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ARBEITSVORHABEN

Elections and Democracy: Voter ID, Electoral Integrity, and Access to the Ballot Box

In recent years, elections and fundamental democratic rights have become highly politicized in many democracies. Debates about introducing or tightening mandatory voter ID in contexts where many voters lack the requisite identification are central to this trend and make voter suppression a major concern. Currently, these debates affect over a billion voters worldwide, including in the UK, Australia, India, and the US. This project examines how elections and democracy are impacted when mandatory voter ID is introduced in a democracy where a significant share of the electorate lacks the required ID.

Scientifically, the effects of voter ID remain poorly understood because existing studies reach contradictory findings and focus overwhelmingly on the US, a polarized democracy from which conclusions do not easily generalize. This project makes use of a unique opportunity to study – in real time – a national reform introducing mandatory voter ID in the UK, a less polarized context, from which findings are more easily generalizable. I will examine the causal effect of mandatory ID on voter behaviour and attitudes, using innovative regression discontinuity and difference-in-differences approaches. The project employs (i) original surveys examining the effect of UK voter ID in real time, (ii) historical data from the introduction of voter ID in Northern Ireland (2002), and (iii) survey data from the voter ID trials of 2018/19. Academically, the project provides the first comprehensive study of the effects of voter ID at local and national levels in any developed democracy to date.

Recommended Reading

Schleiter, Petra, Tobias Böhmelt, Lawrence Ezrow, and Roni Lehrer (2021). "Social Democratic Party Exceptionalism and Transnational Policy Linkages." *World Politics* 73 (3): 512–544. <https://www.doi.org/10.1017/S0043887121000022>.

Schleiter, Petra, Margit Tavits, and Dalston Ward (2022). "Can Political Speech Foster Tolerance of Immigrants?" *Political Science Research and Methods* 10 (3): 567–583. <https://www.doi.org/10.1017/psrm.2021.37>.

Tavits, Margit, Petra Schleiter, Jonathan Homola, and Dalston Ward (2024). "Fathers' Leave Reduces Sexist Attitudes." *American Political Science Review* 118 (1): 488–494. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0003055423000369>.

Democratic Backsliding and the Politicization of Voting Rights: The UK Voter ID Reform

Democratic backsliding has become a pressing global concern, with the politicization of voting rights emerging as a key dimension of this trend. In both established and emerging democracies, measures such as mandatory voter ID requirements are reshaping access to the ballot, often with significant implications for electoral participation and equality. This talk examines the effects of the UK's recent voter ID reform, enacted in a context where no universal ID system exists. I explain how my team studies the effect of this reform, drawing on a natural experiment, individual level, and aggregate turnout data. Our findings demonstrate that the UK voter ID law reduces turnout and disproportionately impacts voters without ID, exacerbating inequalities in democratic participation. The findings underscore the urgent need for targeted mitigation efforts and contribute to broader debates on the intersection of voting rights and democratic resilience. I conclude by discussing how these findings are informing policy processes and what the next steps in this project are.

PUBLIKATIONEN AUS DER FELLOWBIBLIOTHEK

Schleiter, Petra (New York, NY [u.a.],2024)

Fathers' leave reduces sexist attitudes

<https://kxp.k10plus.de/DB=9.663/PPNSET?PPN=1895818362>

Schleiter, Petra (Cambridge,2022)

Can political speech foster tolerance of immigrants?

<https://kxp.k10plus.de/DB=9.663/PPNSET?PPN=189581166X>

Schleiter, Petra (Baltimore, MD,2021)

Social democratic party exceptionalism and transnational policy linkages

<https://kxp.k10plus.de/DB=9.663/PPNSET?PPN=1895809320>