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Using Eurobarometer Data on Voter Participation in the 2004 European Elections to Test the RECON Models

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Abstract

Why do Europeans turn out to cast a vote or fail to do so on Election Day? In this paper a critical review of the 2004 European Parliament (EP) elections under the lens of the democratic deficit debate is attempted, with the use of three distinct models of democracy proposed by the RECON project: a delegated, a federal and a cosmopolitan one. The findings put forward a flexible understanding of electoral participation where delegated/statist indicators boost voting intentions along with a set of proxies of a nascent EU civil society, that allude to a cosmopolitan model of democracy. Respondents' EU knowledge, active information seeking on EP elections, as well as participation in the euroelectoral campaign play a central role in triggering turnout, along with the usual suspects of the national electoral context (i.e. compulsory voting, strict party lists etc.). Europe matters not only as a functional regime set up to address output problems but as a novel political entity to be discovered by a nascent public sphere. Surprisingly enough, the central element in a federal understanding of EP elections - an exclusive EU identity - weakens voting intentions in the euroelectorate of 2004. The interaction terms included in the analysis, finally, substantiate some inhibitions over the prevalence of delegated indicators in the face of weak socialization mechanisms at the EU level. Put simply, among the 'old' fifteen member states and in particular those with an exclusive EU identity, satisfaction with national democratic institutions lowers intended participation in the European electoral arena. The three models of European electoral participation are tested with the use of a pre-election Eurobarometer survey and official electoral statistics.

Keywords

Democratic Deficit – Elections – European Parliament – Turnout

Introduction

Why do Europeans turn out to cast a vote or fail to do so on Election Day? What are in turn the implications of European voter turnout for the viability of democracy at the EU level? Despite the intimate link between these questions, critical attention has been directed toward the factors explaining voting behaviour at the expense of EU democratic reconstitution. Both issues are pertinent, nevertheless, in the context of the 2004 ballot, when turnout hit an all-time low of 45.7 per cent. Average turnout for this historic vote – the first since the EU enlarged to Central and Eastern Europe in May 2004 – was a blunt ‘wake up call’ to leaders and practitioners, for participation was mainly depleted in the ten new member states reaching an impressive 26.9 per cent (Eurobarometer 2004: 4-5). In spite of successive rounds of EU widening that have increased the number of MEPs, and regardless a significant boost to the Parliament's powers with each change to the Union treaties, voter turnout in European elections has been in constant decline, casting doubt on the feasibility of state-inspired democracy within an ever changing European context.

The standard explanation scholarly literature offers for such downturn is that Euroelections constitute ‘second-order national contests’ that fail to set in motion a concrete process of government formation and thereby deplete public participation (Reif and Schmitt 1980). Ongoing research on turnout, however, has brought forward the alternative view that ‘Europe matters’ in these elections, and increasingly so (Hix and Marsh 2007; Mattila 2003; Studlar et al. 2003). In an attempt to tackle fragmentation in the existing literature, an integrated framework of analysis has been devised offering a classification of the diverse independent variables that underlie electoral choice, across an aggregate-individual level basis and a mobilisation-facilitation axis (Bellucci and Whiteley 2006; Sinnott 2003; Sinnott and Lyons 2003). Such typology has redirected attention away from democratic theory to a practical establishment of categories, so that each particular effect on turnout can become a recognisable part of some class of effects.

This paper, nevertheless, does not unilaterally aim at a comprehensive overview of the diversified literature on the influences of European turnout. After laying out the theoretical details, an attempt will be made to explore what kind of democratic system is in the making at the EU level, at least in the channel of political representation provided by competitive elections. Statistical evidence on what influences participation in the European parliament (EP) polls, will offer tentative answers as to whether democracy can be reconstituted along national/delegated, supranational/federal or post-national/ cosmopolitan standards, following the three distinct models developed by Eriksen and Fossum (2007) as part of the RECON project (Reconstituting Democracy in Europe). Such models induce flexibility in the evaluation of the Euroelectoral democratic performance reflecting the political and institutional evolution of the EU from a regulatory regime, to a federal super-state that ultimately failed to produce its own constitution, to a complex multi-level configuration working along cosmopolitan lines, where the regional, national and the supranational mingle.

The critical review of the 2004 elections under the lens of the democratic deficit debate will be attempted with the use of multiple indicators that extend across all axes of the typology identified in earlier research, in models corresponding to the three distinct models of European democracy, without assuming the causal primacy of any particular type from the outset. To do so, aggregate level statistics will be employed in

the reevaluation of system level factors influencing 2004 European turnout, while individual level participation will be assessed via a standard Eurobarometer survey (EB 61 and CCEB 2004.1)¹ that has not been previously used. The latter, being conducted a few months prior to the elections, includes a wealth of variables that allow the concurrent evaluation of intergovernmental, federal and mainly transnational perceptions of electoral democratic participation. What is more, its emphasis on voting intentions prepares the ground for a future comparative study against the background of the forthcoming electoral contest of 2009.

Context vs. Voter: The ‘second-order elections’ model and its descendants

Understanding the downward trend in successive European vote contests, as well as diversity in turnout levels among individual member states, has produced a mosaic of theoretically informed and empirically driven contributions of markedly different concerns and often divergent conclusions. Those primarily interested in system-level explanations and *comparative politics* develop their EU electoral models alongside researchers involved in individual-level projects tracking *comparative political behaviour*.

Drawing largely on the comparative politics perspective, a strikingly perceptive and vastly influential explanation emerged in the 1980s presenting European turnout as derivative of recent national elections rather than EU-centred. The ‘second-order model’ predicts that a) government parties at the time of EP elections experience losses, b) minor parties are the main beneficiaries of temporary protest vote against the government and c) the timing of a European election in the national election cycle determines the size of the abovementioned effects, since mid-term electoral contests allow voters to express their dissatisfaction with incumbent administration (Van der Eijk et al. 1996; Hix and Marsh 2007: 2). Such ‘second-order’ vote insights have been strongly confirmed in a series of elections (Reif 1985; Schmitt and Mannheimer 1991; Van der Eijk and Franklin 1996). The underlying dynamics behind the European vote contest, however, extend beyond the general and rather static explanation of the ‘classic view’ raising issues of electoral variation over time and space. Why has turnout continued to decline despite gains in the power of the European assembly? What may account for the increasing divergence of turnout patterns among individual countries?

In an updated and revised analysis Mark Franklin takes the second-order model a step further (1999, 2001, 2002) focusing primarily on contextual variables linked to institutional factors as well as to attributes of specific elections. Compulsory voting, first European election and election timing close to the national polls, become the main structural reasons for turnout differences across countries. Among aggregate level explanations, simultaneous elections, Sunday voting and proportionality of the member-states’ electoral system also appear to increase turnout *ceteris paribus* (Oppenhuis 1995: 75; Blondel et al. 1998: 245; Smith 1999: 118-119).

¹ The Eurobarometer 61 study (EB61) is used for the 15 member states and Candidate Countries Eurobarometer 2004.1 (CCEB 2004.1) is the same survey replicated among the new entrants. Both surveys were produced and sponsored by the Commission of the European Communities, and supplied by the UK Data Archive.

Inferences about contextual features, nevertheless, bear no clear causal connection to individual *resource* characteristics (age, income, education etc.) and voter specific *mobilisation* factors (party attachment, interest in politics and campaign mobilisation) that have been used and make up for some explained variation in the updated models of European turnout (Wessels 2007; Schmitt 2005; Franklin et al. 1996) *Within* country variation is sidelined in early European voting research for the sake of a thorough *between* country analysis. In an attempt to assemble the European turnout puzzle, an extensive list of individual level factors come to the fore measuring citizens response to the institutional context in which they find themselves, as well as their orientations to European integration. In their seminal work, Jean Blondel, Richard Sinnott and Pelle Svensson (1998, 1997) show that voter attitudes to integration matched by their perceptions of supranational institutions frame decisively their decision to abstain from or participate in EU wide elections. EC related attitudes preferences and orientations nevertheless, play no significant role in the explanation provided by Schmitt and Mannheimer (1991) first and Franklin et al. (1996) later, while a miniscule effect is registered in research undertaken by Schmitt (2005) as well as in that of Van der Eijk and Schmitt (2007). Evidence is certainly not conclusive over the precise impact of attitudes on electoral participation, but voting research has made since a decisive leap forward.

A Typology of factors affecting European Voter Turnout (EvoT)

The EvoT typology in earlier research

The high concentration of aggregate and individual level variables in the ongoing study of European electoral participation has triggered a series of articles that provide an integrated analytical framework and a much-needed typology of the factors affecting participation and/or abstention (Bellucci and Whiteley 2006; Sinnott 2003, 2005; Sinnott and Lyons 2003). Framing electoral choice in Europe in the twenty first century follows a 'bidimensional' funnel of causality proposed originally by Rokkan (1970), and later operationalised graphically by Mannheimer (1989). Explanations on voting choice in other words run along two dimensions. The first dimension is the *exogenous-endogenous* axis, running from the structure of the political system to the characteristics of single voters. The second dimension is a *voting incitement* axis running from *mobilisation* factors that motivate participation, such as instrumental perceptions of EP power or a sociological sense of a European identity, to *facilitation* factors that make voting easier, such as election related capacities (i.e. sociological factors like EU knowledge) and personal circumstances (i.e. instrumental factors like education and/or occupation) (Bellucci and Whiteley 2006: 453).²

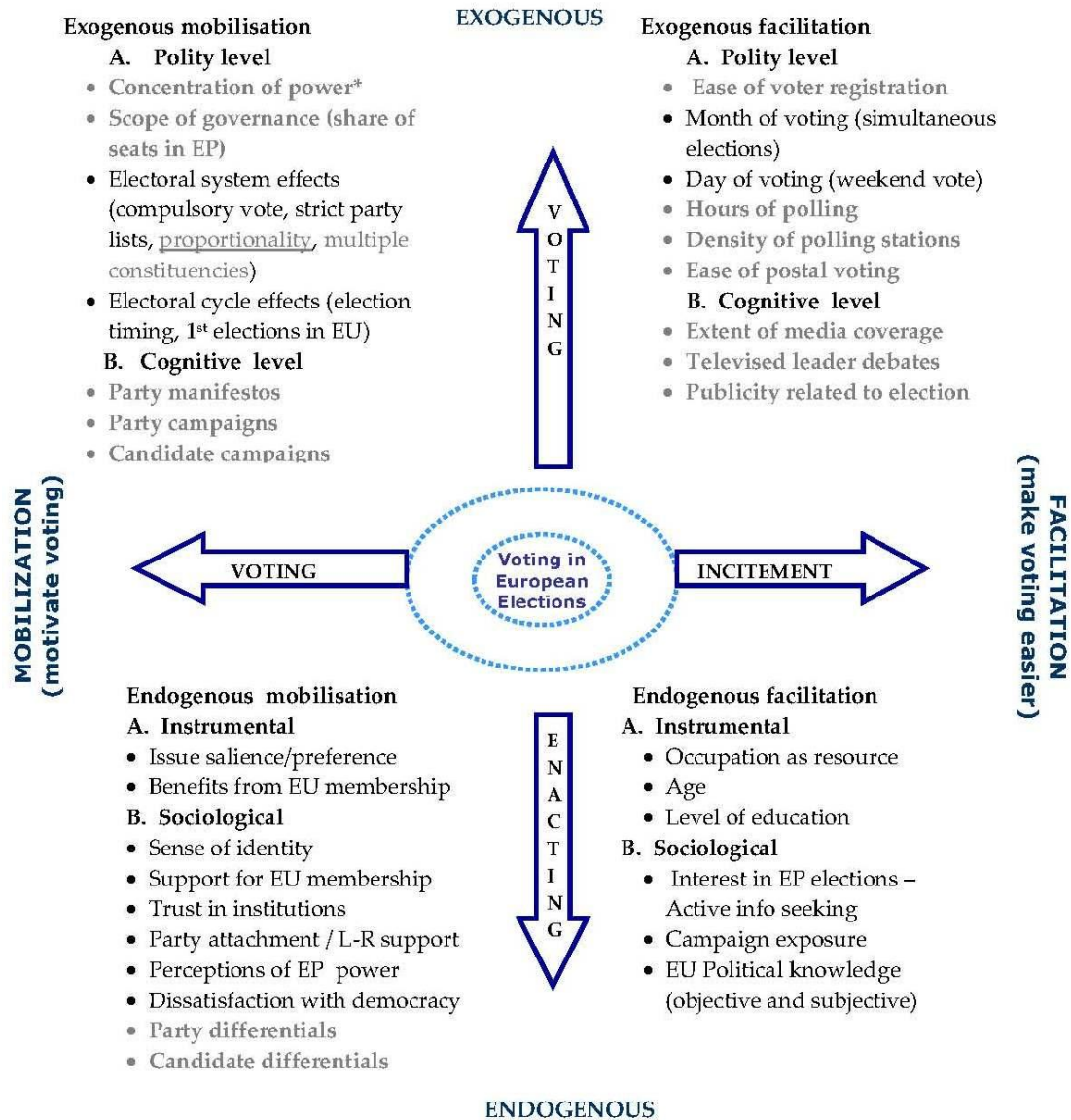
Political choice in EU elections is then seen as enabled/constrained by a variety of factors which can be grouped in the four quadrants. The exogenous mobilisation one refers to *polity level* features on the one hand that comprise the scope of governance, electoral system and electoral cycle effects and to *cognitive level* factors that consist of party manifestos and candidate campaigns. The endogenous mobilisation conditions

² In particular, Bellucci and Whiteley (2006) while presenting the 'bidimensional funnel of causality' refer to a *macro-micro* axis comprising of system and individual level factors and a *voting proximity* axis, a temporal dimension which distinguish factors distant from or proximate to the vote choice, running from early political socialisation-through the family and the environment - to the features of individual decisions on polling day.

refer to *instrumental* perceptions on European integration and to *sociological* processes involving political trust, identification with the EU satisfaction with democracy, recognition of EP institutional power and party attachment. The exogenous facilitation variables on the other hand, include polity level features of the elections at hand, such as ease of voter registration, concurrent elections and hours of polling. While finally the endogenous facilitation factors translate into instrumental personal characteristics (income, education and occupation) and cognitive capacities that facilitate voters' decision making process, such as subjectively and objectively measured EU knowledge and/or campaign exposure (see Figure 1).

Seeking to adopt a common framework of analysis current research on European elections (see Table 1, Appendix I) has relied extensively on indicators extending across the four aforementioned quadrants that make up the bidirectional channel of causality. Besides the revised 'second order model' of exogenous mobilisation and facilitation replicated in the aggregate study of Franklin (2001) and partly in the analysis of Mattila (2003), instrumental and sociological factors of individual level mobilisation and facilitation appear in most recent articles that analyse voter participation in the 2004 European ballot. In an updated contribution Franklin (2007) delves into voter specific explanations that extend across the entire *voting incitement* axis. Turnout in his analysis while still largely determined by compulsory vote and election timing, is also mobilised by trust in the European assembly, interest in EP elections, participation in the national ballot as well as the difference between voters' propensity to vote for their most preferred party and their mean propensity to support all parties. Voter attitudes to membership make part of his analysis, yet without exerting considerable weight on the turnout explanation. Similarly, Schmitt (2005) confirms the 'classic view' via an aggregate level model and moves on to register the effect of individual factors employing Eurobarometer rather than European Elections Survey data. In his conclusions too, EU attitudes fail to predict turnout while it is mainly left-right self placement, political information and individual resources that facilitate participation. Interestingly enough, an insignificant effect is also registered for individual interest in politics and campaign involvement. Wessels on the contrary (2007), employing the same dataset but applying a different methodology reports a robust impact of campaign exposure on participation. Using the factor scores of a number of relevant indicators he distinguishes between mediated information, active information seeking and direct contacts to conclude that all three make a significant contribution to individual turnout.

Drawing upon mixed evidence over individual mobilisation in general and campaign exposure in particular, articles employing cognitive indicators of exogenous facilitation have come at centre stage. Using media content analysis and Eurobarometer survey data, Banducci and Semetko (2003) show that campaign visibility in the news, and the tone of coverage about EU actors, influence an individual's decision to vote in the 1999 EU parliamentary elections. Greater visibility of European campaigns is also related to EU knowledge gains as De Vreese and Boomgarden (2006) demonstrate, boosting subsequently turnout intention in an EU enlargement referendum. Moving to the Danish Euroelectoral context De Vreese and Tobiasen (2007) similarly disclose that campaign exposure significantly affects turnout both through engaging in political discussions with others and by turning to specific news media that presented European elections as conflict laden.



Source : Adapted from Sinnot, 2003

*Variables in grey fall outside the scope of the present analysis

Figure 1: A typology of the variables affecting European Voter Turnout

Finally, an impressive number of studies analyse *cognitive* factors measuring the party rather than the media driven effect of Europe on electoral choice. Ferrara and Weishaupt (2004) for example strongly confirm the second order propositions over party size, the performance of government parties and the effect of electoral cycle, while partially substantiate the hypothesis that Europe may affect party-choice in EU wide elections. Their aggregate level analysis suggests that intra party dissent on European integration leads to a substantial electoral defeat. Party positioning on EU however, matched by the salience assigned to integration do not significantly determine EP vote choice. Van der Brug et al. (2008) conversely find that smaller distances between the positioning of voters and parties on European integration yield higher party preferences. Positioning on European unification nevertheless is not as a salient factor as the difference in Left Right orientations among parties and their electorate.

All in all, despite 30 years of research on the determinants of voting choice in Euro-elections our knowledge remains fragmented. Nationally significant effects of both the classic 'second order' view and the revised model by Franklin make up an almost uncontested finding (Hix and Marsh 2007; Ferrara and Weishaupt 2004; Kousser 2004; Marsh 1998, 2003). Evidence in support of the 'Europe matters' view, however, remains unstructured across all different types of studies focusing either on turnout and/or on campaign effects and/or on party politics. Variation in the sample of countries and election periods studied, as well as in the choice of data sources and survey items to measure turnout (participation vs. vote switching) on the one hand and the instrumental and sociological factors influencing electoral participation on the other, belie a deep understanding of the European Parliament elections' 'puzzle'. Obviously, there is a need of consolidation of the existing evidence, stemming mainly from the 2004 European ballot that has monopolised recent scholarly interest.

The EVoT typology adapted to the present study

In order to reinforce and stabilise the findings of updated European electoral studies two steps will be taken in this paper, one technical and another theoretical. From a technical point of view, a new Eurobarometer dataset will be employed, a pre election survey conducted a few months prior to the 2004 European polls.³ The added value of this survey instrument is twofold. Compared to the Flash Eurobarometer post election study conducted in June 2004 contains a wide range of trend survey items that enable the analyst to examine in detail instrumental attitudes to integration as well as the level of knowledge on the EU – a sociological facilitation factor of particular interest in this study. Juxtaposed now to the European Election study of 2004 the data source in question provides us with a broad list of items on campaign exposure and active information seeking, indicators that prove to be useful in establishing empirically a sound theoretical model of EU voting.

In terms of theory the existing typology of factors influencing EVoT will be reinterpreted using the insights and hypotheses stemming from the EU democratic deficit discourse as laid out in the RECON project of which this paper is part. The four quadrants of the bi-dimensional funnel of causality will now correspond into a set of hypotheses that will not simply examine the determinants of turnout but whether such indicators give resonance to one or another approach over the democratic control of the Union. A tentative answer will be offered in other words, as to whether voting, a critical moment in Union's democratic functioning, can be reconstituted along delegated, federal and/or cosmopolitan lines. In particular, the variables of concern in this paper comprise a number of factors that while included in earlier research, are also taken into account in the newly specified model of 2004 EP turnout. Prior to theorising the connection between EP voting data and the three models of EU democracy, nevertheless, a basic presentation of these indicators extending across the four quadrants of Figure 1 seems pertinent.

Aggregate mobilisation factors consist of country-level official statistics comprising compulsory voting, time till next national elections in months, first elections in the EP, and strict party lists. Strict party lists, a variable emanating from Mattilla's research (2003), do not allow voters to vote at their own discretion and demotivate participation. In the absence of open lists, voters are less likely to feel satisfied with

³ *Supra*, note 1.

the act of voting as they are not always allowed to vote for the candidate of their choice (ibid.: 455). First elections in the EU conversely, should boost participation. If the 2004 ballot is the first election to the European Parliament ever held in the countries involved, individual motivation to vote should be higher on average. Similarly, the closer the European polls are to the upcoming national electoral contest the more active the participation of citizens is expected to be. The position of European polls in the national electoral calendar largely determines media coverage and the extent of public interest in voting. Last but not least, compulsory voting, if enforced, increases the costs of not voting leading to higher turnout rates, a result that has not been contested so far in any European election model. Similarly, aggregate facilitation factors refer to yet other institutional explanations of turnout, such as weekend voting and concurrent elections, measured on aggregate level. Holding elections on weekend days lowers the cost of voting as citizens can take time to go to polls. Having national, regional or local elections simultaneously with the European contest also increases participation, as voters can respond to two civic responsibilities at once. All in all, the practical administrative arrangements that both *mobilise* and *facilitate* voting will come under scrutiny in the ensuing empirical analysis that seeks to reinterpret the typology of influences on turnout by means of the democratic deficit debate.

Besides contextual factors individual mobilisation and facilitation whether instrumental or sociological comes under scrutiny with the use of a standard Eurobarometer survey conducted between February and March 2004, i.e. three months prior to the European parliament elections. This study, unlike the Flash Eurobarometer post election survey that has been employed extensively, queries respondents on standard Eurobarometer measures allowing the analyst to gauge into instrumental attitudes to integration. Namely, a question on the country's perceived benefit from EU membership is included in the ensuing analysis as well as a constructed three point index of support for joint decision regarding EMU, a common foreign policy and a common defence and security policy.⁴ A positive utility oriented stance to the material aspects of integration, whether generally expressed or targeted to specific areas of policy making, is expected to boost voters' propensity to participate in the elections. The problem solving capacity of the Union potentially leads to stronger incentives to vote following the economic calculus theorising developed in studies of EU public opinion (Diez Medrano 2003; Gabel 1998; Anderson and Reichert 1996).

Sociological mobilisation on the other hand, comprises indicators registering respondents' sentiments of national and EU identity, trust towards the European and the National assembly, satisfaction with democracy at both levels, recognition of EP power and their positioning along the left right politico-ideological scale. The incentives to vote in this case derive from affective rather than utilitarian attitudes to European integration and its institutional underpinnings (Hooghe and Marks 2005; Luedtke 2005; Kritzing 2003; Carey 2002). Voters' sense of attachment to a national vs. a European identity has a strong effect on their propensity to abstain or participate

⁴ The exact Eurobarometer question on 'benefit' is as follows: 'Taking everything into consideration, would you say that [our country] has on balance benefited or not benefited from being a member of the EU? 1. Benefited 2. Not Benefited 3. DK. The exact Eurobarometer question on 'EU policies' is as follows: What is your opinion on each of the Following statements: 1. A European Monetary Union with one single currency, the euro. 2. One common foreign policy among the member states of the European Union, towards other countries. 3. A common defence and security policy among European Union member states. A. For B. Against C. DK

in the elections. An exclusive national identity in fact, is expected to erode popular incentives for electoral participation, unlike a European sense of belonging that should increase the likelihood of voting, especially among those who perceive the Union as a political community that can sustain an identity building process via its institutions. Such long-term mobilisation processes will be further investigated in this paper via other lasting mobilisation indicators measuring citizens' concerns over democratic performance, their level of trust towards the domestic and supranational representative structures and their confidence in the effect of the European Parliament. Citizens satisfied with the nature of democracy in their own country, who have confidence in the representative function of their assembly and are dismissive of the effect European Parliament decisions may have on their lives, are expected to abstain in the long run. Conversely, citizens with low levels of satisfaction and trust in their domestic democratic performance, who recognise the effect of the supranational assembly on daily life, will probably display a higher propensity to vote reckoning that the political benefits of voting in the supranational arena overcome nationally driven inhibitions. Last but not least, voters' left-right orientations come under scrutiny with a view to determining whether participation in EP elections is 'politically cued' or not. In line with the premise of cue theory, we examine whether citizens' interest in EP elections is conditioned by the left-right continuum and in particular whether left and right extremism, measured as respondents' distance from the midpoint of the ten item left-right scale, leads to higher levels of intended abstention in the Euroelections.

Turning to sociological facilitation, a variety of Eurobarometer survey items is used measuring EU knowledge, subjectively and objectively defined, active information seeking and campaign exposure. The pre-election Eurobarometer survey employed in this paper unlike the survey instruments that have been used so far, allows the analyst to consider the effect of respondent's knowledge of EU matters both in *subjective* terms, ranging between lack of EU knowledge to high awareness on EU matters, and in *objective* terms by means of an index measuring respondents' valid answers to a ten item test on European integration. What is more, the dataset to be analysed brings to the fore respondents' active information seeking on members of the European parliament since the last EP elections, ranging from uninterested voters who have employed no means of searching such as TV, radio, newspapers etc. to fully active citizens who have employed between four and seven means.⁵ In a similar fashion, respondents' intention to participate in the EP campaign is taken into consideration in a constructed variable that comprises uninterested, passive, partially active and fully active campaign followers.⁶ Last but certainly not least the Eurobarometer study at hand examines respondents' preference for a campaign that focuses on European parliament activities than on country issues. Transposing the 'cognitive mobilisation' insights from public opinion research to the study of European turnout,

⁵ The survey item that has been employed is as follows : Since the last European Parliament elections, have you seen or heard anything about or had any contacts with a member of the European Parliament in any of the following ways? 0. Not Anything 1. Newspaper/Magaz 2. Television 3. Radio 4. Internet 5. Newsletter 6. Public Meeting 7. Other This has been recoded so that 'None' = 0 , 'passive' = 1, 'partially active' = 2 and/or 3 'fully active' = 4 to 7.

⁶ The survey item that has been employed is as follows : Would you personally be interested in seeing or hearing more about members of the European Parliament in any of the ways we have just talked about? 0. Not Anything 1. Newspaper/Magaz 2. Television 3. Radio 4. Internet 5. Newsletter 6. Public Meeting 7. Other This has been recoded so that 'None' = 0 , 'passive' = 1 , 'partially active' = 2 and/or 3 'fully active' = 4 to 7.

we claim that respondents with cognitive skills, whether 'long term', such as general knowledge on EU affairs, or 'short-term,' such as interest in the EP campaign, should feel less threatened by elections in the supranational arena and thereby display higher voting intentions (Inglehart 1970). Greater levels of information on the EU matched by EP campaign exposure presumably lead to lower levels of cautiousness about integration boosting voting intentions.

Instrumental facilitation finally, is operationalised by means of the usual suspects of sociodemographic background i.e. occupation dummies, age in years and a four point index of education. An elevated occupational status, maturity in years as well as higher education should result in a systematically increased voting tendency among the respondents. Education, social class and age effects come under scrutiny as well-established determinants of turnout promising to enhance our understanding of electoral participation in the 2004 European ballot.

All in all, the determinants of European voting offer competing information on the ways people can be facilitated and mobilised to vote via processes operating at an institutional and individual level. Participation in European Parliament elections, nevertheless, has significant implications not just for the act of voting but also for the democratic performance of the Union. The ability to vote is a litmus test of true democracy at the supranational level. Simply because going to polls offers a unique opportunity to have a say in how the EU should work choosing between intergovernmental, supranational and transnational principles and structures. In this sense, the factors hindering or promoting the act of EP voting will be used as a compass in tracing the form or forms of democracy best suited to the European practice.

RECONstituting hypotheses on European Electoral Participation

Transposing the state loaded concept of democracy to a supranational entity is a non straightforward task. Equally challenging is the interpretation of the act of voting in a multi-level system of EU governance that may lack nation state characteristics but can be democratic. Descending the ladder of abstraction, this paper will assess the prospects of democracy for Europe via a conceptual map adjusted to the European Parliament voting experience. Such theoretical insights derive primarily from three models for EU democratic reconstitution – a delegated, federal and cosmopolitan one – developed by the RECON project of which this study is part.

Before assessing which approach to European democratic restructuring is a viable solution in the context of EP voting, a concise presentation of their attributes seems most pertinent. In summary, RECON Model 1 of Delegated Democracy assumes a democratic control of the Union exclusively associated with member state democratic institutions. RECON Model 2 of Federal Democracy assumes 'a democratic constitutional state, based on direct legitimation' at the Union level (Eriksen and Fossum 2007: 20). RECON Model 3 of Cosmopolitan Democracy finally assumes that the Union can be democratic by means of an active, self-legislating public sphere, without being a state (in contrast to Model 2) or without depending on the democratic institutions of its member states (in contrast to Model 1) (ibid.: 15-26).

Under conditions of delegated democracy member states contract with one another to delegate powers to supranational institutions. Delegation is chosen as a means of achieving credible policy commitments relatively undistorted of local preferences (Menon and Wheatherhill 2002: 117). Whilst this model implies that Union institutions must be configured to allow for control by national democracies, it otherwise implies that all the enabling conditions for democracy – free and fair elections, a party system, rights, civil society, public sphere, civic capabilities and political community – can and should be delivered through the domestic arena. If this model is feasible we would at least expect the policy delegations to the Union to have motivational force or, in other, words for turn-out to the European elections to be positively related to the degree to which voters perceive their country as benefiting from Union policies (Hypothesis 1b). Additionally, in Model 1 the goal is control of the Union by its several national democracies. Thereby, EP voting tendencies should depend on national contextual variables linked to domestic institutional factors such as compulsory voting and strict party lists, as well as to attributes of specific elections, i.e. first European election and election timing close to the national polls (Hypothesis 1a)

Model 2 in turn, assumes the Union is or should be a multinational Federal state which has a demos of its own and in favour of which member states alienate – rather than delegate – selected powers. Specifically it implies that, even if European elections are organised in member states, they should be capable of producing pan-European majorities which are widely accepted as being entitled to make decisions that are collectively binding throughout a ‘European people’s’ Union. Thus, quite unlike model 1, model 2 presupposes a sufficiently developed ‘political community’ at the Union level. It is an open question whether that could be as ‘thin’ as a shared understanding of those norms of mutual recognition and respect that are needed for individuals to communicate and decide together, or whether ‘political community’ at the Union level would have to be ‘thickened up’ at least as far as a ‘constitutional patriotism’ and possibly as far as more affective ties of shared history, myths and *teloi*. But, one way or another, it would seem to be reasonable to take as a test of the plausibility of this model a positive relationship between standard Eurobarometer questions on European (as opposed to national) identity and respondents’ willingness to participate in European elections. Stronger European identity should be associated with greater probability of voting (Hypothesis 2).

Model 3 finally, effectively strips the legitimating force of democracy itself down to the single principle that individuals acting as equals should be authors of their own laws in a post-national government system (Eriksen and Fossum 2007: 22-24). Provided that the individuals in question understand the discourse principle – what it is to treat another person as an equally entitled holder of political views and what it is to try to reach agreement only on the basis of convincing others rather than exercising power over them – democracy can, in principle, be practised between any group of individuals, quite regardless of whether they belong to territorially well-defined *demos* or identify closely with one another. The Eurobarometer data would tend to suggest this model is feasible if i) turn-out is quite unaffected by any kind of identity, national or European and yet ii) it tends to rise with knowledge and active information seeking on the Union in general and the Parliament in particular (Hypothesis 3a).

Table 1: Hypotheses over European voting across the three RECON Models

	Delegated democracy	Federal democracy	Cosmopolitan democracy
EXOGENOUS			
MOBILISATION (Polity level)	The Structure of National Political Institutions is significant (Hypothesis 1a)	–	The Structure of National Political Institutions is significant
FACILITATION (Polity level)	The National Infrastructure of electoral participation matters	The National Infrastructure of electoral participation matters	The National Infrastructure of electoral participation matters
ENDOGENOUS			
MOBILISATION	The benefits stemming from European integration have a strong positive effect on voting intentions (Hypothesis 1b)	–	The benefits stemming from European integration should have a positive effect on voting intentions
A. Instrumental			
B. Sociological	Sociological Public Attitudes i.e. sense of identity, feeling of trust, satisfaction with democracy, acceptance of effect of parliaments and attachment to political ideology favour the Nation state and boost the intention to vote	Sociological Public Attitudes i.e. sense of identity , feeling of trust, satisfaction with democracy, acceptance of effect of parliaments and attachment to political ideology favour the EU and boost the intention to vote (Hypothesis 2)	The propositions of both models over public sociological attitudes and identity may hold in view of the emergence of a ‘flexi-demos’ operating at both national and EU level. However, satisfaction with EU democracy should prevail over any type of identification (Hypothesis 3b)
FACILITATION	Voters’ personal circumstances have a significant effect on voting	Voters’ personal circumstances and partially their civic capabilities in the form of interest in EP campaign etc. make up an important factor in explaining turnout so long as EU identity constitutes a positive and significant factor	Partially voters’ personal circumstances and mainly their civic capabilities in the form of interest in EP campaign, active information seeking and EU knowledge make up the most important factor in explaining turnout (Hypothesis 3a)
A. Instrumental & B. Sociological			

While formulating the hypotheses on motivating European Voter Turnout factors across ‘delegated’, ‘federal’ and ‘cosmopolitan’ lines, we discern several variables affecting turnout that are important to all three models. For example, the national infrastructure of electoral participation, i.e. the ease with which people can vote, can make a difference in voting intentions in any version of Euroelectoral democracy, whether following the template of the nation state or rising above it. Similarly, voters’ personal circumstances comprising their socio-economic background and age, raise

voting propensities across all models. Following a 'developmental theory of turnout' (Plutzer 2002: 42), mature citizens who possess the personal resources, i.e. occupational status and educational assets may invariably turn out to vote in a delegated, federal or cosmopolitan Euroelectoral order.

Additionally, in the study of EU voting behaviour there are factors important to two of the models but not all three. Knowledge of the Union – its policies and its institutions – for example, is probably relevant to models two and three but not one. Model one is a form of delegated democracy in which the goal is the satisfaction of functional objectives in a Union controlled by its several national democracies. Active information seeking on the EU institutional structure and knowledge, whether objectively or subjectively measured, are sidelined in a delegated structure where the European Parliament is just seen as a device for helping national parliaments in their scrutiny. A positive role, however should be reserved for EU awareness raising processes both in a federally organised Union and a cosmopolitan system of self-legislating citizens, where public deliberation could play a greater role than representation. Of course a federal model of EU electoral democracy would equally require an overarching common identity, that would build up a collectivity in which interest in acquiring and extending EU political knowledge would be strong enough to override the divisive utilitarian interests of subgroups. In a cosmopolitan version of EU democracy in turn, knowledge should be highly valued in a non-coercive deliberative system, quite irrespective of national and collective EU identity feelings, as the latter do not essentially determine the democratic sustainability of an all-inclusive public sphere. Simply put, while the presence of a collective EU identity matched by info-seeking tendencies potentially validates the federal model, it does not essentially challenge the presence of a cosmopolitan EU order. Nor does the absence of EU identity overturn cosmopolitan assumptions. Thereby, in an attempt to frame a more rigorous test for model three, we also take into account an interaction term combining identity feelings with satisfaction over EU democracy. The suggestion is that turn out might be positively related to satisfaction in European Union democracy, quite regardless of patterns of identification, i.e. that even those who identify more with their member states, or not very much with either level at all, are more likely to participate if they are satisfied with democracy at the EU level (Hypothesis 3b). Model 3 in other words, as a cosmopolitan approach does not require any strong sense of political community of any kind. Instead it posits that a proper understanding of what it is to live together with others under a common set of laws should in and of itself be enough to ground acceptance of a shared democratic process.

Last but not least, it should be pointed out that while testing the plausibility of any of the RECON models on European Voter Turnout data, besides the principal variables building up the hypotheses over a delegated, a federal and a cosmopolitan form of electoral participation, there are peripheral ones that serve a complementary function. That is the role assigned to certain variables measuring sociological public attitudes. In particular, feelings of trust to the national and European assembly, acceptance/rejection of their effect on peoples' lives and attachment to or detachment from left-right political ideology add to a delegated, a federal or even a cosmopolitan explanation but not determine each model's part in finishing the EVoT jigsaw. Unlike delegated perceptions of EU power, in a federally inspired electoral context, trust towards the European assembly should prove more significant than that of the national parliament much like voters' attachment to the left right cognitive schema. In addition, satisfaction with democracy at the EU level should override the approval of

national democratic institutions and the recognition of EP power should equally add to positive voting intentions. Conversely, in a cosmopolitan electoral order both the delegated and federal complementary hypotheses of sociological mobilisation may hold without assuming primary role, since a cosmopolitan perception of democracy does not require any strong sense of political community whether national or European.

All in all, for the sake of brevity and presentational accuracy Table 1 puts on display all hypotheses (both primary ones highlighted in bold and secondary) over democratic performance that need to hold depending on whether a functional, a federal or a cosmopolitan model characterises the EU electoral context.

Testing the RECON Models on European Voting

To test these competing and at times partially complementary hypotheses over what influences European electoral participation I use two types of data, aggregate level data from official statistics and individual Eurobarometer survey data (see Appendix I for a description of variables and data sources).⁷ Aggregate and individual data in turn, are analysed in distinct models, simply because the results of aggregate data analysis can be misleading when transposed to the individual level (Achen and Shively 1995). In particular, the research equation that operationalises Euroelectoral participation as a function of 'aggregate level' explanations testing the presence of a delegated, federal or cosmopolitan model of EU democracy is as follows:

$$(EP \ VOTING)_i = a + \sum_{j=1}^K \beta_j X_i^j + u_i \quad (1)$$

Where i denotes the 25 member countries, u is a stochastic disturbance term, α and β 's are unknown parameters to be estimated, while X finally stands for the values of a set of j contextual mobilisation and facilitation factors comprising compulsory voting, time till next national elections, first EP elections, strict party lists, weekend voting and concurrent elections. The dependent variable in turn, is the percentage of those entitled to vote that has participated in the 2004 European ballot. Given the small $N = 25$ and the micronumerosity issue it raises (i.e. there is not enough data or variability in the data to get precise estimates), no distinction is drawn between old and new member states at this stage. The twenty five member countries, however, constitute the entire universe of observations for the 2004 European ballot and for that reason this study replicates the aggregate level analysis already employed in earlier research (Schmitt 2005: 657).

Besides the assessment of macro-level EVoT factors, the results of a micro-level analysis of European electoral participation come under scrutiny. Individual level data has been used at this stage in an attempt to build an explicit test for each of the three models of European democracy. More specifically, a standard *Eurobarometer* public opinion survey has been employed for the 'old' fifteen member states (EB 61), while a Candidate Countries Eurobarometer survey (CCEB 2004.1) has been used for the ten new entrants. As the fieldwork for both surveys was carried out concurrently

⁷ All variables have been coded such that higher values should yield higher turnout.

using identical questions, the matching of these studies is most pertinent in measuring citizens' attitudes to the European Parliament, a few months prior to the 2004 elections. It should also be pointed out that the analysis is carried out independently for the old fifteen member states and the 10 new member countries following the trend in current Euroelectoral research that builds separate models for distinct groups of countries in search of potentially diverge dynamics motivating electoral participation in established democracies that have a long experience in the Euroelectoral context and the post-communist entrants for whom the European ballot was a novel experiment (Schmitt 2005; Hix and Marsh 2007; Franklin 2007⁸; Wessels 2007; Van der Brug et al. 2008).

The structure of the dependent variable extracted from the aforementioned Eurobarometer studies, i.e. the propensity to vote in forthcoming European elections measured along a ten point scale, enables the building up of four distinct OLS regression models, with robust standard errors and backward difference coding for the included categorical independent variables, that will test the prevalence of a delegated, federal or cosmopolitan model of EU democracy across the individual level quadrants of electoral mobilisation and facilitation, both instrumental and sociological.⁹ Namely, four models come under scrutiny, which vary in the inclusion of a) instrumental mobilisation and facilitation as well as b) sociological mobilisation and c) sociological facilitation factors that become added in an incremental fashion. More specifically, the general equation applied is as follows

$$(\text{Intended EP Vote})_i = a + \sum_{j=1}^K \beta_j X_i^j + u_i \quad (2)$$

where i denotes individual respondents, u is a stochastic disturbance term, α and β 's are unknown parameters to be estimated, while X finally stands for the values of a set of j individual mobilisation and facilitation factors. In particular, X^j corresponds to instrumental mobilisation and facilitation, as well as sociological mobilisation and sociological facilitation for $j=1,2$ and 3 respectively while $j=4$ comprises the interaction terms.

2.1	$(\text{Intended EP Vote})_i = a + \beta_1 \cdot (\text{instrumental mobilisation})_i + \beta_2 \cdot (\text{instrumental facilitation})_i + u_i$ [delegated model]
2.2	$(\text{Intended EP Vote})_i = a + \beta_1 \cdot (\text{instrumental mobilisation})_i + \beta_2 \cdot (\text{instrumental facilitation})_i + \beta_3 \cdot (\text{sociological mobilisation})_i + u_i$ [federal model]
2.3	$(\text{Intended EP Vote})_i = a + \beta_1 \cdot (\text{instrumental mobilisation})_i + \beta_2 \cdot (\text{instrumental facilitation})_i + \beta_3 \cdot (\text{sociological Mobilisation})_i + \beta_4 \cdot (\text{sociological facilitation})_i + u_i$ [cosmopolitan model]
2.4	$(\text{Intended EP Vote})_i = a + \beta_1 \cdot (\text{instrumental mobilisation})_i + \beta_2 \cdot (\text{instrumental facilitation})_i + \beta_3 \cdot (\text{sociological Mobilisation})_i + \beta_4 \cdot (\text{sociological facilitation})_i + \beta_5 \cdot (\text{interactions})_i + u_i$

⁸ Mark Franklin (2007) runs separate models for a) established democracies b) new and old member countries c) post-communist countries d) particularly low turnout countries

⁹ The same analysis was conducted using Ordered Logistic Regression so as to check the distances between adjacent levels in the dependent variable that is measured along a ten point scale. The distances ranged between 0.25 and 0.46, a result that justifies the treatment of the dependent variable as interval and the use of an OLS procedure.

These four models represent the major directions in RECON theorising. Model 2.1 focusing on instrumental mobilisation and facilitation, examines the impact of economic variables on voting and investigates the viability of a delegated model of EU democracy in a functionally driven electorate. Model 2.2, adding sociological mobilisation to the EP elections equation, emphasises identities and tests the feasibility of a federal euro-democracy operating for an EU minded demos. Model 2.3 inserts sociological facilitation in the analysis exploring the prominence of EU knowledge and info seeking in a cosmopolitan EU public sphere. Model 2.4 finally, examines two interaction terms that allow a better distinction between models. Since, EU knowledge and info seeking on the MEPs can be factors compatible with both cosmopolitanism and federalism in the presence of a strong EU identity, attention is also directed to satisfaction with democracy. As previously argued, evidence that turnout is positively related to satisfaction in EU democracy, quite regardless of patterns of identification - (i.e. that even those who identify more with their member states, are more likely to participate if satisfied with democracy at the EU level)- offers an ideal additional test for a cosmopolitan model. The latter puts emphasis on public acceptance of a shared democratic process and does not require any strong sense of political community of any kind. At the same time, the impact of satisfaction in domestic democracy on EP turnout, among those with an EU identity, comes under scrutiny. Evidence that those with an exclusive EU identity are less likely to participate if satisfied with democracy at the national level would be deeply problematic for Model 2 and ideal for Model 1, as the former focuses on the explanatory power of EU identification in determining turnout unlike Model 1, in which domestic identity and satisfaction with national politics prevail in the decision to vote. In this light, evidence that identification with the EU increases turn-out even amongst those who are satisfied with national democracy would tend to be problematic for Model 1 and ideal for Model 2.

The ensuing analysis building on these insights compares the relative influence of delegated, federal and cosmopolitan traits on European voting. In doing so, the typology of factors influencing turnout (EVoT) is reinterpreted by means of concrete EU democratic audit propositions (see Figure 2). Simply put, the four quadrants of Figure 1 now translate into substantial indicators of democratic performance, put forward by Lord (2008), which if empirically substantiated will lead us to assess the relative weight of a delegated, a federal and a cosmopolitan model of EU democracy against the background of the 2004 electoral contest.

More specifically, in the aggregate mobilisation quadrant and the 'polity level' section, a modified democratic audit proposition over free and fair voting is most relevant, namely: 1. *How far and how equally does the political system allow citizens to exercise public control through free and fair voting?* Turning to aggregate facilitation, the democratic audit proposal on free and fair voting ensured by the election specific administrative arrangements is found wanting: 2. *How far and how equally does the electoral infrastructure allow citizens to exercise public control through free and fair voting?* While polity-level mobilisation clearly alludes to a delegated model of democracy where citizens use national institutions to secure continued control of power delegated to European governance, the same is not the case for polity level facilitation. The ease with which people can vote constitutes a factor of electoral choice that may take effect across all models. Whether EU electoral legitimation relies on national parliamentary systems or is based on a Union wide federal order or even corresponds

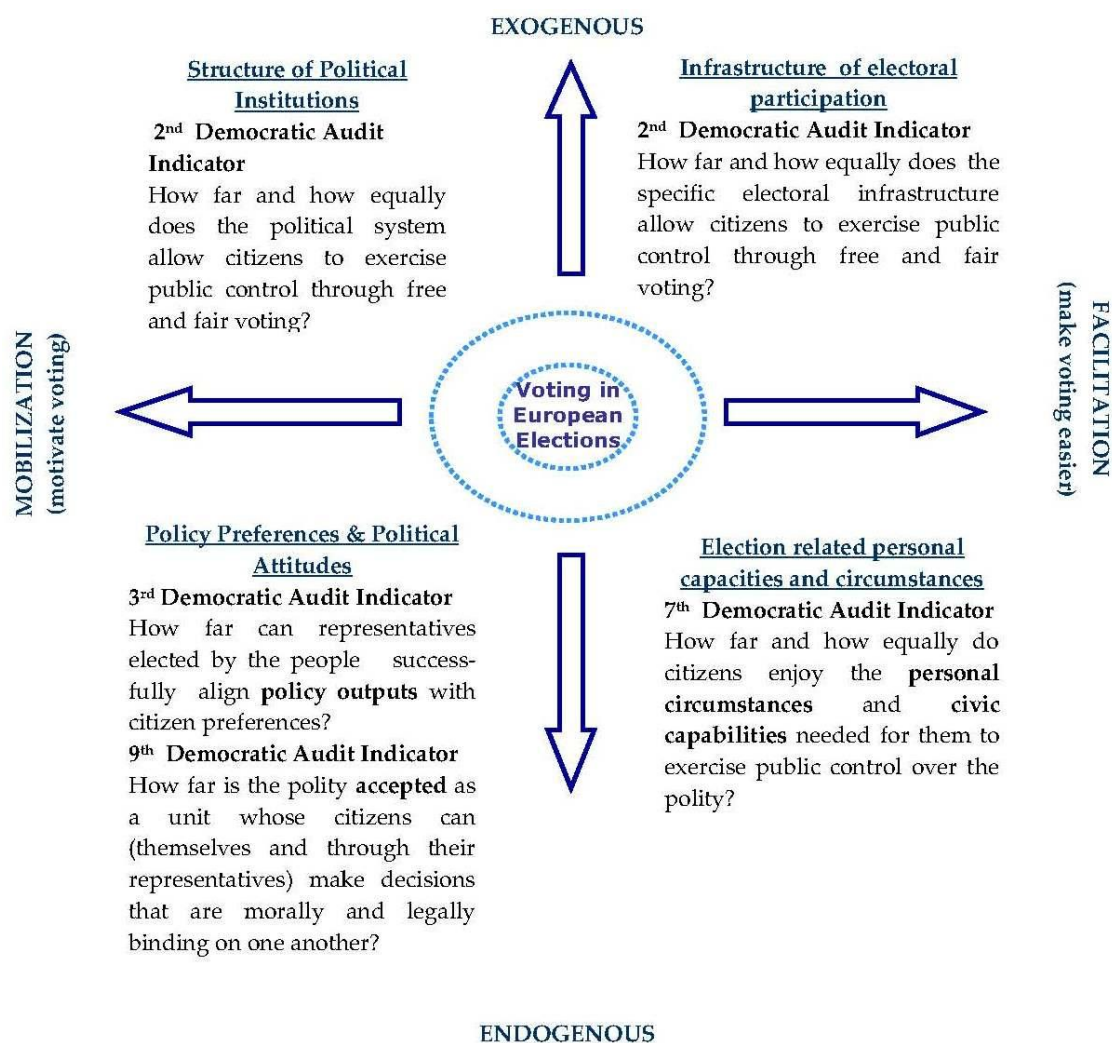
to a cosmopolitan entity based on self legislating citizens, voting facilitation factors may invariably hold across all cases boosting popular intention to participate.

Individual mobilisation in its instrumental version in turn, directs research interest towards public attitudes of utilitarian nature encapsulated by the following amended indicator of democratic performance: 3. *How far can representatives elected by the people successfully align **policy outputs** with citizen preferences?* Representative institutions in other words, mobilise electoral participation if securing a pareto optimal institutional performance and outputs. Output justification of EP power serves as the main intermediary for an indirect, elite-led democratisation much like the indirect nationally inspired 'second order' election model encapsulated in the polity level propositions of aggregate mobilisation. Conversely, sociological explanations of voter mobilisation put forward issues of trust, identification and belonging eloquently encapsulated in the following federally inspired democratic audit indicator : 4. *How far is the EU polity accepted as a unit whose citizens can (themselves and through their representatives) make decisions that are morally and legally binding on one another?* EU is not defined as a mere 'policy-generating' process but as a polity in the making i.e. 'an entity that might develop into a form of direct governance in its own right (Wallace 1993: 101). Government by the people' at the EU level, in this case presupposes a European people around which and for which representative democracy can be organised (Weiler 1997; Scharpf 1999: 11-12). All in all, a political-ideological justification of democracy prevails over performance driven criteria in sociological explanations of voter mobilisation.

The fourth quadrant of individual facilitation finally, triggers a passage to both 'statist' and non 'statist' factors that may have an impact on turnout. In particular, the democratic audit proposition alluding to instrumental and sociological voter facilitation is as follows: 5. *How far and how equally do citizens enjoy the personal circumstances and civic capabilities needed for them to exercise public control over the polity?* Following a 'developmental theory of turnout' (Plutzer 2002: 42), mature citizens who possess the personal resources, i.e. socioeconomic status and educational assets may invariably turn out to vote in a delegated, federal or cosmopolitan Euroelectoral order. On the other hand, politically active citizens seeking information on EU matters become involved in processes of will formation that allows them easier access to an electoral arena over which they know or wish to find out, what is at stake. Openness to information and EP campaign exposure formulates a dynamic public sphere where 'government with the people' exists on a complementary basis with 'government by and for the people'. A potential prevalence of civic capabilities thereby, primarily alludes to a cosmopolitan model of democracy where European citizens will be able to consider themselves as self-legislating actors *through a polity that is not a state and is 'without agreement on a demos'* (Eriksen and Fossum 2007: 24). It could also be the case that sociological facilitation in the form of active information seeking and EU political knowledge or campaign exposure relates to a federal perception of EP elections building up a vital EU identity and a common language among Europeans. Yet, citizens in a federal order recognise the European assembly as the main repository of EU legitimacy assuming that it will almost *automatically* generate a sense of belonging to Europe. The socialisation means through which such a we-feeling is produced (info seeking, or campaign exposure etc.) are left unexplored due to the conviction that an immediate leap to representative government will help release latent support for elections, solving any legitimacy problems (Kelstrup 2000: 25). In this manner sociological facilitation factors will be deemed conducive to a

federally inspired model on condition that a ‘common European identity’ appears to be a strongly significant and positive factor in motivating electoral participation.

All in all, the statistical evidence of what influences turn-out to European elections will have a role in answering these broader questions of EU democratic design allowing us to assess how the Union might be controlled via the multiple standards set by the RECON models.



Source : Adapted from Sinnott, 2003 and Lord, 2007

**Democratic Audit Propositions in grey are not included in the present analysis.

Figure 2: Relevant Democratic Audit Indicators across the EVoT typology

Findings

Aggregate level findings: Revisiting the ‘classic view’

Table 2 displays the relative weight of ‘polity level’ factors on actual turnout rates registered across the 25 member states in the last Euroelectoral contest. The results of equation (1) using the 2004 sample corroborate at large the findings of earlier research. In line with a wealth of empirical studies, real turnout rates are strongly related to compulsory voting (Wessels 2007; Franklin 2001, 2005, 2007; Schmitt 2005;

Mattila 2003; Flickinger et al. 2003; Smith 1999; Blondel et al. 1998). In countries with mandatory electoral participation actual turnout in EP elections is *ceteris paribus* 38 per cent higher than in countries where failure to vote is not punished. Similarly, concurrent first-order elections strengthen participation significantly much like the opening of the polls on Sunday rather than on a week day (Schmitt 2005; Mattila 2003; Blondel et al. 1998; Van der Eijk et al. 1996). Interestingly enough, in the 2004 sample, strict party lists depress turnout – a hypothesis barely confirmed in Mattila’s own analysis of European elections for the period 1979 – 1999 (2003: 464). List election systems in the enlarged EU deprive voters the satisfaction of choosing their preferred candidate and thereby deplete participation. Turning now to the effect of time until the next national election, it is insignificant and not in the expected direction. Only when tested for non compulsory voting countries (i.e. member states insulated from the consequences of mandatory vote), does election timing prove to be significant, still positive and of miniscule effect. Such an outcome is confirmed in the 2004 election study conducted by Schmitt, who reports that ‘the cycle is perhaps a less mighty determinant in the new and larger European Union stretching out towards Eastern Europe’, but not in the aggregate level analyses of Mattila (2003) and Franklin (2001, 2005, 2007) that account for multiple European contests extending mainly between 1979 and 1999. In the latter research as time towards the next national ballot shrinks turnout raises. Such an effect appears to be overturned in the enlarged EU since national elections have also suffered from voter defection in recent years. Last but not least, the negative effect of the first European elections among the new entrants does not come as a surprise knowing the remarkably low turnout figures observed among the Central and Eastern European countries that cast a vote in June 2004. It should be borne in mind that the reverse effect highlighted in Franklin’s research corresponds to a different time period and thereby a divergent sample comprising the Mediterranean entrants as well as the EFTA countries, which largely confirmed the first election hypothesis (Franklin 2007: 54, 56).

Table 2: Model of polity-level factors influencing EVoT among EU 25

EP turnout	Beta Coefficient	Std. Err.	Sig.t
Compulsory Vote	34.74	5.85	0.000
Strict Party lists	-8.17	3.82	0.047
Simultaneous Elections	22.70	4.48	0.000
Weekend Vote	10.10	3.41	0.009
First EP elections	-7.32	4.73	0.140
Time till next nat. election	.066	.088	0.466
Time till*non compulsory	.380	.158	0.028
Constant	23.019	7.09	0.005

Adjusted $R^2 = 0.866$

N = 25

On the basis of the aforementioned table, there is evidence in favour of a mainly delegated and/or a partially cosmopolitan model of EU democracy since both allow in variable degree for a derivative legitimation of EU practices via the nation state apparatus. However, the overall fit of the polity-level model as given by the adjusted R^2 figure cannot on its own confirm the validity of a nationally inspired Euroelectoral model, since system level data always provide a better fit than individual data. In addition, the small number of observations inflates the R^2 measure even further. In fact, the polity level model needs to be complemented by individual level evidence before reaching a conclusion over the prevalence of a particular type of EU

democracy. For that reason attention will be shifted towards equations (2.1), (2.2), (2.3) and (2.4) comprising individual level data in both sides so as to avoid the risk of committing 'ecological fallacy' i.e. the risk of using aggregate data to make inferences over individual voting behaviour.

Individual level analysis: Revisiting the 'Europe matters' model

Tables 3 and 4, display the effects of instrumental as well as sociological mobilisation and facilitation tested in four models, across EU 15 and the ten new entrants, in an attempt to explain voters' intention to participate in the 2004 European ballot. To begin with, the evidence presented does not rule out the existence of a Euroelectoral model associated with the nation state. Decreasing differences in European and national participation inflate significantly intended turnout levels. The analysis of instrumental mobilisation factors across all four models further indicates that participation is consistently associated with perceived benefits from integration. The EU benefit coefficient is .659 among EU fifteen in the first model (digressing to .27 in the fourth model) meaning that for those who think that their country has benefited from integration their intended participation in EP elections goes up by almost 0.6 points in the ten point scale. Even more so, among the ten new entrants perceived benefits from accession boost voters' intention by almost 1,5 points in the first model and 0.7 points in the full model. A utilitarian public inception of supranational governance is thereby strongly confirmed doing credit to a delegated model of EU democracy. In addition, the overly positive and strongly significant effect of support for joint decision-making on intended EP turnout, lends further support to a nationally inspired model of EU electoral participation.

The significance of a nationally driven electoral model is retained even when a series of socio-demographic controls is introduced. Maturity in years boosts voting intentions in both sampling populations, confirming the evidence of earlier electoral research (Schmitt and Mannheimer 1991; Franklin 2007). Lower socio-professional status depletes participation among then new entrants but not among the old fifteen. In the former, both high and low professional status is positively associated with intended turnout. Low education finally, affects negatively individual voting tendency across both groups while only among the 15 member states higher educational background functions as a significant indicator of turnout. To put it bluntly, the people most likely to turn out to vote in 2004 European Parliament elections were older people drawn from an educational and social elite. Treating turnout as a gradually acquired habit (Verba and Nie 1972: 148; Miller and Merrill Shanks 1996), resonates well with a delegated model of state driven democracy, where prospective European voters become acculturated to voting in the national sphere. It offers, however, an equally plausible framework of analysis for both a federally inspired and a cosmopolitan model of Euroelectoral democracy, as there is room for electoral socialisation in their distinct explanations.

Model 2 in turn, examines whether a passage from a consequentialist perception of EU and its electoral politics to a 'multinational federal European state' is possible (Eriksen and Fossum 2007: 22). Trust to the European assembly being significant in determining voting intentions as well as recognition of its significantly effect on individuals partially allude to a federal model. Trust towards the national assembly on the other hand, being an equally significant and slightly more powerful predictor

of voting propensities than EP trust much like the indicator of satisfaction with national democracy redirect interest towards the delegated model. Similarly, the limited role played by domestically inspired left right positioning, which is only marginally significant among the 2004 entrants can get accommodated in the aforementioned logic. More importantly, the central variable in determining the validity of a federal model of representative democracy in the EU, i.e. exclusive EU identity feelings, is in the opposite direction from that expected and apparently has a substantive impact on intended participation. Among the old member states, identification with the EU depletes voting intentions by 0.7 points while such effect reaches the level of 0.9 among the new entrants. An exclusive EU identity in fact has a stronger detrimental effect on intended participation than that recorded for feelings of national identity. Such evidence reflects the weakness of a European facet to public identities and the ensuing absence of an EU demos around which and for which a federal framework of EP electoral analysis could evolve. In addition, the marginal contribution of these variables to the overall model fit across both groups of EU members that goes up by three per cent open the way to alternative models of electoral EU democracy.

In models 3 and 4 finally, the evidence offered redirects interest towards a cosmopolitan multilevel model of electoral democracy since variables preparing an EU public sphere play a central role in triggering turnout. The variables registering respondents' EU knowledge, active information seeking on EP election issues as well as participation in the Euroelectoral campaign serve as good proxies of a nascent civil society, which based on a solid understanding of EU practices will be able to function within and justify a multilevel non state entity. Among all variables that have been considered so far, respondents' interest in the EP campaign proves to be the second most powerful predictor of electoral participation. A movement from no interest to passive engagement over the EP campaign (i.e. using one means of information) brings about a one unit increase in the expressed intention to participate in 2004 elections across both the EU15 and the ten new member states. Such findings are in line with Wessels' analysis, whose multivariate findings report a significant effect on turnout for mediated, direct and personally driven campaign exposure (2007: 222-223).

Campaign exposure is also found significant in decreasing abstention in the earlier Euroelectoral analysis by Blondel et al. (1998: 224-225). It should be pointed out, nevertheless, that it is mainly the passage from no interest in EP campaign to some limited exposure that boosts voting intentions, indicating the embryonic state of an EU civil society. Such results confirm the findings by Banducci and Semetko (2003) as well as the analysis of Banducci (2005), where personal campaign exposure is either not significant or less significant than system level campaign visibility in mobilising turnout. Besides campaign exposure, active information seeking on the members of the European assembly mobilises participation and even more so among the old fifteen member states, while an equally significant and strong predictor of voting intentions is voters' knowledge of EU matters subjectively and objectively measured. In fact, objective knowledge of EU issues is a stronger predictor of turnout among the established member states as they have a longer experience of EU practices. Besides the impact of EU awareness on participation, which is not well documented in the literature due to the use of data sources not including relevant survey items, this study further shows that potential voters' preference for a campaign that focuses on EP issues increases their intention to show up in the polls. All in all, the sociological facilitation factors employed suggest that an increasing role assigned to a nascent civil

society can make room for a viable EU democracy along cosmopolitan lines, where electoral participation in the various levels (regional, national and supranational) is enhanced via awareness raising techniques.

Table 3: Model of individual level factors influencing EVoT among EU15

Variable	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
EP-NP Turnout	.603***	.598***	.578***	.578***
EU Benefit	.659***	.311***	.269***	.268***
Joint Dec_1	-.115	-.246*	-.327**	-.329**
Joint Dec_2	.367***	.28**	.25**	.248**
Joint Dec_3	.371***	.192**	.115	.117
Age	.0295***	.0283***	.0234***	.0233***
Education_2	-.0195	-.0302	-.241**	-.244**
Education_3	.462***	.414***	.265***	.266***
Education_4	.472***	.359***	.155*	.154*
White collar	.584***	.498***	.271***	.27***
Blue collar	.214***	.196**	.13*	.128*
National id		-.324***	-.0596	-.126
EU identity		-.729***	-.722***	-.311
Trust EP		.416***	.336***	.33***
Trust NP		.542***	.404***	.404***
Satisf. EU Dem		.00829	.0815	.0261
Satisf.Nat.Dem		.348***	.242***	.274***
EP effect		.661***	.398***	.4***
LR extremism		.017	.0124	.0124
subknow_2			.373***	.373***
subknow_3			.38***	.38***
subknow_4			.283***	.282***
objective know			.132***	.132***
Info-Seek_2			.186**	.184**
Info-Seek_3			.394***	.393***
Info-Seek_4			.176	.176
EP Campaign_2			.95***	.95***
EP Campaign_3			.0352	.0323
EP Campaign_4			.229**	.233**
Campaign_EP focus			.195**	.197**
Satisf. EU Dem*nation.id				.127
Satisf.Nat.Dem*eu.id				-.668**
Constant	5.41***	4.73***	4.91***	4.94***
Adjusted R ²	.233	.263	.325	.326
N	12.680	12.680	12.590	12.590

* p<0.05; ** p<0.01; *** p<0.001

Table 4: Model of Individual level factors influencing EVoT among EU10

Variable	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
EP-NP Turnout	.43***	.434***	.41***	.41***
EU Benefit	1.45***	.915***	.741***	.739***
Joint Dec_1	.868***	.636**	.426	.405
Joint Dec_2	.654***	.512**	.382*	.381*
Joint Dec_3	.675***	.514***	.478***	.479***
Age	.0113***	.0134***	.0112***	.0112***
Education_2	-.32*	-.101	-.318*	-.321*
Education_3	.116	.126	-.0164	-.0134
Education_4	.3**	.237*	.0534	.056
White collar	.152	.0532	.00225	.00127
Blue collar	-.295**	-.275**	-.255**	-.256**
National id		-.289***	-.055	-.247
EU identity		-1.1***	-.922***	-.9***
Trust EP		.698***	.577***	.571***
Trust NP		.631***	.503***	.505***
Satisf. EU Dem		.371***	.264*	.127
Satisf.Nat.Dem		.228**	.159	.165
EP effect		.46***	.187*	.187*
LR extremism		.076***	.0525**	.0526**
subknow_2			.362*	.356*
subknow_3			.456***	.46***
subknow_4			.401***	.406***
objective know			.0961***	.0967***
Info-Seek_2			.119	.117
Info-Seek_3			.285**	.287**
Info-Seek_4			-.0562	-.05
EP Campaign_2			1.22***	1.22***
EP Campaign_3			.0783	.0785
EP Campaign_4			.134	.132
Campaign_EP focus			.361***	.363***
Satisf. EU Dem*nation.id				.305
Satisf.Nat.Dem*eu.id				-.125
Constant	5.14***	4.39***	4.54***	4.65***
Adjusted R ²	.195	.231	.288	.288
N	5.750	5.750	5.224	5.224

* p<0.05; ** p<0.01; *** p<0.001

The central role of 'public sphere' proxies is further testified by the significant boost they offer to the variance explained that goes up from 26 per cent to 33 per cent among the old fifteen member states, while in the ten new entrants the R² figure raises from 23 to 29 per cent. The significance of EU civil society proxies, nevertheless, for some may not offer conclusive evidence over the functioning of a cosmopolitan electoral democratic logic since EU political knowledge, interest in EP campaign and active info-seeking on the MEPs could also be seen as operating in a federally inspired European order building up a sense of a European identity. What overturns such assumptions is the negative contribution of an exclusive EU identity to voting

intentions, which retains its significance and its sizeable effect even after the introduction of the sociological facilitation factors. Hence, in Model 3 there is indirect evidence in favour of a cosmopolitan model. In an attempt to frame a more direct test an interaction term is added in Model 4. In a cosmopolitan order no strong sense of political community of any kind is required. Instead, a proper understanding of what it is to live together with others under a common set of laws should in and of itself be enough to ground acceptance of a shared democratic process. Turnout in other words should be positively related to satisfaction with EU democracy, quite regardless of patterns of identification. Our expectation is not born out (see Figures 3a and 4a). Those who identify more with their member states, are more likely to participate if they are satisfied with democracy at the EU level, yet this is a non significant relationship across both groups of countries.

Interestingly enough, across the EU fifteen sample exclusive identification with the EU depresses turnout even amongst those who are satisfied with democracy at the national level (see Figure 3b and 4b). In particular, among those who identify with the EU in the experienced member states, satisfaction with the way democracy works at the national level depletes voting intentions by 0.4 in the ten point scale. Such finding allows us to say that under conditions of adverse socialisation (i.e. negative impact of EU identity feelings on EP turnout) doubt can be cast on the delegated Euroelectoral model, because the effect of one of its centripetal factors, satisfaction with national democracy, is reversed.

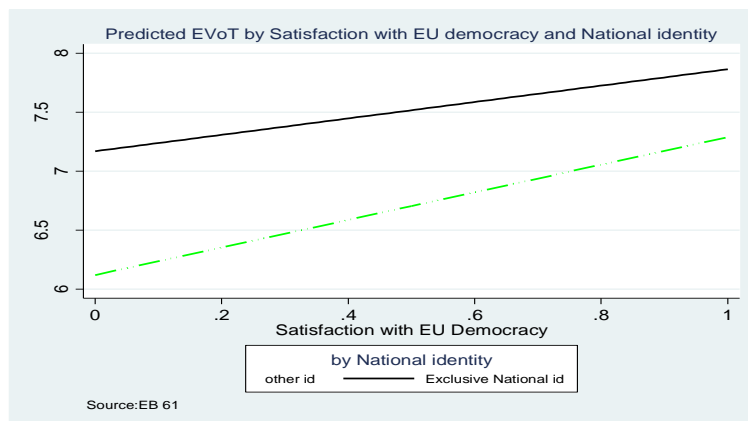


Figure 3a: Predicted EP Vote among EU15

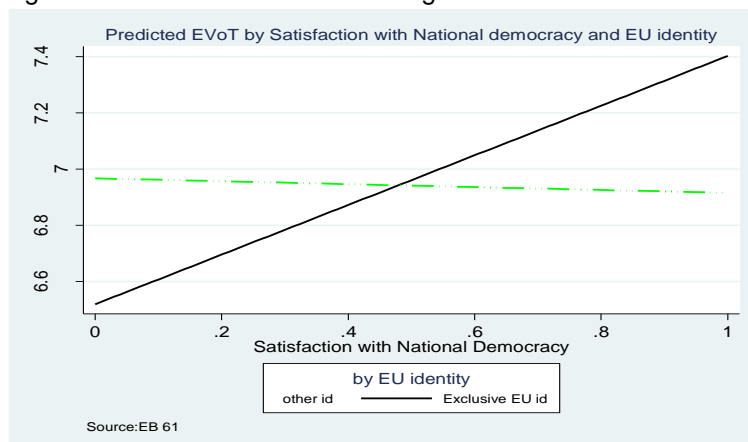


Figure 3b: Predicted EP Vote among EU15

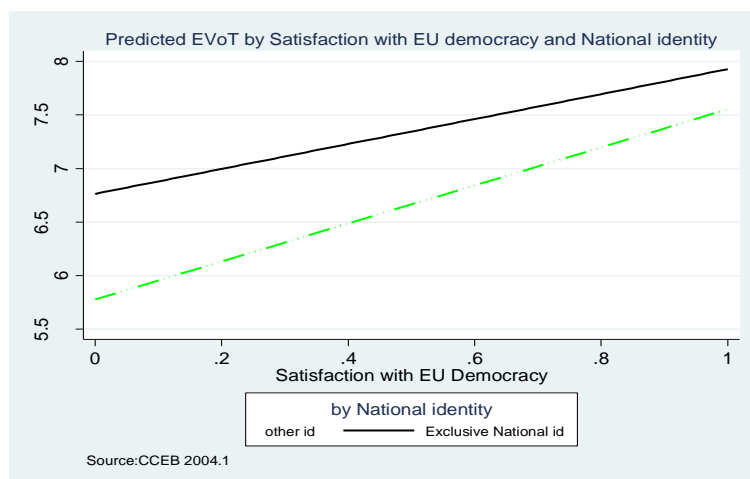


Figure 4a: Predicted EP vote among EU10

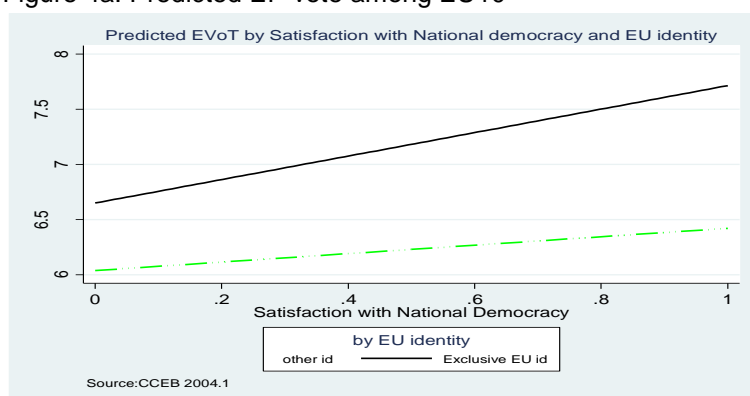


Figure 4b: Predicted EP vote among EU10

All in all, the evidence shows that participation in the 2004 European ballot is not just affected by aggregate factors of mobilisation or individual level variables of instrumental mobilisation that point to a derivative Euroelectoral democracy deeply influenced by 'statist' procedures and utilitarian EU expectations. Rather, the traces of a cosmopolitan model of EU democracy also emerge since a decisive role is reserved for a set of proxies of a nascent EU public sphere. In addition, the central element in a Federal understanding of EP elections – an exclusive EU identity – weakens voting intentions in the Euroelectorate of 2004. The rejection of the federal model comes as no great surprise at a time shortly before the EU experienced a major blow in its federal aspirations: the French and Dutch 'No' to the Lisbon Treaty establishing a constitution for Europe. Interestingly enough such findings hold not only across the EU wide sample of the old fifteen member states are equally verified among the ten new entrants proving Franklin right in saying that 'new members of the European Union, even the post-communist countries, are not very different from existing members in terms of things that influence the turnout of their electorates at European Parliament elections' (2007: 66). What differentiates the two groups is that among the 'old' fifteen and in particular those with an exclusive EU identity, satisfaction with national democratic institutions lowers intended participation in the European electoral arena a finding problematic for a delegated understanding of representative EU democracy.

Conclusions

Bringing the latest Euroelectoral contest within the broader context of democratic design we come to conclude that European voter participation should not be appraised against fixed standards. The national context matters, but more importantly, this study is among the few to provide evidence that Europe matters not only as a functional regime set up to address output problems but as a novel political entity to be discovered by a nascent public sphere. In addition, the interaction terms included in the analysis substantiate some inhibitions over the prevalence of delegated/statist indicators in the face of weak socialisation mechanisms at the EU level made felt in the negative contribution of exclusive EU identity feelings to turnout.

To begin with, the findings on system level determinants of turnout dovetail with extant research in that European parliament elections are still very much influenced by nationally specific structural factors such as compulsory voting, strict party lists or concurrent elections. Similarly, individual level analysis partially corroborates the presence of a derivative electoral participation model where the EU is envisaged as a problem solving entity whose authority is confined to acts of delegation by the member states. Utilitarian considerations explain a quarter of the variance among the 15 member states and almost one fifth in the new entrants.

Affective considerations in turn, such as trust towards the European parliament, prove to be only partially significant in triggering participation and do not add much to the explanatory power of the 2004 turnout model alluding to the limited resonance of a federal state like democracy in the EU. In addition, the strong negative contribution of exclusive EU identity feelings to intended EP turnout casts doubt on the feasibility of a European demos in the 2004 electoral arena that will help replicate the nation-state model of representative democracy at European level. Such negative contribution of EU identity to voting intentions is retained even among respondents who are satisfied with national democracy, reflecting the potential vulnerability of a state like model of electoral participation in a sphere where socialisation efforts are weak at best.

Rather than federalism, a key component in the European turnout debate complementing utility driven explanations, is a group of factors fostering an EU minded civil society. Interest in the EP campaign, knowledge on EU matters subjectively and objectively measured, as well as active information seeking on members of the Parliament trigger significantly higher levels of participation, both across the EU wide samples and within individual member states, alluding to the possibility of breeding a cosmopolitan EU democracy where a central role is reserved for civil society and an EU wide public sphere.

In overall terms this study of the 2004 European ballot demonstrates that a single theoretical device is not enough if the analyst is to come up with a satisfactory operating tool for explaining why turnout differs between countries and within individual member states. The flexibility in testing electoral participation and in evaluating the democratic performance of the EU is in line with the institutional pedigree of the EU. Article 8A of the Lisbon Treaty, for example, proclaims in a federal fashion that 'citizens are directly represented at Union level in the European Parliament'. A few lines further, the delegated model of nationally inspired

democracy comes forth since; 'Member States are represented in the European Council by their Heads of State or Government and in the Council by their governments, themselves democratically accountable either to their national Parliaments, or to their citizens' Finally, the touches of a cosmopolitan understanding of self legislating citizens comes to fore in article 8B where, no less than one million citizens who are nationals of a significant number of member states may invite the Commission to submit a legislative proposal on their behalf.¹⁰

Such differentiation in the determinants of European voter turnout provides empirical evidence in favour of a flexible understanding of the democratic deficit debate where delegated and cosmopolitan understandings may intermingle in search of a viable model of representative democracy. The policy implications of such conceptual flexibility in turn could be a combination of awareness raising techniques and functionally oriented propositions that would tackle the apathy of an embryonic EU civil society but also face its utilitarian fears which grow with the widening of a financial crisis into a recession over the last fifteen months. Such questions will have to be addressed for the 2009 elections where the combination of cosmopolitan and delegated features could be high among citizens who may in time realise the regulatory significance of the EU in an unstable environment depending on the preparedness of the supranational sphere to address their concern.

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¹⁰ *Official Journal of the European Union* (2007) C 306/14

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APPENDIX I

Table 1: Literature on European voter turnout (most significant indicators in italics)

	Franklin 2007	Wessels 2007	Schmitt 2005	Marsh and Schmitt 2005	Mattila 2003	Franklin 2001	Blondel et al. 1998
Source	EES 2004	EB flash 162 2004	EBflash 162 2004		Own data 1979-1999	Own data 1979-1999	EB 41.1
Dependent V.	aggregate vote self reported vote	self reported vote	aggregate vote self reported vote	Probability of shifting or abstaining rather than staying with the gov party in EP	aggregate vote EP – NP vote	aggregate vote	Voluntary and circumstantial Euro-specific abstention
Exogenous mobilisation	<i>compulsory vote</i>	<i>compulsory vote</i>	<i>compulsory vote</i>		<i>Compulsory vote</i>	<i>compulsory vote</i>	<i>compulsory vote</i>
Polity-level	<i>election timing</i> <i>1st elections in EU</i> <i>Post communism</i> <i>Low turnout</i> <i>country</i>		<i>NP turnout</i> <i>Post communism</i> <i>cycle</i>		strict party lists multiple constituency <i>election timing</i> <i>1st elections in EU</i>	<i>First election</i> <i>Electoral salience</i>	<i>Proportionality</i> Election timing
Cognitive		-	-		-	-	
Exogenous facilitation		Weekend vote	Weekend vote		<i>weekend vote</i>		<i>weekend vote</i>
Polity-level		<i>simultaneous election</i>	<i>simultaneous election</i>		<i>simultaneous election</i>		<i>simultaneous election</i> (national & Regional)
Cognitive		-	-		-	-	
Endogenous mobilisation	EU good for country		EU approval rate	<i>Government approval</i>	Budget contribution		
Instrumental	Government approval <i>Nat. parliament</i> vote				<i>EU membership</i>		

	Franklin 2007	Wessels 2007	Schmitt 2005	Marsh and Schmitt 2005	Mattila 2003	Franklin 2001	Blondel et al. 1998
Sociological	Trust NP, Trust EP Trust Government EU dem satisfaction Left-right extremism Party attachment Max. vote propensity Max propensity – mean propensity N of ties for max propen Ties*max propensity	Political Community (sense of identity & EU membership) Electoral effectiveness (Party & Candidate differentials) Responsiveness (EP & civic interests & Trust EU institutions)	Left Right Self placement EU attitudes	Left Right Self place Pro rapid integr Party attachment (close to a gov. party)			National Democracy Satisfaction, EP Power, EP-NP power, EP reliability Party attachment Left Right self-place Party & Candidate differentials Europarty-nation party differentials Pro rapid integr. Pro EU as it is
Endogenous facilitation	Education , Age, Middle class, Rural resident		Gender, age, social status				Age, religion, education, occupation-manual
Sociological	EP elections' interest, Read Newspaper , Interest in politics	Campaign exposure (Media & contacts), active info seeking	Interest in politics, Political info, campaign involvement	Interest in politics			Interest in politics, National political info, EU involvement, EU knowledge Campaign exposure
Method	Logistic regression	logistic regression	OLS back. condit LR	logistic regression. OLS	OLS	OLS	logistic regression
R2	.308 (full model)	.25	EU MS between .06-.40	EU15 .19/EU10 .22	.77 / .79 / .81	.821/.812/.805	-

	Van der Eijk et al. 1996	Banducci 2005	Banducci and Semetko 2003	De Vreese and Boomgarden 2006	Ferrara and Weishaupt 2004	Van der Brug et al. 2008	Freire et al. 2005
Source		EB 162 and newspaper content data	EB 52 & TV content data	panel surveys & media content in 2004 NL & DK	Aggregate data and expert survey data	EES 2004	EES 2004
Dependent V.		1. Perceived importance of EP elections 2 subjective info on elections	Probability of voting in EP Elections	political knowledge and turnout intermion in referendum on EU enlargement	Weighted Performance differential: difference bet. the votes received by a party in EP and NP elections held at t-1 & t+1. The differences are then weighted by the position of EP elections in the national cycle	Propensity to vote for a particular party	<i>Vote a Right EP party</i> Vote pro intgr. party
Exogenous mobilisation	compulsory vote		<i>compulsory vote</i>				
Polity-level	election timing Proportionality Electoral salience				<i>Party size, Executive size/oppositio n* Executive *cycle/oppositi on* cycle</i>	<i>party size</i>	<i>Former Communist ibid*LR self placde Effective threshold EP elections, ibid*LR</i>
Cognitive					<i>Position on EU* EU salience Party ideology , Party dissent on EU Executive *dissent/Oppo sition *dissent High vs low contest countries* dissent</i>		<i>Party system polarisation, ibid*LR Party system congruence, ibid*LR</i>
Exogenous facilitation	Weekend vote simultaneous election						
Polity-level	Weekend vote simultaneous election						

	Van der Eijk et al. 1996	Banducci 2005	Banducci and Semetko 2003	De Vreese and Boomgard 2006	Ferrara and Weishaupt 2004	Van der Brug et al. 2005
Cognitive	Campaign visibility (newspaper analysis)	Campaign coverage (Volume & tone of Coverage) Volume*low Attention Volume*high Attention				
Endogenous mobilisation Instrumental						<i>EU dem satisfaction</i> Government approval Importance of issues
Sociological	Party attachment	EU support Party attachment	EU Membership Good	Entertainment preference	Left Right Support ¹¹	Left Right Self-place Self-place Anti /pro integr Self pl.
Endogenous facilitation Instrumental	Age, education	Gender, age, occupation & education	Age, gender, education	Age, gender, education	Age, gender, education, social class, religion	Age, gender, education, social class, religiosity, trade union member
Sociological	Interest in politics	Interest in politics Campaign exposure (no of contacts during campaign, saw epelection on TV, in newspaper, saw party ad)	Attention to Political News Campaign exposure (Days TV News Viewing, days read newspaper, Contacted by Party)	discuss EU affairs, Political interest, Political knowledge News exposure & attention EU (Public & commercial) Reading & attention EU (broadsheet and tabloid) Entertainment preference		
Method	Multinomial logit	Logistic regression ¹²	Logistic regression ¹²	Logistic regression	OLS ¹²	OLS
R2	1 st .24/ 2 nd .19	.12	.34/.41	.32/.35	.311/.339/.244	.41/.48

¹¹ Distance between each voter own position & that of each party.

¹² predict propensity to vote for each party based on all measures of respondents' social class

Table 2: EVoT indicators and data sources

Variable	Description	Data Source
Dependent V (Individual) v250 (aggregate) epturnout	Respondent's intention to vote in EP elections (10-scale answer), % of voter turnout in 2004 European elections	EB 61 (EU 15) CCEB 2004.1 (EU 10) http://www.europarl.europa.eu/elections2004
Mobilisation	Administrative	Aggregate level data
Compuls	Countries with compulsory vote =1	Mattila. M. (2003) and http://www.idea.int/ (EU10)
Lists	Countries with strict party lists=1	Farrell, D. and Scully, R. (2005)
Uptime	Time till next national elections in months	http://www.electionresources.org
Arrival	1 st elections in EU except for compulsory voting countries = 0	
Diffturnout (Aggregate)	Difference between real European and National turnout	http://www.idea.int/ EB 61 (EU 15)
Diffturnoutil (individual)	Difference between reported European and National turnout (i.e. V250-v249)	CCEB 2004.1 (EU 10)
Facilitation	Administrative	
Restd	Weekend vote=1	http://www.euractiv.com/en/future-eu/european-parliament-elections-2004-archived/article-117483
Simultel	simultaneous elections	Report Flash Eurobarometer 162
Instrumental	Mobilization	Individual Level Data
Supjdm	Index of Support for 3 EU policies 0-4 (EMU, Foreign Policy & defence)	
Euben	The country has benefited from EU membership=1	
Sociological	Mobilization	
Natidws	Feel national id =1	
Nptrust	Trust National Parliament=1	
Eptrust	Trust European Parliament=1	
LRextreme	Respondents' distance from the midpoint of the 10 LR scale	
effectdum	The EP has considerable effect on individuals=1	
Eudsat	Satisfaction with EU democracy=1	
<u>Natdsat</u>	Satisfaction with National democracy=1	
Instrumental	Facilitation	
Occup4_wc and occup4_bc	Occupation category dummies (white collar, blue collar)	
Age	Age in years	
Educ4	Levels of education (1=Low, 2= mid-low 3=mid-high 4=high)	
Sociological	Facilitation	
Actinfo4	Active information seeking over MEPs (1=None 2= passive 3= partially active 4= fully active)	
Intcamp4	Intention to participate in EP campaign (1=None 2= passive 3= partially active 4= fully active)	
v295	EP campaign should focus on EP activities =1	

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