Rufino, 2018) by focusing on the effect of intervention on turnout. It seems that, in addition to the political inequality between the core body of EU states and those on the economic periphery

(Alonso, 2014; Magone, 2016), intervention has consequences for the health of democracy beyond a reduction in the autonomous capacity of states to design their own economic policies. EU constraints drive inequality in individual participation between states which further reduces the legitimacy of government policy in those states undergoing intervention.

EU intervention and political participation: Three hypotheses

Intervention: The absence of choice

The Eurozone crisis represents a notable turning point in the trajectory of the EU. Despite treaty-based rules prohibiting inter-state bailouts[1], six EU member states required economic intervention from the EU institutions between 2010 and 2013. The first states to become signatories of EU-sponsored bailout agreements, were Greece and Ireland. In exchange for much-needed financial assistance, both states had to pay a political premium by foregoing sovereignty over their domestic economies via the agreement of their respective *Memorandum of Understanding* (MoU) they signed with the EU institutions.[2] Ireland and Greece were followed by Portugal which signed its own MoU the following year in 2011. Spain and Italy were advised by the European Central Bank (ECB) that they were required to implement an austerity and internal structural reform package in 2011 should they wish to be considered for financial assistance in the future to which both states complied. To fulfill the ECB's demands, both countries submitted themselves to the increased oversight of the EU institutions, increased austerity measures and implemented a catalogue of domestic reforms similar to those required by the MoUs including, in the Spanish case, a

constitutional amendment restricting the budget deficits and public debt-to-gross domestic product (GDP) ratio in 2011, as well as labour market liberalisation efforts and structural changes to the countries' pension schemes. This informal and unprecedented step by the ECB to condition financial assistance to Italy and Spain has been interpreted to be a de facto contractual agreement comparable to the formal MoUs (see, Ruiz-Rufino and Alonso, 2017; Schraff and Schimmelfennig, 2019). In addition to these reforms, Spain officially signed an MoU agreement in exchange for financial capital for the country's struggling banks in 2012. Cyrpus was then also subjected to intervention the following year in 2013.

The significance of the MoU and the other informal means of intervening in the economies of Greece, Ireland, Italy, Portugal and Spain (GIIPS) and Cyprus has important implications not only for the economies of these states, but also for the proper functioning of their democracy. EU economic intervention ties states' hands, restricting not only the room for manoeuvre of the government of the day but also of that of future elected governments. In addition to the EU's requests for austerity, increased labour market liberalization, cuts to public sector workers and the provision of state pensions, the EU also requested that fiscal spending rules be enacted that would not allow *future* governments to return to periods of increased public debt and the use of budget deficits to increase spending (Closa, 2015; Ioannou et al., 2015). This means that when the electorates of these states are presented with the opportunity to throw out the incumbent government, doing so and installing a new political party or coalition in government does not automatically lead to an alternation in policy direction given the reduced potential for spending alternatives. In other words, MoUs

have 'replaced party manifestos as the roadmaps of policy' (Alonso, 2014: 14). The fact that these roadmaps are imposed by external actors is, however, indicative of the regressive nature of democratic choice in the intervened-in states. Whereas manifestos represent opposing policy platforms amongst which voters can select their desired prospectus for the policy output of their state, MoUs only serve to suppress the discretion of policy-makers' ability to autonomously design their proposed policy programmes.

Whilst all EU member states are subjected to the rules and regulations of polity membership that play an inhibitive role on the autonomy of member states' governments, the intervention of the EU institutions in the GIIPS states represents a sizeable alteration in the rules of the game for a small selection of member states. This expansion is tantamount to treaty-change (Turnbull-Dugarte, 2020) despite these processes taking place outside of the community processes, and represents a deeper level of political integration over member state economies that is not yet experienced by the core body of states that have not undergone intervention (Alonso, 2014). Whilst the adoption and promotion of austerity as the only alternative – 'There is no alternative' (TINA) was a popular message amongst austerity advocates (see Blyth, 2013) – was present in the non-intervened-in states, there was a clear distinction in the democratic credentials of the policy. Austerity in the core economies of the EU was self-imposed whereas in the GIIPS it was imposed by an external actor alongside a battery of internal devaluations measures. Parties in non-intervened-in states were able to act responsively to the policy preferences of their voters in accordance with their own ideological and economic interests. Political parties in the intervened-in

states, notably those on the left, were coerced into implementing policies that go against their ideological beliefs, as well as those of their voters, in order to ensure they qualify for the carrot of financial support they required from their European partners. EU intervention has led to the establishment of a two-tier political order in the polity, where the economic survival of a small minority of electorally unresponsive member states is maintained only at the mercy of their electorally responsive European peers (Alonso, 2014).

In some cases, observed in both Greece and Italy, technocratic governments were installed to ensure a responsible government was in power that would guarantee compliance with EU demands. One example, if extreme, of the castrated nature of democratic input in shaping a state's own policies is provided by the case of Greece. The rise of the radical left-wing group Syriza grew under the wings of its explicit anti-austerity message. In government, however, the party proved unable to produce an alternative to austerity that was reflected in the actual policy output adopted in the country (Matthijs, 2017). The castration of the government's ability to fulfil the will of its voters was evinced during the climactic period of summer 2015 when the Syriza-led government held a referendum on the latest bailout conditions. Despite a resounding rejection of the conditions of financial assistance – over 60% of Greek voters rejected the deal – the government eventually conceded defeat to their EU partners and signed a deal which actually included harsher conditions than the one they originally offered regardless of the mass opposition to the same amongst voters. The people asked, they answered, and were then ignored: they could vote but they could not choose as the ballot box no longer served as a means of providing an alternation in policy, resulting in

a 'democracy without choice' (Alonso, 2014) and a 'diminished form of democracy' (Sánchez-Cuenca, 2017).

Why vote?

Voters are assumed to be rational actors that carry out an assessment of the relative costs vis-à-vis the perceived benefits of voting when deciding to take part in elections (Downs, 1957; Riker and Ordeshook, 1968). In this framework, voters are understood to be welfare maximisers that are incentivised to take part in elections if they perceive that selecting a particular party will provide them with some returns in exchange for their ballot. One of the core benefits of voting is that voters exercise an opportunity to have a say over the policy output of the democratic system that they form a part of. Of paramount importance is that part of the benefits that Downs views for voters is their faith in the democratic system itself given that voting 'makes democracy possible' and democracy is the 'reward of voting' (Downs, 1957: 270). In other words, the very idea of being able to have a say is one of the benefits voters perceive from the act of voting itself (Riker and Ordeshook 1968: 28). In addition to the welfare maximising benefits then, voters are also motivated by these intrinsic benefits which involve the socialised sense of doing one's civic duty by voting and being a good democratic citizen.

Steiner (2010) argues that one cannot disaggregate the gains of utility-based and intrinsic benefits of voting as the latter is clearly conditional on the former. If voters do not believe

that the electoral procedures in place to allow them to have a say that increases their chances of gaining utility-maximising returns based on the outcome, then they are likely to question the intrinsic utility of voting in general. How can voting be indicative of good democratic citizenship if voting does not represent a democratic expression of choice between competing programmatic alternatives that can be implemented afterwards?

Voters like choice. When there is a wide array of political alternatives to choose from, voters are more inclined to feel that a party offers something for them to gain and are more likely to turn out to vote as a result (Brockington, 2009; Hobolt and Hoerner, 2019; Rodon, 2017; Wessels and Schmitt, 2008), especially when there is a high level of congruence between an individual's preferences and those on offer (Hobolt and Hoerner, 2019). Lipset (1983: 191) argues that the motivating impulse of self-interest in driving individuals to participate in elections is only activated when voters believe that the differentiated policy choices they are afforded by political competitors can be understood as having a significant impact on their everyday lives. In a context where the viable electoral alternatives provide no variation in the economic policy platform they offer to voters (i.e. when austerity is the only viable dish on the menu), then there is no identifiable policy differential that may provide distinct alternative trajectories for people's lives.

Electoral participation in times of constraint

Existing empirical evidence suggests that reduced state autonomy negatively affects turnout. The impact of processes of market-based integration has been found to have negative consequences on participation. Steiner (2010) argues that the processes of economic integration that have taken place over the post-war period have reduced the capacity of states to react independently to economic shocks. Analysing country-level turnout data between 1965 and 2010, Steiner (2010) establishes a negative correlation between the level of integration in the international economy on electoral turnout. Marshall and Fisher (2013) provide support for this argument, showing that globalization, measured in the level of foreign direct investment, leads to a notable reduction in aggregate-level turnout. The decrease in turnout occurs, the authors maintain, because political parties in states that are more economically integrated into global markets reduce the dispersion of choice they offer to voters, converging together on the main axis of economic policy concerns. In the European context, Haupt (2010) argues that globalisation has indeed increased the convergence of economic positions of left- and right-wing parties, but these findings remain contested (see Sen and Barry, 2018). In the instances where increased exposure to international markets leads to reduced choice for voters, we can observe a significant reduction in aggregate turnout (Steiner and Martin, 2012).

Of course, whilst assessing the diversification of policies *offered* by parties is an important indication of the decreased discretionary capacity of parties to shape policy, this may not capture the real effect of constraint. Parties may still differ in what they propose to offer voters, as some left-wing parties have persisted to do, but once these parties gain the reins of

government, they are confronted with realities of constraint. The impotence of the Syriza government in Greece and its failure to fulfil its anti-austerity *raison d'être* despite promising in national elections and a referendum to do just that is exemplary of this. Similar events are echoed in other intervened-in states too, such as Spain, where the socialist-led Zapatero government introduced austerity in 2010 again in 2011 in a spectacular political U-turn with voters and political pundits drawing a clear link between the policy change and external coercion from the EU (Alonso, 2014; Magone, 2016).

Beyond the constraints of market liberalisation, is also the limited room for manoeuvre engendered by the expansion of supranational oversight and European integration. As Le Gall (2017) argues, European integration has the effect of both (a) advancing interstate economic dependence, and (b) introducing an additional layer of responsibility in the multilevel governance framework. This is theorised to have a negative effect on turnout (LeGall, 2017) given that devolving sovereignty to the EU and becoming more integrated with the economies of other states reduces the catalogue of policy areas over which state governments can act autonomously and, as a result, reduces the level of partisan competition over a number of issues (Dorussen and Nanou, 2006; Konstantinidis et al., 2019; Nanou and Dorussen, 2013) but particularly over economic policy concerns (Ward et al., 2015). The effect of both the diluted sovereignty of state governments as well as the reduced competition between political alternatives, is likely to drive voters to view domestic elections as an inadequate means of shaping policy outcomes (Mair, 2013).

There is mixed evidence on how EU constraints affect electoral turnout. Le Gall (2018), relying on data from the European Electoral Study (EES) in 2009, observes a reduction in turnout in national elections when voters *perceive* the EU as having a major role over domestic outcomes. The effect is not consistently observed using data from 2014. The empirical link between EU integration and turnout, therefore, requires further assessment as this evidence shows a pre-intervention negative effect but a post-intervention null effect. Although, pre-intervention, the constraints of EU integration on member states from the Western block have been equally distributed, the processes of intervention, which represents a significant advancement of EU integration within the intervened-in states (Alonso, 2014; Ioannou et al., 2015), leads to important interstate variation in the constraining power of the EU.

Of paramount importance to the theoretical mechanism between the reduced manoeuvrability of governments and the negative impact it may have on the electorate, is that voters are conscious of the reduced capacity of governments to be responsive. This is because the theoretical model envisages two steps that link EU intervention and electoral participation. Firstly, EU intervention serves to castrate parties' ability to provide political alternatives removing policy choice from electoral competition. Secondly, voters become aware of the impact of intervention and the reduced room for manoeuvre this implies which reduces their incentives to vote as they are aware of their reduced capacity to enact change.

Voters update their political priors when exposed to new information (Gerber and Green, 1998) and this updating is heightened during times of crisis (Dinas, 2013). Such political learning processes are found to be at work in relation to state capacity to be responsive and government responsibility. Duch and Stevenson (2010) use aggregate cross-national survey data to demonstrate that voters have an understanding of the consequences of economic integration, showing a strong negative correlation between the extent of state exposure to international trade and the ability of governments to control economic outcomes.

Relying on longitudinal Eurobarometer data, Ruiz-Rufino and Alonso (2017) evince that the EU's intervention had a notable political learning effect on the electorates of the intervened-in member states, leading to a significant increase in citizens' knowledge of the EU and EU institutions. The authors present strong empirical evidence to show that exposure to new political information instilled an understanding in voters that intervened-in governments have lost a pronounced amount of political autonomy which consequently diminished their capacity to be responsive to voters. The effect of the same also led to a sizeable collapse in the level of satisfaction with democracy as voters became to understand the lack of choice they were offered (Ruiz-Rufino and Alonso, 2017).

In short, EU economic intervention is found to both engender an awareness in voters that their governments have been castrated of the ability to act autonomously and to be responsive to voter preferences (Ruiz-Rufino and Alonso, 2017), with voter satisfaction with

democracy suffering as a result (although see Devine, 2019). The literature observes that voters can become aware of the inability of their governments to react to economic downturns if they are highly dependent on international markets (Duch and Stevenson, 2010) and the same can depress individual-level (Steiner, 2016) and country-level (Marshall and Fisher, 2015; Steiner, 2010; Steiner and Martin, 2012) electoral participation. If voters in states subjected to EU intervention are aware of the diluted means of governments to respond to their preferences, then they will be disincentivised to vote in national elections. Under EU constraints, voters begin to operate under the assumption that parties in government cannot operate freely to enact policies that appease their electoral desires and, as a result, they no longer view elections as windows of opportunity to engender policy change. The calling of elections continues, and voters can vote freely but they are not given the opportunity to choose the policy direction of their incoming governments as these have had their hands tied by previous stages of EU intervention (Alonso, 2014). Therefore,

H1: Individual voters will be less likely to participate in elections in states under EU intervention.

Levels of political sophistication tend to condition the ability of voters to process economic and political information (Basinger and Lavine, 2005; Duch and Stevenson, 2010). Taking education as an indication of political sophistication, initial empirical assessments identify a negative relationship between hard economic times and individual participation amongst the

more highly educated (Häusermann et al., 2018), and there is reason to expect the effect of EU intervention to be conditioned in a similar fashion. The better educated are more likely to have a deeper understanding of EU interventions' constraining conditionalities and, therefore, will be more aware of their inability to affect change in the policy direction of their representatives. Consequently,

H2: The negative effect of intervention on participation will be conditional on levels of education.

Intervention does not exhibit a homogenous constraining effect across political parties. Social-democratic parties, who have traditionally been the guardians of welfare state expansion and greater state expenditure (Esping-Andersen, 2017) have been forced to fall back on their electoral promises and veer towards a more austere and fiscally frugal agenda (Bremer, 2018). The internal restructuring demanded by the EU, which went beyond fiscal prudence and included labour market liberalisation reforms easing the ability of firms to dismiss workers and reducing trade unions' bargaining power, went in direct opposition to the economic interests and the ideological leanings of centre-left parties and their core constituents. Parties on the right, whose own ideological offering is in line with those demanded by the EU, can continue to seek and implement policies that are congruent with their voters' preferences whilst it is only parties on the left who are forced to enact policies incongruent with their platforms and those supported by their constituents. When subjected

to intervention, left-leaning establishment parties have been punished at the ballot box as their constituents move to protest these parties' enactment of the internal devaluation measures solicited by the EU (Alonso and Ruiz-Rufino, 2018).

Given that parties in government will install the conditional requirements of intervention regardless of a party's ideological colour (Alonso, 2014; Alonso and Ruiz-Rufino, 2018), voters will become increasingly aware of the reduced utility of their vote in triggering a change in policy output. This effect will likely be more pronounced amongst voters who identify on the left as these are the individuals who have felt the castration of their vote the most and the "betrayal" of political parties on the left who have prioritised responsibility to the supranational community over responsiveness to their own domestic voters (Bremer, 2018). As a result, left-leaning voters are more likely to be aware of the constraining nature of EU intervention on the capacity of political parties to provide political alternatives and will therefore be less incentivised to turnout. Thus,

H3: The negative effect of EU intervention on participation will be conditional for left-leaning voters.

Data and method

The analysis that follows utilises data compiled from the ESS between 2002-2017 which includes individual-level responses from biannual cross-national survey data. The dataset is

structured hierarchically and includes data at the individual-level from respondents (N = 131,778) within each country included in the analysis, as well as indicators collected at the country-level (N = 15). The sample of countries is limited to that of the Western European states (EU15) in order to control the level of constraint before the application of intervention on the GIIPS states. Including countries from Eastern Europe, which, in addition to experiencing significantly distinct levels of political participation (Bernhagen and Marsh, 2007), were also undergoing changes in the levels of constraint via their application and eventual accession to the EU during the mid-noughties.

The dependent variable is a dichotomous indicator that captures the self-reported participation of respondents in the most recent general election held in their country. The main limitation of this operationalisation is the potential bias caused by the over-reporting of participation and alternatives, such as the self-reported probability of voting, are not available. That being said, there is no relationship between over-reporting in the ESS and intervention status, so we can assume the potential for bias is equally distributed across the main variable of interest (see Sigelman, 1982). Moreover, providing a test of the effect of intervention on official aggregate turnout rates serves as a confirmatory test to demonstrate that overall turnout is influenced by intervention and not just the result of survey-based analysis.

To assess the impact of EU intervention, I replicate the operationalisation of intervention applied in existing empirical work (Alonso and Ruiz-Rufino, 2018; Ruiz-Rufino and Alonso, 2017; Schraff and Schimmelfennig, 2019; Turnbull-Dugarte, 2020) and include a dichotomous variable to indicate the country-years in which certain member states were subjected to economic intervention by the EU institutions. This includes Ireland and Greece (after 2010), and Italy, Portugal and Spain (after 2011).[3] Cyprus is not included in the main analysis as it does not belong to the block of Western European states. In order to isolate the distinct nature of intervention from general economic deterioration caused by the financial crisis, which with varying degrees of severity impacted all countries, I include two different country-level economic indicators in different models to control for economic malaise. This includes a measure of the country's budget deficit (as a percentage of GDP) in the year prior to the survey's fieldwork (*t-1*) and the change in the unemployment rate.[4]

In order to test *H2* and *H3*, I include measures of education and ideology. Education has been established as a potent determinant of political participation, with better-educated individuals being significantly and substantively more likely to vote in elections than the less-educated (Blais, 2000; Gallego, 2010; Hadjar and Beck, 2010). This is attributed to education providing voters with an increased understanding of political events and the political choices available to voters (Gallego, 2007). Education is operationalised as the number of full-time years in education. Ideology is captured via individuals' self-placement on the left (0) - right (10) dimension.

Two core demographic indicators are included: a dichotomous indicator of gender (1 = male) and a categorical indicator of age. Income is controlled for in the models via the income percentile of the respondent in each country. An alternative measure, income satisfaction, which some view as a better indicator of income status (Kern et al., 2015) reports similar results (see the Online appendix). The models also condition on employment status which indicates respondents who are employed (baseline), unemployed, studying or not in the labour force (NILF). Those identified as NILF include unemployed individuals who are not looking for work, unpaid domestic workers or retirees.

In addition to education, one of the most powerful predictors of individual-level electoral participation is political interest (Breckler, 1984; Hadjar and Beck, 2010). Those with an interest in politics are more likely to be aware of the issues at stake, the positions of competing parties and the incentives for participating in elections, which lead them to be substantially more likely to turn out to vote. The model also controls for the cohabitation status. There is a strong empirical link between cohabitation and contagious electoral behaviour between family members (Blais et al., 2019). In light of the rising divergence between political dispositions between voters based on their geographic distribution amongst areas of different levels of urbanization (Smets and van Ham, 2013: 350), I also include a control indicating voters who reside in rural locations.

Finally, country and year fixed effects are included to capture between country heterogeneity that might explain variation in the level of individual-level participation and longitudinal changes occurring over the whole population respectively. Controlling for country-fixed variation also ensures that the models reduce the potential of omitted variable bias whilst also controlling for core systemic-level variables that may influence participation such as cultural predictors or other unidentified country-specific confounders. Longitudinal controls are required given the trends of decreasing turnout.

Given the binary structure of the dependent variable, the models apply logistic regression estimations. Despite the hierarchical structure of the data, there are an insufficient number of higher-level observations (countries) to provide efficient estimates using a multilevel model (Bickel, 2007). In order to cater for the potential bias in standard errors caused by including country-level variables in the prediction of individual-level outcomes, however, I apply robust country-clustered standard errors which provide similar standard errors to multilevel models when using country- and individual-level variables. Country-level clustering of standard errors therefore allows one to model both country- and individual-level effects whilst reducing the risk of type one errors when using hierarchical data (Steenbergen and Jones, 2002) and also permits the inclusion of cross-level interactions when the level-2 N is low (Hox, 2010).[5] For robustness, however, the main regression models are re-estimated adopting a multilevel logistic regression model to ensure the main findings are not conditional on the estimation technique applied (see the Online appendix). The hierarchical model provides near-identical results.

Empirical analysis

Before beginning to assess the effect of intervention on individual-level electoral participation, I first seek to show that aggregate-level turnout was affected by EU intervention. To do this, I present a simple difference-in-difference analysis modelling the impact of intervention on the overall turnout rate. Figure 1 presents difference-in-difference estimation whilst controlling for country-specific fixed effects, time trends and lagged values of turnout and the budget deficit.[6]

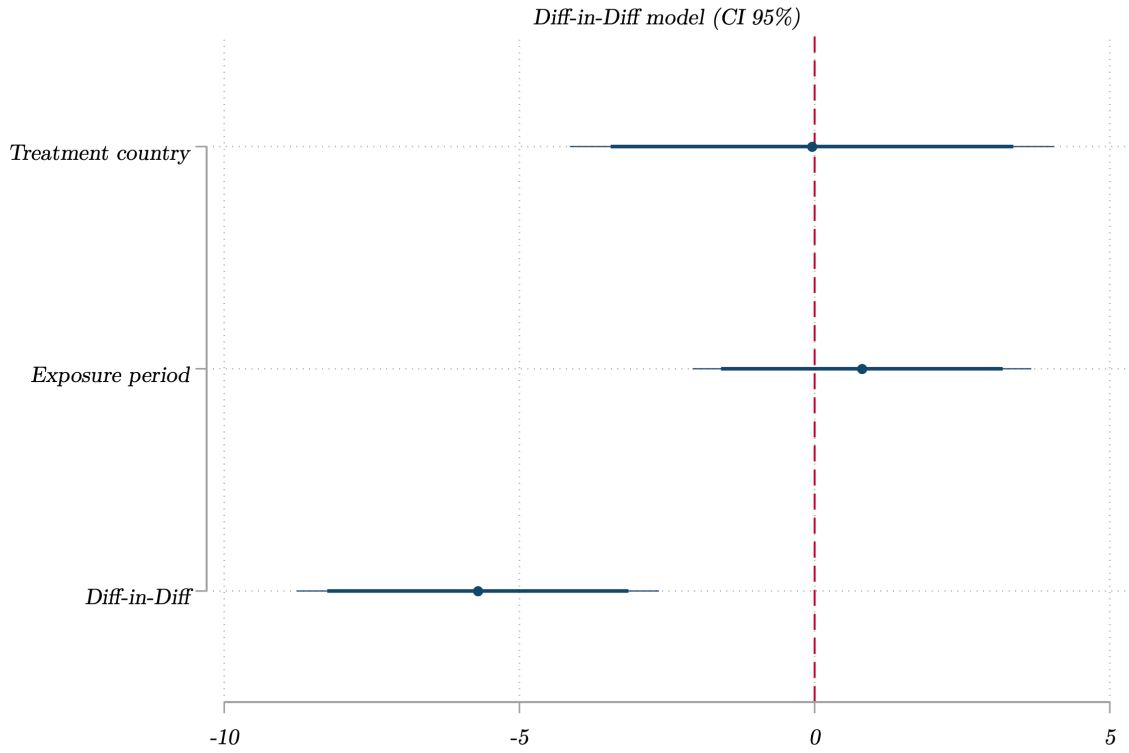

Figure 1: Aggregate level impact of EU intervention on turnout

As expected, intervention is associated with a significant reduction in turnout. Whilst during the pre-intervention period there is no difference of significance in the turnout rates between the non-intervened and intervened-in states, the latter experience a significant reduction in turnout by 5.7 percentage points during the post-treatment period that is not exhibited in the other member states. Intervention, therefore, is associated with a significant reduction in aggregate-level turnout rates, but how does this effect translate to individual-level behaviour?

Individual level participation

Table 1 models the effect of EU intervention on the likelihood of turning out to vote and reports both the logit coefficient and the odds-ratio (e^{β}) for ease of interpretation. Model 1 estimates the effect of intervention controlling for the individual-level covariates. Model 2 and Model 3 repeat the same whilst including additional country-level economic controls for the deficit and the unemployment rate, respectively. Reporting the average marginal effect (AME) provides for an intuitive understanding of the political magnitude of the effects (Table 2).

Intervention decreases turnout by a significant and politically substantive amount. Voters in states experiencing intervention are, on average, five percentage points less likely to participate in elections. The coefficient of intervention retains its negative direction and

statistical significance throughout the different models, demonstrating that intervention exhibits a statistically significant negative effect on individual turnout. This is consistent with *H1* and suggests that when voters are conscious of the reduced capacity to shape policy under EU constraints, they are more likely to stay home rather than turning out to vote.

Table 1: Modelling the effect of EU intervention on political participation

		(Mode 1)		(Model 2)		(Model 3)	
		Coef.	e^{β}	Coef.	e^{β}	Coef.	e^{β}
Country-level variables	EU intervention	-0.36**	0.70**	-0.40***	0.67***	-0.37***	0.69***
		(0.14)	(0.10)	(0.13)	(0.10)	(0.14)	(0.10)
	Deficit			-0.01**	0.98**		
				(0.01)	(0.01)		
	Unemployment					-0.02	0.98
						(0.02)	(0.02)
Socio-economic variables	Gender (male)	-0.14***	0.87***	-0.14***	0.87***	-0.14***	0.87***
		(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)
	Age						
	25-34	0.25***	1.29***	0.25***	1.29***	0.25***	1.29***
		(0.09)	(0.12)	(0.09)	(0.12)	(0.09)	(0.12)
	35-44	0.70***	2.01***	0.69***	2.00***	0.70***	2.01***
		(0.09)	(0.18)	(0.09)	(0.18)	(0.09)	(0.18)
	45-54	1.08***	2.96***	1.08***	2.95***	1.09***	2.96***
		(0.09)	(0.25)	(0.09)	(0.25)	(0.09)	(0.26)
	55-64	1.52***	4.57***	1.52***	4.56***	1.52***	4.57***
		(0.15)	(0.70)	(0.15)	(0.70)	(0.15)	(0.70)
	65+	1.85***	6.33***	1.84***	6.32***	1.85***	6.34***
		(0.18)	(1.16)	(0.18)	(1.16)	(0.18)	(1.16)

	Education	0.05***	1.05***	0.05***	1.05***	0.05***	1.05***
		(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)
	Income	0.07***	1.07***	0.07***	1.07***	0.07***	1.07***
		(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)
	Employment						
	Unemployed	-0.45***	0.64***	-0.45***	0.64***	-0.44***	0.64***
		(0.10)	(0.07)	(0.10)	(0.06)	(0.10)	(0.07)
	Student	-0.14**	0.87**	-0.14**	0.87**	-0.14**	0.87**
		(0.07)	(0.06)	(0.07)	(0.06)	(0.07)	(0.06)
	NILF	-0.18***	0.84***	-0.18***	0.84***	-0.18***	0.84***
		(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)
	Lives with partner	0.23***	1.26***	0.23***	1.26***	0.23***	1.26***
		(0.05)	(0.06)	(0.05)	(0.06)	(0.05)	(0.06)
	Rural	0.19***	1.21***	0.20***	1.22***	0.19***	1.21***
		(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)
Political	Left-right scale	0.01	1.01	0.01	1.01	0.01	1.01
variables		(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)
	Political interest	0.63***	1.88***	0.63***	1.88***	0.63***	1.88***
		(0.04)	(0.07)	(0.04)	(0.07)	(0.04)	(0.07)
	Country effects		✓		✓		✓
	Year effects		✓		✓		✓
	Constant	-1.62***	0.20***	-1.62***	0.20***	-1.62***	0.20***
		(0.19)	(0.04)	(0.19)	(0.04)	(0.19)	(0.04)
	Observations	113,953		113,953		113,953	

Country-clustered robust standard errors (two-tailed) in parentheses

*** p < 0.01, ** p < 0.05, * p < 0.1

Note: NILF: not in the labour force.

Noteworthy amongst the country-level controls is that changes in unemployment appear to exhibit no effect. This is consistent with the findings presented by Kern *et al.* (2015) who

argue that the financial crisis played no incremental or regressive role on political participation in EU states. Increases in the budget deficit report a negative effect on turnout but the substantive magnitude of the effect is very small. As shown, the AME of each of the economic controls is negligible. In comparison, the effect of intervention is both significant ($p < 0.01$) and politically important, decreasing individual participation by five percentage points across all models. The individual-level controls comply with established expectations.

Table 2: Average marginal effects

	(Model 1)	(Model 2)	(Model 3)
EU intervention	-0.05**	-0.05**	-0.05**
Deficit		-0.00***	
Unemployment			-0.00
Gender (male)	-0.02***	-0.02***	-0.02***
25-34	0.05***	0.05***	0.05***
35-44	0.12***	0.12***	0.12***
45-54	0.17***	0.17***	0.18***
55-64	0.22***	0.22***	0.22***
65+	0.25***	0.25***	0.25***
Education	0.01***	0.01***	0.01***
Income	0.01***	0.01***	0.01***
Unemployed	-0.06***	-0.06***	-0.06***
Student	-0.02***	-0.02***	-0.02***
NILF	-0.02***	-0.02***	-0.02***
Lives with partner	0.03***	0.04***	0.03***
Rural	0.02***	0.02***	0.02***
Left-right scale	0.00	0.00	0.00

Political interest	0.08***	0.08***	0.08***

Standard errors reported in the Online appendix

*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

Note: NILF: not in the labour force.

Conditional effects

Given that *H2* and *H3* refer to conditional effects involving interactions between intervention indicator and education and ideology, respectively, the empirical results for these tests are displayed in graphical form (full output in Online appendix) following the recommendation of Brambor et al. (2006: 72-4). The illustration of the predictive margins is accompanied by a depiction of the moderating variable's distribution to show the relative number of observations for each category of the moderator (Hainmueller et al., 2019).

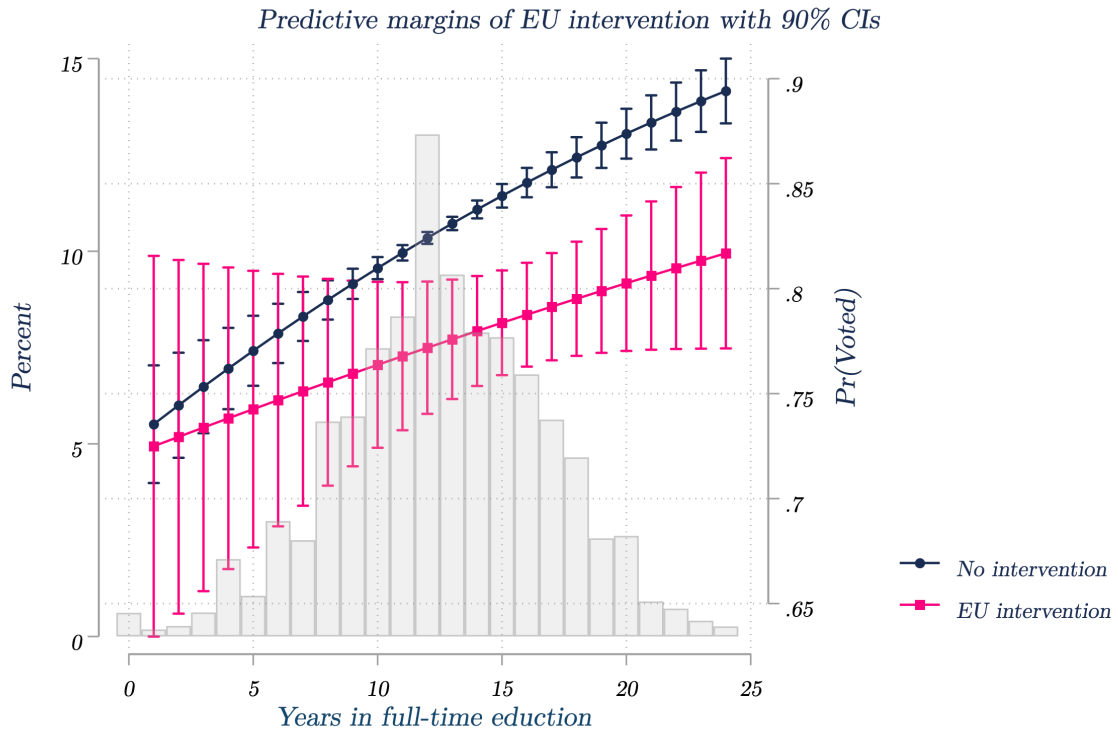

Figure 2: EU intervention and education

Figure 2 displays the effect of EU intervention on participation conditional on education. *H2* predicts that individuals with more education will be less likely to turnout to vote in intervened states because they will have a greater level of understanding regarding the constraining nature of the EU's economic intervention on the manoeuvrability of parties to provide distinctive policy options in key policy areas related to the economy. The results of the interaction support this hypothesis: individuals with a lower level of education (less than eleven years) in intervened and non-intervened states have a probability of voting that is statistically indistinguishable from each other. However, voters with a higher level of education (in excess of eleven years) show significantly distinct levels of participation under constrained conditions. Taking the median value of education, twelve years, as a

representative example: under intervention these individuals are five percentage points less likely to vote than individuals with comparable levels of education not experiencing intervention. The difference is not only significant but also substantively important. Those with more years in education are far less likely to participate in national elections when their governments are under EU constraints than those with similar academic trajectories in non-intervened states. The consistency of the conditional effect is also confirmed using a different means of operationalising education via a categorical variable (see the Online appendix).

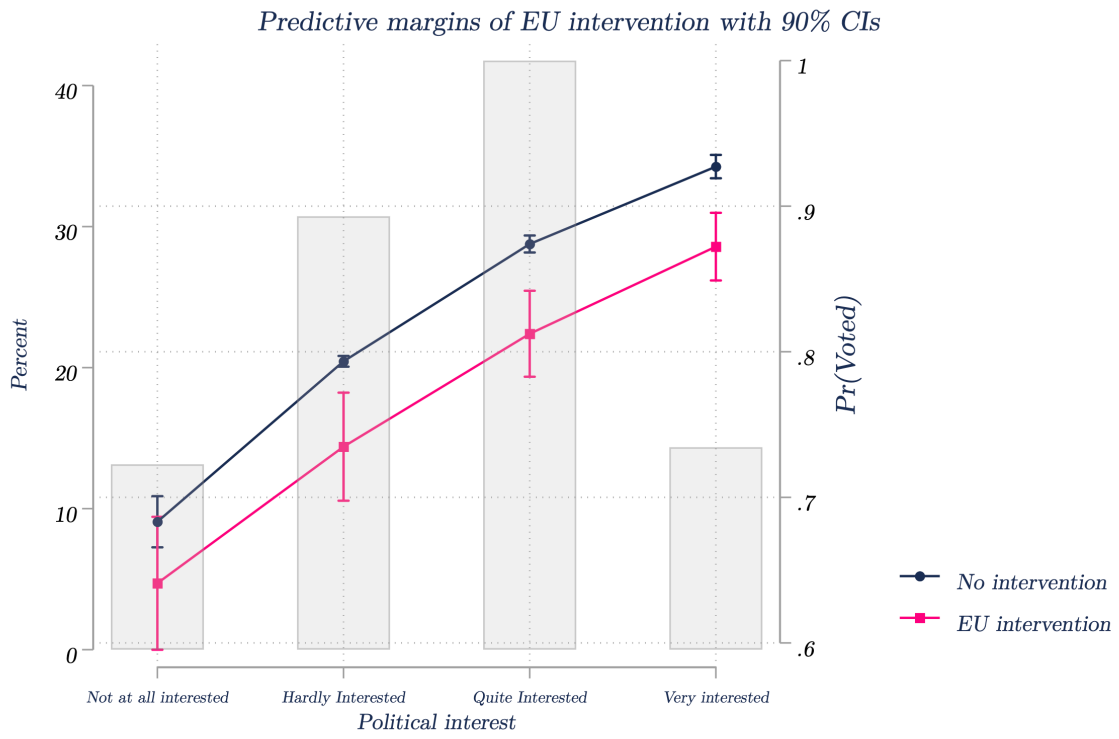

Figure 3: EU intervention and political interest

In order to provide further evidence to support *H2*, I also estimate an interaction between intervention and political interest. If education serves as an indicator of the level of

awareness and understanding voters are to have of the restrictive nature of the EU constraints on government autonomy, political interest should capture similar effects. Those with higher levels of political interest tend to be more knowledgeable about politics (Eveland and Scheufele, 2000) and therefore be exposed to political punditry that will discuss the implications of EU intervention. The results mirror those observed in the case of education.

The visualisation of conditionality of intervention on ideological placement provides evidentiary support for *H3*. Voters who place themselves further to the left are significantly less likely to turn out to vote in the national elections of those states that have been subjected to the EU's economic intervention. The negative coefficient of intervention is observed for all voters with a self-reported ideological position of six or less. Individuals who identify with the centre (5) are five percentage points less likely to turn out when experiencing intervention. Theoretically, there is less of a rationale for intervention to play a suppressive role on participation amongst those on the right given that the constraining nature of intervention does not undermine the adoption of policies that are likely desired by right-wing voters since the economic preferences they hold are reflected in those demanded by the MoUs. Empirically, the estimated probabilities do not report a significant reduction in the propensity to participate for voters who identify on the right.

Both *H2* and *H3* find support in the analysis. The results demonstrate that the effect of intervention is conditional on education and political identification, with only those with a

higher level of education and who identify on the centre or the left being affected by intervention. Those with lower levels of education and those on the ideological right do not observe any statistically significant change in the probability to turning out to vote as a result of intervention.

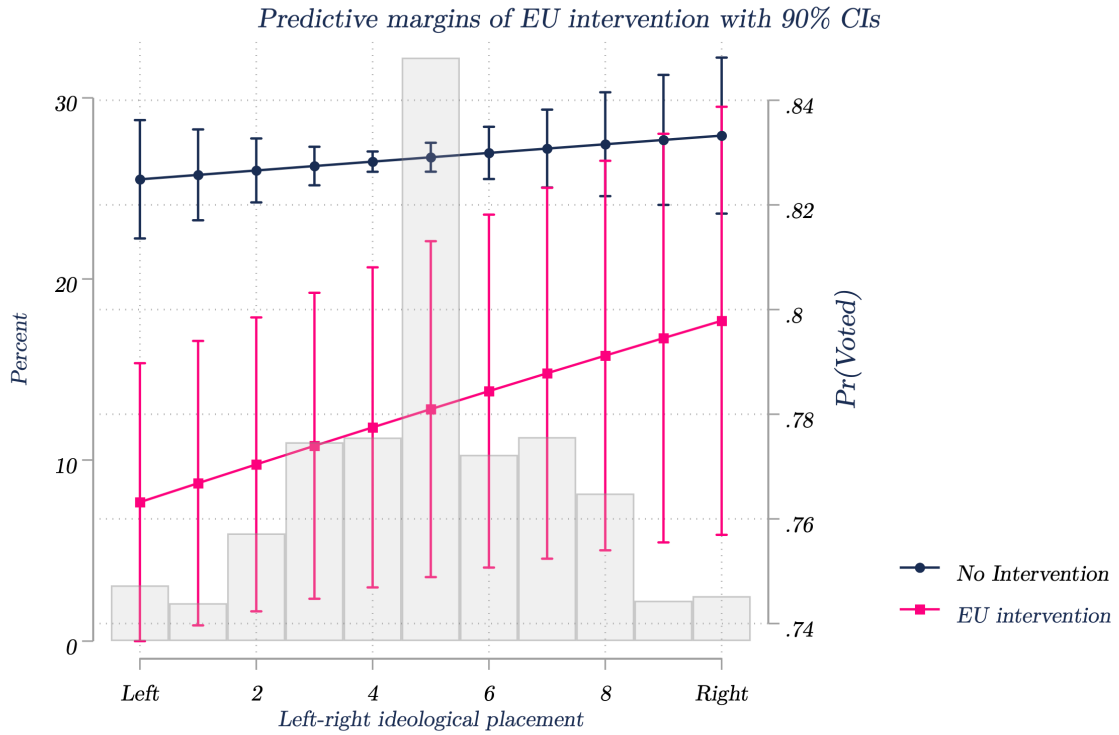

Figure 4: EU intervention and voter ideology

Alonso and Ruiz-Rufino (2018) argue that one of the primary consequences of EU intervention on domestic politics was the electoral collapse of mainstream parties on the left. The conditionality of the suppressive impact of intervention presented here suggests that

part of these electoral losses may be due to the effect of the crisis in driving voters who identify with the left to stay at home. For these voters, when it is clear that their vote does not provide them with a sufficient means to choose between distinct policy alternatives due to externally imposed constraints, the perceived utility-maximising benefits of their vote is diminished reducing their incentives to vote.

Conclusion

Whilst previous assessments have established that reductions in the autonomy of democratic regimes allowing financial markets to steer economic policy have negative consequences on turnout (Steiner, 2010, 2016; Steiner and Martin, 2012), this study argues that when states become the recipients of the will and mercy of their European peers, then voters become less incentivised to vote. The findings are largely consistent with the very recent work of Schraff and Schimmelfennig (2019) who establish a negative effect of financial bailouts on aggregate-level turnout using a synthetic control model as well as the robust empirical link between a state's economic manoeuvrability and political participation from Häusermann et al. (2018). The evidence presented also adds voice to the arguments that the increasing of European integration has detrimental effects for political turnout (LeGall, 2017, 2018). Here I argue that the reduced autonomy of EU member states via the contract between intervened-in states and the EU institutions has a regressive effect on electoral participation.

Focusing on the individual-level, I show, in line with the findings of Häusermann et al. (2018), that the negative impact of the EU's intervention is conditioned by education. An important theoretical innovation this contribution seeks to make, however, is to show that the intervention's negative effect on participation is also moderated by individuals' ideological beliefs. Those who identify to the right do not display any significant reduction in their propensity to participate in elections as a result of intervention. Given that the parties they tend to support promote a similar policy agenda to that solicited by their state's EU-level creditors; right-leaning voters do not observe a collapse in the congruence between their desired preferences and those which the state is able to provide in the same way that left-of-centre voters do. This contribution suggests that the electoral collapse of social-democratic and other establishment parties on the left as a result of intervention and the 'costs of responsibility' (Alonso and Ruiz-Rufino, 2018) may be influenced by left-leaning voters' decision to stay home.

The present study is not without its limitations. The empirical approach adopted relies on a dichotomous operationalisation of EU intervention which might fail to capture variation in the intensity of the constrains applied. Whilst the approach adopted here replicates what has been applied elsewhere in the literature (Alonso and Ruiz-Rufino, 2018; Ruiz-Rufino and Alonso, 2017; Schraff and Schimmelfennig, 2019), I also show that the grouping of the intervened countries together in this way does not influence the results. Removing each of the intervened countries included in the analysis demonstrates that the results are not conditional on the dichotomous operationalisation applied (see Online appendix). This

includes removing Greece, a potential outlier given the extremity of the EU's intervention within the country, as well as Italy, who was only informally exposed to intervention.

Secondly, whilst I agree with the argument presented by Alonso and Ruiz-Rufino (2018) that intervention does not represent a technocratic decision based on purely economic indicators, it is the case that intervention and poor economic performance are intricately intertwined. The abstention effect of intervention may also be capturing electoral discontent with internal devaluation measures, or updates in citizens' perceptions of the state of the economy (Devine, 2019), rather than EU conditionality. Of note, however, is that the effect is only observed for centre and left-leaning voters which suggests that the theorised constraining mechanism (lack of choice for left-leaning voters) is indeed driving the turnout-reducing impact of intervention.

Democratic theory assumes that voters are provided the procedural capacity to shape the policies, and polities, that seek to govern their everyday lives. The expansion of EU constraints over the manoeuvrability of domestic governments disrupts this balance by reducing state capacity to be responsive to voter preferences. When voters are called upon to vote in national elections under such conditions, they are far less likely to answer the call. Not only are voters being robbed of their choice, but the effect of the same has been to reduce their desire to choose at all.

Acknowledgements

I am indebted to a number of colleagues, especially Christel Koop and Rubén Ruiz-Rufino for their helpful comments and advice on earlier drafts of this manuscript. An earlier iteration also benefited from the feedback of participants at the Elections, Public Opinion and Parties (EPOP) 2019 Annual Conference, as well as members of the Quantitative Political Economy Research Group at King's College London. I am also grateful to the two anonymous reviewers for their comments and recommendations.

Funding

This work received support from the UK's Economic and Social Research Council under grant number ES/J500057/1

1 Article 125 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU)

2 The collective of these institutions is frequently referred to as the *Troika* which included two EU-based institutions – the European Commission and the European Central Bank – alongside the International Monetary Fund.

3 I adopt a dichotomous indicator here, as opposed to a difference-in-difference model including an interaction between those exposed to treatment (GIIPS states) and the post-treatment period. I take this approach for simplicity given that the intervention variable will need to be interacted with other variables in order to test *H2* and *H3*. Estimations of a difference-in-difference approach are reported in the Online appendix.

4 Alternative macroeconomic measures are tested including levels of government debt (see the Online appendix). Data for macroeconomic indicators are taken from the Comparative Political Data Set 1960–2017 (Armingeon et al., 2019).

5 Bickel (2007) states that multilevel models require in surplus of 20 level-2 units. Hox (2010) recommends the same but also highlights that for the efficient production of standard errors using cross-level interactions, one would require in surplus of 50 level-2 units.

6 Estimation presented in Figure 1 modelling aggregate turnout for country (*i*) in year (*t*):

$$Turnout_{i,t} = \beta_0 + \delta TreatmentCountry_i + \delta Exposure_t + \delta\delta(Treatment_i * Exposure_t) + \beta_1 Deficit_{i,t}\, Turnout_{i,t-1} + CountryFE_i + Trends_t + e_{i,t}$$

Full output and alternative models in the Online appendix. Parliamentary election turnout data taken from International IDEA. Available at: www.idea.int (accesed10th November 2019).

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Online appendix material for:

Turnbull-Dugarte, Stuart J. (2020) Why vote when you cannot choose? EU intervention and political participation in times of constraint.

Table A 1: Summary statistics

Variable	Observations	Mean	SD	Min	Max
Voted	113,953	0.842	0.365	0.000	1.000
Gender	113,953	0.483	0.500	0.000	1.000
Age	113,953	4.092	1.613	1.000	6.000
Education	113,953	12.540	4.427	0.000	56.000
Income	113,953	5.790	2.619	1.000	10.000
Employment	113,953	2.399	1.442	1.000	4.000
Partner	113,953	0.632	0.482	0.000	1.000
Rural	113,953	0.371	0.483	0.000	1.000
Left-right	113,953	5.056	2.103	0.000	10.000
Political interest	113,953	2.543	0.901	1.000	4.000
Intervention	113,953	0.099	0.299	0.000	1.000
Deficit	113,953	-2.650	3.928	-15.136	5.914
Unemployment	113,953	0.164	1.259	-2.400	6.600
Year	113,953			2002	2017

Table A 2: Correlation matrix of intervention and economic controls

	Intervention	Deficit	Unemployment
Intervention	1.00		
Deficit	-0.28	1.00	
Unemployment	-0.14	-0.54	1.00

Table A 3: Diff-in-Diff model estimation

	Full sample	Full sample	Full sample	MoU signatories only
GIIPS	0.02	-0.00	0.03	
	(0.14)	(0.13)	(0.13)	
Post-treatment	-0.15	-0.16	-0.15	-0.47***
	(0.14)	(0.14)	(0.14)	(0.11)
Diff-in-Diff	-0.36**	-0.40***	-0.37***	
	(0.14)	(0.15)	(0.14)	
Deficit		-0.01		
		(0.01)		
Unemployment			-0.02	
			(0.02)	
Gender (male)	-0.14***	-0.14***	-0.14***	0.01
	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.05)
Age *(baseline: under 24)*				
25-34	0.25***	0.25***	0.25***	0.52***
	(0.09)	(0.09)	(0.09)	(0.12)
35-44	0.70***	0.69***	0.70***	0.88***
	(0.09)	(0.09)	(0.09)	(0.13)
45-54	1.08***	1.08***	1.09***	1.22***
	(0.09)	(0.09)	(0.09)	(0.13)
55-64	1.52***	1.52***	1.52***	1.62***
	(0.15)	(0.15)	(0.15)	(0.11)
65+	1.85***	1.84***	1.85***	1.52***
	(0.18)	(0.18)	(0.18)	(0.22)
Education	0.05***	0.05***	0.05***	0.02*
	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)
Income	0.07***	0.07***	0.07***	0.06***
	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.01)
Employment				
Unemployed	-0.45***	-0.45***	-0.44***	-0.19***
	(0.10)	(0.10)	(0.10)	(0.04)
Student	-0.14**	-0.14**	-0.14**	-0.17
	(0.07)	(0.07)	(0.07)	(0.12)
NILF	-0.18***	-0.18***	-0.18***	-0.06
	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.04)
Lives with partner	0.23***	0.23***	0.23***	0.28***
	(0.05)	(0.05)	(0.05)	(0.05)
Rural	0.19***	0.20***	0.19***	0.25***
	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.05)
Left-right scale	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.03***
	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)
Political interest	0.63***	0.63***	0.63***	0.51***

	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.04)
Country fixed effects	✓	✓	✓	✗
Year effects	✓	✓	✓	✗
Constant	-1.62***	-1.62***	-1.62***	-1.01***
	(0.19)	(0.19)	(0.19)	(0.23)
Observations	113,953	113,953	113,953	27,349

Country-clustered robust standard errors (two-tailed) in parentheses
*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

Table A 4: Multi-level logit estimation model

		Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	MoU signatories only
Country-level variables	EU intervention	-0.36**	-0.40***	-0.37***	-0.44***
		(0.14)	(0.15)	(0.14)	(0.10)
	Deficit		-0.02**		
			(0.01)		
	Unemployment			-0.02	
				(0.02)	
Socio-economic variables	Gender (male)	-0.14***	-0.14***	-0.14***	-0.01
		(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.04)
	Age				
	25-34	0.25***	0.25***	0.25***	0.52***
		(0.09)	(0.09)	(0.09)	(0.12)
	35-44	0.70***	0.69***	0.70***	0.88***
		(0.09)	(0.09)	(0.09)	(0.12)
	45-54	1.08***	1.08***	1.09***	1.21***
		(0.09)	(0.09)	(0.09)	(0.12)
	55-64	1.52***	1.52***	1.52***	1.62***
		(0.15)	(0.15)	(0.15)	(0.11)
	65+	1.84***	1.84***	1.85***	1.53***
		(0.18)	(0.18)	(0.18)	(0.21)
	Education	0.05***	0.05***	0.05***	0.02***
		(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.00)
	Income	0.07***	0.07***	0.07***	0.06***
		(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.01)
	Employment				
	Unemployed	-0.45***	-0.45***	-0.44***	-0.22***
		(0.10)	(0.10)	(0.10)	(0.05)
	Student	-0.14**	-0.14**	-0.14**	-0.18
		(0.07)	(0.07)	(0.07)	(0.12)
	NILF	-0.18***	-0.18***	-0.18***	-0.07
		(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.05)
	Lives with partner	0.23***	0.23***	0.23***	0.30***
		(0.05)	(0.05)	(0.05)	(0.04)
	Rural	0.19***	0.20***	0.19***	0.25***
		(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.04)
Political variables	Left-right scale	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.02***
		(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)
	Political interest	0.63***	0.63***	0.63***	0.51***
		(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.05)
	Year effects	✓	✓	✓	✗

Var (Constant | Country)	0.30***	0.30***	0.30***	0.13***
	(0.08)	(0.08)	(0.08)	(0.04)
Constant	-1.61***	-1.62***	-1.62***	-1.01***
	(0.25)	(0.25)	(0.25)	(0.29)
Observations	113,953	113,953	113,953	27,349
Number of groups	15	15	15	5

Robust standard errors (two-tailed) in parentheses

*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

Table A 5: Average marginal effects

	(Model 1) AME	(Model 2) AME	(Model 3) AME
EU intervention	-0.05**	-0.05**	-0.05**
	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)
Deficit		-0.00***	
		(0.00)	
Unemployment			-0.00
			(0.00)
Gender (male)	-0.02***	-0.02***	-0.02***
	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)
Age			
25-34	0.05***	0.05***	0.05***
	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)
35-44	0.12***	0.12***	0.12***
	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)
45-54	0.17***	0.17***	0.18***
	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)
55-64	0.22***	0.22***	0.22***
	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)
65+	0.25***	0.25***	0.25***
	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)
Education	0.01***	0.01***	0.01***
	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)
Income	0.01***	0.01***	0.01***
	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)
Employment			
Unemployed	-0.06***	-0.06***	-0.06***
	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)
Student	-0.02**	-0.02**	-0.02**
	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)
NILF	-0.02***	-0.02***	-0.02***
	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)
Lives with partner	0.03***	0.03***	0.03***
	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)
Rural	0.02***	0.02***	0.02***
	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)
Left-right scale	0.00	0.00	0.00
	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)
Political interest	0.08***	0.08***	0.08***
	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)
Country effects	✓	✓	✓
Year effects	✓	✓	✓

Observations	113,953	113,953	113,953

Table A 6: Interaction models

	(Intevention*Edu.)	(Intevention*Left/Right)	(Intevention*Pol interest)
EU intervention	**-0.03**	**-0.45*** **	**-0.06**
	(0.38)	**(0.09)**	**(0.19)**
Unemployment	-0.03	-0.02	-0.03
	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)
Gender (male)	-0.14***	-0.14***	-0.14***
	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)
Age			
25-34	0.25***	0.25***	0.25***
	(0.09)	(0.09)	(0.09)
35-44	0.70***	0.70***	0.70***
	(0.09)	(0.09)	(0.09)
45-54	1.09***	1.09***	1.08***
	(0.09)	(0.09)	(0.09)
55-64	1.52***	1.52***	1.52***
	(0.16)	(0.15)	(0.16)
65+	1.85***	1.85***	1.84***
	(0.18)	(0.18)	(0.19)
Lives with partner	0.23***	0.23***	0.23***
	(0.04)	(0.05)	(0.05)
Income	0.07***	0.07***	0.07***
	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)
Employment			
Unemployed	-0.44***	-0.44***	-0.44***
	(0.10)	(0.10)	(0.10)
Student	-0.14**	-0.14**	-0.14**
	(0.07)	(0.07)	(0.07)
NILF	-0.18***	-0.18***	-0.18***
	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)
Rural	0.19***	0.19***	0.19***
	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)
Education	**0.06*** **	0.05***	0.05***
	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)
Intervention*Education	**-0.03**		
	(0.02)		
Left-right	0.01	0.01	0.01
	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)
Intervention*Left-right		**0.02**	
		(0.02)	
Political interest	0.63***	0.63***	**0.65*** **
	(0.04)	(0.04)	**(0.04)**

Intervention*Pol interest			**-0.15****
			(0.06)
Country effects	✓	✓	✓
Year effects	✓	✓	✓
Constant	-1.67***	-1.61***	-1.65***
	(0.19)	(0.19)	(0.19)
Observations	113,953	113,953	113,953

Robust standard errors (two-tailed) in parentheses
*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

Table A 7: Income satisfaction instead of income

		(Model 1		(Model 2)		(Model 3)	
		Coef.	e^{β}	Coef.	e^{β}	Coef.	e^{β}
Country-level variables	EU intervention	-0.33**	0.72**	-0.38***	0.69***	-0.33**	0.72**
		(0.14)	(0.10)	(0.13)	(0.09)	(0.14)	(0.10)
	Deficit			-0.02**	0.98**		
				(0.01)	(0.01)		
	Unemployment					-0.02	0.98
						(0.02)	(0.02)
Socio-economic variables	Gender (male)	-0.12***	0.89***	-0.12***	0.89***	-0.12***	0.89***
		(0.03)	(0.02)	(0.03)	(0.02)	(0.03)	(0.02)
	Age						
	25-34	0.26***	1.29***	0.26***	1.29***	0.26***	1.29***
		(0.08)	(0.11)	(0.08)	(0.11)	(0.08)	(0.11)
	35-44	0.70***	2.02***	0.70***	2.02***	0.71***	2.03***
		(0.08)	(0.16)	(0.08)	(0.16)	(0.08)	(0.17)
	45-54	1.06***	2.90***	1.06***	2.89***	1.06***	2.90***
		(0.09)	(0.25)	(0.09)	(0.25)	(0.09)	(0.26)
	55-64	1.43***	4.17***	1.43***	4.16***	1.43***	4.18***
		(0.16)	(0.67)	(0.16)	(0.67)	(0.16)	(0.68)
	65+	1.66***	5.25***	1.66***	5.24***	1.66***	5.26***
		(0.21)	(1.08)	(0.21)	(1.08)	(0.21)	(1.09)
	Education	0.05***	1.05***	0.05***	1.05***	0.05***	1.05***
		(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)
	Income sat	0.25***	1.28***	0.25***	1.29***	0.25***	1.28***
		(0.06)	(0.08)	(0.07)	(0.08)	(0.07)	(0.08)
	Employment						
	Unemployed	-0.39***	0.68***	-0.39***	0.67***	-0.39***	0.68***
		(0.07)	(0.05)	(0.07)	(0.05)	(0.08)	(0.05)
	Student	-0.30***	0.74***	-0.31***	0.73***	-0.30***	0.74***
		(0.09)	(0.07)	(0.09)	(0.07)	(0.09)	(0.07)
	NILF	-0.18***	0.84***	-0.18***	0.84***	-0.18***	0.84***
		(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)
	Lives with partner	0.29***	1.34***	0.29***	1.34***	0.29***	1.34***
		(0.03)	(0.04)	(0.03)	(0.04)	(0.03)	(0.04)
	Rural	0.19***	1.21***	0.20***	1.22***	0.19***	1.21***
		(0.03)	(0.04)	(0.03)	(0.04)	(0.03)	(0.04)
Political	Left-right scale	0.01	1.01	0.01	1.01	0.01	1.01

variables							
		(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)
	Political interest	0.62***	1.86***	0.62***	1.86***	0.62***	1.86***
		(0.04)	(0.07)	(0.04)	(0.07)	(0.04)	(0.07)
	Country effects	✓		✓		✓	
	Year effects	✓		✓		✓	
	Constant	-2.02***		-2.03***		-2.02***	
		(0.24)		(0.25)		(0.23)	
	Observations	138,177		138,177		138,177	

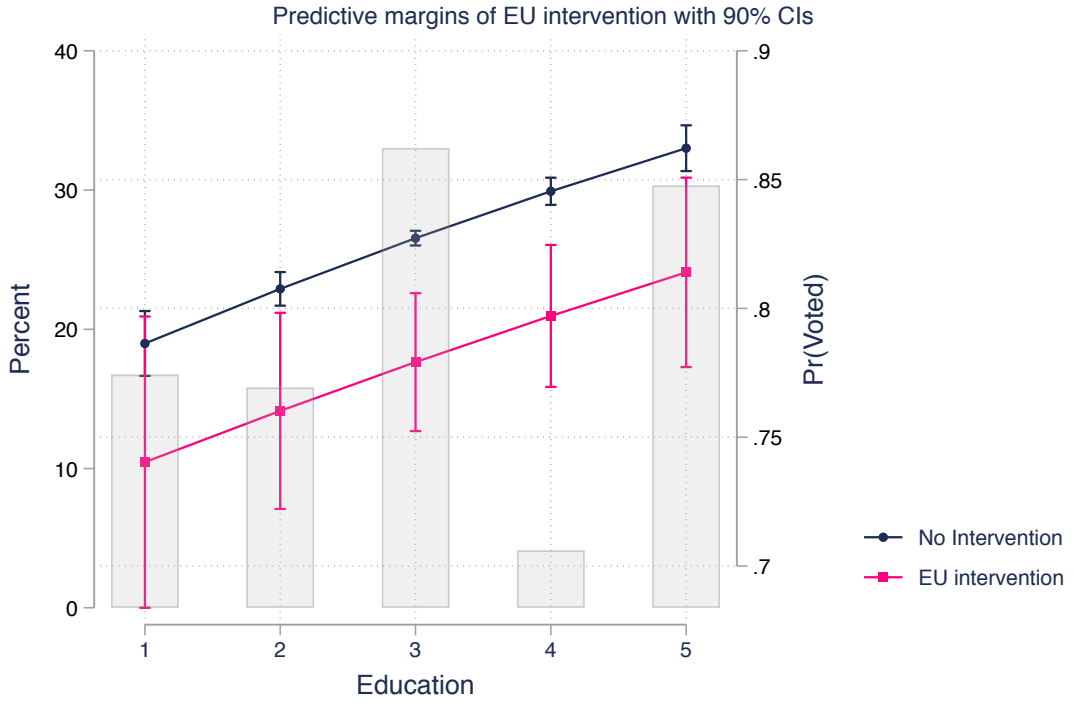

Figure A 1: Alternative operationalisation of education

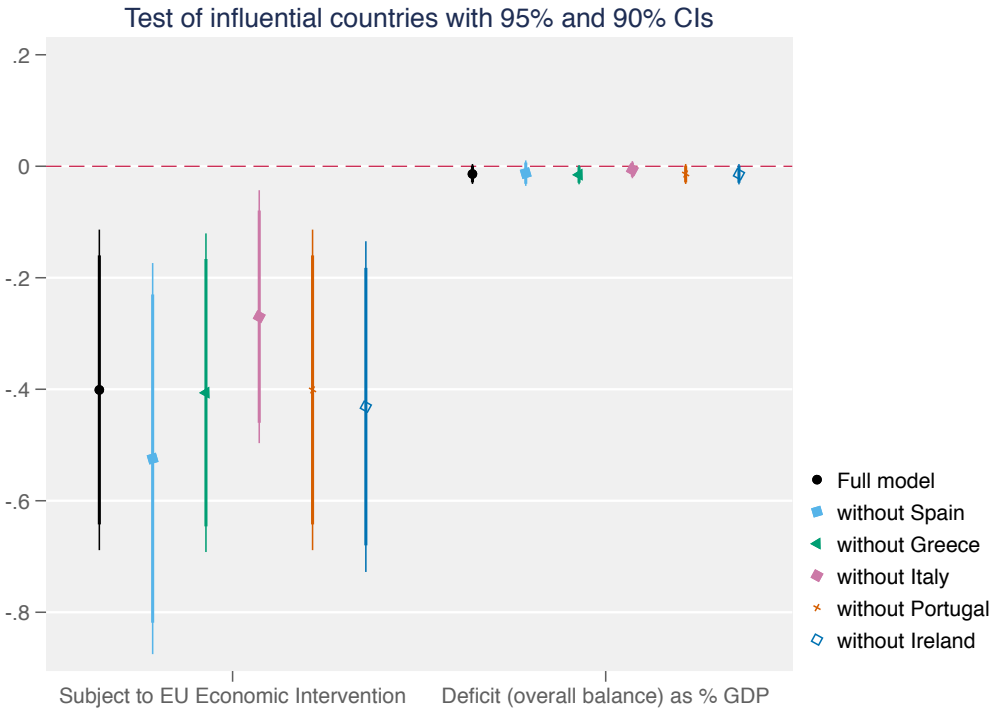

Figure A 2: Sensitivity test

Table A 8: Aggregate-level turnout analysis

	(1) Baseline	(2) + deficit	(3) + unemployment	(4) + debt	(5) + misery index
GIIPS	0.74	-0.04	-1.13	3.33	0.80
	(2.10)	(2.01)	(2.24)	(2.14)	(1.97)
Post-treatment	1.59	0.80	1.93	1.37	1.26
	(1.44)	(1.41)	(1.40)	(1.32)	(1.36)
Diff-in-Diff	**-4.35*** **	**-5.70*** **	**-7.43*** **	**-5.76*** **	**-4.79*** **
	(1.46)	**(1.50)**	**(2.13)**	**(1.43)**	**(1.38)**
Turnout lag	0.33**	0.18	0.39***	0.42***	0.29**
	(0.13)	(0.14)	(0.13)	(0.13)	(0.13)
Country FE	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Trends	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Deficit (t-1)		-0.21**			
		(0.09)			
Unemployment (t-1)			0.35*		
			(0.18)		
Debt (t-1)				0.07**	
				(0.03)	
Misery (t-1)					0.39**
					(0.17)
Constant	688.97*	619.99*	795.26**	961.15***	666.21*
	(349.04)	(331.00)	(339.80)	(334.35)	(328.56)
Observations	51	51	51	51	51
R-squared	0.97	0.97	0.97	0.97	0.97

Standard errors (two-tailed) in parentheses

*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

Table A 9: Alternative macroeconomic indicator tests

	(1) Model 2	(2) Model 3	(3) + Debt	(4) + Misery
EU intervention	**-0.40*** **	**-0.37*** **	**-0.41*** **	**-0.36** **
	(0.15)	**(0.14)**	**(0.13)**	**(0.15)**
Individual-level controls	✓	✓	✓	✓
Country Effects	✓	✓	✓	✓
Year Effects	✓	✓	✓	✓
Deficit (t-1)	-0.01			
	(0.01)			
Unemployment (*t-1*)		-0.02		
		(0.02)		
Gov debt (*t-1*)			0.00	
			(0.00)	
Misery (*t-1*)				0.00
				(0.02)
Constant	-1.62***	-1.62***	-1.87***	-1.62***
	(0.19)	(0.19)	(0.25)	(0.19)
Observations	113,953	113,953	113,953	113,953

Model 2 and Model 3 reproduced from Table 1

Robust standard errors in parentheses

*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1