Political interest among young Austrians before and after lowering voting age

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Panel “Political Socialization of Young Adults – Between Family, School, and Political Awareness”

ABSTRACT

Young people are said not to be interested in politics. Lack of political interest of adolescents has been used as a counter argument against lowering voting age. But why should someone be interested in politics if he or she is not eligible to vote? This paper examines the differences in political interest of 16 and 17 year old Austrians before (2004) and after (2008) lowering voting age to 16. We see a couple of changes: Political interest of 16- and 17-year old Austrians is higher after lowering voting age. The patterns of determinants change as well: Parents are of utmost importance for political interest of young people who are not enfranchised. After lowering voting age, the role of school becomes much more important.
Introduction

Lowering voting age to 16 years has not only been a debate among policy makers and interest groups, also in scientific research this topic is part of recent discussions (Chan and Clayton, 2006, Electoral Commission, 2004, Hart and Atkins, 2011, Franklin, 2004, Wattenberg, 2008). In this context, the political interest of young people, or more precisely the lack of it, is used as an argument against lowering voting age (Chan and Clayton, 2006).

In electoral research political interest in fact is a crucial point in the debate of lowering voting age, as it is an important explanatory variable for political behavior (e.g. Campbell et al., 1960, Blais, 2000, Lazarsfeld et al., 1960, Verba et al., 1995). If political interest is not evenly distributed among the electorate, normative questions arise (van Deth, 1989). Additionally, the lack of political interest has been described as one important cause for low participation rates, especially when it comes to young voters (Fieldhouse et al., 2007, Strate et al., 1989). Blais et al. (2004) for example were able to show that attention to politics is a powerful predictor of electoral participation and partly\(^1\) explains the differences in turnout between the generations (Blais et al., 2004).

But when it comes to lowering voting age, the argument concerning political interest is twofold: On the one hand side, this gap could possibly be enlarged by lowering voting age, as political interest is even lower among the adolescents who have not yet reached voting age (Wattenberg, 2008, p.126). But on the other hand, one could also ask, why someone should be interest in politics, if he or she is not allowed to participate in elections (Chan and Clayton, 2004). Consequently, when debating political interest in the context of lowering voting age, the question arises, whether the lack of political interest is a result of lack of political maturity, or if it is a matter of not being interested in something where you are not yet allowed to take part. As political socialization research has shown that political interest seems to start increasing in adolescence (Jennings and Niemi, 1974, Niemi and Hepburn, 1995), this age period is most crucial to consider when studying political interest.

In this paper, we want to take a closer look at the levels and the patterns of political interest among 16 and 17 year olds. For Austria, where voting age was lowered from 18 to 16 in 2007,\(^1\)

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\(^1\) Lower levels of civic duty are identified as the second reason for lower level of turnout among young voters.
we are able to analyze possible differences in political interest before and after lowering voting age. In addition, and based on political socialization research, we examine central factors that support or hinder the development of political interest.

**What is political interest?**

In electoral research, political interest is perceived to be a starting point of an activation process (Lazarsfeld et al., 1960) or an indicator of political engagement (Verba et al., 1995) and political involvement (Campbell et al., 1960) respectively. Although these studies do not share exactly the same concept of political interest, all of them highlight the importance of interest for political participation in the well-documented way that interest is an important driving factor for participation. Recently, in their discussion concerning the merits and limits of rational choice approach, Blais and Labbe-St-Vincent (2011) named political interest as “the best individual-level predictor of perceiving high benefits and low cost in voting, as well as having an opinion about which is the best candidate or party in an election” (p.395). To sum up, political interest often works as a link between social and psychological drivers of political attitudes or behaviors.

Despite this popularity of political interest in electoral research and its prominent role concerning the explanation of political behavior, little attention has been paid to the concept itself (Prior, 2010, van Deth, 1989). Following van Deth (1989), political interest is defined as “the degree to which politics arouse a citizen’s curiosity” (p.278). Usually, political interest is measured with a single indicator[^2] that is meant to capture this concept properly. But, taking psychological interest research into account, two qualitatively different types of interest have been distinguished: situational and individual interest. Situational interest therefore refers to the focused attention and affective reaction that is triggered momentarily by environmental stimuli and it may or may not last over time (Hidi and Renninger, 2006, Krapp, 2002, Hidi, 1990). Individual interest on the other side refers to a persons’ relatively enduring predisposition to reengage with particular content over time as well as to the immediate psychological state when this predisposition has been activated (Renninger et al., 2002, Hidi and Renninger, 2006). Additionally, individual interest requires substantial knowledge of a topic and valuing that knowledge (Renninger, 2000).

[^2]: “How interested would you say you are in politics?”, usually to be answered on a four point scale.
Based upon these findings, we try to cover a broad concept of political interest in this paper. We therefore take into account situational, triggered political interest as well as individual political interest, where only the latter is supposed to be linked to behavior, e.g. following the news as an indicator of reengagement with the topic of politics\(^3\).

**Political interest and its development**

Facing the high importance of political interest, the question arises when and under what circumstances political interest starts to be formed. Early research allocated the starting point of political interest in early adulthood and report an increase up to old age (Glenn and Grimes, 1968). Jennings and Niemi (1974) found that political interest rises among young adults during the time they are attending high school. After that period of life, political interest was reported to be somewhat fluctuating. Additionally, they found, that political interest indeed increases during the lifespan, but only for higher levels of education. For lower levels of education even a decrease was observed after finishing high school. Summing up these results, Niemi and Hepburn (1995) conclude that the period of greatest importance for the development of political interest lies between fourteen and the mid twenties. A not yet published article (Neundorf et al., 2011) highlights similar findings for Germany: The authors show in a latent growth model, that political interest increases up to the age of 25 and remains stable afterwards. Other recent studies define an even smaller period of time: Chan and Clayton (2006) compared British panel data from 1991 and 2001 and found increasing political interest within this time span only among those who were sixteen to nineteen in 1991. More recently, Prior (2010) raised the question of stability of political interest, and showed, that political interest is quite stable during the life time, and that the formation of political interest must happen in the young adult years. He furthermore stresses the importance to understand, how political interest is formed among young adults.

Considering all these results, which show that political interest starts to increase at the end of adolescence or the beginning of adulthood and that its development seems to be more or less completed in one’s mid twenties, we can conclude that becoming eligible to vote (be it at the age

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\(^3\) For a more detailed discussion on the concept and measurement of political interest see also Zandonella, M. and Zeglovits, E. (2011) Political Interest and Turnout – a long-time relationship is up for debate. *Annual Scientific Meeting of the ISPP*. Istanbul July 9th – 12th 2011.
of 16, 18 or 19) seems to take place in this formative period. But, the above mentioned studies have, besides their corresponding results, another important thing in common: all of them studied young people who were enfranchised to vote at the age of 18 or later. The resulting starting point for the development of political interest can therefore be located shortly before their enfranchising. Yet, based on the given results, we are not able to distinguish whether political interest arises because of some maturation or life cycle effect or if it arises because young people (and their parents or teachers) anticipate a “life event”, their becoming an enfranchised voter. Actually none of the studies available so far link the age of their respondents to the development of political interest and to the age of being enfranchised.

A similar question was raised by Niemi et al. (Niemi et al., 1984), as they discussed turnout among newly enfranchised (like females in Germany after First World War, blacks in the US or Spanish people after the Franco regime), confronting a “life cycle hypothesis” with an “experience hypothesis”. While their life cycle hypotheses explains certain developments by simply aging and getting more mature, their experience hypotheses explains developments by experiences independently of age, as the experience of having been disenfranchised for a long time. Following Niemi et al. (1984), developments based on the latter furthermore allow quicker adoptions of attitudes and behaviors among the young voters, as they are more flexible and open for new things.

We adopt this approach of two confronting hypothesis for our study on political interest among adolescents and set up the following: Our life cycle hypotheses fits the studies discussed above and assumes that the development of political interest is explained by age-dependent maturation:

Hypotheses 1a – “life cycle hypothesis”: Political interest is a matter of age. Political interest among 16- and 17 year olds therefore is the same for enfranchised and for non-enfranchised adolescents.

On the other hand, and this goes beyond the studies conducted so far, we assume what we call a “life event effect” meaning that the development of political interest is connected to being enfranchised:
Hypotheses 1b – “life event hypothesis”: Becoming enfranchised increases political interest: The political interest of 16- and 17-year-old enfranchised voters is higher than that of 16-17-year-old non-enfranchised voters.

When studying the development of political interest, not only maturation and enfranchising have to be taken into account. Especially when it comes to adolescents, socialization research becomes relevant as the question arises what factors can be identified that push or hinder the development of political interest? In this context, most studies agree that parents, school and peers are the most important agents of political socialization (Butler and Stokes, 1974, Jennings and Niemi, 1974, Niemi and Sobieszek, 1977, Verba et al., 1995, Andolina et al., 2003).

The family is of high importance for value formation because it is the initial social surrounding for a child growing up and its first important reference group (Oerter and Montada, 2002). Concerning the field of politics, studies for example have shown that parents’ and children’s partisanship are very much alike (Butler and Stokes, 1974, Niemi and Sobieszek, 1977). More recently, Jennings et al. show that transmission processes between parents and offspring still work and that the acquisition of political characteristics has an impact on one’s further development (Jennings et al., 2009).

Political interest and political behavior of peers can also be seen as important for the political interest and behavior of an adolescent. In research, this influence of peers is usually seen within the context of schools (Campbell, 1980, Yates and Youniss, 1998), as classmates are most likely to form crucial parts of the peer group. School is their most important “public” environment. Flanagan et al. (1998) describe the function of schools as a place where one can learn dealing with a community: “Schools are like mini polities where children can explore what it means to be a member of a community beyond their families” (Flanagan et al., 1998). School has several functions, as it is the place, where young people spend most of their time: Of course, school is a place where young people are supposed to get information, to gather knowledge, to accumulate resources. But school is also a place where they are confronted with the norms and values of the society they live in (Henkenborg, 2005). Additionally, school democracy is an important field of practice for young people, where they can have their first experiences with collective decision
making processes or elections, which again is associated with deeper understanding of political processes, or higher levels of political efficacy (Torney-Purta, 2002, 203). The results concerning the role of teachers within political socialization are puzzling. Following Torney-Purta (2002), teachers have important roles as they are in the position to influence knowledge, behavior and attitudes. On the other hand, Dostie-Goulet (2009) showed for Canadian high school students, that teachers’ influence on the development of political interest is not significant. In her study, parents had the most important influence on the development of political interest among high school students.

Nonetheless, all these studies show the importance of socialization agents when it comes to the development of political interest. Franklin (2004) additionally highlights the importance of school in his discussion about voting age: “The most promising reform that might restore higher turnout would be to lower the voting age still further, perhaps to fifteen. (…) They could then learn to vote in the context of a civic class project where they were graded on their ability to discover relevant information (…).” (Franklin, 2004, p. 213).

Following Franklin (2004) we assume that for enfranchised adolescents school is of higher importance for the development of political interest than for non-enfranchised adolescents.

Hypotheses 2: School has higher effect on political interest among enfranchised 16 and 17 year olds compared to non-enfranchised 16 and 17 year olds.
Method and Data

We test our hypotheses for Austria, as in 2007 Austrian parliament resolved upon an electoral law reform, including lowering active voting age to 16 years for federal elections (Nationalratswahlen), as well as presidential elections and elections for the European Parliament and plebiscites (binding as well as non-binding referenda). This makes Austria one of the very few countries with a general voting age that low and hence, Austria provides us with a particular interesting group of young voters, when studying the development of political interest.

For testing Hypotheses 1a and 1b, we will compare levels of political interest at two points of time: 2004 for non-enfranchised 16 and 17 year old Austrians and 2008 for enfranchised 16 and 17 year old Austrians. In order to test our hypothesis 2 we conduct two structural equation models (one for the 2004 non-enfranchised and one for the 2008 enfranchised 16 and 17 year olds) explaining political interest. We will then compare, if the patterns are similar or different before and after lowering voting age.

Our data derive from two cross-sectional surveys, one conducted before and one conducted after lowering voting age. The first survey was part of a comparative project on youth participation conducted in 2004, and we refer to it as “EUYOUPART Austria”. The second survey was conducted a few weeks after the Austrian federal election in 2008, which where the first elections after voting age was lowered to sixteen; we refer to this one as “Votes at 16”.

The population of interest is people aged 16 and 17, as this age group is affected by lowering voting age from 18 to 16. Details regarding the two surveys can be found in the appendix.

Our basic model is based upon the results reviewed in the section above. The level of political interest is directly affected by support from parents and school (Flanagan et al., 1998, Henkenborg, 2005, Jennings and Niemi, 1974, Jennings et al., 2009, Niemi and Hepburn, 1995, Torney-Purta, 2002). There are also indirect effects via political knowledge, whereas knowledge can be seen either as a resource necessary to develop interest, or engagement as Verba et al. (Verba et al., 1995) put it, or as a prerequisite for developing individual interest in the
psychological sense (Renninger, 2000). As there is a well known gender gap when it comes to measuring political knowledge (Mondak and Anderson, 2004), we additionally allow gender effects on knowledge as well as on political interest.

As discussed above, we will not reduce political interest to the single item on subjective political interest, which is usually used to capture political interest in quantitative research. As we want to cover the broader concept of political interest, including situational as well as individual interest (Hidi and Renninger, 2006), we will also use the frequency of following political news as an indicator of individual political interest.

For measuring support by parents, we use three indicators: talking about politics to one’s father, talking about politics to one’s mother and parents’ educational background. Finally, school environment is measured by talking about politics with teachers and the number of “political” activities in school (activities of internal school democracy as students’ assemblies or activities that have to do with democracy in general, as having a discussion with a politician in school).

Results
Confronting the life cycle hypothesis with the life event hypothesis, we compare levels of the two chosen indicators of political interest in 2004 and 2008. Table 1 shows, that both indicators of political interest, subjective political interest and frequency of following the news, show higher interest among the enfranchised 16- and 17-year olds in 2008 than among the non-enfranchised 16- and 17-year olds in 2004. As we compare two cross sectional surveys, we cannot be sure about causality, but the data support hypotheses 1b and show that the level of political interest is not only a matter of maturity.

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4 Other scholars argue that the causal order can be reversed and describe interest as a driver of knowledge (Delli Carpini, M. X. and Keeter, S. (1996) What Americans Know about Politics and Why it Matters, Yale University Press.)

5 All question wordings can be found in the Annex
Table 1: Political interest of 16 and 17 year old Austrians, 2004 – 2008

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>How interested are you in politics</th>
<th>2008</th>
<th>2004</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>not at all interested</td>
<td>6.6</td>
<td>15.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>not very interested</td>
<td>31.6</td>
<td>51.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fairly interested</td>
<td>39.9</td>
<td>23.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>very interested</td>
<td>21.8</td>
<td>7.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t know, answer refused</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>2.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frequency of following the news</th>
<th>2008</th>
<th>2004</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>never</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>9.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>less often than once a week</td>
<td>17.3</td>
<td>28.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>once/twice a week</td>
<td>26.0</td>
<td>25.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>several times a week</td>
<td>30.2</td>
<td>17.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>every day</td>
<td>23.8</td>
<td>19.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>don’t know, answer refused</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N 719 214

Sources: 2004 EUYOUPART Austria, 2008 Votes at 16

Testing hypothesis 2, we compare how the data of 2004 and 2008 fit to the structural equation model described above. The following graphs 1 and 2 show that our hypothesized structure is supported at both points of time and that the fit indices are good for both models.

In the model for 2004, we see a significant and strong direct impact of parents on political interest, plus a smaller on political knowledge. For this group of non-enfranchised 16 and 17 year old Austrians in 2004, school and knowledge do not contribute significantly to explain political interest. The results rather show that political interest of the non-enfranchised 16 and 17 year olds is a matter of parents’ support. The gender effect on political interest finally indicates that young men are more interested in politics than young women (with all other factors held equal).

This quite simple model for explaining political interest comes up with a high explanatory power, the estimated Rsquare for the latent variable political interest is 0.57. The rather low levels of political interest of 16 and 17 year olds in 2004 can be convincingly explained by parents’ support plus some gender gap.
Graph 1: Explaining political interest of 16- and 17 year olds before lowering voting age, EUYOUPART Austria, 2004

Fit indices: $\chi^2 = 17.174$, $df = 13$, $p = 0.1915$, $CFI = 0.963$, $RMSEA = 0.039$, $R$ square of interest: $0.570$, $n = 206$
The picture is different in 2008: For newly enfranchised 16 and 17 year old Austrians, the impact of parents is reduced. Instead, we observe a strong direct and indirect effect of school on political interest. The results show, that school supports political interest directly as well as indirectly via increasing political knowledge, which in turn increases political interest.

The 2008 data again shows a gender effect, whereas the direct effect of gender on political interest is quite similar to the one in 2004. Additionally, we observe the well known gender gap in political knowledge, which leads to another indirect effect on political interest.

As the explanatory power of the 2008 model and its model fit are less convincing than for the 2004 model, the higher levels of political interest in 2008 can only partly be explained by the two most important agents of political socialization, parents and school. A rather large part of the variance of political interest among the youngest voters can therefore not be explained by parents and school. Contrary, the model for the non-enfranchised 16 and 17 year olds in 2004 fits well and explains a high proportion of the variance of political interest among this group. For the enfranchised 16 and 17 year olds in 2008, the model is still fitting, but does not come up with the same explanatory power than the 2004 model. Political interest of enfranchised 16 and 17 year olds therefore is more than a product of political socialization. We can only assume at this point, that the proceeded electoral campaign or the media possibly affected the development of political interest of the youngest significantly.
Graph 2: Explaining political interest of 16- and 17 year olds after lowering voting age, Votes at 16, 2008

Fit indices: $\chi^2=66,758$, df=17, $p=0.000$, CFI 0.909, RMSEA 0.064, R square of interest: 0.302, $n = 717$

Summary and Conclusion

In this paper we analyzed the levels and patterns of political interest among 16 and 17 year olds before and after lowering voting age in Austria. Our aim was to provide deeper insight in the development of political interest, especially concerning its connection to the actual age of being allowed to vote. Therefore we linked political interest not only to the adolescent years but also to enfranchising.
We first of all confronted a “life cycle hypothesis” with a “life event hypothesis”, testing whether the level of political interest merely is the result of a maturation process or if it also is connected to being enfranchised. As our results show significantly higher levels of political interest for the enfranchised young Austrians than for the non-enfranchised, we can conclude that enfranchising makes a difference when it comes to the development of political interest.

Thus, even though our data do not allow direct causal conclusions concerning possible effects of lowering voting age on political interest, we at least are able to add some empirical support to the assumption of Chan and Clayton (2006), who point out that enfranchising might be able to push the development of political interest.

Moreover, we analyzed the effects of determinants of political interest among 16 and 17 year olds, again before and after lowering voting age. We therefore took political socialization research and psychological interest research into account and tested the impact of parents’ and schools’ support on political knowledge and political interest within two structural equation models. Our results duplicate those of Dostie-Gulet (2009) concerning the overwhelming importance of parents for political interest, but only for the non-enfranchised voters. As far as our enfranchised voters are concerned, our results are in accordance with Franklin (2004), as we demonstrated a strong decrease of the importance of parents’ support for political interest and simultaneously a strong increase of the importance of schools’ support.

These results suggest that the field of politics is perceived as more private and therefore left mainly in the hands of parents as long as adolescents are not yet enfranchised. Within the enfranchised group, where the students are already allowed to take part in societal development via voting their representatives, school becomes of high importance for political interest and it indeed seems that school overtake considerable amounts of responsibility for education in the field of politics from parents.

We finally can conclude that enfranchising effects the development of political interest and it seems that it does so by changing its determinants. Austria seems to provide a good example worth studying and so far, the positive outcomes seem to prevail.
ANNEX

(1) Data used:

“EUYPART” - Political Participation of Young People in Europe – Development of Indicators for Comparative Research in the European Union (EUYPART), within the 5th Framework Program, HPSE-CT-2002-0012; data available at GESIS. Austria was one participating country. The face to face survey is representative of 15-25 year old people living in Austria (n=1,000), and was conducted in Nov./Dec. 2004

“Votes at 16” was a project organized by two private Austrian research companies and an individual researcher (SORA http://www.sora.at ; Institut für Strategieanalysen http://www.strategieanalysen.at ; Dr. Ulrike Kozelu), and funded by public sponsors: Austrian Parliament, Federal Ministry of Education, Federal Chancellery, Land Wien (City of Vienna), Land Kärnten (Region of Carinthia), Donau Universität Krems. The project included a representative telephone survey amongst 16-18 year old Austrians (eligible voters), conducted in October and November 2008, 3-6 weeks after the federal election. A detailed description can be downloaded on http://www.sora.at/fileadmin/downloads/wahlen/2009_wahlen-mit-16_summary-english.pdf [7.3.2011]

(2) Question wordings and definition of indicators:

Political interest (EUYPART Austria, Votes at 16): “How much are you interested in politics, are you very much (1), fairly (2), little (3), not at all interested (4)?” (was rescaled, that a higher value indicates higher interest)

Knowledge (EUYPART): We counted the number of correct answers to eight knowledge questions, each of them a statement, where the respondent had to classify the statement as true or false. Four of the items were related to the European Union (e.g. “Serbia is a member of the EU”), the other four to the national political system (e.g. name of the prime minister). The indicator has hence a range from 0 to 8, the modus is 3.
**Knowledge (Votes at 16):** We defined a variable that counts the number of correct placements of four political parties on the left-right scale. We take four out of five parties represented in Austrian parliament: SPOE, OVP, FPO, Greens. We skip BZO as this party is rather new, highly concentrated in one region of Austria, and the party faced internal struggles after the death of their party leader Jörg Haider short after the election 2008. The correct point is taken from the Chapel and Hill Expert Survey 2006 (Hooghe et al., 2010). As the left-right placement is on a 1-5 scale in the data for adolescents, we have to slightly adapt this procedure, which leads to a broader range of placements that count as correct. We transferred the experts’ placement from a 0-10 to a 1-5 scale, and applied a tolerance of plus/minus 1 (on the 5-point scale), then we floored the lower bound and used the next count as upper bound. E.G. we transferred the 7 in the expert survey for OVP to a 3.54 on the 1-5 point scale, the tolerance of plus minus 1 leads to an interval of 2.54 to 4.54. Thus, we count any placement between 2 and 5 as correct. Modus of the indicator is 4.

**parents’ education (EUYOUPART Austria, Votes at 16):** indicates if at least one of the parents has completed education at the level of “Matura” which corresponds with a high school diploma that allows one to attend university

**talking to father/mother/teacher (EUYOUPART):** “How often do you talk about political topics with the following persons? (a) always, (b) often, (c) sometimes, (d) rarely, (e) never?” (1) father, (2) mother, (5) teacher

**talking to father/mother/teacher (Votes at 16):** “Have you talked to the following persons about the elections? yes/no” (1) father, (2) mother, (4) teacher

**school activities (EUYOUPART Austria):** indicates the number of six possibly activities a respondent has ever taken part in, e.g. ever been a member of the students’ council or ever participated in a protest movement in school, modus is 0, median is 1

**school activities (Votes at 16):** indicates the number of eight possibly activities a respondent has taken part in, e.g. ever visited to the parliament in class or has school ever hosted a discussion with politicians; modus is 3
(3) Additional tables and results

Table 2: Measurement model, standardized coefficients

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>EUYOUPART Austria 2004</th>
<th>Votes at 16 2008</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Political interest</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subjective political interest</td>
<td>0.746</td>
<td>0.693</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frequency of following the news</td>
<td>0.770</td>
<td>0.694</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Talking to father</td>
<td>0.902</td>
<td>0.825</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Talking to mother</td>
<td>0.617</td>
<td>0.844</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents education</td>
<td>0.334</td>
<td>0.286</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Talking to teachers</td>
<td>0.590</td>
<td>0.709</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School activities</td>
<td>0.461</td>
<td>0.368</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

All coefficients are significantly different from 0, p < 0.05

Table 3: Structural model

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>EUYOUPART Austria 2004</th>
<th>Votes at 16 2008</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Political interest explained by…</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>… knowledge</td>
<td>(0.116)</td>
<td>0.156</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>… parents</td>
<td>0.536</td>
<td>0.165</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>… school</td>
<td>(0.207)</td>
<td>0.369</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>… gender</td>
<td>0.188</td>
<td>0.173</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge explained by…</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>… parents</td>
<td>0.314</td>
<td>(-0.045)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>… school</td>
<td>(-0.073)</td>
<td>0.281</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>… gender</td>
<td>(0.035)</td>
<td>0.155</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Coefficients in brackets do not differ significantly from 0, p > 0.05
REFERENCES


