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The EES 2014

The EES 2014 project continues the tradition of the post European Parliament (EP) elections studies which started in 1979. The overall goal of the project is to assess the quality of democracy in the European Union at the time of the 2014 EP elections. In light of the Euro crises and the important institutional changes, our aim is to provide suggestions for improving the state of EU democracy.

The 2014 study consists of several sub-projects:

- EES Voter Study (completed)
- EES Panel Study (in progress)
- EES Manifesto Study (preliminary results)
- EES Social Media Study (preliminary results)

website

www.eeshomepage.net

The Components

- 1) **The 2014 EES Voter Study, Post-Election Survey** consists of a EU-wide survey which was carried out jointly with the post-electoral survey commissioned by the European Parliament (EP). The study continues the tradition of post EP elections voter studies which started in 1979. The data is deposited at the GESIS Data Archive for the Social Sciences. A number of papers based on the data have already been published or are forthcoming.
- 2) **The 2014 EES Panel Study** consists of online panel surveys that were/will be administered in nine EU member countries. The first wave was carried out after the 2014 EP elections and the second wave will be carried out after the subsequent national elections. Data of the first wave is ready for archive.
- 3) **The 2014 EES Manifesto Study** consists of collecting and coding the electoral manifestos issued at the time of the 2014 EP elections by all relevant political parties. All available manifestos were collected and coded by country experts. The data will be made available as of June 2016. Initial results were presented in the form of conference papers.
- 4) **The 2014 EES Social Media Study** consists of all the Twitter communication of EP candidates and their followers at the time of the 2014 EP elections. Due to copy right issues, the raw data cannot be made publicly available. An aggregate version of the data is currently prepared. A number of papers have already been published or are forthcoming.

Selected Publications

Journal Articles

- Schmitt, Hermann, Sara B. Hobolt, and Sebastian Adrian Popa. 2015. "Does Personalization Increase Turnout? Spitzenkandidaten in the 2014 European Parliament Elections." *European Union Politics* 16(3): 347–68.
- Popa, Sebastian Adrian, Robert Rohrschneider and Hermann Schmitt. Forthcoming. "Polarizing Without Legitimization: The Effect of Lead Candidates' Campaigns on Perceptions of the EU Democracy." *Electoral Studies*
- Nulty, Paul, Yannis Theocharis, Sebastian Adrian Popa, Olivier Parnet, Ken Benoit. Forthcoming. "Social Media and Political Communication in the 2014 Elections to the European Parliament". *Electoral Studies*
- Schmitt, Hermann, and Eftichia Teperoglou. 2015. "The 2014 European Parliament Elections in Southern Europe: Second-Order or Critical Elections?." *South European Society and Politics*, 20(3):287-309.

Special Issues

- Schmitt, Hermann, and Eftichia Teperoglou (Eds.), 2015. Special Issue: The 2014 European Parliament Elections in Southern Europe. *South European Society and Politics*, 20(3).
- Rohrschneider, Robert and Hermann Schmitt (Eds.), Forthcoming "Special Issue: European Parliament Elections in Times of Crises." *Electoral Studies*

Selected conference presentations

- Theocharis, Yannis, Pablo Barberá, Zoltán Fazekas and Sebastian Adrian Popa. 2015. *A Bad Workman Blames his Tweets: The Consequences of Citizens' Uncivil Twitter Use when Interacting with Party Candidates*. [111th Annual Conference of the American Political Science Association, San Francisco, CA, September 03rd to September 06th, 2015]
- Fazekas, Zoltán, Sebastian Adrian Popa, Hermann Schmitt, Pablo Barberá and Yannis Theocharis. 2015. *When to talk about Europe? Selective Europeanization of the 2014 EP Elections*. [5th Annual General Conference of the European Political Science Association, Vienna, June 25th to June 27th, 2015]
- Popa, Sebastian Adrian, Pablo Barberá and Hermann Schmitt. 2015. *A Common Multidimensional Political Space for Voters, Parties, and Legislators in Europe*. [73rd Annual Conference of the Midwest Political Science Association, Chicago, April 16th to April 19th, 2015]
- Braun Daniela and Sebastian Adrian Popa. 2016. *The effect of lead candidates emphasized in election manifestos on the relevance of European elections* [23rd International Conference of Europeanists, Philadelphia, PA, April 14th to April 16th, 2016]

Data

- Schmitt, Hermann, Sara B. Hobolt, Sebastian Adrian Popa, Eftichia Teperoglou, and Public Monitoring Unit European Parliament, Directorate-General for Communication. 2015. "European Parliament Election Study 2014, Voter Study." *GESIS Data Archive, Cologne*. ZA5160 Data file Version 3.0.0, doi:10.4232/1.12384.
- Braun, Daniela; Sebastian Adrian Popa, Felix Dwinger, Mikhaylov, Slava; Schmitt, Hermann. Forthcoming. "European Parliament Election Study 2014, Manifesto Study". *GESIS Data Archive, Cologne*.

The impact of institutional innovation on EU democracy: The role of the *Spitzenkandidaten* in the 2014 EP elections

Main expectations: a reformed process of nominating and electing the Commission president should improve the state of EU democracy by:

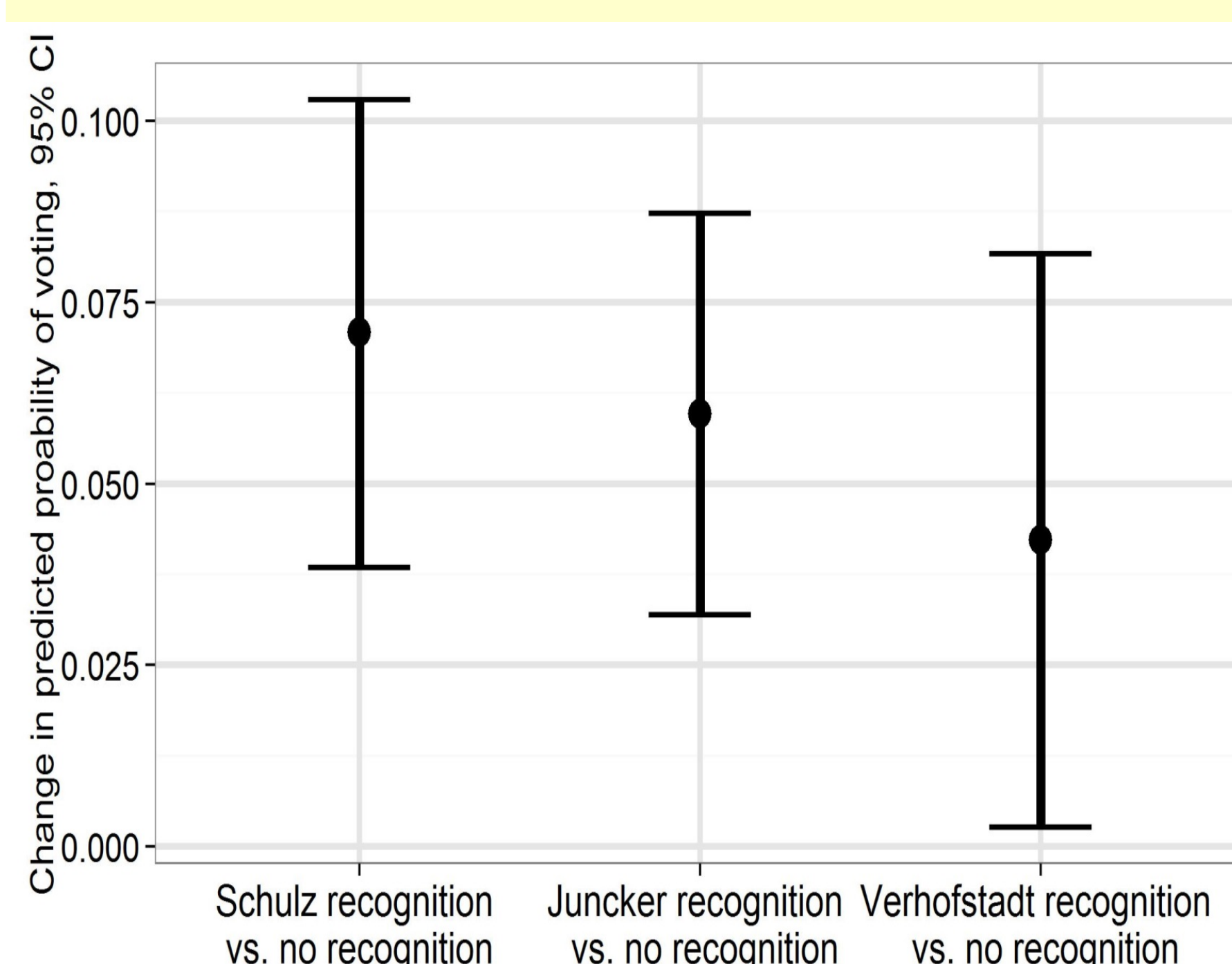
- mobilizing citizens to take greater interest and participate in the elections
- strengthening the accountability in EP and thus also contributing to the legitimacy of the EU

Findings

Voter Study

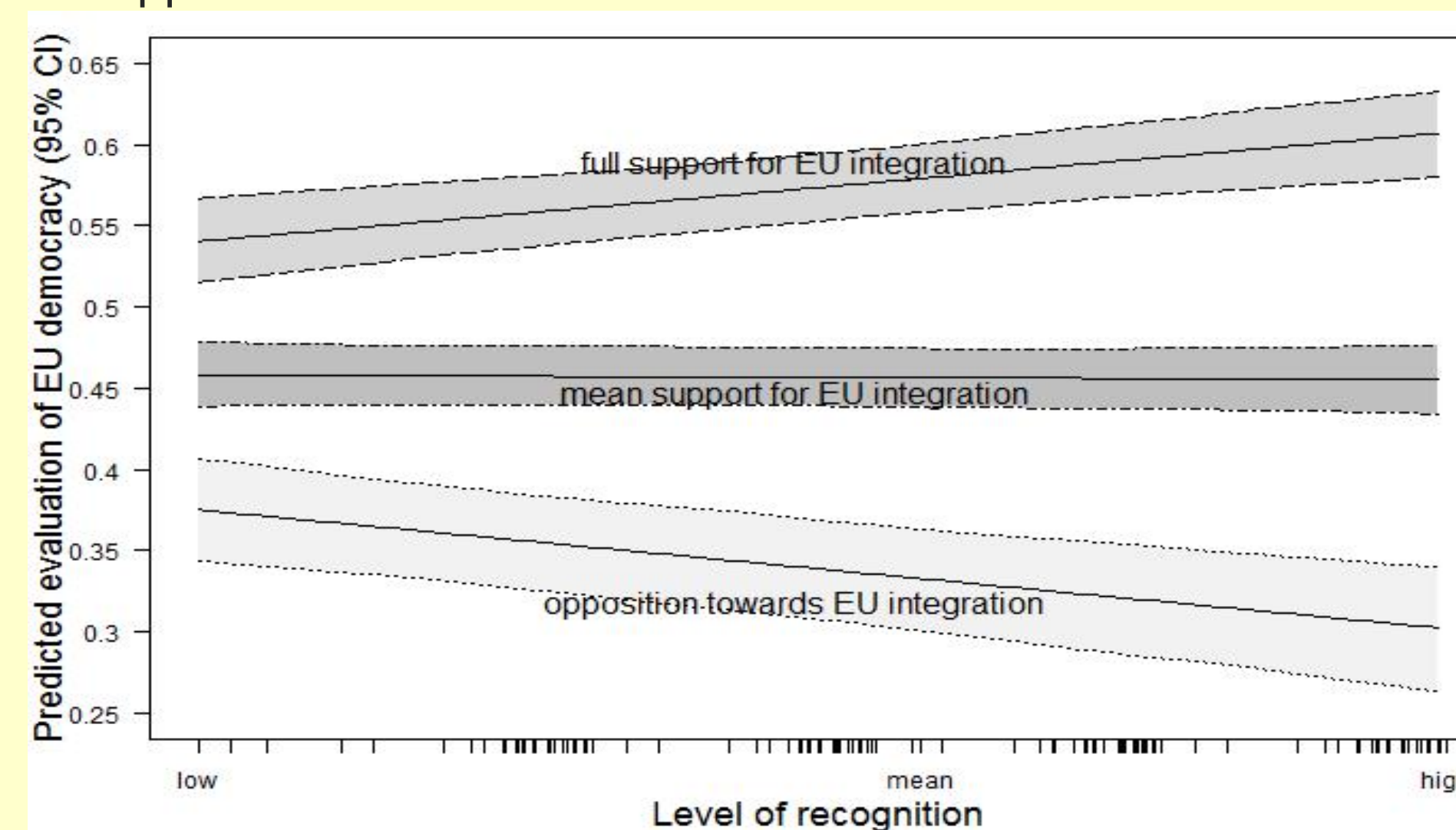
- Citizens who are aware of the *Spitzenkandidaten* and their role in the EP elections are more likely to vote in the EP elections (see Figure 1)

Figure 1: Effect of candidate recognition on turnout



- The campaign activities of the candidates also had a positive effect on turnout, both directly and in interactions with recognitions.
- No evidence that the *Spitzenkandidaten* system increased the legitimacy of the EU; on the contrary it managed to polarize opinion about the state of EU democracy based on pre-existing attitudes (see Figure 2)

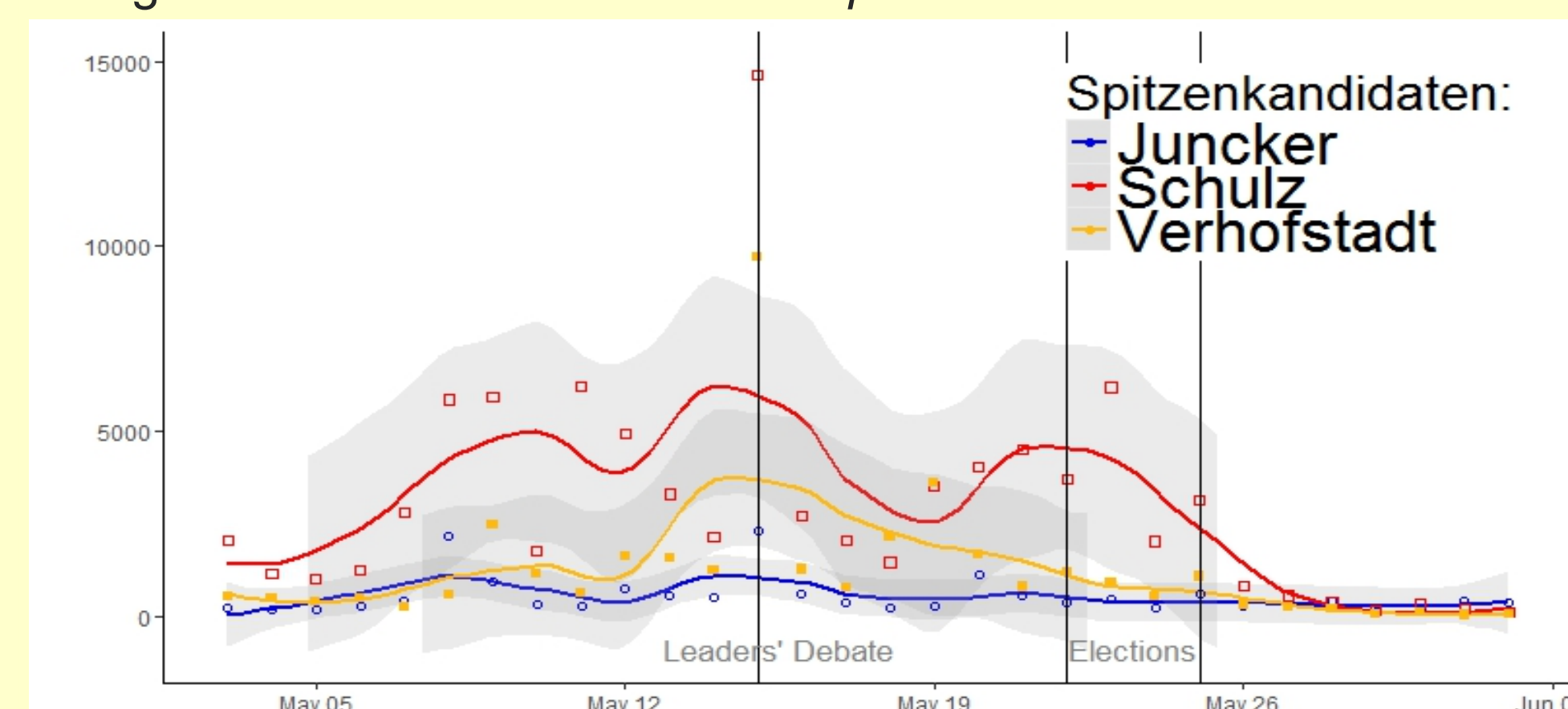
Figure 2: Predicted values of recognition depending on support for EU



Social Media Study

- Significant social media activity and increased attention to the topic on social media (see Figure 3)

Figure 3: Twitter mention of the *Spitzenkandidaten*



Manifesto Study

- 29 parties out of 159 analysed parties mentioned the topic, the mean space allocated is 0.7% of the total manifesto size
- Low salience of the topic among parties as possible explanation for weak effects

Conclusion

- Weak effects of the *Spitzenkandidaten* among the general public, not fulfilling initial hopes of improving the state of EU democracy
- Possible reason: low salience among parties