

Expatriates at the Polls: An analysis of predictors affecting voter participation in the 2019 EU Elections

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ABSTRACT

In the wake of the 2024 elections, far-right parties have capitalized on prevailing social and economic grievances to expand their electoral base. These parties raised issues such as immigration, national security, and economic dissatisfaction to appeal to voters seeking drastic changes from the status quo. This paper focuses on expatriates' voter turnout in the last 2019 European elections and examines whether the turnout of the European elections is influenced by the period expatriates have been living in another EU country. Additionally, this paper aims at testing if expatriates are more inclined to have an extreme political orientation than non-expatriates. Employing several logistic regression models to examine the effects between different types of determinants and turnout and extreme political orientation, this paper aims at testing to what extent the period of residence, perception of the economic situation, trust and European views influence the expatriates' voters to go to the polls.

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1. Introduction

The political behaviour of expatriates has emerged as a crucial yet understudied factor in shaping electoral outcomes within the European Union (EU), particularly in the context of rising political polarization and the shifting appeal of far-right ideologies. The 2024 European elections took place at a time when the European Union (EU) faces several structural crises, such as the rise in support for far-right parties across the continent (Ganesh and Froio 2020; Pinto 2023; Siddiqui 2021). This shift towards the far-right is not merely a political oscillation; it represents a fundamental challenge to the core values and integrity of the EU, including commitments to democracy, human rights, and the rule of law (Bârgăoanu, Durach, and Ștefăniță 2023). The burgeoning support for such parties risks destabilizing the traditional political equilibrium, potentially altering the direction of policy-making at both national and European levels (Bârgăoanu, Durach, and Ștefăniță 2023). Amidst ongoing crises, such as the migration issue and conflicts at the EU's borders, far-right parties have adeptly harnessed public discontent, framing these challenges as symptomatic of the failures of the current EU leadership and governance structures. By capitalizing on fears related to sovereignty, identity, and economic security, these parties have broadened their appeal, not just among the traditionally disaffected or marginalized voters but increasingly within the mainstream electorate as well (Brigeovich 2020; Ivaldi 2019; Karimi 2024).

The rise of the far-right as result of the 2024 European elections cannot be overstated. First, the ideological shift in the European Parliament's composition, could lead in the coming years to the adoption of more isolationist, nationalistic policies at the expense of collective action and solidarity (Raik and Rikmann 2021; Vasiljević 2021). Such outcomes could severely impact the EU's ability to respond cohesively to crises, undermining its global standing and the efficacy of its policies internally. Second, the rise of far-right parties often goes hand in hand with an

erosion of democratic norms and values within member states. This trend towards illiberal democracy not only threatens the foundational principles of the EU but also risks creating divisions among member states, thereby challenging the unity and coherence of the Union (Bârgăoanu, Durach, and Ștefăniță 2023). In turn, this could exacerbate existing tensions and create new fractures within the EU, affecting everything from internal market operations to external relations. Third, the rhetoric and policies espoused by far-right parties tend to marginalize and scapegoat vulnerable communities, contributing to a rise in xenophobia and racism within the EU. Such societal divisions are detrimental to social cohesion and the sense of European identity, which are essential for the EU's long-term stability and prosperity.

Thus, in this precarious political landscape, expatriates' electoral behavior offers a critical lens for understanding broader dynamics. Far-right parties are poised to capitalize on disaffection rooted in social and economic grievances, using issues like immigration, national security, and economic dissatisfaction to expand their appeal. In the wake of the 2024 European elections, it is imperative to closely monitor these dynamics and consider their potential implications for the future of the EU. Addressing the root causes of disaffection among voters, promoting inclusive and constructive political discourse, and safeguarding democratic institutions and values are crucial steps in countering the rise of the far right and ensuring the resilience of the European project.

The phenomenon of voting behavior within the European Union (EU) represents a constant debate among scholars and political actors. With the rising mobility of citizens across borders, understanding the dynamics that influence voter turnout among expatriates during key political events, such as the European Parliament elections, is critical. The 2019 European elections offered a unique vantage point to explore these dynamics due to the significant political changes and challenges confronting the EU, including debates on sovereignty, migration, and the

union's future direction. The topic is even more of interest in the last year, especially in the context of the 2024 European elections' results, as well as national elections results. Therefore, given the ongoing migration crisis and the ongoing conflicts at the EU border, the topic cannot be overstated.

These factors collectively underscore the evolving landscape of intra-EU mobility and its implications for electoral participation, making it crucial to understand how these dynamics might influence the democratic process and policymaking in a time of significant political, social, and economic challenges within the EU. In this context, this study seeks to bridge the gap in the literature on electoral behavior by focusing specifically on EU expatriates—a growing demographic whose electoral participation is often understudied. By examining the voter turnout of EU citizens residing in member states other than their own during the 2019 European Parliament elections, this research aims to unravel the nuances of expatriate voting patterns and the factors that influence their participation in such elections.

Central to our investigation is the hypothesis that the duration of an expatriate's residence in a host EU country significantly affects their likelihood of engaging in the electoral process. This premise stems from the assumption that longer periods of residence may lead to higher levels of integration and interest in the host country's political landscape, potentially influencing electoral participation. However, the factors that influence expatriates' turnout in EP elections remain largely unexplored. Considering this, the paper examines expatriates' voter turnout during the 2019 European elections, with a focus on whether their length of residence in another EU country influences electoral participation. It also explores whether expatriates are more inclined toward extreme political orientations compared to non-expatriates.

The rest of the study is structured as follows. Section 2 presents the previous research that was developed on the turnout determinants, and it formulates the study's hypothesis. Section 3 describes the research design,

data and instruments used to test the formulated hypothesis and section 4 emphasizes the study findings. Section 5 includes the discussions related to the findings, while in the last section the conclusions of the study will be underlined.

2. Previous research and the substantiation of hypotheses

A considerable body of research that explored different determinants affecting voting turnout at second-order elections agrees that almost all the determinants that influence the turnout at national elections are also influencing the turnout at second-order elections. Hence, the research contributions on EP elections represent a sub-field of research that is rooted in the theory of voting behavior, as well as in theories specific to EP elections (Cancela and Geys 2016). The theory of voting behavior is mostly based on the Downsian model in which the benefits and cost of voting are weighted and the decision to vote emerges from this cost-benefit analysis (Downs 2009). The most famous explanation for EP elections is the so-called second-order national election theory (Reif and Schmitt 1980), which is based on two key arguments. The national political arena determines and dominates EP elections because they occur at different times. Strictly linked to this argument, the second key proposition is that people vote differently in second-order EP elections (they may vote or abstain) because less is at stake than in first-order national elections. Various empirical studies support this model, showing that turnout is lower in EP elections than in national elections (Hix and Marsh 2011).

Considering the prepositions expressed above, most of the previous research aimed to analyze the factors that might explain why turnout is lower in EP elections than in the national elections, and fewer studies focused on the voters' characteristics, in particular on expatriate's voter characteristics and their predisposition to vote or abstain in the EP

elections. Hence, the factors that influence expatriates' turnout in EP elections remain largely unexplored. Furthermore, empirical contributions on EP elections, as well as those on voter turnout, are grounded on individual data (Hobolt and Rodon 2020) or aggregate data.

The study divides the factors affecting expatriate's turnout in EP elections into two groups. The factors included in the first group are related to the European Unions as a political system (voters' support for the EU membership, trust in the EU institutions, etc.). The factors included in the second group consist of factors that are more related to the individual characteristics of the voters. The analysis of turnout rates of the EU member countries' expatriates, as a combination of these two groups of independent variables, will show what their relative impact in the model is.

Previous studies on individual-level explanations of turnout in the EP elections are usually related to the attitudes of European citizens. For example, trust in the EU's institutions may explain why EU citizens decide to vote or stay home. Studies on the effects of EU-related attitudes on turnout have produced contradictory results. Schmitt and Mannheimer's (1991) study of participation in the 1989 EP elections showed that EU- or EP- attitudes played only a negligible part in people's decisions to vote. Later Franklin et al. (1996) came to the same overall conclusion in a study of the 1989 and 1994 EP elections. Blondel et al. (1998) studied the 1994 EP elections and came to a contrary conclusion. Their analysis showed that EU/EP attitudes affect turnout, even when controlled for contextual and socio-demographic variables. Consequently, the impact of EU/EP-attitudes on turnout remains in doubt. However, this study will consider trust in EU institutions and support for the EU membership as independent variables. The novelty of these variables is that they will measure how trust and support in the EU institutions could determine the expatriate's intention to vote or stay home. In previous studies, these variables only measured the trust and support for general citizens for

whom the EU space might have a different significance than it has for expatriates' voters who experienced EU in different ways. Taking into consideration this aspect, the paper hypothesizes that:

(H1) Turnout is higher if the support for the EU membership is also higher.

(H2) The higher the trust in the EU institutions, the more likely the expatriate to vote in the EU elections.

These hypotheses include a measure of trust and public opinion into the analysis to test if they have a positive or negative relationship with the dependent variable. It is expected that trust and support will show a positive relation towards turnout.

Furthermore, voting is often related to socio-demographic factors like age, gender, education or income, place of residency (Bevelander 2015; Gherghina and Tseng 2016; Xu 2005). This paper uses the period of residence (how much time someone lives abroad) as an independent variable assuming that the highest the number of years someone lived abroad, the higher the chances of voting. This is because voters had the time to better understand the new culture and the implications of the EU. Accordingly, the third hypothesis of this study is:

(H3) The longer the period of time spent abroad, the more likely the expatriate to vote in the EU elections.

The measurement of this variable intends to emphasize the fact that the longer expatriate citizens live in their country of residence, the more accustomed they become to local rules and the more knowledgeable they are about how they can exercise their right to vote. It is expected to be a positive relationship between this independent variable and the dependent variable.

Another independent variable is the age when people finish education. It is assumed that for a person who has a high education (usually finishing around age 22.1 years) the chances that the person will vote are higher (Tenn 2007). This assumption is also applied for the European elections since the same determinates as national elections are also applied for second-order elections. Considering that education has been proven to be directly correlated to political engagement, this paper considers the age when someone finishes education as an independent variable that could influence the intention to vote or to abstain. Based on this, the fourth hypothesis of the study was formulated:

(H4) The ones that have spent more years in education tend to participate more in the elections.

(H5) Individuals perceiving national economy as performing well have a higher probability of voting.

Additionally, this study introduces a novel layer of analysis by incorporating extreme political orientation as a dependent variable. The concept of extreme political orientation, particularly among expatriates, has been an understudied yet increasingly relevant area of research, especially in the context of the rising populist and far-right movements across Europe. Expatriates' political behavior often deviates from the mainstream, shaped by various social, economic, and political factors that contribute to a tendency towards ideological extremism.

Expatriates, particularly those who have spent extended periods living abroad, exhibit a complex relationship with both their home and host countries. Research indicates that longer periods of residence abroad are positively correlated with stronger political engagement and, in some cases, the adoption of more extreme political views. Schmitt and Mannheimer (1991) have argued that prolonged residence abroad can lead to political alienation, as expatriates may feel distanced from their home

country's political landscape while simultaneously becoming disillusioned with their host country's political system. This disillusionment often manifests in the adoption of more radical political views, as expatriates seek political alternatives that challenge the status quo (Hix & Marsh, 2011). Further studies have supported this notion, suggesting that extended stays in foreign countries can result in an "identity crisis," where individuals feel disconnected from both national identities and political systems, leading them to embrace more extreme ideologies as a form of political expression (Bevelander, 2015). For expatriates, the increasing political polarization in their host countries can contribute to a growing sense of frustration, potentially pushing them toward far right or populist political movements that promise drastic changes. Furthermore, the relationship between economic dissatisfaction and political radicalization is another key theme in literature. Economic grievances are well-documented as a precursor to support for extremist parties (Franklin et al., 1996). Expatriates, particularly those who experience economic insecurity or perceive their economic situation as unfavorable, may turn to extremist parties as an outlet for expressing their discontent. This is consistent with the economic voting theory, which posits that individuals who are economically disadvantaged or dissatisfied are more likely to support parties that promise to radically alter the political system (Hix & Marsh, 2011).

Studies suggest that economic dissatisfaction among expatriates, particularly when they feel marginalized in the host country, is a significant factor contributing to the adoption of extreme political views. In the case of expatriates, who often have limited political representation or influence in their host countries, radical parties may appear to offer solutions to their economic woes, especially when these parties advocate for the redistribution of resources or criticize the current economic order (Tenn, 2007). This dynamic is reflected in the findings of this study, where dissatisfaction with the economic situation was significantly associated

with extreme political orientation among expatriates. Thus, we formulate the following hypothesis:

(H6) Expatriates who have lived abroad for longer periods, experience economic dissatisfaction, and have lower satisfaction with democratic governance are more likely to adopt extreme political orientations.

Considering the hypothesis formulated above, this study attempts to fill the gap in literature and present empirical evidence on the relationship between different characteristics of expatriate voters and electoral participation (turnout rate) across the Member States with a high level of immigration.

3. Methods

This section discusses methodological choice and the research design process of the study. The main objective of the study is to explore the relationship between turnout in European elections among expatriates with the independent variables described in the previous section. To confirm or refute the main hypotheses established, the study will use several logistic regression models.

The framework of determinant factors that influence election turnout is based on previous research. Therefore, the main intent of this study is to find out which are the determinants that are particular for the European elections and to test them in order to observe their effect on the dependent variable (turnout). Therefore, a choice for a quantitative research design is appropriate because it is the best approach to test a theory or explanation.

In terms of data, we used the post-electoral survey among expatriates for the European elections in 2019 (N = 8617). The data

collection was conducted in the period 12 June – 2 July 2019 by Kantar. We excluded individuals who had not moved abroad from the dataset, resulting in a final sample of 1,531 respondents. From the dataset we selected as the main dependent variables the vote participation and extreme political orientation. In terms of the independent variables, we extracted from the dataset four main variables as indicated in our hypotheses¹.

The study uses as a statistical instrument logistic regression analysis to estimate the significance and weight of various factors that explain the turnout rates among expatriates' voters. The most straightforward way is to use the actual turnout figure as a dependent variable and to estimate a regression model to see how the independent variables are related to turnout among expatriates. The paper assumes that the turnout at EP elections among expatriates is affected by several factors. To estimate the significance and weight of these factors the paper intends to design the following model:

$$\begin{aligned} \text{Turnout}_i / \text{Extreme political orientation}_i &= \beta_0 + \beta_1 * \text{perception regarding same sex marriage} \\ &+ \beta_2 * \text{support for immigration} + \beta_3 \\ &* \text{democratic governance satisfaction} + \beta_4 \\ &* \text{trust in the EP} + \beta_5 \\ &* \text{satisfaction with the economic situation} + \beta_6 * \text{Age} \\ &+ \beta_7 * \text{Gender} + \beta_8 * \text{Education} + \beta_9 \\ &* \text{social class perception} + \varepsilon \end{aligned}$$

Furthermore, the study identified some methodological limitations. First, it did not take into consideration the income of voters. Second, there is a lack of control variables. This might lead to misleading and unclear results. Third, possible multicollinearity between more than two explanatory variables. To justify the use of linear regression models the VIF test was performed. The result of VIF (Variance Inflation Factor) after

¹ See Table A1 in the Appendix for variables operationlization and measurements.

regression analysis shows that all variables are less than 10 (Appendix. Table A2 - VIF). Therefore, this study is free from the problem of multicollinearity.

4. Findings

The results presented in Table 1 emphasize the main potential factors influencing voter turnout in European Parliament (EP) elections (Model 1), as well as the determinants of extreme political orientation (Model 2). These findings contribute to understanding the political behavior of expatriates and the broader dynamics of electoral participation and ideological alignment in the context of European integration and rising political polarization.

Model 1 examines predictors of voter turnout in EP elections, with a focus on the role of residence abroad, socioeconomic perceptions, and political attitudes. Among the key findings, the duration of residence abroad emerges as a significant positive predictor of turnout. This result supports the hypothesis that longer periods of residence abroad foster greater political engagement among expatriates. Specifically, a one-unit increase in the years of residence abroad is associated with a 15.1% increase in turnout, underscoring the role of prolonged exposure to a host country in shaping political behavior.

Another significant factor is the perception of same-sex marriage, where less progressive attitudes correlate with lower voter turnout. This suggests that socially conservative values may negatively influence electoral participation in EP elections. Additionally, satisfaction with democratic governance demonstrates a weak negative relationship with turnout. This finding implies that dissatisfaction with governance structures may discourage participation, although the effect is relatively small. Interestingly, while education is often regarded as a strong predictor of political engagement, its impact on turnout in this model is

not statistically significant. However, prior studies suggest that education positively influences electoral participation, highlighting the need for further investigation into this variable in the expatriate context.

Additionally, Model 2 focuses on extreme political orientation as the dependent variable. While the model explains less variance compared to Model 1, it provides valuable insights into the predictors of ideological extremism among expatriates. Similar to the first model, the duration of residence abroad is a significant positive predictor, strengthening the hypothesis that longer residence abroad can contribute to stronger ideological positions, potentially due to increased engagement with political and social issues in both the host and home countries.

Perceptions of immigration also play a role in shaping extreme political orientations. Negative perceptions of immigration are associated with higher levels of extremism, indicating that attitudes toward immigration may polarize political views among expatriates. Additionally, satisfaction with the negative perception of the economic situation shows a strong positive relationship with extremism: individuals who are less satisfied with their economic circumstances may feel emboldened to support extreme political positions, potentially as a form of ideological expression. Satisfaction with democratic governance emerges as a significant predictor in this model as well. A positive relationship indicates that lower satisfaction with governance correlates with stronger extreme political orientations. Other variables, such as trust in the European Parliament and education, exhibit weak or nonsignificant effects in this model. However, age shows a marginally significant relationship with turnout but not with extreme orientation.

Table 1. *Results of Regression Analysis*

	Turnout EP (Model 1)	Extreme political orientation (Model 2)
Residence abroad (no. years)	0.024*** (0.003)	0.006*** (0.003)
Perception regarding same sex marriage (against higher scores)	-0.009** (0.003)	0.002 (0.003)
Perception of immigration (against higher scores)	0.001 (0.003)	0.005 (0.003)*
Democratic governance satisfaction	-0.010* (0.004)	0.017*** (0.004)
Trust in EP	-0.003 (0.003)	0.005* (0.003)
Satisfaction with economic situation (against higher scores)	-0.008** (0.003)	0.011*** (0.002)
Education	-0.001 (0.002)	-0.003 (0.002)
Age	0.131* (0.06)	-0.101 (0.063)
Gender: male	-0.000 (0.108)	-0.218* (0.110)
Perception of social class	0.090* (0.047)	0.010 (0.019)
Constant	-0.898*** (0.227)	-0.801*** (0.204)
Observations	1531	1531
Nagelkerke R	0.135	0.074
Log Lik (df = 11)	-969.3381	-946.9739
AIC	1960.7	1915.9

Note:

*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

These findings emphasize the importance of examining expatriates' political behavior in the context of European integration and rising far-right populism. The positive association between residence duration and both turnout and extremism highlights the role of assimilation and political exposure in shaping electoral participation. However, the influence of socioeconomic perceptions and democratic satisfaction points to the need for an even deeper exploration of the psychological and contextual factors driving political behavior.

5. Discussion and Conclusion

This paper has provided several significant insights into the political behavior of expatriates within the European Union (EU), particularly their participation in European Parliament (EP) elections. The primary aim of this research was to explore the factors influencing voter turnout among expats in the EU, with a particular focus on the role of residence abroad, socioeconomic perceptions, and political attitudes, as well as the profile of individuals having an extreme political orientation. Drawing from the 2019 Eurobarometer dataset, this study sought to address whether the duration of residence, socio-demographic characteristics, and perceptions of EU affairs could determine expatriates' likelihood of voting in second-order elections or preferring an extreme political orientation.

As discussed in the literature, the theoretical foundation for this study is grounded in two major lines of thought in voting behavior literature: the Downsian model of voting (Downs, 2009) and the second-order national election theory (Reif & Schmitt, 1980). The findings of this study support the main assumption of Downs's model, emphasizing that voter participation is a function of the costs and benefits, and individuals decide to vote if the perceived benefits outweigh the costs. Furthermore, the paper found that the duration of residence abroad was a positive predictor of voter turnout, supporting the idea that prolonged exposure to the host country's political system encourages expatriates to participate in the electoral process. This aligns with the findings of Bevelander (2015) and Gherghina & Tseng (2016),

who argued that long-term residency in a host country enables expatriates to better understand political dynamics and increases their likelihood of voting. Long-term expatriates are more likely to have internalized the political culture of their host country and may feel more vested in the outcome of EP elections due to their greater understanding of the political system and its implications for their daily lives. This is consistent with the work of Hobolt & Rodon (2020), who found that expatriates who are better integrated into their host country's political system are more likely to participate in elections. Furthermore, this finding supports previous studies on voting behavior, which have emphasized the importance of political socialization in shaping electoral engagement (Tenn, 2007).

The paper also highlights the role of EU affairs perceptions, such as attitudes toward same-sex marriage, immigration, trust in the EP, and democratic governance, in influencing expatriates' voting behavior. A significant finding is that less progressive views on social issues correlate with lower voter turnout. This finding aligns with the work of Blondel et al. (1998), who argued that attitudes toward social issues play a crucial role in shaping electoral behavior, even when controlling other variables. In the context of EP elections, this result suggests that socially conservative expatriates may be less likely to participate in the democratic process, perhaps because they feel less represented by the political options available. Similarly, dissatisfaction with democratic governance, while a weaker predictor, was also associated with lower voter turnout, further supporting the theory that negative perceptions of political systems can decrease electoral participation (Schmitt & Mannheimer, 1991).

The relationship between satisfaction with economic conditions and political engagement is another critical area where this study adds to the existing literature. According to the findings, expatriates who perceive their host country's economic situation negatively are more likely to adopt extreme political positions. This is consistent with the work of Franklin et al. (1996) and more recent studies that have linked economic dissatisfaction to support for radical political ideologies. The findings suggest that economic discontent may not only influence voter turnout but also contribute to the rise of populist

and extremist political views, especially among those who feel excluded from the economic benefits of the host country. Another key aspect of this study is the role of trust in EU institutions. The analysis found that trust in the EU did not have a strong effect on voter turnout, but it was a significant predictor of extreme political orientation. This finding echoes the contradictory results found in previous studies on EU-related attitudes and voter behavior (Schmitt & Mannheimer, 1991; Franklin et al., 1996). The weak relationship between trust in EU institutions and voter turnout may reflect the second-order nature of EP elections, where voters may feel that the stakes are lower and thus less motivated to vote based on their trust in the EU. However, the significant relationship between trust in the EU and extreme political orientation suggests that disillusionment with EU institutions may lead some expatriates to gravitate toward more radical political positions, which aligns with the rise of far-right populism across Europe.

The paper brings an innovative approach and adds another layer of understanding to expatriate political behavior by exploring the profile of expats having extreme political orientation. While the focus of the first model was on voter turnout, Model 2 explored the predictors of ideological extremism among expatriates, showing that factors such as residence abroad, perceptions of immigration, and dissatisfaction with democratic governance were associated with more extreme political views. These findings are in line with the literature on political polarization and the rise of populist and far-right movements in Europe (Franklin et al., 1996). The study found that longer periods of residence abroad are positively associated with both voter turnout and extreme political orientation.

The relationship between economic dissatisfaction and extreme political views is particularly noteworthy. The study found that expatriates who perceive their economic situation negatively are more likely to adopt extreme political positions, consistent with the work of Franklin et al. (1996) and other studies linking economic grievances to support for radical political ideologies. This suggests that for expatriates who feel economically marginalized or dissatisfied with their circumstances in the host country, radical political parties may represent an outlet for expressing their discontent. This aligns

with the broader literature on economic voting, which suggests that individuals who are economically disadvantaged may be more likely to support parties that promise to radically alter the political system (Hix & Marsh, 2011).

Moreover, the finding that dissatisfaction with democratic governance is linked to a stronger inclination toward extreme political views underscores the importance of understanding the psychological and contextual factors driving political behavior. As suggested by Schmitt & Mannheimer (1991), a lack of satisfaction with political institutions can contribute to political disengagement or radicalization. In this context, the study's findings contribute to understanding the role of dissatisfaction in motivating individuals toward extremist political positions, particularly in an environment where populist movements are on the rise. The study's findings regarding trust in EU institutions provide an interesting contrast to the findings on voter turnout. While trust in the EU was not found to have a strong impact on voter turnout, it was a significant predictor of extreme political orientation. This reflects a contradictory pattern found in earlier studies on EU-related attitudes and voter behavior, such as those by Schmitt & Mannheimer (1991) and Franklin et al. (1996), which also found mixed results regarding the influence of trust in the EU on electoral behavior. The weak relationship between trust in EU institutions and voter turnout may be explained by the second-order nature of EP elections, where the stakes are perceived to be lower than in national elections, leading expatriates to feel less compelled to vote based on their trust in the EU. However, the significant relationship between trust in the EU and extreme political orientation points to the role of disillusionment with EU institutions in fostering political radicalization. Expatriates who are dissatisfied with the EU and its institutions may be more likely to support extremist parties that position themselves as oppositional forces to the EU and its policies. This finding highlights the importance of addressing issues of trust and engagement with EU institutions, as a lack of trust may fuel ideological extremism and support for far-right movements, which are gaining traction in Europe (Tenn, 2007).

The study also emphasizes the role of socioeconomic factors such as

perceptions of immigration and social class in shaping political behavior. The positive association between negative perceptions of immigration and extreme political views aligns with the broader literature on the rise of anti-immigrant sentiment within populist and far-right movements (Bevelander, 2015). This finding suggests that attitudes toward immigration may polarize political views among expatriates, particularly in the context of debates surrounding immigration policy and national identity in the EU. Additionally, the relationship between social class perceptions and political alignment further underscores the importance of understanding how social and economic factors intersect with political behavior. The study found that individuals who perceive themselves as economically disadvantaged are more likely to support extreme political positions, consistent with the findings of Franklin et al. (1996) and Hix & Marsh (2011). This suggests that economic discontent, coupled with perceptions of social marginalization, can drive individuals toward extremist ideologies, especially in a context where mainstream political parties are perceived to be failing to address their grievances.

While this study contributes to the understanding of expatriate voter behavior in EP elections, it also raises several important questions for future research. One key avenue for further investigation is the exploration of how digital media and online political engagement influence expatriates' voting decisions. Given the increasing role of social media in shaping political discourse, it would be valuable to examine how expatriates engage with political content online and whether this affects their likelihood of voting in EP elections. This could provide further insights into the intersection of digital media and political participation, particularly in the context of expatriate communities. Moreover, this study suggests the need for more research on the role of social integration in shaping expatriates' political behavior. As mentioned earlier, the length of residence abroad was a significant predictor of voter turnout, yet the study did not explore the extent to which expatriates are integrated into local social networks. Future studies could investigate how social ties to both the home and host countries influence expatriates' political engagement, as well as how different forms of social capital shape voting

behavior.

In conclusion, this study contributes to the growing body of literature on expatriate voting behavior in European Parliament elections. The results suggest that longer periods of residence abroad, more progressive social attitudes, and dissatisfaction with governance are key factors influencing voter turnout and political orientation among expatriates. As the EU faces rising political polarization, understanding the factors that motivate expatriates to engage in EP elections is crucial for shaping strategies to increase voter turnout and ensure that all citizens, regardless of their place of residence, have their voices heard in the democratic process. Future research should continue to explore the complex interplay of individual characteristics, political attitudes, and social integration in shaping expatriates' electoral behavior, particularly in light of the challenges posed by digital media and the rise of populist movements in Europe.

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Appendix

Table A1. *Coding of variables*

VARIABLE	MEASUREMENT
DEPENDENT VARIABLES	
TURNOUT	Dummy; 1 = voted and 0 = did not vote
EXTREME POLITICAL ORIENTATION	Recoded from a categorial variable measured on scale from 0 to 10 where 0 means extrem left and 1 means extrem right political orientation to a dummy variable where 1 means extreme political orientation and 0 means otherwise. Extreme political orientation was recoded by averaging 0-1 and 9 - 10 categories from the original variable.
RESIDENCE ABROAD	Numerical variable showing the actuals numbers of years since the respodent moved to the host country.
INDEPENDENT VARIABLES	
TRUST IN EU INSTITUTIONS	Categorical variable measured from 1 to 7 where 1 means total trust and 7 means total distrust.
SATISFACTION WITH ECONOMIC SITUATION	Categorical variable measured from 1 to 5 where 1 means a lot better and 5 means a lot worse.
SUPPORT FOR SAME SEX MARRIAGE	Categorical variable measured from 1 to 5 where 1 means totally agree and 5 means totally disagree.
SUPPORT FOR IMMIGRATION	Categorical variable measured from 1 to 5 where 1 means totally agree and 5 means totally disagree.
SATISFACTION WITH DEMOCRATIC GOVERNANCE	Categorical variable measured from 1 to 5 where 1 means totally satisfied and 5 means totally unsatisfied.
AGE	The actual age of the respondents.
EDUCATION	The level of education.
GENDER	1 = male; 0 = female
PERCEPTION OF SOCIAL CLASS	1 = lower class; 5 = upper class.

Table A2. *The Result of VIF*

	VIF
Residence abroad	1.701
Education	2.390
Support	3.861
Trust	4.236
Participation rate (national citizens)	1.200