



# Chapter 13

## Who treated the 2004 European Election in Greece as a second-order election?

Eftichia Teperoglou and Stavros Skrinis  
*University of Athens and Panteion University Athens*

### Abstract

This paper focuses on the **2004 European Election in Greece**. In the first part of the paper we try to answer whether this election is consistent with the second-order election (SOE) model. Participation in the European Election is compared with that in the March 2004 General Election and we present the trends in participation in various types of elections (European and General ones from 1981 to 2004 and Prefecture ones since 1994). Next we examine the losses in the share of votes for the governmental and big parties and the electoral appeal of the smaller ones. The main conclusion is that the hypotheses of the SOE model are verified. Therefore, the 2004 European Election in Greece was a SOE. Since the answer to the first question is affirmative, the main question that runs through the second part of our paper is an attempt to extend this question one step further: Second-order election, for whom? In other words, we want to find if all voters treated the election as a SOE. We attempt to answer these questions using data on demographic variables from the results of the European Election Study 2004 (EES 2004), from the Flash Eurobarometer 162 and the exit polls by OPINION S.A. conducted on 7 March 2004 for the General Election and on 13 June 2004 for the European Election respectively.

## **1. Introduction**

Besides General Elections, there are various other elections with differing purposes and functions in respect to the institutional background and administrative organisation of each country. The attempt to study systematically and comparatively different types of elections started in the USA and focused mainly on the electoral cycle and the evolution of party performance in presidential and mid-term elections. In 1960, Angus Campbell formulated the ‘surge and decline’ theory. In Europe, the first study on the electoral cycle and the popularity of the government was done by Reiner Dinkel (1978) and was formulated as the ‘minor elections’ theory. Dinkel observed that the performance of the federal government parties in the German Länder elections depended on the timing of the election within the federal cycle.

The characteristics of the mid-term and Länder elections led to the formulation of the theoretical model of ‘second-order national elections’. Karlheinz Reif and Hermann Schmitt’s model is a turning point in the study of elections that had been overshadowed by general ones (Reif and Schmitt 1980, Reif 1985, Schmitt and Mannheimer 1991, Van der Eijk and Franklin 1996, Reif 1997, Norris 1997, Marsh 1998, 2005, Freire 2004, Schmitt 2005, Van der Brug and Van der Eijk 2005). They made the distinction between first-order national elections and second-order national elections. In their 1980 article, they studied the first European Election that took place in June 1979 and represented a typical example of a second-order election.

The main hypothesis and novelty of Reif and Schmitt’s theoretical model was that the European Election political arena combined nine different second-order political arenas. Each member-state of the European Community (EEC) had a national (first-order) political arena (FOPA) and therefore, the European Election result (second-order political arena/SOPA) was clearly affected by the current national policies and the national first-

order political arena. Thus, at the time of the European Election, the FOPA played an important role in the SOPA (Reif and Schmitt 1980, Reif 1985).

Reif and Schmitt place each European Election within each national electoral cycle and claim that participation will be lower, smaller and new parties will fare better and null votes will increase.<sup>1</sup> They also elaborate on the performance of larger and governing parties or coalitions, and claim that such parties do worse than in General Elections. All these trends derive from the fact that less is at stake, since the national government will not change. The European electorate uses national criteria, the campaign and media focus on national issues, and political leaders ask for the voters' support based on national policy platforms (Caramani 2004: 1). The 'less at stake' dimension is the first axis of the model and most students of European Elections consider it the key point for understanding and analysing second-order elections.

This paper is divided in two parts and tries to answer two questions. In the first part we try to examine the 2004 European Election in Greece with the help of the second-order election (SOE) model. The main question is whether the 2004 European Election in Greece verifies the hypotheses of Reif and Schmitt, according to which, participation is lower in comparison to the national election, government and bigger parties fare worse and smaller parties fare better.

The main question that runs through the second part of our paper is an attempt to extend this question one step further: Second-order election, for whom? In other words, we want to find if all voters treated the election as a SOE, or whether certain groups of voters do not change their choices between elections.

## 2. The 2004 European Election in Greece: second-order elections?

The European Election took place in Greece only three months after the General Election of 7 March 2004. Looking at Table 1, we see that participation decreased and that the ranking of the parties did not change. The New Democracy (Nea Demokratia, ND) party won both elections, leaving the Pan-Hellenic Socialist Movement (Panellinio Sosialistiko Kinima, PASOK) second and faring worse in the European Election. Given these facts, we will try to answer whether the last European election in Greece was a second order election (SOE).

**Table 1: Electoral Results**

	<b>European Election</b>		<b>General Election</b>	
	June 2004		March 2004	
<b>Electorate</b>	9938863		9899472	
<b>Participation</b>	6283637	63.2	7573368	76.5
<b>Valid</b>	6122632	97.44	7406619	97.8
<b>Null/Blanks</b>	161005	1.56	166749	2.2
<b>ND</b>	2633961	43.0	3359682	45.4
<b>PASOK</b>	2083327	34.0	3003275	40.6
<b>KKE</b>	580396	9.5	436706	5.9
<b>SYN</b>	254447	4.2	241637	3.2
<b>LAOS</b>	252429	4.1	162151	2.2
<b>Other</b>	318377	5.2	199979	2.7

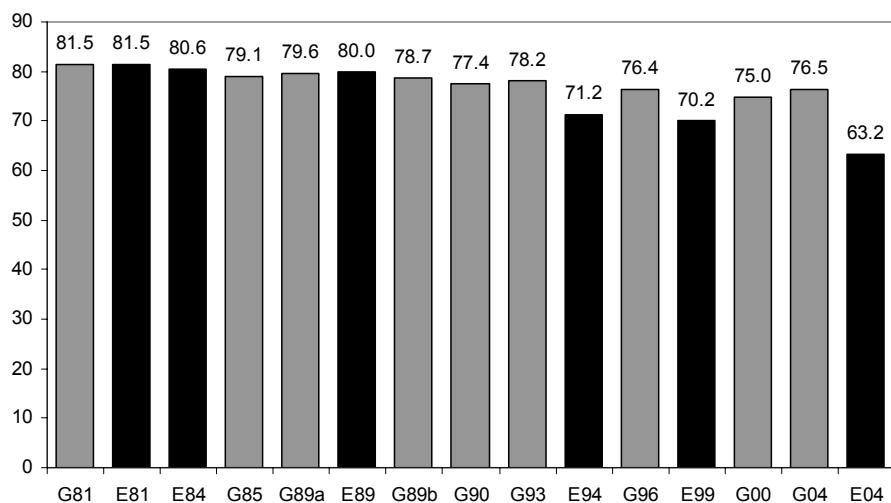
Source: official results, Ministry of Interior

Examining the first hypothesis of the model, according to which, participation is lower vis-à-vis the national election, the study focuses on various comparisons. On the one hand, we compare the evolution of participation in European Elections with the respective rate in each previous General Election, and on the other, with the European average. We also compare participation in the European Elections with that in other second-order elections. In addition we try to find the relationship between abstention

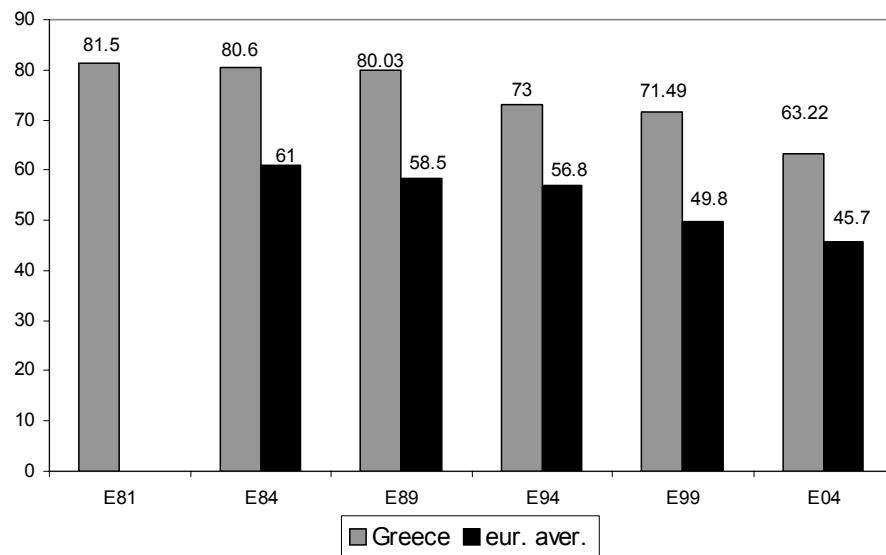
and the point in time that the European Election takes place within the first-order electoral cycle.

The last European Election saw the lowest participation ever throughout the European Union (EU): it reached 45.7%, following the steady decrease from 63% in 1979 to 61% in 1984, 58.5% in 1989, 56.8% in 1994 and 49.9% in 1999. In Greece, the last European Election was marked by the lowest turnout of any election.<sup>2</sup> It reached 63.2%.<sup>3</sup> This fact is especially relevant since in Greece voting at the European Parliament Elections is quasi-compulsory<sup>4</sup>. In the 1999 election participation was 70.2% and the difference with the respective figure in the 2000 General election has been was 4.7%. Comparing participation in the two elections in 2004, the difference is three times as big: it is 13.3%. For the first time in Greece there is a clear manifestation of increasing abstention in SOEs.

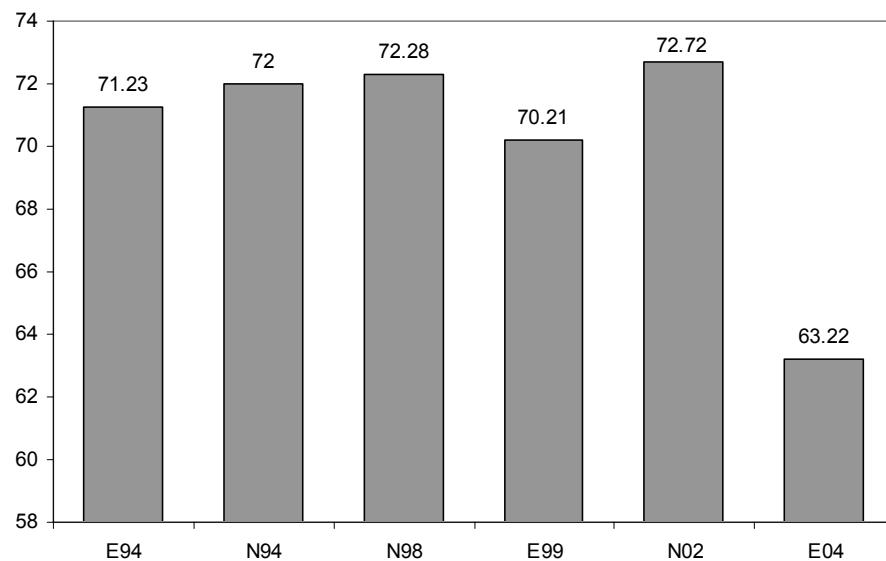
**Chart 1: 1a Evolution of participation in European (E) and General (G) Elections in Greece, 1981-2004**



**1b Evolution of participation in European Elections in Greece, compared with the European average**



**1c Evolution of participation in European (E) and Prefecture (P) elections in Greece, 1994-2004**



Source: official results, Ministry of Interior

Calculating the average participation in General and European Elections since 1981, there is a 3.1% difference (General Elections average =77.6,

European Elections average =74.5). The fact that in the case of Greece voting is quasi-compulsory contributes to high participation in European votes.<sup>5</sup> Chart 1b shows that participation in European Elections in Greece is higher than the average of the other member states. Another comparison is also worth mentioning: that of participation figures between European Elections and the elections for the Prefectures, as another type of SOEs (Mavris 2003). According to Reif and Schmitt participation in European Elections is even lower than in other SOEs (Reif 1985: 16). This feature is also verified in Greece (Chart 1c).

One of the most important defining factors of participation in European Elections is the time of such an election within the electoral cycle of the General elections. According to analyses, European Elections that took place near the start of the electoral cycle have lower participation (the difference exceeds 10% in comparison with General elections). On the other hand, European Elections that take place just before General ones, in the end of the cycle, are characterised by higher participation (Marsh and Franklin 1996: 17-19).<sup>6</sup> Low participation in the last European Election in Greece on the one hand is related to the fact that the election took place at the start of the electoral cycle. It also shows that the complementary and secondary character may also be attributed to the electoral fatigue due to the recent General Election (Teperoglou and Skrinis 2006: 137).

According to the statistics, more than 1.3 million voters decided to abstain, compared to the March General Election. Amongst them, 57% came from those who voted for PASOK in March, 33% came from ND voters and 10% from those who had voted for the rest of the parties (TA NEA (THE NEWS newspaper), 15 June 2004). Undoubtedly, some PASOK partisans chose not to vote for reasons that relate to the ample disinterest that the electorate shows for such elections (a parameter that concerns all the parties, not only in Greece, but even more in Europe in general). Another important section of PASOK voters chose to abstain in order to expressing dissatisfaction with

their party. Irrespectively of party preference and affiliation, abstention by a considerable share of voters indicates the citizens' alienation from the national political elites, and from the process of European integration (Pantazopoulos 2005: 141-63).

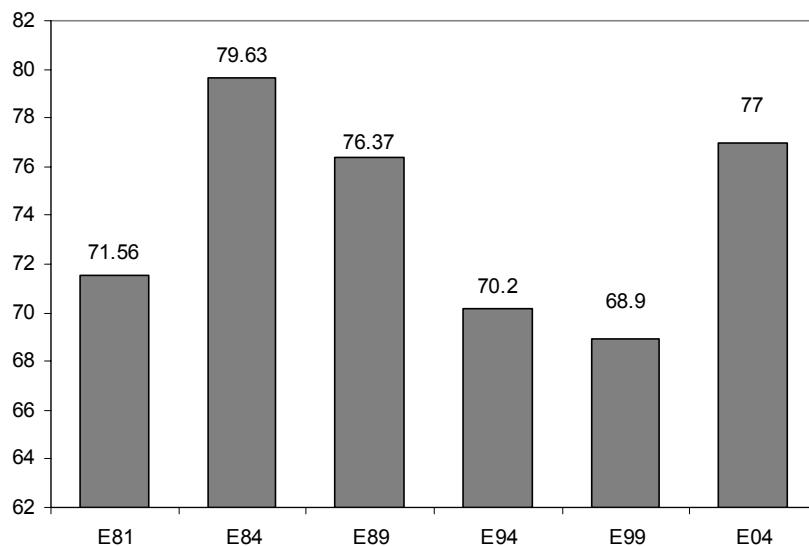
Another issue that arises is the timing of the decision to abstain in European Elections. As Flash Eurobarometer (EB) 162 data show, a large part consists of regular abstentionists (24%). An equally large part (23%) decided to abstain a few months before the election, while 38% answered that the decision not to vote was taken on election day or a few days before it. The reasons that the abstentionists mentioned are related to the 'less at stake' dimension of Reif and Schmitt's model: the largest share (31%) claimed that they were 'on vacation, not at home', and 17% claimed 'illness'. On the other hand, the frequency of answers like 'lack of interest for European issues' and 'lack of information about the European Parliament', is quite low, 6% and 3% respectively. It is worth mentioning that no one of those who abstained claimed to be opposed to the EU.

The reasons for abstention are partly related to the core of the electoral campaign and the citizens' lack of information on EU issues. According to a study conducted in Greece, 'enlargement, integration, the European Constitution and EU membership were seldom brought up for discussion by the mass media. [...] (T)he Greek media, as is also the case of other member states, pay less attention to Europe and European politics'<sup>7</sup> (Demertzis and Tsiligiannis 2004: 162). Furthermore, in the electoral debate that was conducted on the eve of the election, journalists and party leaders alike focused on domestic issues, avoiding subjects such as the EU in general, and the European Constitution and EU common policies in particular (Kavakas 2005: 134).

In the 2004 European Election, all government parties in each member state fared worse in comparison to the previous General election (except Slovakia

and Spain to a certain degree), thus verifying the Reif and Schmitt model.<sup>8</sup> The dropoff (Van der Eijk et al. 1996: 156) of the ND party in the last European Election, that is the difference in the vote share between the General election and the European Election, reached 2.4%. However, this loss of votes for the governing party is the lowest that has ever been recorded in all European Elections in Greece (Teperoglou and Skrinis 2006:140). This observation is consistent with the hypothesis that government parties fare well in European Elections that take place near the start of the legislature, because they may still take advantage of the honeymoon period. This is the first time in Greek European Elections that this hypothesis has been verified.<sup>9</sup>

**Chart 2 Evolution of the aggregate vote for ND and PASOK in European Elections, 1981-2004**



Source: official results, Ministry of Interior

A second point that verifies the model in the Greek case deals with the losses in the vote share of large parties as a whole. In the June 2004 election, the share of the two larger parties was clearly lower: it decreased by 8.9% compared with the General election in March (77.0% and 85.9% respectively). Chart 2 shows that the cumulative share of ND and PASOK is

8% higher than the respective figure in 1999. It is the second highest since the 1984 election, which was characterised by total confrontation and polarisation. Thus, we find ourselves confronting a certain particularity: the 2004 European Election took place only three months after ND won the right to form the government and, therefore, it was unlikely that an actual issue would have arisen, especially one concerning the conduct of government. In similar cases, the absence of such an issue is also manifested in the results of European Elections: comparing with the European Election of 12 June 1994 that also occurred during the honeymoon period, one may observe the similar decrease of both major parties PASOK and ND, which were kept to about 80% and 83% of their share in the 1993 General Election (an aggregate fall of 15.8%).

The losses of the larger parties are attributed in the model to the fact that voters in European Elections feel less obliged to stick to their party attachment. This entails vote switching between General and European Elections. Franklin (2005) analysing the European Election Study 2004 (EES 2004) results, has calculated the net vote switching in the last European Election at was about 8.6%.<sup>10</sup> Moreover, exit polls suggest interesting connotations in relation to vote switching. Table 2 shows that of those who voted in March either for ND or PASOK, 13% switched in June: 3% turned to the opposite big party, while the rest 10% turned to smaller ones.

**Table 2 Vote-switching: General – European Elections 2004**

General Election 2004	European Election 2004					
	ND	PASOK	KKE	SYN	LAOS	Other
<b>ND</b>	87.2	3.1	1.7	1.4	3.6	3.0
<b>PASOK</b>	3.0	86.2	4.0	2.5	1.0	3.3

Source: Exit poll OPINION S.A, 13 June 2004

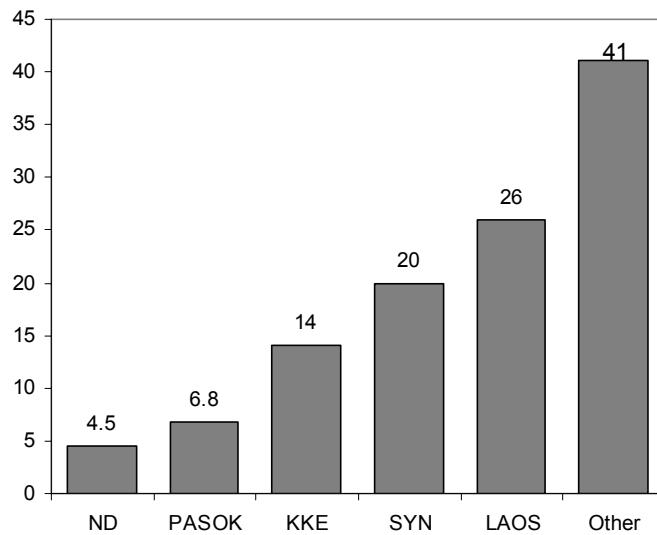
Consequently, one may wonder whether these ‘leaks’ have been consolidated. We have checked the question in the exit poll by OPINION S.A. on the timing of the final decision about the party people voted for in

the European Election. Most of those who had chosen which party to vote for early vote systematically the same way in both elections, while very few consistent voters made their decision only a few months before the election. Nine out of ten ND voters (91%) come into these two categories ('always the same' and 'a few months ago'). This has to do not only with the high ceiling that the government party has, but with post-electoral euphoria too. The respective figure for PASOK has been high too (88%).

From those who answered 'a few weeks ago', 'a few days ago' and 'on election day', the main group consists of those who made their choice on the last moment (day of the election). Furthermore, one may observe a U-shape curve. While those who vote always for the same party are quite numerous, the answers 'a few months', 'a few weeks' and 'a few days' are low while the numbers answering 'on election day' rise again. This significant rise may mean that, during the last weeks before the European Election, the campaign had not been too lively and therefore not helpful, so that only a few of the voters could make up their minds. Voters finally decided on the last day because they felt it was compulsory to vote. The main question that arises is which party did those 'last moment' voters vote for?

It appears from Chart 3 that the 'election day' choosers favoured the small parties. Of those voters who had chosen one of these very small lists, 41% did so on the day of the election. The same applies for 26% of the nationalist Popular Orthodox Rally (Laikos Orthodoxos Synagermos, LAOS) and 20% of those who voted for the Coalition of the Left and Progress (Synaspismos, SYN). The percentages decrease for bigger parties; thus, 6.8% of the PASOK voters and only 4.5% of the ND ones decided in front of the polling booth.

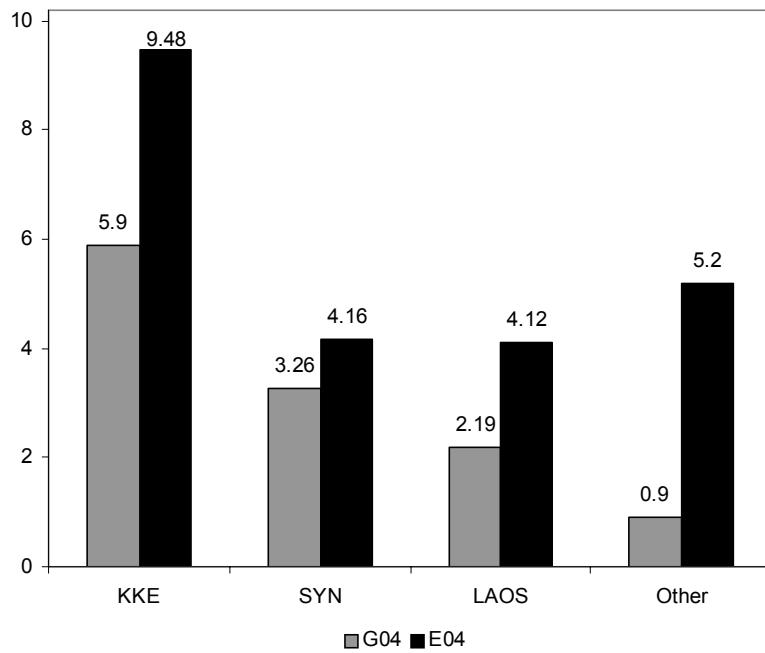
**Chart 3: Those who decided on the day of the election within each party (%)**



Source: Exit poll OPINION S.A, 13 June 2004

Looking at Chart 4, the strength of all the small parties increased in the European Election, although their share may be considered relatively low if compared with other European countries. There, the electoral result clearly has favoured those smaller parties most that attract the protest vote of a large part of the European electorate. However, the Greek result complies with the axioms in the literature about the electoral cycle and the honeymoon period, when protest voting is quite low. Besides, the share of the smaller parties might have been higher if participation had not been so low. In our case study, abstention has been another form of protesting (Teperoglou and Skrinis 2006: 143). The choice not to vote, instead of the so-called ‘voting with the boot’, does not add much to small or new parties, contrary to the case of the 1994 and 1999 European Elections.<sup>11</sup>

**Chart 4: Smaller parties' vote share in the General and European Elections 2004**



Source: official results, Ministry of Interior

To go into detail, the share of the Communist Party of Greece (Komounistiko Komma Elladas, KKE) increased in the European Election, gaining 3.58% (143,823 votes) more than in the General one, verifying the hypothesis of the model. In addition, this share is also higher if compared with that of the 1999 European Election. In the last European contest, KKE presented itself as the main expression of euro-scepticism in Greece.

The gains of SYN have been limited: 12,908 more voters turned to it in the European Election. This results may be considered to indicate that the party is at a standstill in its electoral appeal compared with the General election (0.9% rise), but on the other hand it could indicate the start of a fall in comparison with the 1999 European Election, when it had won 2 seats, with 5.16% of the votes. All the same, it was expected that SYN would be favoured, gaining sympathy votes, especially in an election where less is at

stake, and would attract voters who would otherwise vote tactically. The share of the ‘Women for another Europe’<sup>12</sup> list (0.76%) partly explains SYN’s standstill and constitutes an explicit example of ‘loose vote’ that emerges in European Elections.

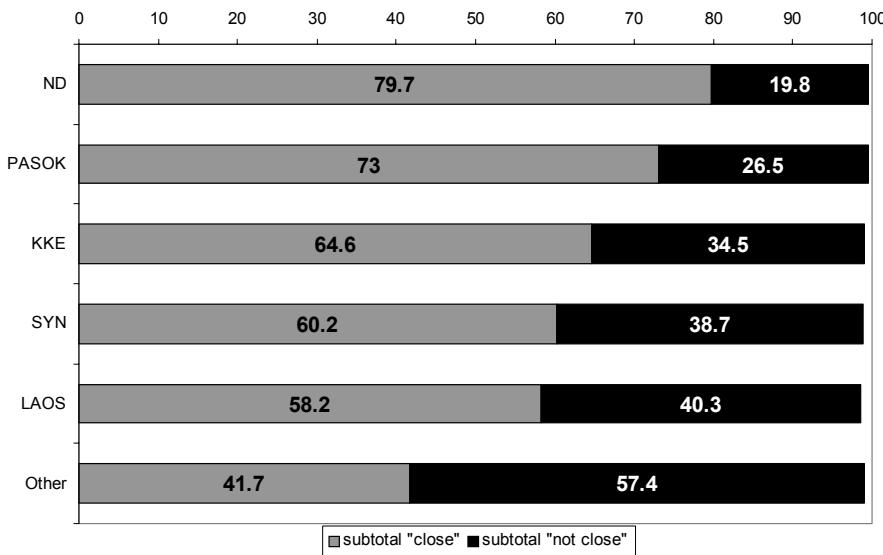
LAOS was significantly favoured in this European Election. It got 90,326 more votes than in the March General Election, almost doubling its vote share. Taking into consideration the findings of surveys on the LAOS’s electorate (Koukourakis 2005), one may argue that the rise in the party’s share in the last European Election came from various groups of voters. To begin with, this share came from ND voters who either were disappointed by their party (although not much time had passed since ND came to government), or who chose to express themselves through a ‘loose’ choice, as is the case in European Elections. At the same time, a section of LAOS voters, according to the same surveys, describe themselves as ‘a-political’ and ‘anti-political’ (non-partisan vote). Besides, LAOS had called for the support of rightwing euro-sceptics (Koukourakis 2005: 139). Thereby, the LAOS choice implies, at least as far as the conscientious voters are concerned, voting with the boot towards the established parties.

Finally, the total share of the rest of the lists rose. An increase of 2.5% compared with the General Election three months earlier, certifies the hypothesis of the SOE model. A question that arises about the vote for the smaller parties is if, and to what degree, does this vote constitute a protest (negative vote) against one of the big parties, or if it is about ‘voting with the heart’.

One way to approach this is by examining how close each voter felt towards the party of his/her choice. Looking at the data in the exit poll we have used, we cannot rule out negative voting in this European Election. On the whole, 72.73% felt close or very close to the party they voted for, while 27.27%

either did not feel close or felt far from it. Proximity to each party is shown on Chart 5.

**Chart 5: Proximity to the party voted in the European Election 2004**



Source: Exit poll OPINION S.A, 13 June 2004

Applying the SOE model in the case of the 2004 European Election in Greece, we conclude that the main hypotheses of the ‘less at stake’ dimension are verified. Therefore, we are dealing with a SOE. Since the answer to the first question is affirmative, our study goes one step further. In the next part of our paper we are focusing on the question Second-order election, for whom? In other words, we try to find whether the secondary character of the election applies to the whole of the electorate or if there are different trends among different socio-demographic groups.

### **3. Second-order election, for whom?**

We have chosen to do cross tabulations since they allow us to examine frequencies of observations that belong to specific categories on more than one variable. We attempt to answer the questions above using data from the

European Election Study 2004 (EES 2004)<sup>13</sup>, the Flash EB 162 and the exit polls by OPINION S.A. conducted on March 7<sup>th</sup> and June 13<sup>th</sup>. We have chosen to use the following demographic variables: sex, age, years of education, size of the town. These variables are cross tabulated with abstention and party preference. We try to find if there is any association between the demographic variables and abstention or the size of the party voted for (where large parties are ND and PASOK, and smaller parties, which KKE, SYN, LAOS and ‘other’ parties).

## **Abstention**

Looking at the EES 2004 and the Eurobarometer Flash 162 data on Greece, we observe certain similarities. Age is the most important variable. As shown in Tables 3a and 3b and Charts 6a and 6b there is a very clear pattern of greater abstention among younger voters (aged 18 to 24). In Europe, according to both surveys, abstention is also high among the second age group (25-39). In Greece, though, abstention decreases almost 20% in comparison to the youngest age group and the European average. The decreasing trend continues both in Greece and in Europe, in the 40-54 and 55+ age groups. The only difference lies on the share of the eldest Greeks in the Flash EB 162, where there is a 5% rise from the previous age group. Consequently, the main trend running through both surveys is that in both Greece and in Europe as a whole it is highly possible that the younger one is, the more one will abstain. It is worth mentioning that according to the EES 2004 data, the difference between abstention rates in the 18-24 and 55+ age groups reaches about 50%. The respective difference in the Flash EB 162 data is 28%.

**Table 3a: European Election Study 2004: Demographics and abstention cross tabulation**

		EES 2004	
		EU24 <sup>a</sup>	GREECE
<b>Sex</b>	Male	54.4	<b>37.7*</b>
	Female	57.3	<b>34.4*</b>
<b>Age</b>	18-24	70.5	<b>67.2</b>
	25-39	63.7	<b>43.9</b>
	40-54	54.3	<b>27.8</b>
	55+	46.2	<b>19.1</b>
<b>Years of education</b>	-15	54.7	<b>16.4</b>
	16-20	59.4	<b>40.5</b>
	21+	52.6	<b>39</b>
	0	69.1	-
<b>Area</b>	Large town	55.2	<b>41.6</b>
	Middle or small size town	56.4	<b>32.4</b>
	Rural or village	52.3	<b>24.7</b>

Source: Own calculations based on the European Election Study 2004 data

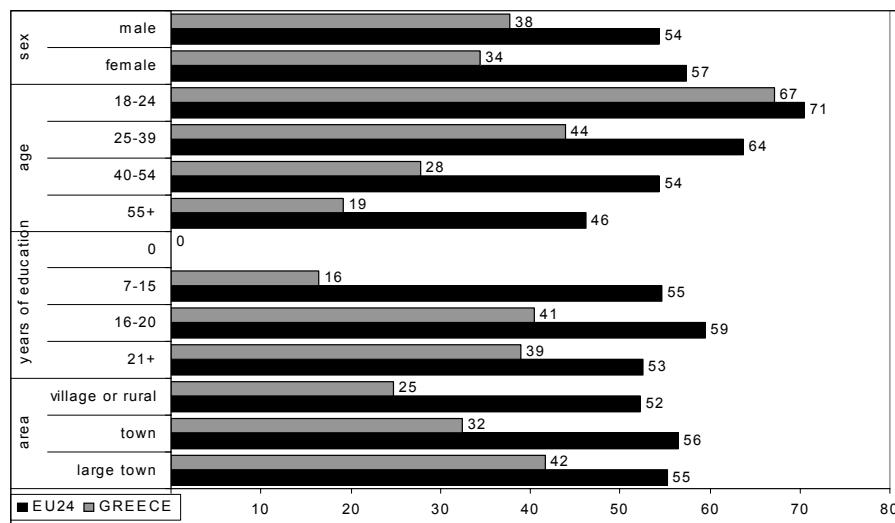
The sample has been weighted for participation. The results are statistically significant at least at 95%, except the figures with an asterisk (\*).

<sup>a</sup> Malta did not participate in the EES 2004

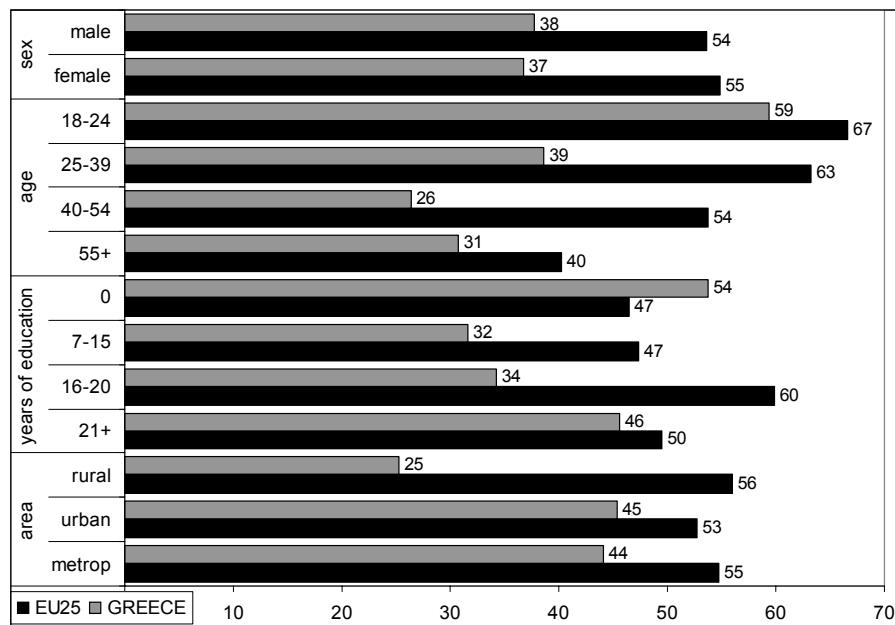
**Table 3b: Flash EB 162: Demographics and abstention crosstabulation**

		Flash Eurobarometer 162	
		EU25	GREECE
<b>Sex</b>	Male	53.6	<b>37.8</b>
	Female	54.9	<b>36.8</b>
<b>Age</b>	18-24	66.6	<b>59.4</b>
	25-39	63.3	<b>38.6</b>
	40-54	53.7	<b>26.4</b>
	55+	40.3	<b>30.8</b>
<b>Years of education</b>	-15	47.4	<b>31.6</b>
	16-20	59.9	<b>34.3</b>
	21+	49.5	<b>45.6</b>
	0	46.5	<b>53.8</b>
<b>Area</b>	Metropolitan	54.7	<b>44.1</b>
	Urban	52.7	<b>45.4</b>
	Rural	56	<b>25.2</b>

Source: Own calculations based on the Post European elections 2004 survey- Flash Eurobarometer 162 data

**Chart 6: Demographics and abstention****a. EES 2004**

Source: Own calculations based on the European Election Study 2004 data

**b. Flash EB 162**

Source: Own calculations based on the Post European elections 2004 survey-Eurobarometer Flash 162 data

The locality variable is equally interesting. According to the Flash EB 162, there is a clear split between the answers that have been given in Greek

metropolitan and urban areas on the one hand, where abstention lies at 44% and 45%, and rural areas on the other, where it is more limited at 25%. Contrary to the case of Greece, the EU average shows uniformity across geographic areas. Table 3a demonstrates that the Greek EES 2004 data are consistent with the aforementioned trend, even though the coding does not correspond exactly. The same trend is also clear in the March general election, where there is differentiation between metropolitan and urban regions on the one hand and rural regions on the other (see Table 4).

**Table 4: Crosstabulation: Abstention by locality**

	Large town	Middle or small size town	Rural or village
Abstention	41,6 [12,3] <sup>a</sup>	32,4 [8,5]	24,7 [7,4]

Source: own calculations based on the EES 2004 data

<sup>a</sup> In brackets it is the abstention in the March General Election.

Evidently, according to the answers given in the survey, abstention in large towns increased rather a lot (by about 39%), in smaller towns by 24%, and in rural areas and villages by almost 17%, when compared to abstention in the 7th March election. From the analysis of the relative data we find that in rural regions, citizens do not abstain as much as they do in more populated regions.

Examining the education variable, we observe that the results of the two surveys are not very similar. According to the Flash EB 162 those who have not had any schooling and those who have university education abstained more than those who have primary and secondary education. The opposite is the case for the European average (see Table 3b and Chart 5b). According to the Greek data in the EES 2004 survey, we also see that those with less education participated more than those with more education (see Table 3a and Chart 5a).

Finally, looking at the gender variable and abstention, the cross tabulation table for the Greek data does not give statistically significant results. There is no evidence that there is a difference in attitude between males and females in the population, as there is in the rest of the variables we have examined. At the EU aggregate level, it seems that women abstain slightly more than men (see Tables 3a and 3b).

## **Voting for large or smaller parties**

The ‘less at stake’ dimension in the SOE model is based on the one hand on participation and, on the other, on the performance of large and smaller parties. Next, we will focus on examining if there is any difference between voting preferences and each of the categories of the demographic variables. We have recoded the vote variable so that ND and PASOK choices are coded as ‘large’ parties, and KKE, SYN LAOS and rest of the lists are coded as ‘smaller’ ones. Before proceeding to the analysis it is useful to remind that abstention had increased and that protest voting was limited.

**Table 5: Cross tabulation: Age by size of party**

**a. EES 2004**

	<b>18-24</b>	<b>25-39</b>	<b>40-54</b>	<b>55+</b>
<b>Large (ND &amp; PASOK)</b>	65.2 [89.4]	76.8 [83.8]	67.1 [75]	84.9 [90.7]
<b>Smaller (KKE - Other)</b>	34.8 [10.6]	23.8 [16.2]	32.9 [25]	15.1 [9.3]

**b. Exit poll OPINION S.A**

	<b>18-35</b>	<b>36-54</b>	<b>55+</b>
<b>Large (ND &amp; PASOK)</b>	73,8 [85,5]	73,4 [84,1]	85,6 [89,7]
<b>Smaller (KKE - Other)</b>	26,2 [14,5]	26,7 [15,9]	14,5 [11,1]

Source: Own calculations based on the European Election Study 2004 and OPINION data respectively

The cross tabulations of the EES 2004 and the OPINION exit poll (the Flash EB 162 cross tabulation was not statistically significant) help us make some interesting observations. Among the three age groups in the exit poll data, voting in the March General Election (see figures in brackets) is rather identical. There is a small differentiation between the first two groups and the last one. If we consider voting for smaller parties as an indication of a ‘loose vote’ in European Elections, then we find that voters aged 18 to 54 respond similarly to the less-at-stake stimulus. Turning to the EES 2004 data, we see that the results are not the same as those in the exit poll. However, it is clear that older voters tend to vote more for large parties. Comparing voting choices between March and June, it is obvious that young voters change more. Therefore, supporting smaller parties is mainly a characteristic of those in the first age group. Older voters respond differently. Their European Election votes do not loosen too much, and tend to remain constant and consistent with their General Election choice.

**Table 6: Crosstabulation: Locality by size of party****a. EES 2004**

	<b>Large town</b>	<b>Middle or small size town</b>	<b>Rural or village</b>
<b>Large (ND &amp; PASOK)</b>	74,1 [81,6]	79 [90]	82 [87,8]
<b>Smaller (KKE - Other)</b>	25,9 [18,4]	21 [10]	18 [12,2]

**b. Flash EB162**

	<b>Metropolitan</b>	<b>Urban</b>	<b>Rural</b>
<b>Large (ND &amp; PASOK)</b>	65,1	84,3	83,1
<b>Smaller (KKE - Other)</b>	34,9	15,7	16,9

**c. Exit poll OPINION S.A**

	<b>Metropolitan</b>	<b>Urban</b>	<b>Rural</b>
<b>Large (ND &amp; PASOK)</b>	73,4 [83,7]	82,7 [88,8]	82,5 [90,5]
<b>Smaller (KKE - Other)</b>	26,7 [16,2]	17,3 [11,2]	17,5 [9,5]

Source: Own calculations based on the European Election Study 2004, Flash EB 162 and OPINION data respectively

Turning to the locality variable, we notice that things are not the same as in the cross tabulation with abstention, which showed voters in metropolitan and urban areas have the same electoral behaviour. When it comes to voting choice, the difference lies between voters in metropolitan areas on the one hand, and urban and rural on the other.

The tables above show that big parties do not have the same weight in larger areas (large towns or metropolitan areas), as they do in smaller ones (middle and small-size towns, villages and rural areas). Taking into consideration the result of the 7<sup>th</sup> March election, we observe that in all of the three groups of localities there are ‘loose votes’, and in smaller regions the difference between the two elections is lower. To be more precise, according to the EES 2004 the shift from the General Election to the European Election vote is about 7.5% in large towns, 11% in middle and small-size ones, and 5.8% in rural areas and villages. According to the OPINION exit poll the shift is 10% in metropolitan areas, 6% in urban ones, and 8% in rural areas. Consequently, we find that in more populated areas there is more dispersion of votes among parties, while in less populated areas the share of votes is about the same.

The difference that is noted in more populated areas (about 8%) in the EES 2004, and the exit poll and Flash EB 162, may be attributed to the sample of each survey and to the operational definition of the variable, that is the limit which puts each region in one of the three groups.

**Table 7: Crosstabulation: Education by size of party**

**a. EES 2004**

	<b>6-15</b>	<b>16-20</b>	<b>21+</b>
<b>Large (ND &amp; PASOK)</b>	76,8 [85,5*]	72,6 [80,3]	79,7 [88,1]
<b>Smaller (KKE - Other)</b>	23,2 [14,5]	27,3 [19,7]	20,3 [11,9]

\*: The General Election figures (in brackets) are not statistically significant

**b. Flash EB 162**

	<b>Never been to school</b>	<b>6-15</b>	<b>16-20</b>	<b>21+</b>
<b>Large (ND &amp; PASOK)</b>	90	84,1	76,5	67,7
<b>Smaller (KKE - Other)</b>	10	15,9	23,5	32,3

**c. Exit poll OPINION S.A**

	<b>Primary, not finished (6-11)</b>	<b>Primary (12)</b>	<b>Secondary (13-18)</b>	<b>College or University</b>
<b>Large (ND &amp; PASOK)</b>	86,8 [89,6]	84,9 [90,1]	77,3 [86,9]	71,6 [82,8]
<b>Smaller (KKE - Other)</b>	13,3 [10,5]	15,2 [10]	22,7 [13,1]	28,3 [17,4]

Source: Own calculations based on the European Election Study 2004, Flash EB 162 and OPINION data respectively

Moving next to educational level, as it ensues from the ‘age when finished full-time education’ question, there are some differences in the choice of party. The EES 2004 data are quite homogeneous. Voting choice seems to be consistent among the three different groups, while the change from the General Election is almost the same. However, OPINION exit poll and Flash EB162 data show that the more years of full-time education one has, the more prone one is to turn away from bipartism and support smaller parties. In the March General Election, differences in voting across educational levels are not significant. In the European Election, however, the ‘loose vote’ is clearly present among those who have had more years of full-time education. Unfortunately, the surveys do not use the same categories for educational levels, preventing direct comparison.

Gender is the last demographic variable to be examined. EES 2004 data do not provide statistically significant results. Therefore, no safe conclusion may be drawn from this survey. Nevertheless, using Flash EB 162 and OPINION exit poll data, it seems that female voters are more inclined to favour one of the two big parties, while male voters turn slightly more towards smaller and more extreme lists. The exit poll data are more balanced than those from the Flash EB 162, where there is a difference of almost 10%. Moreover, comparing vote shares between the European and the General elections, we observe a similar decrease for the two big parties (about 9%) for both sexes (see Table 8).

**Table 8: Crosstabulation: Sex by size of party**

**a. Flash EB 162**

	<b>Male</b>	<b>Female</b>
<b>Large (ND &amp; PASOK)</b>	71,9	82,2
<b>Smaller (KKE - Other)</b>	28,1	17,8

**b. Exit poll OPINION S.A**

	<b>Male</b>	<b>Female</b>
<b>Large (ND &amp; PASOK)</b>	75,7 [84,8]	78,6 [87,5]
<b>Smaller (KKE - Other)</b>	24,3 [15,1]	21,3 [12,4]

Source: Own calculations based on the Flash EB 162 and OPINION S.A data respectively

## 4. Conclusions

This paper has attempted for the first time to apply in the Greek case a theoretical model that has prevailed in the study of European Elections. Trying to answer the main question of the paper, whether the last European Election in Greece consists of a SOE we checked to see if the main hypotheses of the model are verified.

We have illustrated the main patterns within the last European Elections in Greece. Our main conclusion is that this has indeed been a SOE. Starting from this fact, we made some very interesting observations that mark out

important aspects of the European Elections. The result was defined by the current political context and the first-order political arena. Participation was the lowest ever, while abstention did not affect parties equally. The losses of the two larger parties, in particular those of ND (that in comparison with the previous European Elections were rather limited) also verify the relevant literature. They are consistent with the timing of the election in the electoral cycle of the General election and the post-electoral euphoria that favours governing parties. The hypothesis of the SOE model, that smaller parties fare better, is also verified, although the increase in their vote share – attributed to negative/protest voting – might have been even higher, if the European Election had taken place later in the electoral cycle or if participation had been higher.

Applying the SOE model in the Greek case, one may notice that European Elections are used as a ‘medium’ either to express true party preferences or to protest against the party usually voted for in general elections. However, the large vote share the two big parties recorded in this European Election resulted from limiting the increase of the vote share for the smaller parties. Although the total share was higher than in the General Election, it remained lower than in the previous European Election. Probably, this electoral behaviour relates to the national character that has been attributed to these elections by the parties, and the fact that there has not been any alternative that could motivate the electorate. At the same time, the lack of issues and the new FOPA have given the character of an election with less at stake.

Having studied the June 2004 European Election in Greece with the help of the SOE model, we decided to take one step further. We tried, using demographic data, to see if every voter treated it as a second-order election and answer for whom it actually was one, and for whom there was no question of order between different types of elections (at least for the two that took place in 2004). The two most salient parameters of the model’s ‘less at stake’ dimension are changes in abstention and in the vote shares of

bigger and smaller parties. We cross tabulated demographic variables (gender, age, education and locality) by abstention and party size preference, using three surveys. We presented only statistically significant results.

Based on the results of the cross tabulations, we have noticed that there is differentiation of electoral behaviour from one demographic group to the other. All groups of voters are influenced by the fact that less is at stake in European Elections, but all do not respond the same way. Consequently, trying to say for whom was the 2004 European Election a SOE, we have observed that younger, male, more educated citizens living in more populated areas tend to adopt a pattern of electoral behaviour which accords more to the hypotheses of the 'less at stake' dimension than other demographic groups.

Particularly, there is a clear cut division between younger and older voters. Older ones tend less to abstain and/or vote for smaller parties. A similar reserve towards both abstention and vote switching is also observed amongst voters in rural areas. However, younger voters and city-dwellers tend to abstain more or are more likely to switch their votes in European Elections. All these conclusions are nothing more than trends and indications valid in the election in question. Given that European Elections take place every five years in all member states, regardless of the electoral cycle they may prove a valuable 'laboratory' to study electoral behaviour in General as well as European elections.

## **Afterthoughts**

All the comments offered by participants were useful and helped us improve our study considerably. However, the next step that we should take for a future publication is that of a comparative paper, using our main question as the core point. We have introduced the use of socio-demographic variables in the examination of the hypotheses of the SOE model. We have used the case of Greece, since we are very familiar with the Greek party and political systems. After the discussion in the Lisbon meeting, we have the impression that we can use the same question, but expand it with the use of data by more countries. Professor Franklin's suggestion to use all the countries in the EES 2004 seems to us as a rather ambitious goal, due to the characteristics that comparative studies have. The specificities of each national party system and demographic differences should be taken into consideration.

Instead of this large-scale comparative study, a more feasible step would choose certain groups of the European Union (EU) countries and study whether the 2004 European Election had been treated as a SOE, and if this treatment is related to socio-demographic criteria. In this instance we lean towards two approaches. The first would be geographical, thus focusing on a certain part of the EU, i.e. the South (Greece, Italy, Spain and Portugal). The second would entail another question, whether the voters in 'older' member-states behave differently in European Elections than the voters in 'younger' member-states, always in relation to the main question of our study. In this case, we would include one country from each wave of enlargement; one from the countries that have held European Elections since 1979 (probably Germany), Greece from 1981, Spain from 1987, Austria from 1995 and one from the ten of the last wave.

Having mentioned the future prospects of our paper, we would like to underline the importance and the usefulness of the meeting. Moreover, we, as young researchers, consider ourselves benefited by talking with experienced researchers and professors. (Eftichia Teperoglou / Stavros Skrinis)

---

## Notes

This is a revised version of the paper presented at the Conference on the European Parliament Election of 2004, organized by the Institute of Social Sciences of the University of Lisbon (ICS) with the support of the CONNEX Network of Excellence/ European Election Study (EES) 2004, 11-14 May 2006, Lisbon, Portugal. For helpful comments regarding this paper, the authors would like to thank all the participants in the above-mentioned conference, but especially Cees van der Eijk, Hermann Schmitt, Angelika Scheuer, Mark Franklin and Wouter Van der Brug. Obviously, any shortcomings remaining are the authors' exclusive responsibility.

<sup>1</sup>In his 1997 article, Reif mentions that apart from smaller parties, radical, populist ones and protest parties also tend to fare better in second-order elections (Reif 1997: 118).

<sup>2</sup>According to various researchers, the share of actual participation is almost 13% higher (Franklin 2001: 207). This difference has been attributed to the electoral register that is not updated regularly, but also to the fact that the register for General and European elections had been based on the municipal rolls. These included people who had migrated, their children, etc. (Drettakis 2004: 15-7). For abstention figures in the last European Election see Andreadis (2004) and Drettakis (2004: 18-38). It should be underlined that these percentages are based on official sources and are underestimated. According to calculations in Greece, there is almost universal turnout.

<sup>3</sup>In the period between the General Election in March and the European Election in June, many had feared that abstention would rise. The survey that was conducted for *Standard Eurobarometer* 61 showed that of all Europeans, Greeks were the keenest to vote, at 66%. This figure was close to the official participation, but at the same time it has been the lowest in Greek electoral data.

<sup>4</sup>According to the 2001 amendment of the Greek Constitution (article 51/5), there are no longer any penal sanctions for abstaining.

<sup>5</sup>Equally high participation has been registered in Luxembourg, Belgium and Italy (until 1993) where voting is obligatory. For more in factors of high participation see Franklin et al. (1996: 306-31) and Mattila (2003: 449-68).

<sup>6</sup>Attempting to apply Marsh and Franklin's conclusions in the case of the Greek European Elections, we find that in the 1984 and 1994 ones they are verified. In the first case, the election took place a few months before the General Election and participation was high. In the second, the election was soon after the General contest and participation was low. On the contrary, the 1999 European Election contradicts the conclusions, as participation was low even though the election took place a year before the General Election.

---

<sup>7</sup>The purpose of the study was a discourse analysis of the European Election campaign by the media. It covered the last fortnight (01/06/2004-13/06/2004) before the election. The data had been compiled from six nation-wide and two regional newspapers, and three private and one public TV network. Prof. Demertzis from the University of Athens was the study supervisor.

<sup>8</sup>The government coalition in Slovakia won almost 10%. In Spain, PSOE increased its share of vote by 1%.

<sup>9</sup>The 1994 European Election took place eight months after the 1993 General Election, during the honeymoon period, the losses of the government party reached 9.23%. The respective figures in the 1981 and 1989 European Elections, which coincided with the General Elections, were 4.53% and 3.17%. The case of the last European Election in Spain may be compared to the Greek one. The Spanish General Election took place one week after the Greek General Election. PSOE's share increased. We assume that this deviates from the SOE model because of post-electoral euphoria, and it fits Angus Campbell's notion of 'surge'.

<sup>10</sup>According to Franklin's calculations, the 1989-2004 average was 8.9. This is the lowest among the 15 member states (Franklin 2005).

<sup>11</sup>The nationalist Political Spring (Politiki Anixe, POLAN) won 8.65% in the 1994 European Election and the populist Democratic Social Movement (Demokratiko Kinoniko Kinema, DIKKI) 6.85% five years later.

<sup>12</sup>The 'Women for another Europe' was an ad hoc list comprised of left-wing women, who formerly belonged to or supported SYN.

<sup>13</sup>This study comprises 26 representative mass surveys conducted after the European Parliament Elections of 2004, in 24 members-countries of the EU. Malta was not covered in this study, while there were two separate studies for Belgium, for the Flemish and Walloon voters, and for the UK, where there were separate studies for Great Britain and Northern Ireland. The methodology used in many west EU member-countries was a telephone survey, while many of the new eastern member-countries preferred face-to-face interviews. In Italy, Ireland and Sweden a postal survey was conducted. For more information on the project, see [www.europeanelectionsstudies.net](http://www.europeanelectionsstudies.net).

---

## References

- Andreadis, Giannis (2005) ‘Apohi stis vouleftikes ekloges kai euroekloges 2004’ (Abstention in the 2004 general election and European Election), *Politike Episteme (Political Science)* 1: 76-88.
- Campbell, Angus (1960) ‘Surge and Decline: A Study of Electoral Change’, *Public Opinion Quarterly* 24: 397-418.
- Caramani, Daniele (2004) ‘The formation of a European Electorate. Evidence from Electoral Volatility Measures, 1970s–2000s’, *Working Paper*, Mannheimer Zentrum für Europäische Sozialforschung.
- Demertzis, Nikos and Panos Tsiligiannis (2004) “E Euroekloges sta hellenika MME” (The European Election in the greek mass media), *Hellenike Epitheorese Politikis Epistemis (Hellenic Review of Political Science)* 24: 161-82.
- Dinkel, Reiner (1978) ‘The relationship between federal and state elections in West Germany’ in Max Kaase and Klaus von Beyme (eds), *Elections and Parties*, pp. 53-65. London: Sage.
- Drettakis, Manolis (2004) *Vouleftikes ekloges kai Euroekloges 2004 (the 2004 general election and European Election)*, Athens.
- Franklin, Mark (2001) ‘European Elections and the European voter’, in Jeremy J. Richardson (ed) *European Union: Power and Policy-Making*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, pp. 201-16. London: Routledge.
- Franklin, Mark (2005) ‘The Fading Power of National Politics to Structure Voting Behaviour in Elections to the European Parliament’, paper delivered at the ‘Conference on the 2004 European Elections’, Central European University, Budapest (available at [www.ees-homepage.net/papers](http://www.ees-homepage.net/papers)).
- Franklin, Mark et al. (1996) ‘The Institutional Context’ in Cees Van der Eijk and Mark Franklin (eds) *Choosing Europe? The European Electorate and National Politics in the face of Union*, pp. 306-31. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.

- 
- Freire, André (2004) ‘Second-Order Elections and Electoral Cycles in Democratic Portugal’ *South European Society and Politics* 9: 54-79.
- Kavakas, Dimitris (2005) ‘Greece’, in Juliet Lodge (ed) *The 2004 Elections to the European Parliament*, pp. 131-7. Hounds Mills: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Koukourakis, Giorgos (2005) ‘Laikos Orthodoxos Synagermos (LAOS) kai o horos tis Akras Dexias sto Helleniko Politiko Systema’ (The Popular Orthodox Rally and the Extreme Right in the Greek Political System), in Christoforos Vernardakis (ed) *E kine gnome stin Ellada 2004 (Public opinion in Greece 2004)*, pp. 128-40. Athens: Institute VPRC-Savvalas.
- Marsh, Michael (1998) ‘Testing the second-order election model after four European elections’, *British Journal of Political Science* 28: 591-607.
- Marsh, Michael (2005) ‘The results of the 2004 European Parliament elections and the second-order model’ in Oscar Niedermayer and Hermann Schmitt (eds) *Europawahl 2004*, pp. 142-58. Wiesbaden: VS-Verlag.
- Marsh, Michael and Mark Franklin (1996) ‘The Foundations: Unanswered Questions from the Study of European Elections, 1979-1994’, in Cees Van der Eijk and Mark Franklin (eds) *Choosing Europe? The European Electorate and National Politics in the Face of the Union*, pp. 11-33. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.
- Mattila, Mikko (2003) ‘Why bother? Determinants of turnout in the European elections’, *Electoral Studies* 22: 449-68.
- Mavris, Giannis (2003) ‘Nomarxiakes ekloges 1994-2002: ekloges defteris taxis?’ (Prefecture elections 1994-2002: second-order elections?), *Hellenike Epitheorese Politikis Epistemis (Hellenic Review of Political Science)* 21: 95-105.
- Norris, Pippa (1997) ‘Nomination: second order elections revisited’, *European Journal of Political Research* 31: 109-14.
- Pandazopoulos, Andreas (2005) ‘O laikismos tis Dexias: to phenomeno tis apohis prin kai meta tis Euroekloges’ (Right-wing populism: the abstention phenomenon before and after the European Election), in Christoforos

- 
- Vernardakis (ed) *E kine gnome stin Ellada 2004 (Public opinion in Greece 2004)*, pp. 141-63. Athens: Institute VPRC-Savvalas.
- Reif, Karlheinz (1985) *Ten European Elections. Campaigns and Results of the 1979/81 First Direct Elections to the European parliament*, Aldershot: Gower.
- Reif, Karlheinz (1997) 'European Elections as member state second –order elections revisited', *European Journal of Political Research* 31: 115-24.
- Reif, Karlheinz and Hermann Schmitt (1980) 'Nine second-order National elections; a conceptual Framework for the analyses of European Election Results', *European Journal of Political Research* 8: 3-44.
- Schmitt, Hermann (2005) 'The European Parliament Elections of June 2004: Still Second Order?' (Forthcoming in *West European Politics*, available at [www.ees-homepage.net/papers](http://www.ees-homepage.net/papers))
- Schmitt, Hermann and Renato Mannheimer (1991) 'About Voting and Non-voting in the European Parliament Elections of June 1989', *European Journal of Political Research* 19: 31-54.
- Teperoglou, Eftichia and Stavros Skrinis (2006) 'To modelo ton eklogon defteris taxis kai e Euroekloges 2004 stin Ellada' (The second-order election model and the 2004 European Election in Greece), *Hellenike Epitheorese Politikis Epistemis (Hellenic Review of Political Science)* 27: 126-47.
- Van der Brug, Wouter and Cees van der Eijk (eds) (2005) *European Elections and National Politics. Lessons from the Past and Scenarios for the Future*, University of Notre Dame Press (forthcoming, available at [www.ees-homepage.net/papers](http://www.ees-homepage.net/papers))
- Van der Eijk, Cees and Mark Franklin (eds) (1996) *Choosing Europe? The European Electorate and National Politics in the face of Union*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.
- Van der Eijk, Cees, Mark Franklin and Michael Marsh (1996) 'What Voters Teach us about Europe-wide Elections; What Europe-wide Elections Teach us about Voters', *Electoral Studies* 15:149-66.