

EUROPEAN UNION POLITICIZATION AND THE DEMOCRATIC DEFICIT: WHY  
EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT ELECTIONS MATTER

By

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To my Family in the US and Romania

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During my first years at the University of Florida, I stumbled upon an article on the 2004 European Parliament (EP) elections, whose assumptions and conclusions seemed problematic. As a citizen of a state that missed the 2004 wave of European Union (EU) enlargement, and, thus, witnessed the heated post-2004 political debates over the necessary reforms to allow for EU membership, I could not grasp the logic presented in the mentioned article, which mainly stated that EP elections are ‘not important’ elections in the EU member states. The question I had was why are elections for the only directly elected EU institution not important if EU membership seems to be highly important? It has been a long journey from that first reading to the current finished research project, which represents an attempt to qualify ‘the lack of importance’ of EP elections across EU regions and over time. I am thankful to many scholars, organizations, friends, and colleagues for accompanying and supporting me during this process of generating a synthesized work.

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

|        |   |
|--------|---|
| AN     | National Alliance (Italy)                       |
| BNP    | British National Party (United Kingdom)         |
| CDA    | Christian-Democratic Appel (The Netherlands)    |
| CDU    | Christian Democratic Union of Germany (Germany) |
| CDU    | Unitarian Democratic Coalition (Portugal)       |
| CSSD   | Czech Social Democratic Party (Czech Republic)  |
| CSU    | Christian Social Union in Bavaria (Germany)     |
| DIKO   | Democratic Party (Cyprus)                       |
| DISY   | Democratic Coalition (Cyprus)                   |
| DF     | Danish People's Party (Denmark)                 |
| EDEK   | Movement for Social Democracy (Cyprus)          |
| EP     | European Parliament                             |
| EU     | European Union                                  |
| IRL    | Union of Pro Patria and Res Publica (Estonia)   |
| FG     | Fine Gael (Family of the Irish-Ireland)         |
| FN     | Front National (France)                         |
| FPO    | Freedom Party (Austria)                         |
| GP     | Green Party (Ireland)                           |
| JOBBIK | Movement for a Better Hungary (Hungary)         |
| K      | Centre Party (Estonia)                          |
| KD     | Christian Democrats in Finland (Finland)        |
| KESK   | Centre Party of Finland (Finland)               |
| KF     | Conservative People's Party (Denmark)           |
| LAB    | Labour Party (United Kingdom)                   |

|        |   |
|--------|---|
| LAOS   | Popular Orthodox Alarm (Greece)                                 |
| LDS    | Liberal Democracy of Slovenia (Slovenia)                        |
| Lijst  | List Pim Fortuyn (The Netherlands)                              |
| LPR    | League of Polish Families (Poland)                              |
| MPF    | Movement for France (France)                                    |
| MSZP   | Hungarian Socialist Party (Hungary)                             |
| NEZ    | Independents- Political Movement (Czech Republic)               |
| ODS    | Civic Democratic Party (Czech Republic)                         |
| OVP    | Austrian People's Party (Austria)                               |
| PASOK  | Pan-Hellenic Socialist Movement (Greece)                        |
| PCTVL  | For Human Rights in an United Latvia (Latvia)                   |
| PdCI   | Party of Italian Communists (Italy)                             |
| PD     | Democratic Party (Italy)  |
| PD-L   | Democratic Liberal Party (Romania)                              |
| PdP-CL | Coalition Agreement for the Future (Poland)                     |
| PERUS  | True Finns (Finland)  |
| PiS    | Law and Justice (Poland)  |
| PO     | Citizens' Platform (Poland)                                     |
| PNL    | National Liberal Party (Romania)                                |
| PPD    | Coalition for Strong Portugal (Portugal)                        |
| PRM    | Greater Romania Party (Romania)                                 |
| PVV    | Party for Freedom (The Netherlands)                             |
| PSD    | Social Democratic Party (Portugal)                              |
| PSD-PC | Social Democratic Party + Conservative Party Alliance (Romania) |
| PSOE   | Socialist Workers' Party of Spain (Spain)                       |

|           |  |
|-----------|--|
| Rahvaliid | Estonian People's Union (Estonia)                                  |
| REP       | The Republicans (Germany)  |
| SDKU      | Democratic and Christian Union (Slovakia)                          |
| SLS       | Slovenian People's Party (Slovenia)                                |
| SF        | Sinn Fein "We Ourselves" (Ireland)                                 |
| SF-FR     | Free Forum (Slovakia)  |
| SFP       | Swedish People's Party in Finland (Finland)                        |
| SNK-ED    | Association of Independent and European Democrats (Czech Republic) |
| SNS       | Slovak National Party (Slovakia)                                   |
| SOE       | Second Order Election Model  |
| SP        | Socialist Party (Ireland)  |
| SVP       | South Tyrol People's Party (Italy)                                 |
| SZDSZ     | Alliance of Free Democrats (Hungary)                               |
| TB/LNNK   | Alliance "Fatherland and Freedom" (Latvia)                         |
| TP        | People's Party (Latvia)  |
| UDMR      | Democratic Union of Hungarians in Romania (Romania)                |
| UMP       | Union for the People's Movement (France)                           |
| UPyD      | Union, Progress, and Democracy (Spain)                             |
| UKIP      | United Kingdom Independence Party (United Kingdom)                 |
| V         | Left-Denmark's Liberal Party (Denmark)                             |
| VVD       | People's Party for Freedom and Democracy (The Netherlands)         |

Abstract of Dissertation Presented to the Graduate School  
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EUROPEAN UNION POLITICIZATION AND THE DEMOCRATIC DEFICIT: WHY  
EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT ELECTIONS MATTER

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European Union (EU) is often portrayed in the media and in the scholarly debates as a supranational political system that lacks representation, legitimacy, and accountability. While elections constitute the first mechanism to address these democracy-related issues, it is still debatable whether elections for the European Parliament (EP) may rise up to the task of fixing the 'democratic deficit'. This dissertation contributes to this debate by theorizing *when, where, and why* attitudes toward European integration matter for participation and vote choice at EP elections. The contribution is twofold: first, it points to some weaknesses in the current behavioral theories relevant to the question at hand, namely the 'second order election model' and its alternative, 'Europe matters'.

Second, it advances a new theoretical approach that emphasizes the important role of anti-EU parties in promoting EU politicization. The core argument posits that while attitudes toward European integration exist at a latent structural level, it is up to the anti-EU parties to bring these latent attitudes to surface. Insisting on a variety of issues, from immigration, to Islam, and Eastern Enlargement, anti-EU parties *start* party

elite debates over the (dis)advantages of EU integration. These debates, I argue, are essential in mobilizing voters at EP elections to express their preferences over EU integration. This is mostly the case because high EU politicization means in fact clearer party positioning on EU integration. Focusing on party supply and voters demand sides, the large-N analyses uncover three regional dynamics. The West, as the region with states that share the net contributor status to the EU budget, displays debates over EU integration. Citizens base their decisions to participate and to select parties on preferences over EU integration and EU membership. In the South, the region of states that share the net recipient status of EU funds, EU attitudes play only an insignificant role in influencing voting behavior. In the post-communist region, with an unsettled party system on the EU and the left-right ideological dimensions, citizens base their participation on attitudes toward EU membership. EU attitudes, however, do not play any role in shaping party selection during EP elections.

CHAPTER 1  
A REASSESSMENT OF WHY ELECTIONS FOR THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT (EP)  
MATTER

**Preamble**

On October 10, 2011, the European Union (EU) posted the following question on one of its social network sites (SNSs), the Facebook wall of the European Parliament (EP):

Following the American example, a Presidential election primary has been organized in France. Do you think such a practice could and should be extended to European elections, with people choosing the top candidates of their political party ahead of the elections?<sup>1</sup>

The 83 responses and comments received within two days engaged a broader debate on the EU as a supranational political system that suffers from a democratic deficit, lack of legitimacy, and lack of accountability. The comments, not necessarily strictly focused on EP elections, varied from very critical positions toward the EU, which only ‘pretends to be democratic’ and whose supranational decisions ‘coming from Brussels’ are rarely explained to voters, to more optimistic positions, supportive of reforms that would allow to ‘make the EU our EU’. Most interestingly for this research project, none of the 83 comments referred to the conventional perspective that the scholarly community holds with respect to EP elections, namely that these elections are ‘second order (‘not important’) national elections’ (Reif and Schmitt 1980; Reif 1984; Schmitt and Mannheimer 1991; Franklin, Van der Eijk, and Openhuius 1996; Franklin 2007; Van der Brug and der Eijk 2007; Hix and Marsh 2007). By contrast, this younger generation perceived the EP elections as ‘European affairs’ and not as ‘national affairs’.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.facebook.com/#!/pages/European-Union-EU/12088416071> (Accessed October 11, 2011).

A different perspective on the role of EP elections can be derived from perusing the news titles issued after the results of the 2009, most recent, wave of EP elections. ‘The rise of the nationalists’ (The Financial Post, Canada), ‘EU Parliament on the Fringe of Lunacy’ (Straits Times Europe Bureau, Singapore) or ‘The rise of the far right’ (The Guardian, London) represent some of the titles available at the time. They all allude to the paradox of EP elections: originally designed to make EU’s institutions more legitimate, EP elections ended up creating an opportunity structure for fringe nationalist movements that focus on anti-EU, anti-immigration, and anti-Islam stances. Ataka, The Anti-Turkish Party of Bulgaria, the Jobbik in Hungary accused of beating up the Roma people, the Greater Romania Party which decried ‘Jewish plots’, and the Slovak National Party all won their first representation in the European Parliament. While these examples are coming from former communist, poorer states with weaker democratic institutions, similar examples could be found in the richer, more mature democracies of Britain, Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Greece, France, Finland, Italy and the Netherlands—in all, extreme nationalists registered strong support<sup>2</sup>.

This research project is about all three different perspectives on EP elections exemplified above: EP elections as ‘national affairs’ (as the majority of the scholarly community suggests), EP elections as ‘European affairs’ (as young posters on Facebook walls and a minor voice in the scholarly community view these elections) and

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<sup>2</sup> *The Straits Times* (Singapore), Sunday 14, 2009; *The Guardian* (London), June 9, 2009, and *National Post* (f/k/a *The Financial Post*, (Canada) June 9, 2009, retrieved via LexisNexis, [http://www.lexisnexis.com/lncui2api/delivery/PreviewFrameDisplay.do?jobHandle=1827%3A356923578&fromCart=false&dnldFilePath=%2FIn%2Fshared%2Fprod%2Fdiscus%2Fqds%2Frepository%2Fdocs%2F8%2F57%2F1827%3A356923578%2Fformatted\\_doc&fileSize=5000](http://www.lexisnexis.com/lncui2api/delivery/PreviewFrameDisplay.do?jobHandle=1827%3A356923578&fromCart=false&dnldFilePath=%2FIn%2Fshared%2Fprod%2Fdiscus%2Fqds%2Frepository%2Fdocs%2F8%2F57%2F1827%3A356923578%2Fformatted_doc&fileSize=5000) (Accessed June 22, 2012).

EP elections as opportunities for far right nationalist parties. The research question that unites these three different perspectives and guides the project is the following: where, when, and why do European attitudes matter at EP elections? This project offers then a systematic analysis of the role that attitudes toward European integration play in shaping electoral behavior at EP elections. Its main goal is to demonstrate the significance of EP elections in fostering EU democratization.

### **Debates over the Role of EP Elections in the European Union (EU)**

The broader debate that this project joins focuses on today's perceptions of the EU as a political system that suffers from a 'democratic deficit' and lacks democratic representation, popular legitimacy, and democratic accountability (Van der Brug and der Eijk 2007; Smith 2005; Hix 2005; Hix 2008). It is argued in the literature that the EU integration project lost public support: started as an elite process out of a time's desire to prevent post WWII conflicts, the loose European communities--the European Coal and Steel Community, the European Atomic Energy Community, and the European Economic Community--transformed over the years into a formal economic and political union, the EU. This Union, however, failed in bringing the general public closer to the integration process (Smith 2005; Hix 2005), such that some scholars label the EU today as an 'enlightened despotism' (Hix 2008, 3). Put differently, the 'permissive consensus' (Lindberg and Scheingold 1970) between elites and the general public on the European Community project documented in the beginning of the integration process seems to have vanished (Smith 2005). This process accelerated in particular after the ratification of the Maastricht Treaty (1993), when EU citizens realized that the EU has become a lot more than simply an economic union (Hix 2008, 53).

EP elections play an essential role in the debate over EU's democratic deficit, as a critical mechanism that should allow the public to express its preferences toward European integration. However, it is argued, EP elections suffer from a fundamental flaw encapsulated in the institutional designs of the EU (Van der Brug and Van der Eijk 2007, 230-244). EP elections, it is further explained, cannot fulfill the linkage functions between citizens and one EU institution, the EP, on issues relevant to the EU policy-making process because the outcome of these elections does not matter for the allocation of power in the executive and the agenda-setting bodies of the EU, which are the Commission<sup>3</sup> and the Council of the European Union<sup>4</sup> (known also as the Council of Ministers) (ibid). The results of EP elections do not yield an EU government and despite the increased EP legislative powers and the policy-making process is still not initiated in the European Parliament<sup>5</sup>. As a consequence of this institutional setting, domestic political issues dominate the campaigns and not the EU related ones (Reif and Schmitt 1980; Reif 1984; Schmitt and Mannheimer 1991; Franklin, Van der Eijk, and Openhuius 1996; Franklin 2007; Van der Brug and der Eijk 2007; Hix and Marsh 2007). Since the composition of the European Parliament has no direct bearing on domestic politics

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<sup>3</sup> The European Commission has no equivalent in national governmental systems and refers to the college of commissioners and civil servants who work for the institution. The members are essentially unelected, they represent national officials appointed by the European Council and approved by the European Parliament. As a result, 'the institution's democratic legitimacy is constantly in question' (Dinan 2010, 171).

<sup>4</sup> The Council of the European Union consists of government ministers and a European commissioner who meet regularly to reconcile national positions and adopt EU legislation. Critics to this institution, which is essentially a legislature, point to the fact that the Council of the EU is the only legislature in the Western world that severally curtails public access to its deliberations (Smith 2005; Hix 2008; Dinan 2010).

<sup>5</sup> There is, however, a limited provision of legislative initiative in the Treaties of Lisbon, the last major treaty reform which was signed in 2007 and came into force in 2009. Art. 225 (TFEU) enables the EP to call on the Commission to 'submit a proposal on matters on which it considers that a Union act is required for the purpose of implementing the Treaties' (art. 225 TFEU).

either, all actors involved, the national parties, media and voters, it is argued, pay little attention to these elections. Thus, these Europe-wide elections become elections that literally ‘serve no/little purpose’ (Wessels and Franklin 2010, 98). Moreover, scholars argue, they will continue to have this meaningless sense of existence despite the increased salience and politicization of the EU (see Van der Brug and der Eijk 2007, 228-230) and despite increased powers to the EP.

Because of the scant public and media attention paid to EP elections is sometimes interpreted as ‘weak popular support for the EU’ (Smith 2005, 8), scholars propose reforms, almost on an electoral cycle basis, to overcome public perceptions that ‘there are no European politics’ (Smith 2005, 16). Institutional reforms related to the outcomes of EP elections or to changes in the electoral system are presented as solutions to increase the stakes of EP elections. For instance, Smith (2005) would like to see the executive body, or at least its formation<sup>6</sup>, linked to the result of EP elections. Hix and Hagemann (2008) insist on changing the electoral system from large districts closed-lists to small districts open-ballots. This change, argue Hix and Hagemann (2008), will create an ‘electoral link’ by allowing for a better connection between citizens and politicians: MEPs will have to campaign directly to voters, while citizens will have the opportunity to reward good performance in the European Parliament. Similarly, electoral reforms that force national parties to campaign outside national boundaries will lead to a ‘Europeanization of parties’, which will, in the end, impede domestic parties in using the

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<sup>6</sup> Smith (2005) refers here to the European Commission, as the executive body of the EU. Julie Smith acknowledges that the EU is different from a nation-state and does not have an executive body ‘in quite the same way it is understood in most countries’ (ibid, 17). However, for the author, the European Commission represents ‘the closest the EU comes to having an executive’ (ibid, 61).

EP electoral results as markers of performance at the domestic level (Van der Eijk and Mark Franklin 2007, 370-379). Moreover, changes within the EP to a longer presidency term from a two-and-a-half year term to a five-year term (Hix 2008) or changes of informal rules with respect to committee chair assignments (ibid)<sup>7</sup> are presented as solutions to politicize Brussels (Hix 2008) and to increase public support for the integration project (Smith 2005).

EU has, however, responded to some of these 'lack-of-democracy' related critiques by consistently reforming its institutional structure to increase the importance of the European Parliament and its elections. For instance, if in the early 1980s, the European Parliament had largely played only a consultative role in the policy-making process, in 2009, after the most recent EU Treaty reform came into force, the European Parliament became a co-equal legislator with the Council of Ministers (Dinan 2010, 306). Moreover, EU focused on reforms that yielded a broader representation into the policy-making process: national parliaments, for instance, have now the opportunity to influence the Commission's policy drafts, and, so do EU citizens, via the Citizens' Initiative<sup>8</sup>. EP elections also increased in importance given that starting with the 2014 EP elections, the European Council will have to take into account the outcome of EP

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<sup>7</sup> Specifically, Hix (2008) mentions that there is an informal rule in the EP according to which committee chairs are assigned in proportion to the size of the political groups. This rule yields that no political group dominates the assembly and every political party has some influence over policy outcomes. With respect to link between the EP policy output and the EP elections, this proportional way of within EP power allocation means that spectacular changes in the EP electoral results do not lead to spectacular changes in the policy agenda of the EP, giving that opposing groups share power within EP.

<sup>8</sup> 'Not less than one million citizens who are nationals of a significant number of Member States may take the initiative of inviting the European Commission, within the framework of its powers, to submit any appropriate proposal on matters where citizens consider that a legal act of the Union is required for the purpose of implementing the Treaties' (Art. 11.4 TEU)

elections before proposing a candidate for the President of the Commission, which is, in some scholars' opinions, the executive arm of the EU.

This project joins these debates over what reforms are necessary to transform the EP elections such that (more) EU debates take place at elections times. The major finding, however, is that EP elections, as they are designed at the moment, allow for EU related conversations, precisely because they hold a secondary role in the electoral hierarchy.

### **Contribution of the Research Project**

While acknowledging EU's broader efforts in becoming a more transparent, less opaque and technocratic, and a more inclusive political system, ie in democratizing itself, this research project focuses strictly on the role that EP elections play in forging that 'missing' electoral link between voters and the EU. This project represents, therefore, a reassessment of the role the EP elections play in the democratization process. It has as starting conceptual point the perspective that public attitudes toward European integration are not 'superficial', European integration is not 'a low salience issue', and European integration is not 'unrelated to the basic conflicts that structure political competition' (Hooghe and Marks 2009, 7). While the tenets developed in the 1980s on the role of public attitudes toward European integration do not hold any more, as Hooghe and Marks (2009) clearly state above, it is important to mention that I distinguish between today's 'extraordinary times' of unprecedented EU politicization from more 'ordinary times' of EU contestation<sup>9</sup>.

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<sup>9</sup> Please note that I use EU politicization and EU contestation interchangeably as terms that reflect an increased emphasis in political debates over the role of the EU and various aspect of EU integration, such as the single currency and the single market, market liberalization, EU financial monetary policy, EU's cultural threat to national identity, EU enlargement, EU immigration, EU social welfare, and so on.

The economic crisis that hit Europe very hard since 2009 and especially the financial crisis in the Eurozone area led to an unprecedented level of public attitudes toward European integration shaping the electoral behavior in national elections. The most recent national elections in the EU states are cases in point. For instance, the French presidential election in early May 2012 registered a 'Europeanization of national elections', with European leaders campaigning and supporting different candidates: Angela Merkel (Germany) and David Cameron (UK) campaigned for the center-right candidate Francois Sarkozy, while the Belgian socialist prime-minister, Elio Di Rupo, supported the socialist Francois Hollande (Revista 22, April 18, 2012)<sup>10</sup>. The stake in that French national election was in fact European, one could argue, given the question that the EU leaders were addressing at the time: specifically, how to respond to the Eurozone crisis with a unanimous austerity-focused voice (The Economist, April 28, 2012)<sup>11</sup>.

A second manifestation of extreme EU politicization took place in Greece, a month later. The Greek vote in national elections (June 2012) became a vote about the single currency and a 'pro-euro' vote. Faced with two polarized choices, a pro-bailout rightwing coalition versus an anti-austerity radical left coalition, the Greek voters decided, in one of the closest and most watched national elections with far implications for EU

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Basically, EU politicization and EU contestation encompass all EU integration related topics on which parties take sides and debate.

<sup>10</sup> Revista 22, 18.04. 2012, "François Hollande a obținut susținerea unor personalități franceze de dreapta și a premierului Belgian", <http://www.revista22.ro/francois-hollande-a-obtinut-sustinerea-unor-personalitati-franceze-de-dreapta-si-a-premierului-belgian-14423.html> (Accessed June 22, 2012).

<sup>11</sup> The Economist, April, 28, 2012. "The rather dangerous Monsieur Hollande The Socialist who is likely to be the next French president would be bad for his country and Europe", <http://www.economist.com/node/21553446> (Accessed June 22, 2012).

integration 'for the Greece to remain in the euro' (declaration issued shortly after the results of elections by the leader of the winning conservative faction, Antonis Samaras)<sup>12</sup>. These recent developments speak about the interconnectedness, especially in the Eurozone area, of EU states that share a common currency and lost supremacy over monetary policies. While the Eurozone area does not include all EU states, and therefore, the increased EU politicization may not apply to all EU, it is still unclear what the implications of these unprecedented levels of EU politicization are for national politics.

The current research project offers, however, a reassessment of when, where, and why EU attitudes matter at EP elections during 'ordinary times', when the results of national elections were not framed in EU related terms. Therefore, still building on the perspective that attitudes toward European integration structure contestation in European societies (Kriesi et al. 2007; Hooghe and Marks 2009), this research project seeks to uncover the conditions under which voters' EU attitudes translate into participation and party selection at EP elections. This project focuses on both sides of electoral competition, the demand side of public EU attitudes and the supply side of party EU stances. The core argument developed here posits that at least the last two waves of EP elections fostered debates over the integration project, precisely because EP elections are 'second order, not important' elections. As elections of lesser importance, EP elections attract less interest from mainstream parties, which are also, as pro-EU parties, the parties least likely to engage in EU debates (I develop this

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<sup>12</sup> *The Guardian* June 17, 2012. "Greek elections: voters give Europe and single currency a chance Rightwing New Democracy party hopes to lead coalition while left gains from votes against austerity" <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2012/jun/17/greek-elections-voters-europe-chance?fb=native&CMP=FBCNETT9038>, Accessed June 22, 2012.

argument in Chapter 4). Because of this lesser involvement from mainstream pro-EU parties, EP elections become, in fact, 'electoral opportunities' for fringe nationalist parties (see the story mentioned in the Preamble), which are the parties that *start* the debates over EU integration. EP elections display, however, different levels of EU politicization, depending on the strategies that mainstream parties adopt to counteract the anti-EU stances of the fringe nationalist parties. There are, indeed, substantial regional variations within EU: the old Western states represent the most EU politicized area, followed by the post-communist region, where 'belonging to the EU' has a particular meaning; lastly, the old Southern region lacks EU contestation. The main implication of this argument is, however, that reforming EP elections to increase their stakes may lead, in fact, to 'nationalization' rather than to 'Europeanization' of EP elections. This is because, as important elections, EP elections will attract mainstream parties' interest, with no guarantee that EU debates will follow as well. Paraphrasing Kriesi et al. (2007), if the new cleavage of EU integration does not shape electoral competition in some EU states, then there is no reason to see EU related debates emerging in these states, regardless of how important the EP elections may be. In other words, EU integration must be a political issue for the EU to become the subject of political contestation.

### **Research Design and Methods**

This research examines the relationship between public EU attitudes and electoral behavior at EP elections. The following question guides this study: When, where, and why do European attitudes affect electoral behavior at EP elections? To answer this question several aspects will be examined. On the political demand side the main questions to be answered are: What factors generate EU attitudes in the first place? Do

EU attitudes affect electoral behavior in other types contests besides EP elections, such as national elections and/or EU referendums? Once the dominant behavioral theories that explain voting behavior at EP elections are identified, I address the following questions: Do the assumptions on which the main EP election behavior theories are built hold across all EU member states? Or, are there regional differences with respect to the dynamic that EU attitudes and electoral behavior generate? If yes, what aspects of EU integration may explain these differences? On the supply side of the equation, including party EU stances, the following questions are addressed: which parties are most likely to start EU related debates? Also, what is the relationship between the EP elections and the parties responsible for EU debates? Do EP elections systematically favor some parties' successes over the others?

The above questions will be answered through a mixed-method approach of in-depth case study analysis followed by large-N multivariate analysis of electoral behavior across twenty states in two elections, 2004 and 2009. Finally, the question related to party success at EP elections will be answered via large-N analyses that will include all parties in all seven waves of EP elections across all EU states.

The project starts with an intuition that a particular case, Romania, defies the conventional wisdom about EP elections as 'second order national elections'. Given Romania's first exposure to Europe-wide EP elections<sup>13</sup>, I attempt to discern between citizens' national and EU related reasons for participation and party selection in first Europe-wide EP elections. I focus in this case study on three different components:

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<sup>13</sup> I specifically distinguish between first Europe-wide EP elections and first EP elections. In Romania's case, first EP elections took place in 2007, while first Europe-wide EP elections took place in 2009. I elaborate on the reasons for this distinction in Chapter 3.

voters' EU attitudes, the EU debates present in the media during the EP electoral campaign, and the clarity of parties' positioning on EU integration. The particular expertise I hold as a Romanian citizen, the language skills, background, and the historical knowledge, greatly enhanced the quality of fieldwork and allowed me to triangulate the findings by using a variety of methods: interviews and participant observation, discourse analysis of media content, and large-N multivariate analysis. I consider the case study to be a preliminary stage meant to single out critical components in generating a new theory on electoral behavior at EP elections that draws on behavioral theories developed for EU referendums and national elections. In addition, because the case study points to regional differences, I can improve the model specifications when applying the new theory across twenty EU member states.

Three findings become essential when unfolding the electoral dynamic at first Europe-wide EP elections in Romania: two belong to voters' attitudes and one belongs to the party supply side. On the electoral demand side, citizens' attitudes toward EU integration, which focus on utilitarian perspectives and emphasize the benefits accruing from EU membership, are important. Second, the strategic behavior of punishing governing parties predicted by the 'second order election' model seems to be lacking in this case. Interviews with participants in the EP elections reveal that they view these elections to be as important as the national elections; voters also believe that their preferred party, which may or not be the same as the one in the previous national election, constitutes the best representation that Romania could have in the EU structures. On the party supply side, the analysis on the campaign coverage illustrates that mainstream parties do not differentiate among their positions on EU integration. At

most, they singled out that a vote for the fringe nationalist party, the Greater Romania Party (PRM), would be a wasted vote. In addition, the most anti-EU party in Romania did not engage in EU debates and focused instead on national politics and the fast approaching presidential elections.

I use these components on voter and party sides to develop a new theory on electoral behavior at EP elections, which builds upon behavioral theories developed for national elections and EU referendums. The core argument of the new theory posits that voter EU attitudes shape electoral behavior at EP elections *only* when the emphasis of EU issues during the campaign is high and when parties differentiate their positions on EU integration. This study tests the argument using the European Election Study Data in twenty member states at the last two waves of EP elections. The large-N analyses show that citizens' attitudes toward European integration (which I refer to as political attitudes) and citizens' perceptions of economic gains or losses from the EU (which I refer to as economic attitudes) significantly affect voter decisions to participate and vote in the last two waves of EP elections. They do so as much as other domestic issues, such as evaluations of the national economy and the national government. Therefore, citizens with positive political and economic EU attitudes are more likely to participate at EP elections and less likely to defect from parties previously selected in national elections.

In addition, this project points to a differential effect of EU attitudes across three regions. The first distinction I operate is between former communist states and others. Here, specific perceptions of EU membership as the fulfillment of a long-term, historic goal of 'returning to Europe' and the weak party institutionalization significantly shape

the role that EU political and economic attitudes play in the region. The second regional distinction I operate across EU is between older members, richer states that are net contributors to the EU budget versus more recent members, poorer non-communist states, which are mostly net receivers of EU funds. I show, therefore, that high levels of EU emphasis and EU politicization are achieved in the first category. The West is the region where EU attitudes shape electoral behavior. In the South, EU attitudes have only a minimal effect on electoral behavior. I elaborate further that responsible for this differential effect across the two non-communist regions are the fringe, anti-EU parties that start the EU integration debates.

The last empirical large-N analysis ponders over the relationship between EP elections and the key parties in generating the EU debates, the fringe anti-EU parties. Using a data set that includes all parties that have participated in EP elections over time and gained more than 1% of the vote, I show that EP elections are in fact 'windows of opportunity' for fringe anti-EU party successes. EP elections become, therefore, institutional facilitators for EU democratization, where EU democratization is defined as the process of bringing the EU closer to its citizens, because EP elections foster the emergence of anti-EU parties, which then (perhaps ironically) stimulate greater politicization of the EU and increased citizen engagement based on EU attitudes.

### **Structure of the Research Project**

Chapter 2 reviews research on the role of EU attitudes, their origins, and the link between EU attitudes and electoral behavior at different instances: national elections, EU referendums, and EP elections. With respect to the origins of EU attitudes, the research concurs that utilitarian approaches, understood as economic benefits accruing from EU membership, drive the formation of EU attitudes. With respect to the linkage

between EU attitudes and electoral behavior, the results are mixed. At EU referendums, EU attitudes trump the effects coming from domestic politics, as government performance or evaluations of the economy. At EP elections, two theories stand out. One, the second-order election (SOE) model, underscores the domestic factors as essential indicators in shaping behavior at EP elections. The SOE model does not necessarily exclude the role of EU attitudes, but attributes them a minimal role at best. As an alternative, recent research advances a Downsian approach, a spatial voting theory, to understand why and when EU attitudes may matter.

Chapter 3 represents a close application of these two main behavioral theories in one case, Romania. The starting conceptual point in the case study is the intuition that the assumptions on which both theories are built, the SOE and the spatial voting model, may not hold at EP elections in one of the most recent EU member state. For instance, citizens may not be aware that EP elections are second order and that their result does not matter. Second, citizens may present difficulties when asked to place parties along the left-right and EU integration dimensions. The major finding of this chapter is that voters base their participation in EP elections on EU attitudes. However, EU attitudes do not play any role in party selection, precisely because voters cannot differentiate among parties' positioning on the EU integration dimension.

Chapter 4 advances a new theory that seeks to explain how voting behavior at EP elections relates to attitudes toward EU integration. The starting conceptual point in proposing a new theory is the argument that the public has developed attitudes toward EU. The question to be answered, however, is when, where, and why do EU attitudes affect voting behavior. The theory advanced in this chapter underscores the important

role of anti-EU parties in bringing these latent EU attitudes to surface. The major finding of the chapter is that EU attitudes matter the most in the West, the region of wealthy net contributor states to the EU budget. In addition, EU attitudes matter the least in the South, the region of poorer net recipient states of EU funds. The post-communist region displays a particular dynamic of EU attitudes affecting participation and not party choices. As I replicate the models with data from two EP elections, 2004 and 2009, interesting temporal dynamics are uncovered. Given the economic crisis affected in particular the South and the post-communist regions, we observe that parties respond differently in the two regions to the challenge on how to portray EU integration. In the South, mainstream parties insist on the positive aspects of EU integration, while there is a higher emphasis in the anti-EU tone of the anti-EU parties. The increase in EU politicization in the South 2009 compared to the South 2004 leads to a more important role for EU attitudes in explaining voting behavior. By contrast, in the post-communist region, parties adopt confusing positions. In this region, mainstream parties campaign simultaneously on pro and anti-EU issues, which only confuse voters even more than in 2004 as to where parties stand on EU issues. Finally, the increased anti-EU tone in the West 2009 compared to the tone in the West 2004 does not yield a more important role for EU attitudes. It seems, therefore, that the West seems to have reached an equilibrium with respect to how much EU attitudes may affect voting behavior.

Chapter 5 focuses strictly on the relationship between EP elections and extreme parties on the EU dimension. The starting conceptual point in this chapter is that EP elections, as elections that 'are not so important', represent in fact political opportunities for other parties than the mainstream ones, which dominate first order elections. The

major finding in this chapter is that EP elections favor in particular the anti-EU parties, in addition to the Green and new parties. In addition, there seems to be a temporal and regional effect. As more EP elections take place, especially after Maastricht, the anti-EU parties become better skilled at capturing more votes than in the national elections. Also, across the three regions identified in the previous chapter, anti-EU parties gain more votes at EP elections, in the post-Maastricht West and South regions, but not in the post-communist one.

Chapter 6 summarizes the findings and presents the implications of this research. Points of contention between the empirical findings and the theory are underscored as well. Further avenues of research are presented.

## CHAPTER 2 ATTITUDES TOWARD EUROPEAN INTEGRATION AND ELECTORAL BEHAVIOR

This chapter offers a foundational background for understanding the role that EU attitudes play in the EU. The chapter focuses on the electoral demand side, on voter attitudes toward the EU, and addresses the following questions: What factors are responsible for the emergence of attitudes toward European integration? Do EU attitudes vary over time and cross-nationally? What linkages exist between the variation of attitudes toward European integration and electoral behavior? With respect to electoral behavior, three instances are identified: two at the supranational level, EU referendums and EP elections, and one at the state level, national elections. Given the particular interest of the research project, namely the lack of input democracy during EP elections, i.e. the presumed lack of voting based on EU attitudes, the chapter focuses on the role that EU attitudes play during EP elections. Here, two theories dominate the behavioral explanations: the second order election theory and the 'Europe matters' alternative.

The findings are essential in proposing a new theory on electoral behavior during EP elections that will be developed in Chapter 4. Most importantly, the ensuing chapter underscores that attitudes toward European integration may vary over time and cross-nationally. Yet, this variation does not yield a particular behavior either during EU referendums, national elections, or EP elections. In addition, the chapter uncovers a temporal trend in public attitudes toward EU, where the debates around the Treaty of Maastricht (1993) produced a substantial shift: if before Maastricht the aggregate level of positive public attitudes toward EU had an increasing trend, after Maastricht the aggregate level of positive public attitudes toward EU displays a decreasing one.

## **A Survey of European Union (EU) Attitudes and their Origins**

Initiated at the end of WWII as a political, elite-driven process concerned with laying out a collaborative framework among former enemies for peace and prosperity, the EEC (European Economic Community)<sup>1</sup> started to expose itself to public scrutiny in the early 1970s, with the occasion of the first enlargement. The first time that one of the six EEC publics had the opportunity to express its approval with respect to the relatively new political project was in 1972, when France organized a referendum on the question of accepting new members, namely the UK, Norway, Denmark, and Ireland. Since then, more than forty referendums have been organized in the member states and candidate countries on constitutional treaty reforms and EU accession. This introduction of direct democracy into EU integration made political elites aware of the role and consequences of public perceptions and reactions to the integration project. For instance, the Norwegian public rejected the EEC membership twice, first in 1972, and again in 1994. Also, the UK public displayed only a 'small no' to the 1975 question of whether it is time for the UK to leave the EEC (67.2%) (Hix and Hoyland 2011). In this context of increased relevance of public attitudes, understanding how EU attitudes vary and what factors shape public support became essential for elites concerned with garnering approval to move forward with the EEC integration.

In the early 1970s, the European Commission started to track public attitudes toward the integration project across all member states, and later in candidate countries via the Eurobarometer surveys. These surveys capture public opinion on a variety of EU

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<sup>1</sup> The EEC is the official name of the EU between 1957-1986, followed by the EC (European Communities) during the 1987-1992, and the EU, after Maastricht (1993).

issues and measure what scholars refer to as political ('diffuse') and economic ('concrete') support for the EU (Hobolt 2009; Hix 2010).

Figure 2-1 displays aggregate levels of public support for the integration project with reference to two aspects: diffuse or political (related to perceptions of one's country membership qualified as a good thing) and concrete or economic (related to perceptions of one's country benefits accruing from EU membership). The aggregate results are plotted over time (1973-2011), across all EU member-states. We see that public support for the EU varied tremendously over time. For instance, there was a consistent increase in the number of people who thought that their country benefited from EU membership in the late 1980s. In this period of optimism, direct elections for the European Parliament were introduced in an effort to generate more interest in EU affairs and to establish a link between citizens and decision making at European level (Marsh and Mikhaylov 2010). However, EP elections failed in these expectations and were rapidly labeled as 'second order national elections' (Reif and Schmitt 1980), a perspective that remained essential to the literature of direct elections even for the most recent 2009 EP elections.

As Figure 2-1 shows, the period of optimism toward EU integration in the early 1990s was followed by a decreasing trend in public support, especially after the Maastricht Treaty in 1992, when a series of referendums on ratifying the Maastricht Treaty were organized in Denmark (twice, since in the first round, with 49.3% 'yes', the Danish people rejected the treaty), Ireland, and France (near-failure with 51.1% 'yes' vote) (Hobolt 2009, 9). The outcomes of Maastricht referendums were instrumental in launching the perception that the 'permissive consensus' that political elites benefited

from in the first years of integration has vanished (ibid, 10). The increased awareness of the loss of public support is explicitly spelled out in the Laeken Declaration (2001) adopted by the EU's heads of state and government:

Within the Union, the European institutions must be brought closer to its citizens. Citizens undoubtedly support the Union's broad aims, but they do not always see a connection between those goals and the Union's everyday action. They want the European institutions to be less unwieldy and rigid and, above all, more efficient and open. Many also feel that the Union should involve itself more with their particular concerns, instead of intervening, in every detail. In matters by their nature better left to Member States' and regions' elected representatives. This is even perceived by some as a threat to their identity. More importantly, however, they feel that deals are all too often cut out of their sight and they want better democratic scrutiny (Laeken Declaration on the Future of the European Union).

The results of Maastricht referendums kept alive the debate that the EU suffers from a 'democratic deficit'<sup>2</sup> (ibid, 14). The democratic concerns related to the integration project were further confirmed by the Irish 'no' vote on the first referendum on the Treaty of Nice in 2001, the negative outcomes on the referendums on the Constitutional Treaty in France and the Netherlands in 2005, and the negative Irish vote on the Lisbon Treaty in 2008.

Given the increased importance of public attitudes toward EU for moving the integration project forward, what factors shape these attitudes constitute the research agenda of a series of articles which underscore post-materialist values (Inglehart 1971, 1977), culture (McLaren 2002), or economic cost-benefit calculations (Gabel and Whitten 1997; Gabel 1998) as possible answers.

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<sup>2</sup> For an elaborate review on various aspects of the 'democratic deficit' debate related to the EU decision-making process and sources of accountability for each EU institution, see Mihail Milev, A 'Democratic Deficit' in the European Union?', CIFE (Centre International de Formation Europeenne) <http://www.geopolitis.net/EUROPE%20EN%20FORMATION/Democratic%20Deficit%20in%20the%20European%20Union.pdf> (Accessed February 10, 2012).

In one of the first cross-national behavioral studies on public opinion in the European Economic Communities, Inglehart (1977) establishes a dichotomy between materialist and post-materialist values and argues that post-materialist values explain the presence of the supra-national loyalty toward the EU. Post-materialist values, develops Inglehart (1977) understood as demands of social equality and individual self-expressions, constitute the priorities of post-industrial societies and are present mostly in the original six members. By contrast, citizens in the member-states that joined the EEC only in 1973 have larger cohorts of citizens which possess mostly material concerns of demands for sheer economic gains. This value change from an emphasis on material consumption toward concerns related to the quality of life (post-materialist) explains the development of support for the EEC. Since post-materialist predispositions are generated mainly among the younger cohorts as a result of education and economic and physical security, posits Inglehart (1977), one may expect that as these post-materialist values gradually spread throughout EEC member states and other age-cohorts, more support for the EEC would follow. However, such predictions have not been fulfilled since starting with 1992 the EU member-states registered an overall decline and not an increase in EU support.

A somewhat different approach of what explains the origins of EU attitudes lies in the utilitarian, cost-benefit theory, which emphasizes the economy as playing a more direct role in attitude formation. The core assertion of the utilitarian approach is that EU citizens use economic criteria to evaluate the integration project (Anderson and Reichert 1996; Gabel and Whitten 1997; Gabel 1998). International security and the economy were central to the initiation of the European project, but as the issue of war among

European states became over time increasingly unlikely, it is the economy that was left as a possible motivation for EU support (Gabel and Whitten 1997). The authors in this school of thought hold that economic benefits matter and set up projects to study whether economic evaluations of EU membership represent the central motivation for EU support. Anderson and Reichert (1996) argue that benefits derived by individuals from their state's membership in the EU explain differential attitudes in more or less pro-EU sentiment among citizens. The authors show that individuals in states that benefit more from the EU budget are more supportive of EU integration (ibid, 242). Gabel and Whitten (1997) distinguish between 'objective' evaluations of the economy, such as country level measures of unemployment, inflation, real per capita GDP growth, and 'subjective' retrospective evaluations of individuals' personal and national economic fortunes. Since objective economic indicators do not attain a significant effect in their analysis, Gabel and Whitten (1997) conclude that it is the 'subjective economy' that matters in originating EU attitudes and not the 'objective one' (ibid, 92). Therefore, the better the subjective evaluations of national economy and personal welfare accruing from the EU membership, the more will citizens support the EU. Gabel (1998) tests five different theories regarding what factors lead to support for EU integration and posits that citizens with higher levels of human capital will most likely support EU integration. Human capital encompasses aspects of occupational skills (such as professionals and executives), education, income, and residency in a bordering region with other EU member states. Gabel (1988) shows human capital is the most important indicator for support of EU integration, while other alternative non-economic explanations are not as relevant.

A different alternative to this position that 'economic benefits matter' suggests that a 'more basic aspect' (McLaren 2002, 555) of 'antipathy towards other culture' (ibid, 551) produces equally strong (negative) effects on support for EU. In a study that seeks to replicate as close as possible Gabel's (1998) study, McLaren (2002) shows that threat perceptions, realistic via social benefits or symbolic via religious practices coming from ethnic or national groupings, play an equally important role in shaping attitudes towards the EU. However, no differential role is found in the impact of these cultural variables between the original six or later EU member-states.

In contrast to these assertions that support for the integration project reflects economic advantages or cultural threats, all EU related issues, Anderson (1998) posits that citizens 'use the context of domestic politics to form opinions about the integration process' (ibid, 574). As such, attitudes about the advantages and disadvantages of European integration reflect in fact more 'firmly held and extensively developed political beliefs' that result from citizens' experiences with domestic political reality (ibid, 573). In other words, because the EU is a remote political system about which citizens possess little knowledge, people use proxies from domestic politics when asked to express support for EU integration. Such proxies are related to diffuse support for national democratic political institutions, government, and mainstream parties. Thus, argues Anderson (1998), economic performance evaluations of EU membership, to the extent that they are significant, have only an indirect effect, mediated by political domestic attitudes (ibid, 588).

We are, therefore, left with somewhat mixed expectations regarding the role of EU issues or national factors as generators of EU attitudes; yet, the economic utilitarian

approach to EU membership seems to dominate. The mixed findings with respect to the debate between EU related issues and national cues spills over from research on the formation of EU attitudes into the research that ponders the relationship between EU attitudes and political behavior. Figure 2-4 illustrates the arguments considered thus far in which the EU attitudes constitute the dependent variable. I move then to the second part of the graph which follows the EU attitudes as independent variables.

### **EU Attitudes and Electoral Behavior**

There is no straightforward relationship between EU attitudes and electoral behavior. This dynamic is illustrated by a cross-national tabulation of EU attitudes at two different points in time. Figure 2-2 and Figure 2-3 present a more refined picture of support for EU membership across EU member states in 2004 and 2009 and shows that aggregate levels of EU support measured as diffuse ('EU membership is a good thing') and concrete ('Country benefited from EU membership') conceal in fact substantial cross-national variations. Historically, citizens in the original six member states have been more supportive of EU, in addition to citizens in Ireland, Greece, and Portugal, while citizens in the Nordic republics and the UK have been amongst the most Eurosceptic (Hobolt 2009, 27). Following the recommendation that distinguishes three sub-regions within EU, the original six, later Western members, and post-communist states, we observe that on average the original six member states display higher levels of diffuse EU support when compared to the other two sub-groups. In 2004 and 2009, the six foundational member states have an average of 56.33% and 62.66%

respectively of citizens who approve of EU membership<sup>3</sup>. In 2004, post-communist citizens are somewhat more supportive than the remaining non-foundational Western states (55% vs. 50%). In 2009 the two sub-groups display equal 52% support, 10% behind the original six. For concrete EU support, which measures the perceptions of economic benefits accruing from EU membership, we notice that in 2004, citizens in post-communist states are among the most supportive. On average 59% of citizens argue that their state benefitted from EU membership, while only 53% of citizens answer the same in both Western sub-groups. In 2009 however, we observe an overall increase in citizens' concrete support for EU membership, with no difference registered among the three sub-groups.

In addition to these aggregate sub-groups variation, Figures 2-2 and 2-3 display substantial variation within each sub-group. In 2004, among the original six, France and Germany are close to Sweden and bypassed in lower support only by the UK and Austria from Western Europe. In addition, in the post-communist group, citizens in Lithuania, Romania, and Bulgaria are among the most enthusiast supporters of the EU, while citizens in Latvia, Hungary, and the Czech Republic are among the most Eurosceptic. In 2009, Italy and Greece lowered substantially the percentage of people who think that EU membership is good. Among the post-communist states, only Hungary and Latvia still display lower levels than the rest of post-communist states.

When we look at the electoral behavior at EP elections we notice constant levels of participation for Western Europe in 2004, with somewhat lower levels in Eastern

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<sup>3</sup> The numbers listed here are averages of attitudinal diffuse and economic support for the EU across three EU sub-regions. The actual data used to obtain these averages are reported and mapped in Figure 2-2 and Figure 2-3.

Europe. In 2009, Eastern Europe displays a more nuanced decreasing trend in participation in EP elections, with 38% participation versus 52% in the old member states. A few cases with high levels of participation stand out in 2004 and 2009: Luxembourg, Belgium, Cyprus, and Greece have compulsory voting laws; in Malta and Ireland, voter turnout is traditionally high at both national and EP elections due to a highly proportional electoral system (Single Transferable Vote). Italy also displays remarkably higher levels of participation in both national and EP elections, driven maybe by popular culture or political custom: until 1993, voting has been compulsory.

In addition, what these cross-national and cross-temporal graphs conceal is a considerable gap between elites and public support for European integration, with around 90% of national elites across all EU member states in favor of European integration, and with levels varying from 80% to as low as 20% of the general public supporting the EU integration (Hobolt, Spoon and Tilley 2008; Hobolt 2009; Hooghe and Marks 2009). This elite gap in particular and the rejection of some of the elite-made-pacts on European integration put forward to the public at EU referendums made Hooghe and Marks (2009) call the post-1991 period as one of '*constraining dissensus*': 'Elites, that is, party leaders in positions of authority, must look over their shoulders when negotiating European issues. What they see does not reassure them' (ibid, 5).

Given this increased cross-national and cross-social variations in diffuse and concrete support for EU integration, how EU attitudes shape electoral behavior became the research agenda of a series of studies. EU attitudes may affect political behavior in three different instances: during EU referendums, EP elections, and as recent research suggests during national elections. There is, however, substantial variation in terms of

how scholars theorize and search for empirical evidence supporting the hypothesis that EU attitudes matter at each instance. In the referendum literature, European attitudes decisively trump the effects of national considerations (Siune, Svensson, Tonsgaard 1994; Hobolt 2009; Glencross and Trechsel 2011), while at EP elections national issues dominate (Reif and Schmitt 1980; Schmitt and Mannheimer 1991; Franklin, van der Eijk, and Oppenhuis 1996; Franklin 2007; Schmitt and van der Eijk 2007). Finally, only recent studies introduced the hypothesis that EU attitudes (or the EU issue, as scholars who work in the area define them) may affect political behavior during national elections (Tillman 2004; De Vries 2007; 2009). In the following section, I briefly review the role of European attitudes during national elections and I expand on the EU referendum literature. These two literatures on the impact of EU attitudes on political behavior in contexts other than EP elections are informative in pointing out to factors that may have been overlooked by the previous literature on EP elections.

### **The Electoral Link between EU Attitudes and Behavior during EU Referendums and National Elections**

The literature on national elections and attitudes toward the EU is probably the least developed. Despite the interconnectedness of national and EU decision making processes, only very recently scholars started to investigate whether attitudes toward European integration influence voting in national elections (Tillman 2004; de Vries 2007; 2008). Given the recent Europeanization of national elections mentioned in the introduction in France and Greece, it is most likely that this literature will soon flourish. However, as of 2009, two factors were underscored as important in generating a vote based on attitudes toward EU integration during national elections. These factors are the presence and roles of Eurosceptic parties and EU referendums.

Eurosceptic parties at the political extremes are key factors in generating a context in which there is conflict over 'EU issues' (De Vries 2007). To the extent that EU integration is valuable to them, Eurosceptic parties play up the issue related to EU integration in the electoral campaigns such that partisan conflict over EU integration rises. Voters become aware of the partisan conflict over EU integration, and, to the extent that voters care about EU integration, they will most likely vote in national elections based on attitudes toward EU integration. De Vries (2007) tests this argument on voting behavior during national elections in Denmark, Germany, the Netherlands, and the United Kingdom. The author finds that EU attitudes are significant predictors only in Denmark and the UK. Both cases display the necessary context of Eurosceptic extremist parties actively campaigning against EU integration.

Referendums constitute a second factor that may increase the role of EU attitudes. EU referendums give parties the opportunity to discuss the EU integration issue at stake, to explain the EU institutions and the complex treaty reforms to their citizens. EU referendums, in contrast to EP elections or national elections, bring the EU issues to the forefront and force domestic parties to clearly position themselves on important issues such as enlargement, joining, and deepening the EU integration. Voters become increasingly aware of the distances between mainstream parties<sup>4</sup>, in addition to the position of the more extreme parties on European integration. De Vries (2008) tests this theory of the effect of EU referendums on European attitudes and national voting in the

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<sup>4</sup> This argument of differentiation on the EU issue among mainstream parties is particularly important since most research on EP elections argues that this is precisely the reason why EU attitudes do not matter at EP elections. Namely, domestic *mainstream* parties shy away from positioning themselves on EU issues at EP elections (Franklin, Eijk and Marsh 1996, 370-371). By contrast, De Vries (2008) suggests that this lack of differentiation among mainstream parties does not hold at EU referendums, fact that creates the context for the EU issue to matter at national elections.

2006 Dutch parliamentary elections. The author finds that after the 2005 referendum on the Constitutional Treaty, the saliency of the EU issue increased among voters as a result of the heightened inter-party conflict. In this new context, attitudes toward EU integration significantly affected voters' party choices in the following national election. Tillman (2004) studies the effect of European integration (named EU voting) in three new member states, Austria, Finland, and Sweden, during the period of accession EU referendums. The author finds that congruence between a party's EU positioning and voter attitudes toward EU integration significantly affect the likelihood of the citizen voting for that party. Thus, concludes Tillman (2004), national elections may be an arena for European integration (ibid, 604).

When we move the research focus from the national to the supranational level, namely at electoral behavior during EU referendums, attitudes toward EU integration win the debate over whether it is the EU attitudes or the national cues coming from domestic elites that influence political behavior the most. The research in this area offers more nuanced perspectives on how EU attitudes are measured, what dimensions they encompass, and what additional factors enhance their effects on electoral behavior. For instance, Siune, Svensson and Tonsgaard (1994) distinguish between attitudes toward EU political integration and EU economic integration. In a study on the two Danish referendums on the Maastricht Treaty in 1992 and 1993, the authors show that attitudes toward the integration project played an important role in shaping the 'no' (1992) and the 'yes' (1993) votes. What explains the change from the 'no' to the 'yes' vote, argue the authors, is different perceptions of the EU. The Danes wanted to continue in the European community, favoring EU economic integration, but not the

political one: 'most of voters didn't want more than the benefits from economic integration' (ibid, 107) and manifested a 'strong resistance to closer political integration' (ibid, 109). Only after the perceptions related to the political integration as threatening the national sovereignty changed, namely after the Edinburgh Agreement was signed, enough Danes voted 'yes' and the referendum passed.

A different way of thinking of how to conceptualize attitudes toward EU integration is to distinguish among its multiple dimensions: the economic one (refers to benefits accruing from EU membership), the political one (refers to the workings of the EU democratic structure), and the constitutional one (refers to EU as a political system in itself). Glencross and Trechsel (2011) apply this three-dimensional structure of EU attitudes in an empirical study on all constitutional referendums in France, Spain, Luxembourg, and the Netherlands. The authors establish that the 'notion of 'Europe' (...) has a major impact on voting behavior' (ibid, 757). The structural European dimension, which encompasses attitudes toward EU institutions (Europhile attitudes), toward the Treaty of European Constitution (Constitution-phile attitudes), and toward perceptions of economic benefits accruing from EU membership (Egocentric Europeanness) is tested against domestic consideration of government-opposition party identification, ideology, and preferred party's position with respect to EU integration. Based on large-N analyses, Glencross and Trechsel (2011) conclude that how voters understand the EU, and the perception of economic benefits accruing from EU membership in particular, are crucial factors in determining support for the constitutional European project. In addition, the European dimension definitely trumps in relevance the second order interpretations of EU referendums.

In addition to defining measures to capture EU attitudes, the literature on electoral behavior during EU referendums underscores the important distinction between EU referendums and EP elections: namely, while EU issues are visible during EU referendums as they are the issues at stake on the ballot, EU issues are in fact missing from the debates during EP elections (Glencross and Trechsel 2011; Hobolt 2005; 2009). Recent research on EP elections calls into question this oversimplification of EU integration as an issue during EP elections (Hobolt 2005; 2009). Yet, it is important to emphasize the important point made here, that an increased level of awareness on the voter side of various aspects of EU integration is a necessary condition to generate a vote based on EU attitudes.

To understand what generates variation on voter's awareness with respect to aspects of EU integration, Hobolt (2005, 2009) introduces political information and the campaign context as 'crucial' intervening variables. The author suggests that political information and campaigns 'mediate the weight of attitudes and elite cues in determining voting behavior' (Hobolt 2009, 29). Building on Zaller's (1991) work on the heterogeneous aspect of citizens' political awareness, Hobolt (2005, 2009) posits that European attitudes are the driving forces in EU referendums mainly for individuals with higher levels of political awareness and in the context of the high intensity of political campaigns. Mostly in the context of high and intense flow of information, which reduces the uncertainty with respect to what is at stake, namely the issue of EU integration, will European citizens be able to connect their underlying European preferences to the voting outcome, which is more or less integration. Thus, European attitudes will matter the most in the context where national elites debate over the EU issue. By contrast, in

an environment with lower levels of political information, measured both at the individual level, as political awareness, and at the contextual level, as a low intensity campaign, citizens will rely on national proxies, reducing the EU referendums to a 'second order' type of voting.

Therefore, 'Europe' conceptualized as a multi-dimensional structure that captures attitudes toward the political system, its workings, and its benefits, affects voting behavior during EU referendums especially when the flow of EU related information presented during the campaigns is high. The campaign environment becomes, therefore, particularly important in influencing behavior: campaigns act as informers, allow voters to distinguish between different alternatives promoted by national parties, and allow voters to match these alternatives with their EU preferences. Second, campaigns act as mobilizers by sending the message that the issues at stake are important. The campaigns emphasizing various issues or aspects of EU integration or EU policy making are said to constitute the missing elements at EP elections. As we know, EP elections are elections that are not important, attract less interest from the media, parties, and voters. Most important, however, is that the issues debated during the campaigns are not about EU, but rather about national politics. There are, of course, cross-state variations with respect to the domestic focus during EP elections. The theory I develop in Chapter 4 addresses precisely this aspect pointed to in the referendums literature, which is how to make the electoral campaigns more about EU and less about national politics. The theory developed in Chapter 4 brings together factors presented as important during national elections and EU referendums, namely, the campaigns as essential in generating a vote on EU attitudes. Parties most likely to

initiate the debates over EU integration during the campaigns are the Eurosceptic parties, as the ones that oppose the most the EU. Before developing this theory, I move next to illustrate the dominant behavioral theories and the role that EU attitudes play during EP elections.

### **The Electoral Link between EU Attitudes and Electoral behavior during European Parliament (EP) Elections**

What role do European attitudes play at EP elections? Does the same logic developed in the referendum and national literature applies to EP elections or do EP elections elicit a substantially different behavior? When and under what circumstances do European attitudes influence people's voting behavior during EP elections? In contrast to national elections or EU referendums, where the issues at stake are national governments and EU integration, there is 'little is at stake' at EP elections—this is the core characteristic that distinguishes EP elections from other types of electoral contests. This characteristic leads to a particular dynamic of national domestic issues and EU attitudes influencing electoral behavior on which I elaborate below. I distinguish between two theories, which emphasize different factors as essential in explaining voting behavior. On the one hand, the 'second order national' election (SOE) model posits that EU attitudes hardly matter during EP elections. On the other hand, the 'Europe matters' alternative, developed as a spatial voting model, seeks to incorporate into its logical formulation the role that EU attitudes may play during EP elections. While I find both theories problematic, for reasons explained in the following chapter, it is important to understand what the current theories say with respect to the voting dynamic at play.

## **The EP elections and the 'second order election' (SOE) model**

The national parliamentary elections that lead to the formation of the executive are labeled first order elections, while elections that do not have at stake a ruling government are labeled second order. Examples of second order elections include regional, state, local elections that occur midway through the cycle of national elections. Given that EP elections have no capacity for forming a government at the EU level, they are 'second order' elections (Reif and Schmitt 1980). In addition, the dominant framework that explains the electoral behavior at EP elections added the 'national' appellation to the 'second order' name, as reflective of the manifestations that parties, candidates, and the electorate put forward during EP elections. Contesting parties campaign on domestic issues rather than EU issues, the electorate decides based on national attitudes and factors rather than EU attitudes and EU level factors, and the results are difficult to interpret for EU affairs: these are the statements of the SOE model (ibid).

The SOE theory underscores three essential factors in structuring the behavior of parties, candidates, and the electorate at EP elections: 'less power at stake', the arena issue, and timing. The first dimension, 'less (power) at stake', refers to the differentials in electoral salience between EP and national elections. As low salience elections with 'less (power)-at-stake' when compared to national first-order elections, EP elections attract fewer voters and less party and media attention and involvement. Second, there is the specific-arena issue, where it is not European related issues that are debated and voted upon, but rather national concerns (ibid). Direct consequences of these characteristics are lower levels of political participation and the possibility of different strategic behavior from both voters and parties. Voters are freed from strategic

calculations related to possible governmental outcomes. Parties, large mainstream parties in particular, are free to limit their electoral investments since these elections are not that important anyway. These two characteristics of electoral participation and voting behavior make the EP electoral result look different than the national electoral outcome. Thus, at EP elections small, radical, even new or different parties win more support than in national electoral contests. In addition, mainstream large parties, governmental in particular, are losing support when compared to their previous national outcomes (Reif and Schmitt 1980; Schmitt and Mannheimer 1991; Franklin, van der Eijk, and Oppenhuis 1996; Franklin 2007; Schmitt and van der Eijk 2007).

In addition to these two components ('less at stake' and the arena issue), timing is a third factor that plays a critical role in shaping the electoral behavior. European elections occur every five years but for most member states they do not occupy the same position in the national electoral cycle (the period between two national legislative elections). Since national elections occur at a frequent rate than European elections, with a maximum term for the national parliament of four years, the position of EP elections in the national cycles varies between countries and over time. Based on previous research, the relationship between EP elections and timing in the electoral cycle produces the following behavior and expectations. EP elections held in the first part of the national electoral cycle trigger little interest on both voters and parties' sides, reason for which such elections are labeled 'throw away elections'. In these EP elections, sincere voting of 'voters vote with the heart' takes place. EP elections held in the second part of the national electoral cycle are in general protest vote against national governments' performance. Such elections, labeled as 'marker setting

elections', in which voters 'vote with the boot', signal in fact voter discontent with domestic politics and not with European related issues (Oppenhuis, van der Eijk and Franklin 1996, pp. 302-304)<sup>5</sup>. As EP elections get closer to a national election the outcome of the EP election mimics the outcome of the future domestic contest. Due to this dynamic of EP elections conditioned by timing within electoral cycle to reflect national politics, Europe-wide elections have been thought of and labeled as the European version of midterm/primary elections in the US (Tufte 1975). As such, losses and gains of domestic governmental parties follow the electoral cycle, with larger losses encountered right at the midterm of two legislative elections. The fact that domestic concerns trigger European electoral behavior becomes important because the result cannot be interpreted neither as a mandate for Europe nor as a vote against Europe (Van der Eijk and Franklin 1996).

The second order election model addresses, therefore, two broad questions: first, why do people vote, and, second, *when* they vote, why and how their voting behavior differs from the one in national, first order elections. In answering these questions, the common theme that unites different research designs, including case studies, large-N analyses, experimental or observational studies is that following the SOE model 'Europe hardly matters' (Reif and Schmitt 1980; Schmitt and Mannheimer 1991; Franklin, van der Eijk, and Oppenhuis 1996; Franklin 2007; Schmitt and Van der Eijk 2007; Hobolt and Wittrock 2011). This interpretation remains valid, argue scholars working under this

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<sup>5</sup> The use of EP elections as barometers on national political standing of particular parties is possible only as long as similar electoral systems, of PR variations, are used in both elections. For instance, since in Britain the first-past-the-post electoral system is used in national elections, the EP electoral outcome based on an unfamiliar List PR cannot be translated into domestic political terms (Franklin 2007, 25).

paradigm, despite the fact that the EU has changed over time, growing in scale, from 9 to 27 member states, and in scope, covering a large palette of policies that are decided at the EU level and not at the national level. Moreover, the seven successive waves of EP elections would have allowed voters to learn more about the EU and the role of the EP. And yet, after the last 2009 EP electoral wave, a BBC editorial entitled ‘Viewpoint: A truly European Vote?’ posits that EP elections are still just a ‘mid-term vote on national governments’.<sup>6</sup> Therefore, worrying over the EU meaning of low turnout or governmental party losses, and why not, of Eurosceptic party gains, is not appropriate given the logic of SOE that the 2009 EP elections still follow. We should focus instead, argues Hix (2009), on ways of reforming the EP elections, such that they can become about Europe and not about national issues.

I follow next the fine grained theory of EP elections as ‘second order national’ elections that seeks to explain behavior at EP elections by overemphasizing the role of national domestic issues. I distinguish between two instances of electoral behavior, turnout and party selection (or switching). The major goal in the following section is to assess the extent to which European attitudes have been introduced as explanatory factors into models coming from the SOE school of thought and to highlight the major conclusions of these studies. Second, I move to the ‘Europe matters’ alternative developed as a spatial voting model. Here, I focus on the same aspects: to what extent attitudes toward European integration have been introduced as explanatory factors, and

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<sup>6</sup> Simon Hix. 2009. ‘Viewpoint: A truly European Voter’, BBC NEWS: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/go/pr/fr/-/2/hi/europe/8025749.stm>. Published: 2009/05/05. Last accessed September 20, 2011.

what conclusions have been reached regarding the role that EU attitudes may play during EP elections.

### **EU attitudes and turnout**

There are different approaches to studying voting participation: on the theoretical level one can use system level explanations in which the unit of analysis is the member state or individual level explanations in which the unit of analysis is the individual (Table 2-1). More recent research employs a combination of the two and includes individual level data nested within member states data. Depending of the theoretical choice, one uses aggregate level turnout rates for system analyses or survey data for micro-individual approaches. Table 2-1 maps out different indicators that have been used in turnout analyses, with a particular focus on turnout during EP elections. I identify five types of factors affecting turnout: socio-demographic variables such as age, gender, income, region, religiosity and political culture indicators, such as attitudes, belief, values for national institutions (trust in and evaluations of national authorities and institutions) or EU institutions (trust, identification, and evaluations of the EU or EP). A third category refers to political behavior: partisanship, mobilization due to campaign exposure, political knowledge and interest, and evaluations of the national economy. The last two sets of factors refer to system analyses and use aggregate level data: institutional factors such as electoral laws, constituency size, compulsory voting, Sunday or weekday voting. The political context covers both national and EU level factors. Under this generic name one can have measures of turnout at the previous national election and timing within the electoral cycle as important national measures. EU level factors consist of different aspect of the experience with the EU policy: net contributor to the EU budget or net recipient, adoption of the euro currency, length of

EU membership, hosting a EU institution, country's share of EP seats, and agricultural workforce as an indirect measure of the CAP (Common Agricultural Policy) influence which absorbed over time between 80% to 50% of the EU budget. Finally, the country level indicators of media attention to EU news at EP elections affect voters' awareness of the issues at stake and can have an impact on political behavior as well.

The cross-national studies concerned specifically with *why people do (not) vote at EP elections* use either aggregate level data for explaining decreasing overall trends and cross-national variations in EP turnout from the first 1979 EP election to recent waves (Franklin 2001, 2007; Mattila 2003; Flickinger and Studlar 2007), or use individual level data for understanding the 'hidden messages' of abstentions (Schmitt and van der Eijk 2007, 161), or display a combination of both individual and aggregate level data (Franklin, van der Eijk, and Oppenhuis 1996). The major conclusion of comparative studies working under the framework of the SOE model is that 'Europe hardly matters' for electoral participation and for the declining rates of participation (Schmitt and Mannheimer 1991; Franklin 2007). Table 2-2 maps out these different studies on the questions of turnout and the role of EU attitudes across different levels of analysis: only individual data, only aggregate level data, and mixed. In addition, this table notes when EU attitudes and/or EU level factors are factored into the analyses and whether such indicators are found to be significant.

For instance, using individual level data, pre- and post-1989 EP elections surveys in 12 members states, Schmitt and Mannheimer (1991) posit that 'European attitudes and EC-orientations appear to have been almost irrelevant to decisions to participate in or to abstain from the European elections of 1989 (...) and the forceful explanator (...) is

nothing but habitual voting' (44). In addition, 'the direct effects of general EC approval, perceived importance of the European Parliament and saliency of EC issues on intended as well as on reported participation in European elections are negligible' (ibid).

A follow up, comprehensive study that considers electoral participation data for all European Community member states in the 1989 and 1994 EP elections and which employs both aggregate level and individual characteristics concludes: 'EC-related attitudes (...) play no significant role in the explanation of electoral participation in European elections (...) this underscores again (...) that what we are dealing with are second order national rather than European elections' (Franklin, Van der Eijk, and Oppenhuis 1996, 322-323). Moreover, this study on differences in turnout, both within and between countries and over time, shows that 92% of the variance in the system-level turnout is explained with four variables: compulsory voting, Sunday voting, proportionality of the electoral system and time until the next national election (ibid, 318). This idea that overtime (decreasing) trends in turnout are not related to public attitudes toward the political project is further reinforced by the findings of a study on turnout variations from 1979 to 1999 (Franklin 2001).

In addition to the structural factors previously mentioned, such as compulsory voting, electoral salience which refers to timing within the national electoral cycle, a 'first time boost' indicator is introduced as responsible for apparent long-term declining trends (ibid, 312). The short-term boost to average turnout that each new member contributes with is counteracted by the overall decrease in the number of compulsory voting member states with each enlargement. Franklin's (2001) turnout calculations, which correct for the overlooked factor of 'first-time boost', show interesting variations:

increase in the 1984 EP elections, followed by a decrease in the 1994 elections, and stabilization in the 1999 election. This pattern, which obviously contradicts the actual average turnout results of constant decrease, receives the following interpretation:

We do suspect that turnout reflects the importance of an election and in the EC/EU, the importance of elections might vary without being linked to approval of European integration (...) The low corrected turnout in 1979 mirrors a drop in support for Europe found in all opinion polls conducted after the signing of Maastricht Treaty (...) The fact that there was no further decline in corrected turnout in 1999 could be taken as an encouraging sign that public concerns for European matters has perhaps been stabilized after 1994 (ibid, 323).

This quote shows the lack of clarity that research on turnout and EU attitudes share: does the low turnout reflect mainly the 'low stakes of EP elections' or is the overall corrected turnout trend linked to publics' support for EU integration? Studies that work under the SOE framework and employ both aggregate and individual level indicators strongly support the perspective that turnout variations in the first four EP elections are not reflective of public attitudes toward Europe. To the extent that some EU related perspective is allowed to emerge, (decreasing) turnout trends reflect in fact the low saliency of the EP elections rather than publics' attitudes (Franklin 2001).

However, research focused mostly on institutional factors such as compulsory voting and simultaneous national elections has been criticized for not dealing with the actual puzzle, which is, in fact, the large gap between turnout at national elections and turnout at EP elections (Blondel, Sinnott and Svensson 1997; 1998). For this type of puzzle, argue Blondel et al. (1997; 1998), the institutional factors that are essential in Franklin et al.' analyses (1996) do not vary. Consequently, they cannot account for large differences in turnout variations within countries. If institutional factors do not carry much explanatory power, what can be said about individual-level explanations, such as

political interest, campaign mobilization, and party appeal? And, ask Blondel et al. (1997; 1998),

Can it really be that attitudes to Europe--what people know and think and feel (or do not know and think and feel) about the European Union and its institutions--play no significant part in determining whether or not they vote in a European Parliament election? (1997, 246; 1998, 40).

Therefore, a substantive critique to the SOE framework has been mounted by Blondel, Sinnott and Svensson (1997, 1998). Based on open-ended survey questions related to the reasons for abstaining in the 1994 EP elections in twelve member states, the authors seek to disentangle the relationship between the 'voluntary deliberate Euro-abstention' on the one hand (1998, 41) and the core assumptions of the SOE on the other hand, by also carefully investigating what role European attitudes play for turnout dynamics. The authors start their investigations by directly questioning the base assumption of the SOE model, namely the argument that 'little is at stake'. Comparing voters' power perceptions of EP and national legislatures, the authors suggest that the relative powerlessness of the EP 'may be an objective account (...) that is not shared by a majority of European citizens' (ibid, 112). Likewise, when focusing on the relationship between European and national party differentials for each individual voter, the authors find that voters consider the matter of which party wins or loses seats of 'equal importance', regardless of the type of election, EP or national. Both of these findings show that non-voters at least do not share what constitutes the very nature of EP elections, namely the second-order character. Finally, Blondel et al. (1997, 1998) also show that support for the EU significantly reduces the odds of voluntary Euro-abstention. Therefore, conclude the authors, voluntary abstention in EP elections is not

supported by the second-order explanations, while attitudes towards European Union have a significant impact on abstention (ibid 1998, 236).

Although important, the SOE approach has been quite dismissive of Blondel et al.'s findings, invoking as critiques methodological issues: the method used, namely for the use of open-ended questions for listing reasons for non-voting, can only be asked to non-voters. Thus, the research design suffers from selection bias, since we do not know how '(un)interested and (dis)satisfied are those who did cast a ballot in the European elections' (Schmitt and van der Eijk 2007, 150). In addition, 'by taking these responses as reasons ('causes') for non-voting that would be satisfactory from a researchers' perspective, Blondel et al. (...) shrink away from their own responsibility to formulate falsifiable accounts for the respondents' behavior: their approach leaves no room for falsifying the reasons for non-voting given by respondents' (ibid).

In a follow up study on the voting and non-voting in all EU member states participating in the 1999 EP elections, Schmitt and van der Eijk (2007) pose the question of 'how much of a political message is hidden behind non-voting in European Parliament elections?' (ibid, 161). Thus, concerned specifically with disentangling the relationship between participation and Euro-skeptic abstentions, the study concludes that abstentions in EP elections do not carry an anti-EU sentiment. The decision to abstain is allegedly based on 'other grounds' than one's own evaluations of the EU (Schmitt and van der Eijk 2007, 162). Thus, even negative behavior (abstention) is not Europe related. Similarly, Schmitt (2005) in an aggregate level study on the 2004 EP election finds that variations in attitudes toward the EU 'do not affect turnout in any

significant way' and 'EU-scepticism scarcely contributes to our understanding of electoral participation' (ibid, 658).

Therefore, cross-national studies on turnout variations, understood as variations within member states from national to EP elections and referred to as the 'Eurogap' (Flickinger and Studlar 2007, 390), or as variations among member states, or as aggregate level over time variations, argue that turnout outcomes in EP elections can be explained with the same factors as the ones in national elections, such as the macro-level indicators of compulsory voting, Sunday voting, the electoral system specifications, position with the electoral cycle, or first time participation in an EP election. At the individual level, people vote out of habit, or because of social norms, because they trust institutions in general, and because they feel attached and identify with a particular party (Franklin 2001; Wessels and Franklin 2010; Franklin and Hobolt 2011). If positive views on Europe are present among voters, such views, it is argued, do not predict voting only in EP elections but also voting in national elections. European attitudes are thus interpreted as support for elected institutions in general and not as linkage structures between voters and the EU on European issues. 'Such attitudes tend to be part of a syndrome of support for elected institutions in general, which is in no sense peculiarly linked to Europe and European elections' (Marsh and Franklin 1996, 16). Or, if EU specific factors affect turnout, their effect is smaller (Mattila 2003, Wessels and Franklin 2010). For instance, Wessels and Franklin (2010) in a study on turnout at the 2004 EP elections conclude that the micro-level EU attitudinal (and mobilization) variables even though significant 'do not contribute much to the explanations of real turnout' (ibid, 97).

## **EU attitudes and party selection (or party switching)**

Since it seemed that Europe does not matter much for political participation, an alternative approach considering whether Europe matters entailed the investigation of both individual behavior and aggregate level data with regards to support of, or better yet, defection from governmental parties or other first choices in the preceding national elections. With respect to party switching it is important to highlight the main assumption of the SOE model, which implies that the issues based on which voters decide *remain the same across* national and EP elections. What changes are voters' perceptions with respect to power at stake at EP elections, little in contrast to much in national elections. Of interest to this study however is to assess the extent to which scholars have explored the alternative of EP elections as not just 'second-order' and theorized, thus, on the role of EU attitudes: do EU attitudes matter when deciding to choose either the same or a different party at the following EP election? Just as the turnout question, the party vote selection at EP elections, which becomes a party switching question across first- and second-order elections, has been explored using individual and aggregate level data. I map out these studies in Table 2-3, which includes the research question and the findings with respect to the role and magnitude that the EU attitudes may have played.

At the aggregate level, party position on European integration does not seem to have a systematic impact on voter decisions to switch across elections (Van der Eijk and Franklin 1991; Hix and Marsh 2007). For instance, Van der Eijk and Franklin (1991) investigate whether agreement exists between parties and voters with respect to European integration. Using two different surveys commissioned around the 1989 EP elections and building average level measures of voters and parties' positions on EC integration, the authors conclude that there is substantial voter-party disagreement on

the EC issue. Yet, 'parties do not acquire votes on the basis of European integration' (ibid, 124). In a more comprehensive study on party gains across all 1979-2004 EP elections, Hix and Marsh (2007) find some evidence that party position on Europe matters. More precisely, parties with extreme positions on EU do better in EP elections. Moreover, anti-EU and Green parties do better than other party families in European elections. These findings hold only in the old 15 member states. Thus, conclude Hix and Marsh (2007), 'EU attitudes matter more where public support for the EU is low' (ibid, 505).

Studies at the individual level support in part the mixed findings of the aggregate level studies. When explaining government party vote loss at the 1999 European elections, Marsh (2007) finds that 'negative attitudes to Europe drive voters who voted for the government last time to switch or abstain' (ibid, 67). Since other measures of voters' and parties' positions on the EU proved not to affect voting behavior in his study, Marsh (2007) concludes that 'governments' at EP elections stand in fact as 'proxy for the EU itself' (ibid, 70). Thus, anti-EU sentiments influence support for government candidates regardless of candidates' positions on the EU issue. Not delving into the theoretical underpinnings of why European attitudes conflate with governmental support, Marsh (2007) labels this finding as 'tenuous' for the moment and calls for more research on this issue (ibid, 70).

By contrast, Van Egmond (2007) in a study on the same 1999 EP elections shows that 'parties that take a negative stance toward EU integration benefit systematically from it' (p46). Van Egmond (2007) seeks to explain 'quasi-switching' or split voting in EP elections and real (i.e., simultaneous) or counterfactual national election, based on a

hypothetical survey question of ‘how would you vote if tomorrow national elections would take place’. Hence, EP elections are, to some extent, about anti-European issues, confirming some of the findings (Hix and Marsh 2007) at the aggregate level. Still, in the same edited volume and on the same 1999 data, two studies on non-voting, EU support, and party choices strongly upheld that ‘an anti-EU sentiment’ does not play a major role in the decision to vote or abstain (Schmitt and van der Eijk 2007, 162). Similarly, attitudes toward the EU are ‘of marginal importance for the process leading to voters’ party choice’ (van der Brug, van der Eijk, and Franklin 2007, 183).

### **EU attitudes and the ‘Europe matters’ alternative**

The studies on party switching mentioned thus far work under the SOE framework, which assumes that the same issues of governmental referendums and approval of the economy are responsible for party choices across both levels. These studies seem to concur that EU attitudes do not matter, or, have a minimal effect, at best. Yet, this perspective of minimal impact has been recently challenged by a series of studies which point to the fact that Europe matters in a quite systematic way. This dissertation project builds on the recent work and its innovations to unpack the micro-dynamics of electoral choice by directly questioning the sameness of relevant issues across different levels in a multi-governance structure. The recent studies underscore that attitudes toward EU become more salient during EP elections (Hobolt and Spoon 2010; Hobolt, Spoon, and Tilley 2008; Hobolt and Wittrock 2011; Marsh and Mikhaylov, 2010). This recent work advances for instance the hypothesis that voters *may* distinguish between parties’ performance and policy preference across the two levels, national and the EU. Given the increased relevance of the European Parliament in the policy decision-making process and the overall prominence of EU institutions, voters may evaluate the EU on

its own terms, and, thus, use EU related factors to judge parties' behavior across this multi-layered governance structure (Clark and Rohrschneider 2009; Carruba and Timpone 2005).

For example, Carrubba and Timpone's (2005) study on vote switching at the 1994 EP elections shows that voters treat the EP elections as more than 'secondary and symbolic' (ibid, 261). Voters who perceive the EP as powerful are more likely to switch to Green parties in the EP election mostly because these environmentally-minded voters have different policy preferences across the two levels, national and supranational. Thus, conclude Carrubba and Timpone (2005), at national elections environmental issues may not be among the most pressing ones but at EP elections such issues become the most important. Similarly, Clark and Rohrschneider (2009) hypothesize that perceived performance of parties at the EU level may influence voters' decisions to defect or stay with the same party. Using data on the 1999 EP election, Clark and Rohrschneider (2009) show that voters move toward governmental parties (i.e., from an opposition party in the national election to a governmental party in the EP election) when they believe that parties do a good job at the EU level. In addition, voters are more likely to consistently oppose governmental parties at both levels, national and EP, if they disapprove of parties' performance at the EU level (ibid, 125). This last finding in particular confirms previous research on the role of EU attitudes at national elections (see the section on EU attitudes and national electoral behavior).

A more systematic approach to investigating when, how, and why Europe matters has been recently launched in a series of studies that advance a Downsian approach with respect to parties and voters' positions on EU integration and left-right ideological

dimensions. As a complement rather than a challenge, Hobolt et al. (2008) suggest that distances between voters and governing parties on both dimensions, left-right ideological and the European integration, are essential in understanding why European attitudes matter at the 1999 and 2004 EP elections. The starting empirical observation in this study is that voters are overwhelmingly less supportive of the EU integration project than the governing parties are. Given this 'Eurogap' between governing party voters and parties, governing party voters either abstain or switch to an alternative party at the EP elections, a party that is closer to their preferred position on EU integration. Two major propositions related to European integration attitudes are tested: first, the larger these distances the more likely will governing voters abstain or defect. Second, voters who are less supportive of the EU project are more likely to defect or abstain. The study shows thus that more negative attitudes towards EU integration are more likely to matter in shaping behavior at EP elections. In doing so, the authors confirm previous 'tenuous' findings that negative attitudes shaping behavior at EP elections. In addition to indicators at the individual level, a contextual factor, the campaign context, is introduced as relevant. Specifically, given the relevance of the negative EU integration attitudes, campaigns with a more Eurosceptic tone will increase voters' defections from the governing parties. In a follow up study concerned with conditions under which voters' motivations come from the national or EU arenas, Hobolt and Spoon (2010) add a new component, party polarization, as important in shaping behavior at EP elections. Greater party polarization on the EU issue helps voters identify different alternatives and boosts the overall saliency of the EU issue.

And yet, even this Downsian approach confirms some of the SOE implications that the national factors matter more than the EU related ones. In an experimental study on vote choice at EP elections, Hobolt and Wittrock (2011) conclude that ‘national cleavages and the left-right dimension matter more’ to voters who participate in EP elections than ‘attitudes in the EU-arena’ (Hobolt and Wittrock 2011, 30). The study is set up to test a few propositions related to vote choice in EP elections in the British context, which include party’s stance on the ideological left-right and EU integration dimension, pertinent information on the EU received during the campaign, and domestic arena issues, such as dissatisfaction with the government and national economy. The study shows that proximity on the left-right dimension has a considerable larger effect on the probability of voting for a particular party than the proximity on the EU integration dimension. Still, the study confirms the important role of EU related information since voters exposed to more EU information are more likely to base their vote choice on EU related dimension. Moreover, negative information on the government’s performance has a considerable effect on vote choice, implying that voters mostly decide at EP elections based on national issues (ibid, 40).

### **Concluding Remarks on EU Attitudes and Electoral Behavior: how to Move the Debate Forward**

With respect to the role of EU attitudes and voting behavior at EP elections, two research strands stand out: one is the dominant SOE model, which underscores issues from the national arena as the most important in shaping behavior that can be either strategic or sincere. The theoretical expectations put forward by this approach have been confirmed by a legion of studies. A second one comes from a complementary approach to the SOE, the ‘Europe matters’ alternative, which seeks to integrate in a

systematic way the impact of EU attitudes on voting behavior at EP elections. This second strand produces mixed results, with somewhat inconclusive statements of why and when Europe matters. One particular approach within the 'Europe matters' alternative stands out: the Downsian conceptualization of parties and voters in a two-dimensional space of EU integration and left-right ideological continuum. Working under the assumption that voters can situate themselves and parties in this issue space, these studies posit that voters are more likely to base their voting behavior on the EU dimension at EP elections if: 1) they are more Eurosceptic than the party they voted for in the national election and 2) the campaigning context is highly negative. By contrast to these mixed results on electoral behavior during EP elections, the research on EU referendums underscores that EU attitudes play an essential role in shaping the electoral behavior, precisely because EU referendums facilitate campaigns based on issues related to EU integration.

This dissertation builds upon recent research on the micro-dynamics of the 'Europe matters' alternative as a starting conceptual point that allows, at least in theory, for more room for 'EU attitudes' to matter. However, I argue, despite the innovation of theorizing on the role that EU attitudes may play during EP elections, the 'Europe matters' alternative imposes a dynamic with respect to party position on EU integration and left-right ideology that may not apply to all EU member states. The particular region I have in mind is the post-communist Europe, with its volatile party system and electorate.

Therefore, the next chapter derives hypotheses from the two dominant theories of electoral behavior during EP elections, the SOE and the Downsian approach. These

theories are tested with data from the first Europe-wide participation in EP elections in Romania. The goal in the following chapter is to test the assumptions on which both behavioral theories are built, and which, I argue, may not hold in this state. Specifically, contrary to the SOE model, the assumption that little is at stake may not hold:

Romanians are less likely to be aware of the relative 'little power at stake' at EP elections because they participate in a Europe-wide election for the first time. Given that 'little power at stake' drives the behavior based on domestic issues and given that this logic of viewing the EP elections may be missing in this region, it follows that there is more room for EU attitudes to matter.

How to capture whether EU attitudes affect voting behavior becomes the following question. To answer this question I have as conceptual starting point the 'Europe matters' alternative, which seeks to theorize precisely what role EU attitudes may play. However, I argue, because of the irrelevancy of the left-right ideological dimension when building the power/opposition structures, Romanians will have a harder time placing and perceiving proximities on the two dimensions between themselves and mainstream parties. Similarly on the EU dimension, because the country joined the EU only in 2007, Romanians will have also difficulties in judging the performance of parties at the EU level. Therefore, the party dimensionality assumed by the 'Europe matters' alternative may not hold in this region, such that studies working under this framework and applying this logic in post-communist states may find insignificant effects. Such results, I posit, will be an artifact of the measures used to capture attitudes toward EU integration, and not the effect of EU attitudes themselves. I adopt, therefore, a new measure used to capture attitudes toward EU integration, an approach outlined in the

EU referendum literature, which insists on different dimensions of voter EU attitudes: political and economic.

To develop a new theory of voting behavior during EP elections in Chapter 4, I use the framework illustrated in the EU referendums literature, which underscores the important role of EU information in the campaigns. Specifically, I argue that voters are more likely to base their electoral behavior on EU attitudes when the issues of EU integration acquire saliency among voters and parties. While acknowledging the structural latent preferences that voters have with respect to EU integration, I posit that political elites play an essential role in making these attitudes salient during voting in EP elections. Party elites frame Europe during the campaigns. Therefore, the EU related information received during the campaigns incentive voters to base their vote on EU attitudes. In addition, party polarization on the left-right ideological dimension and EU integration allows voters to make the distinctions among mainstream parties and fringe parties on these dimensions. In a polarized party system on the EU dimension, the parties most likely to start the EU integration related debates will be the anti-EU fringe parties. To the extent that they pose a serious challenge to mainstream parties, a EU related debate at the party level may emerge. The EU debates will then most likely be reflected in voter behavior, by allowing voters to link their EU integration preferences to party EU stances.

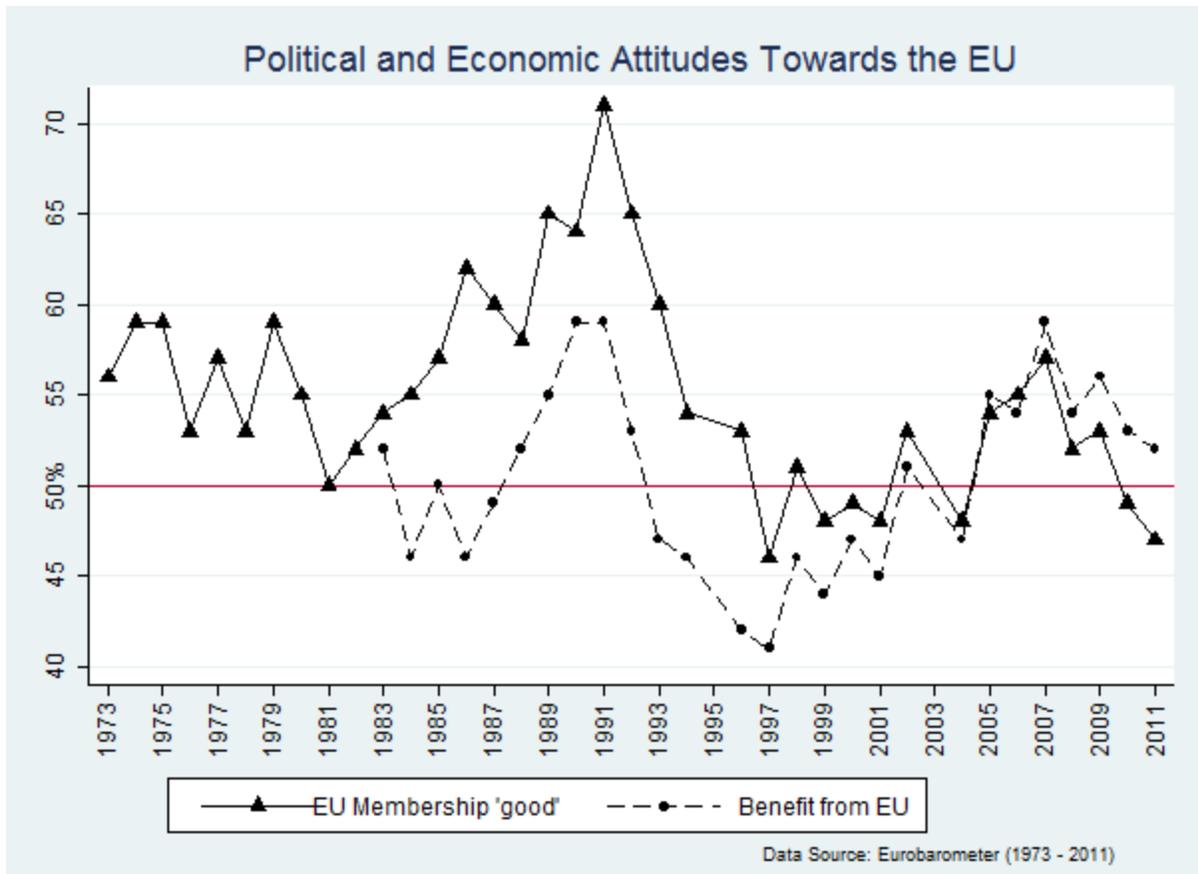


Figure 2-1. Developments in public support for European integration. Note: Answer 'good' to the question: 'Generally speaking, do you think that (your country's) membership of the European Community (Common Market) is a good thing?' & Answer 'benefitted' to the question: 'Taking everything into consideration, would you say that (your country) has on balance benefited from being a member of the European Community (Common Market)?' (Adopted from [http://ec.europa.eu/public\\_opinion/cf/index\\_en.cfm](http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/cf/index_en.cfm))

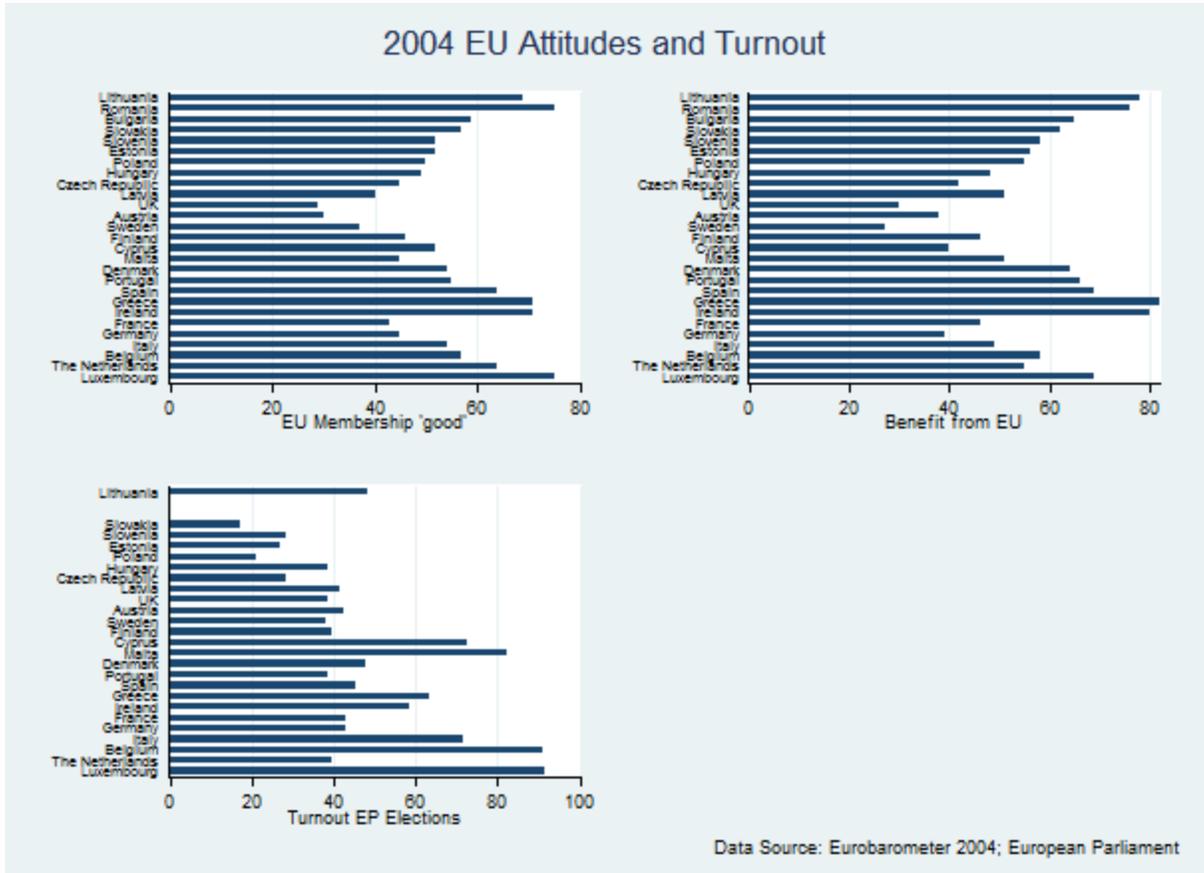


Figure 2-2. Cross-national support for the European Union (EU) and turnout during the 2004 European Parliament (EP) elections (Adopted from [http://ec.europa.eu/public\\_opinion/cf/index\\_en.cfm](http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/cf/index_en.cfm) and <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/portal/en>)

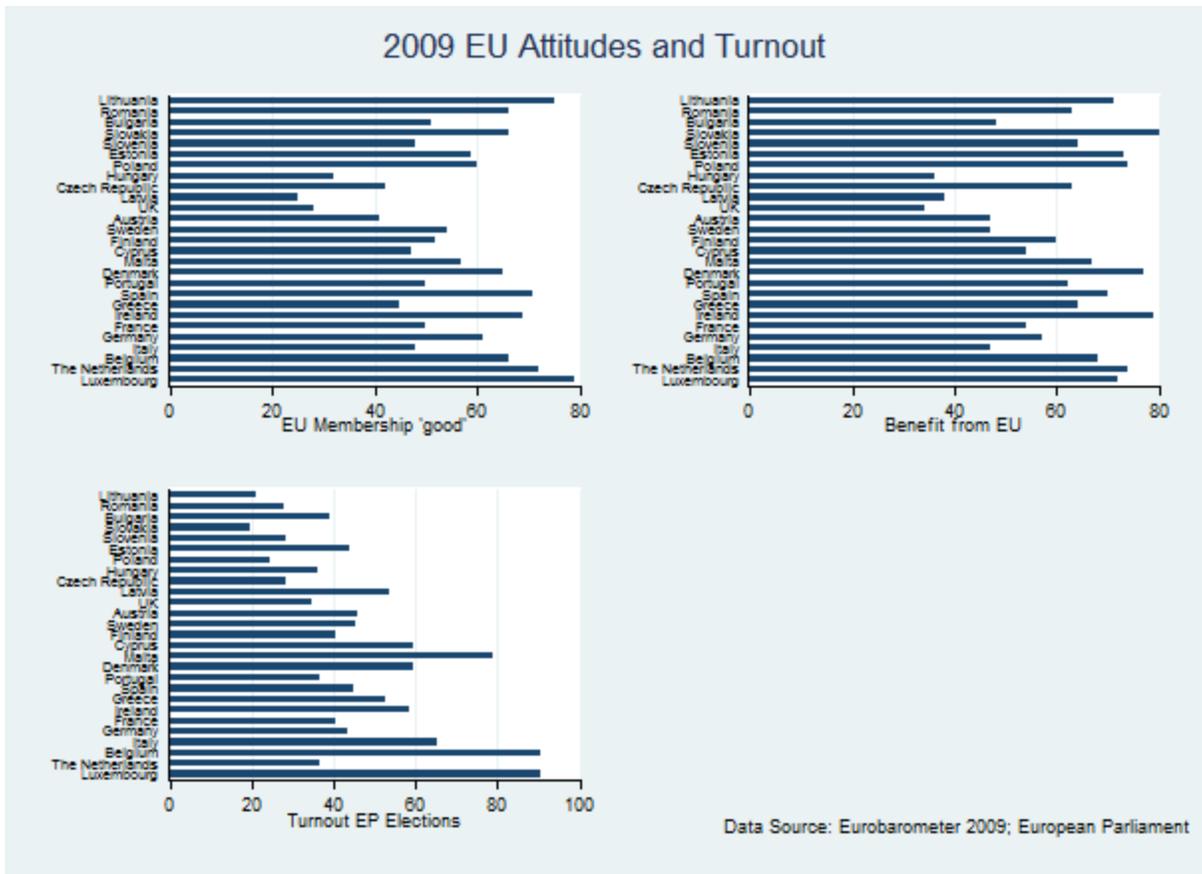


Figure 2-3. Cross-national support for the EU and turnout during the 2009 EP Elections (Adopted from [http://ec.europa.eu/public\\_opinion/cf/index\\_en.cfm](http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/cf/index_en.cfm) and <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/portal/en>)

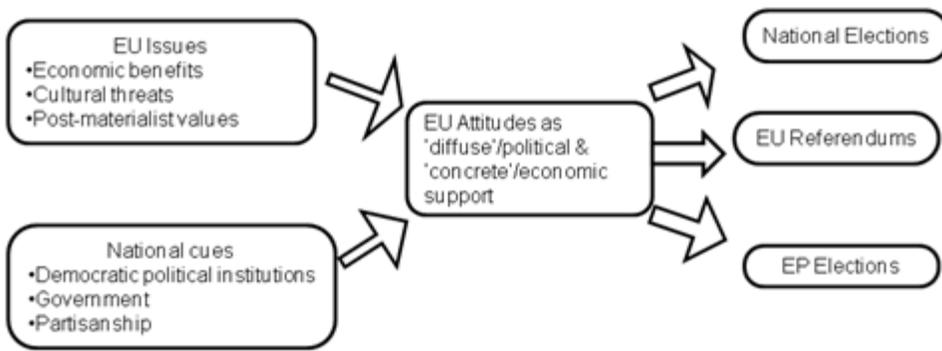


Figure 2-4. EU attitudes and political behavior

Table 2-1. Theoretical approaches to turnout at European Parliament (EP) elections

|                         | Voting in general   | Voting in the EP elections  |
|-------------------------|---|---|
| Individual explanations | Socio-demogr. factors   | Age, Gender, Occupation, Income, Region   |
|                         | Political culture:<br>Attitudes, beliefs, and values (national) | Trust in political authorities; Satisfaction with the way national politics works; Trust in national government   |
|                         | Attitudes, beliefs, and values (EU)                             | Citizens' perceptions of the EU, their identification with it and evaluation: trust in EU/EP institutions, European identity, belief the EU is a good thing, belief of economic benefits accruing from EU membership, support for EU membership |
|                         | Political behavior  | Partisanship; Political interest and political knowledge; Evaluation of the economy; Campaign exposure  |
| System explanations     | Institutional factors   | Electoral laws: closed or open party lists; Constituency size; Compulsory voting<br>Weekdays vs. weekends<br>Concomitant elections with other national, regional or local elections<br>First EP elections effect                                |
|                         | Political Context<br>National                                   | Timing within the electoral cycle<br>Turnout in previous national elections   |
|                         | EU  | EU Policy experience: net contributors or net beneficiary to the EU budget, membership in years, hosting a EU Institution, agricultural work force, country's share of seats in the EU, adoption of the euro                                    |
|                         | Campaigning   | EU related news in the campaigns  |
|                         |   |   |

Table 2-2. A survey of the literature on European attitudes and turnout at EP elections

|                           | Turnout Studies                         | Research question  | EU Attitudes |   | EU Political Context |           |
|---------------------------|---|--|--------------|---|----------------------|-----------|
|                           |   |  | Include      | Signif.                                   | Included             | Signif.   |
| Individual level analysis | Schmitt & Mannheimer (1991)             | Cross-national study on determinants of electoral participation(1989 EP elections) | YES          | NO  | NO                   | NA        |
|                           | Schmitt & Van der Eijk (2007)           | Non-voting in the 1999 EP election   | YES          | NO  | NO                   | NA        |
| Aggregate level analysis  | Mattila (2003)                          | a)Turnout in 1999; b) Cross-national variation in 5 EP election waves              | YES          | YES, smaller effects.                     | YES                  | YES       |
|                           | Schmitt (2005)                          | To re-examine the SOE propositions (2004 EP elections)                             | YES          | Yes, In post-com states no system. effect | NO                   | NO        |
|                           | Flickinger & Studlar (2007)             | a) Turnout in 2004; b) Cross-national turnout variation across 6 EP elections      | YES          | Partially                                 | YES                  | Partially |
| Mixed level data          | Franklin, der Eijk and Oppenhuis (1996) | Turnout differences; EP elections in 1989 and 1994                                 | YES          | NO  | NO                   | NA        |
|                           | Blondel (1997)                          | Turnout variation at 1994 EP elections   | YES          | YES                                       | NO                   | NA        |
|                           | Blondel, Sinnott and Svensson (1998)    | Abstentions in the 1994 EP elections   | YES          | YES                                       | NO                   | NA        |
|                           | Wessels and Franklin (2010)             | Turnout differences between member states all 1979-2004 EP elections               | YES          | Yes, but minimal effect                   | NO                   | NA        |

Table 2-3. A survey of the literature on party switching and European attitudes

|                           | Studies   | Research question  | Findings   |
|---------------------------|---|--|--|
| Aggregate level analysis  | Van der Eijk & Franklin (1991)                  | Agreements between EC's parties' position & voters' behavior (1989 EP elections) | 'Parties do not acquire votes on the basis of European integration'  |
|                           | Hix & Marsh (2007)                              | Party gains across all 1979-2004 EP elections                                    | 'EU attitudes matter more where public support for the EU is low'  |
| Individual level analysis | Marsh (2007)                                    | Government party vote loss at the 1999 EP elections                              | EU and government conflate and candidate's EU positions do not matter.                                       |
|                           | Van Egmond (2007)                               | Explains split voting at the 1999 EP elections                                   | EP elections are to some extent about anti-EU issues   |
|                           | Van der Brug, der Eijk, & Franklin (2007)       | Party choices at the 1999 EP elections   | Attitudes towards the EU are of marginal importance  |
|                           | Carrubba & Timpone (2005)                       | Vote switching at the 1994 EP election   | Environmental issues become more important at EP elections   |
|                           | Clark & Rohrschneider (2009)                    | Party choice at the 1999 EP elections  | Parties are evaluated based on the performance at the EU level   |
|                           | Hobolt, Spoon, & Tilley (2008)                  | Governing party losses at the 1999 and 2004 EP elections                         | Governing party voters are more likely to switch or abstain when the distances on the EU dimension are large |
|                           | Hobolt & Spoon (2010)                           | Party choices at the 2009 EP elections   | Party polarization matters to identify parties' positions on the EU issue                                    |
| Hobolt & Wittrock (2011)  | Possible party switching in the British context | Cleavages on the left-right dimension matter more than EU attitudes              |  |

CHAPTER 3  
METHODOLOGICAL CONCERNS EXEMPLIFIED WITH A CASE STUDY:  
ROMANIANS' BEHAVIOR IN THE FIRST EUROPE-WIDE ELECTIONS FOR THE  
EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT (EP)

Chapter 2 offered an overview of the origin of European attitudes and their effect on electoral behavior at different instances: EP elections, EU referendums, and national elections. Chapter 3 focuses on the debate over the role of EU attitudes at EP elections and calls for a more contextual examination of relevant domestic and EU indicators. Specifically, previous research that considered the behavior in the last the 2004 EP elections yields inconclusive results with respect to the role that the post-communist context may play in these EP elections related dynamics. On the one hand, research that looks at the aggregate level results and focuses mainly on the applicability of the SOE model in the post-communist context concludes that the nice orderly expectations of governing party losses do not hold very well in a context characterized by weak party institutionalization, weak party attachment, and high volatility (Schmitt 2005; Koepke and Ringe 2006; Hix and Marsh 2007). By contrast, research that works within the SOE framework but focuses on both micro-foundations and context related factors posits that citizens in both East and West regions respond to the same institutional and contextual influences. Mainly, they all perceive that the 'outcome of the EP elections does not matter' (Wessels and Franklin 2010, 97). In addition, studies that consider the micro-foundations of vote choice and posit that 'Europe matters' argue that East-West differences are *insignificant* with respect to voter's voting behavior in EP elections (Clark and Rohrschneider 2010, 130). To the effect that some magnitude differences are detected, in the sense that positive EU democratic performance help national governmental parties more in the West than they do in the East, these differences do

not mean, argue the authors, that voters perceive EP and national elections differently across the two sub-regions. Rather, it was suggested, 'voters in the West had more time to connect performance evaluations to parties' status as a government or opposition party' (ibid). Finally, studies following the spatial voting approach conclude that the theory travels well across all Europe with the qualification that voters in the East are more likely to switch (not found significant) or abstain than voters in the West (Hobolt et al 2008, 110).

Chapter 3 continues this line of thought that the post-communist context may play a particular role in the EP electoral dynamics. I argue that a few regional characteristics need to be closely considered: the perception of the first EP election as second order national election, the particular meaning of EU membership, and the party system characteristics. While I consider these factors to be relevant to the entire post-communist region, I elaborate below on each factor by focusing specifically on the Romanian context. The language skills and the understanding of this particular case as a Romanian citizen allowed me to use different methodologies to triangulate the findings from different perspectives: on the party supply side, I focused on the context of campaigns and the party debates over EU integration; on the voter demand side, I focused on voter motivations for participating and voting in the first EP elections. This inductive approach to closely consider a case study from a region where current theories fall short allows me to uncover behavioral dynamics that are symptomatic of the entire post-communist region. In addition, the findings guide the following arguments, when proposing a new theory that seeks to explain voting behavior during EP elections across all EU member states.

This chapter addresses the following research question: can Romania's voting behavior in the first Europe-wide elections for the European Parliament (EP) be explained strictly as an outcome of domestic factors or do European attitudes play a role as well? At face value, the aggregate regularities of second order elections of lower turnout, governing parties' losses, and gains for radical extreme parties, were only partially confirmed in the 2009 Romanian context: turnout decreased in the 2009 EP elections, from a national average of 39.2% in the preceding parliamentary elections to 27.67% in the EP elections (*Biroul Electoral Central* 2008, 2009). Governing parties' losses were, however, minimal, around 2% for each governing party. Rather, the spectacular outcome that made the news in Europe consisted of a substantial gain for one extreme, nationalist party, the Greater Romania (PRM), with more than 5% increase jumping from 3.15% in the national election to 8.65% in the EP one (ibid). These aggregate results generate the following research questions: What motivations, national or European, lie behind Romanians' decisions to participate and vote in EP election? To the extent that 'Europe matters', is the electoral outcome a vote 'against Europe', given that a radical party seems to be the biggest winner of these elections?

The findings are the following: voters' positive attitudes toward Europe, at least in the early years of EU membership, negatively affect the probability of abstaining and have no impact on the probability of party switching. This statement is time-dependent and may hold only during the first-Europe wide elections in a new member state, when the party system has not polarized yet on the EU issue. Also, the success of the far right nationalist party, the Greater Romania Party (PRM), can be attributed to voters'

disenfranchisement with the political class as a whole, governing and opposition. In addition, PRM voters share negative attitudes toward EU membership.

The ensuing chapter proceeds as follows: the first part introduces the Romanian particularities that refer to: voters' evaluations of the importance of the EP results when compared to the national ones for the SOE model. For the spatial voting theory, important are positive European attitudes and blurred perceptions of mainstream parties' positions on the left-right and the European integration dimensions. Second, new hypotheses are developed. Third, the chapter proceeds to testing the extent to which Romanians' motivations to participate and vote in EP elections are mainly driven by national or/and EU issues. I use, in this empirical section, several methodologies: discourse analysis of mainstream newspapers to present how the EU issues were framed in the Romanian context; open-ended interviews with citizens participating in the first Europe-wide EP elections, and large-n analyses on a representative nationwide random sample of 1,000 participants. Finally, I conclude.

### **The Mediating Factor of the Romanian Context**

Specifically, the chapter concentrates on Romania's first EP wide electoral participation and argues that this context poses particular challenges to the current explanations, the 'second order national election model' (SOE) and the 'Europe matters' as a 'spatial model approach'. With respect to the SOE assumption, this chapter argues that Romanians may not be aware of the view that 'the EP elections are elections with no power at stake' given that the 2009 EP elections are the first Europe-wide EP elections in which they participate. I posit that Romanian citizens, as part of a state that has recently joined the EU (in 2007), may be less aware of the perspective that EP elections are 'second order national elections'. Romania did not participate in other EU-

wide EP electoral campaigns, such that the first exposure of its citizens to the second order concept may be happening only during this campaign. Moreover, as citizens of a new member state, Romanians are less likely to be familiar with the EU decision-making process, and thus less equipped to judge the relative position of the EP in the EU decision-making process. It may be possible that Romanian citizens consider the EP elections' results just as important as the national elections' results. The EES 2009 survey results confirm this perspective. The EES 2009 survey allows us to tap into voters' associated importance to the EP results when compared to the national results (i.e., the relative importance associate to which parties are wining at EP and national elections). The EES survey does not include questions that would allow us to compare how citizens perceive the EP and the national legislatures. However, the EES survey provides questions related to the importance that respondents attribute to which party wins the most mandates at each election. Therefore, the percentages reported in the chapter are based on the difference between two EES 2009 survey questions: 'It is very important for you which political party wins the most votes in the EP election' and 'It's very important for you which party wins the most votes in the national election' (Voter Survey Data 2010). The EES 2009 survey in Romania yields that 67.33% of respondents consider both elections equally important, 18.26 % of respondents consider the EP electoral result as more important than the national one, and only 15.41% of respondents consider the national outcome as more important than the EU one (EES 2009, Voter Survey Data 2010). It seems, therefore, that only 15% of respondents follow the SOE logic, which, as mentioned before, attributes less importance to the EP electoral outcome when compared to the national one.

In addition, citizens view the EU membership in a predominantly positive light with only 6% of the Romanian respondents answering that the 'EU membership is a bad thing' (ibid). This overwhelmingly positive view is linked to notions of 'hopes for a better life', 'expected reforms in the justice system', 'the opportunity of traveling and studying freely in the EU' (interviews 2009 Romania). As Cichowski (2000) explains, the post-communist citizens associate with the EU membership the fulfillment of two goals: one economic, in which the EU is perceived as the guarantor of a long-desired economic well-being, and one political, in which the EU is the guarantor of democracy itself via the institutionalization of democratic norms, values, and institutions. Given the high stakes that the EU membership has for citizens in these countries, one could expect that positive EU attitudes may play a positive effect on voting behavior at EP elections. Thus, based on these two characteristics, we can argue that citizens may perceive the EP elections important. They represent a first opportunity to actively participate in the EU structures and may not be rapidly dismissed as not relevant, as the SOE assumption argues. Post-communist citizens and Romanians in particular may not perceive the EP elections as *decisive* neither for national nor for EU related politics, but they may consider these elections as *important* for both political processes.

Third, the transitioning party system with weak party attachment and unstable electoral markets diminishes voter capabilities of differentiating among mainstream parties along the left-right ideological dimension. In the post-communist context, parties frequently split, dissolve, become extinct, and do not stand for clear identifiable values or programs, and do not permit clear choices (Birch 2003). These characteristics impede a smooth functioning of the SOE and spatial voting models in the following way.

First, when we forward arguments of strategic or sincere voting across national and EP elections, we assume that the same supply of parties exists across the two elections. What the post-communist context may display though is a new party offering at EP election that did not exist at the national election, and vice-versa. Often times, a new preference at EP elections may mean that voters changed their preference (voter volatility) or that a preferred party does not exist anymore (party volatility) (Bernhard and Karakoc 2010; Tavits 2007).

The Romanian party system does not display high levels of party volatility (O'Dwyer 2010), but has instead a particular *ideological elasticity* or 'ideological conversion' (Pop Eleches 2010) with respect to party's positions on the left-right dimension. This characteristic has been referred in the press as an 'irrelevance of ideological positions' when delineating the power and the opposition in the governing structures (Preda 2012). Since these ideological traits diminish the relevance of ideology in governing coalitions, we may speculate that they also diminish the potential impact that ideology may play in voting behavior. Parties in a transitioning system may lack the structural element of ideology. Some easily switch alliances, only sometimes followed by a claimed ideological adaptation as well. Even though no new major parties entered the Romanian political scene over the past twenty years, voters followed this lack of structural factors and focused instead on more short term aspects when voting, such as personalities (Pop-Eleches 2010). This dynamic, however, disturbs the functioning of both SOE and spatial voting model, which assume clear identifiable positions on the left-right ideological continuum and clear and stable preferences from one type of election to another.

In addition to the issues mentioned on the left-right dimension, I argue that in the post-communist context voters have difficulties with the EU integration dimension, at least in the first Europe-wide participation. The context of long negotiation process of more than a decade, in which almost all pro-EU mainstream parties have been involved, with no open anti-EU party stance, will impede voters in differentiating mainstream parties' stances, governing and opposition, along the EU integration dimension. Once in the EU, parties have more freedom in developing a critical position toward some aspects of the EU integration, see Hungary or Czech Republic today, but before the accession such an approach is highly unlikely. With respect to citizens' shift in attitudes, quite relevant are data from the 2009 Standard Eurobarometer, which highlight that the most substantial negative shifts with respect to the EU image are registered in the post-communist states that joined the EU in 2004, Slovenia, Hungary, Slovakia and Czech Republic. By contrast, in member states that joined the EU only in 2007, the EU has the best image, namely in Romania and Bulgaria (Eurobarometer 71, 130).

To graphically illustrate the difficulty of positioning the Romanian parties along the left-right ideological and the EU integration dimensions, I use three different sources of data on mainstream parties' stances in the EP elections and plotted their positions along the two dimensions based on: Euromanifesto data, expert's evaluations, and voter's perceptions (Figure 3-1). The Euromanifesto data is based on party programs issued by political parties ahead of the 2009 election to the European Parliament with the goal of measuring issue emphases and policy positions of political parties that have representation in national parliaments (EES 2009, Manifesto Study Data). The expert evaluation is a country expert assessment of mainstream parties' positions in EP

elections based on party platforms, documented in the EES Manifesto Study Data. Voter placements of mainstream parties' positions are based on averages based on individuals' reported scores in the Voter Study Data (EES 2009), according to which voters place parties along the left-right and EU integration dimensions.

With respect to the left-right dimension, we observe that experts disagree on how to place the main parties. Based on policies mentioned in the party platforms the PSD+PC (Social Democratic Party and the Conservative Party) alliance, an alliance between a center-left with a center-right party, falls to the right of the center-right party, the PD-L (Democrat Liberal Party). In contrast, based on country experts, the alliance should be placed to the left of the PD-L, as the main competitor on the center-left. This perspective is confirmed by voters' perceptions, which view the PSD and the PC as main competitors on the left, while the PD-L and the PNL (National Liberal Party) as main competitors on the center-right. In addition, the PNL is placed closer to the PD-L than to the PSD+PC or PSD and PC in all three plots.

With respect to the EU integration dimension, the EP electoral literature posits that governing parties are in general more pro-EU while other parties adopt more-anti EU stances (Hobolt et al. 2008). In the Romanian context, the three relevant parties, the PSD, the PD-L and the PNL display similar positions in two plots, experts and voters evaluations, while based on party platforms, one could argue that the PSD is less pro-EU than the other two parties. Important, however, is the fact that only PRM is perceived less pro-EU than mainstream parties, in at least two plots. Quite telling is also the UDMR position (The Democratic Union of Hungarians in Romania), which covers basically all possible situations, from the most pro-EU (experts) to the least pro-EU

(voters). Therefore, the three sources of data reveal at least one thing: there is a lot of disagreement between voters' perceptions of parties' stances and the actual parties' positions on the two dimensions. In addition, the ideological left-right dimension does not seem to play an important role in Romanian politics given that parties that are rather more distant on the left-right dimension forge political alliances.

Since both theories of voting behavior, the SOE and the spatial voting model, focus on voter perceptions of party ideological and EU stances, I refer for the rest of the chapter only to these subjective evaluations of parties' stances. The plots in Figure 3-1 illustrated the aggregate result of voters' subjective evaluations. I present in addition the actual distributions of voters' answers when placing the relevant parties along the two dimensions (Figure 3-2). These distributions, I argue, contribute to the point that voters present difficulties when placing parties along the EU dimension.

Figure 3-2 illustrates the distributions of voter's party positions for the parties that received representation in the European Parliament. The first row plots to the left-right ideological position of four parties: PC, PSD, PD-L, and PNL. The wide distributions reflect a somewhat left-right ideological divide between the PSD and the PD-L. The second row maps out the EU integration positioning of the same parties. This time we notice almost identical distributions for the major players: PSD, PD-L, and PNL, confirming the argument that voters have overall a hard time identifying these mainstream parties' positions on the EU integration dimension. However, what these graphs conceal is that 33-45% respondents answer that they 'don't know where to place these parties' either with respect to ideology or with respect to the EU dimension. The last row in Figure 3-2 plots the radical nationalist party (PRM) and the ethnic Hungarian

party (UDMR) along the two dimensions. This time we notice almost identical bi-modal distributions of these parties' positioning on the two dimensions. Based on this last row, one could argue that voters do not seem to distinguish between the left-right and the EU dimensions when it comes to the last two parties since the two receive almost identical scores regardless of which one of the two dimensions voters are questioned about<sup>1</sup>. In fact, about 45% of respondents give PRM the same score on the two dimensions and about 6% position this party at the extremes (far-left and anti-EU and far-right and pro-EU).

Of interest for this chapter in addition to mainstream parties is the fringe nationalist party, PRM, which gained a 5% boost in the EP election. This party steadily declined in the national 2008 elections to a 2-3% of the national vote after the outstanding performance in 2000. At the time, PRM received the second place in the legislative elections with 23% of the vote and its leader, Vadim Tudor, became the second-placed candidate in the presidential elections. Yet at the 2009 EP elections, it is its unexpected success that keeps international media's attention (The Economist, June 11, 2009.)<sup>2</sup>. PRM, in coalition with Gigi Becali, a compromised Romanian businessman and politician, received 8.65% of the vote. Since voters perceive PRM as less pro-EU than mainstream governing parties PSD and PD-L (Figure 3-1) this party's success may be interpreted as an anti-EU stance if voters base their vote on EU attitudes. Therefore,

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<sup>1</sup> Given the particular voting dynamic for UDMR based on which the votes for this party come almost exclusively from the ethnic Hungarian minority, I do not refer further in the chapter to this particular party.

<sup>2</sup> 'Scary Elections in Eastern Europe. Time to start fretting. Boring center-right parties did well-- but so did quite a few nasties', *The Economist*, June 11, 2009, <http://www.economist.com/node/13832627> (accessed January 4, 2012)

understanding the particular dynamic that the PRM vote entails at EP elections becomes important for the overall argument of the chapter.

In this context, it is relevant to mention that PRM advocates mostly domestic issues and identifies ‘corruption of the political class’, ‘the Hungarians’, ‘the Gypsies’, and ‘the Jews’ as ‘Romania’s enemies’ (Hartleb 2009). The party claims to have at its core the defense of ‘the Romanian interest’ and focuses on (re)building ‘The Greater Romania’, which would include the unification of all Romanians within one unitary state. With respect to the EU, PRM departs from other fringe nationalist parties in Europe in that it endorses a ‘positive orientation towards Europe’ (ibid). The party’s early manifestos ‘barely mention the EU’ (ibid, 8). By 2005, PRM shifted towards an instrumental value to the EU membership as a mechanism for achieving the party’s core national interest, which is to build ‘The Greater Romania’ (ibid). PRM’s ideological doctrine speaks about a ‘Euroregion’ which would include ‘the whole Romania plus areas in other states on the borders that are inhabited by Romanians’ (‘PRM Doctrina Nationala 2005’, ibid, 9). The same instrumental approach to EU membership is present during the 2009 campaign. As such, Vadim Tudor and Gigi Becali reinforced at a press conference near Bucharest as their priority ‘to build a stronger Romania in a united Europe’ (Biroul de Presa al Partidului Romania Mare, 17 Mai 2009, 16). Yet, in the same newspaper one could read that ‘Romania is EU’s slave in the 21 century and pays EU 1.5 billion euro as tribute’ (ibid, 17). Such statements receive only minimal coverage and PRM’s targets during the 2009 campaign are local institutions and national politicians and not the EU. Given these contradictory positions with respect to the EU and the fact that the EU issue is rarely put forward during the campaign, this chapter

posits that it is less likely that voters will base their vote on EU attitudes. Rather, issues coming from the domestic arena, such as dissatisfaction with politics and mainstream parties will explain its success at EP elections.

Therefore, in this section I argued that the post-communist context displays particular characteristics that need to be considered when evaluating current theories of voting behavior. First, there is a symbolic perception of EP elections as ‘important’ for country’s membership in the EU. Second, the complex transformations of the party system coupled by the importance of the EU accession process impede voters in formulating clear assessments of parties’ stances on the two ideological and EU dimensions (Table 3-1 summarizes this section). In this post-communist context, the few testable propositions coming out of the two theories of voting behavior can be reformulated in the following way:

An alternative to the SOE model:

**H1:** In addition to national issues and domestic cleavages, such as governing party’s performance and national economy, (positive) attitudes towards EU will increase turnout, all else equal.

‘Europe matters’ as an alternative to the spatial voting approach:

**H2:** Given the blurred positioning of parties along the left-right and EU dimensions, absolute distances between voters and parties on the EU and left-right ideological dimensions are less likely to affect abstaining and switching.

**H3a&b:** To the extent that mainstream parties did not develop clear positions on EU membership and did not polarize over EU integration, EU attitudes are less likely to affect:

- switching in general (H3a)
- switching from governing parties in particular (H3b)

**H4:** The success of the nationalist party reflects citizens’ disenchantment with the political class as a whole rather than citizens’ attitudes toward EU integration.

Unchanged hypotheses:

**H5:** The campaign context matters for the EU dimension

**H5a:** A campaign environment tilted toward EU news will increase the impact of the EU dimension for voting at EP elections.

**H6:** To the extent that both national and European dimensions matter, EU attitudes may impact equally or more voting behavior than national indicators.

For the remaining of the chapter, I proceed to test these hypotheses using various methods: large-N analyses and interviews. However, as both theories on voting behavior underscore the important position of EP elections within the national cycle and the government and opposition parties' dynamic, I move next to outline the domestic context at the 2009 EP election. I assess the saliency of the EU issue for mainstream parties, media, and other relevant actors during the three-week campaign. Based on the overall characteristic of the Romanian campaigning environment, I reformulate H5 to reflect the relationship between EU attitudes and campaign exposure in the Romanian context, which does not focus on EU news.

## **The Context and Campaign of the 2009 Europe-wide EP Elections in Romania**

### **The Domestic Context**

Romania's first Europe-wide participation in the EP elections took place on June 7, 2009<sup>3</sup>. Romania has 33 seats in the EP, allocated in a single nation-wide constituency. The electoral system was closed list PR, with an electoral threshold for political parties and electoral alliances of 5% of the total nationwide valid votes. The electoral law has two stipulations with respect to independent candidacies: first, the ballot access requires

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<sup>3</sup> As Romania joined the EU in 2007, elections for a two-year EP mandate for 35 seats were held towards the end of that year. I chose to ignore the 2007 election mostly because of the limited EP mandate. It may be that parties paid little attention to the 2007 EP elections precisely because of the half-term mandate. Given this possible contamination of a shorter mandate and the fact that no other state is holding EP elections at the same time (Bulgaria, as another 2007 EU joiner, had EP elections a few months earlier than Romania) I chose to ignore these results as I argue they would not reflect the dynamic of a full EP mandate, with other simultaneously EP elections across all EU member states.

the support of 100.000 signatures. Second, the candidate's final share of votes needs to be larger or equal to the national electoral coefficient<sup>4</sup>.

Two observations about the context of the 2009 Romanian EP are in order, both essential for understanding the arguments of the second order national election theory. One refers to the political landscape and mainstream parties' positioning in the governing structure and the second one pertains to the economy. As argued before, the second order national election (SOE) theory posits that voter motivations for participating and voting in EP elections are mainly coming from the national arena and are not related to issues in the EU arena. In addition, the second order theory suggests that voters behave strategically in these EP elections. Conditioned on the position of the EP election within the national electoral cycle, voters evaluate governing parties based on the government performance and the state of the economy. Moreover, the SOE theory argues that domestic parties only vaguely engage EU issues in the campaign and put forward mainly domestic issues. Thus, understanding who the mainstream parties are, what positions they have with respect to the government (in the government or in opposition), and with respect to the economy (whether voters hold them accountable for the economic situation) becomes important for explaining the strategic dynamic of EP elections.

First, EP elections took place in the middle of a national electoral cycle, formed by a preceding national parliamentary election (Nov 2008) and a follow up presidential

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<sup>4</sup> The national electoral coefficient is obtained by dividing the nationwide valid votes by 33 (the total number of Romanian seats). *Lege privind organizarea si desfasurarea alegerilor pentru Parlamentul European*, January 2007, <http://www.alegeri.tv/files/legea-33-2007-privind-alegerile-europarlamentare.pdf> (accessed December 4, 2011).

election (Nov 2009)<sup>5</sup>. In 2008, the main contenders and rivals were the PSD-PC, on the center-left, and the PD-L on the center right. Also important was the PNL (National Liberal Party), whose leader was heading the minority government. At the 2008 national elections, turnout was low, of only 39.2% and it was interpreted as a sign of public disenchantment with national politics marred by party splits and conflicts between the president and the prime-minister or the president and the parliament over policies and electoral reforms (Muntean et al. 2010).

Overall, the 2008 national parliamentary elections resulted in a 'resurrection' of the 'former-communist left', the PSD, the decline of the governing party, the PNL, to a third position with only 18% of the vote. In addition, the support for the ultra-nationalist PRM (Greater Romania Party) declined such that the party failed to secure the 5% threshold for legislative representation (Downs 2009, 510). Most of all, the general 2008 election produced no clear winner, with a virtual tie between the two main old adversaries, PSD and PD-L (ibid). A grand, 'awkward' coalition of PD-L and PSD, which surprised political analysts given the traditional rivalry of the two, was engineered by the president and invested in December 2008 (ibid). As a justification, the president argued that political stability was at stake, given the economic instability that loomed around in the neighboring Europe (Vijulie 2009). However, despite the rhetoric of cooperation, the 2008 election proved that the weak party system did not produce 'alternatives with clear ideological positions' (Downs 2009, 513). Moreover, the electorate interpreted the fact

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<sup>5</sup> As a rule, a national electoral cycle is defined by two parliamentary elections. While such an approach is valid in a fused power system, with only minimal presidential powers, in the semi-presidential Romanian political system, the presidential elections are as important as the legislative ones given that their outcome can reshuffle the political leadership of the country. This is more the case since the incumbent president, Traian Basescu, has been in the midst of executive-legislative fissures, which led, in 2007, to a failed attempt of impeachment (Downs 2009).

that two rivals 'with nothing in common' agreed to share power as a pure demagogic act in which 'opportunism and self-interest trumped policy positions and campaign promises' (ibid). As expected, the grand coalition was short-lived and lasted only three months after the EP election, when the PSD ministers left the government, followed by a vote of no-confidence to the remaining government formed only by PD-L ministers<sup>6</sup>. The Nov 2009 presidential election took place in this conflictual political landscape, with debates focused mostly on Basescu's personalized leadership style rather than the actual policy platforms advanced by political parties (Muntean et al. 2010, 755)<sup>7</sup>. Against all odds, the incumbent president won the second round of the presidential contest with 50.3% of the votes.

The EP election scheduled on June 2009, six months before the presidential election, took place in this highly charged political landscape, with rivals sharing power in a government headed by a PD-L prime minister and backed up by more than 70% seats in the two-chamber legislature. Two characteristics emerged out of this political arrangement. First, the PSD, the center-left partner in the grand coalition, advanced a dual position during this entire period of simultaneously part of the government and the opposition. As one of the Romanian political analysts acknowledges, Mircea Geoana, the PSD leader, only confused the electorate with respect to the actual power structure, since for all government's projects, 'his reaction is to initially reject them, only to say yes

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<sup>6</sup> For over a month the parliament came very close to rejecting two presidential nominations for prime minister and avoided to a minimum the dissolution of the legislature and new elections by postponing the second vote, as a 'procedural stretch' until after the presidential elections (Muntean et al 2010, 755)

<sup>7</sup> For instance, Traian Basescu would present himself as defending citizens' interests against 'those of the 'moguls' and the former communists'. Along these lines, he proposed, constitutional reforms such as the dissolution of the Senate and the adoption of a unicameral legislature with a substantively diminished body of legislators, of 300 from the actual 471. On the other hand, the opposition, the leaders of PSD, Mircea Geoana, and PNL, Crin Antonescu, would accuse the incumbent president of populist dictatorship-like tendencies (Muntean et al 2010, 755)

in the end' (Preda 2009, IV). Second, the short-lived grand coalition showed its first fissures during the European campaign when the president, as the major architect of the grand coalition, started questioning the feasibility of the political project.

In this context the Romanian campaign for the first EP elections was shadowed by the internal fights for power (re)arrangements, which mainly centered on the question: 'Will the incumbent president advance his candidacy for a possible second term? And if so, what strategic alliances need to be forged to fight this political move?' (Palade 2009, 1). This question was essential for Romanian politics. On the one hand, the president gave contradictory statements about his intentions for a second candidacy. On the other hand, his participation in the presidential race was essential for the success of his party, the PD-L. As political analysts explained, PD-L is one of the most personalized Romanian parties, which would not survive without the president: 'If the president goes away, the party disappears' (Duca 2009, 4). This ambivalence played by the president and the high stakes of his candidacy explain why the news related to the EU campaign only rarely kept media's attention.

The second aspect of the Romanian context that needs to be addressed is the economic situation, as it was argued that voters use the economy to punish the governing parties at EP elections. The implosion of the global financial markets in September 2008 definitely affected East Central Europe and Romania in particular (RSM International, Global Challenges 2009). The minority government faced major pressures from trade unions and labor organizations for salary increases in 2008 and the government pledged to take measures that would insulate the country from the international crisis (Downs 2009). During this time Romania suffered one of the region's

largest GDP contractions in 2009, of 8.5% (RMS International, Global Challenges 2009). However, by the second half of 2009, the economic activity had stabilized (The World Bank Report, “From Stabilization to Recovery”, October 2009). Moreover, political and economic elites argued that the economic contraction in the first part of 2009 did not have a Romanian origin, but it was rather due to the global market turmoil (Suciu 2009).

### **Framing Europe in the EP Electoral Campaign<sup>8</sup>**

In the context of domestic political infighting and of an economic crisis with international (non–EU) origins, coupled with Romanians’ positive EU attitudes, the EP campaign not only did not politicize the EU membership, but aspects related to the EU integration and membership were only rarely engaged in the press. For instance, Rodica Palade (May 2009), a Romanian journalist, complained that mainstream parties avoided both national and European agendas in this electoral campaign. Rather than taking advantage of this opportunity to educate the Romanian public and its candidates on issues pertaining to the EU and EP, its functions, competencies, structure and relation with the other EU institutions, explained Palade, the Romanian mainstream parties were neither preoccupied with European issues nor with national ones. Rather, the campaign theme that united the major political players and the media alike was the presidential election scheduled for November 2009 and the pivotal role that the

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<sup>8</sup> I elaborate on the major themes and frames used in about fifteen newspaper articles that I could identify in four major Romanian newspapers and reviews, covering the three-week period of 2009 EP campaign. The newspapers were selected based on overall ratings as mainstream media: Romania Libera, Evenimentul Zilei, and Jurnalul National. In addition, I included the review of the Group for Social Dialog (GDS), Revista 22, the first post-communist Romanian civic association, founded in 1989, with the broad goal of pursuing democracy, the rule of law, and human rights. Its members represent the Romanian dissidents and cultural and intellectual elite. Three GDS members were co-opted by the PD-L to run for the European Parliament Elections as representatives of this party.

incumbent president, Traian Basescu, could play in these future elections (Palade 2009).

Therefore, the media coverage of EP elections in Romania followed closely the pattern already established in other EU member states, where news related to the EU and the stakes of EP elections were only rarely mentioned. Given the highly charged political environment around EP elections with a governmental coalition on the verge of collapsing and with presidential elections scheduled in less than six months, the stakes of EP elections, became, in the Romanian context, highly intertwined with the chances of positioning the future presidential candidates (Parvulescu 2009; Lazescu 2009). Along these lines, Ioan Stanomir, a political analyst, suggested 'the stakes in these elections are not European, but rather national'. These elections, followed Stanomir, allowed Romanians 'to unbundle an alliance against nature', which was the grand governing coalition made of rivals on both left and right (20 Years after Communism Civil Society and Politics Debate organized at the GDS Center, 14 May 2009).

In addition, the European Parliament elections offered a new maneuvering space for the extreme right, ultra-nationalist party, the Great Romania Party (PRM). The PRM and his leader, Vadim Tudor, co-opted Gigi Becali, a suspicious multi-millionaire, boss of the champion Steaua football club and leader of another nationalist party, the New Generation Party (PNG), into participating at EP elections under the same banner, the PRM. Both parties registered a minimal performance at previous national (legislative or presidential) or EP 2007 elections, with a vote share of only 2-4%. However, given the protracted political crisis, these parties had a chance of winning at least two MEP seats despite the threshold of 5%. The PRM and Becali' rhetoric focused on anti-political

system stances and anti-corruption (Vaida 2009). In addition, an opportunity was presented to the PRM by the arrest of Gigi Becali under criminal accusations such that Becali submitted his candidacy to the EP elections while behind bars from his prison cell. This 'victimization' favored the ultranationalist group as it created an electoral platform that boosted the candidates beyond the electoral threshold (ibid).

Thus, some aspects of the SOE logic were in place during the first Europe-wide EP elections in Romania. Mainstream parties focused mostly on the upcoming presidential elections and the electoral campaign rarely engaged the EU issues. In addition, the radical right party's leader, Vadim Tudor, realized that EP elections represented an opportunity to gain some nation-wide recognition and to boost his party back into the national electoral game. Illustrative in this sense was PRM's campaigning message, which stated 'With Vadim to Cotroceni', where Cotroceni is the presidential palace.

A close reading of mainstream Romanian newspapers reveals, however, a distinct European focus, highly reduced in importance and media coverage when compared to the national one. The European component can be subsumed into three main ideas: first, in contrast to what some of the journalists stated, there was a media concern with educating the public with respect to the EU power structure, the role of the EP, and the role of the MEPs in promoting the 'national interest'. Second, political parties portrayed the European component of their candidacies differently either by linking the quality of representation in the EP to a particular party, the PD-L, or by framing the national competition into a broader fight between the left and the right at the EU level, the PSD. Third, there was an overwhelming perception embraced by the president, the EP

candidates, political analysts and journalists, that EP elections in Romania, as in other post-communist states that only recently joined the EU, have a *different* European nature than in Western states. It was argued that EP elections are crucial to the new member-states as an opportunity for these states to prove that they are fully committed to the European project. I elaborate on each argument below.

First, to the extent that media addressed issues related to the EP elections, the discussions were rather vague and mostly focused on general, informative questions about the role of EU institutions, the functions of the European Parliament, and the role that Romanian MEPs could play in 'defending the country's national interests' in the multilevel governance structure (view, for instance, the weekly editorials of Horia-Roman Patapievici in *Evenimentul Zilei*, 2009). The idea that the EU is 'the most complex political system' (Vas 2009, 7) dominated in the Romanian press, without, however, offering a clear position as to where the European Parliament fitted within the power structure of the EU. For some, the European Parliament was the most important EU institution (ibid), while for others, the European Parliament was not as important as the European Commission or as the Council of the EU (Ungureanu 2009; Lazescu 2009). Finally, news related to the EP elections allowed contributors to express frustrations vis-à-vis the misinformation that some media outlets and Romanian MEPs spread when positing that the EP was just like another national legislature or when arguing that the EP was the most important EU institution (Patapievici 2009).

Second, moving from political analysts and journalists to the MEP candidates and national parties, we can argue that there was a focus on explaining the role of the EP in the EU decision-making process and the role of the Romanian MEPs in promoting

national interests. The two major competitors, for instance, the PD-L and the PSD, differed in how they framed the European component of these elections. The PD-L, the center right governing party, advanced a list headed by some of the most important representatives of the Romanian civil society, namely Cristian Preda, Monica Macovei, and Traian Ungureanu. Notwithstanding the candidates' earlier political affiliations with the governing party<sup>9</sup>, both media and political analysts perceived the political debut of representatives from the civil society for a directly elected office on a PD-L platform as a novelty in the Romanian political scene. As Cristian Preda articulated, in Romania there is a broad understanding that the way to enter politics is from the business world, while their entry from the civil society represented rather 'an exception' (*Plus22* 2009, I-V). This exception, however, sought to counterbalance one of the Romanians' fundamental problems with politics, mainly 'the loss of trust in mainstream parties' (*ibid*) or the overall 'disenchantment with the political class' (*ibid*).

Yet, despite the perception that the symbolic PD-L nomination ensured quality representation in the EP, there was less of an agreement among the MEP candidates on the PD-L list with respect to the role of the EU and the stakes of the EP elections for Romania and its electorate. For instance, while Cristian Preda, a PD-L MEP candidate, suggested that the stakes consisted in the opportunity to 'modernize and Europeanize' national parties, Mihaela Miroiu, a political theorist, clearly doubted that this possibility existed (*ibid*). Moreover, Traian Ungureanu, a PD-L MEP candidate, interpreted these elections in a broader sense and linked them to Romania's membership in the EU. He confessed:

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<sup>9</sup> Monica Macovei held a ministerial position as the Justice Minister, while Cristian Preda was Presidential Adviser for Education and Research.

I am myself a Eurosceptic, but I understand that Romania doesn't have other choice but to be part of the EU. I am aware of the limits and problems of the EU, and yet, I cannot but accept the European project as the only way for Romania (ibid).

However, if there was some disagreement with respect to the stakes and long term consequences of the Romanian representation in the EP, the PD-L MEP candidates shared a common view on what they could do if elected. Specifically, they would represent Romania's interests in the political groupings and bring back information on what the EP does and what its powers are. In addition, these MEPs committed to 'change the negative image that the EP had as the European institution where nothing happens because it has no power' (ibid)

If the PD-L candidates somewhat debated over their commitment to the European project and highlighted the fact that as a national delegation their goal was to advance Romanian interests in the EP, the PSD delegation had a more cohesive message and framed the EP contest as a broader competition between the European left and the European right. With a list of core PSD members headed by Adrian Severin, former foreign minister, the PSD delegation linked its success to the success of the Socialists in the EP. As such, Adrian Severin articulated, both governing parties, the PSD and the PD-L, promote similar Romanian interests in the EU: citizens' free circulation in Europe, accession to the labor market, agricultural subventions, and minimum wages and retirement funds comparable to the EU levels (Severin 2009). However, continued Adrian Severin, the two families to which the governing parties belonged, held different positions on these issues. The Socialists promoted 'solidarity and integration', while the Right, represented by Germany, Italy, the UK, and the Netherlands, defended 'national protectionism and discrimination against Romanians' (ibid). Thus, the central message

of the PSD campaign was that even though both governing parties had similar positions with respect to the Romanian interests in the EU, the PSD was better positioned in fulfilling the Romanian goals than the PD-L. It was definitely better positioned, the argument continued, than other competitors, such as the UDMR, the PRM, which would represent a wasted vote given their 'focus on nationalism and state secession' (ibid).

Therefore, it is difficult to assess the extent to which the European dimension may affect voting behavior with respect to party choices and switching, given that mainstream oppositional parties shared government and held similar positions in what concerns their delegations' role in the EP. All delegations posited that their main goal was to pursue national interests in EP's political groupings. We have seen that delegations had some disagreement with respect to how their members talked about the role of EU, the EP, and the role and powers of the MEPs, but there was no polarization between the two on the EU issue. In addition, all mainstream parties argued that EP elections were, not decisive for a member-state, but still very important (Patapievici, 2009). More important in the new-member states than in Western Europe, commented Alexandru Lazescu, a Romanian political analyst and contributor to several Romanian publications, since Western Europe has 'other ways of pursuing national interests in the EU political structures' (Plus 22 2009, 8). Given all these aspects of the EP election campaign, with no party polarization on the EU issue and with little EU information disseminated, it is more likely that EU attitudes will matter less for *party switching* from one election to another. This is mostly the case as voters are not presented during this campaign with the necessary tools to distinguish between parties' positions on the EU.

The European dimension became, however, essential for a different aspect of voting behavior, namely participation in EP elections. It was for turnout that the European nature of these elections mattered. This position was adopted by all political actors, from the president and party delegation leaders to media and political analysts. The overall message advanced was that EU leaders would interpret 'large numbers' as a confirmation of Romania's commitment to the EU (Vaida 2009). The president, for instance, attached a particular meaning to the Romanians' participation in the EP elections, 'as a sign of respect for what the EU has done for us and for what the EU committed to do in the future' (ibid). Similarly, Adrian Severin, the PSD delegation leader, declared that 'high turnout means that Romania is taking seriously its role in Europe (...) and higher turnout than its neighbors, such as Bulgaria or states as Italy and the Netherlands will improve Romania's image as a state seriously interested in the integration project' (Severin 2009).

In sum, mainstream parties only vaguely engaged the European component of the EP elections in the campaign messages and debates. This happened mostly because there was an overall agreement over what policies both center-left and center-right parties sought to achieve at the EU level, in the name of 'defending the national interests'. To the extent that parties had different strategies in how to connect to voters, these strategies reflected deficiencies perceived in the national arena, and not in the EU one. PD-L forwarded a list of representatives coming from the civil society to address public's lack of trust in 'corrupted politicians'. Out of all parties, only the PSD gave an ideological EU component to the domestic fight when claiming that the Socialist family was in a better position of defending Romania's interests than the party families on the

right. However, this argument was not engaged by the other side, the center-right party. Mostly, all parties, political analysts and media insisted on a broad participation in EP elections as a symbolic confirmation of Romania's commitment to the EU project. Given this relative lack of focus on EU news and the lack of party polarization over EU, I reformulate H5 in the following way:

**AH5.** Given the lack of EU focus during the campaign, it is less likely that campaign exposure will condition the impact of EU attitudes on electoral behavior.

After outlining domestic and EU factors that may affect participation and vote choices at EP elections, I move next to investigate the reasons for which Romanians actually participated and voted. In doing so, I use qualitative interviews and large-N analyses of survey data.

## **Analyses**

To reiterate, this chapter uses Romania as a case for developing, inductively, a theory of electoral behavior during EP elections. To do so, it seeks to disentangle between national and European components in three different instances of voting behavior: participation, party switching, and the success of the radical right party, the PRM.

### **Statistical Analyses**

The section consists of large-N analyses based on data from the Voter Survey of the 2009 European Election Study. A total of 1000 interviews (face-to face and phone interviews) were carried out in Romania a few weeks after the 2009 EP election. This is a nationally representative sample using non-response weighting. With these analyses I seek to answer the following questions related to participation, party switching, and the success of the radical right. To the extent that people participate in EP elections, do EU

attitudes play a role in this participation? Second, do European attitudes play a role in the decision to abstain or switch parties at EP election when compared to behavior at the preceding national election? If yes, what is the relationship between European attitudes and abstaining or party switching? Previous studies that incorporated the role of EU attitudes in their theoretical formulations underscored the governing parties as the ones mostly affected by the 'second-order' aspect of the EP election. To address this aspect I distinguish in my analyses between party switching in general and governing party switching in particular. Lastly, is the success of the radical right party, the PRM, driven by factors in the national arena or factors in the EU arena? As I posited in the previous section, the expectation is that PRM's success is mostly driven by national, domestic factors. However, given the position that the party has on the EU dimension, it is possible that anti-EU attitudes play also a role. In answering these questions, I start the analyses with models that point to the fact that the spatial model approach does not travel well in the Romanian context. As I argued above, Romanian voters have a hard time placing themselves and mainstream parties on the EU and ideological dimensions. Therefore, following the spatial model approach, one may conclude that ideology and EU attitudes do not affect voting behavior. In fact, I argue, the measurement used to capture these attitudes becomes problematic in the Romanian context, while EU attitudes impact voters' decisions at least for participation if not for party switching. I move next to address each of the three distinct questions.

The 2009 European Election Study contains several performance indicators needed to test the hypotheses mentioned in the study (Appendix A presents a complete formulation of the survey questions used). First, I include the two spatial indicators, on

EU integration and ideology, as the absolute distance between voters and parties' preferences on the two aspects. As I argued, I do not expect these two indicators to have a significant impact on voting behavior (H2). As an alternative measurement, I added two EU indicators. One captures political attitudes ('EU membership is good') and a second one aims to capture economic attitudes towards EU ('EU decisions will be in the interest of my country'). I expect that positive evaluations of the EU will have positive effects on turnout (H1).

With respect to party switching, I advanced the position that positive EU attitudes do not affect switching in general (H3a) or switching from government parties (H3b). This is mostly the case since mainstream parties did not develop clear and/or antithetical positions with respect to EU membership or EU integration. As for the far right PRM, the only less pro-EU party, I posited that voters disenchanted with Romanian politics will most likely vote for this party and that EU attitudes are less likely to play a role in this decision. This is due to the fact that PRM did not politicize the EU during the campaign, an issue on which it holds an ambiguous position given its 'Euroregion' approach. By contrast, PRM mainly carried out a presidential campaign, promoting an anti-political class' message. Thus, disenchanted voters with Romanian politics will vote for this party (H4)<sup>10</sup>.

To capture the national component of voting behavior I include several indicators: public perceptions of the national economy, evaluations of how well democracy works, as well as evaluations of the performance of national government. It was stated in the

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<sup>10</sup> Note that in contrast to previous analysis, I am not assessing the extent to which voters switch from other parties at national elections to PRM at EP elections. Rather, the last analyses are concerned with a profile of the PRM voter at EP elections by completely ignoring the party choice at the previous national election. I decided to have this approach due to the insufficient number of observations—there are only 15 voters in the data set who switched from other parties to PRM.

theoretical section that positive assessments on these indicators will decrease party switching, for governing parties in particular, and will increase turnout. Of interest for this chapter is not necessarily the assessment of the direct impact of national factors, but rather a comparative appreciation of national vs. EU indicators (H6). I posit that it is less likely that the voting dynamic will follow the strategic midterm aspect of EP elections, which means the opportunity to punish governments and governmental parties. To the extent that national indicators matter, it is more likely that they will reflect a sincere approach to voting, i.e. vote for the preferred national party. This particular dynamic would translate into less strategic party switching and more sincere party choices at EP elections. Thus, when investigating turnout differences or party switching, it is more likely that party attachment will become relevant, an indicator that is mostly used as a control and not as a reflection of the SOE logic. Therefore, when comparing the effect of domestic versus EU factors, it may be that EU attitudes trump or have a similar impact as national indicators (H6).

Finally, previous studies suggest that campaign exposure plays an important role in elections in general and in EP elections in particular as elections of 'lesser importance'. To measure the positive impact of campaigning, I created a composite measure of individual's passive exposure to the EP campaign using the answers to two questions. The questions capture how often the respondent came across EP electoral news on TV and in newspapers. The theoretical expectation is that media exposure will increase turnout and the impact of EU attitudes in particular if the campaign entails a EU content. Given the lack of EU news during the Romanian campaign, I posit that it is

less likely that campaign exposure will condition the effect of EU attitudes on voting behavior (AH5).

In addition, given the important role of socio-demographic factors on voting behavior, I include several control indicators: education, age, social class, and urban-rural divide. This study, however, is not concerned with theorizing over possible relationships between voting in EP elections and these control indicators. I proceed next to test these hypotheses.

### **Turnout**

The first analyses explain the micro-dynamics of turnout at the 2009 EP election, for which I created two types of dependent variables. The first approach captures the binary answer to the question 'did you participate in the 2009 EP election'. The second variable encompasses the binary answer to a two-by-two combination of turnout at EP elections and turnout at the preceding national election. Therefore, the four-category dependent variable represents: participation in the preceding general elections only, participation in both general and EP elections, participation in EP elections only, and non-participation in both EP and national elections.

Table 3-2 displays the coefficients of three models explaining turnout. Model 1 represents a close application of the spatial voting approach in which the dependent variable is the binary answer to the participation question. As expected the two spatial indicators measuring absolute distances on EU and ideology between voters and parties voted for at the national election have no effect (part of H2). Based on this approach, one may conclude that participation in EP elections is driven mostly by domestic politics such as attitudes towards the political system and government performance: the better the evaluations on these indicators the more likely are voters to

participate. In addition, the campaign exposure has a substantial positive effect on turnout. In Model 1, neither party attachment nor satisfaction with the economy attain significance.

Model 2 replaces the two spatial indicators with two measures capturing political and economic EU attitudes. These two new EU indicators were underscored as particularly important in the post-communist context, in which EU membership represents the fulfillment of two goals, one political and one economic (Cichowski 2000). Model 2 confirms the expectation that positive EU attitudes toward EU membership increase turnout, all else equal (H1). In addition, some of the national indicators matter: party attachment and satisfaction with democracy. The important effect of party attachment supports the argument that mostly sincere and not strategic voting takes place in this election. This finding is reinforced by the non-significant effect of government performance. As expected campaign exposure is also highly significant for participation, but campaign exposure does not condition the impact of EU attitudes (AH5). This hypothesis is confirmed by the lack of statistical significance of the interaction indicator of membership evaluation and campaign exposure (Model 3).

To assess the relative impact of national and EU indicators, Table 3-3 presents the predicated probabilities of significant indicators on turnout (Model 2) at minimum and maximum values while holding all other indicators constant. In addition, to allow for a better comparison effect all continuous variables have been standardized. The absolute change, therefore, which is mainly positive since all indicators have a positive effect, reflects the actual impact of each indicator on the probability of voting while holding everything else at the mean. Table 3-3 shows that a voter's probability to participate in

EP elections increases by as much as 15% for voters who think that the EU membership is a good thing as oppose to those who think otherwise. Some of the domestic indicators have a more significant effect given that moving from min to max values on satisfaction with how Romanian democracy works increases the probability of voting by 22%, while differences in party attachment increase the probability by as much as 40%. It is important to mention that the two domestic indicators found significant do not follow the SOE logic which underscores a dynamic of strategic voting in the sense of punishing governing parties. Table 3-3 also highlights the important role of campaign exposure, given that a change from no exposure to maximum implies an increase in the probability of voting of 42%.

Model 4 (Table 3-2) presents the results of a multi-nominal logit analysis with four possible options for the dependent variable. I list, however, only the most interesting comparison with voting in national elections as the reference category and voting in both elections as the other category. Thus, the coefficients in Model 4 illustrate the effect of each indicator for voters who decided to vote in the EP election given that they have voted in the national election relative to voters who voted only in the national election and abstain in the EP election. Overall, the same indicators as in the previous analysis on turnout in EP elections are statistically significant. Therefore, voters will decide to participate in EP elections, after having participated in national election, if they view EU membership positively, approve government's performance, and are satisfied with the way democracy works. In addition, partisanship and campaign exposure matter in this move towards participation in both elections relative to participation only in the general election.

To assess the relative impact of these factors on the probability of participating in both elections to participating only in the general election, I report the odds ratio based on Model 4 (Table 3-2). Therefore, we see that holding all other variables constant, the odds of voting in both elections to voting only in the general election are 2.13 times greater for people who think that EU membership is good than for voters who think otherwise. This is the largest effect from all EU and national indicators. The next important indicator is government performance: the odds of voting in both elections to voting only in the general election are 1.32 times greater for people who approve of government performance. In addition, we notice that the effect of campaign exposure diminished substantially for this type of turnout comparison. A one standard deviation increase in the level of campaign exposure leads to a change in the odds of voting in both elections relative to voting only in the general election by a factor of 1.34 times. Finally, a one standard deviation increase in satisfaction with Romanian democracy increases the odds of voting in both elections to voting only in the general election by a factor of 1.32 while a similar change in party attachment leads to an increase in the odds ratio by a factor of 1.34.

To ascertain the magnitude of these effects for all comparisons not reported in Table 3-2, Figure 3-3 reports the factor change in the odds of an outcome over another, effects plotted with significance levels. In Figure 3-3, G represents participation only in the general election, B means participation in both EP and national, E stands for participation only in the EP election, and N means non-participation in national and EP elections. As in Model 4, participation only in the general election (G) is the reference category. The distance between a pair of letters indicates the magnitude of the effect.

Statistical significance is added by drawing a line between categories for which there is *not* a significant coefficient. Thus, the lack of significance is shown by the connecting line, suggesting that these two outcomes are ‘tied together’ (Long and Freese 2006, 265).

The comparison of most interest for this chapter is between participation in both national and EP elections relative to participation only in the general election, namely the pair of letters B and G. We can see, therefore, that all independent indicators plotted here have a significant impact on the odds of participating in both elections relative to participation only in the general one. In addition the effects are all in the same direction, positive. Finally, given the distances between the two letters, distances based on standardized coefficients, we see that support for EU membership has the largest effect on this odds ratio. Also, attitudes toward EU membership are not significant for other turnout comparisons, such as voting only in the EP election relative to only the general or abstaining in both elections relative to voting in the general election. In a nutshell, this figure allows for a visual effect of different EU and national indicators on different turnout comparisons and underscores the significant impact of positive evaluations of EU membership for only one comparison. These findings confirm the expected relationship between turnout and positive EU attitudes (H1). In addition, EU attitudes affect the most the decision to participate in EP election given that a voter has participated in the national election. This finding constitutes a partial confirmation of H6, which focuses on the comparison of EU attitudes and national indicators’ impact on electoral behavior.

## **Party switching during EP elections**

To investigate the interplay between EU attitudes and party choices at EP elections, I present below several approaches to party voting. First, I explore the relationship between EU attitudes and governing parties by limiting the sample to governing party voters only (H3b). The relationship between EU attitudes and governing parties was presented as the most robust relationship in the literature (Hobolt et al. 2008). Second, I identify three types of voters at EP elections: partisans (voters that keep the same party at both elections), switchers (voters that switchers parties at EP elections), and abstainers (voters that abstain at EP elections after having voted at national elections) (H3a). In addition, all analyses assess first the applicability of the spatial voting approach in the Romanian context. As mentioned in the theoretical section, absolute distances on ideology and EU attitudes between voters and parties chosen at EP elections are less likely to represent useful measures in the Romanian context (H2). Finally, the last analysis explores the factors driving the PRM choice at EP election (H4). In this last section I include all party voters, in addition to non-voters. The overall goal in the last analysis is to assess the importance of EU attitudes when voting for PRM.

Table 3-4 illustrates the relationship between governing party voters and behavior at EP elections. The governing party voters have two options to change their choice at EP elections: switch to a different party or abstain. Model 1 represents a close application of the spatial voting approach in which ideological and EU attitudes are measured as absolute distances between governing parties and voters. As expected these two measures do not attain statistical significance neither for defection nor for abstaining. This finding represents a partial confirmation of H2, partial mostly because

of the sample limitation to governing party voters only. The significance of some domestic indicators only in Model 1- abstain highlights the lack of strategic voting in the Romanian context at EP elections. To the extent that voters are disappointed with the political class (the indicator measuring satisfaction with democracy) or with the governing class (the indicator measuring government performance) they are more likely to abstain but not to defect to other parties. Model 2 (Table 3-4) removes the two problematic measures and includes a new measure for attitudes toward EU membership. Model 2, defection, underscores partisanship as the only indicator that attains statistical significance. As argued before, positive EU attitudes are less likely to attain significance in the quest for alternative parties given that voters have difficulties in distinguishing mainstream parties' positions on EU integration. In Model 2 on abstention, the significant effect of EU membership confirms the important role of EU attitudes for decreasing abstention. This relationship between EU attitudes and participation in EP elections measured in different ways (as turnout differences in Model 3, Table 3-1, as governing party voters and abstention in Model 2, Table 3-4, or as abstainers relative to partisan voters in Model 2, Table 3-5) represents the most robust finding of this chapter. This mini-section on governing party voters confirms the expected relationship between governing party voters and EU attitudes. As expected, the section shows that EU attitudes do not influence voters when switching from governing parties at EP elections (H3b). I move next to a broader approach to party switching in which I distinguish between three types of voting behaviors and voters: partisans, switchers, and abstainers.

The entries in Table 3-5 represent the multi-nominal logit coefficients, with partisans as the reference category. Table 3-5 allows for two types of comparisons: one between switchers relative to partisans and one between abstainers relative to partisans. In addition, each model has two estimations: a first one aimed at closely following the spatial voting model and a second one which removes the problematic measures and introduces the indicator capturing EU attitudes. As mentioned in the previous sections, the overall expectation for this very broad approach to voting behavior is that the spatial indicators do not attain significance. In addition, the indicator capturing EU attitudes is highly unlikely to influence the behavior of switchers relative to partisans. This expectation is based on the fact that parties do not differentiate themselves on the EU dimension. Therefore, Model 1 (Table 3-5) presents estimations with the spatial voting indicators. We see now that the left-right ideological dimension attains significance in the right direction: the larger the distances between voters and parties the more likely are voters to switch parties relative to voters who keep the same party. Model 2 (Table 3-5) removes the two distance measures and introduces instead the measures on EU integration. As expected, EU attitudes play no significant role in the decision to switch parties. Model 2 (Table 3-5) replicates the same analyses as in Model 1 for a different comparison: abstainers relative to partisans. Attitudes toward EU represent the most important coefficient for this comparison: the more people think that EU membership is good the less likely they are to abstain. Other domestic factors that attain significance are government performance, party attachment, and campaign exposure. All are in the expected direction given the comparison between abstainers relative to partisans. To ascertain the relative effect of national and EU indicators for

Model 2, the last column in Table 3-5 reports the odds ratio of abstainers relative to switchers. The odds of abstaining relative to voting with the same party decrease by a factor of .40 if voters think positively of EU membership. As Figure 3-4 illustrates, EU attitudes represent the most important indicator that affects the comparison between partisans and abstainers.

Figure 3-4 presents all comparisons, where A stands for abstainers, S stands for switchers, and P stands for partisans. As mentioned above, the larger the distance between a pair of letters the more important the larger the impact of the respective indicators. Statistical significance is added by drawing a line between categories for which the respective indicator is not significant. Therefore, Figure 3-4 illustrates that EU attitudes affect the most the decision to abstain relative to switching or voting for the same party. In addition, we notice that the most important comparison is the one between abstainers relative to switchers or partisans, given that different levels of government approval and campaign exposure do not produce significant differences in the behavior of the latter two categories. The only important indicator for differentiating between switchers relative to partisans is party attachment. The more attached voters are to a party the more likely they are to vote with the same party at EP elections. Therefore, Figure 3-4 represents a visual confirmation of H3a which posited that EU attitudes will have no impact on switching parties at EP elections. In addition, H6 which addressed the comparison of EU and national indicators is confirmed. To the extent that EU attitude matter, the effect of this EU indicator is larger than other domestic indicators. Therefore, different analyses presented thus far underscore the important

role of EU attitudes for one type of electoral behavior, namely participation, but not for party switching at EP elections.

### **Voting for the radical right party and parties' profiles along the European Union dimension**

The only question left for this chapter concerns the interplay between EU attitudes and domestic indicators for PRM voters. This party registered a substantial gain at the EP election, 5% difference, and it was perceived as the least pro-EU Romanian party (Figure 3-1, where the PRM is on the lowest EU end in at least two of the graphs). However, as mentioned in the previous sections, this party has an ambivalent position on the EU, favoring EU integration in an instrumental way. The 'Euroregion' that the party is mentioning would allow PRM to fulfill its most ardent goal, namely to build a 'region with all Romanians'. In addition, this party did not have an anti-EU message during the EP electoral campaign. It was rather focused on securing the presidential chair for its leader, Vadim Tudor, having as central message 'With Vadim at Cotroceni'.

In addition to this lack of EU concern, other mainstream parties did not perceive PRM candidates as real competitors and only rarely engaged in negative campaigning against PRM. As previously mentioned, only the PSD delegation emphasized that a PRM vote is a 'wasted vote' given the preponderance of the Socialist family in the EP. Therefore, due to all these factors, the ambivalent EU position, the alliance between two leaders that have in common only public's disenchantment with mainstream parties and politicians, and the lack of EU focus during the EP campaign, I hypothesize that the PRM vote will mostly be driven by domestic factors rather than EU attitudes. In the following analysis, I profile the PRM voter by assessing the role of European and national attitudes in comparison to these indicators' effects on mainstream party voters.

In doing so, I employ a multivariate technique popular in ecological research named Canonical Correspondence Analysis (CCA) (Ter Braak 1986).

CCA represents a two-step approach which extracts first the dominant pattern of variation in the data by an ordination technique, yielding ordination axes ('gradients'). In the second step, CCA attempts to relate this pattern of ordination axes to the independent indicators (ibid). The method generates a spatial map of important dimensions in the data and allows for a quick appraisal of how the dependent categories vary with the independent variables. In this chapter, the CCA ordination diagrams (also known as biplots) (Figure 3-5 and Figure 3-6) illustrate how political parties vary with the behavioral indicators. In the biplots, political parties are represented by points and behavioral indicators are represented by arrows. Such diagrams show the main pattern of variation in voting preferences as accounted for by the attitudinal variables. In addition, they also illustrate the distribution of political parties along each independent indicator. The relationships the biplots map out are interpreted based on the geometrical features of arrows, projections, and angles formed by the response and explanatory variables. As such, the length of an arrow measures how party distributions differ along that explanatory variable and important variables are represented by longer arrows. Second, the degree of association between an independent variable and a voting preference in the context of the first two canonical axes is obtained by projecting the voting preference at a right angle on the independent variable. The longer these projections the more important are the respective indicators for that particular voting preference. Third, different angles in the biplot formed either between the response and explanatory variables, or between the explanatory variables

themselves, or between the response variables themselves reflect the correlations. In this context, acute angles mean strong positive associations between variables in question and obtuse angles represent strong negative correlations. Right angles show that the two variables are orthogonal. This approach allows thus for a quick appraisal of which variables are important for which parties based on simultaneous comparisons. Figure 3-5<sup>11</sup> represents a distribution of political parties and non-voters in relation to independent variables at first EP elections. Figure 3-6 removes the non-voter category at EP elections and focuses only on the relationship between party choices and European and national explanatory indicators. In both biplots, the variance produced by the socio-demographic controls, such as education, class, age, urban, and ethnic has been already accounted for<sup>12</sup>.

Thus, after adjusting for the effect of the control variables, we notice that non-voters are negatively associated with EU membership, which means that non-voters do not approve of EU membership. In addition, national variables such as party attachment and satisfaction with democracy are important, displaying a negative relationship with non-voters. In this spatial map, for PDL voters, government approval is the most important indicator, while for PSD voters, exposure to campaign and party attachment are more important. In addition, the European dimension represented by the EU

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<sup>11</sup> Data analysis for CCA is carried out in the R-statistical language and the R-package *vegan* is used to generate the biplots (Jari Oksanen 2011)

<sup>12</sup> CCA allows to partial out the effect of some variables and this is the approach I followed. First, I accounted for the variation produced by controls only. I do not show these biplots but they illustrate expected relationships in the Romanian context. Namely, non-participants and PRM voters are associated with younger, lower class voters who live in big cities. UDMR voters are mostly associated with the ethnic indicator, confirming that the base for this party comes from the Magyar population. PNL voters share higher levels of education, while PSD and PDL voters are older people who live in the rural areas. Appendix B reports the statistical significance tests. Second, I assess the impact of explanatory variables, after adjusting for the effect of the controls (Figures 5 and 6).

membership indicator is positively associated with all parties: PDL, PSD, PRM, and PNL. This lack of relevance of attitudes for EU membership when it comes to party choices complements previous findings which highlighted that positive attitudes toward EU integration are important for turnout but are less important for party switching. Given the distinct position of non-voters as substantially different than party voters, I remove next the non-voters category from the CCA analysis.

Figure 3-6 displays the new spatial map with only party choices at EP elections. Similarly to the previous display, all effects of the control variables have been accounted for. The new spatial map allows for a quick appraisal of associations between the explanatory variables and the response party categories. Thus, we notice now that PRM and UDMR (the ethnic Hungarian party) parties are strongly negatively associated with EU membership and democracy satisfaction. Given the length of the EU membership arrow, we infer that this variable is more important than the domestic indicator. We also notice that the two parties mentioned are strongly, positively associated with exposure to the electoral campaign. Therefore, based on this new graph, we infer that PRM voters are anti-EU voters, not satisfied with the way democracy work in Romania. The association between PRM and EU membership was not visible in the previous CCA analysis that included non-voters, mostly because of the very strong effect of EU membership for turnout. Once this relationship is removed however the important association between the two, PRM voters and EU attitudes becomes evident<sup>13</sup>.

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<sup>13</sup> For a robust check on the relationship between EU attitudes and PRM voting I performed also a logit analysis, with a binary dependent variable (did you vote for PRM: yes/no). In this logit analysis, the 'no' category represented participants who chose other parties. These results are not reported here but are available from the author. In the logit analysis, the coefficient for EU membership was negative and statistically significant at .05 level. This means that voters with anti-EU integration attitudes are more likely to vote with PRM. In addition, to assess the effect of EU attitudes comparatively across different party categories, I ran a multi-nominal logit analysis, with the PRM category as the reference category. In this

In addition, important information is offered by the position of the PSD, as very close to the EU membership variable. The acute angle formed by the two indicates that PSD voters approve of EU membership, and they do so more than other mainstream voters, such as PDL and PNL. The right angles formed between EU membership and the two party categories mentioned leads to an interpretation that for PDL and PNL voters EU membership is not an important explanatory variable. For these party voters more important are approval of government and the economy for PDL and the opposite for PNL. This relationship makes sense given that PDL was at the time in government, while PNL was in opposition.

In contrast, PSD held an ambiguous position as 'government party in opposition'. This ambiguous position with respect to domestic politics seems to have generated more room for the EU dimension, since this is the only party for which the EU dimension substantially affects voting behavior (relationship confirmed also with a multi-nominal analysis as PRM voting relative to PSD voting). The strong association between EU attitudes and PSD could also be explained by the campaign message. As previously stated, PSD was the only party with a cohesive pro-EU message, which underscored that as a party PSD is better positioned than other Romanian parties in defending Romania's interest at the EU level<sup>14</sup>. In contrast, the PDL delegation of representatives

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analysis I also included a non-voter category which represents national voters (participants in national elections) who abstain at EP elections. Overall, the multi-nominal analysis confirms the important distinction between PRM and PSD voters on the EU dimension, visible with the CCA analysis. Given the positive statistical significant coefficient for EU membership, we infer that voters who approve of EU membership are more likely to vote for PSD than PRM. Other party comparisons (PRM relative to other parties) on the EU dimensions were not significant. Also, different party comparisons in which the PRM is not the reference category are not significant on the EU dimension (these results are not reported in Appendix but are available from the author).

<sup>14</sup> Just as a small note that reinforces the perspective that mainstream parties do not have a settled position on the EU, in 2012 the PSD (the pro-EU party in 2009) puts forward anti-EU, ethnocentric and nationalistic electoral slogans, such as 'Stop selling our country' (see Dan Tapalaga, 24.04.2012,

from the civil society focused on debating EU membership and expressing personal positions rather than promoting a cohesive image. This interplay between mainstream parties' stances on EU and domestic positions produced two important results in the Romanian context: PRM voters share anti-EU attitudes and they are distinguishably different than PSD voters on the EU dimension. Different statistical approaches suggest that we can distinguish between PRM and PSD voters on the EU dimension, but other differences between PRM on the one hand and PDL or PNL on the other, or between PSD on the one side and PDL and PNL on the other, could not be detected.

To offer a more nuanced perspective on voter motivations for participation and strategic behavior during EP elections defined as party switching, I present next the results of short interviews held on EP Election Day, in Romania 2009.

### **Romanian Interviews**

I summarize the main findings of an open-ended survey carried out on Election Day. A total of 200 face-to-face interviews were carried out in Bucharest, yielding about 150 completed surveys<sup>15</sup>. The open-ended question I summarize asked voters to list the main reasons for their participation and vote switching in the EP election and to

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available @ <http://www.revista22.ro/articol.php?id=14536>, (accessed April 25, 2012). This slogan however is not new in Romanian politics—it was heavily used in the first years of democratization when the same party (PSD) was in power. This flip-flop from a nationalistic position to a pro-EU one only confirms the perspective that mainstream parties have not settled on the EU issue.

<sup>15</sup> The survey was implemented in 12 polling locations randomly chosen from the six administrative units of Bucharest. Six interviewers were trained to apply a survey instrument developed during the Romanian campaign. Each fifth voter was asked to participate in the survey. The non-response rate was quite large and it varied from 20-40% for different interviewers. This approach yielded a somewhat informative sample of voters participating at EP elections in Bucharest, a region in which mainstream parties controlled at least one administrative unit. The survey's main goal was to assess the extent to which attitudes towards the EU mattered for voting behavior: first for participation and second for party choices. In addition, the survey tested voters' knowledge on the EU and the national political systems and exposure to the electoral campaign. The overall goal of the survey was strictly informative in the sense of providing for a solid starting point when analyzing more representative data.

elaborate on the meaning of this participation<sup>16</sup>. The summary of these responses shows that almost none of the voters interviewed mentioned that the two elections, national and EP, were substantially different. The two types of elections were perceived as *equally important* for different reasons: one assured representation at the national level, while the other one was concerned with the same issue at the EU level. Second, with respect to reasons for participation, the answers revealed both a European and a national civic component. Almost all respondents represented core party voters who confessed that neither did they switch parties from one type of election to another nor did they intend to do so at the following national election. The small proportion of voters considering changing their vote in the upcoming presidential elections argued that they were waiting for the presidential campaign to decide whether to switch parties or not. 'Civic duty' was almost always cited as the main reason for participation in EP elections. The older respondents referred often to the act of voting as 'a privilege gained with a lot of sacrifices in 1989'. For them, in particular, voting was a 'privilege and a duty to Romania', rather than a choice that citizens may make on a regular basis. Almost all respondents believed that the first party choice they made in national elections represented the best choice that 'Romania' could have at the EU level as well.

In addition to the national civic concern, there was a clear EU component associated with the act of participation. Almost two thirds of voters surveyed cited 'hopes for a change' toward a 'better life' as short or long term outcomes, for immediate or future generations. Sometimes, concrete examples were given on how EU membership could benefit Romania and its citizens. The EU issues highlighted referred

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<sup>16</sup> A similar approach was used by Blondel et al. (1997, 1998) to investigate into the voluntary reasons of abstention.

to 'structural funds', 'help with the fight against corruption', and the 'possibility of traveling and studying freely in the EU'. In addition to concrete or broadly defined benefits accruing from EU membership, respondents also invoked opinions addressing the quality of the Romanian representation at the EU level. When 'making sure we have a good representation at the EU level', these concerned voters were referring in fact to some MEPs candidates, such as Gigi Becali and Elena Basescu, described as 'very problematic' and 'embarrassing' representatives for Romania<sup>17</sup>. The following answer summarizes this protest vote the best: 'I came to vote to make sure I did my best to minimize the chances of winning of Becali or EBA (i.e., Elena Basescu)'.

Therefore, in addition to civic duty, voters cite two motivations for participation in EP elections. One belongs to a national arena, defined as party attachment. It seems therefore that core party voters participated, with minimal switching<sup>18</sup>. Also, other national factors such as government approval or the state of the economy do not seem to drive participation. To the extent that the economic situation is mentioned as a reason for voting, it has rather a prospective EU-related effect, of potential benefits accruing from EU membership rather than a retrospective one referring to the national economic evolution in the past twelve months. In addition, positive attitudes toward EU matter as EU was not criticized by a single interviewee. By contrast, voters link the act of voting in

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<sup>17</sup> In fact, most of the candidate-centered media news focused exactly on pointing to embarrassing moments involving the two candidates: Gigi Becali on the PRM ticket and Elena Basescu, the president's daughter and former PDL member, running in EP election as independent.

<sup>18</sup> This voter typology corresponds to Romanian elites' expectations with respect to participants' profile in EP elections. See PSD members' interviews (Valeriu Zgonea, Mircea Geoana, Viorica Dancila, Ioan Mircea Pascu, Adrian Severin, Rovana Plumb, Corina Cretu) available on PSD official website (<http://www.psd.ro>), published March-June 2009 (accessed July 7, 2009).

EP elections to EU via notions of a 'better life' in Romania and via the 'quality of the Romanian representation'.

As mentioned, the survey was meant to be informative with respect to assumptions and factors driving voting behavior based on the logic of the two dominant theories, the SOE and the spatial voting model. The findings summarized above follow some of the messages mentioned in the Romanian campaign. As highlighted in the previous sections, all political actors, parties, MEP candidates, and the Romanian president promoted the message that participation in EP elections was important for reasons coming from both national and European arenas. This message seem to have reached the voters since, based on the interviews and the large-N analyses, positive attitudes toward EU membership are associated with higher turnout. Particularly with respect to Europe, voters underscore the quality of the Romanian representation and focus primarily on future benefits accruing from the EU membership. The interviewed voters and the media rarely to never mention arguments theorized in the literature that EP elections are elections of 'less power at stake' or that the EP as a legislature is one of a different kind than the national one. However, the interviewed voters represent a sample of participants in EP elections, while non-participants may have developed different perspectives on the importance of EP elections.

As a conclusion relevant to the last two empirical sections, it seems that attitudes toward EU were highly important for voters in the sense that positive evaluations of EU membership yields higher rates of participation. In addition, parties are not evaluated based on their EU positioning and the strategic behavior of punishing particular parties at EP elections is missing here. By contrast, the perception that the preferred party

during EP elections represents the best choice for national and EU politics seems to dominate among this particular electorate. It is also important to mention that parties themselves contribute to this perception, as they do not distinguish based on aimed policies. Parties send instead the message that they will do everything to defend the national interest in EU structures, without differentiating the national interest based on their ideological position.

### **Concluding Remarks**

The goal of this chapter was threefold: first, I sought to underscore some of the problematic aspects of core assumptions on which behavioral theories base their expectations with respect to EP elections. Second, in addressing these limitations I developed alternative hypotheses that took into account the contextual characteristic of one case study, Romania. Third, while testing the new empirical propositions, I paid particular attention to the role that EU attitudes may play in different instances of voting behavior: participation, party switching, and voting for a radical-right fringe party. The Romanian chapter, therefore, argues for a more contextualized application of broad general theories developed to travel across EU. The following chapter builds on the findings of this case study and test new arguments across Western and Eastern Europe, regions which I argue entail different voting dynamics.

The starting point of the present chapter was that the post-communist context displays a few characteristics that may not allow for a smooth application of two major behavioral approaches: the second order national theory and the spatial model approach to voting. These characteristics consist of the following: citizens in a new member state not exposed yet to arguments of 'second-order' character may consider

EP elections as important as national elections. Survey data and interviews support this perspective, which implies that the logic of the second order national elections theory, namely of midterm behavior that targets governing parties, may not hold. Second, the complicated party system of the region may create difficulties for the spatial voting approach, given that voters have difficulties in placing and conceptualizing ideological and EU distances between themselves and parties. In addition, voters display mostly positive attitudes toward EU and parties with negative stances on EU integration are represented by fringe radical parties and not by mainstream parties. These fringe parties, however, have a larger anti-systemic label attached to them in addition to the anti-EU one. Party switching as choosing a different party assumes a move from mainstream parties to radical right parties as the only anti-EU party offer. This chapter illustrated that such strategic dynamic is missing in the region, even though PRM voting was based on anti-EU attitudes. PRM voters displayed negative sentiments toward EU as the most important driver for choosing this party, but switching at EP elections was not caused by anti-EU attitudes.

The analyses display therefore a more nuanced application of behavioral theories in one post-communist member-state, Romania. Using different methodologies of interviews and large-N analyses, this chapter advances as its most robust finding the fact that EU attitudes matter for participation. Thus, positive evaluations of EU membership increase participation in EP elections. In addition, when assessed comparatively the EU attitudinal impact relative to domestic indicators, such as governmental approval and assessments of the economy, has the largest effect. EU membership entails a particular meaning for participants in EP elections. Romanians

participate in EP elections and vote largely with the same party as during the previous national election because, they mention, of expectations and beliefs in a 'better life'. These voters appreciate EU membership for the economic benefits associated with 'membership in an exclusive club'. 'Higher standards of living' are often mentioned as future expectations now that Romania is part of the EU. And in consonance with the message advanced by the political class, citizens believe also that their vote represents a commitment to more EU reforms that will lead to improved living standards. It is important to note here that the question that measures exactly these life expectations, namely that 'EU decisions will be in the interest of the country', does not attain significance in any of the analyses presented in this chapter. This particular dynamic implies ambivalence that Romanian citizens may have for EU: they believe in a better life associated with EU membership but they do not think that EU decisions will be in the interest of the country. This particular relationship between the two indicators that are positively correlated in the data set could mean that citizens do not expect immediate improvements. For instance, during the interviews most of the respondents mentioned 'a better life for future generations'. On the other hand, this lack of significance could also reflect vague latent expectations of a 'better life' and skepticism towards more concrete measures. This duality however implies that developing a Eurosceptic stance to EU membership in only a few years after EU membership is not highly unthinkable. At least this has been the evolution in other post-communist states such as Hungary and the Czech Republic that joined the EU three years prior to Romania. This seems to be the trajectory that Romania is following, given that in 2012, two of the mainstream Romanian parties, the PSD and PNL, display heavily anti-EU/anti-globalization

campaign messages. It seems therefore that anti-EU sentiments meshed with anti-globalization positions may become an important cleavage divide among mainstream parties.

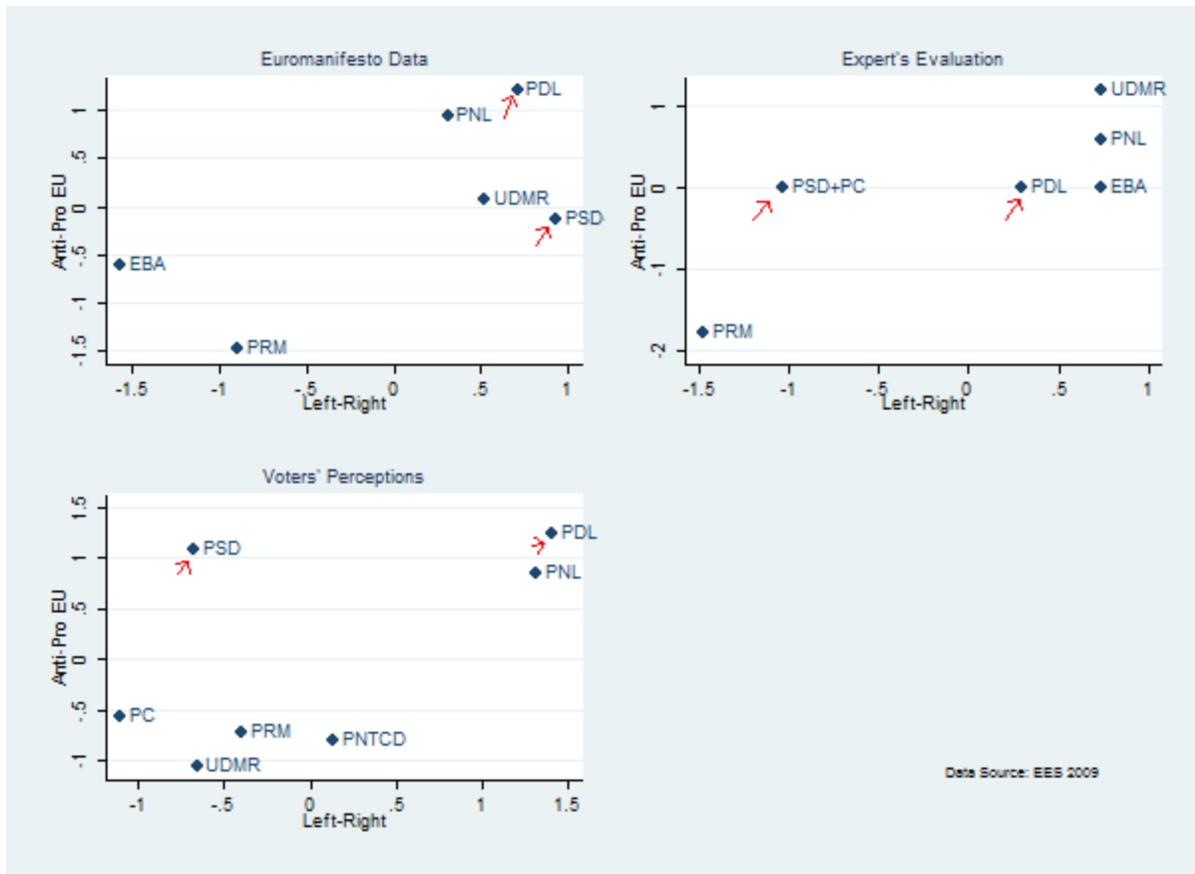


Figure 3-1. Romanian party positions on the two dimensions: left-right and European Union (EU) integration: different evaluations (standardized coefficients). Note: The three most important parties are the PSD (Social Democratic Party), the PD (Democratic Party) and the PNL (National Liberal Party). The PSD+PC represents the electoral alliance at the 2009 EP election, of the PSD and the PC (Conservative Party)--a party formed in 1991 with a conservative social ideology. The PD-L stands for the Democratic Liberal Party, formed in 2007, of the PD and a faction of the PNL. The PNTCD (Christian-Democratic Peasants' National Party) is one of the Romanian historical parties, in addition to PNL. EBA stands for Elena Basescu, the President's daughter who competed in the EP elections as an independent candidate, after leaving the PD-L. The PRM stands for the radical nationalist The Greater Romania Party. In the first two plots, based on party platforms, the PSD and the PC are considered as one competitor. UDMR stands for the Democratic Union of Hungarians in Romania. In the third plot, based on voter evaluations, separate questions were answered for each party. In addition, in the third plot, EBA's position was not gauged mainly because the survey focused on parties and not on independent candidates ideological positions.(Adopted from <http://www.ees-homepage.net/>)

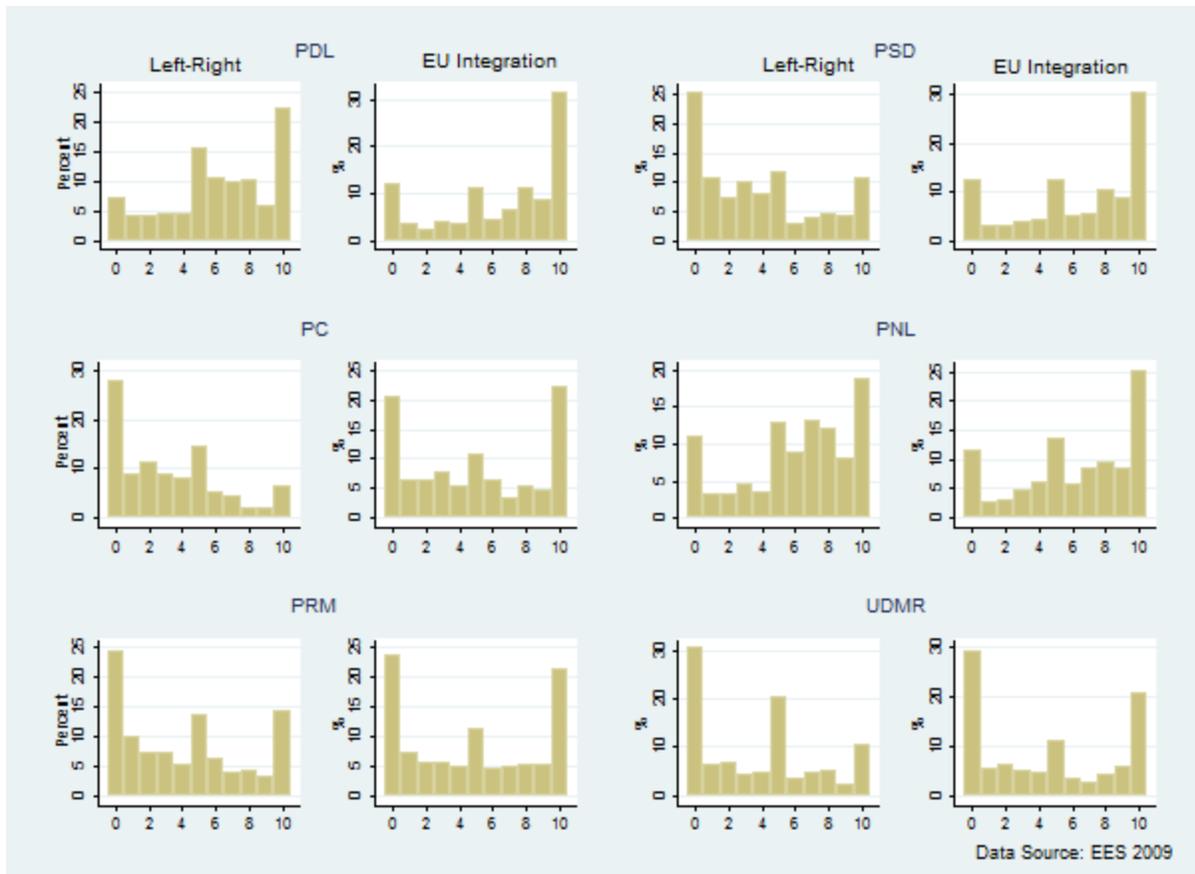


Figure 3-2. Distributions of voter's perceptions with respect to Romanian parties' positions on the two dimensions: left-right and EU integration (Adopted from <http://www.ees-homepage.net/>)

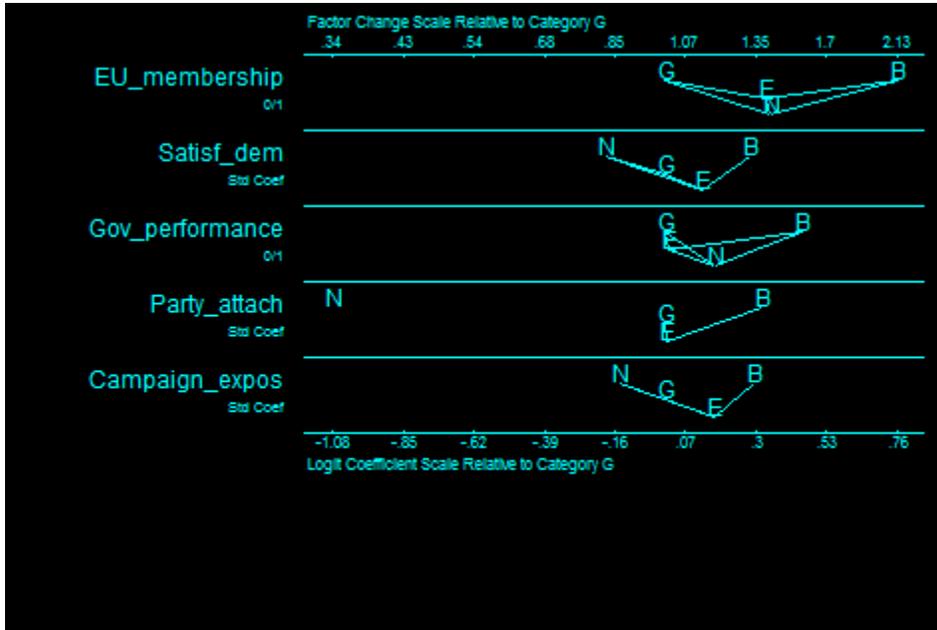


Figure 3-3. Odds-ratio plot on four types of turnout: at national and European Parliament (EP) elections, only at EP election, and abstention in both elections, and general elections only Note: Turnout in the general election only (G) is the reference category

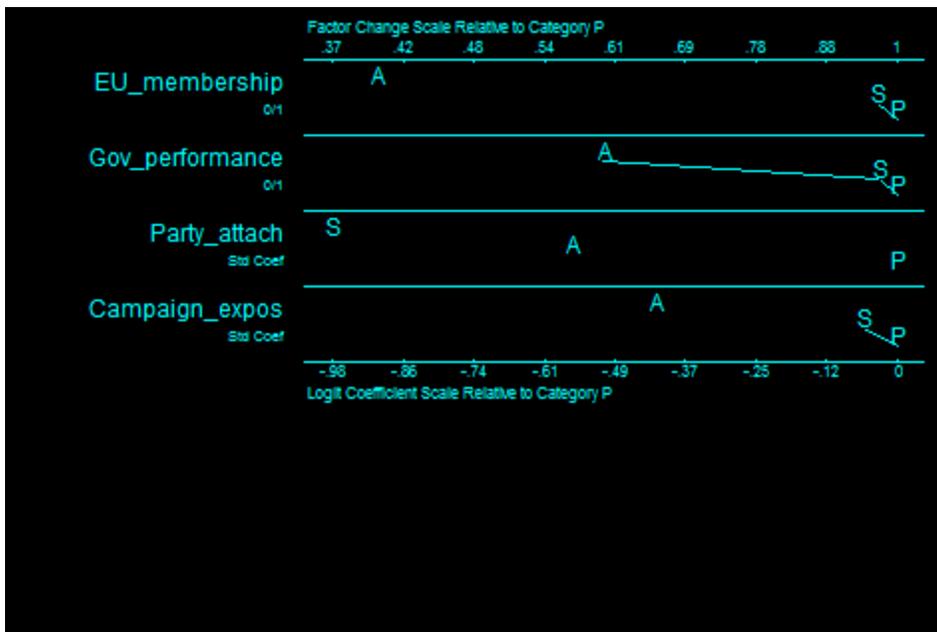


Figure 3-4. Odds-ratio plot on partisans, switchers, and abstainers during the EP elections. Note: Partisanship (P) is the reference category

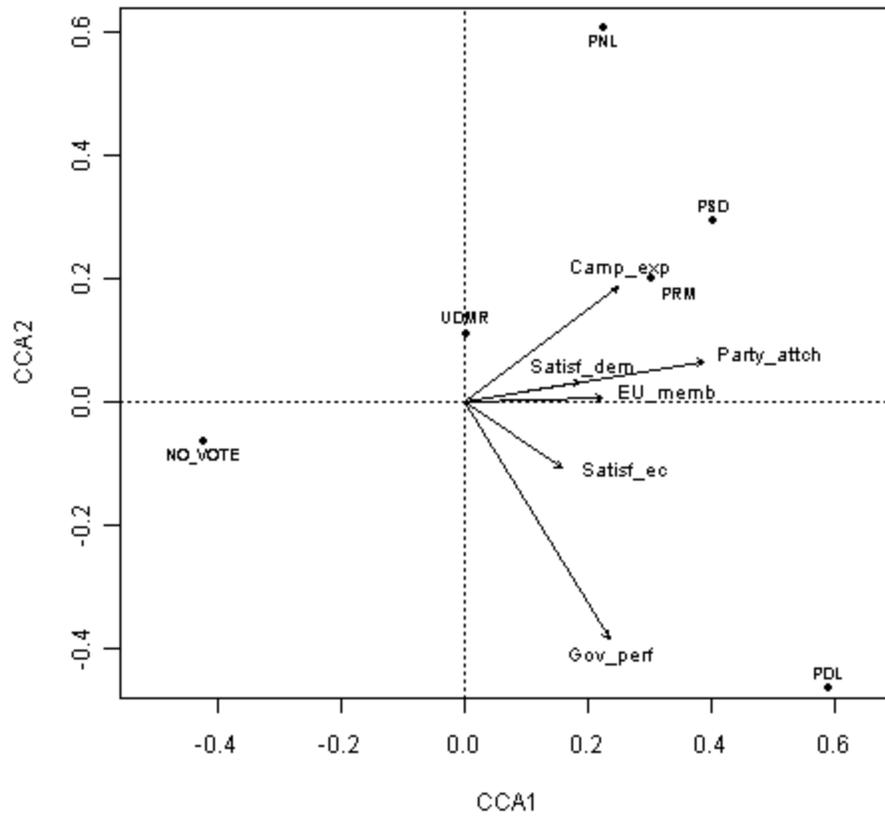


Figure 3-5. Canonical Correspondence Analysis (CCA) for political behavior during EP elections in Romania

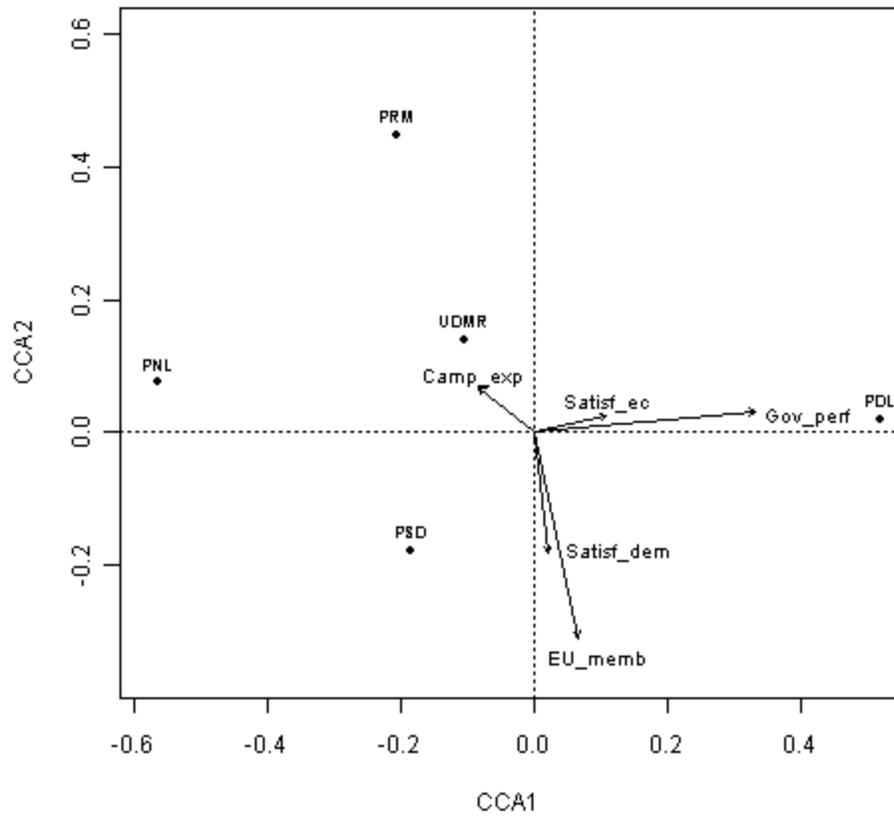


Figure 3-6. CCA for party choices during EP elections in Romania

Table 3-1. Summary of two complementary voting theories and their critique in the post-communist Romanian context

| Present voting theories  | Problematic Aspects in the Romanian Context  |
|--|--|
| <p>SOE Model: Second Order Factors</p> <p>Assumption</p> <p>EP election results perceived as less important</p> <p>Government Performance</p> <p>Economy</p> <p>Ideology</p>   | <p>Contextual characteristics</p> <p>EP election results considered as important as the national ones</p> <p>All mainstream parties shared government positions within the past year</p> <p>Global economic crisis</p> <p>Ideology does not structure party competition and voting</p> |
| <p>Spatial Voting Approach: European Factors</p> <p>Assumption</p> <p>Identifiable positions on the ideological left-right and EU dimensions of voters and parties</p> <p>EU distance matters</p> <p>Ideological distance matters as well (in fact a restatement of the SOE model but based on a spatial approach)</p> | <p>Contextual characteristics</p> <p>Voters have a hard time placing parties along these two dimensions</p> <p>Methodological difficulty</p> <p>Methodological difficulty</p>  |

Table 3-2. Turnout (2009 EP elections Romania)

|  | Model 1<br>EP<br>Turnout | Model 2<br>EP Turnout | Model 3<br>EP Turnout | Model 4<br>Turnout<br>both<br>elections | Model 4<br>Odds<br>ratio |
|--|--------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|---|--------------------------|
|  | log odds<br>(s.e)        | log odds<br>(s.e)     | log odds<br>(s.e.)    | log odds<br>(s.e)                       |                          |
| Membership evaluation                            |                          | .62***(.22)           | .62***(.22)           | .75***(.25)                             | 2.13***                  |
| Country interest (stand)                         |                          | -.15 (.10)            | -.15(.11)             | -.05 (.11)                              | 0.94                     |
| EU dimension                                     | -.05(.04)                |                       |                       |   |                          |
| Left-right dimension                             | -.00(.05)                |                       |                       |   |                          |
| Satisfaction with the economy (stand)            | -.03 (.17)               | .11 (.11)             | .11(.11)              | .07 (.13)                               | 1.07                     |
| Satisfaction with democracy (stand)              | .26*(.15)                | .28**(.10)            | .28***(.10)           | .28**(.11)                              | 1.32**                   |
| Government performance                           | .79**(.36)               | .34(.21)              | .34(.21)              | .45*(.25)                               | 1.56*                    |
| Party attachment (stand)                         | .23(.19)                 | .52***(.10)           | .52***(.10)           | .32***(.12)                             | 1.37***                  |
| Campaign exposure (stand)                        | .39**(.19)               | .53***(.11)           | .47***(.20)           | .29**(.13)                              | 1.34**                   |
| Campaign exposure (stand)* Membership evaluation |                          |                       | .10(.23)              |   |                          |
| Education  | .04 (.06)                | .05 (.03)             | .05(.03)              | .09**(.04)                              | 1.09**                   |
| Age  | .02** (.01)              | .02**(.00)            | .01**(.00)            | .02**(.00)                              | 1.01**                   |
| Social class                                     | -.05 (.23)               | .07 (.11)             | .06(.11)              | .07 (.14)                               | 1.07                     |
| Urban  | -.21 (.14)               | -.30***(.08)          | -.30***(.08)          | -.24**(.09)                             | .79**                    |
| Pseudo R   | 0.09                     | 0.18                  | 0.18                  | 0.16                                    |                          |
| N  | 309                      | 768                   | 768                   | 774                                     |                          |

Note: Entries in Model 4 are from a multi-nominal logit analysis. Voting in past national elections is the reference category.

Table 3-3. Predicted probabilities for turnout in Model 2

| Variable                            | Min value | Max value | Change |
|-------------------------------------|-----------|-----------|--------|
| EU Factors                          |           |           |        |
| Membership evaluation               | 47.59     | 62.99     | 15.40  |
| National Factors                    |           |           |        |
| Satisfaction with democracy (stand) | 50.91     | 73.44     | 22.53  |
| Party attachment (stand)            | 43.35     | 79.33     | 35.98  |
| Campaign exposure (stand)           | 42.00     | 82.12     | 40.12  |

Table 3-4. Governing party voters and vote switching

| Variable                         | Model 1                     |                              | Model 2                     |                           |
|----------------------------------|-----------------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------------|
|                                  | Defect<br>log odds<br>(s.e) | Abstain<br>log odds<br>(s.e) | Defect<br>log odds<br>(s.e) | Abstain<br>log odds (s.e) |
| Membership evaluation            |                             |                              | -0.66 (.55)                 | -1.13***(.34)             |
| Country Interest                 |                             |                              | -0.31(.30)                  | .06(.73)                  |
| Distance left-right (abs)        | .14(.11)                    | .06(.07)                     |                             |                           |
| Distance EU integration (abs)    | -0.07(.11)                  | .01(.05)                     |                             |                           |
| Satisfaction with economy (sd)   | .00(.32)                    | .12(.22)                     | .00(.27)                    | -.16(.19)                 |
| Satisfaction with democracy (sd) | -.49(.43)                   | -.52**(.22)                  | -.02(.26)                   | -0.0493                   |
| Government performance           | -.73(.61)                   | -1.05**(.41)                 | -.25(.46)                   | -.73**(.32)               |
| Party Attachment (sd)            | -.42(.30)                   | -.38**(.18)                  | -.48***(.17)                | -.31**(.12)               |
| Campaign exposure                | .17(.37)                    | -.19(.19)                    | .21(.21)                    | -0.0496                   |
| Education                        | -.02(.07)                   | -.03(.06)                    | .06(.06)                    | -.06(.04)                 |
| Age                              | -.02(.01)                   | -.03**(.01)                  | -0.0002                     | -.01(.01)                 |
| Social class                     | .15(.31)                    | .10(.28)                     | -.22(.26)                   | -.02(.19)                 |
| Urban                            | .45**(.21)                  | .28*(.16)                    | .30(.20)                    | .34***(.12)               |
| Pseudo R                         | 0.15                        | 0.15                         | 0.13                        | 0.2                       |
| N                                | 164                         | 208                          | 241                         | 337                       |

Table 3-5. Party switchers and abstainers relative to partisans

|                                    | Model 1<br>Switchers |                |            | Model 2<br>Abstainers |                |            |
|------------------------------------|----------------------|----------------|------------|-----------------------|----------------|------------|
|                                    | Log odds (s.e)       | Log odds (s.e) | Odds ratio | Log odds (s.e)        | Log odds (s.e) | Odds ratio |
| Membership evaluation              |                      | -.03(.43)      | .96        |                       | -.90***(.29)   | .40        |
| Country Interest                   |                      | -.30(.22)      | .77        |                       | .03(.15)       | 1.02       |
| Distance left-right (abs)          | .21**(.08)           |                |            | .06(.07)              |                |            |
| Distance EU integration (abs)      | .02(.07)             |                |            | .04(.05)              |                |            |
| Satisfaction with the economy (sd) | .35(.25)             | .21(.19)       | 1.21       | .17(.21)              | -.15(.17)      | .86        |
| Satisfaction with democracy (sd)   | .16(.55)             | .29(.20)       | 1.29       | -.28(.18)             | -.18(.14)      | .84        |
| Government performance             | -.51(.43)            | -.03(.33)      | .96        | -1.04***(.39)         | -.51*(.28)     | .59        |
| Party Attachment (sd)              | -.72***(.21)         | -.75***(.15)   | .37        | -.41**(.17)           | -.43***(.11)   | .56        |
| Campaign exposure                  | -.22(.20)            | -.05(.14)      | .94        | -.39**(.17)           | -.36***(.13)   | .65        |
| Controls                           |                      |                |            |                       |                |            |
| Education                          | .07(.06)             | .07(.05)       | 1.07       | -.02(.05)             | -.08*(.04)     | .91        |
| Age                                | -.00(.01)            | -.00(.01)      | .99        | -.02**(.01)           | -.01**(.00)    | .98        |
| Social class                       | -.14(.26)            | -.22(.19)      | .79        | .03(.25)              | -.05(.16)      | .95        |
| Urban                              | .02(.18)             | .03(.15)       | 1.04       | .21(.15)              | .35***(.11)    | 1.42       |
| Pseudo R                           | 0.14                 | 0.15           |            | 0.14                  | 0.15           |            |
| N                                  | 290                  | 484            |            | 290                   | 484            |            |

Note: Entries are from a multi-nominal logit analysis in which partisans represent the reference category

## CHAPTER 4 EUROPEAN UNION (EU) CONTESTATION ACROSS TWENTY MEMBER STATES

Chapters 2 and 3 established that the two dominant strands of research on electoral behavior at EP elections entail core assumptions that may not hold across all EU member states. The more fine grained explanation of EP elections as ‘second order national elections’ advances that voter behavior is driven mostly by issues coming from the national arena. In this case economic and political evaluations of domestic politics are key explanatory factors. In contrast, the Romanian case study illustrated that voters base their participation at least, if not party choices also, on EU attitudes. A different pathway of thinking about EP elections has been developed in a series of studies which forward that ‘Europe matters’ at EP elections. As EU expanded beyond an integrated single-market with a common currency and new policy reach especially into immigration and foreign affairs, domestic parties’ participation in the EU structures presents the potential for contestation at EP elections. This alternative posits that voters have the opportunity to express their ‘sincere’ preferences on EU integration at EP elections rather than to limit themselves to vote on domestic issues. The Romanian chapter illustrated that voters may not be able to clearly distinguish among parties’ positions on the EU dimension. In addition, the case study underscored the erroneous conclusions one may reach when applying a spatial approach to voting in a party system that has settled neither on the left-right ideological dimension nor on the EU one.

The goal in Chapter 4 is to address the limitations in the current behavioral theories and to advance a theory that answers the questions of where, when, why EU attitudes shape behavior at EP elections. This theory emphasizes the conditional nature of voting on the EU arena at EP elections, i.e. voters vote based on their EU attitudes at

EP elections *only* when some conditions are met. Rather than suggesting that Romania represents an exceptional case with its party system characteristic, positive EU attitudes, and timing, as a first time exposure to the EP elections, this chapter generalizes the dynamic unfolded in the case study to all EU member states<sup>1</sup>. In addition, it pays particular attention to possible cross-sub-regional variation in the saliency of EU attitudes as relevant for political behavior. The new theoretical perspective incorporates partial arguments from the two strands of electoral research and advances a model that focuses on three components: voter attitudes, party EU stance, and party mobilization on EU issues during the EP electoral campaigns.

### **Theoretical Approach: The Conditional Nature of EU Contestation**

The conceptual background of the theory is that EP elections are second order contests that attract overall less participation and interest from voters and parties. The consistent low aggregate turnout results with a 10-20% difference between EP and national contests make the ‘second order’ character of EP elections an uncontested issue. The case study emphasized that ‘the less important’ nature of EP elections may not be immediately relevant to voters in new member states. However, as the first Europe-wide campaigns unfold and parties engage less in political debates than they would normally do in national contests, the perspective that maybe ‘there is not too much at stake’ makes room in new voters’ minds as well. However, I argue, this ‘less important’ characteristic does not entail a strategic vote based on domestic issues. This dynamic has been extensively discussed in the previous chapter.

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<sup>1</sup> While I argue that the theory developed in this chapter holds across all EU member states, I use in fact only 20 EU member states to empirically test the arguments. I drop two: Romania and Bulgaria because these states did not hold EP elections in 2004. In addition, I drop five more states because of the limitations of the survey instrument used, which misses important indicators needed to test the theoretical arguments.

Following the 'Europe matters alternative' I suggest that the EU has become more salient overtime, with EU attitudes playing a role in shaping voting behavior. The relationship between EU attitudes and voting behavior is, however, not straightforward given that states with high aggregate results of positive EU attitudes do not necessarily display higher aggregate results of participation. Conversely, more Eurosceptic states do not have lower turnout rates either (see the discussion in Chapter 2). Also, more pro-EU or anti-EU parties do not gain a systematic vote at EP elections in the sense that more anti-EU parties win more votes in Eurosceptic states, while more pro-EU parties win more votes in Euro-optimist states. Therefore, despite the existing cross-national and within-states variation that exists in the EU with respect to voters' views on EU integration, EU attitudes do not translate immediately into a particular behavior. The main contribution of this chapter is to spell out the conditions under which EU attitudes are more likely to shape voting behavior. I posit that *EU salience* on the voter side and *clarity* on the party side with respect to EU integration are two essential components in understanding when EU matters at EP elections. When advancing the EU salience theory for parties and voters, I build on De Vries approach on the 'conditional nature of EU issue voting' at national elections (De Vries 2007: 365). Similarly to De Vries, I emphasize the importance of inter-party conflict on European integration to stir voter preferences with respect to EU integration. In addition to presenting a EU-wide theory, this chapter underlines three different regional dynamics with respect to the relationship between EU attitudes on the one hand and participation and party defection on the other.

The conceptual starting point of the EU salience theory is related to voter EU attitudes. I assume first that EU citizens hold 'real', but latent attitudes toward EU integration. I argue that these latent attitudes shape behavior at EP elections only if they are brought to surface by party elite competition over EU integration. We know, given the Eurobarometer studies, that voters have preferences with respect to EU integration that vary over time, cross-nationally, and across social groups. However, we do not know much about the intensity of these preferences. Yet, we may think about two scenarios: one, in which voters have very strong opinions with respect to EU membership. Such voters will most likely base their vote on EU attitudes, especially if parties emphasize various aspects of EU integration during the campaigns. In the second scenario, voters may have preferences over EU integration, but the intensity of these preferences is low. These voters will most likely *not* base their vote on the EU arena unless parties increase the salience of the EU issues during electoral campaigns. Therefore, as a minimum condition for voters to engage the EU arena when voting is that parties emphasize EU integration in their manifestos programs and campaign on EU related issues.

The second step of the theory refers to party EU stance. I posit next that voters will start considering the possibility of voting based on issues coming from the EU arena *only if* parties underscore *competing positions* with respect to the EU. If all parties promote a similar position on what EU membership means for the state, the salience of the EU issue increases for voters, but they may not be able to distinguish among parties' positioning on EU integration. In a nutshell, to be able to cast a vote at EP elections based on EU attitudes voters need to understand where domestic parties

stand on EU integration. Only when *clarity* is achieved via partisan competition will voters be able to link EU attitudes to their EU related party preference. I suggest further that clarity at the party level is achieved when EU politicization is high. I move next to theorize the party dynamic that will lead to high EU politicization.

It has been previously argued that mainstream parties are overall more pro-EU than fringe parties on both political extremes (Van der Eijk and Franklin 1996; de Vries 2007; Hix and Marsh 2007; Hobolt, Spoon and Tilley 2008). In addition, political elites are overall more pro-EU than ordinary voters (Hooghe 2003; Hobolt 2005; Hobolt, Spoon and Tilley 2008). Given this 'Europe divided' (Hooghe 2003) phenomenon between political elites and ordinary citizens, partisan conflict presumes some negative stances over EU integration. Such negative positions may come mostly from fringe parties on the political extremes. This is the case mostly because mainstream parties as government parties were responsible for shaping the integration project in Western Europe. In more recent EU member states, mainstream parties were responsible for negotiating the accession process. Thus, *opening* debates over the lack of benefits accruing from EU membership would not make much sense from mainstream parties' perspective. It is rather the fringe parties on the political extremes that have greater incentives for bringing EU issues to the fore. Insisting on a variety of issues such as immigration, Islam, the Eastern enlargement, net financial contributions to the EU budget and to the EU structural funds which target 'backward' regions, EU agricultural spending, and the overall loss of national sovereignty, fringe parties tap into voters' anti-EU preferences, in addition to their extreme left-right ideological positions.

Mainstream parties need to feel challenged by fringe competitors to engage the debate over the EU. Mainstream parties may ignore the EU debate completely, but if fringe anti-EU stances translate into potential votes, mainstream parties have two options of how to respond. Both options were clearly illustrated in the most recent French presidential election which displayed an unprecedented level of EU politicization for a national contest. One option is to engage the EU debate and clarify parties' positioning by offering a more nuanced pro-EU perspective. Just as a quick example of nuanced perspectives, during the last French national election French presidential candidates backed up by various EU state leaders debated the course of EU integration. The incumbent Nicolas Sarkozy, leader of UMP (Union for a Popular Movement) and head of state, signed The Fiscal Compact designed to address the weakness of the common currency design. On the other hand, Francois Hollande, the official candidate of the Socialist and the Radical Left Party, announced his preference for recasting the most recent intergovernmental EU Treaty. The Fiscal Compact, argued Hollande, was promoting too much the German perspective on how to answer to the current eurozone crisis by 'limiting governmental spending' and 'not promoting growth' (*The Economist*, 2012). This debate over the Fiscal Compact allowed French voters to gain a clearer perspective on mainstream parties' positioning on EU integration. In the same presidential debate, Marine Le Pen, leader of FN (National Front), a far right party propelled forward by the economic crisis, insisted on the anti-immigration and the anti-EU position as a solution to the French crisis. Therefore, when mainstream parties engage in EU debates, they refine their EU positions and offer clear alternatives to voters. The first hypothesis that the theory presented thus far generates is that EU

contestation that involves clear anti- and pro-EU party positioning mobilizes voters to participate and choose parties based on their EU attitudes. Therefore, when EU politicization is high, EU attitudes matter for electoral behavior (*The EU Arena Hypothesis for Electoral Behavior*).

As a second scenario, when challenged on EU integration mainstream parties can forward simultaneously pro and anti-EU positions. To continue with the French example, when the far right party brought the anti-EU immigration issue to the fore, Nicolas Sarkozy reopened the debate over the Schengen accession criteria to avoid losing too many votes on this issue (Terziev 2012). Challenged by Marine Le Pen, Nicolas Sarkozy flirted with the idea of ‘leaving Schengen if Bulgaria joins the Schengen area’ (ibid.). Given that free movement of persons across EU is one of the core principles on which EU is built, only mentioning a potential reenacting of state frontiers represents a definite anti-EU stance. Moreover, at the time similar debates with respect to the Schengen criteria and the joining of Romania and Bulgaria were taking place in the Netherlands, where Geert Wilders, the leader of the far right Freedom Party (PVV) was blocking the Schengen enlargement for these two countries. Therefore, because Sarkozy joined a debate over Schengen that the influential far right in the EU has already launched, his position was perceived and interpreted in the media as a desperate attempt to capture an issue quite useful for the National Front (FN). I argue, therefore, that this duality to the extreme of Sarkozy’s positioning on the EU discourages voters to base their vote on EU attitudes when choosing UMP. That is mostly the case because they are left unclear with respect to where Nicolas Sarkozy and the UMP stand on EU integration. Is Sarkozy pro-EU given his very important role

in generating the Fiscal Compact for instance, or is he anti-EU, given his attempts of counteracting a resurgence of the FN? This is a difficult question for French voters. Therefore, the alternative hypothesis that this scenario generates holds that high EU emphasis and low EU politicization<sup>2</sup> diminishes the potential of EU attitudes to affect political behavior at EP elections. Voters may participate in EP elections because the EU issues are emphasized during elections and thus they gain *broad* perspectives as to where their preferred parties stand on EU integration. However, voters may not defect from their initial party preference in national elections because of their attitudes toward EU, mostly because they are left unclear on how parties *differ* on the EU dimension. This second scenario increases participation at EP elections based on voter EU attitudes, but party selection will not be EU related (*The EU Arena Hypothesis for Participation*).

Table 4-1 summarizes the theoretical discussion presented thus far. Considering the two dimensions of how parties may focus on EU integration at EP elections, i.e. emphasize and politicize EU integration, I envision different dynamics of how the EU Arena matters for electoral behavior. For electoral behavior I distinguish between participation and party defection. I consider two levels for EU emphasis and EU salience at the party level: low and high. Therefore, when EU emphasis and EU politicization is

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<sup>2</sup>To clarify the terms I use, I define high EU politicization or high EU contestation, terms used interchangeably, as the situation where parties compete among themselves on various aspects of EU integration and hold *clear* positions with respect to UE integration. While one could argue that EU integration is a complex phenomenon with multiple facets, I believe that parties simplify it to send clear messages to their voters as to where they stand on EU integration. I define low politicization as the situation when parties do not compete among themselves over EU integration or emphasize contradictory statements. If parties are internally divided over various aspects of EU integration, the literature on party positioning on EU integration suggests that these parties abstain from bringing the EU debates to the fore. If parties hold divergent opinions and decide to campaign on these issues they confuse voters as to where they actually stand on EU integration. Therefore, I argue that in the second scenario defined as low politicization, it is less likely that voters will select parties based on their own preferences over EU integration.

high, voters base their electoral behavior (participation and party selection) on EU attitudes. When EU emphasis is high but EU politicization is low, voters base only their participation on EU attitudes. When EU emphasis and EU politicization are low, EU attitudes do not matter at EP elections. Working with this matrix of EU emphasis and EU politicization at the party level, I move next to consider expected regional differences in how EU attitudes affect voting behavior.

Up to now I approached the EU integration as a monolithic issue, even though I did acknowledge it to be a complex phenomenon. I move next to unpack how EU integration can be presented to voters and to highlight how voters in different states may relate to various aspects of EU integration. The short French example illustrated, for instance, the complexity of various aspects of EU integration, which referred to EU enlargement, identity and economic threats that the mass-immigration of citizens coming from poorer member states impose on more developed states and their citizens. Other facets of EU integration presented in the literature mention identity threats understood as a loss of national sovereignty vis-à-vis the decision making process and policies coming from Brussels. Such a dynamic, for instance, was illustrated in Chapter 2, with the Denmark referendum case study, when the Danish people favored the economic integration of their country into the EU structures but feared the loss of national sovereignty. I start, therefore, by operating a regional level differentiation among EU states that are more likely to display a positive image with respect to EU integration and states that are more likely to display a negative image. In addition, I unpack which aspects of EU integration are more likely to be present across the three regions.

EU is a supranational structure made of twenty-seven member states which are substantially different in terms of perceived state level interactions with EU and state level expectations from EU. The first distinction I suggest at the regional level is between the post-communist member states and the 'old' Europe. I consider the post-communist region different than the rest of Europe mostly because of the decade-long EU accession negotiation process in which all mainstream parties participated. During this time, all parties emphasized the EU as the guarantee for democratic stability at the regime level and economic well-being at the individual level (Cichowski 2000). I argue, therefore, that the dominant positive formulation of EU membership that domestic political elites advanced during the accession process left little room for EU politicization during the first years of membership. This is more the case since mainstream parties have not settled on the left-right ideological dimension either in many of these countries. Chapter 3 illustrated one aspect of a party system still in the process of consolidating, namely the ideological elasticity of a charisma driven party system that has yet to consolidate party positions along the left-right continuum. If such characteristics do not necessarily extend to all party systems in the region, scholars agree at least that unstable electoral markets with high volatility on party and voter sides do not allow voters to perform clear choices based on party programs and ideological values (Birch 2003). Therefore, because there is still room for manoeuvre on the more traditional arena of party competition, the left-right ideological continuum, and because of a lack of anti-EU parties in the first EU membership years, it is less likely that party competition on EU issues will emerge during the first cycles of EP elections. The probable lack of EU politicization at the party level will impede voters in making party choices based on

EU attitudes that are different at EP elections than the choices at national elections. I posit therefore that in the post-communist region it is less likely to have party defection driven by European attitudes. To the extent that voters switch to different parties, and they do so more in this region as shown by the overall higher electoral volatility scores, it is less likely that EU attitudes will play a role in defection (*The EU Arena Hypothesis for Party Defection in the Post-Communist Region*).

Yet, the interviews in Chapter 3 pointed to the importance of EU attitudes for participation in EP elections. As previously mentioned, Romanian political elites forwarded the argument that high levels of participation reinforce the state commitment to the EU. It may be that this particular take that elites had on the meaning of participation may have been related to the conditional nature of Romania's acceptance into the EU. Romania and Bulgaria were allowed to join in 2007 even though they had not fulfilled all the accession criteria and lagged behind on judicial reform. As EU member states, these two states were (and still are) under the monitoring procedures of the European Commission, which releases progress reports on the reform issue every six months. Thus, elites' framing of 'Romania's commitment to the EU' may have been related to the state's particular accession process that may not be necessarily shared by all former-communist states. Along this argument, the voter interviews in the previous chapter acknowledged the importance of the EU in reforming the national judiciary. However, the interviews also illustrated broader positive feelings about EU membership and expectations of economic benefits and life improvements accruing from EU membership. I argue, thus, that this broader identification with the EU's beneficial impact will be present across the region in the first Europe-wide elections as a

legacy of the decade-long negotiation process. This discussion over the lack of EU politicization at the party level and positive expectations at the individual level generates the following hypothesis for the post-communist region: it is less likely that EU attitudes will impact party selection at EP elections, but EU attitudes will have a large impact on participation during regular EP elections (*The EU Arena Hypothesis for Participation in the Post-Communist Region*).

After four years of membership however, the legacy of positive identification with EU membership and the lack of EU politicization fade away. Now, fringe parties have more leeway in pointing to unfulfilled expectations with respect to what EU membership entails. In addition, this is the region where voters' aggregate evaluations of EU membership as a 'good thing' dropped dramatically. If we exclude Greece, a member state which registered the steepest 26% decrease in the percentage of citizens who think the EU membership is a 'good thing', the post-communist region displays the largest decreases ranging from changes to as low as 3% up to 17% over the period between the two EP elections (Eurobarometer Data 2004, 2009). Therefore, by the time of the second EP elections, EU politicization may increase in this region and EU attitudes may have an impact on party defection as well. I move next to present the expected voting dynamics in 'old' Europe.

The starting conceptual point in thinking about regions in 'old' Europe and various aspects of EU integration relates to the question of what factors generate EU attitudes in the first place. Different explanations have been advanced, which emphasized post-materialist values (Inglehart 1977), cultural threat perceptions coming from EU enlargement (McLaren 2002), or utilitarian cost-benefit calculations accruing from EU

membership (Anderson and Reichert 1996; Gabel and Whitten 1997; Gabel 1998). This debate presented in Chapter 2 convincingly concludes that economic benefits understood as subjective evaluations of personal and national EU-related fortunes matter the most in shaping voter EU attitudes (Gabel and Whitten 1997, Gabel 1998). Given the utilitarian approach to evaluating EU membership, I distinguish between two sub-regions within 'old' Europe: states that are mostly perceived as net contributors to the EU finances and states that are mostly perceived as net recipients of EU funds. In performing this division I follow previous studies which suggest that large discrepancies between economic contributions to the EU and returns from the EU budget affect turnout (Mattila 2003). Germany, the Netherlands, Luxembourg have been classified as net contributors during the 1990s, while Spain, Portugal, Ireland, and Greece have been labeled as net recipients (ibid, 457). Given that utilitarian perspective of economic benefits and losses accruing from EU membership shape EU attitudes, I expect that arguments related to economic gains and the EU will also dominate parties' positions when it comes to politicize EU. Therefore, in states that contribute the most to the EU budget, we are more likely to see parties emphasizing and politicizing EU integration in a negative way. In states that are mostly on the recipient side of EU benefits, I expect that economic aspects related to EU integration to be less emphasized and less politicized.

In addition to the categorization present in the literature between recipients and contributors, I add UK, France, Austria and Denmark to the contributor category and place Italy and Cyprus to the recipient side. UK, Austria, and Denmark are wealthy 'Eurosceptic states', very critical of EU membership (De Vries 2007), while France

played (and still plays) a key role in moving forward the integration project (Dinan 2010). Therefore, in these states, we are more likely to see fringe political entrepreneurs contesting EU integration for various reasons. I add Italy to the South as a state where high politicization of EU membership is less likely to be achieved. If Italy participated in the integration process since the beginning, the state is not presented as a key integration player, but more as a state that is lagging behind in following the EU integration. For instance, when the conditions of state deficits were imposed as necessary requirements for creating the Eurozone, Italy was the only state of the original six barely meeting these criteria. In addition to the economic difficulties and the uncertain EU contributor status, the Italian society shares a strong mistrust of national politicians. The 'mani pulite' judicial investigations in the 1990s and the more recent case of Berlusconi's resignation are cases in point. Therefore, in Italy, it is less likely to have parties contesting EU integration based on economic disadvantages mostly because of the shaking Italian economy and the additional accountability that the EU may offer vis-à-vis a corrupted political class.

The last state to be classified is Cyprus, a poorer state that shares the lack of EU politicization of the post-communist region and the positive attitudes of a very recent state. Still, Cyprus does not display the high party volatility of the post-communist region. Therefore, I added this state to the southern region.

States in the first category, the West, are more likely to politicize the EU. Given the free movement of persons within the EU, these wealthier states will also attract legal immigration from poorer members. Therefore, either in the name of economic disadvantage or immigration, fringe parties on the extremes have a fertile ground for

bringing anti-EU issues to the fore, issues that voters care deeply about. In contrast, in the states portrayed as beneficiaries of EU structural funds and other EU related infrastructure projects, it is less likely to have anti-EU parties campaigning on economic or cultural threat issues, mostly because such characteristics are lacking in the region. To the extent that fringe parties take critical approaches to EU membership, they may insist on the loss of national sovereignty or the lack of transparency in the EU decision-making process. Such issues, however, are less likely to galvanize voters when compared to the impact of economic and cultural-threat related ones. Therefore, the distinction between two sub-regions in the 'old' Europe, West and South, entails a different dynamic for EU attitudes. The hypotheses that this distinction generates is that EU attitudes are more likely to impact political behavior understood as both participation and party selection in the West and less likely to have an impact in the South (*The EU Arena Hypothesis in 'Old' Europe*). The main reason for this differential impact of EU attitudes consists in the lower probability of having fringe parties in the South that emphasize anti-EU issues that voters care deeply about and start the EU politicization process.

To sum up, this chapter advances a theory on where, when, and why EU attitudes shape voting behavior at EP elections. This theory emphasizes the role of party elite in bringing EU attitudes to the fore. The core statement of the theory is that voters' EU attitudes shape voting behavior *only when* aspects of EU integration are highly emphasized and highly politicized. These aspects are, however, most likely to be linked, but not exclusively focused on economic benefits and losses accruing from EU membership. High politicization of the EU may be achieved when fringe parties on the

political extremes emphasize anti-EU positions during the campaigns. In addition, mainstream parties engage the debates by clarifying their pro-EU positions. I apply this theory to the EU as a whole and I distinguish three regional patterns generated by various legacies with respect to state-EU relations, party system dynamics, and voter expectations. I suggest that EU attitudes will be highly relevant for participation and party defection in the West, as a region most likely to achieve high EU politicization. In contrast, EU attitudes will matter less in the South, as the region least likely to achieve EU politicization. Finally, in the post-communist region, the legacy of positive elite discourse advanced during the accession process and positive expectations associated with EU membership enhance the effect of EU attitudes for one type of electoral behavior, participation. Given the potential lack of EU politicization, EU attitudes are less likely to affect party selection. This legacy of positive association with EU may fade with future EU experiences. Thus, there may be room for high EU politicization in the post-communist region, but mostly after the first EP election. Table 4-2 maps out these three different regional dynamics. Before I turn to the empirical examination of these hypotheses, I introduce next the data, operationalizations, and the methods used in the analyses.

### **Data, Operationalizations, and Methods**

To examine the relationship between attitudes on European integration, the campaigning context, and voting behavior at EP elections, I employ individual and country-level data from twenty EU member states at the last two Europe-wide EP elections: 2004 and 2009. I use three different surveys from the 2004 and 2009 European Election Study database: the Voter Study for voter related data, the Longitudinal Media Study for news media coverage, and the Manifesto Study for party

programs issued ahead of the two elections (these surveys are presented in the Appendix C)<sup>3</sup>. I select only twenty out of twenty-seven EU member states mostly because I assess the impact of independent indicators across two elections. The 2004 election may be viewed as exceptional, given that 10 new member states participate for the first time in the Europe-wide contests. To avoid this critique and to check the robustness of the arguments I replicate the analyses with 2009 data. In addition, this replication illustrates inter-regional dynamics from one wave to another. However, the two points in time, 2004 and 2009, are not directly comparable given the economic crisis that hit very hard Europe, such that all cases in this sample have negative GDP growth rates. Romania and Bulgaria are dropped, since these states joined in 2007 and have been exposed to only one Europe-wide EP election. In addition, I restrict the sample to states where question wordings in the Voter Survey Study are almost identical for the dependent and independent variables. Thus, I drop five additional states that lack various indicators measured in the analyses: Belgium, Sweden, Malta, Luxembourg, and Lithuania<sup>4</sup>.

The analyses proceed in two parts. First, I determine where and when European attitudes shape two types of electoral behavior: participation in EP elections and party

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<sup>3</sup> EES (2004), European Parliament Election Study 2004, Voter Study, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition (<http://www.ees-homepage.net/>); EES (2009), *European Parliament Election Study 2009, Voter Study*, [Advance] Release, 23 June 2011, ([www.piredeu.eu](http://www.piredeu.eu)); Banduci, Susan, de Vreese, Claes, Semetko, Holli; Boomgarden, Hajo, Luhiste, Maarja, 2010. *EES Longitudinal Media Study Advance Release Documentation*, 15/10/2010, [www.piredeu.eu](http://www.piredeu.eu); EES 2004, *Euromanifesto Documentation*, <http://www.mzes.uni-mannheim.de/projekte/manifestos/>; EES (2009), *European Parliament Election Study 2009, Manifesto Study Data, Advance Release (user beware/pre-release B)*, 22/07/2010, [www.piredeu.eu](http://www.piredeu.eu).

<sup>4</sup> However, I do not expect that dropping these 7 states will affect the results in any systematic way. It is simply a limitation on the survey side commissioned by the EES for 2004 and PIREDEU for 2009 in the sense that the EU member states did not implement the master questionnaire properly. Lithuania, for instance, misses half of the master survey questionnaire. The Belgium survey does not allow generating the partisans, defectors, and abstainers dependent variable because it is missing the party choice question in national elections.

selection and how the interplay between electoral behavior and EU attitudes varies across the three regions. Research focused on electoral behavior during EP elections distinguishes between party selection at EP election conditioned on the party selection at national election. Therefore, the dependent variable that measures party selection at EP elections becomes: similar party selection at national and EP elections (partisans), party selection at EP elections defers from the party selection at the previous national election (defectors), and party selection at EP elections is none relative to party selection at previous national elections (abstainers).

To answer these questions of EU attitudes and electoral behavior I employ EU-wide pooled analyses of voting behavior across twenty member states. The second part focuses on the question of *why* EU attitudes matter. As expected based on the theory presented thus far, to understand why EU attitudes matter I pay particular attention to EU contestation at the party level. Given that the two points in time are somewhat different because of the economic crisis, the party level assessments in the second part will allow us to observe how distressful economic times affect party EU stances differently within the three regions.

I construct four types of dependent variables that are very similar to the ones used in the previous chapter. Two variables are related to participation and two indicators address party choices: participation at EP elections and participation in both EP and national elections relative to participation only in national elections. For party selection, I use two party choice questions: 'which party did you vote for at national elections' and 'which party did you vote for at EP elections'. Based on these answers I construct three types of voters: 'partisans' defined as voters who keep the same party at both national

and EP elections. ‘Defectors’ defined as voters who abandon their initial choice at national elections and switch to a different party at EP elections. ‘Abstainers’ are voters who abstain at EP elections after having voted at national elections. A similar categorization of different types of voters and thus possible different voting behaviors has been advanced in recent research (Hobolt and Spoon 2010). The four dependent variables generate four models of voting behavior: Model 1 participation in EP elections and Model 2 participation in both elections relative to participation only at the national elections. The last two models disentangle the relationship between EU attitudes and different categories of voters. Thus, Model 3 compares partisan behavior relative to defectors at the last two EP elections and Model 4 compares partisan behavior relative to abstainers (see Appendix C for the exact wording of the questions).

To answer the questions of where and when EU attitudes become more salient for voters, I include indicators at the individual level that capture political and economic attitudes toward EU membership<sup>5</sup> and indicators that measure domestic preferences, such as evaluations of the political system, the economy, and the government. The national indicators are key factors in the second order election models, while EU attitudes are key factors in the ‘Europe matters’ alternative. To assess the impact of EU political attitudes, I use respondent evaluations of EU membership (good or otherwise). Economic attitudes capture respondent perceptions that EU decisions are in the interest

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<sup>5</sup> Support for EU integration is a multi-dimensional and complex phenomenon that encompasses political attitudes as support for EU membership, economic attitudes as cost-benefit calculations of advantages and disadvantages accruing from EU membership, and Europhile attitudes that refer to trust in EU institutions. I referred to these aspects in Chapter 2, where I highlighted how various scholars approached questions of how EU attitudes affect voting behavior in other contests, such as referendums or national elections. For this chapter, I decided to use two EU indicators—political and economic EU attitudes. In doing so, I closely follow work done by Simon Hix (2010) and Sara Hobolt (2009). Initially, I had introduced the Europhile measure in all analyses, but this indicator rarely to never attained statistical significance.

of his/her country. Based on 'Europe matters' alternative, we know that positive answers on these EU indicators increase participation and decrease party changing behavior, defined either as switching or abstaining.

To incorporate domestic political components, I use respondent evaluations of the political system (satisfaction with democracy), retrospective subjective evaluations of the economy, and government approval. Based on the second order election model, we know that positive answers on these domestic indicators increase participation and decrease party switching. Also, when compared to the impact of EU attitudes, the second order model suggests that national indicators matter the most, a point of contention with the 'Europe matters' alternative. In addition, I include two more national indicators: partisanship and passive campaign exposure. These two last indicators are in general treated as controls. Partisanship is measured as the feeling to being close to a party. Higher levels of partisanship should increase participation and decrease different party choices. Passive campaign exposure is measured as a composite of two questions: 'did you watch a campaign program about the election' and 'did you read about the election in the newspaper'. The expectation with the last indicators is that larger values on partisanship and campaign exposure will increase participation. The relationship between campaign exposure and party selection is more difficult to determine mostly because I have argued that negative campaigning should make a difference for party defection rather than just campaign exposure. Therefore, I do not have a particular expectation as to how exposure to campaign affects party selection because campaign exposure does not necessarily mean exposure to mostly negative

news. As controls at the individual level I have social class as a five-point measure, age, and education.

To capture the EU contestation at the contextual level, I include several country level indicators that assess the amount of EU information in the media, the amount of negativity in the media with respect to the EU, and the EU salience across all states. I use data from the cross-national media studies in 2004 and 2009<sup>6</sup>. These studies conducted systematic analyses of newspapers and national television in all EU member states during the three-week campaign. I construct two measures: one with respect to the primary topic of the story defined as 'topics that have mentioned at least twice and not just in passing' and the second one refers to the overall tone when EU (as institutions, political system, or policies) is evaluated. To construct the amount of EU information during the campaigns I sum the total number of stories in which the primary topic relates to EU elections, EU politics/EU institutions/competences of the EU institutions, and EU integration and enlargement. I express the total number of stories as a country level percentage out of total campaign stories. The EU topic ranges from 11% in Germany and 13% in the Netherlands to as much as 31% in Austria and 34% in Denmark in 2004. In 2009, the lowest levels of EU topics are displayed in Italy 6% and Germany 8%, while the highest can be found in Cyprus 28% and Greece 40%. For EU tone, I sum two of the 5-category answers of how EU is evaluated (negative and rather negative) and I express these sums as percentages of all news (EU and non-EU related). In 2004, Slovenia, Hungary and the Czech Republic have the most positive campaigns, with less than 1% negative EU news (.57%, .69% and .77%), while Austria

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<sup>6</sup> Appendix C lists the actual wording of the questions used to develop these measures.

and Greece have around 6-7% of negative EU news ( 6.10% and 7.30%). In 2009, the negativity increased substantially with Austria displaying the highest level of 11.75% and Latvia with the lowest 2.57%. To construct the last EU country level indicator that measures EU salience, I use the answers to the question of which level of government is the most appropriate to deal with the most important problem. I select the 'European level' and I present it as percentage. For instance, in 2004 only 4% of respondents in Slovenia think that the most important problem that the country faces needs to be solved at the EU level, while in Netherlands 28% of respondents would like to have the most important problem solved at the EU level. In 2009 the percentage of respondent who would like the EU government to solve the most important problems increases and ranges from 11% (UK) up to 42% (Germany) and 50% (Cyprus).

In addition to the EU level indicators, I include two contextual controls meant to capture the impact of the global economic crisis that affected the EU in 2008/2009 and timing within electoral cycle. The economic indicator measures the annual GDP growth rate in 2004 and 2009 (Eurostat Tables), an indicator that allows for comparisons of economic development across time and between states. In 2004, GDP growth rate displays positive changes from 1.2 in Germany to 6.3 in Estonia. In 2009, almost all growth rates are negative, with -1.9 in Cyprus and -17.7 in Latvia, as the most negatively affected economy. Finally, timing within electoral cycle, an important indicator based on the second order theory is expressed as months passed since the last national election (see the discussion in Chapter 2).

Before explaining the measure used to capture EU politicization at the party level, I illustrate first why using proximity measures between respondent and party positioning

on left-right and EU integration is problematic. To restate, I have shown in Chapter 3 that voters in Romania either did not know where to place themselves and parties on these two dimensions, or if thought they knew, they could not differentiate among parties along the two dimensions and gave similar answers. The Romanian chapter illustrated a post-communist case with an unsettled left-right party system and lack of experience with the EU. I expand beyond this case study and hold that voter difficulty when placing parties along the EU integration dimension may be an outcome of two dynamics. First, parties do not campaign on the EU issue for various reasons, and second, when they emphasize EU during the campaign they do not politicize EU, i.e. do not take clearly identifiable positions as to how they differ on the EU dimension. Therefore, unless parties politicize EU, voters are less equipped to differentiate among their EU positions. As the theoretical section suggests, the post-communist and the South are two regions where parties are less likely to politicize EU. In other words, given the different levels of EU politicization across the three regions, citizens will differ in a systematic way in their ability to position parties along the EU integration dimension. The survey question that uses voter and party positions on EU integration is the following:

Some say European unification should be pushed further. Others say it already has gone too far. What is your opinion? Please indicate your views using a scale from 0 to 10, where 0 means unification 'has already gone too far' and 10 means it 'should be pushed further'. 'And about where would you place the following parties on this scale?

While voter and party positions on EU integration encompass several EU related dimensions that may refer to economic benefits and losses, cultural/identity threats emerging either from immigration or from the loss of national sovereignty, or to the lack

of transparency of EU institutions and the EU decision making process, the spatial voting studies suggest that the question mentioned above encompasses all these EU related dimensions.

Following the same logic of suggesting that one question reflects the complex facets of EU integration, I posit further that the key variable in the proximity models, which is absolute distances between voters and party positioning on EU integration, incorporates a systematic error, with more accurate answers in the West and less useful measures in the post-communist region and the South.

To test the argument of systematic error, I calculate the party entropy, a measure designed to capture voters' ability to place parties along the two dimensions. Entropy, usually referred to as Shannon entropy, is a measure of uncertainty, of unpredictability developed in the theory of communication (Shannon 1948). Shannon developed this measure to gauge the unpredictability of language. As an example used in the original paper, if we know exactly what letter comes after 'i' when constructing a word in English the entropy is 0. If all letters in the English alphabet are equally likely to follow an 'i' when constructing an English word, then the entropy is maxim (ibid, 386). Another example, a series of tosses of a fair coin has maximum entropy since we do not know what will come after each toss. A series of tosses with a two-head coin has zero entropy given that what will come next is entirely predictable. Entropy is therefore associated with a random variable  $X$ , with possible values  $x_1, \dots, x_n$  and cell probabilities  $p_1, \dots, p_n$ . The entropy of  $X$  is denoted by  $H(X)$  and is given by:  $H(X) = E(-\log p(X)) = -\sum p \cdot \log(p)$ .

I apply the entropy approach to measure the level of uncertainty that voters have when placing party  $X$  on the two dimensions, left-right and EU integration. This allows

me to take into account the 'don't know' category, which is substantially larger in the post-communist region than in the rest of Europe. When placing parties voters have the following options: from 0 to 10, and 'don't know'. If all voters give the same answer with respect to party X positioning, the entropy for party X is zero. If voters cluster around some values the entropy increases, and if all options are equally likely, i.e. voters' answers are equally distributed along the twelve options, the entropy is maxim. I calculate the party entropy for each dimension, left-right and EU, for all parties listed in the EES database in 2004 and 2009. In total there are 160 parties in 2004 and 166 parties in 2009, with an average of 8 parties per country.

Table 4-3 lists only the mean party entropy calculated at the country level when positioning parties on the two dimensions. Table 4-4 presents the results of a one-way ANOVA test designed to test whether the mean regional entropy in the post-communist area is different than the mean entropy in the South and in the West. Table 4-3 illustrates that left-right mean entropy is lower than the EU one, a relationship that holds in all states. In addition, we notice mean entropies in the West are lower than mean entropies in the South or post-communist states. To test whether there is a regional difference, I report the one-way ANOVA test of mean differences across the three regions in Table 4-4. In Table 4-4, we can see that the highest uncertainty is in the post-communist region, in 2009 for the EU dimension (2.32). The South and the West display lower entropies in both elections. For example, in 2009 the West mean entropy for the EU dimension is .13 lower than the one in the post-communist region. The difference is significant at .001 level. We also notice that if differences between the post-communist region and the West are large for the EU dimension, the ones between the South and

post-communist area are not. In fact, only in 2009, the regional mean party entropy for the EU dimension in the post-communist region is larger than the one in the South and the difference is statistically significant at .05 level.

This short analysis of mean regional entropy points to some weaknesses in the previous proximity models that base their arguments on voter's ability to place parties along the two dimensions. The results illustrate that respondents have more difficulties when placing parties along the EU dimension than when placing parties on the left-right ideological dimension. This difficulty is present in all three regions. In addition, the EU dimension seems to be equally problematic for respondents in the post-communist states and in the South. The second part of this chapter will explain why the mean entropies in the South and in the post-communist regions are very similar. I will show later that if in the South parties rarely emphasize EU issues, in the post-communist region parties take both anti-EU and pro-EU positions. For different reasons therefore, in these two regions the level of unpredictability when positioning parties on the EU dimension is higher than in the West. This short discussion on party positioning on the EU dimension justifies the use of dummy variables for the three regions included in the pooled analyses.

To sum up, in the first part of this chapter I focus on the questions of when and where EU attitudes shape voting behavior at EP elections. I pay particular attention to how EU attitudes matter differently across three regions. To answer these questions I use pooled large-N analyses of individual level data and context indicators. Given the dichotomous dependent variables (presented above), I estimate a series of logit multiple regression models to predict participation at EP elections, participation at EP election

relative to participation at the previous national elections, defection, and abstention. Considering the nested structure of the data, individuals within countries, and the two level indicators used in the analyses, individual and country levels, I estimate a random intercept multi-level structural model with two distinct levels for covariates. Such a model accommodates the dependence of observations within countries and makes adjustment to both within and between parameter estimates (Snijders and Bosker, 1999).

$$\text{logit} (\text{Pr} (\text{Vote}_{ij} = 1)) = \beta_{0j} + \beta_1 \text{Membership Evaluation}_{ij} + \beta_2 \text{Country Interest}_{ij} + \beta_3 \text{Economy Satisfaction}_{ij} + \beta_4 \text{Democracy Satisfaction}_{ij} + \beta_5 \text{Government Performance}_{ij} + \beta_6 \text{Party Attachment}_{ij} + \beta_7 \text{Campaigning Exposure}_{ij} + \beta_8 \text{Education}_{ij} + \beta_9 \text{Age}_{ij} + \beta_{10} \text{Social Class}_{ij}$$

where  $i$  indexes individuals and  $j$  indexes countries. At the country level, I model the individual-level constant  $\beta_{0j}$  as a function of the following country level predictors:

$$\beta_{0j} = \gamma_{00} + \gamma_{01} \text{West}_j + \gamma_{02} \text{South}_j + \gamma_{03} \text{EU Topic}_j + \gamma_{04} \text{Negative Campaign}_j + \gamma_{05} \text{EU Importance}_j + \gamma_{06} \text{Month}_j + \gamma_{07} \text{GDP growth}_j + u_{0j}$$

where  $u_{0j}$  are independent, identically distributed random errors.

By specifying a Level 2 random effect  $u_{0j}$  I avoid imposing the assumption that the model accounts for all possible sources of contextual heterogeneity. In addition, the hierarchical model allows for differences between countries not included in the model to be regarded as unexplained variability within the set of all countries (Snijders and Bosker, 1999).

After I establish where EU attitudes matter and the regional patterns with respect to the relationship between EU attitudes and voting behavior, I move to the second part of the chapter which seeks to explain *why* we have these differences in the first place. In this second part, key concepts are EU emphasis and EU contestation (politicization)

at the party level. To capture these two concepts, I use the Party Manifesto Data for the last two elections. The Euromanifesto database contains party programs issues by political parties ahead of the EP elections. The objective when content-analyzing these party programs is to measure issue emphases and policy positions of political parties across countries. To this goal a common framework has been used for all EP elections, since 1979, based on the Manifesto Research Group (MRG)'s classification scheme. For this chapter, relevant are content-analysis manifesto data from the last two elections<sup>7</sup>.

To assess the emphasis that parties place on EU issues at EP elections, I use two indicators derived from the Euromanifesto data: summarized percentages of policy issues that belong to the left-right ideological dimension and summarized percentages of all pro-EU and anti-EU issues mentioned in party platforms. I construct the EU emphasis measure at the party level by dividing the summarized percentages of EU issues by the summarized percentages of left-right ideological issues. If the EU emphasis indicator is larger than 1, it means that the respective party emphasizes more

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<sup>7</sup> I am aware of the large errors introduced in the analysis when assuming that content of party manifestos represent a good and reliable source of the actual party manifestos issues advertised during the campaign. In general, these party manifestos include suggestions provided by the EU level organizations that are not necessarily used during the campaign. A second critique may refer to the fact that while different EU related aspects are mentioned in the programs, parties may focus only on some aspects during the campaigns. One way to address this limitation would be to use the Expert Survey Data ([http://www.unc.edu/~hooghe/data\\_pp.php](http://www.unc.edu/~hooghe/data_pp.php)), which places parties on various aspects of EU integration, from general placement of parties, as more or less supportive of EU integration and as more or less supportive of the economic benefits accruing from EU membership. In addition, specific EU policy positions are mentioned. The parties' policy positions are related to the powers of the European Parliament, the internal market, the structural funds, the foreign and security policy, and the EU enlargement. In addition, the survey expert studies include a measure that addresses the salience of the EU dimension for each party and the within party division with respect to EU integration. Such data for the 2010 party positions became available only in June 2012, too late for validating the measure used in this chapter. Future iterations of this chapter will incorporate a validation of the party manifesto data used here. However, it is important to mention that the Expert Survey Data do not necessarily refer to the party positions advertised during the campaigns. Therefore, such Expert Survey Data become problematic with respect to the positional difference that may exist between the 2009 EP elections and 2010 assessment, which speaks about parties in 2010 and not about the electoral context of the previous year.

the EU dimension in the political program than the left-right ideological position. If the EU emphasis indicator is smaller than 1, the political program insists on the left-right dimension at the state, local governmental level. To capture EU politicization at the party level, I report the summarized percentages of pro-EU stances and the summarized percentages of anti-EU positions of the parties with high EU emphasis scores. If in a state, we have parties that hold clear anti-EU positions and parties that promote clear pro-EU positions, then the EU politicization in the respective state is high. If all parties in a state adopt mostly pro-EU positions or mostly anti-EU positions, then the EU politicization in the state is low. If a party campaigns simultaneously on pro-EU and anti-EU issues, that party's positioning on the EU becomes unclear and the EU politicization in the respective state becomes low as well. I classify the 20 EU member states based on the values on these two indicators and I show that only when large values on these two dimensions are obtained, do EU attitudes matter.

Therefore, if the first part of the chapter establishes regional patterns, the second part moves the analysis at the state level and focuses on party's EU stances to establish the level of EU emphasis and EU politicization. Here I present a series of logit regression for each state to establish the states in which EU attitudes shape defection and abstention. I consider these two instances of voting behavior as the most demanding in terms of establishing where EU attitudes matter. Appendix D reports the actual results of 80 logit regressions (Model 3 defection and Model 4 abstaining\* per 20 states\* two elections). However, in the actual qualitative assessment on the role of anti-EU parties, I use only the answer (yes/no) of whether EU attitudes affect the two types

of electoral behavior. The logit regression models at the country level are expressed as follows:

$$\text{logit} (Pr (Vote_{ij} = 1)) = \beta_0 + \beta_1 \text{Membership Evaluation}_{ij} + \beta_2 \text{Country Interest}_{ij} + \beta_3 \text{Economy Satisfaction}_{ij} + \beta_4 \text{Democracy Satisfaction}_{ij} + \beta_5 \text{Government Performance}_{ij} + \beta_6 \text{Party Attachment}_{ij} + \beta_7 \text{Campaigning Exposure}_{ij} + \beta_8 \text{Education}_{ij} + \beta_9 \text{Age}_{ij} + \beta_{10} \text{Social Class}_{ij}$$

### **Empirical Analysis**

The first part of the analysis reports the results of pooled analysis and establishes regional patterns for the effect of EU attitudes and political behavior. In Table 4-5, I estimate two models to predict participation at EP elections: a model with individual and country level predictors and a second model with cross level interactions between the regions, West and South, and EU attitudes and domestic indicators. The first two columns report the analysis with 2004 data and the last two columns report the analysis with 2009 data. To allow for a comparative assessment of the impact of independent indicators, all quantitative indicators have been standardized such that larger coefficients mean larger impact. To ease the interpretation of the coefficients, I recoded the independent indicators such that positive coefficients are interpreted as positive effects and all negative coefficients represent negative effects. Finally, in all multi-level analysis, the post-communist region represents the baseline category<sup>8</sup>. The models present in Table 4-5 explain around 29-30% of the total variance<sup>9</sup>.

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<sup>8</sup> While it may be argued that a comparison with the South region may be more appropriate given the expectation that EU attitudes may have the least influence in that region, I decided to have the post-communist region as the baseline because of the structure of the project. The previous chapter illustrated the problematic aspect of current theories in a case coming from the post-communist region. This chapter continues the argument that the post-communist region presumes a different dynamic than the one in 'old' Europe with respect to the role of EU attitudes and political behavior. Having the post-communist region as the baseline will allow me to capture this different dynamic.

<sup>9</sup> I calculate the R squared as the variance of the linear predictor divided by the sum of the variance of the linear predictor, plus the level-two intercept variance, plus the level-one residual variance (Snijders and Bosker 1999, pp. 224-225).

The first and the third column display the results for participation in EP elections, 2004 and 2009. We notice that almost all independent indicators attain significance. Positive political and economic EU attitudes increase participation, all else equal. EU attitudes have the largest impact when compared to the effects of national variables (economic, political, and governmental evaluations) on the probability of participating at EP elections. This result emphasizes the importance of EU attitudes for participation, which play a larger role in shaping this electoral behavior than domestic indicators. Party attachment and campaign exposure, two indicators used as controls in the second order election models, significantly impact the decision to participate. The effects of these last two national indicators are as large as the EU attitudinal impact. All individual level controls attain significance, yielding the interpretation that older voters, more educated and with a higher social status are more likely to vote.

With respect to country level indicators, we observe that the regional distinction attains significance. Thus, being in the West or in the South substantially increases turnout when compared the effect of the post-communist region. Somewhat unexpected is the negative relationship between amount of EU information in the media and turnout. It may be that the EU information presented during the campaigns mostly confuses voters with respect to EU institutions, functions, and attributions and that this lack of clarity may contribute to decrease turnout. When controlling for type of information presented in the campaign, we see that the amount of negativity increases turnout. While the negativity indicator is still a crude measure of EU politicization given that we do not know whether a positive EU image is present as well, the significance of this indicator constitutes a first confirmation of the argument that EU politicization has a

positive impact on electoral behavior. Finally, the coefficient designed to capture aggregate levels of EU salience for voters does not attain significance in any of the models. The EU importance indicator was designed to capture country level variation with respect to whether the EU is the solution to the most important problem that voters identify. There is a lot of state variation with respect to the salience of the EU in solving the most important problem that a state has. Yet, the lack of significance may be related to the very crude measure of EU importance. For instance, I do not distinguish among the problems that citizens list as the most important. Future research will provide for a better measurement for this indicator. With respect to timing within the electoral cycle, the positive coefficient of month confirms previous arguments that as more time goes by from the last national elections, the more the EP elections will look like first order elections. Overall these relationships hold across the two elections, in 2004 and 2009.

There is, however, one interesting exception: the economic variables, measured at both individual and contextual levels, switch signs across the two elections. In other words, in 2004 when the global economy is doing well and all state economies in the sample have positive GDP growth rates, positive evaluations of the economy increased participation. By contrast, in 2009, when the economic crisis hit the EU and all states in this sample have negative GDP growth rates, positive evaluations of the economy depressed participation. This different dynamic depending on the overall economic context is not directly related to the argument of the paper. It illustrates, however, a protest vote in 2009, probably present in national elections as well, that was not present in the 2004 EP election.

Although with some unexpected relationships, the models with main effects establish that EU attitudes matter more than domestic factors and that they positively impact participation. I move next to discuss the models with interactions, as these are the analyses that allow me to directly test the hypotheses suggested at the beginning of the chapter: namely the different impact of EU attitudes across the three regions. With respect to EU attitudes in the post-communist region, I have previously stated that as EU politicization is likely to be low during the first EP elections in the region, EU attitudes will still have a large impact on participation. This is due to the legacy of the accession process and the positive image associated with EU membership. In the South, the likely lack of EU politicization during the campaigns will translate into lesser effects of EU attitudes on electoral behavior. In the West, the region most likely to display high levels of EU politicization, EU attitudes will matter. The negative significant coefficients of regional interactions with EU attitudes confirm that EU attitudes matter differently across the three regions, with the largest impact in the post-communist one. In other words, positive evaluations of EU membership have a larger impact on the probability of voting in the post-communist region than in the South or in the West. For the economic attitudes towards EU, the relationship is the same given the negative coefficient, but the effects are significant only for the West- post-communist comparison and not for the South- post-communist one. Looking across the two elections, we notice that the larger impact of EU attitudes in the post-communist region fades away. In 2009, only the comparison with the South attains significance and only for political and not for economic EU attitudes.

The most important finding becomes then that political attitudes toward EU membership matter differently for turnout across the two regional comparisons in 2004. However, even in 2004, the economic attitudes toward EU have a different effect only for the post-communist-West comparison, but not for the post-communist-South one. This particular dynamic with respect to economic EU attitudes may reflect the fact that both the post-communist region and the South are recipients of EU funds and, thus, relate in similar ways to EU integration. In 2009, we have a different dynamic, with statistical significant behavioral differences only for the post-communist-South comparison. As I will show later in the chapter, the economic crisis affects the EU and how parties respond differently to challenges coming from EU integration. In the West, the far right parties substantially increase their negative messages related to EU integration, while in the South EU integration issues start to be emphasized in states that mostly abstained before from politicizing the EU in any way. Also, in the South a negative EU integration position still seems to be lacking given that mainstream parties focus mostly on pro-EU issues. In the post-communist states, mainstream parties focus on increasing their pro- and anti- EU stances. The increase in negativity in both West and the post-communist region yields that economic EU attitudes have no statistical significant differential effect for the comparison of the two regions. The substantial positive focus in the South on EU integration yields that the comparison South-post-communist regions is significant only for broad political EU attitudes, but not for the effect of economic attitudes across the regions.

To compare the size of the marginal effects of EU attitudes on participation, Table 4-9 reports the changes in predicted probabilities as independent variables move from

minimum to maximum for dummy variables or four standard deviations around the mean for continuous ones (+2 and -2 standard deviations from the mean). We can see that as attitudes toward EU membership change from complete disapproval to complete approval, the probability of participating in EP elections increases by 13 points in the post-communist region, 7 points in the West, and only 1 point in the South. All other independent variables are held constant at their means. Similarly, as economic EU attitudes change from two standard deviations below the mean to two standard deviations above the mean, the probability of participating in EP elections increases by 13 points in the post-communist states, only 2 points in the West, and 3 points in the South. In 2009, EU attitudes have the largest effects in the post-communist states, with changes in the probability of participating of 12 points and 17 points. Still, given the large changes in the probability of participating in the West and South for the economic attitudes in particular, we may conclude that in 2009 economic attitudes toward EU matter more across all Europe and not just in the post-communist region.

Figure 4-1 plots the actual probabilities of participating in EP elections across the three regions. We see that according to this participation model, turnout is highest in the South, followed by the West, and lastly by the post-communist states. In addition, the flat lines for the South illustrate the minimal role of this indicator for that region, while the steepest lines in the post-communist region show the largest impact of EU attitudes in the post-communist region. When voters disapprove of EU membership, the probability of participating in EP elections reaches 85% in the South, 60% in the West, and only 40% in the post-communist states in 2004. When voters fully support EU membership, the probability of participating in EP elections reaches 86% in the South, 67% in the

West, and 53% in the post-communist area. In 2009, voters participate slightly more than in 2004, with turnout probabilities in the West and post-communist states of 76% in the West and 58% in the post-communist states for voters who disapprove of EU membership. If voters fully support EU membership, the probability of participating in EP elections reaches up to 86% in the South, 82% in the West, and 70% in the post-communist region. With respect to the effect of economic attitudes toward EU membership, the plots in Figure 4-1 illustrate again the minimal impact in the South with flat lines, and the larger effect in the West and post-communist regions with steeper lines. While moving four standards deviations around the mean, the probability of participating in EP elections changes from 87% to 90% in the South, from 60% to 62% in the West and from 45% to 58% in the post-communist region. In 2009, the effects of economic attitudes increase in all three regions, with the largest impact still in the post-communist region.

In addition to different effects of EU attitudes across the three regions, Table 4-9 reports that domestic indicators matter differently across the three regions. Satisfaction with democracy has the largest positive effect on participation in the post-communist region, with an increase in the probability of participation of 19 points in 2004 (Table 4-9). In 2009, the impact of this variable in the post-communist region becomes minimal, with a decrease of 1% in participation, as satisfaction with democracy changes from min to max values. In addition, partisanship has the largest effect in the post-communist region in 2009, with a marginal change of 55 points, as the values of this indicator move from min to max values.

Therefore, as domestic indicators that may explain participation in EP elections, we have satisfaction with democracy and partisanship. While partisanship matters in all three regions, satisfaction with democracy has a substantive effect only in 2004, the post-communist region. After four years of EU membership, the effect of this variable for the post-communist region fades. Other domestic indicators such as government performance and economic satisfaction barely attain significance level and when they do, their effect is minimal. Table 4-9 reports all the marginal changes in predicted probabilities across the three regions as the independent indicators range from min to max or move four standards deviations around the mean. This table allows for a quick assessment of which indicators have the largest effects on the probability of participating in EP elections. We can see that government performance has no effect on participation. Partisanship and campaign exposure are the two independent indicators that matter the most, with changes in the probability of voting that range from 20% to 55%.

In sum, the first model of participation establishes that voter attitudes toward EU matter the most in the post-communist region, followed by the West, and have only a minimal impact in the South. In 2009 however, economic attitudes toward the EU become important in the South and in the West such that regional differences cannot be detected. Given the contextual background of the economic crisis, the increased importance of EU attitudes via the economic evaluations of EU membership is not surprising. What would be interesting to disentangle though is whether parties change their EU emphasis because of the economic crisis and if they do in what direction, more pro or more anti-EU. I return to this point later in the chapter.

I consider next a different model of participation, one that restricts the sample to voters in the national elections and compares participation in both elections relative to participation only in the national elections. I am excluding therefore the non-voter category from the national elections. These models explain only 25% to 27% of the variance. The results of this approach are reported in Table 4-6, changes in predicted probabilities reported in Table 4-9 (Model 2 Turnout Comparison) and the actual range of predicted probabilities are plotted in Figure 4-2. Overall the same dynamic presented in the previous model of participation holds with this second approach. I highlight, therefore, only on the most interesting results, which consists in a comparison of the effect of EU attitudes relative to the effect of national indicators. In addition, I map the effect of EU attitudes across the three regions. Based on the results in Table 4-6, we see that political and economic EU attitudes play an important role in attracting national voters to vote in EP elections as well. This relationship holds across both elections in 2004 and 2009. The effect of EU attitudes is larger than the effect of domestic indicators, such as democracy satisfaction or economic satisfaction. Approval of government attains significance only in one model, in 2004, but even then the effect is minimal compared to the effect of EU attitudes. The three regions are distinct, with higher probabilities of participation in both elections in the South, followed by the West, and lastly the post-communist region. When looking comparatively at the impact of EU attitudes across the three regions, we see that EU attitudes matter the most in the post-communist region, with changes in the probability of voting in both elections that range from 13 and 15 points in 2004 and from 10 to 17 points in 2009 (Table 4-9). However, only the comparison of the post-communist region and the South with respect to the

impact of political EU attitudes attains significance. In the post-communist region the impact is maxim, while in the South the marginal effect of EU attitudes is minimal, with a change of only 1 point in the predicted probability of voting in both elections. Economic EU attitudes have a different impact only in 2004 with marginal changes of 15 points in the post-communist region, 14 points in the West and only 1 point in the South. In 2009 however, the impact of EU attitudes matter in all three regions, such that the differences are not significant any more.

I have established thus far that EU attitudes matter for participation in EP elections. In both instances of turnout, as turnout in EP elections or as turnout in EP elections conditioned on participation in national elections as well, political and economic EU attitudes positively affect participation in EP elections. The more voters value the EU the more likely they are to participate in EP elections. Moreover, if we exclude the effects of partisanship and campaign exposure, EU attitudes have the largest effects on participation. Evaluations of domestic politics measured as economic, political, or governmental preferences affect participation less than evaluations of the EU. Finally, EU attitudes matter differently across the three regions, with the largest effects in the post-communist region, followed by the West, and lastly by the South. Political EU attitudes, even though significant in the South Europe, have only a marginal impact of 1 point change in the probability of participating in EP elections. Economic EU attitudes follow the pattern of political EU attitudes only in 2004. In other words, the largest marginal impact is obtained in the post-communist region when assessing participation in EP elections, followed by the West, and lastly the South. In 2009 however, as the global economic crisis affected EU and Southern Europe in particular,

the impact of economic evaluations of EU increases substantially in the South such that the regional differences do not attain significance. In 2009, the marginal change in the probability of participating in EP elections as economic EU evaluations change from min to max is large across all three regions. Thus, the economic crisis made the EU more salient to voters such that the more voters think that EU decisions are in the interest of their country, the more likely they are to participate in EP elections. This relationship holds across all regions.

I move next to a different dynamic of political behavior. In the following approach I restrict the sample to voters who voted for a party in both EP and national elections. I exclude therefore the non-voters in EP or national elections, voters who spoiled the vote in either of the two elections, and voters who do not remember the party they voted for in one of the two elections. I distinguish between two categories of voters: partisans and defectors (voters who switch to a different party at EP elections). Table 4-7 reports the results for the comparison of partisans relative to defectors. We notice first that these models explain only 14% to 17% of the total variance. Positive economic and political attitudes toward EU decrease defection, and so does government performance. Other domestic indicators as political and economic domestic evaluations attain significance only in 2009. As expected, partisanship significantly depresses defection. The negative effect of education and social class on voting with the same party across elections points to the fact that sophisticated voters understand better the position of EP elections within the national political system and may use the EP elections to protest against their first choice, which are most likely government parties. The models with interactions show that voters who evaluate positively the government in the West or South are more

likely to vote with the same party than voters from the post-communist states who also evaluate positively the government. The models with the interactions and EU attitudes point to the different impact of EU attitudes in the West when compared to the post-communist region. The South-post-communist comparison does not attain significance for party defection. In other words, it seems that EU attitudes matter for party defection mostly in the West, the region where the EU is probably highly politicized (Tables 4-1 and 4-2). Therefore, in the West, voters switch parties at EP elections based on their preferences for EU and based on how they perceive that parties position themselves along the EU integration dimension. In the post-communist and the South regions, EU attitudes do not play a role in party switching. I have posited that in these two regions, voters will have a hard time understanding where parties sit with respect to EU membership and integration, mostly because in these last two regions parties do not campaign on EU issues.

Table 4-9 Model 3 reports the marginal changes in the probability of defecting across three regions as EU and national indicators move from min to max values or four standard deviations around the mean (-2 and +2 standard deviations around the mean). The marginal changes in the probability of voting with the same party at EP elections illustrate that the most interesting result for this model is the large effect of economic EU attitudes in the West. In the West, the probability of voting with the same party increases by as much as 27 points in 2004 and 16 points in 2009 if a voter strongly believes that EU decisions are in the interest of his/her country. This large impact of EU economic attitudes for party defection in the West relative to the post-communist region or the South confirms the EU Arena Hypothesis in Old Europe. As expected, economic

EU attitudes affect mostly the West states, as the states where EU is more likely to be politicized. These states are the ones contributing the most to the EU budget, thus the one most likely to have debates over the advantages of EU membership. In addition, we notice that the effect of government approval is substantial in the region, yet with a lower effect than the economic EU attitudes. The change in the probability of voting for the same party if the government is viewed in a positive light is of 8 points in 2004 and only 2 points in 2009. Model 3 confirms that when defecting at EP elections, evaluations of EU economic benefits constitute the most important reason, if we exclude the effect of partisanship. In addition, the fact that this indicator matters more in the West than in the post-communist or the South regions reinforces the perspective that dynamic of EU attitudes is different across the three regions. If in the post-communist region evaluations of EU membership were important for participation in EP elections, in the West, economic evaluations of EU are important for party defection. In the South evaluations of the EU matter less for either type of behavior, participation or party defection (Tables 4-1 and 4-2).

Table 4-8 reports the results of a last approach to voting behavior. The analyses restrict the sample to voters in national elections who then decided to abstain at the EP elections. The models compare the behavior of voters who vote with the same party during both elections to voters who abstain in EP elections. The trend already established in the previous models is confirmed here as well. Political and economic EU attitudes matter more than domestic factors for this type of comparison, if we exclude the effect of partisanship and campaigning. Positive EU attitudes decrease abstention. Interestingly only the South-post-communist comparison attains significance in the

models with regional interactions. In the South, positive evaluations of EU membership matter less for partisans than in the post-communist region during both 2004 and 2009 EP elections. In addition, economic evaluations of EU membership matter more in the West than in the post-communist region, in 2004 EP elections only. Given that this approach of partisans relative to abstainers represents in fact a combination of participation and defection at the same time, the importance of EU attitudes for two out of three regions reinforces previous results.

Table 4-9 Model 4 displays the marginal effects on the probability of voting with the same party relative to abstaining of EU and national indicators as they change from min to max or four standard deviations around the mean. These changes illustrate again the overall importance of EU attitudes. In the South, political and economic attitudes matter the least, with less than 1 point change in the probability of voting with the same party as evaluations of EU membership move from min to max. There is however a slight increase in 2009 in the effect of economic EU attitudes in the South, with a positive change in the probability of voting with the same party relative to abstaining of 9 points. This increase in the importance of EU attitudes in the South in 2009 relative to 2004 may reflect an increase in EU politicization in this area as well. The largest changes in the probability of voting with the same party relative to abstaining as EU attitudes move from min to max values can be found in the post-communist and the West regions. In these two regions, changes that range from 9 points to 13 for political attitudes and from 19 to 26 points for economic attitudes. Finally, Figure 4-3 plots these changes across the three regions. As we can see, the probability of voting with the same party is larger in South, followed by the West, and lastly the post-communist

region. However, the effect of EU attitudes is the smallest in the South, even though it increased compared to previous analyses that displayed mostly flat lines.

I have established thus far that EU attitudes matter for political behavior at EP elections. In contrast to the argument of the second order election model, political and economic attitudes toward EU had the largest effects on the probability of participating and voting in EP elections. In addition, these analyses underscored the different dynamics of EU attitudes and political behavior at EP elections across three regions. Thus, in the post-communist region, EU attitudes are important for participation, while in the West, economic evaluations of EU decisions are particularly important for party defection. The last question that this chapter seeks to explain is *why* we see the different dynamics of EU attitudes across the three regions. I have previously suggested that EU politicization, defined as party elite debates over the benefits of EU integration, is the most important explanatory factor that may generate a vote based on EU attitudes and not on domestic indicators. Given the literature on party elite positions with respect to EU, we know that the most critical positions on EU integration may come mostly from parties from political extremes. Therefore, I have argued that only in states where fringe parties emphasize EU in their campaigns and other mainstream parties engage in the debates by polishing their own pro-positions on the EU dimensions, will EU attitudes affect electoral behavior. The large-N analyses confirmed that the negative tone during the campaigns mobilizes voters, but have not allowed us to say much about the role of fringe parties in generating politicization. To assess the validity of this last argument with respect to the importance of fringe parties, I move the analysis at the state level and focus on two indicators that measure party elite behavior during the EP elections

campaigns. These two indicators are EU emphasis and EU politicization. They capture the amount of EU information that parties promote during the campaigns and the divergent positions that parties have with respect to the EU.

Tables 4-12 and 4-13 list the first parties (2-3) within each EU state that emphasize EU the most in the campaign programs. In addition to the largest EU emphasis indicator, these tables list also the summarized percentages of pro-EU and anti-EU positions for each party. The last columns in these tables report the voter percentage that the parties receive in the EP elections. This vote percentage represents an indicator of how successful the party has been in the EP elections, given that we know what type of campaign it led. In addition, I identify the fringe parties as the parties with less than 10% of the vote.

To derive the two party level EU indicators, EU emphasis and EU politicization, I use the Euromanifesto Documentation, which establishes 9 domains of policy positions and the negative or positive connotations for each quasi-sentence that address a policy position. The nine policy domains refer to external relations, freedom and democracy, political systems in general, political system of the European Union, the economic structure, economic policies and goals, welfare and quality of life, fabric of society, and social groups. Quasi-sentences in each of the nine domains and their sub-domains are identified and assigned levels whether the content explicitly points to 1) the country governmental system, 2) Europe or EC/EU as a governmental frame, 3) the global government, and 4) neither one of these. The total percentages of quasi-sentences positive and negative that refer to the EU are already calculated and reported as computed results in the data sets. Some examples of EU related policy positions

include quasi-sentences related to financing the EU, transfer of power to the EU, competences of various EU institutions, voting procedures in various EU institutions, EU enlargement, membership of East European countries currently not in the EU, membership of Balkan countries currently not in the EU, membership of Turkey, EU structural funds, market regulation, single market, European monetary union, European currency, EU integration, environmental regulations. The computed variable for EU related policy positions is reported in the data sets as the Pro-Anti European Integration dimension, as the sum of Integrationist codes and the sum of integration-skeptic codes. In the analysis below I use the sum of EU integrationist and EU integration-skeptic codes as an indicator for EU emphasis. I divide the summarized percentages of EU issues over summarized percentages of left-right issues to get a comparative measure of EU emphasis relative to the more traditional left-right dimension.

Columns 6, 'largest EU emphasis', in Tables 4-12 and 4-13 allows us to assess comparatively across all states how much EU information top EU emphasis parties advance in their political programs. We can see therefore that in 2004 top parties in the South focus less on the EU than top parties in the West and even less than top parties in the post-communist states. In 2009, West states still emphasize the EU the most, but the distinction between South and post-communist states disappears. In addition, based on the anti-EU column in these tables, we see that in the West, top EU emphasis parties are in fact anti-EU parties. In Austria, Britain, Denmark, France, Germany, and the Netherlands, parties that emphasize EU the most are the parties that criticize EU the most. In general, these anti-EU parties receive less than 10% of the vote. We also observe that second or third top EU emphasis parties in the West are the pro-EU parties

that receive more than 20% of the vote. The only exception to this trend is Finland in the West, in 2004, when parties barely emphasize EU. In fact, there is no anti-EU party at all. In 2009 however, the parties in Finland increase their EU focus, still not as much as the rest of West Europe. Also, an anti-EU party emerges, the PERUS (True Finns), but there is no pro-EU competitor. In 2009 however, in the West, we observe that the overall the anti-EU stances increase for all parties. In addition, anti-EU parties in the Netherlands and Denmark receive more than 10% of the vote. In Denmark for instance the DF (Danish People's Party), one of the anti-EU parties, received 6.8% of the vote in 2004 and 15.28% in 2009. At the same time, the summarized percentage of pro-EU issues for the pro-EU parties in the West does not increase. Therefore, in the West the 2009 economic crisis exacerbated the negative discourse of some anti-EU parties and seems to have had no effect on the pro-EU positions of the pro-EU parties.

Tables 4-10 and 4-11 summarize the EU emphasis and EU politicization information provided in Tables 4-12 and 4-13. 'Very high' EU emphasis (column 2) indicates that the party score on this indicator is above 1. 'High' refers to party score above .5. 'Medium' means between .3 and .5, and 'low' is below .3. The 'EU side' column reiterates whether parties take clear pro-EU and anti-EU stances in the respective election. 'Some pro-EU' or 'some anti-EU' mean that even though the party takes overall a pro-EU or anti-EU stance, there is a substantial amount of EU issues in the political program that can be classified on the opposite side to the main position; i.e. anti-EU parties include pro-EU stances in their programs and vice-versa. These parties are therefore somewhat confusing as to where they stand on EU integration. 'Unclear' are those parties that campaign equally on both pro-EU and anti-EU sides, at the same

time. The last two columns report the results of 80 multivariate regressions per election year, two per state, one for a comparison of partisan and defectors (Model 3 in previous analyses) and one for a comparison of partisans and abstainers (Model 4 in previous analyses). I replicate Model 3 and Model 4 in each state only with individual level data (see Appendix D for full results). These last two columns in Tables 4-10 and 4-11 mention only if EU attitudes attain statistical significance.

Based on the theory advanced in the beginning of the chapter on party EU emphasis and EU politicization and voter mobilization, we see that in the West, EU attitudes matter in almost all states, with the exception of Finland in 2009. These states all have anti-EU parties that campaign heavily on anti-EU issues, with the exception of Finland in 2004. The pro-EU side is represented by pro-EU mainstream parties. However, more anti-EU campaigns in the West in 2009 compared to the 2004 levels do not necessarily increase the importance of EU attitudes for party defection. We can see that states where parties reach the highest anti-EU scores in 2009, namely France and Britain, voters abstain based on their EU-preference rather than defect. What the pooled analysis showed with respect to the West and EU attitudes in 2009 was that voters base their defection on economic evaluations of the EU rather than on broader political EU attitudes. Therefore, one may speculate that the increase in negativity of anti-EU parties during the economic crisis did not lead necessarily to increased defection but it led instead to a reevaluation of which EU attitudes matter, economic in this case and not political. More research is needed to actually disentangle the relationship between the increase in EU negativity in some states that yield either a lack of EU attitudes' significance or perhaps a reorientation toward the economic meaning of EU

membership. However, what both pooled analyses and the more qualitative assessment in the second part agree on is that EU politicization has been high in the West, and that fringe anti-EU parties have been the main responsible for the high EU emphasis and high EU politicization.

In 2004 South, there is less EU emphasis in party programs than in the other two regions. In 2009, the EU emphasis increases in the South, but not necessarily in the negative direction. Based on the pro-EU and anti-EU columns in Tables 4-12 and 4-13 and the EU side columns in Table 4-10 and 4-11, we can see that anti-EU parties are mostly missing in the region. Cyprus and Spain have only pro-EU parties in 2004. Italy has the AN (National Alliance), which takes simultaneously a pro-EU and anti-EU position in 2004, while in 2009 there is no anti-EU party. The main anti-EU parties in the region are in Greece (LAOS-Popular Orthodox Alarm) and in Portugal (CDU-Unitarian Democratic Coalition) in 2004. In 2009 however, the CDU (Portugal) lowers its anti-EU stances in the party program, such that it is not the party that emphasizes aspects of EU integration the most. This trend in the South is completely the opposite of the one in the West, where during the economic crisis the anti-EU parties became even more negative. This lack of EU politicization due to a lack of anti-EU parties and lower EU emphasis explains why EU attitudes yield the least effect in the pooled analysis. Additional country analyses reiterate the finding that EU attitudes have only a minimal impact in the South. In addition, in 2009 we see an increased emphasis on EU issues, but mostly on the positive side. Yet, this increased positive EU emphasis leads to an increased relevance of EU attitudes for political behavior, such that in only 2 states, Greece and Cyprus, EU attitudes do not attain statistical significance. In a nutshell, the

theory advanced in the beginning of the chapter that low EU emphasis and low EU politicization translate in minimal effect of EU attitudes on political behavior holds in 2004 for this region, but does not hold in 2009.

In the post-communist region, we can see that parties emphasize EU integration in their political programs, but the parties do not take clear positions on the EU. Thus, pointing to the anti-EU parties in this region becomes difficult, especially in 2004. In 2004, ODS (the Civic Democratic Party, Czech), Rahvaliid (Estonian People's Union, Estonia), TB/LNNK (Alliance Fatherland and Freedom, Latvia), LPR (League of Polish Families, Poland) are cases in point of parties with somewhat unclear EU integration positions. Given the high vote percentage that these parties receive in the EP elections from 8% to 30%, we may conclude that they are in fact mainstream parties that receive votes not based on EU integration stances. In 2009, we have the NEZ (Independents Political Movement, Czech), TB (Alliance Fatherland and Freedom, Latvia), PiS (Law and Justice, Poland), SLS (Slovenian People's Party, Slovenia) and SNS (Slovak National Party, Slovakia) are cases in point as parties that emphasize simultaneously pro and anti-EU integration positions. In 2009, for instance, the only clear anti-EU party that emerges in the region is the JOBBIK (Movement for a Better Hungary) in Hungary, while the mainstream parties (based on the vote %) focus on pro-EU issues. Thus, the only case in which we can establish high EU politicization is Hungary in 2009.

This is, therefore, a trend that differs from both West and South in the sense that it does not follow the increased negativity of the anti-EU parties in the West nor does it follow the pro-EU stances of pro-EU parties in the South. Rather, mainstream parties adopt an unclear pro-EU and anti-EU position, fact that confuses voters when asked to

position parties on the EU dimension. As mentioned in the chapter before, the entropy on parties EU positioning is the highest in 2009 in this region. This last section only explained why after four years of membership voters have even more difficulties in placing these parties than they had before. With respect to EU attitudes, high EU emphasis yields that EU attitudes matter for participation in particular but less for party defection. The last two columns in the Tables 4-10 and 4-11 represent a second confirmation of the hypothesis that EU attitudes matter mostly for participation in this region. Latvia (2009) represents an outlier to this theory. In 2009 Latvia, we have pro-EU campaigns and yet EU attitudes matter for party defection. However, this is the state mostly affected by the economic crisis and with the largest negative shift in people's evaluations of EU membership. Thus, mainstream parties seem to campaign against an increased disapproval of EU membership.

### **Concluding Remarks**

This chapter advances a new theory that seeks to answer when, where, and why EU attitudes matter for voting behavior. The theory builds on De Vries's approach to the conditional nature of voting on the EU arena in national elections. Similar to De Vries, this chapter holds that voters base their voting behavior on EU attitudes under particular conditions: when EU emphasis and EU politicization during the campaigns are high. While the theory acknowledges that EP elections are second order, giving the relatively reduced media, parties, and voters attention, the findings of the chapter emphasize that an electoral link between voters and the EU on EU related issues exists at EP elections. The linkage, however, is conditioned by the activity of anti-EU parties in opening debates over the importance and benefits of EU membership. While it may be possible that mainstream parties start the debates over EU integration as in Ireland, the literature

on party behavior and EU integration argues that such debates are however highly unlikely. This is mostly the case because of two possible reasons: either mainstream parties are internally divided over various aspects of EU integration or there is a large gap between the pro-EU mainstream parties' position and the general public. Ireland, for instance, the exception maybe to this rule, is the only state in the EU that continuously has to debate constitutional EU treaty changes before adopting these changes into national law. The Irish constitution, therefore, incentives mainstream parties to take stands on EU referendum issues. This higher level of EU debates in the state may explain why during EP elections, there is no need for an anti-EU party presence to have the EU integration emphasized and politicized.

This chapter confirms, therefore, that 'Europe matters' during EP elections and maps out the dynamic between EU attitudes and voting behavior in three different regions. The three regions are established based on party system dynamics and expectations derived from EU membership. This chapter focused on several dependent variables: turnout at EP elections, turnout at EP elections conditioned on participation in national elections, and party selection during EP elections conditioned on the behavior in national elections. The party selection dependent variable included comparisons of three types of behavior: voting with the same party across both elections, defecting at EP elections from the party choice made in national elections, and abstaining in EP elections after having voted in national elections. In addition, the chapter illustrated the dynamic of EU attitudes in three different regions, when explaining the types of electoral behavior mentioned above. A second comparison that the chapter sought to accomplish was to asses a comparative effect of EU attitudes across the three regions relative to

the effects of national domestic indicators. The major findings are summarized in Tables 4-14 and 4-15. I have established that EU attitudes matter for participation and defection only in the West, while EU attitudes matter only for participation in the South and the Post-communist regions. In addition, in the South EU attitudes have only a minimal effect. In the post-communist region, EU attitudes have the largest effect, for participation only.

The second part of this chapter focused on the *why* question and sought to confirm the important role of anti-EU parties in increasing EU politicization. However, it was demonstrated that while anti-EU parties represent key actors in increasing EU emphasis and EU contestation during electoral campaigns, they dominate the EU debates mostly in the West. These anti-EU parties are mostly missing in the South and in the post-communist region during normal times. Moreover, in times of economic distress, fringe and mainstream parties tackle the aspects of EU membership and EU integration differently. Anti-EU parties in the West increase their anti-EU focus in their political programs, while parties in the South insist on the positive side of EU membership. In the post-communist region, mainstream parties campaign simultaneously on anti-EU and pro-EU issues. What is also interesting is that the increase in EU politicization in West and EU emphasis in the South has a different effect on the vote based on EU attitudes. In the West, an increase in negativity is not followed by an increase in party defection, given the dynamics in France and Britain, but it leads instead to a reevaluation of economic EU attitudes. The pooled analysis showed that party defection is mostly based on economic EU attitudes in the West. In the South, an increased EU emphasis yields an increased importance of EU attitudes for party

defection and participation. This result is somewhat unexpected and does not follow the theory of EU politicization produced by anti-EU parties. Finally, in the post-communist region, higher EU emphasis in 2009 leads to higher relevance of EU attitudes for participation. The pooled and state level analyses at two points in time reinforce the importance of anti-EU parties for EU politicization in the West. In the rest of EU, it is more difficult to have clear expectations of how EU attitudes matter at EP elections, mostly because of a relative lack of importance of such attitudes in the South during normal times and of a still unsettled party positioning on the EU issues in the post-communist region.

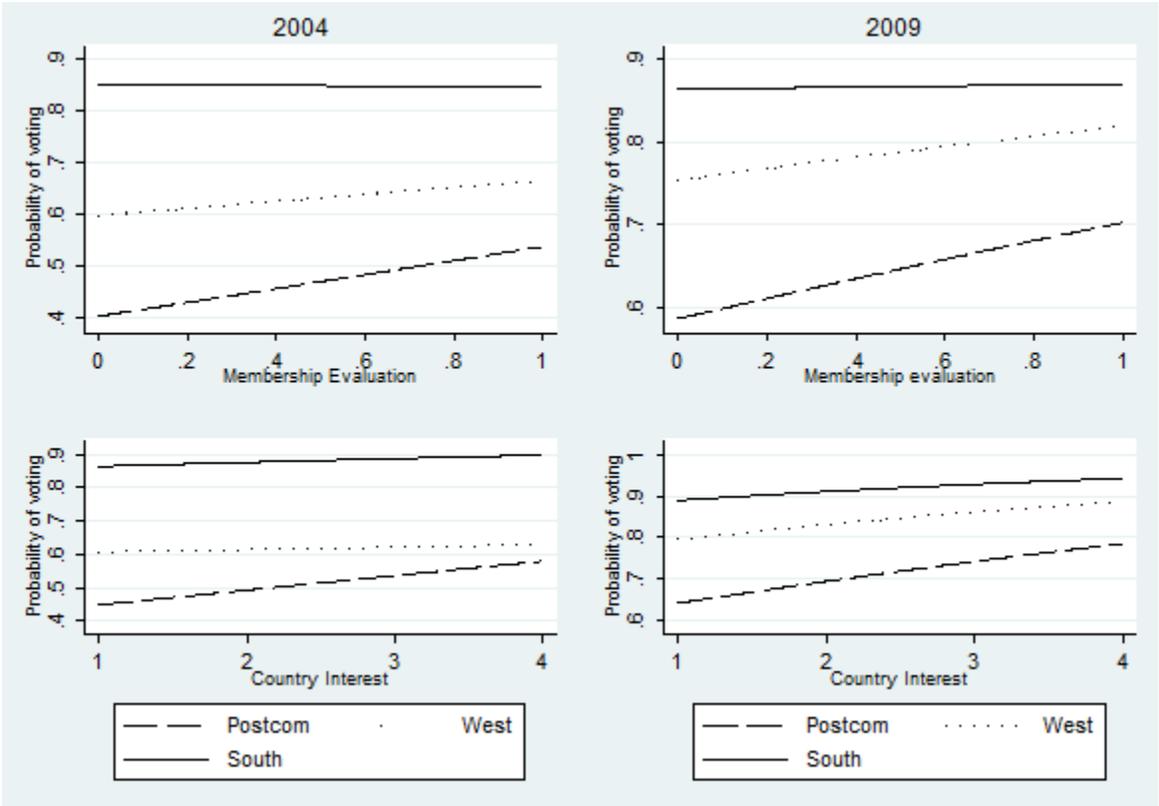


Figure 4-1. European Union (EU) attitudes and turnout across three regions (Adopted from <http://www.ees-homepage.net/> and <http://www.piredeu.eu/>)

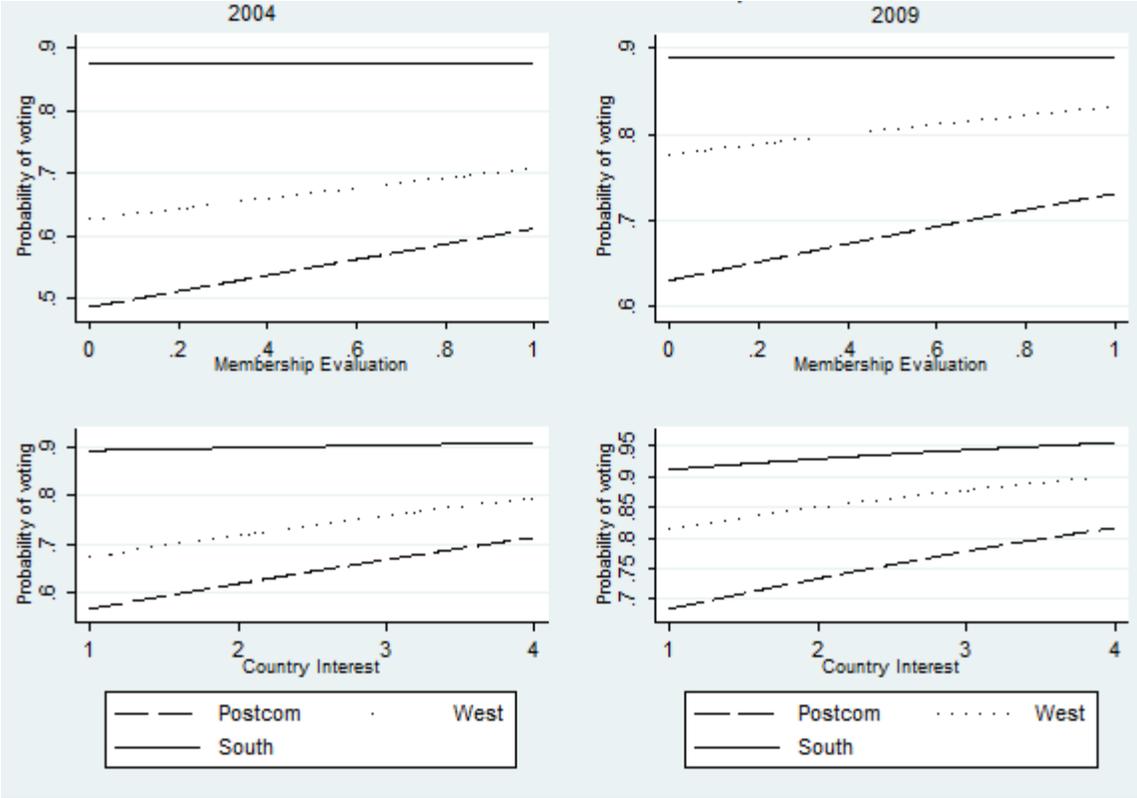


Figure 4-2. EU attitudes and turnout comparisons across three regions (Adopted from <http://www.ees-homepage.net/> and <http://www.piredeu.eu/>)

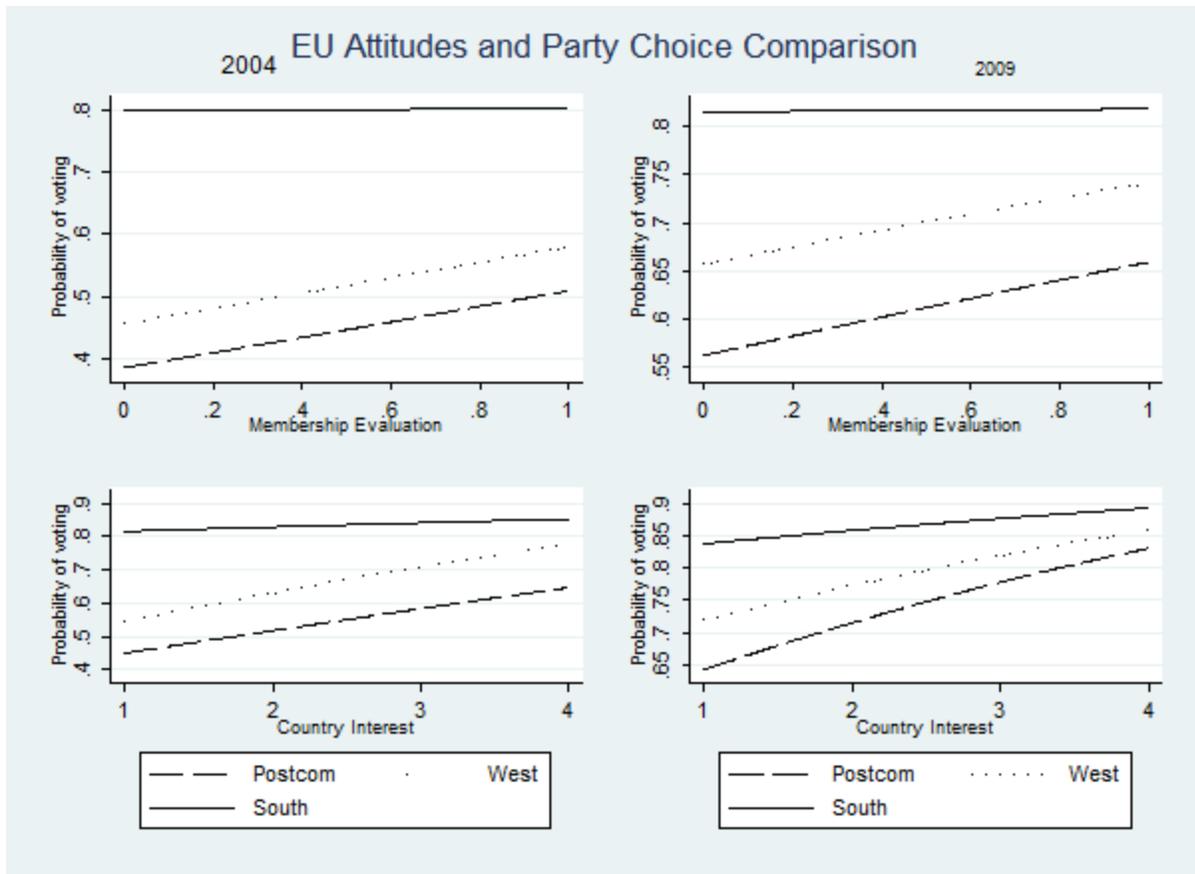


Figure 4-3. EU attitudes and abstaining across three regions (Adopted from <http://www.ees-homepage.net/> and <http://www.piredeu.eu/>)

Table 4-1. Theoretical summary on the conditional nature of European Union (EU) arena voting

| EU Emphasis | EU Politicization                        |   |
|-------------|--|---|
|             | Low                                      | High                                      |
| Low         | No effect                                | <i>Difficult cases</i>                    |
| High        | Participation -YES Party<br>defection-NO | Participation- YES Party<br>defection-YES |

Table 4-2. EU arena across three regions

| EU Emphasis | EU Politicization  |      |
|-------------|--|------|
|             | Low  | High |
| Low         | South  |      |
| High        | The post-communist region-1 <sup>st</sup><br>EP election | West |

Table 4-3. State mean entropy for party positioning on the left-right ideological dimension and EU integration

| EU State       | 2004               |            | 2009               |            |
|----------------|--------------------|------------|--------------------|------------|
|                | Left-Right Entropy | EU Entropy | Left-Right Entropy | EU Entropy |
| West           |                    |            |                    |            |
| Austria        | 1.86               | 2.14       | 2.09               | 2.19       |
| Britain        | 2.14               | 2.15       | 2.18               | 2.18       |
| Denmark        | 2.01               | 2.10       | 2.02               | 2.20       |
| Finland        | 2.02               | 2.18       | 2.04               | 2.17       |
| France         | 1.90               | 2.06       | 1.82               | 2.33       |
| Germany        | 1.98               | 2.18       | 1.96               | 2.21       |
| Netherlands    | 2.00               | 2.23       | 2.10               | 2.20       |
| South          |                    |            |                    |            |
| Cyprus         | 1.47               | 2.19       | 1.83               | 2.34       |
| Greece         | 1.89               | 2.08       | 2.02               | 2.24       |
| Ireland        | 2.14               | 2.20       | 2.26               | 2.19       |
| Italy          | 1.98               | 2.27       | 1.92               | 2.34       |
| Portugal       | 2.09               | 2.22       | 1.92               | 2.32       |
| Spain          | 2.05               | 2.25       | 2.20               | 2.31       |
| Post-communist |                    |            |                    |            |
| Czech          | 1.80               | 2.23       | 1.99               | 2.32       |
| Estonia        | 2.21               | 2.25       | 2.29               | 2.36       |
| Hungary        | 1.97               | 2.20       | 1.97               | 2.33       |
| Latvia         | 2.16               | 2.27       | 2.25               | 2.35       |
| Poland         | 2.14               | 2.22       | 2.17               | 2.32       |
| Slovakia       | 2.02               | 2.23       | 2.22               | 2.33       |
| Slovenia       | 2.21               | 2.22       | 2.17               | 2.30       |

Source: Party Manifesto Data 2004; 2009.

Table 4-4. One-way ANOVA (analysis of variance) of entropy mean differences across three regions

|                | 2004             |                  | 2009             |                  |
|----------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|
|                | LR Mean est (se) | EU Mean est (se) | LR Mean est (se) | EU Mean est (se) |
| Post-Communist | 2.08 (.03)       | 2.23 (.01)       | 2.16 (.02)       | 2.32 (.01)       |
| South          | -.12*(.04)       | -.01 (.01)       | -.11**(.04)      | -.03*(.01)       |
| West           | -.10*(.04)       | -.09***(.02)     | -.12**(.04)      | -.13***(.01)     |
| DF             | 140              | 140              | 146              | 146              |

Table 4-5. A multilevel mode of participation at EP elections (2004 and 2009)

|                   | 2004         |                 | 2009         |                 |
|-------------------|--------------|-----------------|--------------|-----------------|
|                   | log odds     | log odds (s.e.) | log odds     | log odds (s.e.) |
|                   | (s.e.)       |                 | (s.e.)       |                 |
| Individual level  |              |                 |              |                 |
| Mem eval          | .32***(.04)  | .54***(.06)     | .35***(.04)  | .51***(.07)     |
| Country interest  | .17***(.02)  | .17***(.03)     | .24***(.03)  | .23***(.03)     |
| Econ satis.       | .04**(.02)   | .03*(.02)       | -.04*(.02)   | -.04*(.04)      |
| Dem satis.        | .13***(.02)  | .22***(.03)     | .06**(.02)   | -.01(.04)       |
| Gov. perform      | -.05(.04)    | -.06(.04)       | .05(.04)     | .04(.04)        |
| Party attach      | .37***(.02)  | .45***(.02)     | .45***(.02)  | .61***(.04)     |
| Campaign          | .41***(.01)  | .41***(.01)     | .44***(.02)  | .44***(.01)     |
| Education         | .02***(.00)  | .02***(.00)     | .12***(.01)  | .12***(.01)     |
| Age               | .02***(.00)  | .02***(.00)     | .02***(.00)  | .02***(.00)     |
| Social class      | .09***(.02)  | .09***(.01)     | .10***(.02)  | .10***(.02)     |
| Country level     |              |                 |              |                 |
| West              | .64**(.29)   | .78***(.29)     | .97***(.21)  | .77***(.22)     |
| South             | 1.79***(.26) | 2.12***(.27)    | 1.26***(.21) | 1.5***(.22)     |
| EU topic          | -.04***(.01) | -.04***(.01)    | .01(.01)     | .01(.01)        |
| Negative camp     | .15***(.05)  | .14**(.05)      | -.07*(.03)   | -.06*(.01)      |
| EU Importance     | -.00(.00)    | -.00(.00)       | -.00(.00)    | -.00(.00)       |
| Month             | .02***(.00)  | .13**(.05)      | -.01***(.00) | -.01***(.00)    |
| GDP growth        | .12**(.05)   | .13**(.05)      | -.07***(.02) | -.07***(.01)    |
| Interactions      |              |                 |              |                 |
| W x Mem eval      |              | -.25***(.08)    |              | -.12(.10)       |
| S x Mem eval      |              | -.56***(.11)    |              | -.45***(.11)    |
| W x Country Inter |              | -.14***(.04)    |              |                 |
| S x Country Inter |              | -.06(.07)       |              |                 |
| W x Dem satis     |              | -.14**(.05)     |              | .14**(.06)      |
| S x Dem satis     |              | -.15**(.07)     |              | .13**(.06)      |
| W x Party attach  |              |                 |              | -.35***(.05)    |
| S x Party attach  |              |                 |              | -.09(.06)       |
| Random effects    | .26(.04)     | .25(.04)        | .26(.04)     | .25(.04)        |
| R squared         | .29          | .30             | .30          | .31             |
| No of groups      | 20           | 20              | 20           | 20              |
| No of Individuals | 16622        | 16622           | 15293        | 15293           |

Source: 2004 European Electoral Study; 2009 PIREDEU Voter Study. \*\*\*p<0.001; \*\*p<0.05; \*p<0.1.

Table 4-6. A multilevel model of participation in both EP and national elections relative to participation only in national elections (2004 and 2009)

|                   | 2004               |                 | 2009               |                 |
|-------------------|--------------------|-----------------|--------------------|-----------------|
|                   | log odds<br>(s.e.) | log odds (s.e.) | log odds<br>(s.e.) | log odds (s.e.) |
| Individual level  |                    |                 |                    |                 |
| Mem eval          | .35***(.04)        | .50***(.08)     | .30***(.05)        | .46***(.08)     |
| Country interest  | .19***(.03)        | .21***(.03)     | .24***(.03)        | .23***(.03)     |
| Econ satis.       | .00(.02)           | -.00(.02)       | -.03(.02)          | -.04(.02)       |
| Dem satis.        | .12***(.03)        | .23***(.05)     | .07**(.03)         | .01(.05)        |
| Gov. perform      | -.07(.04)          | -.08*(.04)      | .00(.05)           | -.00(.05)       |
| Party attach      | .28***(.02)        | .29***(.03)     | .33***(.02)        | .47***(.04)     |
| Campaign          | .37***(.02)        | .38***(.02)     | .40***(.02)        | .40***(.02)     |
| Education         | .01***(.00)        | .01***(.00)     | .10***(.01)        | .11***(.01)     |
| Age               | .02***(.00)        | .02***(.00)     | .02***(.00)        | .02***(.00)     |
| Social class      | .08***(.02)        | .08***(.02)     | .08***(.02)        | .08***(.02)     |
| Country level     |                    |                 |                    |                 |
| West              | .47(.31)           | .57*(.32)       | .84***(.22)        | .71***(.23)     |
| South             | 1.67***(.28)       | 1.99***(.30)    | 1.26***(.22)       | 1.54***(.24)    |
| EU topic          | -.04***(.01)       | -.03**(.01)     | .00(.01)           | .00(.01)        |
| Negative camp     | .15**(.06)         | .14**(.06)      | -.06(.04)          | -.05(.03)       |
| EU Importance     | -.00(.00)          | -.00(.01)       | -.00(.00)          | -.00(.00)       |
| Month             | .02**(.00)         | .01**(.00)      | -.01***(.00)       | -.01***(.00)    |
| GDP growth        | .12*(.06)          | .13**(.06)      | -.07***(.02)       | -.07***(.02)    |
| Interactions      |                    |                 |                    |                 |
| W x Mem eval      |                    | -.13(.10)       |                    | -.11(.11)       |
| S x Mem eval      |                    | -.50***(.14)    |                    | -.47***(.13)    |
| W x Country Inter |                    | -.00(.04)       |                    |                 |
| S x Country Inter |                    | -.15*(.08)      |                    |                 |
| W x Dem satis     |                    | -.18***(.06)    |                    | .07(.07)        |
| S x Dem satis     |                    | -.13(.08)       |                    | .14*(.07)       |
| W x Party attach  |                    |                 |                    | -.30(.06)       |
| S x Party attach  |                    |                 |                    | -.07(.06)       |
| Random effects    | .27(.05)           | .28(.05)        | .27(.05)           | .26(.04)        |
| R squared         | .25                | .25             | .26                | .27             |
| No of groups      | 20                 | 20              | 20                 | 20              |
| No of Individuals | 12920              | 12920           | 12670              | 12670           |

Source: 2004 European Electoral Study; 2009 PIREDEU Voter Study. \*\*\*p<0.001; \*\*p<0.05; \*p<0.1.

Table 4-7. A multilevel model of party choice for two types of voters: partisans relative to switchers during EP elections (2004 and 2009)

|                   | 2004               |                 | 2009               |                 |
|-------------------|--------------------|-----------------|--------------------|-----------------|
|                   | log odds<br>(s.e.) | log odds (s.e.) | log odds<br>(s.e.) | log odds (s.e.) |
| Individual level  |                    |                 |                    |                 |
| Mem eval          | .15**(.05)         | .15**(.05)      | .05(.06)           | .05(.06)        |
| Country interest  | .16***(.03)        | .19***(.04)     | .10***(.03)        | .03(.06)        |
| Econ satis.       | -.01(.02)          | -.01(.02)       | .06**(.02)         | .06**(.02)      |
| Dem satis.        | -.00(.03)          | .00(.03)        | .08**(.03)         | .07**(.03)      |
| Gov. perform      | .21***(.05)        | -.07(.11)       | .13**(.05)         | -.08(.10)       |
| Party attach      | .66***(.02)        | .49***(.05)     | .63***(.02)        | .47***(.05)     |
| Campaign          | .01(.02)           | .01(.02)        | -.06***(.02)       | -.06***(.02)    |
| Education         | -.01***(.00)       | -.01***(.00)    | -.05**(.02)        | -.05**(.02)     |
| Age               | .00***(.00)        | .00***(.00)     | .00***(.00)        | .00***(.00)     |
| Social class      | -.02(.02)          | -.02(.02)       | -.05**(.02)        | -.05**(.02)     |
| Country level     |                    |                 |                    |                 |
| West              | -.49(.51)          | -.68(.51)       | -.59**(.28)        | -.51*(.30)      |
| South             | -.33(.47)          | -.46(.47)       | -.08(.27)          | -.08(.29)       |
| EU topic          | .03(.02)           | .03(.02)        | -.00(.01)          | -.00(.01)       |
| Negative camp     | -.10(.09)          | -.10(.09)       | -.02(.05)          | -.03(.05)       |
| EU Importance     | -.00(.01)          | -.01(.01)       | .00(.00)           | .00(.00)        |
| Month             | -.04***(.01)       | -.04***(.01)    | .00(.00)           | .00(.00)        |
| GDP growth        | -.21**(.10)        | -.22**(.10)     | .08***(.02)        | .09***(.02)     |
| Interactions      |                    |                 |                    |                 |
| W x Country Inter |                    | .21***(.07)     |                    | .19**(.08)      |
| S x Country Inter |                    | -.10(.08)       |                    | .00(.09)        |
| W x Gov perform   |                    | .41***(.13)     |                    | .25*(.12)       |
| S x Gov perform   |                    | .28*(.14)       |                    | .38**(.15)      |
| W x Party attach  |                    |                 |                    | .24***(.06)     |
| S x Party attach  |                    | .22***(.07)     |                    | .19***(.07)     |
| Random effects    | .47(.08)           | .47(.08)        | .35(.06)           | .36(.06)        |
| R squared         | .16                | .14             | .17                | .17             |
| No of groups      | 20                 | 20              | 20                 | 20              |
| No of Individuals | 9024               | 9024            | 9218               | 9218            |

Source: 2004 European Electoral Study; 2009 PIREDEU Voter Study. \*\*\*p<0.001; \*\*p<0.05; \*p<0.1.

Table 4-8. A multilevel model of party choice for two types of voters: partisans relative to abstainers during EP elections (2004 and 2009)

|                   | 2004               |                    | 2009               |                    |
|-------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
|                   | log odds<br>(s.e.) | log odds<br>(s.e.) | log odds<br>(s.e.) | log odds<br>(s.e.) |
| Individual level  |                    |                    |                    |                    |
| Mem eval          | .41***(.05)        | .50***(.09)        | .30***(.05)        | .40***(.09)        |
| Country interest  | .24***(.03)        | .23***(.06)        | .26***(.03)        | .33***(.06)        |
| Econ satis.       | .00(.02)           | -.00(.02)          | -.03(.02)          | -.03(.02)          |
| Dem satis.        | .12***(.03)        | .23***(.06)        | .10***(.03)        | -.01(.05)          |
| Gov. perform      | .00(.05)           | -.00(.05)          | .06(.05)           | .04(.05)           |
| Party attach      | .49***(.02)        | .46***(.03)        | .52***(.02)        | .58***(.04)        |
| Campaign          | .36***(.02)        | .37***(.02)        | .34***(.02)        | .34***(.02)        |
| Education         | .01**(.00)         | .01**(.00)         | .07***(.02)        | .07***(.02)        |
| Age               | .02***(.00)        | .02***(.00)        | .02***(.00)        | .02***(.00)        |
| Social class      | .08***(.02)        | .08***(.02)        | .08***(.02)        | .08***(.02)        |
| Country level     |                    |                    |                    |                    |
| West              | .27(.36)           | .29(.37)           | .47*(.25)          | .39(.25)           |
| South             | 1.52***(.33)       | 1.87***(.35)       | .92***(.24)        | 1.22***(.25)       |
| EU topic          | -.03*(.01)         | -.03*(.01)         | .00(.01)           | .00(.01)           |
| Negative camp     | .12*(.07)          | .12*(.07)          | -.05(.04)          | -.05(.04)          |
| EU Importance     | -.00(.01)          | -.00(.01)          | .00(.00)           | .00(.00)           |
| Month             | .00(.01)           | .00(.01)           | -.01**(.00)        | -.01**(.00)        |
| GDP growth        | .05(.07)           | .06(.07)           | -.05**(.02)        | -.05**(.02)        |
| Interactions      |                    |                    |                    |                    |
| W x Mem eval      |                    | -.00(.11)          |                    | -.00(.13)          |
| S x Mem eval      |                    | -.17***(.15)       |                    | -.17*(.09)         |
| W x Country Inter |                    | .08*(.05)          |                    | -.04 (.09)         |
| S x Country Inter |                    | -.10(.09)          |                    | -.17*(.09)         |
| W x Dem satis     |                    | -.18**(.07)        |                    | .17**(.08)         |
| S x Dem satis     |                    | -.10(.09)          |                    | .17**(.08)         |
| W x Party attach  |                    |                    |                    | -.16**(.06)        |
| S x Party attach  |                    |                    |                    | -.04(.07)          |
| Random effects    | .32(.05)           | .33(.05)           | .30(.05)           | .29(.05)           |
| R squared         | .30                | .30                | .26                | .26                |
| No of groups      | 20                 | 20                 | 20                 | 20                 |
| No of Individuals | 10027              | 10027              | 9749               | 9749               |

Source: 2004 European Electoral Study; 2009 PIREDEU Voter Study. \*\*\*p<0.001; \*\*p<0.05; \*p<0.1.

Table 4-9. Changes in predicted probabilities as independent indicators change from min to max and four standard deviations around the mean

|                        | 2004               |      |       | 2009 |      |       | 2004                       |      |       | 2009 |      |       |
|------------------------|--------------------|------|-------|------|------|-------|----------------------------|------|-------|------|------|-------|
|                        | Post               | West | South | Post | West | South | Post                       | West | South | Post | West | South |
| Turnout                | Model 1 EP Turnout |      |       |      |      |       | Model 2 Turnout Comparison |      |       |      |      |       |
| EU Indicators          |                    |      |       |      |      |       |                            |      |       |      |      |       |
| Membership evaluation  | 13                 | 7    | 1     | 12   | 6    | 1     | 13                         | 8    | <1    | 10   | 6    | <1    |
| Country interest       | 13                 | 2    | 3     | 17   | 15   | 11    | 15                         | 14   | 1     | 17   | 16   | 11    |
| Domestic Indicators    |                    |      |       |      |      |       |                            |      |       |      |      |       |
| Democracy satisfaction | 19                 | 6    | 3     | -1   | 9    | 11    | 19                         | 4    | 3     | 1    | 6    | 7     |
| Economic satisfaction  | 3                  | 3    | 2     | -5   | -4   | -2    | NS                         | NS   | NS    | NS   | NS   | NS    |
| Government performance | NS                 | NS   | NS    | NS   | NS   | NS    | -2                         | -2   | -1    | NS   | NS   | NS    |
| Partisanship           | 41                 | 40   | 20    | 55   | 22   | 31    | 27                         | 25   | 12    | 43   | 15   | 24    |
| Campaign exposure      | 43                 | 40   | 20    | 51   | 45   | 32    | 43                         | 40   | 20    | 47   | 42   | 29    |
| Party choice           | Model 3 Switching  |      |       |      |      |       | Model 4 Abstaining         |      |       |      |      |       |
| EU Indicators          |                    |      |       |      |      |       |                            |      |       |      |      |       |
| Membership evaluation  | 3                  | 3    | 4     | NS   | NS   | NS    | 12                         | 13   | <1    | 9    | 9    | <1    |
| Country interest       | 15                 | 27   | 6     | 3    | 16   | 3     | 19                         | 26   | 4     | 25   | 20   | 9     |
| Domestic Indicators    |                    |      |       |      |      |       |                            |      |       |      |      |       |
| Democracy satisfaction | NS                 | NS   | NS    | 7    | 6    | 7     | 19                         | 4    | 5     | -1   | 15   | 9     |
| Economic satisfaction  | NS                 | NS   | NS    | 5    | 6    | 6     | NS                         | NS   | NS    | NS   | NS   | NS    |
| Government performance | -1                 | 8    | 5     | -1   | 2    | 5     | NS                         | NS   | NS    | NS   | NS   | NS    |
| Partisanship           | 45                 | 40   | 58    | 43   | 59   | 58    | 41                         | 41   | 22    | 53   | 38   | 37    |
| Campaign exposure      | NS                 | NS   | NS    | -9   | -8   | -8    | 41                         | 41   | 22    | 41   | 39   | 29    |

Note: NS stands for not significant.

Table 4-10. 2004 EU attitudes and political behavior

| EU MS          | Party EU Position |                              | Voter Behavior |      |
|----------------|-------------------|------------------------------|----------------|------|
|                | EU Emphasis       | EU Politicization            | Defect         | Abs. |
| West           |                   |                              |                |      |
| Britain        | High              | Pro-EU and anti-EU           | Yes            | Yes  |
| France         | Very high         | Pro-EU and anti-EU           | Yes            | Yes  |
| Denmark        | High              | Pro-EU and anti-EU           | Yes            | Yes  |
| Netherlands    | High              | Pro-EU and anti-EU           | Yes            | Yes  |
| Austria        | Very high         | Pro-EU and some anti-EU      | No             | Yes  |
| Germany        | High              | Pro-EU and anti-EU           | No             | Yes  |
| Finland        | Medium            | Only pro-EU                  | No             | Yes  |
| South          |                   |                              |                |      |
| Portugal       | Medium            | Some pro-EU and anti-EU      | No             | No   |
| Italy          | Medium to high    | Some pro-EU and unclear      | No             | No   |
| Ireland        | Medium            | Some pro-EU and unclear      | No             | No   |
| Spain          | Medium            | Only pro-EU                  | No             | No   |
| Greece         | Low to high       | Pro-EU and anti-EU           | No             | No   |
| Cyprus         | Low               | Only pro-EU                  |                |      |
| Post-Communist |                   |                              |                |      |
| Hungary        | High              | Only pro-EU                  | Yes            | Yes  |
| Slovenia       | High              | Only pro-EU                  | No             | Yes  |
| Estonia        | High              | Some pro-EU and some anti-EU | No             | Yes  |
| Latvia         | High              | Some anti-EU and unclear     | No             | Yes  |
| Poland         | High              | Some pro-EU and some anti-EU | No             | No   |
| Czech          | High              | Pro-EU and some anti-EU      | No             | No   |
| Slovakia       | High              | Some pro-EU                  | No             | No   |

Table 4-11. 2009 Voter behavior and party EU politicization

| EU MS          | EU Emphasis       | Party EU position            |                                  |     |
|----------------|-------------------|------------------------------|----------------------------------|-----|
|                |                   | EU Politicization            | Voter Behavior<br>Switch    Abs. |     |
| West           |                   |                              |                                  |     |
| Austria        | High              | Pro-EU and anti-EU           | Yes                              | Yes |
| Netherlands    | High              | Some pro-EU and anti-EU      | Yes                              | Yes |
| Denmark        | Low and very high | Pro-EU and anti-EU           | Yes                              | No  |
| Britain        | High              | Pro-EU and anti-EU           | No                               | Yes |
| France         | High              | Pro-EU and anti-EU           | No                               | Yes |
| Germany        | High              | Anti-EU and unclear          | No                               | Yes |
| Finland        | High              | Anti-EU                      | No                               | No  |
| South          |                   |                              |                                  |     |
| Ireland        | High              | Anti-EU and unclear          | Yes                              | No  |
| Italy          | Medium            | Only pro-EU                  | Yes                              | No  |
| Portugal       | Medium and high   | Some pro-EU and anti-EU      | Yes                              | No  |
| Spain          | High              | Only pro-EU                  | No                               | Yes |
| Greece         | High              | Pro-EU and anti-EU           | No                               | No  |
| Cyprus         | Low               | Pro-EU and unclear           | No                               | No  |
| Post-communist |                   |                              |                                  |     |
| Hungary        | High to medium    | Pro-EU and anti-EU           | Yes                              | Yes |
| Latvia         | High              | Only pro-EU                  | Yes                              | No  |
| Poland         | High              | Some pro-EU                  | No                               | Yes |
| Slovenia       | High              | Some pro-EU                  | No                               | Yes |
| Slovakia       | High              | Only pro-EU                  | No                               | Yes |
| Czech          | High              | Some pro-EU and some anti-EU | No                               | No  |
| Estonia        | High              | Only pro-EU                  | No                               | No  |

Table 4-12. 2004 EP elections and EU politicization

| Region         | EU MS       | Party   | Pro EU | Anti EU | Largest EU Emphasis* | % votes |
|----------------|-------------|---------|--------|---------|----------------------|---------|
| West           | Austria     | FPO     | 9.34   | 23.62   | 1.33                 | 6.3     |
|                |             | OVP     | 37.76  | 4.22    | 1.16                 | 32.7    |
|                | Britain     | UKIP    | 0      | 70.37   | 2.71                 | 15.6    |
|                |             | LAB     | 24.56  | 2.39    | 0.55                 | 21.9    |
|                | Finland     | SFP     | 18.62  | 0.4     | 0.35                 | 23.4    |
|                |             | KESK    | 15.12  | 1.21    | 0.37                 | 5.7     |
|                | Denmark     | DF      | 8.45   | 26.76   | 0.83                 | 6.8     |
|                |             | KF      | 24.65  | 6.84    | 0.88                 | 11.3    |
|                | France      | FN      | 1.85   | 36.37   | 1.41                 | 9.8     |
|                |             | MPF     | 1.5    | 55.55   | 3.39                 | 8.8     |
|                |             | UMP     | 44.18  | 6.2     | 1.1                  | 16.8    |
|                | Germany     | REP     | 3.44   | 39.08   | 1.54                 | 1.9     |
|                |             | CSU     | 17.64  | 17.64   | 0.84                 | 8       |
|                |             | CDU     | 18.22  | 7.29    | 0.44                 | 36.5    |
|                | Netherlands | Lijst   | 1.3    | 30.06   | 0.62                 | 2.5     |
|                |             | CDA     | 24.21  | 3.15    | 0.57                 | 24.4    |
|                | South       | Cyprus  | DISY   | 15.39   | 0                    | 0.3     |
| Greece         |             | PASOK   | 16.6   | 0.57    | 0.28                 | 34      |
|                |             | LAOS    | 0      | 35.63   | 0.59                 | 4.1     |
| Ireland        |             | FG      | 18.55  | 0.21    | 0.39                 | 27.8    |
|                |             | SF      | 9.09   | 12.38   | 0.36                 | 11.1    |
| Italy          |             | AN      | 44.69  | 30.3    | 3.3                  | 11.5    |
|                |             | PdCI    | 15.06  | 8.2     | 0.56                 | 2.4     |
| Portugal       |             | CDU     | 0      | 27.65   | 0.69                 | 9.1     |
|                |             | PPD     | 14.28  | 4.14    | 0.43                 | 33.3    |
| Spain          |             | PSOE    | 21.33  | 0.44    | 0.45                 | 43.5    |
| Post-Communist | Czech       | ODS     | 12.96  | 20.37   | 0.85                 | 30      |
|                |             | CSSD    | 22.85  | 0       | 0.48                 | 8.8     |
|                | Estonia     | Rahval  | 12.59  | 23.7    | 0.64                 | 8       |
|                |             | K       | 20.61  | 7.21    | 0.64                 | 17.5    |
|                | Latvia      | TP      | 7.35   | 23.5    | 0.6                  | 6.6     |
|                |             | TB/LNNK | 11.53  | 11.53   | 0.52                 | 29.8    |
|                | Hungary     | MSZP    | 25.6   | 4.87    | 0.59                 | 34      |
|                | Poland      | PO      | 30.37  | 7.59    | 1                    | 24.1    |
|                |             | LPR     | 10.71  | 28.57   | 1                    | 25      |
|                | Slovenia    | SLD+SK  | 17.58  | 5.53    | 0.49                 | 8.4     |
|                | Slovakia    | SF-FR   | 22.82  | 7.6     | 0.54                 | 3.3     |
| SDKU           |             | 20.7    | 6.56   | 0.61    | 17.1                 |         |

\* Summarized percentages of EU issues over summarized percentages of 'left-right' issues

Table 4-13. 2009 EP elections and EU politicization

| Regions        | EU MS       | Party  | ProEU | AntiEU | Larg.EU Emph.* | % votes |
|----------------|-------------|--------|-------|--------|----------------|---------|
| West           | Austria     | FPO    | 0     | 32.63  | 1.06           | 12.71   |
|                |             | OVP    | 16.53 | 1.41   | 0.47           | 29.98   |
|                | Britain     | BNP    | 0     | 44.56  | 2.41           | 6.04    |
|                |             | UKIP   | 3.84  | 80.76  | 11             | 15.99   |
|                |             | LDP    | 19.83 | 2.72   | 0.6            | 13.32   |
|                | Finland     | KD     | 2.42  | 19.9   | 0.57           | 4.17    |
|                |             | PERUS  | 1.61  | 37.2   | 0.84           | 9.79    |
|                | Denmark     | DF     | 2.16  | 41.08  | 2.75           | 15.28   |
|                |             | V      | 11.97 | 0      | 0.24           | 20.24   |
|                | France      | FN     | 3.17  | 51.32  | 2.32           | 6.34    |
|                |             | UMP    | 23.08 | 3.32   | 0.85           | 27.88   |
|                | Germany     | REP    | 3.29  | 64.83  | 3.44           | 1.32    |
|                |             | CSU    | 14.92 | 11.84  | 0.71           | 30.65   |
|                | Netherlands | VVD    | 18.82 | 9.41   | 0.88           | 11.39   |
|                |             | PVV    | 4.87  | 58.53  | 6.5            | 16.97   |
|                | South       | Cyprus | DIKO  | 12.6   | 2.94           | 0.24    |
| EDEK           |             |        | 5.72  | 8.33   | 0.2            | 9.85    |
| Greece         |             | PASOK  | 17.89 | 1.05   | 0.52           | 36.64   |
|                |             | LAOS   | 3.24  | 12.43  | 0.59           | 7.15    |
| Ireland        |             | SP     | 2.15  | 21.94  | 0.53           | 2.76    |
|                |             | GP     | 6.9   | 5.32   | 0.51           | 1.89    |
| Italy          |             | PD     | 15.38 | 2.27   | 0.38           | 26.13   |
|                |             | SVP    | 15.18 | 1.89   | 0.51           | 0.47    |
| Portugal       |             | PSD    | 23.58 | 10.37  | 1.28           | 31.71   |
|                |             | CDU    | 2.22  | 17.77  | 0.41           | 10.66   |
| Spain          | UPyD        | 22.98  | 1.19  | 0.65   | 2.89           |         |
| Post-Communist | Czech       | SNK-ED | 23.2  | 4.64   | 0.58           | 1.66    |
|                |             | NEZ    | 6.42  | 12.8   | 0.48           | 0.54    |
|                | Estonia     | IRL    | 23.3  | 0.75   | 0.57           | 12.22   |
|                | Latvia      | TB     | 18.75 | 10.41  | 0.51           | 2.78    |
|                |             | PCTVL  | 24.39 | 0      | 0.76           | 9.66    |
|                | Hungary     | JOBBIK | 1.19  | 18     | 0.38           | 14.77   |
|                |             | SZDSZ  | 19.35 | 3.22   | 0.6            | 2.16    |
|                | Poland      | PiS    | 15.67 | 9.75   | 0.76           | 27.4    |
|                |             | PdP-CL | 30.72 | 4.46   | 1.4            | 2.44    |
|                | Slovenia    | LDS    | 24.63 | 4.34   | 0.66           | 11.48   |
| SLS            |             | 17.64  | 11.76 | 1      | 3.58           |         |
| Slovakia       | SNS         | 33.33  | 33.33 | 2      | 5.56           |         |
|                | SDKU        | 30     | 1.67  | 0.8    | 16.98          |         |

\* Summarized percentages of EU issues over summarized percentages of 'left-right' issues

Table 4-14. EU attitudes and electoral behavior

| Dependent variable              | EU Attitudes |                     |                     |
|---------------------------------|--------------|---------------------|---------------------|
|                                 | West         | South               | Post-Communist      |
| Turnout                         | yes          | yes, minimal effect | yes, largest effect |
| Conditional turnout             | yes          | yes, minimal effect | yes, largest effect |
| Party selection                 |              |                     |                     |
| Partisan relative to defectors  | yes          | no                  | no                  |
| Partisan relative to abstainers | yes          | yes, minimal effect | yes                 |

Table 4-15. Party EU emphasis and EU politicization

| Dependent variable | West             |                  | South            |               | Post-Communist |                  |
|--------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|---------------|----------------|------------------|
|                    | 2004             | 2009             | 2004             | 2009          | 2004           | 2009             |
|                    | EU Emphasis      | High             | High             | Low to medium | Medium to high | High             |
| EU Politicization  | Pro-EU & Anti-EU | Pro-EU & Anti-EU | Only some pro-EU | Pro-EU        | Pro-EU         | Pro-EU & anti-EU |

## CHAPTER 5 EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT (EP) ELECTIONS AS OPPORTUNITIES FOR EUROPEAN UNION (EU) CONTESTATION

The theory outlined in the previous chapter established that EU politicization and EU emphasis at the party level are essential components in generating a vote based on EU attitudes. When parties compete on various aspects of EU integration during EP elections, voters are better equipped to link their EU preferences and attitudes to parties' EU stances. When parties do not compete on aspects related to EU integration, voters do not hold a clear picture as to where parties stand on the EU integration and cannot, thus, differentiate among mainstream parties' positions. In this case, voters will most likely base their vote on other domestic factors, such as government approval, the economy, or party attachment. Further, it was argued, that parties on the ideological political extremes play a critical role in generating EU contestation. Insisting on a variety of issues related to the economic and cultural threats brought by the 'unbundling' of the nation state, such as Islam, immigration, EU enlargement, and economic losses, the anti-EU parties tap into publics' negative EU dispositions in addition to voters' ideological orientations (Kriesi et al. 2008; De Vries 2007). The far right anti-EU parties contribute to generating EU contestation, especially if established parties respond by strategizing their EU positions. Moreover, it has been established in the literature that regardless of mainstream parties' reactions to the fringe anti-EU stances, 'strong' EU parties, i.e. parties that emphasize EU stances either on the very positive or on the very negative side, gain a substantial vote in EP elections<sup>1</sup> (Hix and Marsh, 2007).

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<sup>1</sup> Please note that 'strong' in Hix and Marsh (2007)' paper refers to parties that are situated on both extremes on the anti/pro-EU integration dimension. Therefore, it encompasses the anti-EU parties and the pro-EU parties and it excludes parties situated in the middle of the EU integration dimension. The middle parties would be parties that are impartial on the EU dimension.

This chapter elaborates further on the meaning of EP elections for EU contestation by focusing strictly on the political supply side of party competition. Specifically, it suggests that if EP elections constitute institutional political opportunities for ‘strong’ EU parties, then, EP elections fulfill an essential role in the EU: namely they facilitate voting behavior based on EU attitudes. This last empirical chapter moves the analysis to the aggregate level on the party supply side and sets as its goal to establish a typology of party ‘gains’ during the ‘second order elections’. The overall expectation that this chapter seeks to test is that ‘strong’ anti-EU parties *gain more* votes during EP elections when compared to the previous national performances<sup>2</sup>. Yet, the overall meaning of these far-right anti-EU successes is positive for the EU, given the essential role that these parties play in generating EU contestation.

### **The Emergence of Anti-EU Parties: Strategic Calculations and EU Debates**

To assess whether EP elections constitute institutional facilitators for the anti-EU parties, I use a theoretical framework that develops a cost-benefit calculation upon party entry and success at this type of election. Similar approaches of strategic entry have been presented in the literature with regard to questions of new party entry and success during national elections (Cox 1997; Hug 2001; Tavits 2008). In line with the theory of strategic entry, the main argument of this chapter posits that the success of the anti-EU parties during EP elections is due to low institutional costs to enter the electoral arena, high benefits of office, and high probability of electoral support. I elaborate on each component below.

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<sup>2</sup> By contrast to Hix and Marsh (2007), I distinguish between the two direction of EU emphasis, as either very positive or very negative. The goal in this chapter is to assess whether EP elections favor parties that are very negative on the EU integration dimension.

The starting conceptual point in thinking about the role of EP elections for party competition is the perspective that EP elections are elections of 'lesser importance' (Reif and Schmitt 1980). Because of this less important character, EP elections create different incentives for mainstream parties and fringe parties in terms of costs to enter the electoral arena, office benefits, and the probability of electoral support. With respect to the first element of the model, the costs of party entry in the EP electoral competitions, I distinguish between two types: costs related to how easy it is to register a party and how easy it is to win a seat. Electoral systems determine in general these types of costs, in the sense that more proportional electoral rules favor party entrance and success, while more disproportional rules have a deterrent effect.

In addition to the electoral rules, how easy it is to win a seat is closely related to the benefits of office that accrue from the less important elections for the other players in the electoral game. Established mainstream parties, for instance, to the extent that they dominate first order national contests, are less inclined to spend resources on elections that are only secondary in importance. For this type of parties, holding seats in the EP is less important than holding seats in the national legislatures, where mainstream parties can influence the policy-making process from both power and oppositional roles. Winning seats in the European Parliament, as a legislature with more than 100 parties from all EU member states, does not yield a clear say in the EU policy-making process. This is more the case since the EP is only one voice in the EU decision-making process. Moreover, government parties already have access to the EU decision-making process as part of the various EU institutions, such as the European

Council, the numerous structures of the Council of Ministers, or even the European Commission.

Therefore, the low incentives that mainstream parties have in spending resources to win seats in the EP decrease the costs of party entry for the other type of parties, the fringe ones. For them, the costs of party entry and party success are lowered compared to the costs of entry and success in national elections. If in national elections, fringe parties compete against aggressive campaigns coming from mainstream parties, in EP elections, the lack of involvement from mainstream parties yields additional electoral space for fringe parties.

The second element of the model refers to the benefits of holding office. Overall, from national parties' perspective, the benefits of holding office in the EP are minimal because of the structure of the EU decision-making process. As explained by scholars working under the framework of EP elections as second order national elections, the EP electoral outcome does not yield a EU government and the policy-making process is not initiated in the EP (Reif and Schmitt 1980; Reif 1984; Schmitt and Mannheimer 1991; Franklin, Van der Eijk, and Openhuius 1996; Franklin 2007; Van der Brug and der Eijk 2007; Hix and Marsh 2007) (see the discussion in Chapter 2 on the SOE model). However, I posit, the benefits of holding such an office are higher for parties that have less access in the national structures of the decision-making processes, which are national governments and legislatures. For fringe parties, winning seats in the EP increases their legitimacy and their electoral confidence in participating in future national elections. As members of the EP, fringe parties gain visibility in the public arena and build a political record that can be used successfully in following national competitions.

Therefore, while EP elections may not be worth pursuing from mainstream parties' perspective, they are definitely useful institutions for fringe parties.

The third component of the model is the probability of electoral support for parties that participate in EP elections. Here, I make additional distinctions within each type of party. For mainstream parties, I distinguish between government and opposition parties. As we know from the second order literature, government parties suffer the largest losses at EP elections because of public's tendency of retrospective performance-based voting. To the extent that governments had poor performances and the economy displayed negative trends, government parties are punished during EP elections (Reif and Schmitt 1980; Hix and Marsh 2007). With respect to fringe parties, I distinguish between completely new competitors and parties that emphasize different issues than the ones that dominate in national elections. As new competitors, we can have parties that participate for the first time in an electoral competition or parties that did not gain votes in the preceding national elections. As parties that emphasize other issues than the more traditional left-right ideological dimension we can have environmental post-materialist parties and anti-EU positions (Carruba and Timpone 2005; Clark and Rohrschneider 2009).

Mainstream parties respond differently to the challenges coming from fringe parties. The lack of incentive in spending resources during the EP elections does not necessarily mean that established parties do not pay attention to the electoral outcomes or to the policy debates surrounding the EP elections. Research on party behavior during EP elections emphasizes that these elections represent, in fact, the most recent information that parties have with respect to voters' policy preferences, and, thus, with

respect to their electoral prospects in future national contests (Van der Eijk and Franklin 1996; Van der Brug and Van der Eijk 2007; Somer-Topcu and Zar 2011). It is precisely because of this 'public opinion barometer' role that the EP elections play, that established parties will not leave the far right anti-EU parties in particular completely unchallenged during the EP elections.

For the overall concern of this dissertation, which is when, where, and why EU citizens vote based on EU attitudes, the fact that Green parties gain (more) votes during EP elections does not constitute an impetus for EU politicization. A debate over environmental issues during EP elections is less likely to happen, mostly because both mainstream and Green parties emphasize pro-environmental stances. This is more the case given the highly pro-active role that the EU plays in establishing EU-wide environmental regulations. As I mentioned already, mainstream parties are, or have been, part of the EU structures. Therefore, Green parties emphasize environmental issues that established parties can easily include in their platform programs, if they feel threatened by such successes. Green parties emphasize, therefore, issues that are not problematic for mainstream parties' positions in the following national elections, given that EP elections do play that barometer role for national competitions.

The actual challenge to established parties comes from the far right anti-EU parties, whose radical positions on EU integration are more difficult to accommodate. As mentioned in Chapters 2 and 4, mainstream parties are in general pro-EU parties given that they participated in building the EU in the first place. In addition, scholars mention the 'Eurogap' between the public and the mainstream parties, with the public on the negative side of support for EU integration (Hooghe 2003; Hobolt 2005; Hobolt, Spoon,

and Tilley 2008). Because of this structural component of negative EU attitudes at the public level, the probability of winning seats is higher for anti-EU parties than for other types of parties, mainstream and fringe. However, as explained in Chapter 4, if mainstream parties feel threatened by the electoral success of the anti-EU parties, then mainstream parties engage in EU debates in an effort to curtail the possible success. Therefore, to the extent that anti-EU parties gain systematically more votes in EP elections than they normally do in national elections, EP elections become institutional facilitators for EU politicization. In other words, because of the institutional set-up, EP elections represent electoral opportunities for the far right anti-EU parties as elections with low entry and success costs, high benefits of office, and high probability of electoral support. While this particular outcome may be problematic given the presence of such parties in the European Parliament, it is also important to remember that the success of the anti-EU parties is accompanied by debates regarding the course of EU integration. Without the far right presence during EP elections, debates over different aspects of EU integration are less likely to emerge.

### **Anti-EU Party Strategies Based on Regional Dynamics**

This chapter is concerned precisely with this aspect of far-right anti-EU success during all EP elections (1979-2009) and all EU states. All political parties that participated in EP elections and gained more than 1% of the vote are considered, with a total of more than 700 parties<sup>3</sup>. The analysis, which consists of a series of OLS regression models, proceeds in two parts. First, I establish an overall trend for all EU

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<sup>3</sup> I would like to extend my gratitude to Prof. Simon Hix for sharing the data set used in the 2007 article, which included all parties that participated in six EP elections (1979-2004) in all EU member states. Without his generous help I would not have been able to put together such a comprehensive data set.

states and all elections. The model explains the gains or losses a party makes during EP elections relative to the preceding national elections as a function of its government status, whether it is a new party or a Green party, and the policy position of the party along the EU integration and left-right dimensions. The main goal in the first part is to establish an overall trend for parties that hold anti-EU integration positions. In the second empirical part, I replicate the same analyses with the specification that I distinguish between two periods in the EU's history and three regions. I have, therefore, EP elections before the Maastricht Treaty (1992), which include the 1979, 1984 and the 1989 waves, and EP elections after Maastricht, which include the 1994, 1999, 2004, and 2009 waves. As regions, I employ the dynamic outlined in Chapter 4 with twenty states defined as the West, South, and the post-communist region, to which I added the last 7 EU states: Luxembourg and Sweden to the West, Malta to the South, and Bulgaria, Romania, and Lithuania to the post-communist region.

With respect to the EU periodization, as mentioned in Chapter 2, Maastricht represents a turning point in the history of European integration that sets up a complete architecture for the EU and paves the way for fundamental changes, such as the economic monetary union and the single currency. For instance, following Maastricht, member states ceded sovereignty to EU institutions in areas as education, environment, research, consumer protection, industry, culture, infrastructure, development, where supranational EU institutions decide policies. Even though more sensitive areas, such as cooperation in justice and home affairs, were kept with Maastricht at the intergovernmental level, the ratification referendums and the debates around Maastricht generated an overall public malaise with respect to EU integration, a malaise that

continues even today. If before Maastricht, the aggregate level of public support for the integration project had an increasing trend, after Maastricht, we see an increased awareness at the elite level of the loss of the 'permissive consensus' (see the discussion in Chapter 2). The following EU declarations and EU treaty reforms, including the most recent Lisbon Treaty (2009), sought to address precisely this public malaise first noticed around Maastricht and later labeled as the 'democratic deficit'. Because of the importance of the 1992-1993 period in the shift of public awareness with respect to the integration project and with the overall perception of EU's lack of accountability, I divide the analyses for the vote-share differences that a party makes during EP elections in two: the EP elections before Maastricht and the EP elections post Maastricht. I expect that gains for parties on the very negative end on the anti/pro-EU integration dimension will most likely take place in the second EU period, as the period when EU contestation increases tremendously. To what extent anti-EU parties gain more votes in the pre-Maastricht period remains hard to specify considering the overall lack of EU contestation in that period.

With respect to the three regions, I mostly follow the dynamic already presented in Chapter 4. We have seen that during the last 2004 and 2009 EP elections, voters base their participation and party defection on EU attitudes in at least one of the three regions, the West. I have previously argued that in the West, a region with a higher economic status and net contributor to the EU budget, far right anti-EU parties find fertile ground for stirring debates on the negative implications of EU integration. This negative emphasis would most likely tap into public perceptions of cultural and economic threats due to EU integration. Based on the Euromanifesto Documentation

(2009), examples of EU policy positions refer to negative stances on financing the EU, transfer of power to the EU, competences of various EU institutions, voting procedures in various EU institutions, EU enlargement, membership of East European countries currently not in the EU, membership of Balkan countries currently not in the EU, membership of Turkey, EU structural funds, market regulation, single market, European monetary union, European currency, EU integration, environmental regulations . Therefore, tapping into these cultural and economic threats, anti-EU parties promote EU politicization by challenging mainstream parties' positions on these issues.

While in the West we can see this dynamic emerging as an outcome of far-right anti-EU party campaigning, in the South or in the post-communist regions, regardless of the anti-EU stances, established parties feel less compelled to react. In the latter regions, the EU stands mostly for the guarantor of democracy as a form of government, a supporter of the fight against corruption, or as an economic opportunity structure, which translates into advantages at both state and individual levels. In the latter regions, mobilizing voters on the cultural and economic threats generated by EU integration becomes a less credible approach, and, thus, less challenging for the mainstream parties. Therefore, the economic advantages that the South and post-communist regions share outweigh the effects of the possible anti-EU stances over the loss of national sovereignty, the opaque structure of the EU decision making process, or the EU bureaucrats overspending the EU budget on meaningless tasks. This is just to give a few example of what an anti-EU campaign might mean in the latter regions. In the South or in the post-communist regions, a EU-centered campaign, to the extent that it

emphasizes anti-EU issues, is less likely to generate a strategized reaction from mainstream parties.

The analyses in Chapter 4 confirmed these expectations during the last two EP elections. We have seen that the South, in particular, lacked parties advancing anti-EU integration positions in 2004. In 2009, against the background of the economic crisis, the South registered an increase in coverage concerned with the EU benefits. Parties in the post-communist region had a more ambivalent reaction to the 2009 economic crisis, such that mainstream parties incorporated EU issues in their campaigns, but emphasized both advantages and disadvantages coming out of EU integration. The electoral behavior that such party strategies generated was that at least in some Southern states that the increased emphasis led to an increased relevance of EU attitudes at EP elections.

In the post-communist region, however, the increased emphasis of EU issues in the political programs had no behavioral effect. With respect to party activity in this region, it is important to emphasize the findings of Chapter 4, which illustrated that mainstream parties can easily accommodate anti-EU stances in their political programs. In general, the post-communist countries display an unsettled party system with respect to party positioning along both EU and left-right ideological dimensions. Just to illustrate with an example mentioned in the Romanian case, if in 2009, the PSD (Social Democratic Party) was the most pro-EU, in 2012, the PSD switched to become the most fervent critique of the economic openness to the EU markets and to the external competitors brought by EU membership<sup>4</sup>. In this region, therefore, anti-EU parties will

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<sup>4</sup> 'Stop selling our country' (see Dan Tapalaga, 24.04.2012, <http://www.revista22.ro/articol.php?id=14536>, Accessed April 25, 2012).

have a harder time taking advantage of EP elections as electoral opportunities because mainstream parties can easily pick up some of the anti-EU stances. Two factors are responsible for generating this dynamic: very recent EU membership with high expectations regarding the benefits accruing from EU integration and a party system that still displays a lot of freedom in terms of mainstream parties positioning along the EU and left-right dimensions. Thus, if the South and the post-communist regions share the net beneficiary status in the EU, the post-communist region has additional characteristics that constitute extra institutional burdens for the anti-EU party successes during EP elections.

Before formulating the hypotheses for the anti-EU party vote changes during EP elections, it is important to mention the assumption at play when assessing these vote share differences. I assume, therefore, that anti-EU parties campaign on anti-EU issues and that the gains or losses they have during EP elections reflect, in fact, a vote based on the EU dimension. However, this assumption may not hold in all cases. The Romanian chapter, for instance, illustrated that even though Romania had in 2009 the Greater Romania Party (PRM), a party perceived by the public as the most anti-EU party, PRM only rarely mentioned publicly its position with respect to EU integration during the 2009 EP campaign. Not to mention that the anti-EU position based strictly on its political program was very problematic and ambivalent at the time. The party focused instead on the coming national contest, the presidential election. Therefore, in this particular case, there is a substantive mismatch between the public perceptions with respect to where the party stands on EU integration, the actual position based on its political programs, and the campaign message during EP elections. Therefore, teasing

out the long term perception that the public has from the short term effects of its domestic-focused campaign is a very difficult task. This is more the case since in this chapter I am not using individual data, but rather aggregate results of party vote-shares. Yet, the inferences I am making are related to individual level behavior and party selection. There is, however, no way of avoiding this problem of ecological inference, that other aggregate level studies focusing on the link between party vote-share and the EU electoral linkage have been accused of<sup>5</sup>.

I move next to specify the hypotheses, by pointing out the problematic context of the post-communist environment. In this region, in particular, I expect that parties' political programs on issues related to EU integration are the least likely to be congruent with the actual stances that parties have on EU integration during the campaigns. With these regional and temporal dynamics in mind, I formulate the following hypotheses with respect to anti-EU party vote-share differences:

**H1:** In the West, parties on the very negative end on the EU integration dimension will be most successful, gaining more votes during the post-Maastricht EP elections.

**H2:** In the South, given the increased relevance of EU attitudes during the last EP elections, the anti-EU parties may gain more votes during the post-Maastricht EP elections.

**H3:** In the post-communist region, given the unsettled party system on left-right and EU dimensions, positives anti-EU party vote-share changes will most likely be minimal.

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<sup>5</sup> See the discussions on these issues in Hobolt and Wittrock (2011), Hobolt et al. (2008), and Hix and Marsh (2007). In fact, the micro-dynamic studies focused on individual level behavior and EU attitudes have as starting point the observation that aggregate level studies make inferences with respect to individual motivations without actually capturing individual attitudes. Because this chapter uses the aggregate level approach, it suffers from the same weakness as other aggregate level studies.

## **Operationalization, Data, and Methods**

To examine the relationship between a party's extreme position on EU integration and its success during EP elections, I employ a series of OLS multivariate analysis that include the following national and EU related indicators.

The dependent variable measures the vote-share change a party registers between the previous national election and the following EP election. As independent indicators, I include two types of variables: a set that measures party characteristics and a set that captures contextual country level characteristics. At the party level, I introduce first an indicator that captures the core argument of the second order election model, illustrated in the previous chapters. This argument can be reduced to the statement that EP elections represent bad news for government parties. I use Government as a binary variable to indicate whether a party is in government or in opposition. I add a variable designed to capture the stability of the party system at EP elections. New party is a dummy variable that captures whether a party participates for the first time in an electoral competition, the EP one, and gains more than 1% of the vote in EP elections. The larger the effect of this variable is, the more it reflects the instability of a party system.

I consider four party policy positions: two for the left-right ideological dimension and two for the EU integration dimension. For the 1979-2004 period I rely on Hix and Marsh (2007) data set, which uses two expert survey: one by Marks and Steenbergen (1999), applied to the 1979-1999 EP elections, and one by Benoit and Laver (2006), used for the 2004 EP elections. For the 2009 EP elections, I rely on the coder rating

listed in the Party Manifesto Data (EES 2009, Manifesto Study Data)<sup>6</sup>. I rescale the Party Manifesto Data to a 20-point scale used in the Hix and Marsh (2007) data set. The variable Left-Right measures a party positioning on the left-right ideological scale and ranges from 1 (most left) to 20 (most right). The variable LR Extremism measures the extremism of a party on the left-right ideological dimension, calculated as the difference between the actual left-right position of the party and the mean centre on that scale of all parties in a respective state. The variable Anti/Pro-EU measures how favorable a party is toward EU integration, on a 20-point scale and ranges from 1 (most anti-EU) to 20 (most pro-EU). The variable EU Extremism measures the extremism of a party on the EU dimension, calculated as the difference between the actual party EU position and the mean centre on that scale of all parties in the respective state.

In addition to the policy positions, I distinguish between Green parties and others. This is a dummy variable that takes the value of 1 if a party belongs to the Green family and zero otherwise. Green parties are in general strong pro-EU parties that have gained a substantial vote in the 1994 EP elections, when scholars started to mention the 'Green tide' (Carruba and Timpone 2005). A different approach with respect to party families would be to distinguish among all main European party families: Socialist, Christian Democrat, Conservative, Liberal, Radical Left Regional, Extreme Right and anti-EU. However, due to the difficulty of placing the parties in the post-communist states in one of these European families, I decided to restrict the distinction mainly to the Green family. This is more the case given that party members within the European families are in general deeply divided on EU integration (Hix 2005, 184). Therefore, the

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<sup>6</sup> The Chapel Hill Expert Survey has just been released for 2010 (June 2012), not in time to use the information in this chapter.

Green variable allows me to control for parties focusing mainly on environmental issues that do not fit well with the left-right ideological dimension.

To capture the contextual effects, a series of control variables are added to measure the aggregate levels of EU public support, the ease of access ballot of the party system, and the economy. The EU Public Support measures aggregate levels of public positive support for EU membership. This indicator lists the country percent of respondents who support their country's membership to the EU as is revealed in the Eurobarometer survey immediately close to the EP election<sup>7</sup>. The goal with this variable is to distinguish among the cases with more polarized public opinion. Arguably, the more polarized public opinion is over EU integration, the more likely will EU attitudes matter. An electoral system indicator is included to measure the difficulty of winning seats in EP elections. Following Hix and Marsh (2007), I use the 'effective threshold' method developed by Lijphart (1994), calculated as the largest value between the formal threshold and the Lijphart formula (75 divided by the average district magnitude plus one). The lower this indicator is the fewer institutional burdens parties have to overcome for representation in the EP. This indicator varies from as low as .85 for Italy in the 1994 EP Election to 37.5 for UK, the same election year. The annual GDP Growth Rate (Eurostat Tables) allows for comparisons of economic development across time and between states. This economic indicator varies from -17.7 in Latvia (2009) to 8.84 in Ireland (1999), with the largest within-state variations encountered in Estonia, a 16 point difference over the period of EP elections, and Ireland, a 15 point difference.

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<sup>7</sup> For 2009 EP Elections, I use the 2009 June EB, available @ [http://ec.europa.eu/public\\_opinion/cf/index\\_en.cfm](http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/cf/index_en.cfm), while for the 1979-2004 EP Elections I rely on Hix and Marsh data set, which comprises the same questions and the Eurobarometers (EB) 11, 21, 31, 41, 51, 61, 15, 27, 43.1, and 45.1.

A series of OLS models are estimated, having party gain/loss as the unit of analysis. The goal is to assess the effects of policy positions, left-right ideological and EU integration, and party typology understood as new party, Green family, and government parties on vote-share gains and losses. Most important for the overall argument of this chapter is the effect of the anti-EU positioning of a party on the vote-share difference at EP elections. Secondly, I aim to assess the variation of this effect across the two EU periods and the three regions. Despite the problematic dependent variable with a limited range, I decide to follow Hix and Marsh (2007) approach with OLS analysis, rather than change the level of analysis to a categorical variable such as party typology. I address the problem of the lack of data independence, with parties nested in national party systems and parties that participate in more than one EP election, by estimating OLS models with correlated standard errors for states and election years.

### **Empirical Analysis**

Table 5-1 presents the estimates of a model, which tests whether EU Extremism affects party vote-share in EP elections. The first column represents the results of a pooled analysis, with all parties, all EP election rounds, and all EU states. The following columns test the same model across the two EU periods and the three regions. The goal with the second approach is to distinguish regional and temporal dynamics with respect to the effect of party EU extremist position on the vote-share change in EP elections. Table 5-2 reports the predicted vote-share of party gains and losses based on the model estimations presented in Table 5-1. As mentioned earlier, the overall expectation is that parties situated on the negative end on the EU dimension are more likely to have higher positive vote-shares in EP elections than in national elections. This

relationship is most likely to hold in the West, post-Maastricht, when EU saliency and contestation increased tremendously, and so did public disapproval rates of the EU.

A few results stand out in the first column, Table 5-1. The overall trend, which includes all parties and all elections, reveals that three types of parties gain more votes at EP elections than at national elections. These are new parties, as the most significant winners, with an average predicted vote-share gain of 7%, anti-EU parties with an average predicted vote-share gain of 3.36%, and Green parties with an average predicted increase vote-share of 2% (see Table 5-2, first three columns). Opposition parties do better at EP elections than at national elections, while government parties register losses<sup>8</sup>. Other significant results for an overall trend include vote-share increases for parties that are more pro-EU. Quite interesting is the dynamic revealed by the two EU integration variables, which shows that on the one hand parties that are more pro-EU gain more votes, and yet, parties that are more extreme on the anti-EU side gain more votes than the ones that are extremes on the pro-EU side. Region is introduced in the first analysis as a series of dummy variables that capture the three regions, West, South and Post-communist. In the analysis reported in the chapter, the post-communist region represents the baseline. We observe that the two dummy variables, West and South are not statistical significantly different than the post-

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<sup>8</sup> Government or opposition, party size, and timing represent three important indicators in the SOE (second-order election) model. In the analysis presented in this chapter, only one of the three national indicators is significant, government. Timing (TIME) within electoral cycle, measured as the number of months passed since the national election over the entire electoral cycle (expressed in months) was not significant. When I introduce its square component in the equation, both TIME and TIME2 become significant, but the two have a correlation indicator of .95. Thus, I decide to exclude both terms capturing timing. Finally, SIZE, an indicator that measures party size based on party's previous percentage of vote-share in the national election is highly correlated with party's positioning on the anti/pro-EU dimension. This is mostly because large parties are also pro-EU parties. Considering the interest of this chapter, concerned with a party's extreme positioning on the EU dimension, I decide to include the EU dimension and exclude party size.

communist region. The p-value for the West region is .12 while the p-value for the South is .30<sup>9</sup>. Finally, none of the contextual factors, aggregate levels of public support for the EU, effective threshold, and the GDP Growth Rate, attain significance in the pooled analysis.

The following five columns in Table 5-1 and Table 5-2 report the results of the same model applied across the two EU periods and the three regions. Interesting regional and temporal variations emerge. First, with respect to the interest of this chapter, the anti-EU party gains in EP elections, the significance of the EU Extremism in the West and South, post- Maastricht in both cases (columns 3 and 5 in Table 5-1) confirm the first two hypotheses of the chapter. In the West, during the first EU period, anti-EU parties would gain on average 1.06% more than what they had in national elections (column 4, Table 5-2), while in the post-Maastricht era, anti-EU parties in the West gain on average 4.86% more than what they have in national elections (column 5, Table 5-2). In the South, during the first EU period, anti-EU parties gained on average 9% more votes than what they had in national elections (column 6, Table 5-2). Despite the large gains, this variable is not statistically significant during the first EU period. In the post-Maastricht era, anti-EU parties in the South gain on average 6% more votes than what they have in national elections (column 7, Table 5-2). This time, the effect is statistically significant.

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<sup>9</sup> In different iterations, I included Region as categorical ordinal variable that captured the three regions: West (1), South (2) and post-communist (3). In this case Region attained statistical significance, confirming that party vote-share differs across the three regions. The rest of the coefficients included in the analysis remained largely the same.

Before moving to the post-communist region, it is important to mention that the large effects of EU Extremism in the South are, to some extent, unexpected. The previous chapter, which focused on 20 EU member states and anti-EU party campaigning during the last two waves of EP elections, emphasized that negative EU campaign based on parties' political programs, was missing in the South. The region that had the most anti-EU campaigning was the West. For instance, at the 2004 EP elections, I could identify only two parties strongly anti-EU, LAOS (Popular Orthodox Arm) in Greece and CDU (Unitarian Democratic Coalition) in Portugal, while the AN (National Alliance) in Italy held simultaneously a pro and anti-EU campaign. In 2009, in addition to the above parties, we had the SP (Socialist Party) in Ireland, also with a negative campaign. Thus, given the previous regional dynamic, the results of this chapter, with the largest anti-EU gains in the South seem surprising. They can be generated, however, by two factors: one would be the difference in including additional waves of EP elections, the 1994 and 1999, in addition to the 2004 and 2009 ones. A different source of the difference could be related to the actual measurement used to capture anti-EU stances at the party level. The current chapter uses expert survey data for 1979-2004 EP elections and party manifestos for 2009, while for the previous chapter I relied only on party political programs at the two elections. Regardless of these shortcomings, more research is needed in the South, to better understand what types of anti-EU parties emerge in the region. During the few interviews I had with Italians and Spanish citizens while in Paris 2011, the respondents talked only about the positives of EU membership, such as the external accountability source against corrupted officials (Italy) or EU a source of monetary stability (Spain). Other Spanish

citizens supported EU mainly for the labor mobility brought by EU integration; these respondents in particular were working in Germany at the time and had no intention of returning to Spain. Therefore, more research is needed in the South to understand temporal dynamics with respect to which negative aspects of EU integration mobilize voters and why only some states display negative campaigns and others do not.

Finally, in the post-communist region, as expected with respect the anti-EU parties, although they gain on average 3% more than in national elections, the effect of the extreme EU positioning is not statistically significant. In fact the p-value is very large (.927), such that the estimate becomes completely unreliable. These regional dynamics of EU Extremism and party vote-share differences at EP elections are plotted in Figure 5-1. We can easily see now the linear decreasing relationship between the EU Extremism positioning of parties and the vote-share differences. In all regions, parties on the very negative end on EU Extremism display the largest positive vote-share differences.

Other results are worthy of mentioning. A new party that did not fight in the previous national election receives by far the largest vote-share gains of 11% in the West, during first EP elections (Table 5-2, column 4). As more rounds of EP elections take place, and especially after Maastricht, the vote-share gains decrease substantially to 7% in the West. In the South, a new party registers a vote-share gain on only 2-3%, with no significant temporal variations. In the post-communist region, new parties gain on average 7% more vote-shares than in national elections. These regional differences illustrate a more established party system in the South, with overall less new parties emerging and fluctuation ones in the West and the post-communist regions.

Understanding why we have these differences is definitely interesting and a subject for further research. Government party losses are important changes in all regions, with similar 3% vote-share loss during EP elections. Green parties receive larger vote-share at EP elections only in the West, in all rounds of EP elections. In the South and the Post-communist regions, Green parties' advantage is highly diminished. This small result qualifies previous findings that at EP elections environmentally-friendly voters base their vote on different issues than at national elections. Based on the results of this chapter, we should rather argue that environmental related issues matter the most in the West, less in the South, and are almost non-existent in the Post-communist region.

### **Concluding Remarks**

The important point that this chapter sought to accomplish was to illustrate that anti-EU parties gain more votes at EP elections than they do in national elections. As shown above, this dynamic holds across all EU states, with the clarification that in the post-communist region, the effect of party EU Extremism is not statistically significant. It is, however, in the expected direction. While the media reaction to these anti-EU successes is quite negative and scholars point to the need of reforming the EP elections, I suggest in this dissertation that, in fact, the anti-EU success has positive consequences for the EU. These parties, as undesirable as they may be, fulfill an essential role in generating EU contestation and increasing the saliency of the EU. Previous research on party behavior emphasized that mainstream parties have no incentive in opening the EU debates for the public, either because they are internally divided on EU issues or because they are part of the EU decision-making institutions. The anti-EU parties, however, offer precisely this incentive; they focus in their campaigns on (anti)EU issues, and, thus, challenge mainstream parties on the EU

dimension. The fact that anti-EU parties gain systematically more votes in EP elections means that EP elections represent, in fact, institutional opportunities for EU integration debates. Indeed, from a national party system perspective, this success may have negative consequences. One could argue, for instance, that EP elections fragment national party systems, due to the lowered costs of party entry and party success, by advancing anti-systemic parties, as the fringe anti-EU parties are sometimes identified with. Once successful in one contest, their electoral confidence and public visibility increases even for national contests. Le Front National (France, 1984) or the Greater Romanian Party (Romania, 2009) are cases in point of anti-EU anti-systemic parties that were propelled forward in national competitions by the success in the EP elections. However, I argue, while these concerns with respect to the consequences of EP elections for national party systems are legitimate, we should also keep in mind the positives consequences of their success, given that they seem to be a necessary condition for EU politicization. Until a different dynamic emerges and mainstream parties start debates over EU integration during EP or national elections, the EP elections, as they are at the moment, elections of lesser importance, constitute important elements in increasing EU's accountability and legitimacy.

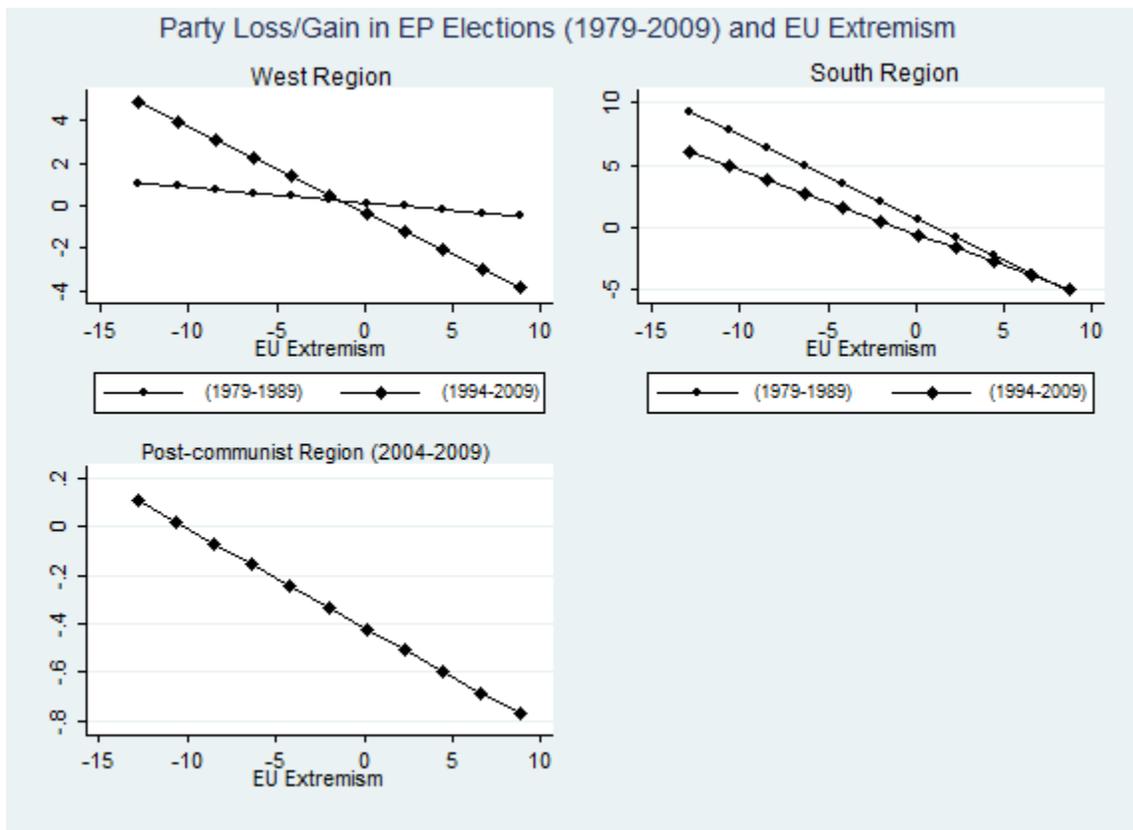


Figure 5-1. Party vote-share differences across three regions in the EU

Table 5-1. The Effect of national and EU indicators on party loss/ gains during EP elections (1979-2009)

|                     | All EU          | West<br>(1979-1989) | West<br>(1994-2009) | South<br>(1979-1989) | South<br>(1994-2009) | Post-Communist<br>States |
|---------------------|-----------------|---------------------|---------------------|----------------------|----------------------|--------------------------|
| Government          | -3.74*** (.58)  | -.00 (.93)          | -4.41*** (.95)      | -4.81** (1.60)       | -4.4*** (1.35)       | -5.32** (2.18)           |
| New Party           | 7.59*** (1.12)  | 12.19*** (3.95)     | 8.16*** (1.34)      | 2.67** (1.18)        | 3.38** (1.26)        | 8.31** (3.65)            |
| Left right          | .36** (.17)     | .47 (1.64)          | -.10 (.28)          | 3.54** (1.70)        | .33 (.21)            | .60 (.66)                |
| LR Extremism        | -.33* (.17)     | -.43 (1.19)         | .11 (.29)           | -3.67** (1.68)       | -.33 (.21)           | -.29 (.64)               |
| Anti/Pro-EU         | .15 (.09)       | -.09 (.36)          | .32** (.15)         | .68 (.62)            | .38* (.01)           | .18 (.40)                |
| EU Extremism        | -.23*** (.10)   | -.07 (.44)          | -.40** (.17)        | -.65 (.61)           | -.51** (.23)         | -.04 (.43)               |
| Green               | 2.24*** (.53)   | 3.55** (1.37)       | 2.49*** (.83)       | 1.01 (.95)           | 1.94 (1.18)          | .35 (1.25)               |
| West                | .70 (.45)       |                     |                     |                      |                      |                          |
| South               | .69 (.66)       |                     |                     |                      |                      |                          |
| EU Public support   | .00 (.00)       | -.10 (.36)          | .02** (.15)         | -.07 (.04)           | .00 (.01)            | -.03 (.04)               |
| Effective threshold | -.00 (.01)      | .07 (.05)           | -.03** (.01)        | .13 (.16)            | .06* (.03)           | -.01 (.09)               |
| GDP Growth          | -.01 (.69)      | -.34*** (.12)       | .02 (.07)           | .03 (.12)            | -.07 (.07)           | -.01 (.13)               |
| Constant            | -6.35*** (1.62) | -6.80 (6.9)         | -3.68* (.07)        | -37.15 (23.23)       | -8.39** (3.21)       | -6.64 (5.43)             |
| Observations        | 792             | 146                 | 298                 | 87                   | 142                  | 119                      |
| R-squared           | .22             | .32                 | .29                 | .27                  | .24                  | .19                      |

Note: Dependent variable: Gain. OLS Estimation with clustered standard errors (for election and country) in parentheses;

Table 5-2. Predicted vote-share of party gains and losses

|                  | West<br>(all data) | South<br>(all data) | Post-<br>communist<br>(all data) | West<br>1979-<br>1989 | West<br>1994-<br>2009 | South<br>1979-1989 | South<br>1994-2009 | Post-<br>communist<br>2004-2009 |
|------------------|--------------------|---------------------|----------------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|--------------------|--------------------|---------------------------------|
| Government       | -2.56              | -2.83               | -3.10                            | .04                   | -3.17                 | -3.80              | -3.43              | -3.68                           |
| Opposition       | 1.17               | .91                 | .64                              | .05                   | 1.24                  | 1.01               | 1.02               | 1.63                            |
| New Party        | 7.19               | 6.92                | 6.65                             | 11.74                 | 7.59                  | 2.39               | 3.02               | 7.26                            |
| Old Party        | -.40               | -.67                | -.94                             | -.45                  | -.57                  | -.27               | -.36               | -1.04                           |
| Green            | 2.09               | 1.82                | 1.55                             | 3.18                  | 2.17                  | .82                | 1.65               | -.07                            |
| Other families   | -.14               | -.41                | -.68                             | -.36                  | -.31                  | -.19               | -.29               | -.42                            |
| EU Extremism (-) | 3.36               | 3.09                | 2.82                             | 1.06                  | 4.86                  | 9.18               | 6.06               | 3.34                            |
| EU Extremism (+) | -2.22              | -2.49               | -2.75                            | -.49                  | -3.83                 | -5.07              | -5.03              | -2.23                           |

## CHAPTER 6 BRINGING IT ALL TOGETHER

European Union (EU) is often portrayed in the media and in scholarly debates as a supranational political system that lacks legitimacy and accountability. While elections for EU institutions constitute one mechanism that may address this problem, it is still debatable whether the only EU direct elections currently rise to the task of fixing the 'democratic deficit'. The goal of this project is to answer precisely this question of how and why the European Parliament (EP) elections facilitate democratic linkages within the EU, by providing an institutional set-up that allows voters to express their preferences over EU integration when participating and voting in EP elections. This project joins, therefore, an important debate over what reforms are necessary to advance the democratization process that the EU has engaged in after the first signs of public malaise were laid out in the 1990s, and which yielded, in fact, substantial institutional reforms. As mentioned in different chapters, scholarly and media perspectives on the role the EP elections play in this democratization process are quite negative. For instance, in a 2009 BBC news story one could read the following description of the voting dynamic that the European Parliament elections allow for emerging:

At the time of the first European Parliament elections in 1979 there was widespread enthusiasm for this experiment in transnational democracy. Sadly these contests have not lived up to their billing. Few people vote and those that do vote are mainly motivated by national rather than European politics<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Hix, Simon. 2009. "Viewpoint: A truly European Voter." *BBC NEWS* Published: 2009/05/05, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/go/pr/fr/-/2/hi/europe/8025749.stm> (Accessed September 20, 2011)

Scholars expand even more on the meaning of the usefulness of these elections and posit that EP elections *cannot* address the problems of democratic linkage and legitimacy. These elections are ‘inescapably’ designed to remain ‘second-order national’ elections (Van der Brug and der Eijk 2007) or become even ‘third-order’ elections (Wessels and Franklin 2010) as an ‘unavoidable consequence of the institutional design of the EU’ (Van der Brug and der Eijk 2007). As it is explained in a legion of studies, the EP elections cannot provide democratic linkages between citizens and one EU institution, the EP, on issues that are relevant to the EU policy-making process because the outcome of the elections does not matter for the allocation of power in the executive and/or the agenda-setting bodies of the EU. Domestic political issues not EU related issues dominate the EP electoral campaigns and determine voters’ choices (Reif and Schmitt 1980). In addition, voters, media, and parties display little interest in these elections because the motivations or gains that accrue from participating (on the party side) and voting (on the voter sides) cannot be easily assessed.

Yet, the outcome of these elections produces a paradoxical result, in the sense that parties with a negative EU integration agenda fare systematically better during EP elections than in national elections. This outcome raises the following question: Is the voting behavior during EP elections related to attitudes toward European integration, as one may infer from the anti-EU vote, or is it not, as might be concluded based on the theoretical explanations that dominate the EP electoral literature?

This project joins the debate over what roles the EP elections play in generating democratic linkages between citizens and EU elected officials and has as its goal to disaggregate the voting dynamic that emerges during EP elections. This project’s main

objective is then to theorize *when, where, and why* attitudes toward European integration matter for participation and vote selection during EP elections. In doing so, this project brings together different scholarly perspectives on EP elections, from 'second order national elections' on the one hand, or opportunities for expressing European preferences on the other, to EP elections as opportunity structures for a particular type of party, the anti-EU parties.

### **Theoretical Contributions**

The main contribution of the different analyses presented is to highlight that the *diversity* that characterizes the EU member states is essential when theorizing about patterns of voting behavior during EP elections. The EU represents a supranational political system which encompasses today 27 member states that are substantially different in terms of within-state characteristics and state-EU interactions. These differences refer to party system characteristics, the presence or absence of anti-EU parties, and the economic development as within-state factors; as EU-state interactions, we have the duration of EU membership, the length of the accession-negotiation process, the relative weight in the EU decision-making structures, and the economic contributions to the EU budget. This project underscores that these differences become important when determining the voting dynamic that occurs during EP elections. The major conclusion that different analyses of the project point to is that EP elections allow for politicization of EU integration, but that such development is highly dependent and conditioned on a series of structural, long term, characteristics at both member-state and EU levels and short-term aspects related strictly to the campaigning environment. In addition, the process of EU integration itself emerges as an important explanatory factor when assessing whether attitudes toward EU integration affect voting behavior.

The starting conceptual point in theorizing about the role that attitudes toward EU integration may play during EP elections is the perspective that EU citizens hold 'real', but latent attitudes toward EU integration. Moreover, EU attitudes do not translate into a particular voting behavior unless party elites bring these EU attitudes to surface via debates over different aspects of EU integration. This project becomes therefore concerned with aspects that facilitate party elite competition on EU issues as key factors that *clarify* party positions on EU integration and allow voters to link their EU preferences to parties that match their interests the best.

The most important state characteristic to investigate belongs to party system development. To elaborate, it makes a difference whether the party system of a member state is relatively well developed and settled on the two dimensions of party competition: the left-right ideological dimension and the EU dimension. If voter and party volatilities characterize the political competition on the left-right ideological dimension, then, it is less likely that parties engage in debates over EU integration during EP elections. Either because parties come and go or because voters have not settled on their ideological preferences, party debates over EU integration are less likely to emerge in an environment where there is still room for maneuver on the more important ideological dimension that structures party competition. Second, a relatively unsettled and poorly developed party system on the EU dimension implies that mainstream parties can adopt, over a short time span, quite divergent and contradictory positions with respect to EU integration. In this case, even though debates over the EU may be present during EP elections, voters have a hard time distinguishing among parties' positions on the EU dimension. Most likely, in this type of environment, voters will not

vote based on preferences over the EU dimension, but will rely on the more traditional issues emerging from the domestic arena.

Still focusing on the party system characteristics, it becomes crucial whether anti-EU parties are present in a particular state, given that these are the parties most likely to start the debates over EU integration. Mainstream parties are the pro-EU parties mostly because they built the EU in the first place and further developed the process of EU integration as members of the EU governing structures. In addition, debating the course of EU integration is less likely to emerge from this side of political competition given that the general public is overall less supportive of EU integration than the political elites are. Moreover, research on party behavior and EU integration underscores that many mainstream parties are, in fact, internally divided when it comes to supporting various aspects of EU integration (Van der Eijk and Franklin 1996). Either because of potential loss of public support or because of potential party fragmentation, mainstream parties are less likely to approach aspects of EU integration during the EP electoral campaigns. In this context, it becomes essential for voting on the EU dimension to occur to have anti-EU parties that challenge mainstream parties' positions on EU integration. To the extent that mainstream parties feel challenged by the anti-EU stances, in the sense that they may lose substantial vote shares, mainstream parties may engage in EU debates, clarifying their positions on the EU. This dynamic allows voters to distinguish among various party alternatives on aspects of EU integration. Therefore, if voters are presented with party alternatives over EU integration, they are in a better position to use their preferences over EU integration when participating and selecting parties during EP elections. This dynamic illustrates, however, that the presence of anti-

EU parties in a political system is, in fact, a key condition for voting on the EU dimension to occur.

Understanding when and where anti-EU parties and anti-EU stances can emerge becomes thus an important question to be answered. For instance, this project suggests that the presence of anti-EU parties and voter appeal of anti-EU issues depend on the overall duration of the accession negotiation process of new or newer member states. Still focusing on the structural, long term factors and within-state characteristics, it becomes important to consider whether mainstream parties can adopt anti-EU stances in states that have not been involved in the EU building process. While the previous paragraph emphasized that mainstream parties are in general pro-EU parties, as members of various EU structures, such a statement is less likely to apply to states that only recently joined the EU. In new(er) member states, mainstream parties have not built a history of support for EU integration as members of the EU decision-making structures. In reality, however, the positions that mainstream parties can develop with respect to EU integration are highly dependent on the duration of the accession negotiation process and the positions that mainstream parties developed during this process. The longer this process, the more likely that all mainstream parties participated in the EU negotiations and, thus, the less likely that mainstream parties can develop anti-EU stances immediately after joining the EU.

Timing with respect to which EP electoral wave is considered and the level of economic and democratic developments of a member state emerge as important factors to be considered when assessing whether voting on the EU dimension may occur. For instance, citizen attitudes toward EU integration during the first years of EU membership

in states that fare poorly on measures of economic and democratic development reflect, in fact, high expectations of life improvement accruing directly from EU membership. These high expectations and optimism related to EU membership leave little room for anti-EU stances during the first years of membership. Yet optimism related to EU membership may translate into higher rates of participation during EP elections such that voters may decide to participate in EP elections even if anti-EU parties and anti-EU stances are missing from the political scene. However, I argue, while such voters participate because of their European attitudes, they do not have the opportunity to choose parties based on their preferences over EU integration if parties do not compete and campaign on EU issues.

Therefore, the campaigns become an important short-term factor that may facilitate voting behavior on the EU dimension during EP elections. For instance, having aspects of EU integration mentioned during the political campaigns, with political parties taking competing positions on questions on how to move the integration project further allows voters to form opinions as to where parties stand on the EU integration. Furthermore, they can link their own attitudes over these issues to the parties that represent their preferences the best. In this context, simply mentioning EU competences and explaining how the EU is structured or how it functions does not seem to constitute an incentive for voters to vote based on EU attitudes. What seems to matter is that aspects of EU integration, such as immigration, welfare benefits, Eastern enlargement, and structural funds are debated during the campaigns with parties taking opposite positions.

Such debates over the advantages and in particular the disadvantages accruing from EU membership are most likely to be present in states that are net contributors to the EU budget. The status of net beneficiary or net contributor to the EU budget represents the most important state-EU interaction factor when assessing the conditions under which voting on the EU dimension may occur during EP elections. Moreover, as affluent states, the net contributor states attract large waves of immigrants coming from the poorer EU member states in search for better jobs and better living conditions. Giving that debates related to economic benefits and perceptions of cultural threats accruing from EU membership are most likely to shape the electoral campaigns in the affluent, old EU member states, we may infer that high EU politicization, high EU emphasis, and active anti-EU party campaigning will characterize these states. This is mostly the case since we know that economic advantages and perceptions of cultural threats are, in fact, factors that generate attitudes toward EU integration in the first place. Therefore, affluent, old EU member states represent the most conducive environment for active anti-EU campaigning and for meaningful debates over the project of EU integration. In this environment, mainstream parties will most likely feel challenged and join the debates by clarifying their own positions over EU integration.

Finally, debates over EU integration are meaningful only if voter perceptions that EU decisions directly affect people's lives are fairly strong. As mentioned in several chapters, the EU evolved over time from a loose economic structure set up to establish peace and prosperity among former enemies to a supranational political system in which member states cede sovereignty over a large array of policy areas. Public perceptions over the importance of EU integration accompanied this evolution, with a

critical juncture in terms of overall support for the integration project emerging around the Maastricht Treaty. The debates during the Maastricht referendums increased public awareness that the EU had changed tremendously over time, without having had public opinions taken into account during this transformative process. The post-Maastricht period is mentioned in the literature as the period when the 'permissive consensus' that the EU elites benefitted from during the first years of EU integration disappeared. Post-Maastricht EP elections mean, therefore, increased public awareness of different aspects of EU integration and decreased support for such transformations. Given this temporal dynamic of EU integration, we may expect that anti-EU parties become particularly active only in the post-Maastricht period, when debates over EU integration become meaningful to the public.

This project gradually develops the argument that the temporal and cross-national EU diversity matters when theorizing over the interplay between EU attitudes and voting behavior during EP elections. Each chapter points to different aspects of these dimensions of EU diversity and unpacks the voting dynamic that the particular independent factors under consideration allow for to emerge during EP elections.

Chapter 2 represents a foundational background that maps out the answers to two important questions: first, what generates EU attitudes and how they evolve over time and cross-nationally; second, how EU attitudes affect behavior in different voting instances, from national elections to EU related contests such as EU referendums and EP elections. The findings of this broad overview highlight three important aspects. First, European attitudes vary substantially cross-nationally and temporally. Second, even though this variation does not yield a particular voting behavior, we know at least

that attitudes toward EU integration are generated by perceptions of economic advantages or disadvantages accruing from EU membership and of cultural threats emerging from the unbundling of the nation state. Third, the far-right anti-EU parties are the parties most likely to campaign on EU integration issues and focus overwhelmingly on the negative aspects of EU integration.

The argument that unfolds over the following three chapters posits that European attitudes affect voting behavior during EP elections conditional on state-level characteristics and state-EU interactions. As research design I use a mixed method approach that combines in-depth case study analysis with quantitative large-N analyses of twenty EU member states during the last two electoral waves or twenty-seven EU member states over seven EP electoral waves<sup>2</sup>.

Chapter 3, the in-depth case study, allows for a close application of dominant theories on voting behavior during EP elections. The particular expertise I hold as a Romanian citizen, the language skills, background, and the historical knowledge, greatly enhanced the quality of fieldwork and allowed me to triangulate the findings by using a variety of methods: interviews and participant observation, discourse analysis of media content, and large-N multivariate analysis. The contribution of the case study is twofold: first, it emphasizes that the current behavioral theories on EP elections fare poorly when explaining the voting dynamic in this state highlighting several weaknesses in the current literature. Second, in this particular example, it establishes that attitudes toward European integration affect only one type of voting behavior, participation. This chapter emphasizes the important role of party system characteristics and development, the

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<sup>2</sup> Of course, not all twenty-seven EU member state participated in all seven waves of EP elections.

duration of the accession negotiation process, and the duration of EU membership in shaping the electoral behavior during EP elections. All these aspects are important factors that shape Romania's democratic linkages of representation in the EU. On the voter side, Romanians relate in a particular way to the EU, where EU membership represents expectations and beliefs in a 'better life'. On the party supply side, mainstream parties express pro-EU integration positions, without differentiating the pro-EU stances based on their ideological profiles. In addition, the nationalist far right party that may campaign an anti-EU issues focuses instead on issues emerging from the national arena and only rarely expresses its position with respect to EU integration. This lack of clarity on party positioning on EU integration impedes voters in formulating strategic approaches to party selection based on congruence between voter attitudes and party stances on the EU dimension. By contrast, voters believe that the party selected during the EP elections represents the best choice to defend Romania's interests in the EU. Yet, the party selection takes place based on issues coming from the national arena.

Chapter 4 moves the analysis from one member state to twenty EU member states with the goal of mapping the regional voting dynamic that emerges across EU. This chapter advances a theory that emphasizes the important role of anti-EU parties in promoting EU politicization and EU emphasis. The core argument posits that while attitudes toward European integration exist at a latent structural level, it is up to the anti-EU parties to bring these latent attitudes to surface. Insisting on a variety of issues, from immigration, to Islam, and eastern enlargement, the anti-EU parties *start* party elite debates over the (dis)advantages of EU integration. These debates are essential in

mobilizing voters to express their preferences over EU integration during EP elections. High EU emphasis and high EU politicization mean, in fact, clearer party positioning on EU integration. Focusing on party supply and voters demand sides, the large-N analyses uncover three regional dynamics during the last two waves of EP elections. The West, as the region with states that share the net contributor status to the EU budget, displays debates over EU integration. Citizens base their decisions to participate and to select parties on preferences over EU integration and EU membership. In the South, the region of states that share the net recipient status of EU funds, EU attitudes play only an insignificant role in influencing voting behavior. In the post-communist region, with an unsettled party system on the EU and the left-right ideological dimensions, citizens base their participation on attitudes toward EU membership. EU attitudes, however, do not play any role in shaping party selection during EP elections.

If Chapter 4 maps the cross-national variations with respect to state-EU interactions, Chapter 5 emphasizes the cross-temporal differences with respect to the process of EU integration itself. This chapter focuses strictly on the political supply side of party competition and encompasses data from all EP elections in all EU member states. The major goal of the chapter is to emphasize that EP elections represent institutional opportunities for a particular type of party, the anti-EU one. Working with a theoretical framework that develops cost-benefit calculations upon party entry and success during EP elections, the chapter highlights that EP elections provide a path with low institutional costs to enter the electoral arena for the anti-EU parties, high benefits of holding office, and high probability of electoral support. In addition to the

cross-regional difference illustrated in Chapter 4, of anti-EU parties present in the West and the South, Chapter 5 adds a temporal component as well. The Anti-EU parties are most successful in the two regions only during the post-Maastricht waves of EP elections.

### **Implications**

This debate over the impact of EU attitudes on electoral behavior is particularly important for scholars who argue that EU suffers from a lack of input democracy (Hix 2008; Hix and Hoyland 2011). In concrete terms, the lack of input democracy means that during EP elections voters do not choose between rival candidates for the European Parliament based on their EU preferences and candidates' rival policy agendas for EU actions. By contrast, the findings of this project suggest that such a perspective represents a highly simplified image of the actual voting dynamic at play. Various analyses have shown that EP elections allow, in fact, for democratic linkages to occur between voters and the EU structures. These linkages of democratic representation occur, however, only where structural 'cleavages' over EU integration exist and shape party and voter behavior.

### **Reforming the European Union (EU)?**

The implications of these findings are twofold: first, understanding the actual voting dynamic at play becomes important for arguments of reforming the rules of EP elections. As mentioned in several chapters, the need to reform these elections is always presented as one of the solutions to the democratic deficit crisis. What this project emphasizes, however, is that manifestations of voting behavior during EP elections emerge, indeed, out of the institutional set up, but that this institutional set up can be an advantage for EU politicization rather than a disadvantage. As second order

elections, the cost of party entry and success are lowered for the anti-EU parties, which are also the parties that politicize EU. These anti-EU parties are, however, active in regions where EU integration issues matter to voters and parties. Therefore, changing the rules of the electoral competition by making the EP elections as competitive as the national elections will not lead to a 'Europeanization' of such elections, but rather to their 'nationalization'. Mainstream parties will become highly interested in receiving representation in the EU structures assuming that the stakes of EP elections would become as high as the ones in national contests. However, it is not clear why mainstream parties would start competing on EU integration issues rather than focusing on issues emerging from the domestic arena. This is more the case if we consider that politicizing the EU is highly difficult in two EU regions, the post-communist area and the South, as the most supportive regions of EU integration. Therefore, the manifestations we have during EP elections emerge out of the institutional set up, but these manifestations also reflect deeper structural cleavages within the EU that may not be changed overnight.

### **Democratic Linkage Structures within the EU**

The second contribution of the project is that it offers an alternative to the literature on the democratic deficit by focusing on the linkages of democratic representation within the EU. Rather than insisting on aspects of European identity formation and the lack of an European 'demos', elements posited as essential in addressing and solving the EU's democratic deficit, this project emphasizes the structural channels the public has to express its preferences over how to move forward the EU integration. This aspect of having the public preferences taken into account becomes highly important during the current economic crisis, when the EU elite-forged solutions are again presented as if the

EU public has no say over these reforms. In fact, this project shows that the public has opportunities to express its preferences over how to move forward the EU integration; these opportunities are available both during national elections (see the French and Greek national elections) and especially during EP elections (see the 2009 EP electoral behavior).

### **Points of Contention and Future Research**

The findings of this research point to several avenues for future research. Given the important role that the anti-EU parties play in politicizing the EU, a pressing issue will be to disaggregate even more the typology of anti-EU parties to understand which parties constitute a challenge to mainstream politics and which anti-EU parties do not. Anti-EU populist far right parties can be divided into two camps: extremist parties that share xenophobe and racist stances, in addition to very critical positions on EU integration. Most of the time such parties challenge the democratic norms of political competition and have been either banned (or considered for banning) during their history by the Constitutional Courts or have not been considered viable partners for government coalition formation. One could further argue that the electorate of such parties is limited, such that regardless of how active these parties are on the EU dimension, they will never represent a challenge to mainstream politics. A second category is represented by populist anti-EU parties that do not share the extreme xenophobic and racist positions and accept the democratic norms of political competition; these parties will most likely represent a challenge to the mainstream parties. In this project, however, I do not take into account such a refined distinction and I restrict the argument of EU politicization and mainstream party challenge to parties that highly criticize the EU during the campaigns. This lack of differentiation may explain

why some cases in Chapter 4 do not support the theory of high EU emphasis and high EU politicization. For instance, the country level analyses in Chapter 4 illustrate that an increased anti-EU emphasis coming from parties such as the BNP or UKIP in the UK or the FN in France does not yield a party selection process in which preferences over EU integration affect the voting behavior during the 2009 EP elections. In addition, in Germany, the active anti-EU REP party does not constitute a challenge to the mainstream parties, such that they rarely engage in EU debates. In all these cases, the UK, France, and Germany voters did not select parties during the 2009 EP elections based on attitudes toward EU integration.

A few problematic cases emerge in the South, where the very active anti-EU CDU in Spain did not generate a vote on the EU dimension during the 2004 EP election. In fact, EU attitudes seem to have no effect on voting behavior in the South in 2004, regardless of anti-EU party campaigning of parties such as the CDU (Spain) or LAOS in Greece. Moreover, the South emerges as a problematic region given that, in 2004, anti-EU campaigning had no effect on voting behavior and yet, the anti-EU parties gain more votes than they do in national elections (based on the results in Chapter 5). In 2009, with the background of the economic crisis, pro-EU campaigning became more active and the EU attitudes did affect party selection. This particular dynamic is quite in opposition to the actual theorized expectations. One explanation can be related to the 2009 economic crisis that affected this region in particular. For instance, during the few interviews I had in 2009 with Italians and Spanish citizens, they all emphasized that they trusted the EU institutions to take the right decisions to deal with the crisis more than they trusted their own politicians. This interplay between EU attitudes and trust in

national representatives becomes highly informative for the post-communist region and the voting behavior and dynamic that may emerge here under similar conditions of extraneous economic difficulties. Therefore, a more in depth case study in one of the South states will allow for a better understanding of the role the anti-EU campaigning plays in the region. Such an analysis will also be informative with respect to the future voting evolutions in the post-communist region.

Finally, a third area of further improvements is related to expanding over the role that the EU officials themselves attribute to EP elections. As of now, I included two components: voter attitudes and party positions on the EU dimension. It would also be informative to capture the perspective that the EU officials have with respect to the democratic linkages that the EP elections are expected to fulfill. One way of approaching these aspects would be to delve into the first EP's discussions of setting up the direct elections for this institution. Furthermore, more current perspectives that EU officials hold with respect to their role in addressing citizens' EU concerns can be inferred from Survey Data with current and past MEPs.

This project represents a first step in disaggregating the voting behavior during EP elections. Given the current debates over the economic crisis in the Eurozone area and beyond, understanding what mechanisms citizens have in place to express their preferences over EU integration becomes highly important. This project has shown, therefore, that EP elections under the current institutional set up, as elections that are not that important, represent working mechanisms that fulfill the democratic linkages between citizens' preferences and the process of EU integration.

## APPENDIX A LARGE-N ANALYSIS IN ROMANIA

Source: EES (2009), *European Parliament Election Study 2009, Voter Study*, [Advance] Release, 23 June 2011, ([www.piredeu.eu](http://www.piredeu.eu)).

As a rule, I reversed the initial coding such that a positive beta coefficient will reflect a positive increase in the probability of the dependent variable happening. In addition, unless otherwise stated, I dropped all 'refuse' and 'don't know' from the analyses.

### **Campaign exposure:**

'How often did you do any of the following during the four weeks before the European election? How often did you:

Watch a program about the election on television? (1 often, 3 never);

Read about the election in a newspaper? (1 often, 3 never)'. I

### **EU Attitudes:**

'Generally speaking, do you think that Romania's membership of the European Union is a good thing, a bad thing, or neither good nor bad? (1 good thing, 3 neither)'. I created a dummy variable: 1 good, 0 otherwise.

How much confidence do you have that decisions of the EU will be in the interest of Romania? (1 a great deal of confidence, 4 no confidence at all). I reversed the coding.

'Some say European unification should be pushed further. Others say it already has gone too far.

What is your opinion? Please indicate your views using a scale from 0 to 10, where 0 means unification 'has already gone too far' and 10 means it 'should be pushed further'. What number on this scale best describes your position?'

'And about where would you place the following parties on this scale?'

### **National indicators:**

'In political matters people talk of "the left" and "the right".

What is your position? Please indicate your views using any number on a scale from 0 to 10, where 0 means "left" and 10 means "right". Which number best describes your position?'

'And about where would you place the following parties on this scale?'

'What do you think about the economy? Compared to 12 months ago, do you think that the general economic situation in Romania is 1 a lot better, 5 a lot worse?'

'On the whole, how satisfied are you with the way democracy works in Romania? Are you 1 very satisfied, 4 not at all satisfied?'

'Do you approve or disapprove of the government's record to date? (1 approve, 2 disapprove, 8 don't know)'. I recoded 1 approve, 0 otherwise.

'Do you consider yourself to be close to any particular party? If so, which party do you feel close to? Do you feel yourself to be very close to this party (1), fairly close, or merely a sympathiser (3)? Do you feel yourself a little closer to one of the political parties than others?' I used the newly released variable (v 301) called *Closeness to Party ordinal scale*, which is a combination of the above mentioned variables, ranging from 0 not feeling close at all to any party, 4 to feeling very close. I recoded 'don't know' and 'unavailable' answers as 'not feeling close'.

**Dependent variables:**

'A lot of people abstained in the European Parliament elections of June 4, while others voted. Did you cast your vote? (1yes, 2 no)'. I recoded 1 yes, 0 no.

'Which party did you vote for?'

'Which party did you vote for at the General Election of 2008?'

**Control variables:**

'What is the highest level of education you have completed in your education? 1 nothing, 15 master.'

'If you were asked to choose one of these five names for your social class, which would you say you belong to – 1 the working class, the lower middle class, the middle class, the upper middle class or 5 the upper class?'

'Would you say you live in a...1 rural area, 2 small or middle-sized town, 3 suburbs of large, 4 large town or city?'

'What year were you born?' I recoded it as age, calculated by subtracting the year when one was born from 2009.

APPENDIX B  
CANONICAL CORRESPONDANCE ANALYSIS (CCA)

First I carry out a CCA on the control variable: age, education, class, urban, ethnic, and all control variables have a significant contribution to the first two canonical axes.

| Variables | Chisquare | F     | Pr(>F)  |
|-----------|-----------|-------|---------|
| Education | .03       | 5.5   | .001*** |
| Age       | .04       | 6.9   | .001*** |
| Class     | .02       | 3.6   | .002**  |
| Urban     | .03       | 5.23  | .001*** |
| Ethnic    | .3        | 45.39 | .001*** |

The constraint canonical axes explained .08% of the variability and the unconstraint explains the rest. Next, I carry out a CCA for voting preference in association with European and national attitudes, adjusting for (conditioning on) the control variables.

| Variables              | Chisquare | F     | Pr(>F)  |
|------------------------|-----------|-------|---------|
| EU Membership          | .04       | 7.7   | .001*** |
| National Economy       | .02       | 3.7   | .004*** |
| Democracy Satisfaction | .01       | 2.66  | .02*    |
| Government approval    | .08       | 12.60 | .001*** |
| Party attachment       | .09       | 14.68 | .001*** |
| EP Media               | .04       | 6.62  | .001*** |

The proportion of variability in voter preferences explained by the first two canonical axes is .62 and .29. The factor loadings of the two canonical axes for the response and predicted variables yield the following biplot scores for independent variables and parties:

|                        | CCA1 | CCA2 |
|------------------------|------|------|
| No vote                | -.42 | -.06 |
| PDL                    | .59  | -.46 |
| PNL                    | .22  | .60  |
| PRM                    | .30  | .20  |
| PSD                    | .40  | .29  |
| UDMR                   | .00  | .11  |
|                        | CCA1 | CCA2 |
| EU Membership          | .45  | .01  |
| National Economy       | .32  | -.22 |
| Democracy Satisfaction | .38  | .06  |
| Government Approval    | .47  | -.78 |
| Party Attachment       | .79  | .13  |
| EP Media               | .51  | .38  |

I decide next to remove the 'No vote' category and replicate the entire analysis. As before, I carry out a CCA on the control variable: age, education, class, urban, ethnic, and all control variables are found significant at the .10 level.

| Variables | Chisquare | F     | Pr(>F)  |
|-----------|-----------|-------|---------|
| Education | .04       | 4.63  | .001*** |
| Age       | .01       | 2.09  | .08     |
| Class     | .02       | 3.0   | .02*    |
| Urban     | .03       | 3.34  | .01*    |
| Ethnic    | .56       | 59.81 | .001*** |

The constraint canonical axes explain .17 of the variability. I carry out a CCA for voting preference in association with European and national attitudes, adjusting for (conditioning on) the control variables. Only two variables are found significant : EU Membership (.01 level) and Government Approval (.001 level).

| Variables              | Chisquare | F     | Pr(>F)  |
|------------------------|-----------|-------|---------|
| EU Membership          | .02       | 3.00  | .01*    |
| National Economy       | .01       | 1.79  | .12     |
| Democracy Satisfaction | .00       | .85   | .47     |
| Government approval    | .12       | 13.78 | .001*** |
| EP Media               | .02       | 2.34  | .06     |

The proportion of variability in voter preferences explained by the first two canonical axes is .80 and .15. The factor loadings of the two canonical axes for the response and predicted variables yield the following biplot scores for independent variables and parties:

|                        | CCA1 | CCA2 |      | CCA1 | CCA2 |
|------------------------|------|------|------|------|------|
| PDL                    | .51  | .01  |      |      |      |
| PNL                    | -.56 | .07  |      |      |      |
| PRM                    | -.20 | .44  |      |      |      |
| PSD                    | -.18 | -.17 |      |      |      |
| UDMR                   | -.10 | .13  |      |      |      |
|                        |      |      |      | CCA1 | CCA2 |
| EU Membership          |      |      | .17  |      | -.84 |
| National Economy       |      |      | .29  |      | .07  |
| Democracy Satisfaction |      |      | .05  |      | -.49 |
| Government Approval    |      |      | .90  |      | .08  |
| EP Media               |      |      | -.23 |      | .18  |

APPENDIX C  
LARGE-N ANALYSIS ACROSS TWENTY EUROPEAN UNION (EU) STATES

EES (2004), *European Parliament Election Study 2004, Voter Study*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition (<http://www.ees-homepage.net/>).

EES (2009), *European Parliament Election Study 2009, Voter Study*, [Advance] Release, 23 June 2011, ([www.piredeu.eu](http://www.piredeu.eu)).

As a rule, I reversed the initial coding such that a positive beta coefficient will reflect a positive increase in the probability of the dependent variable happening. In addition, unless otherwise stated, I dropped all 'refuse' and 'don't know' from the analyses.

**Dependent variables:**

'A lot of people abstained in the European Parliament elections of June 4, while others voted. Did you cast your vote? (1yes, 2 no)'. I recoded 1 yes, 0 no.

'Which party did you vote for?'

'Which party did you vote for at the General Election of X?'

**Campaign exposure:**

'How often did you do any of the following during the four weeks before the European election? How often did you:

Watch a program about the election on television? (1 often, 3 never);

Read about the election in a newspaper? (1 often, 3 never)'. I

**EU Attitudes:**

'Generally speaking, do you think that Romania's membership of the European Union is a good thing, a bad thing, or neither good nor bad? (1 good thing, 3 neither)'. I created a dummy variable: 1 good, 0 otherwise.

How much confidence do you have that decisions of the EU will be in the interest of country X? (1 a great deal of confidence, 4 no confidence at all). I reversed the coding.

'Some say European unification should be pushed further. Others say it already has gone too far.

What is your opinion? Please indicate your views using a scale from 0 to 10, where 0 means unification 'has already gone too far' and 10 means it 'should be pushed further'. What number on this scale best describes your position?'

**Entropy measure for the EU dimension:**

'And about where would you place the following parties on this scale?'

**Domestic indicators:**

'In political matters people talk of "the left" and "the right".

What is your position? Please indicate your views using any number on a scale from 0 to 10, where 0 means "left" and 10 means "right". Which number best describes your position?'

**Entropy measure for the left-right dimension:**

'And about where would you place the following parties on this scale?'

'What do you think about the economy? Compared to 12 months ago, do you think that the general economic situation in Romania is 1 a lot better, 5 a lot worse?'

'On the whole, how satisfied are you with the way democracy works in country X? Are you 1 very satisfied, 4 not at all satisfied?'

'Do you approve or disapprove of the government's record to date? (1 approve, 2 disapprove, 8 don't know)'. I recode 1 approve, 0 otherwise.

'Do you consider yourself to be close to any particular party? If so, which party do you feel close to? Do you feel yourself to be very close to this party (1), fairly close, or merely a sympathiser (3)? Do you feel yourself a little closer to one of the political parties than others?' I used the newly released variable (v 301) called *Closeness to Party ordinal scale*, which is a combination of the above mentioned variables, ranging from 0 not feeling close at all to any party, 4 to feeling very close. I recoded 'don't know' and 'unavailable' answers as 'not feeling close'.

**Control variables:**

'What is the highest level of education you have completed in your education? 1 nothing, 15 master.'

'If you were asked to choose one of these five names for your social class, which would you say you belong to – 1 the working class, the lower middle class, the middle class, the upper middle class or 5 the upper class?'

'What year were you born?' I recoded it as age, calculated by subtracting the year when one was born from 2009.

### **Country level indicators**

EU Importance: 'And who do you think would be most appropriate to deal with <the most important issue>: regional, national, or European political authorities? (1 regional, 2 national, 3 European). I calculate the percentages of respondents who answer 'European'.

### **EU Media Focus:**

Banduci, Susan, de Vreese, Claes, Semetko, Holli; Boomgarden, Hajo, Luhiste, Maarja, 2010. *EES Longitudinal Media Study Advance Release Documentation*, 15/10/2010, [www.piredeu.eu](http://www.piredeu.eu)

'Primary topic of the story (i.e major subject of the story taking the most space and time, often mentioned in the headline). Topics have to be referred to/mentioned at least twice in the article or newscast and not just mentioned in passing.'

The % of EU related topics per country, which comprise EU elections, EU politics/EU institutions/competences of the EU institutions and EU integration/EU enlargement as EU related topic. The % were obtained by cross-tabulations

Story evaluating the EU: 0 neutral, 1 negative, 2 rather negative, 3 ambivalent, 4 rather positive and 5 positive. I include the % of negative and rather negative tone obtained by cross-country tabulations.

### **EU Politicization:**

EES 2004, *Euromanifesto Documentation*, <http://www.mzes.uni-mannheim.de/projekte/manifestos/>

EES (2009), *European Parliament Election Study 2009, Manifesto Study Data, Advance Release (user beware/pre-release B)*, 22/07/2010, [www.piredeu.eu](http://www.piredeu.eu).

EU Politicization: Sum of all pro-EU and all anti-EU integration codes expressed as percentages over sum of all left and all right issues coded according to the Manifesto Research Group and expressed as percentages.

APPENDIX D  
DATA FOR EU ATTITUDES ACROSS TWENTY EU STATES

Table D-1. EU Attitudes and voting behavior in 20 member states (Models 3 and 4): 2004 and 2009. Austria and Britain

|                       | Austria   |  |   |  | Britain   |  |   |  |
|-----------------------|---|--|---|--|---|--|---|--|
|                       | 2004<br>Model 3<br>Switching<br>Log<br>odds(r.se) | 2004<br>Model 4<br>Abstaining<br>Log<br>odds(r.se) | 2009<br>Model 3<br>Switching<br>Log<br>odds(r.se) | 2009<br>Model 4<br>Abstaining<br>Log<br>odds(r.se) | 2004<br>Model 3<br>Switching<br>Log<br>odds(r.se) | 2004<br>Model 4<br>Abstaining<br>Log<br>odds(r.se) | 2009<br>Model 3<br>Switching<br>Log<br>odds(se) | 2009<br>Model 4<br>Abstaining<br>Log<br>odds(se) |
| Membership evaluation | .15(.26)  | .87***(.22)  | .59**(.30)  | .78**(.31)   | .66***(.23)                                       | .37*(.21)  | .44(.28)  | .62**(.25)                                       |
| Country interest      | .21(.18)  | .55***(.18)  | .38*(.20)   | .70***(.22)  | .14(.14)  | .11(.13)   | -.15(.19)                                       | -.18(.16)  |
| Econ satis.           | .11(.14)  | .13(.12)   | -.22(.14)   | -.29*(.16)   | .13(.09)  | -.00(.09)  | .12(.14)  | .01(.08)   |
| Dem satis.            | -.00(.16)   | .02(.15)   | .01(.18)  | .04(.19)   | -.45***(.09)                                      | -.31**(.13)  | .14(.16)  | -.04(.13)  |
| Gov. perform          | .29**(.26)  | -.54**(.22)  | -.56**(.26)                                       | -.21(.29)  | .51**(.23)  | .09(.21)   | .19(.29)  | -.21(.24)  |
| Party attach          | .72***(.11)                                       | .52***(.08)  | .64***(.12)                                       | .69***(.14)  | .69***(.09)                                       | .49***(.09)  | .83***(.12)                                     | .38**(.08)                                       |
| Campaign              | .01(.10)  | .23***(.08)  | .06(.10)  | .26**(.12)   | -.07(.07)   | .32***(.07)  | -.24**(.09)                                     | .33***(.08)                                      |
| Education             | .01(.02)  | .05*(.03)  | -.13(.12)   | .03(.15)   | -.00(.01)   | .01(.01)   | -.03(.09)                                       | .15*(.09)  |
| Age                   | .00(.00)  | .00(.00)   | .00(.00)  | .01**(.01)   | .01*(.00)   | .03***(.00)  | .01(.00)  | .03***(.00)                                      |
| Social class          | -.11(.14)   | -.14(.12)  | .00(.15)  | -.08(.15)  | -.05(.10)   | .11(.09)   | -.02(.13)                                       | .24**(.12)                                       |
| Pseudo R              | .12   | .18  | .11   | .18  | .17   | .16  | .13   | .12  |
| N                     | 483   | 582  | 537   | 497  | 586   | 570  | 371   | 461  |

Source: 2004 European Electoral Study; 2009 PIREDEU Voter Study. \*\*\*p<0.001; \*\*p<0.05; \*p<0.1.

Table D-2. EU attitudes and voting behavior in Finland and Denmark

|                       | Finland   |  |   |  | Denmark   |  |   |  |
|-----------------------|---|--|---|--|---|--|---|--|
|                       | 2004<br>Model 3<br>Switching<br>Log<br>odds(r.se) | 2004<br>Model 4<br>Abstaining<br>Log<br>odds(r.se) | 2009<br>Model 3<br>Switching<br>Log<br>odds(r.se) | 2009<br>Model 4<br>Abstaining<br>Log<br>odds(r.se) | 2004<br>Model 3<br>Switching<br>Log<br>odds(r.se) | 2004<br>Model 4<br>Abstaining<br>Log<br>odds(r.se) | 2009<br>Model 3<br>Switching<br>Log<br>odds(r.se) | 2009<br>Model 4<br>Abstaining<br>Log<br>odds(r.se) |
| Membership evaluation | .10(.33)  | .58**(.24)   | .25(.33)  | .31(.28)   | .90***(.22)                                       | .63**(.23)   | .86***(.24)                                       | .38(.31)   |
| Country interest      | .25(.24)  | -.00(.21)  | .22(.24)  | .17(.22)   | .26*(.16)   | .61***(.17)  | .17(.17)  | .37(.25)   |
| Econ satis.           | -.25(.21)   | -.22(.17)  | -.09(.17)   | -.27(.17)  | -.03(.11)   | .06(.12)   | .07(.10)  | -.08(.12)  |
| Dem satis.            | .24(.25)  | .23(.20)   | .15(.26)  | .16(.22)   | .01(.15)  | .25*(.17)  | .21(.15)  | .47**(.23)   |
| Gov. perform          | .04(.39)  | .18(.30)   | .16(.31)  | .39(.28)   | .34(.21)  | -.41**(.23)  | .02(.19)  | -.51(.31)  |
| Party attach          | .59***(.15)                                       | .59***(.12)  | .99***(.18)                                       | .66***(.16)  | .66***(.10)                                       | .35***(.11)  | .79***(.11)                                       | .18(.13)   |
| Campaign              | -.38**(.14)                                       | .09(.11)   | -.18(.14)   | .42***(.12)  | .01(.08)  | .78***(.11)  | -.05(.08)   | .42***(.15)  |
| Education             | -.05**(.02)                                       | .03(.02)   | .09(.12)  | .22*(.12)  | -.02*(.01)  | .03*(.02)  | -.09(.08)   | -.11(.14)  |
| Age                   | .02***(.00)                                       | .02***(.00)  | .02**(.01)  | .03***(.00)  | .00(.00)  | .02***(.00)  | .02***(.00)                                       | .01(.01)   |
| Social class          | .33**(.14)  | .38***(.11)  | -.00(.15)   | .27*(.14)  | -.01(.10)   | -.00(.11)  | -.25** (.10)                                      | -.12(.17)  |
| Pseudo R              | .11   | .14  | .13   | .17  | .13   | .23  | .13   | .10  |
| N                     | 408   | 491  | 524   | 571  | 608   | 602  | 755   | 562  |

Source: 2004 European Electoral Study; 2009 PIREDEU Voter Study. \*\*\*p<0.001; \*\*p<0.05; \*p<0.1.

Table D-3. EU attitudes and voting behavior in France and Germany

|                       | France  |  |   |  | Germany   |  |   |  |
|-----------------------|---|--|---|--|---|--|---|--|
|                       | 2004<br>Model 3<br>Switching<br>Log<br>odds(r.se) | 2004<br>Model 4<br>Abstaining<br>Log<br>odds(r.se) | 2009<br>Model 3<br>Switching<br>Log<br>odds(r.se) | 2009<br>Model 4<br>Abstaining<br>Log<br>odds(r.se) | 2004<br>Model 3<br>Switching<br>Log<br>odds(se) | 2004<br>Model 4<br>Abstaining<br>Log<br>odds(se) | 2009<br>Model 3<br>Switching<br>Log<br>odds(r.se) | 2009<br>Model 4<br>Abstaining<br>Log<br>odds(r.se) |
| Membership evaluation | -.42*(.23)  | .31(.20)   | -.36(.36)   | -.11(.34)  | -.09(.38)                                       | .21(.30)   | .20(.38)  | 1.07***(.36)                                       |
| Country interest      | .46***(.16)                                       | .31**(.15)   | .13(.22)  | .48**(.21)   | .13(.28)  | .35*(.21)  | .11(.23)  | .75***(.26)  |
| Econ satis.           | -.03(.11)   | -.19*(.10)   | .28(.18)  | .06(.14)   | -.08(.16)                                       | .08(.13)   | .13(.17)  | -.17(.18)  |
| Dem satis.            | .01(.14)  | -.04(.12)  | .12(.22)  | .02(.19)   | .24(.24)  | .06(.20)   | .16(.20)  | .47**(.19)   |
| Gov. perform          | -.25(.23)   | .21(.22)   | .83***(.30)                                       | .61**(.30)   | .50(.41)  | .31(.35)   | .19(.28)  | -.03(.32)  |
| Party attach          | .60***(.09)                                       | .47***(.08)  | .43***(.14)                                       | .13(.13)   | 1.04***(.21)                                    | .62***(.16)                                      | .49***(.14)                                       | .53***(.16)  |
| Campaign              | .18**(.09)  | .47***(.08)  | -.13(.12)   | .22*(.11)  | -.07(.13)                                       | .20*(.11)  | .25**(.11)  | .38***(.13)  |
| Education             | .01(.02)  | .04 (.02)  | -.03(.12)   | .00(.11)   | -.04(.02)                                       | .00(.02)   | -.04(.11)   | .22(.14)   |
| Age                   | .01*(.00)   | .03***(.00)  | .02***(.00)                                       | .03***(.00)  | -.00(.00)                                       | .01**(.00)                                       | -.00(.00)   | .00(.00)   |
| Social class          | -.10(.09)   | .03(.08)   | .13(.14)  | .15(.15)   | -.13(.17)                                       | .04(.14)   | -.51***(.42)                                      | -.07(.17)  |
| Pseudo R              | .10   | .16  | .14   | .15  | .14   | .12  | .08   | .20  |
| N                     | 631   | 745  | 316   | 341  | 251   | 306  | 489   | 478  |

Source: 2004 European Electoral Study; 2009 PIREDEU Voter Study. \*\*\*p<0.001; \*\*p<0.05; \*p<0.1.

Table D-4. EU attitudes and voting behavior in the Netherlands and Cyprus

|                       | Netherlands                                       |  |   |  | Cyprus  |  |   |  |
|-----------------------|---|--|---|--|---|--|---|--|
|                       | 2004<br>Model 3<br>Switching<br>Log<br>odds(r.se) | 2004<br>Model 4<br>Abstaining<br>Log<br>odds(r.se) | 2009<br>Model 3<br>Switching<br>Log<br>odds(r.se) | 2009<br>Model 4<br>Abstaining<br>Log<br>odds(r.se) | 2004<br>Model 3<br>Switching<br>Log<br>odds(r.se) | 2004<br>Model 4<br>Abstaining<br>Log<br>odds(r.se) | 2009<br>Model 3<br>Switching<br>Log<br>odds(r.se) | 2009<br>Model 4<br>Abstaining<br>Log<br>odds(r.se) |
| Membership evaluation | -.12(.17)   | .39**(.17)   | -.12(.37)   | -.23(.34)  | .27(.46)  | .40(.43)   | .06(.34)  | .25(.28)   |
| Country interest      | .27**(.12)  | .35**(.13)   | .40**(.19)  | .52**(.20)   | -.36(.27)   | .40(.27)   | -.05(.18)   | .28(.18)   |
| Econ satis.           | -.05(.08)   | .11(.08)   | .02(.12)  | -.08(.13)  | -.10(.18)   | .12(.17)   | .20(.16)  | .15(.14)   |
| Dem satis.            | .16(.12)  | .09(.12)   | .12(.19)  | .21(.20)   | .05(.27)  | -.30(.30)  | .19(.17)  | .23(.17)   |
| Gov. perform          | .18(.16)  | -.11(.17)  | .33(.25)  | .22(.27)   | .13(.39)  | -.15(.44)  | .35(.34)  | .22(.29)   |
| Party attach          | 1.01***(.12)                                      | .83***(.12)  | 1.04***(.15)                                      | .48***(.14)  | 1.50***(.19)                                      | 1.08***(.19)                                       | 1.07***(.15)                                      | .58***(.13)  |
| Campaign              | -.01(.07)   | .44***(.08)  | -.28**(.12)                                       | .40***(.12)  | -.16(.15)   | .51**(.20)   | -.18(.11)   | .49***(.11)  |
| Education             | -.00(.01)   | .00(.01)   | .03(.09)  | .04(.10)   | -.04(.05)   | -.02(.01)  | -.11(.11)   | -.05(.10)  |
| Age                   | -.00**(.00)                                       | .01 (.00)  | .01(.00)  | .03***(.01)  | .00(.01)  | .02(.01)   | -.00(.01)   | -.00(.01)  |
| Social class          | -.13(.08)   | .04(.09)   | .15(.12)  | .14(.13)   | -.01(.16)   | -.05(.22)  | -.21(.17)   | .04(.13)   |
| Pseudo R              | .09   | .13  | .13   | .17  | .32   | .35  | .18   | .17  |
| N                     | 884   | 867  | 580   | 577  | 308   | 291  | 592   | 608  |

Source: 2004 European Electoral Study; 2009 PIREDEU Voter Study. \*\*\*p<0.001; \*\*p<0.05; \*p<0.1.

Table D-5. EU attitudes and voting behavior in Greece and Ireland

|                          | Greece                   |                                      |                            |                             | Ireland                  |                                   |                            |                             |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------------|
|                          | Model 1<br>EP<br>Turnout | Model 2<br>Turnout<br>to<br>national | Model 3<br>Party<br>switch | Model 4<br>Party<br>abstain | Model 1<br>EP<br>Turnout | Model 2<br>Turnout to<br>national | Model 3<br>Party<br>switch | Model 4<br>Party<br>abstain |
|                          | Log<br>odds(rse)         | Log<br>odds(rse)                     | Log<br>odds(rse)           | Log<br>odds(rse)            | Log<br>odds(rse)         | Log<br>odds(rse)                  | Log<br>odds(rse)           | Log<br>odds(rse)            |
| Membership<br>evaluation | -.26(.41)                | .09(.46)                             | -.18(.29)                  | -.11(.30)                   | .11(.23)                 | -.44(.38)                         | .51(.32)                   | -.35(.47)                   |
| Country<br>interest      | .10(.29)                 | .45(.34)                             | .01(.17)                   | .03(.19)                    | .10(.13)                 | -.15(.20)                         | .36**(.16)                 | .07(.22)                    |
| Econ satis.              | .10(.19)                 | .29(.22)                             | .15(.13)                   | .19(.15)                    | -.02(.07)                | -.10(.14)                         | .24*(.13)                  | .35*(.20)                   |
| Dem satis.               | .38(.27)                 | .03(.28)                             | .11(.16)                   | .29*(.17)                   | .04(.10)                 | .31(.19)                          | -.13(.13)                  | -.05(.17)                   |
| Gov. perform             | -.13(.44)                | .03(.46)                             | .61(.37)                   | .69(.45)                    | .23(.17)                 | -.06(.29)                         | -.02(.30)                  | -.32(.49)                   |
| Party attach             | .79***(.20)              | .20(.18)                             | .78***(.13)                | .84***(.13)                 | .56***(.08)              | .40**(.15)                        | .42***(.10)                | .78***(.17)                 |
| Campaign                 | .30*(.16)                | .27(.17)                             | -.05(.10)                  | .31***(.11)                 | .02(.06)                 | .32***(.11)                       | -.09(.08)                  | .28**(.11)                  |
| Education                | -.00(.03)                | -.03(.02)                            | -.03(.11)                  | .20*(.11)                   | -.01(.01)                | .01(.03)                          | -.02(.08)                  | .07(.11)                    |
| Age                      | .00(.01)                 | .02(.01)                             | -.00(.00)                  | .03***(.01)                 | .00(.00)                 | .03***(.00)                       | .01*(.00)                  | .04***(.01)                 |
| Social class             | .07(.20)                 | .18(.21)                             | -.30*(.15)                 | -.46***(.16)                | -.06(.07)                | -.25**(.12)                       | -.03(.12)                  | .13(.15)                    |
| Pseudo R                 | .17                      | .10                                  | .13                        | .25                         | .07                      | .09                               | .07                        | .17                         |
| N                        | 255                      | 242                                  | 545                        | 570                         | 814                      | 604                               | 561                        | 411                         |

Source: 2004 European Electoral Study; 2009 PIREDEU Voter Study. \*\*\*p<0.001; \*\*p<0.05; \*p<0.1.

Table D-6. EU attitudes and voting behavior in Italy and Portugal

|                       | Italy   |  |   |  | Portugal  |  |   |  |
|-----------------------|---|--|---|--|---|--|---|--|
|                       | 2004<br>Model 3<br>Switching<br>Log<br>odds(r.se) | 2004<br>Model 4<br>Abstaining<br>Log<br>odds(r.se) | 2009<br>Model 3<br>Switching<br>Log<br>odds(r.se) | 2009<br>Model 4<br>Abstaining<br>Log<br>odds(r.se) | 2004<br>Model 3<br>Switching<br>Log<br>odds(r.se) | 2004<br>Model 4<br>Abstaining<br>Log<br>odds(r.se) | 2009<br>Model 3<br>Switching<br>Log<br>odds(r.se) | 2009<br>Model 4<br>Abstaining<br>Log<br>odds(r.se) |
| Membership evaluation | -.13(.23)   | -.24(.45)  | -.28(.51)   | .27(.48)   | -.15(.35)   | .13(.29)   | -.36(.39)   | .20(.30)   |
| Country interest      | .01(.14)  | .15(.29)   | -.43*(.23)  | .09(.31)   | .30(.24)  | .01(.19)   | .52*(.27)   | .32(.20)   |
| Econ satis.           | .21(.13)  | -.43*(.24)   | .00(.18)  | -.10(.21)  | .15(.14)  | -.00(.12)  | -.13(.19)   | -.10(.14)  |
| Dem satis.            | .29**(.13)  | .36(.29)   | .07(.17)  | -.17(.27)  | -.12(.21)   | .07(.18)   | .08(.26)  | .21(.20)   |
| Gov. perform          | -.72***(.26)                                      | -.14(.52)  | .06(.32)  | -.66(.41)  | .87**(.35)  | .18(.27)   | .78*(.42)   | .23(.31)   |
| Party attach          | .49***(.10)                                       | .37(.23)   | .50***(.19)                                       | .56**(.24)   | .87***(.25)                                       | .70***(.19)  | 1.14***(.32)                                      | .74***(.21)  |
| Campaign              | -.02(.08)   | .51***(.17)  | -.00(.12)   | .20(.16)   | .06(.14)  | .46***(.11)  | -.24*(.14)  | .26**(.12)   |
| Education             | .00(.01)  | .01(.03)   | -.22(.15)   | .24(.18)   | -.02(.03)   | -.04 (.02)   | .10(.11)  | .15(.11)   |
| Age                   | .02***(.00)                                       | .02*(.01)  | .02*(.01)   | .03***(.01)  | .01(.01)  | .02**(.00)   | .04***(.01)                                       | .05***(.00)  |
| Social class          | -.03(.11)   | -.32(.25)  | .31(.19)  | -.50**(.22)  | .15(.15)  | .04(.12)   | -.41**(.18)                                       | .06(.18)   |
| Pseudo R              | .05   | .09  | .07   | .12  | .13   | .12  | .18   | .19  |
| N                     | 739   | 581  | 429   | 403  | 368   | 431  | 373   | 476  |

Source: 2004 European Electoral Study; 2009 PIREDEU Voter Study. \*\*\*p<0.001; \*\*p<0.05; \*p<0.1.

Table D-7. EU attitudes and voting behavior in Spain and Czech

|                       | Spain   |  |   |  | Czech   |  |   |  |
|-----------------------|---|--|---|--|---|--|---|--|
|                       | 2004<br>Model 3<br>Switching<br>Log<br>odds(r.se) | 2004<br>Model 4<br>Abstaining<br>Log<br>odds(r.se) | 2009<br>Model 3<br>Switching<br>Log<br>odds(r.se) | 2009<br>Model 4<br>Abstaining<br>Log<br>odds(r.se) | 2004<br>Model 3<br>Switching<br>Log<br>odds(r.se) | 2004<br>Model 4<br>Abstaining<br>Log<br>odds(r.se) | 2009<br>Model 3<br>Switching<br>Log<br>odds(r.se) | 2009<br>Model 4<br>Abstaining<br>Log<br>odds(r.se) |
| Membership evaluation | .06(.37)  | -.11(.21)  | .33(.47)  | .72**(.31)   | .28(.37)  | .45(.36)   | .02(.43)  | .31(.26)   |
| Country interest      | .22(.30)  | .05(.15)   | -.26(.23)   | .18(.15)   | -.29(.27)   | .46(.28)   | -.13(.29)   | .16(.18)   |
| Econ satis.           | .17(.23)  | -.09(.13)  | .31*(.17)   | .05(.10)   | -.17(.16)   | -.23(.16)  | -.16(.17)   | -.12(.13)  |
| Dem satis.            | .05(.28)  | .34*(.17)  | -.04(.24)   | .09(.15)   | .13(.23)  | .36(.24)   | .19(.22)  | -.00(.15)  |
| Gov. perform          | .81**(.38)  | .34*(.17)  | .39(.37)  | .13(.24)   | .23(.42)  | -.44(.38)  | -.41(.39)   | -.05(.25)  |
| Party attach          | .86***(.38)                                       | .46***(.11)  | .91***(.28)                                       | .09(.13)   | .62***(.16)                                       | .53***(.14)  | .59***(.22)                                       | .56***(.12)  |
| Campaign              | -.08(.16)   | .16*(.11)  | .02(.15)  | .12(.13)   | .44***(.15)                                       | .66***(.15)  | .22(.15)  | .37***(.10)  |
| Education             | -.05(.03)   | .00(.02)   | -.33**(.15)                                       | -.25***(.08)                                       | -.01(.05)   | .05(.05)   | -.18(.18)   | .03(.12)   |
| Age                   | .03***(.01)                                       | .02***(.00)  | .01(.01)  | .02**(.00)   | -.00(.01)   | .01(.01)   | .00(.01)  | .01**(.00)   |
| Social class          | .36*(.19)   | .44***(.11)  | .19(.18)  | .35***(.11)  | .04(.15)  | -.23(.14)  | .37*(.20)   | .07(.14)   |
| Pseudo R              | .15   | .09  | .12   | .07  | .11   | .19  | .11   | .13  |
| N                     | 543   | 684  | 412   | 576  | 283   | 323  | 571   | 515  |

Source: 2004 European Electoral Study; 2009 PIREDEU Voter Study. \*\*\*p<0.001; \*\*p<0.05; \*p<0.1.

Table D-8. EU attitudes and voting behavior in Estonia and Latvia

|                       | Estonia   |  |   |  | Latvia  |  |   |  |
|-----------------------|---|--|---|--|---|--|---|--|
|                       | 2004<br>Model 3<br>Switching<br>Log<br>odds(r.se) | 2004<br>Model 4<br>Abstaining<br>Log<br>odds(r.se) | 2009<br>Model 3<br>Switching<br>Log<br>odds(r.se) | 2009<br>Model 4<br>Abstaining<br>Log<br>odds(r.se) | 2004<br>Model 3<br>Switching<br>Log<br>odds(r.se) | 2004<br>Model 4<br>Abstaining<br>Log<br>odds(r.se) | 2009<br>Model 3<br>Switching<br>Log<br>odds(r.se) | 2009<br>Model 4<br>Abstaining<br>Log<br>odds(r.se) |
| Membership evaluation | .00(.24)  | .82***(.21)  | -.45(.28)   | .23(.30)   | -.11(.27)   | .24(.28)   | -.36(.26)   | .09(.47)   |
| Country interest      | .14(.19)  | .26*(.15)  | -.07(.19)   | .16(.20)   | -.01(.19)   | .48**(.19)   | -.02(.17)   | .27(.31)   |
| Econ satis.           | -.22*(.12)  | -.02(.11)  | -.13(.16)   | -.18(.18)  | -.15(.12)   | -.12(.13)  | .38*(.22)   | .01(.33)   |
| Dem satis.            | -.35**(.12)                                       | -.00(.15)  | -.11(.15)   | -.29(.19)  | -.05(.16)   | .14(.16)   | .12(.17)  | .03(.26)   |
| Gov. perform          | .30(.25)  | .14(.23)   | .54**(.27)  | 1.30***(.38)                                       | -.22(.27)   | .04(.27)   | -.09(.39)   | 1.05(1.19)   |
| Party attach          | .64***(.14)                                       | .30**(.12)   | .75***(.15)                                       | .53***(.16)  | .55***(.27)                                       | .42**(.16)   | .22(.14)  | 1.50***(.35)                                       |
| Campaign              | -.04(.10)   | .33***(.08)  | -.09(.10)   | .25**(.12)   | -.06(.12)   | .62***(.13)  | -.08(.10)   | .24(.18)   |
| Education             | -.04*(.02)  | -.00(.01)  | .15(.09)  | .27**(.11)   | .02(.02)  | .03(.03)   | .12(.12)  | .37**(.18)   |
| Age                   | .00(.00)  | .02***(.00)  | -.00(.00)   | .01**(.00)   | -.00(.00)   | .01(.00)   | -.00(.00)   | .00(.01)   |
| Social class          | .13(.12)  | .04(.10)   | -   | -.31**(.15)  | -.14(.13)   | .18(.14)   | -.22*(.13)  | .11(.21)   |
|                       |   |  | .45***(.12)                                       |  |   |  |   |  |
| Pseudo R              | .06   | .12  | .10   | .12  | .04   | .17  | .02   | .17  |
| N                     | 454   | 596  | 428   | 351  | 318   | 339  | 443   | 226  |

Source: 2004 European Electoral Study; 2009 PIREDEU Voter Study. \*\*\*p<0.001; \*\*p<0.05; \*p<0.1.

Table D-9. EU attitudes and voting behavior in Hungary and Poland

|                       | Hungary   |  |   |  | Poland  |  |   |  |
|-----------------------|---|--|---|--|---|--|---|--|
|                       | 2004<br>Model 3<br>Switching<br>Log<br>odds(r.se) | 2004<br>Model 4<br>Abstaining<br>Log<br>odds(r.se) | 2009<br>Model 3<br>Switching<br>Log<br>odds(r.se) | 2009<br>Model 4<br>Abstaining<br>Log<br>odds(r.se) | 2004<br>Model 3<br>Switching<br>Log<br>odds(r.se) | 2004<br>Model 4<br>Abstaining<br>Log<br>odds(r.se) | 2009<br>Model 3<br>Switching<br>Log<br>odds(r.se) | 2009<br>Model 4<br>Abstaining<br>Log<br>odds(r.se) |
| Membership evaluation | .36(.42)  | .70***(.20)  | -.60*(.36)  | .28(.28)   | .04(.50)  | .19(.42)   | -.21(.51)   | .86***(.32)  |
| Country interest      | .55**(.21)  | -.10(.15)  | .57**(.26)  | .44**(.17)   | -.28(.28)   | -.23(.24)  | .44(.27)  | .34(.22)   |
| Econ satis.           | -.25(.21)   | -.01(.10)  | .32(.24)  | -.04(.17)  | -.20(.18)   | -.02(.17)  | -.11(.19)   | -.21(.15)  |
| Dem satis.            | .35(.29)  | .37**(.14)   | -.13(.23)   | -.40**(.19)  | .17(.24)  | .72***(.23)  | .50**(.23)  | .34*(.18)  |
| Gov. perform          | -.21(.42)   | -.34(.21)  | -.16(.49)   | -.23(.36)  | -.31(.54)   | -.18(.53)  | -.17(.40)   | .46(.30)   |
| Party attach          | .39**(.19)  | .29***(.09)  | .70***(.19)                                       | 1.13***(.15)                                       | .67***(.20)                                       | 1.12***(.19)                                       | .46**(.21)  | .64***(.16)  |
| Campaign              | -.14(.15)   | .28***(.08)  | -.24*(.13)  | .34***(.10)  | -.08(.15)   | .31**(.19)   | -.16(.17)   | .40***(.12)  |
| Education             | .02(.04)  | .01(.03)   | .27(.16)  | .47***(.12)  | .01(.06)  | -.01(.05)  | .01(.16)  | .52***(.12)  |
| Age                   | .01(.01)  | .02***(.00)  | .03***(.00)                                       | .01***(.00)  | -.00(.01)   | .01(.01)   | -.00(.01)   | .04***(.00)  |
| Social class          | -.00(.18)   | .31***(.10)  | -.04(.20)   | .10(.28)   | .23(.17)  | .67***(.18)  | .02(.17)  | -.04(.14)  |
| Pseudo R              | .06   | .11  | .14   | .29  | .09   | .29  | .06   | .28  |
| N                     | 436   | 636  | 407   | 560  | 158   | 261  | 301   | 460  |

Source: 2004 European Electoral Study; 2009 PIREDEU Voter Study. \*\*\*p<0.001; \*\*p<0.05; \*p<0.1.

Table D-10. EU attitudes and voting behavior in Slovenia and Slovakia

|                       | Slovenia  |  |   |  | Slovakia  |  |   |  |
|-----------------------|---|--|---|--|---|--|---|--|
|                       | 2004<br>Model 3<br>Switching<br>Log<br>odds(r.se) | 2004<br>Model 4<br>Abstaining<br>Log<br>odds(r.se) | 2009<br>Model 3<br>Switching<br>Log<br>odds(r.se) | 2009<br>Model 4<br>Abstaining<br>Log<br>odds(r.se) | 2004<br>Model 3<br>Switching<br>Log<br>odds(r.se) | 2004<br>Model 4<br>Abstaining<br>Log<br>odds(r.se) | 2009<br>Model 3<br>Switching<br>Log<br>odds(r.se) | 2009<br>Model 4<br>Abstaining<br>Log<br>odds(r.se) |
| Membership evaluation | -.04(.42)   | .10(.34)   | -.26(.40)   | .36(.33)   | -.04(.54)   | .31(.26)   | -.23(.47)   | .22(.26)   |
| Country interest      | .22(.22)  | .67***(.20)  | .12(.17)  | .62***(.21)  | -.41(.37)   | .20(.18)   | -.26(.29)   | .59***(.21)  |
| Econ satis.           | -.02(.16)   | .03(.13)   | .19(.19)  | -.13(.16)  | .00(.21)  | .13(.11)   | .06(.19)  | .18(.12)   |
| Dem satis.            | -.12(.25)   | .08(.21)   | .16(.19)  | -.09(.19)  | .19(.39)  | .12(.18)   | -.05(.24)   | .27*(.15)  |
| Gov. perform          | .43(.34)  | -.04(.29)  | -.73***(.27)                                      | -.57**(.25)  | -.75(.52)   | .17(.18)   | -.26(.34)   | -.26(.34)  |
| Party attach          | .27*(.16)   | .45***(.14)  | .23*(.13)   | .38***(.13)  | .45*(.24)   | .16(.11)   | .59***(.20)                                       | .59***(.20)  |
| Campaign              | .25*(.15)   | .45***(.14)  | .26**(.12)  | .45***(.11)  | .57***(.21)                                       | .52***(.10)  | .13(.14)  | .13(.14)   |
| Education             | -.01(.02)   | .01(.02)   | .09(.10)  | -.06(.11)  | -.13*(.07)  | .08*(.04)  | -.33**(.17)                                       | -.33**(.17)  |
| Age                   | .00(.01)  | .03***(.00)  | .00(.00)  | .02***(.00)  | -.02*(.01)  | .02***(.00)  | -.02*(.01)  | -.02*(.01)   |
| Social class          | .02(.16)  | -.09(.12)  | -.19(.12)   | .14(.13)   | .03(.32)  | -.04(.16)  | -.10(.18)   | -.10(.18)  |
| Pseudo R              | .05   | .21  | .05   | .16  | .10   | .13  | .08   | .08  |
| N                     | 236   | 345  | 467   | 542  | 248   | 531  | 332   | 332  |

Source: 2004 European Electoral Study; 2009 PIREDEU Voter Study. \*\*\*p<0.001; \*\*p<0.05; \*p<0.1.

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## BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

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