

There is Not Much Euro-hostile Non-voting  
in European Parliament Elections

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## Overview

Participation in European Parliament elections is low, and increasingly so over the five elections since 1979. While considerable research effort has been invested to explore the causes of the meagre turnout in European Parliament elections, the results so far are somewhat inconclusive. On the aggregate level, we know quite well that context matters. It does make a difference, of course, whether voting is compulsory or not; but it matters as well whether European Parliament elections are held concurrently with national first order (or other “more important” second order) elections or whether this is not the case; whether national first order elections are close or not; and whether or not voting is restricted to Sundays (see van der Eijk and Franklin 1996: chapter 19).

On the individual level things seem to be less clear. Traditional predictors of individual turnout in European Parliament elections (as well as in any other election) are hardly disputed: the effects of social integration, political mobilisation and party attachment. One controversial question remains which carries, in addition, some political dynamite. This question is whether abstentions in European Parliament elections carry a hidden political message -- like “I don't agree with the whole European business”, or “Why do we need a European Parliament. Let's get things right at home”, and so on.

The paper sets out to determine the relative importance of “Euro-hostile” non-voting in European Parliament elections as compared to what may be called “Euro-neutral” abstentions. Based on the 1999 European Election Study, two factors that may cause “Euro-hostile” non-voting are distinguished, a. the (lack of) support for the EU (“I don't like Europe”), and b. the (lack of) EU policy appeal of political parties (“If it comes to Europe there is no reasonable choice”). Four categories of Euro-neutral abstentions are controlled for: (lack of) support for national politics (“I don't like the way politics is run in this country”); (lack of) political parties' general appeal (“There is no party I can support”); (lack of) involvement (“I don't care”); and (lack of) efficacy (“My vote does not matter”). Social structure is also considered as a more remote social factor which precedes the political ones. Finally, the evolution of Euro-hostile causes of abstention is determined in a diachronic cross-national perspective by analysing survey evidence from the three most recent European Parliament elections of 1989, 1994, and 1999.

## 2. Theoretical considerations

### 2.1. Euro-hostile abstention as a form of strategic voting

Research on strategic voting<sup>1</sup> is usually restricted to matters of party choice. Electoral participation is not considered in these terms. Stephen Fisher, for example, in his work on Britain defines a strategic (he says: tactical) voter as “... someone who votes for a party they believe is more likely to win than their preferred party, in order to vote effectively.” (Fischer 2000:1) Referring back to McKelvey and Ordeshook (1972) and ul-

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<sup>1</sup> Depending on the author, strategic voting is also called tactical or sophisticated voting.

timately to Riker and Ordeshook (1968), Alvarez and Nagler go beyond that by adding characteristics of the voters' individual preference order and of the competitive context of the electoral decision. For them, a strategic voter chooses "... her second most preferred party if the more preferred party is unlikely to win and there is a close contest between the second and third ranked party." (2000: 58)

In these and similar accounts, non-voting is not considered to be a choice option for "strategic" behaviour.<sup>2</sup> However, the act of voting is based on two decisions: (1) the decision to turn out or not, and (2) the decision to choose one (or more, depending on the electoral system) of the alternatives on offer.<sup>3</sup> It is not very plausible that voters would restrict strategic considerations to only one of these two decisions. On the contrary, if (and to the degree that) voters behave strategically, there is every reason to expect them to do so for turnout as well as for party (or candidate) choice.

For European Parliament elections in particular, it might be useful to expand existing notions of strategic behaviour so that they apply not only to party choice but to non-voting as well. This, in turn, requires some initial understanding of the motives and political aims which, by abstaining from the election, a strategic non-voter might pursue. The motives for strategic behaviour are related to different possible outcomes of an election. For present purposes, it suffices to distinguish two kinds of outcome: policies and legitimacy.

Almost every election installs a new, or confirms the old, government. The government's political agenda ultimately results in a set of governmental policies. This is the policy outcome of elections. Based on past performance and on election programmes, voters form expectations about likely policy outcomes of an election. European Parliament elections are different from most other elections because they do not contribute to the formation of a government. The policy consequences of different outcomes of a European Parliament election are therefore difficult to determine (which is not to say that they do not exist). In any case, those consequences are not expected to cause strategic non-voting.

However, general elections are not only a way to collectively decide about future policies.<sup>4</sup> They also add to the legitimacy of the political regime. This is the second outcome of elections that is relevant here. Citizens' participation in the electoral process is often taken to indicate system support, while abstentions may signify two things – indifference as well as system opposition or alienation (Pappi 1996).<sup>5</sup> The context of available choice options seems to matter here a great deal. The smaller the number of

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<sup>2</sup> Quite the contrary, rational choice-oriented scholarship still struggles with the question how voting can be understood as rational behaviour (see Aldrich 1993).

<sup>3</sup> Some authors have suggested that voting implies just one decision, with not turning out as one of the options amidst the options provided by the parties on the ballot (e.g., Schram, 1989). As such perspectives have failed so far to provide new insights into the bases of turnout and party choice, we do not follow them.

<sup>4</sup> Obviously, the causal chain from elections to government formation to policies is far from deterministic, and the term 'decide' should not be taken literally.

<sup>5</sup> Theoretically one could expect satisfaction also to generate abstentions. But empirical research so far has failed to present evidence for this claim.

anti-system choice options available on the ballot are, *ceteris paribus*, the more likely abstention is to express system opposition.<sup>6</sup>

Abstaining because of system opposition, or more generally due to the lack of appropriate choice options, is therefore an indirect manifestation of substantive political preferences, in many ways comparable to what previous research of party choice has called “strategic voting.” In what follows, we will apply this notion to the motives of non-voting in European Parliament elections and try assess how important strategic non-voting actually is in this particular type of election.

## 2.2. Euro-hostile abstentions in European Parliament elections

By politicians and the media alike, participation rates in European Parliament elections are seen as a crucial indicator of political support for the European Union. When the first direct election was called in 1979, the European Parliament launched a broad non-partisan mobilisation campaign in all member-countries of the Union (Reif 1985). Those efforts have been repeated in subsequent elections. In spite of this, turnout was widely considered disappointingly low in 1979, and has declined since. The trend generally points down. EU-wide participation dropped from some 60 percent in 1979 and 1984, to around 55 percent in 1989 and 1994, and down again to 50 percent in 1999 (Table 1).

— Table 1 about here —

This decline in turnout is probably less alarming than it might seem at first sight. At least to some degree, it is the consequence of successive enlargements of the Union with countries where factors promoting high turnout are absent or weak. As a case in point, the proportion of the EU citizenry “operating” under conditions of compulsory voting has declined.

In addition to compulsory voting, turnout is also affected by the timing of European Parliament elections relative to that of first-order national elections. Turnout is highest when European and national elections are held concurrently. It is lowest immediately after a first order national election, and increases slowly with the passing of the domestic electoral cycle. The effects of these factors are not immediately apparent, but they generate problems of comparability with respect to ‘raw’ turnout figures.

When composition effects (i.e., the decline of the proportion of citizens under compulsory voting) and timing effects (i.e., the unequal closeness to national first-order elections) are removed, participation in European Parliament elections is relatively stable (see e.g. Weßels and Schmitt 2000; Franklin 2001). But stable as “in reality” turnout may be, it is also particularly low. This brings us back to our question of strategic non-

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<sup>6</sup> An obvious example are elections under communist rule, e.g. in the former GDR. Anti-system parties could not form and participate in general elections, and citizens opposing the regime could not directly express their preferences: they had to abstain in order to do so. A good number did, but official turnout figures were sugarcoated in order to mock mass support (Weber 1999).

voting in European Parliament elections in general, and to that of Euro-hostile abstentions in particular.

Past research is somewhat inconclusive with regard to Euro-hostile abstentions. Schmitt and Mannheimer, in their 1991 analysis of the 1989 European Election Study data, find that participation in European Parliament elections is virtually unrelated to attitudes about European integration. In 1989 at least, electoral participation was mostly a matter of habitual voting – “people went to the polls because they are used to doing so on election day.” (1991: 50) Later analyses based on the same 1989 European Election Study included, in addition to individual level factors, systemic and contextual characteristics and their interaction with individual-level variables (see Franklin, van der Eijk and Oppenhuis 1996). While this strategy of research meant a big step forward (accompanied by a considerable raise of explained variance), attitudes about European integration and the European Community were again found to be virtually unrelated with electoral participation.

Blondel, Sinnott and Svensson in their 1994 participation study conclude, by contrast, “voluntary Euro-abstention to be significantly affected by attitudes to European integration, by attitudes to the European Parliament, and by attitudes to the parties and candidates in the election, and that it is not significantly affected by second-order considerations and calculations” (Sinnott 2000: 70 summarising Blondel et al. 1998: 222-236). While this obviously conforms much better with conventional wisdom of politicians and journalists,<sup>7</sup> the validity of those claims has to be questioned on methodological grounds.

Blondel et al. call *voluntary Euro-abstainers* those respondents who, in the course of the interview, gave one or more of the following reasons for their abstention: “Lack of interest, distrust of or dissatisfaction with politics and politicians, lack of knowledge and dissatisfaction with the European Parliament electoral process.” (1998: 50). Two objections can be made to such a self-reporting intentions methodology. First, survey respondents are themselves not the most reliable source of information about the causes of their behaviour.<sup>8</sup> Second, the approach yields non-falsifiable and therefore non-scientific propositions as it is impossible to assess whether the same causes (i.e., Euro-hostile attitudes) exist among those who do not manifest the expected effect (i.e., who report to have turned out). Put somewhat differently, Blondel et al. may be seen to have ‘stacked the deck’ because they defined (i.e. selected) the category of respondents that was found to be “dissatisfied with the European Parliament electoral process” on the basis of this very characteristic.

Although we are sceptical about the validity of the conclusions of Blondel *cum suis*, we still cannot rule out that things might have changed since we first explored the issue for the 1989 election. Over the last decade, the European Union has changed in

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<sup>7</sup> See e.g. J. Smith who notes that „Franklin, van der Eijk and Oppenhuis have challenged the sort of claims made in this section ...” and contends without further empirical evidence or argument that “... Despite their scepticism it seems that attitudes do have a part to play in explaining behaviour in EP elections.” (1999, p. 123, footnote 10)

<sup>8</sup> Alvarez and Nagler (2000:61), reviewing the strategic voting literature, cast doubt on the validity of data gathered with the *self-reporting intentions methodology*: “Unfortunately, researchers using these survey questions do not appear to have seriously considered the quality of the survey responses obtained for questions asking for justifications of reported political behaviour.”

many important ways. National sovereignty has been further transferred to Union institutions and authorities (e.g., in the currency domain). The political consequences of EU policy making are more widely felt (like during the BSE crisis and the Hoof and Mouth Disease-epidemic). Last but not least, the dynamics of EU membership is a source of concern for many citizens (like the Eastward enlargement as it was approved in the Nice Treaty).

These and other developments may have changed the relation between mass political orientations towards the European Union and electoral behaviour in European Parliament elections. Euro-hostile abstentions in European Parliament elections might have become more numerous and hence, strategic non-voting in the EU more important than in the past. Whether this is the case is the question which we will try to answer in this paper, first with an in-depth analysis of the 1999 election and then in a diachronic analysis over the three elections from 1989 on.

### 3. Data base and strategy of analysis

#### 3.1. The data base

The analyses reported below are based on the European Election Studies 1989, 1994, and 1999. While the data are of the 1989 and of the 1994 study were collected within the Eurobarometer survey operation of the European Commission, the EES group has archived them separately (see van der Eijk et al., 1993 and Schmitt et al., 1997). The data for the 1999 study were obtained independently from the Eurobarometer in a series of nationally representative mass surveys administered by telephone (except in Italy) immediately after the European Parliament election of June 1999.<sup>9</sup> The 1999 data have recently been made available for secondary analysis through the social science data archives (van der Eijk et al. 2002).

#### 3.2. Scheme of analysis

In contrast to earlier work we will concentrate here on individual level-relationships. As our research questions do not involve multilevel relationships, no test for interactions of individual factors and systemic or contextual ones will be performed. In contrast to the work of others, such as that by Blondel et al. (1998), we refrain from subdividing our sample of non-voters into voluntary and circumstantial. There is always a certain number of citizens who, due to personal circumstances, is prevented from participation. This is equally so no matter which election is called. Circumstantial non-voting, therefore, cannot add to our understanding of non-voting in European Parlia-

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<sup>9</sup> Fieldwork was carried out by IPSOS (except in Italy). Overall, 13549 interviews were realised. The numbers of interviews carried out vary between the countries, with some 1000 respondents interviewed in Denmark, France, Germany, the Netherlands, Spain, and the United Kingdom, and some 500 interviews in the remaining countries except Luxembourg and Italy. In Luxembourg, 300 interviews were felt sufficient. In Italy, the questionnaire was administered by ISPO (Milano) in a telepanel and some 3700 interviews were realised.

ment elections if no epidemic diseases or other natural catastrophes are observed which could help explain the elevated abstention levels. Other methodologically inspired reasons aside, there is simply no good reason to continue on that road.

### 3.2.1 The 1999 Study

Having said what we will not do, we might as well say a few words about what we intend to do. We start with the in-depth analysis of the 1999 study. The dependent variable is participation in the 1999 European Parliament election as reported in the post-electoral survey of the EES 1999.<sup>10</sup> In addition to social-structural predictors of electoral participation,<sup>11</sup> six genuinely “political” constructs will be used as predictors:

1. support for EU politics<sup>12</sup>
2. support for national politics<sup>13</sup>
3. parties’ general appeal<sup>14</sup>
4. parties’ policy appeal<sup>15</sup>
5. political efficacy<sup>16</sup> and
6. political involvement (see Figure 1).<sup>17</sup>

Our central indicator of Euro-hostility is (the lack of) *support for EU politics* (construct 1). We maintain that the stronger the (positive) correlation is between support for EU politics and participation in European Parliament elections, the more room exists for

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<sup>10</sup> Measurements of electoral participation/abstention regularly suffer from the tendency of over-reporting (i.e., from the fact that people claim to have voted while they actually abstained). One of the reasons for this is the “social desirability” response set, i.e. that respondents say what they think is socially acceptable or desirable. We have tried to overcome this problem to some degree by lowering the “social desirability” threshold of having participated by the following wording of the participation question: “A lot of people abstained in the European Parliament election of June 10 while others voted. Did you cast your vote?” Answer categories are (1) yes (2) no (8) don’t know (9) no answer. 8 and 9 are coded as missing. The data reveal that the “don’t knows” are very few so that there is not need to reconsider (and possibly recode) these cases as likely non-voters. There are hardly any refusals either.

<sup>11</sup> These are age and sex of respondents, their education, church attendance, union membership, and urban-rural residence.

<sup>12</sup> This construct is based on the following indicators: EU membership is a good/bad thing (Eurobarometer trend variable); European integration has gone too far vs. should be pushed further (10 point scale); preparedness for personal sacrifice if member-country in crisis; satisfaction with the functioning of EU democracy (4 point scale); satisfaction with national EU policy (4 point scale).

<sup>13</sup> This construct is based on the following indicators: approval of the government’s record to date; satisfaction with the functioning of democracy [in country] (4 point scale).

<sup>14</sup> This class includes the following indicators: party attachment (4 categories from very close to not close to any party); vote probability for the most preferred of the relevant national parties (a value approaching 10 on a scale ranging from 1 to 10).

<sup>15</sup> This construct is based on the following indicators: the smallest of the distances to any of the nationally relevant parties in terms of European integration (see second indicator of footnote 12; this results in a value approaching 0 on a scale ranging from 0 to 9); the smallest of the distances to any of the relevant national parties in terms of left and right (this as well results in a value approaching 0 on a scale ranging from 0 to 9); perceived existence or otherwise (dichotomous coding) of a national political party which is capable of dealing with the most important political problem (party competence).

<sup>16</sup> This construct is based on the following indicators: politics is too complicated (4 point agree/disagree scale); vote does not matter (4 point agree/disagree scale).

<sup>17</sup> This construct is based on the following indicators: attention to political news (4 point scale from none to a lot); interest in politics (4 point scale from not at all to very); attention to EU news (4 point scale from none to a lot); interest in EP election campaign (4 point scale from not at all to very).

strategic Euro-hostile non-voting, and that consequently the incidence thereof *ceteris paribus* will be high. <sup>18</sup>

—Figure 1 about here —

*The policy appeal of political parties* (construct 4) is an additional and in a way more general indicator of strategic non-voting in European Parliament elections. If the policy appeal of political parties is very low, citizens may feel that there is no appropriate “positive” choice option to them, causing them to abstain. A strong negative correlation of parties’ policy appeal with abstention should therefore signal a substantial amount of strategic non-voting. Parties’ policy appeal increases as the distance between the (non-) voter and the closest of the relevant national parties regarding European integration and left-right becomes smaller. We also included a measure of party competence to the effect that parties’ policy appeal is lacking if none of the national parties are felt competent to solve the political problem that the citizens regard as most important.<sup>19</sup>

*Support for national politics* (construct 2), *parties’ general appeal* (construct 3), *political efficacy* (construct 5) and *political involvement* (construct 6) are all in a way indicators of “Euro-neutral” (or sincere) participation or abstention. There is no “hidden” political or substantive message behind the act of non-voting when people abstain due to a lack of mobilisation or involvement, party attachment, or political powerlessness and alienation. In particular, there is no hidden Euro-hostility behind the act of non-voting. Among these four, past research has identified political involvement and parties’ general appeal as particularly strong predictors of electoral participation.

### *Strategy of analysis*

We first report for each of the countries<sup>20</sup> in our survey the correlations between electoral participation and all independent variables we employ, which were listed in Figure 1, plus a few socio-demographic background variables. From these we can gauge to which extent the pattern of bivariate relationships provides a basis for expecting strategic nonvoting to occur.

As our survey contains different numbers of cases for the different political systems of the EU, we decided to correct for this by weighting the respective country samples to an identical number of effective cases. In this way we avoid the risk that relation-



ships that are found to be significant in one system fail to be so in another only for reasons of a smaller sample size.<sup>21</sup>

As a second step in our analyses, we focus only on the variables that pertain to the first construct identified in Figure 1: (lack of) support for EU politics. We assess the strength of this set of 5 variables in explaining electoral turnout. We do so by means of multivariate regression analysis, a technique quite appropriate as we do not assume any particular causal sequence between these explanatory variables themselves. The limitation of this analysis is that no other controls are employed, and that their true causal importance may therefore be overstated. Yet, this analysis provides us with an upper limit of the causal importance of these variables in accounting for differences in electoral participation.<sup>22</sup>

In a third step of analyses we add relevant controls. The aim of this third step is to assess the relative explanatory importance of each of the constructs depicted in Figure 1, plus the socio-demographics. Here, however, we cannot use multivariate regression. That would assume equal causal status between all the independent variables, an assumption we do not subscribe to. It does not seem sensible, for example, that socio-demographics and EU-attitudes are equally proximal to electoral participation. Rather, it seems appropriate to look at attitudes as mediating (part of) the effect of background characteristics of respondents, in addition to adding explanatory power to them.<sup>23</sup> Therefore, we use causal analysis methods (structural equation modelling) instead.

The general structure of the model to be tested is depicted in Figure 2, which displays the theoretical expectations included in the model that is estimated for each of the political systems of the EU. From these models different kinds of results are important. First, whether or not the causal structure imposed on the models that are estimated is falsified by the structure of the empirical data; this is reflected in so-called 'fit' indices. Second, the extent to which all these variables in combination are able to explain individual level variation in electoral participation, i.e., explained variance. Third, the causal importance of each of the constructs shown in Figure 1. This is expressed in so-called (standardized) total effects. These express in a way similar to standardized regression coefficients the sum of the direct as well as indirect causal effects of each of the constructs on electoral participation.

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<sup>21</sup> The weight used in our analyses is known in the datafile as 'political weight 2'. It weights within each of the countries the data so that (weighted) distribution of electoral behavior in the 1999 European Parliament elections corresponds to the actual election result in that country. The specifics of this method have been reported elsewhere (Van der Eijk and Oppenhuis, 1991, and Appendix B in Van der Eijk and Franklin, 1996). After this, the resulting weight was multiplied with a country specific constant so that the effective number of cases after weighting is equal for each political system.

<sup>22</sup> One could wonder why no method of analysis was used that is specifically designed for dichotomous dependent variables, such as, e.g., logit or probit methods. First of all we refrained to do so for presentational purposes, having found that such analyses do not lead to substantively different conclusions. More importantly, however, the logit model is of little use in the subsequent step of our analysis, causal modelling. Logit models are firmly embedded in the tradition of regression, in which all independent variables have equivalent causal status. The consequence thereof is that only direct effects on the dependent are estimated and that (ubiquitous) intercorrelations between the exogenous variables (that is, all independents in the logit model) may lead to the absorption of one variable's effects into that of another one. These problems are avoided in causal analysis, albeit at the cost of not being puritan in the handling of the dichotomous dependent variable.

<sup>23</sup> Of course, attitudinal variables can also be seen as moderators of the effect of background characteristics on electoral participation. In this paper, however, we will not pursue this possibility.

—Figure 2 about here —

As the total number of independent variables is 24, a structural equation model becomes more complex than necessary for the research question we address here. We are *not* primarily interested in the relative importance of each and every individual variable —let alone in the specification of their interrelationships— but rather in the importance of clusters of variables, each representing a construct as illustrated in Figure 1. Therefore, each of these constructs has been operationalised in the form of a single empirical measure. Each construct is measured by the optimal linear transformation and addition of the variables involved. This is obtained by taking the predicted value of the dependent variable (electoral participation) from a multivariate linear regression with only the variables pertaining to a single construct. In contrast to methods such as factor analysis, this ensures that *all* explanatory power of this set of variables is retained. All constructs have been measured in this way, as well as the entire set of socio-demographic background variables.

### 3.2.2 Comparing Euro-hostile non-voting over time

Our analytical scheme inevitably becomes more modest when we move on from the analysis of one study to the analysis of several. The reason is that the survey instrumentation usually differs somewhat from one election to the next, leaving the analyst with a relatively small common denominator of indicators that are available in each of three consecutive European Election Studies. Three sets of independent variables have been included in every EES post-election survey since 1989 that can be employed here, two structural and one attitudinal. On the structural side, there are the social-structural position of respondents<sup>24</sup> and their general political involvement<sup>25</sup>. These structural factors will be used to isolate the true effects of Euro-hostile attitudes on turnout. Two basic indicators of respondents support for Europe and the European Union<sup>26</sup> will then be utilized to determine the evolution of Euro-hostile abstentions. If it comes to the dependent variable, respondents have been asked in each study whether they participated in the preceding election and which party they voted for. The format of these questions differs slightly from study to study; but that would probably be of greater concern if we were estimating levels of participation rather than identifying causes of abstention.

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<sup>24</sup> Sex, age, education, marital status, union membership and church attendance are used mainly as indicators of social integration and resource attribution.

<sup>25</sup> Political involvement is measured somewhat differently than for the 1999 study – we include interest in politics (4 point scale from not at all to very) and party attachment (measured on a 4 point scale from not close to any party to very close to a particular party).

<sup>26</sup> Support for Europe and the EU is measured by two indicators. One is asking for respondents support for European unification (in 1989 and 1994 on a four point scale from very much against to very much in favour; in 1999 on a ten point scale from has already gone to far to should be pushed further). The other is the familiar membership “trend” question from the Eurobarometers which establishes whether one’s countries membership of the EC/EU, according to the respondent, is a good thing, neither good nor bad, or a bad thing.

## *Strategy of analysis*

A strategy for determining the effects of EU attitudes on participation in three consecutive European Parliament elections must be both theoretically grounded and empirically parsimonious. With regard to theory, we refer to the conventional wisdom that non-voters are “peripheral” socially<sup>27</sup> and politically<sup>28</sup>. Both these peripheral locations are of a structural – i.e., not election specific – nature. They are supposed to impact on turnout no matter what election is analysed. The potential relevance of support for Europe and the European Union, by contrast, is of an attitudinal nature and is very election-specific. While both structural position and political attitudes may be interlinked, we decided for the diachronic analysis – with an eye on parsimony – to control for structural factors first and then move on and assess the behavioural relevance of EU attitudes. This can be done by a procedure known as block-recursive regression. Stepwise regressions are performed with electoral participation as the dependent variable. Social-structural factors are entered first, and their explanatory power is determined. Indicators of political involvement are entered second, and the proportion of additional variance explained is determined. Attitudes about Europe and the European Union are entered third and again the proportion of additional variance explained is determined (together with the proportion of variance explained overall).

## 4. Findings

### 4.1 Bivariate relationships

In Table 2 we present for each of the political systems of the EU the bivariate correlation between electoral participation on the one hand and each of the independent variables on the other hand. For presentational purposes, correlations not significant at the .05 level were omitted. The independent variables have been ordered according to the construct or cluster they belong to.

—Table 2 about here —

By looking at the rows of the table one sees immediately in how many of the systems each of these variables is significantly correlated with electoral participation. Three clusters stand out in this respect: political parties’ general appeal, political involvement and political efficacy. With only a few exceptions, we find correlations of indicators of these constructs with electoral participation in all political systems under study.<sup>29</sup> Moreover, the signs of these correlations are all the same, and in the expected direction.

For the other clusters, we find considerable differences between EU member countries. The “support for EU politics” variables, for example, are all quite strongly corre-

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<sup>27</sup> Due to a lack of social integration; see e.g. Lipset 1959; Tigsten 1963; Lancelot 1968; and Wolfinger & Rosenstone 1980.

<sup>28</sup> Due to a lack of political involvement; see e.g. Lazarsfeld et al. 1944; Berelson et al. 1954; Campbell 1962.

<sup>29</sup> Although the EU has 15 member states, we report on 16 systems, because we distinguish within Belgium between Flanders and Wallonia.

lated with electoral participation in Sweden. In a number of countries only some of these variables show significant correlations. There, these correlations are also weaker than in Sweden. In five countries —Greece, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg and Portugal— none of these variables is significantly correlated with electoral participation. The correlations from this cluster of indicators are almost all positive, which indicates that “supportive” attitudes towards the EU are more prevalent among voters than among non-voters. This seems to be in line with a hypothesis of strategic non-voting, motivated by anti-EU attitudes. Three coefficients are, however, negative, and indicate that sometimes Eurosceptics of one kind or another are more, not less, prevalent among those who turn out to cast their vote. Obviously, contextual differences, such as the way in which political parties are aligned with these attitudes have to be taken into account to understand these differences. Although we will not do such analyses in this paper, the mere fact that in Britain and (to some extent) in Flanders it are the Europhiles that are more prone to abstain should serve as a warning against hasty conclusions that abstention can only be motivated by a *lack* of support for the EU.

The construct “support for national politics” appears everywhere to be of limited importance at best. In 10 countries neither of the two variables involved shows any significant correlation, and in the remaining countries the significant correlations are weak (with the exception of —again— Sweden where the correlation of electoral participation with (lack of) satisfaction with democracy in the country is of medium strength).

The variables measuring “parties’ policy appeal” are also only weakly related to electoral participation, and quite differently so in the various political systems. As the construct is related to contextual phenomena such as the format of the party competition in the different political systems, the differences we find between the systems do not come as a surprise. What is surprising, however, is the general weakness of these correlations.

The correlations of socio-demographics with turnout also show considerable country differences. Age is almost everywhere significantly related to electoral participation. Most often this correlation is negative, but in three systems it is positive. All correlations with education are positive, but in 7 of the 16 systems education is *not* significantly related to participation. Similar remarks can be made about the other background variables. Interesting as these differences may be, they are not central to our research question in this paper. The main reason for looking at these variables at all, is to use them as controls in later analyses.

#### 4.2 EU-attitudes and electoral participation

The bivariate correlations presented in Table 2 do not tell us how much of the variance of electoral participation can conceivably be explained by sets of variables. In this section we focus on the set of 5 indicators that make up the construct “(lack of) support for EU politics”, one of the “usual suspects” in political and journalistic interpretations of

low turnout in European elections. In academic circles the importance of these attitudes is contested, as discussed earlier in this paper.

Table 3 reports a multiple regression in each of the political systems, in which electoral participation is the dependent variable and the 5 different EU-attitudinal variables are used as independents. In this table, the systems are ordered on the basis of the variance that is explained by these variables (bottom row: adjusted  $R^2$ ). Inspection of this table leads to the following conclusions.

— Table 3 about here —

First and foremost, the extent to which voting or abstention can be explained by support (or lack thereof) for the EU is extremely limited in most of the EU-systems. In 6 systems there is no significant contribution whatsoever to explaining variance in participation. In no less than 11 out of 16 systems,  $R^2$  falls below .025. This includes such countries as Britain and Denmark, where Euroscepticism (possibly even Europhobia) is very strong and possibly dominant, as well as traditionally Europhile systems such as Italy and Luxembourg. In all systems but one, the explained variance is less than 5 percent, and that is an upper limit as controls for additional or rivalling explanations have not been included. The only real exception to this *pervasive marginality* of the effect of EU-support is Sweden. More than anywhere else in the EU, electoral participation may be (partly) explained by support or lack of support for the EU.

A second conclusion to be drawn from Table 3 is that of the 5 variables involved, one stands out in terms of the number of systems where it reaches significance. The willingness to sacrifice some of one's own wealth to help another country in the EU experiencing economic difficulties shows a significant regression coefficient in 7 systems (plus 2 borderline cases). This variable relates more directly than other ones to respondent's attachment to a EU-wide political community.

As already discussed, the degree to which electoral participation can be explained by EU-support may be different than indicated in Table 3, as no controls have been included in these analyses for potentially rivalling explanations of voting and abstention. To the extent that these effects merely mirror spurious correlations, they are overstated. In principle, they can also be under-stated, namely in the case of spurious zero-correlations, a rare but not impossible phenomenon. Their importance as shown here is not affected when they are an intermediate variable in a causal chain leading towards electoral participation.

#### 4.3. Causal effects of the different constructs

The explanatory power of the constructs shown in Figure 1, and of the cluster of socio-demographic background variables has each been captured in a single variable, using the method described in section 2.3. With the resulting 7 independent variables and electoral participation as the dependent one, a series of causal models (structural equa-

tion models) has been estimated, using the hypothesised direction of potential effects that was depicted in Figure 2.

A first question to be addressed with this kind of modelling is whether or not the empirical observations contradict the hypothesised model, that is, the total set of hypothesised effects. This is indicated by so-called fit coefficients, which are reported in the bottom rows of Table 4. The value of these coefficients is in each case satisfactory, which implies that empirical observations did not falsify the assumptions of causal effects implied in the model, and no significant portions of covariance between the variables are left unaccounted.<sup>30</sup>

— Table 4 about here —

The next question that we can address with the analyses reported in Table 4, is how well they explain electoral participation. In Table 4 we ordered the political systems again on the basis of explained variance. This order is different than that in Table 3, a difference that is caused by the inclusion of other constructs and variables that contribute to the explanation of voting and abstention. The explanatory power of the same set of independent variables varies considerably between the political systems of the EU. Greece ranks lowest, with a mere 6.7% explained variance, Sweden ranks highest with 30.9%. Why these differences? The coefficients of the independent variables may help elucidate these contrasts.

In a EU-wide perspective, three constructs or clusters stand out as the most powerful: social structure, political involvement, and parties' general appeal. The first of these, social structure, has by far the weakest (but still significant) effects in those systems where voting is compulsory (Belgium —Flanders and Wallonia— and Luxembourg), or where a quasi-compulsory regime is in place (Italy, Greece).

This underscores the observation by Franklin et al. (1996) that system characteristics can constrain the playing room for individual level factors when it comes to electoral participation. It also confirms the expectation of Verba, Nie and Kim (1978) that compulsory voting diminishes the effect of social inequality on political participation. In line with the reduced impact of social structure under conditions of (semi-) compulsory voting, we also see that in these same systems the effect of involvement is much weaker than elsewhere. So, the differences between systems in terms of the explanatory power of the model are at least in part a direct consequence of the limited

hardly be accounted for by citizens' alienation from their domestic political systems. Support of EU politics also fails to add significantly to explanations of voting or abstention in 9 out of 16 systems, and is significant, but weak in the other 7. It is strongest in Flanders, Luxembourg and Sweden, but even in those three systems inferior by far to the three most powerful factors: social structure, political involvement and general party support.

#### 4.4 The importance of Euro-hostile abstentions over time

We move on, finally, and consider possible changes in the frequency of Euro-hostile abstentions over time. Did the phenomenon increase, or decrease, or was there not much of a change? Are there particular country patterns standing out? And what about the evolution of structural determinants of electoral participation? Some of these questions can be answered on the basis of information provided in Table 5.<sup>31</sup> The first observation is that attitudes about Europe and the European Union do not play much of a role for the decision to go and vote, or to abstain, after structural determinants of electoral participation have been considered. This is so across the board; no countries are really standing out here as exceptions to the rule; and we find not much development over time either.

– Table 5 about here –

However, we see development the explanatory power of the structural determinants of turnout. Social-structural factors are losing some of their importance for electoral participation. This is most visible in France, but can be traced elsewhere too. It seems to suggest that more and more of those whose social profile traditionally promoted electoral participation abstain nevertheless. Even more pronounced is the downturn of political involvement as a facilitator of participation in European Parliament elections. People abstain no matter whether they are interested in politics or not, or whether they feel attached to a political party or not. Both trends accelerate between the 1994 and the 1999 election.

Could it be that controlling for the two structural dimensions conceals a stronger direct (“gross”) association between turnout and (lack of) support for Europe and the European Union? Table 6 compares gross and net effects of European attitudes on electoral participation. It appears that there are, indeed, examples where social integration and political involvement shield a strong “gross” effect of European attitudes on participation in European Parliament elections: Germany in 1994 and Sweden in 1999 belong in that class of cases. But on average, “gross” and “net” effects of political support for Europe and the European Union do not differ much – mainly because the “gross” effects are very modest themselves.

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– Table 6 about here –

## 5. Summary and Perspectives

How much “strategy” is behind the motives for non-voting in European Parliament elections? Do people stay home because they disagree with the European Union and European integration? Or is it the more general problem that non-voters do not have a “supportable choice option”, that is, that do not see (at least) one political party which expresses their policy concerns reasonably well? The answer, in a nutshell, is no. Nowhere does anti-EU sentiment play a major role in the decision to participate in, or abstain from European Parliament elections. Compared to that, the policy appeal of political parties is somewhat more important (in the Netherlands and in Wallonia in particular). But this second cluster of “strategic” motives of non-voting is not really pervasive either. Given the weight that is attributed to policy orientations in “economic” models of party choice, the limited impact of policy-based relative “choicelessness” on non-voting is actually quite surprising.

Among the individual-level constructs considered in the present paper, social-structural locations are clearly the single most important predictor of electoral participation. It is the strongest standardised total effect in seven of our 16 political systems. General party support and political involvement together come in second, with four first ranks each. Strategic considerations – be it the Euro-hostile or the “choicelessness” variant of it – are defeated, together with support for national politics and political efficacy.

This in a way is good news. Growing levels of abstention in European Parliament elections are not the result of a growing alienation with the EU political system or hostility towards the politics of European integration. They rather seem to result from the fact that those who used to go and vote on election day – the socially integrated and politically involved – stay home in ever greater numbers when the members of the European Parliament are elected. The lack of excitement that comes with these elections, which itself is largely a function of the shortage of political consequences that can be associated with the election result, may be the main reason for this phenomenon. The second-order logic of European Parliament elections thus seems to accelerate the decline of participation.

But there is another, darker side to it. Due to the limited turnout, European Parliament elections do not contribute to the legitimation of the EU political system as much as they possibly could. And in the long run, low turnout figures might contribute to the erosion of political involvement and political support in more general terms. There is a danger of spill-over of apathy and disaffection to the politics at national and sub-national levels although so far this seems not to have materialised (Franklin 2001).

Having ruled out Euro-hostile non-voting as a major factor in explaining abstention in European parliament elections is one thing, a satisfactory explanation is quite another. A number of extensions of the analyses reported here should result in more satisfactory models, at least as far as explanatory power is concerned. First of all,



low  $R^2$ 's to some extent may be caused by local independence.<sup>32</sup> Some factors that impinge on voting versus abstaining are a constant within each of the political systems. They may have an “across-the-board” effect, which cannot be picked up in separate analyses for each of the systems. Therefore, a pooled analysis in which systemic and contextual explanatory factors are added to individual-level ones is necessary. In such an analysis we can also take into account the consequences of the timing of EP elections in terms of the domestic electoral cycle.

Pooled analyses may not add to our present account of within-system variance, but they are imperative for two reasons. First, understanding electoral participation in general has to take contextual factors into account, and this can best be done in a pooled analysis. Secondly, a pooled analysis offers unique possibilities for investigating the extent to which an explanation has to be “localised”, that is, whether the explanation is in some ways unique for specific systems. Residual analysis and the exploration of interactions between contextual variables (or country dummies) and individual-level variables are powerful tools to this end. Attention to local factors in addition to those that operate in a uniform way across systems is necessary, not so much as an ‘academic’ enterprise, but particularly to understand why Sweden is somewhat of an outlier amidst the other EU-systems.

A second kind of extension of our present analysis involves interactions involving subgroups of citizens. Generational differences and differences in political sophistication come immediately to mind when thinking about the possibility that the specification of an explanatory model may be different for subgroups of respondents.

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<sup>32</sup> It must be recognized, however, that  $R^2$  is an often misleading measure for the explanatory power. It seems almost impossible to eradicate the notion that the magnitude of this coefficient should be gauged in terms of the interval between 0 and 1. This is incorrect, however. Empirical distributions of categorical variables generate an upper limit that  $R^2$  can attain that is usually far below 1.

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Table 1  
Participation in European Parliament Elections 1979-1999  
(percentages)

	1979	1984	1989	1994	1999
Austria				68 <sup>3</sup>	49
Belgium	<b>92</b>	<b>92</b>	<b>91</b>	<b>91</b>	<b>90</b>
Denmark	47	52	46	53	50
Finland				60	30
France	61	57	49	53	47
Germany	66	57	62	60	45
Greece	<b>79<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>77</b>	<b>[80]</b>	<b>71</b>	<b>70</b>
Ireland	[63]	48	[68]	44	[51]
Italy	<b>86</b>	<b>84</b>	<b>82</b>	75	71
Luxembourg	<b>[89]</b>	<b>[87]</b>	<b>[87]</b>	<b>[89]</b>	<b>[86]</b>
Netherlands	58	51	47	36	30
Portugal		72 <sup>3</sup>	51	36	40
Spain		69 <sup>2</sup>	55	59	[64]
Sweden				42 <sup>3</sup>	38
UK	32	33	36	36	23
EU-9	62				
EU-10	64	59			
EU-12		61	56	57	
EU-15				57	50

Sources: <http://europa.eu.int>; Statens Offentliga Utredningar 2000; Grundberg, Perrineau and Ysmal 2000. Notes: (1) election of 1981 (2) election of 1987 (3) election of 1995. Bold figures signify elections under compulsory voting; figures in [] indicate that national elections were held concurrently with European Parliament elections.

Table 2  
Correlates of Participation in European Parliament Elections, 1999

	Au	Be F	Be W	De	Fi	Fr	Ge	GB	Gr	Ir	It	Lu	Ne	Po	Sp	Sw
<i>support for EU politics</i>																
EU membership bad or good	.110	-.138	.069	.078	.102		.131								.116	.270
integration gone too far vs. push further	.081		.121		.113		.142						.130			.245
personal sacrifice to help other EU country	.145	.102		.088	.190	.089	.191						.186			.198
satisfaction with EU democracy		.078													.090	.145
satisfaction with national EU policy			.130		.096		.119	-.097								.188
								-.082								
<i>support for national politics</i>																
approval of government record to date		-.131														.084
satisfaction with democracy in country							.096		.078	.078					.108	.202
<i>parties' general appeal</i>																
party attachment strength	.223	.128		.158	.312	.207	.182	.130	.155	.147	.250	.074	.274	.335	.183	.282
highest ptv score given	.217	.302		.106	.221	.203	.163	.208	.161	.231	.311	.219	.184	.316	.259	.256
<i>parties' policy appeal</i>																
distance of closest party on integration scale			.082			-.117										
distance of closest party on left-right scale			-.134			-.172						-.090	-.083	-.158	-.076	
no party felt competent to solve MIP	-.125						-.143		-.103	-.076	-.237			-.121	-.120	
<i>political efficacy</i>																
Politics too complicated	-.098		-.151	-.191	-.109	-.101	-.168	-.144		-.086		-.099	-.166			-.235
Vote does not matter	-.094	-.159	-.245	-.119	-.206	-.122	-.178	-.156		-.088			-.256	-.180	-.160	-.195
<i>political involvement</i>																
attention to news about politics	.183	.226	.120	.286	.275	.220	.251	.248	.076	.206	.169	.130	.280	.188	.152	.365
interest in politics	.159	.142	.178	.312	.299	.178	.268	.248	.137	.096	.199	.196	.273	.239	.134	.317
attention to news about Europe	.162	.118	.142	.230	.119	.218	.189	.268	.057		.147		.122			.283
interest in election campaign	.260	.135	.148	.432	.393	.238	.279	.336		.285	.228		.377	.328	.278	.386
<i>socio-demographics</i>																
sex		.079						-.099								
age	-.276	.162	.122	-.258	-.174	-.158	.191	-.190	-.147	-.239		-.149	-.194	-.121	-.216	-.261
education	.158			.085	.114	.165	.084	.180		.122				.074		.072
union membership		-.112			.098		-.100							-.096		.101
church attendance		-.100	.108	.160	.124	.159		.107		.255			.175		.185	.158
rural-urban residence				-.070		.079				-.183		-.071		-.134	-.084	.133

Source: *European Elections Study 1999*. Findings are based on weighted data (political weight 2). Figures are bivariate Pearson's correlation coefficients. Coefficients not significant at the .05 level are not reported.

Table 3

Electoral Participation and Attitudes Towards European Integration and the EU  
Results from Multiple OLS Regressions (figures are unstandardised regression coefficients and significance levels)

	Sw	BF	Ge	Ne	Fi	BW	Au	De	Sp	GB	Fr	Lu	It	Po	Gr	Ir
constant	-.082 .312	.908 .000	.172 .096	.067 .584	.058 .538	.870 .000	.382 .000	.530 .000	.549 .000	.383 .000	.587 .000	.903 .000	.764 .000	.636 .000	.799 .000	.600 .000
EU membership bad or good thing	.092 .002	-.057 .000	.034 .358	-.025 .537	.014 .619	.003 .821	-.043 .159	.058 .043	.080 .006	.025 .376	.037 .286	.030 .210	-.009 .783	-.023 .622	.015 .489	.020 .607
personal sacrifice for member country	.081 .058	.065 .001	.144 .000	.147 .000	.211 .000	-.002 .928	.115 .005	.073 .063	-.010 .742	.072 .073	.079 .045	-.041 .045	.058 .145	-.009 .841	.010 .700	.008 .848
satisfaction with EU democracy	.006 .823	.039 .001	-.035 .203	-.050 .047	-.034 .269	-.020 .115	-.003 .276	-.029 .268	.039 .095	-.046 .055	-.010 .752	-.001 .952	.005 .841	.004 .902	.006 .691	.009 .771
integration 'too far' or 'push further'	.019 .025	.009 .016	.013 .090	.018 .035	.012 .182	.007 .017	.000 .974	.007 .404	-.008 .168	-.012 .147	-.003 .728	-.002 .538	-.004 .628	-.008 .194	.001 .804	-.001 .930
satisfaction with na- tional EU policy	.063 .026	-.016 .193	.049 .079	.037 .173	.041 .210	.033 .004	.015 .580	-.071 .014	.016 .438	-.036 .153	-.028 .274	.016 .297	.028 .221	.026 .382	.009 .537	-.040 .218
adjusted R2	.094 .000	.049 .000	.044 .000	.041 .000	.037 .000	.022 .001	.019 .002	.016 .006	.014 .014	.012 .027	.004 .201	.002 .286	-.001 .453	-.003 .681	-.004 .753	-.005 .895

Source: *European Elections Study 1999*. Findings are based on weighted data (political weight 2). All independent variables are coded such that the higher values are pointing in a Euro-positive direction.

Table 4

Determinants of Participation in the European Parliament Elections of 1999  
Standardized Total Effects (STEs), Explained Variance and Model Fit Indices

	Sw	Fi	Ne	Po	Ir	BF	De	GB	Sp	Au	Ge	Fr	It	Lu	BW	Gr
support EU politics	.117	.082				.142		.089	.085					.132	.075	
support ntl politics	.089							.054								
parties' general appeal	.261	.300	.247	.359	.222	.383	.094	.171	.242	.246	.200	.219	.332	.197	.077	.163
political involvement	.354	.319	.281	.224	.197	.174	.412	.278	.201	.186	.247	.184	.103	.170	.196	.115
parties' policy appeal	.167	.089	.248	.131			.086		.083		.142				.203	
political efficacy	.100											.143		.106		
social structure	.312	.279	.257	.223	.380	.175	.235	.305	.281	.303	.271	.220	.102	.173	.171	.172
% explained variance	30,9	26,0	24,8	23,8	22,9	22,6	21,7	19,5	18,8	18,3	18,1	14,4	12,9	12,6	10,7	6,7
NFI (1)	.978	.987	.978	.938	.932	.997	.998	.955	.972	.974	.976	.937	.968	.955	.990	.947
NNFI (2)	1.000	.996	.996	1.000	1.000	1.000	1.000	1.000	1.000	1.000	.993	1.000	1.000	1.000	1.000	1.000
CFI (3)	1.000	.999	.998	1.000	1.000	1.000	1.000	1.000	1.000	1.000	.998	1.000	1.000	1.000	1.000	1.000

Source: *European Elections Study 1999*. The structural equations program used is EQS. Findings are based on weighted data (political weight 2). For the EU-wide analysis, sample sizes are additionally adjusted to the proportions of national electorates. (1) Bentler and Bonett's Normed Fit Index. (2) Bentler and Bonett's Non-normed Fit Index. (3) Comparative Fit Index. STEs >.05 are not reported.

Table 5  
 Participation in European Parliament Elections :  
 The Effects of Social Structure, Political Involvement, and Attitudes Towards Europe  
 (figures are R<sup>2</sup> and R<sup>2</sup> changes from block-recursive multiple OLS regressions)

election	1989				1994				1999			
	A	B	C	C-B	A	B	C	C-B	A	B	C	C-B
Au									.09	.13	.14	.01
Be	.09	.12	.12	.00	.08	.14	.14	.00	.04	.06	.09	.03
De	.09	.17	.18	.00	.08	.20	.20	.00	.05	.12	.13	.00
Fi									.07	.19	.20	.01
Fr	.16	.21	.21	.00	.13	.24	.24	.01	.09	.12	.12	.00
Ge	.07	.15	.16	.01	.07	.18	.21	.03	.08	.12	.12	.00
Gr	.22	.24	.24	.00	.23	.32	.32	.01	.04	.06	.06	.00
Ir	.18	.20	.20	.00	.11	.19	.19	.00	.13	.14	.14	.00
It	.08	.15	.15	.00	.17	.24	.25	.01	.02	.10	.10	.00
Lu	.07	.08	.08	.00	.04	.11	.16	.04	.07	.13	.15	.01
Ne	.08	.15	.17	.02	.10	.15	.17	.02	.08	.16	.17	.01
Po	.07	.17	.18	.01	.09	.23	.23	.00	.04	.16	.16	.00
Sp	.09	.15	.16	.00	.11	.21	.22	.02	.08	.12	.13	.01
Sw									.12	.20	.23	.03
UK	.12	.20	.21	.01	.08	.16	.17	.01	.12	.15	.16	.00
country average	.11	.17	.17	.00	.11	.20	.21	.01	.08	.13	.14	.01

Source: *European Election Studies* 1989, 1994 and 1999. Missing values have been deleted pairwise. In the above table heading, "A" symbolises the proportion of variance explained in turnout by social structural factors; the sex of respondents, their age, education, marital status, union membership and church attendance are used as predictors in this block. "B" stands for a model where in addition to social structural factors those of political involvement are entered; political involvement is measured as interest in politics and party attachment. "C" represents a model where in addition to social structural factors and factors measuring political involvement a third block of variables has been entered: attitudes towards European unification (for-against unification) and the European Union (is EU membership of one's country good or bad); note that in 1999, the unification question has been asked in a somewhat different form than in the earlier surveys.



Table 6  
 Attitudes Towards Europe and Participation in European Parliament Elections:  
 Direct Impact and Effect When Social Structure and Political Involvement Is Controlled For  
 (figures are proportions of explained variance from multiple OLS regressions)

Country	election year 19 89		19 94		19 99	
	R <sup>2</sup>	Δ R <sup>2</sup>	R <sup>2</sup>	Δ R <sup>2</sup>	R <sup>2</sup>	Δ R <sup>2</sup>
Austria					.02	.01
Belgium	.00	.00	.01	.00	.03	.03
Denmark	.00	.00	.01	.00	.01	.00
Finland					.02	.01
France	.02	.00	.02	.01	.00	.00
Germany	.04	.01	.09	.03	.02	.00
Greece	.00	.00	.00	.01	.00	.00
Ireland	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
Italy	.01	.00	.01	.01	.00	.00
Luxemburg	.00	.00	.05	.04	.01	.01
Netherlands	.05	.02	.04	.02	.02	.01
Portugal	.01	.01	.00	.00	.00	.00
Spain	.01	.00	.03	.02	.02	.01
Sweden					.08	.03
United Kingdom	.03	.01	.03	.01	.01	.00
country average	.02	.00	.02	.01	.02	.01

Source: *European Election Studies* 1989, 1994 and 1999. Missing values have been deleted pairwise. In the above table heading, OLS R<sup>2</sup> symbolises the gross effect of attitudes towards European unification (for-against unification) and the European Union (is EU membership of one's country a good or bad thing) on electoral participation; note that in 1999, the unification question has been asked in a somewhat different form than in the earlier surveys. Δ R<sup>2</sup> symbolises the net effect of these same variables – after the effect of social structural factors (sex, age, education, marital status [not available in 1999], union membership and church attendance) and political involvement (interest in politics and party attachment) has been removed.

Figure 1

Indicators, Constructs, and the Dependent Variable: The Analytical Scheme

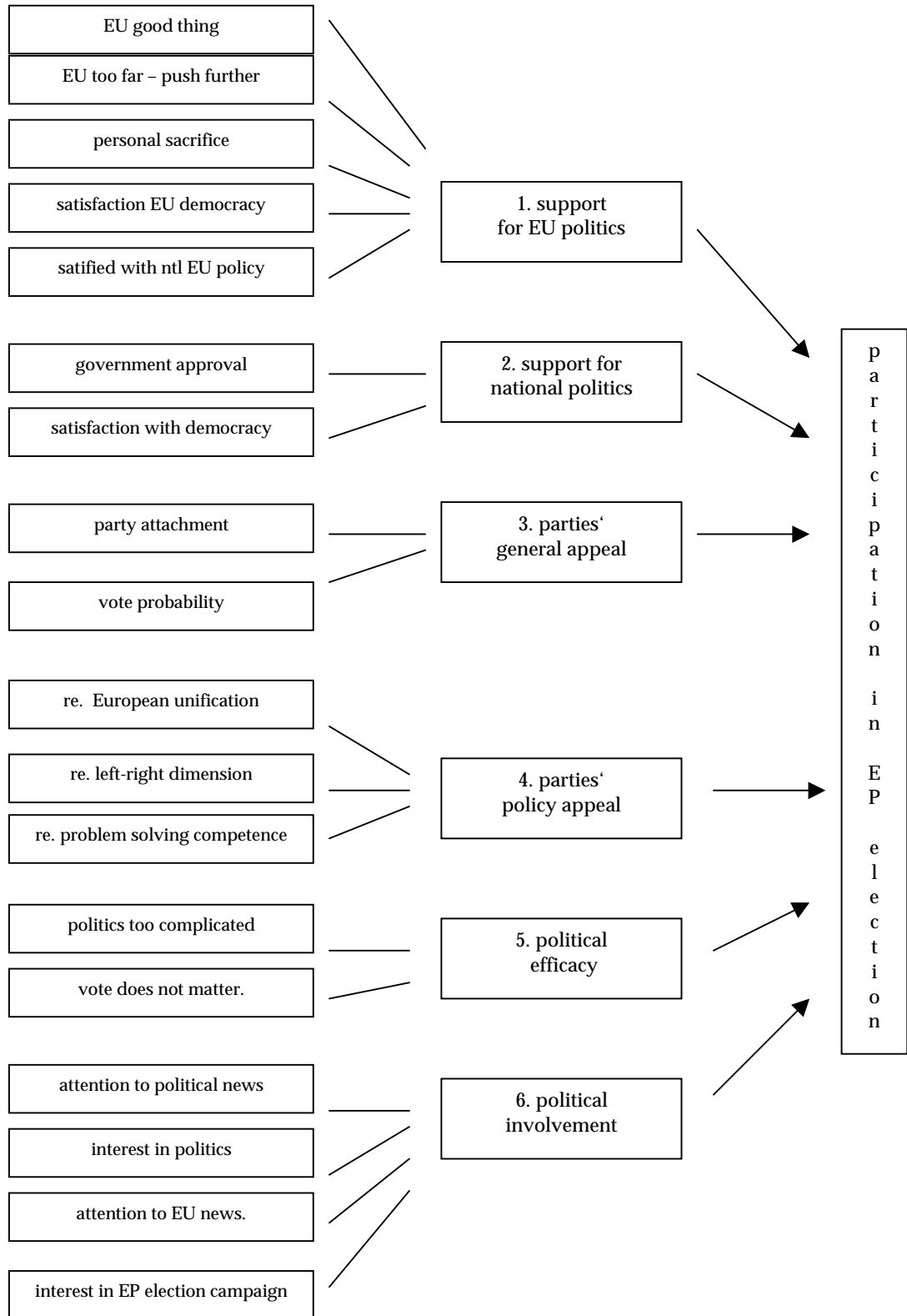


Figure 2

Determinants of Electoral Participation in the 1999 European Election:  
“Permissible” Arrows

