

## **Political campaign, government approval and EU elections\***

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\* Prepared for delivery to the panel ‘La campagna elettorale e le elezioni europee, 2009’, Società Italiana di Scienza Politica Annual Conference, LUISS, Rome, September 17-19, 2009.

**Abstract:** Whether EU elections are best seen by citizens as secondary elections or truly European ones is a matter of scholarly debate. This paper assesses the explanatory power of different interpretative models of voting behavior in the 2009 European elections. We focus, on the one hand, on models linking the European vote to national political concerns (‘Second Order’ model) and to the domestic electoral cycle (‘Midterm’ model) and, on the other hand, on interpretations based on the role of the electoral campaign, European issues and attitudes of both parties and voters towards the EU (what we will call the ‘Europe Matters’ model). We discuss a composite model which tries to implement the salient predictors from each of the former models, so as to provide a more solid account for the dynamic of individual voting behavior in European elections. It is also found that Europe-related factors play a larger role than usually ascertained.

## Introduction

European elections are at odds with the traditional notion of representation and democratic accountability. At national level, elections connect representation with democracy: through them citizens elect their representatives and (directly or indirectly) a government. Elections can be viewed from two different perspectives (and citizens may employ these two different perspectives - or both - in order to cast their ballots) (Manin, Przeworski and Stokes, 1999). In the first one – the ‘mandate’ view – elections serve to select good policies. Representatives are ‘mandates’, and citizens tell them what they should do. Choice is therefore based on choosing future policies (prospective evaluation). In the alternative perspective – that of ‘accountability’ – elections serve the purpose of holding the government responsible, and citizens evaluate the performance of the government, whether they have done what they should have (retrospective evaluation).

European elections are not followed by a process of government formation and neither prospective nor retrospective evaluations apply directly. Moreover, the European party system is based on national parties, and European electoral campaigns have traditionally been dominated by national issues (de Vreese *et al.*, 2006). This has led political scientists to hold what can be qualified as the classical view of European elections as ‘second order’ contests (Reif and Schmitt 1980). This perspective highlights the importance of national issues driving the vote at supranational elections. Nevertheless, in the last years some scholars have shown the increased weight of European elements in the campaign and the final choice of citizens. These rival models try to explain what the nature of the connection between voters and the EU is like – national or European. In this paper we will look at the empirical evidence and compare both types of explanations focusing on the vote share in EU elections for governing parties. Next section will briefly review the literature on models of voting behavior in European elections. The various models presented in the literature will be tested at both bivariate and multivariate level, and their results will be compared with those from our ‘composite’ model. The four models will be further reassessed using governing parties ‘Eurogap’ (that is, the differential in votes between EU election and most recent national elections) as the dependent variable.

## Alternative explanations of European Elections

Franklin, van der Eijk, and Oppenhuis (1996) have shown that voters have not developed preferences for different European policies. European elections are held on the basis of national political concerns instead of European issues, being ‘**second-order elections**’ that reflect national processes. In first order elections people decides who governs the country, while in second order elections voters are driven by national political cues having in mind the same party system and political parties of first order elections (Reif and Schmitt, 1980; Franklin and van der Eijk, 1996; Thomassen *et al.*, 2004). In European elections the electoral turnout is lower than in national elections. Parties dedicate less resources and time to European elections, and this affects the electoral turnout. Without information on the position of the parties about European issues, voters cannot situate neither the parties nor themselves. As a consequence, EP elections are a reflection of national issues, and even serve to punish national governments, as parties in national opposition are likely to gain consensus at the European Parliament<sup>1</sup> (Lord, 2001). Furthermore, voters are thought to use ‘the heart instead of the head’ in European elections, voting for the parties closer to their preferences and ideological outlook. In turns, this makes larger parties to lose and smaller parties to gain vote with respect to national parliamentary elections (Oppenhuis, van der Eijk, and Franklin 1996). Summing up, second order theory affirms that: a) there is a lower turnout in European elections than in national parliamentary elections; b) voters behaves differently between types of election: some of them switch their vote in order to punish parties that are in government or to vote sincerely for the parties they like the most, instead of strategically choose parties that can gain the power at national level; c) large parties, especially those in government, lose votes to smaller parties in the opposition.

As a corollary to ‘second-order elections’ theory, some scholars have pointed out that both turnout and electoral volatility in European elections depend on the phase of the electoral cycle at national level. European elections are conceived as ‘**midterm elections**’, and depending on when European elections take place within the national electoral cycle, citizens will show different patterns of voting behaviour (Reif, 1984,

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<sup>1</sup> This is especially true in the light of June 2009 European elections results, as parties in government were punished in most of the countries and new extreme parties got in some instances striking results (i.e., the *Pirates Party* in Sweden, or the *Dutch Party for Freedom*).

Van der Eijk *et al.*, 1996). When the European elections immediately follow national elections, governments are in the ‘honeymoon period’ and the loss is very little or null. This switch is more important when European elections occur at the midterm of the national cycle, serving as a critical test of the performance of the party(ies) in government. When European elections are held shortly before national elections turn out will increase as voters try to influence up-coming national elections. As a consequence, citizens have stronger incentives to act strategically, and although they can punish parties in government, there is a lower switch to smaller parties. Hence governing parties perform worst in European elections when they are in the midterm than both at the beginning or the end of the cycle. Moreover, empirical evidence shows that the popularity of the government also affects the electoral switch independently of the national electoral cycle. Popular governments lose fewer votes than those unpopular, being this influence for example more important in European than in local elections (Heath *et al.*, 1999). The economic record of the government also explains why governing parties have less support at European than at previous national elections (Kousser, 2004).

Despite this classical view about European elections, a growing body of literature contends that ‘**Europe matters**’ and that its influence on voting has increased overtime, with the strengthening of the Parliament’s powers over the Commission and a somewhat greater visibility of European issues. The salience of Europe is exercised through the parties’ positions over the European policy space. According to Ferrara and Weishaupt (2004) parties with a greater opposition to Europe perform better than those more pro-Europe. The second dimension in which policy positions affect voters is in the left-right dimension. Those parties in the extremes (both left and right) are supposed to be more anti-Europe than parties in the center (Ray, 1999)<sup>2</sup>. Mass attitudes towards the European integration also affect turnout in European elections. Empirical individual

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<sup>2</sup> There are different models of contestation in Europe. Marks and Steenbergen propose a model of contestation which is driven by these two dimensions: a left–right and a pro–anti European integration, being those two dimensions related to each other (oblique). The left–right dimension goes from social democracy to market liberalism and the pro–anti integration from nationalism to supranationalism. Other scholars have interpreted contestation in the European political space differently. The international relations model understands that both left/right and integration dimensions are independent and what is more important is the integration dimension. The model proposed by Simon Hix and Christopher Lord explains contestation based on these two dimensions, but being independent one of each other (orthogonal). Finally, the regulation model, proposed by Tsebelis and Garrett, explains integration on a single dimension: left/right. According to them the left/right dimension that have structured domestic politics have absorbed the dimension on European integration, that is an expression of the left/right conflicts (see Steenbergen and Marks, 2004).

level evidence has shown that pro-integration citizens are more likely to vote in European elections (Blondel, Sinnott, and Svensson, 1997). As a consequence, those countries with higher levels of mass support for the European integration show higher rates of participation in European elections. It is not clear however what effect, if any, have mass attitudes towards Europe on the electoral performance of governing parties, and in this paper we will try to shed some light on this.

Also the electoral campaign has important effects on citizens' turnout and vote choice. Those parties and governments that campaign intensively for the EU elections can augment the interest citizens have on these elections and influence the electoral turnout. Banducci and Semetko (2003) show that greater visibility to European campaigns enhances turnout. Also the 'tone of the campaign has an impact: content analysis of coverage news show (in 1999 and 2004) prevalent negative evaluations of the EU to appear in the media. Their relationship with turnout is however curvilinear: negative evaluations of EU mobilize voters, but up to a threshold above which turnout is depressed (Banducci and Semetko, 2004). Giving importance to Europe also influences the results and not only the participation. Ferrara and Weishaupt (2004) suggest that those parties that assign significance to Europe (positive or negative) perform better at European elections than those who give not relevance to Europe. Unfortunately, research connecting campaigning and media effects to voting choice is rather scant, and comparative and structured data on media's coverage is emerging slowly (de Vreese *et al.*, 2006, p. 479). In particular, how government (and opposition) parties campaigned over Europe is of paramount importance in analyzing the strategies of political actors, connecting parties' campaign outlook to their EU policy preferences, approval rate and phase of the electoral cycle. Although the availability of such data from the European Election Study is imminent, in this paper we can rely only on some proxies to assess the impact of the campaign on the vote, as explained below.

### **Data and Methodology**

As Hix and Marsh has suggested (2007) the better way to resolve conflicting hypothesis about European elections and investigate why citizens switch votes from national to European elections is to use aggregate level data. We use OLS regression to estimate a number of alternative models, and finally our composite model. Differently from previous studies, which have analyzed the switch among all the parties, our units of

analysis are governments' (that is, parties in government) electoral results. We are not interested in which parties gain in European elections and which parties lose. We want to know what happens to governing parties in European elections. We will present results for two different dependent variables. *euvote09* is the percentage of vote share in last European elections for the parties in government across Europe. *eurogap* is the differential in the percentage of votes for parties in government between last national parliamentary elections and European elections. We will use data for all members of the EU except the smaller countries (Malta, Luxemburg and Cyprus). Our dataset is composed of 62 parties in government over of 24 EU member states.

<--- Table 1 Right Here --->

Our model is based on the idea that both types of explanations are valid and work in European elections. As second order theory affirms, we believe that national issues are still very important for explaining citizens' behaviour in European elections. When European elections are taking place within the national electoral cycle can also be an important key for explaining the switch between both types of elections. But we take into account the popularity the governments previous to the European elections as an influential element in the final choice. We will also present a model that highlights the importance of European level issues, including the position of the parties and the citizenry with respect to Europe. We do not include in our model the position of the parties in the left-right dimension because our analysis is based on parties on the government, and this variable works better as an explanation when the unit of analysis are parties from government and opposition. Our model also takes into account the effect of the campaign by including the interest people have in the campaign at the moment the European elections are taking place<sup>3</sup>. We also control whether a country is a recent or an old member of the EU, as in new countries the electoral volatility is much higher than in old countries (see for example Tavits, 2005) – and thus ruling parties are thought to lose less in the latter. Our final model tries to include the most relevant explanations from each of the previous ones.

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<sup>3</sup> It would be startegic to have data on two different aspects. On the one hand, which issues were salient in European elections in the different countries. On the other hand, to what extent this campaign was based on European or on national issues. These data were not available at the moment this analysis has taken place. We will try to include them in further analysis.

The following independent variables will be included in the models:

- *votelast* is the percentage of votes for each party in government in its last parliamentary elections. This variable serves as the baseline to calculate the gap between these elections and European elections (source: [www.parties-and-elections.de](http://www.parties-and-elections.de));
- *time* reflects the national electoral cycle and is based on the number of months between the last national parliamentary elections and the European elections of 2009 (authors' calculations);
- *popgovt2* is the popularity of government in the second semester of the year 2009 (that is, the closest observation in time to the European election; detailed specification of national sources and question format is provided in Appendix);
- *unemployment2* represents the percentage of unemployed in each country during the second quarter of 2009 (source: EUROSTAT);
- *npig* is the number of parties that are in government in each country (source: [www.parties-and-elections.de](http://www.parties-and-elections.de));
- *turnout* reflects the electoral turnout to the last European elections at the aggregate level for each of the 24 countries analysed (source: [www.europarl.eu](http://www.europarl.eu));
- *old\_new* is a dichotomous variable that reflects whether a country is an old (EU15) or a new member of the Union (EU27): those who are old members are coded 1 and new members 0;
- *proconeu* taps the position of the parties in relation to the European Union: each party is assigned a score from 0 (completely against EU) to 7 (completely in favor) (source: expert survey conducted by the North Carolina Chapel Hill University published in 2006);
- *partylr* is the position of the parties in the left-right dimension (source: same expert survey as above);
- *eumassat* are mass attitudes towards the EU (source: Eurobarometer 69.2): data represent the percentage of citizens in each country who declare to trust European institutions;
- *interest2* is the percentage of citizens who declared to be interested in the European campaign (source: survey conducted by TNS/Opinion in mid-May 2009 for the European Parliament).

## Results

The ‘Second Order’ model fits perfectly with the results of the most recent elections to the European Parliament. Without exceptions, turnout in EU election is lower as compared with that of most recent legislative elections in each country. Governing parties suffered losses in almost every nation (with the exception of Finland and Poland, plus the *quasi draw* of Italian government). Moreover, in line with our expectations losses are more accentuated for New member countries’ governments – where electoral volatility is higher (see Figure 1).

<--- Figure 1 Right Here --->

Also the ‘Midterm’ model applies fairly well to the most recent electoral results. The timing of EU election within the national electoral cycle in particular had the hypothesized effect on the vote share for governing parties. Governments in ‘honeymoon’ with their electorates proved to be those losing fewer votes. After the first year of government however, and the more they approach midterm, the losses become more consistent – while governments near the end of the legislature seem to better have ‘contained the damage’ (see Figure 2).

<--- Figure 2 Right Here --->

The popularity of the government, often overlooked in the mainstream literature dealing with European elections, emerges as well as a significant determinant of governing parties’ support in EU elections. The results of June 2009 are quite telling in this respect: *popular governments lose fewer votes than unpopular ones*. Figure 3 presents the crosstabulation between government popularity in the second quarter of 2009 (measured as the percentage of citizens declaring to trust the incumbent government or to approve the way in which it is handling its job; for exact question wording in each country see Appendix) and their electoral performance in European election as compared with the previous national election<sup>4</sup>. Looking at the figure, we can appreciate

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<sup>4</sup> This analysis has been performed only on the ten countries for which we have comparable data: Austria, Czech Republic, Finland, France, Ireland, Italy, Romania, Slovenia, The Netherlands, United Kingdom. Despite the low number of cases, we believe that this preliminary finding was worth inclusion in the paper for the consistency of the pattern and in the light of the fact that countries included represent a fair sample of European nations in terms of both size and time of accession.

that the less popular governments (the British and the Irish) are also those who reported the greatest losses among the ten under analysis, while the most popular of the maze (e.g., Finland) is as well the only one who actually *gained* votes with respect to the last national election.

<--- Figure 3 Right Here --->

The variables employed in the ‘Europe Matters’ model highlight the importance of political, and in particular Europe-related, aspects as determinant of voting decision. As said, the influence of Europe in this model is exerted through the parties’ policy positions. More anti-Europe parties are thought to perform better as compared to more moderate centrist forces (Ferrara and Weishaupt 2004). Figure 4 is aimed at understanding what exactly is the relationship between governing parties attitudes towards the EU and their electoral fortunes in European elections. Governments are scored on a scale from 0 to 7, ranging from completely against European integration to completely in favor. Interestingly, and quite unexpectedly, we found that the more a government is pro-Europe, the more contained are its electoral losses – with the significant exception of Italy, to which is due the inconsistent placement of the trend line’s intercept.

<--- Figure 4 Right Here --->

Finally, what is the effect of the electoral campaign on voting for governing parties? First, our data show that mass interest for the campaign increases the most when national elections are approaching (e.g., roughly after the third year of the legislature). At second, we also found that higher rates of turnout are to be found in those countries where mass interest in the campaign between February and May has increased the most. What concerns us the most however is the effect of growing interest for the campaign on governing parties’ electoral performance. The bivariate analysis points towards rather ambiguous conclusions. It seems like the losses are contained the most when the interest does not increase at all (or decreases) and when it rises very much. On the other hand, when mass interest in the campaign rises only moderately, we find the bigger losses for governing parties (see Figure 5). However, not taking into account the two cases on the upper-right quadrant of the figure (e.g., Poland and Portugal), what emerges is a fairly

linear negative relationship. The multivariate analysis that follows will be helpful in clarifying this and other doubts raised throughout this section.

<--- Figure 5 Right Here --->

Previous analyses have shown that also the context is important in studying European elections (see for example Hix and Marsh, 2007). Governing parties should lose more in systems with more instable party systems and higher electoral volatility as is the case of new members of the EU (Tavits, 2005). Figure 6 shows us that in those new member states the gap between national and European elections for the governing parties is higher than in old members.

<--- Figure 6 Right Here --->

Table 2 shows the statistical estimates of rival explanatory models with the percentage of vote for governing parties in the last 2009 EP elections as our dependent variable. The predictive power of the first two models is comparable to the one which taps European issues. Moreover, the composite model shows us that what mainly matters in explaining the vote at European elections are elements based at the national level. From the second order model we observe that although parties in government lose votes in European elections, most of the voters behave in a similar way in both elections. Logically, in most stable party systems — in old member states of the EU — voters are more stable than in new member states of the EU where empirical studies have found higher electoral volatility, and hence governing parties lose less in Old Europe. In our final model we can see that the electoral cycle at the national level influence the vote choice at the European level in a negative way, the longer the time elapsed since the last national Parliamentary elections the lower the vote for parties in government. But also the popularity the government at the time of European elections explains citizens' choice, and those parties in popular governments lose fewer votes than parties in less popular governments.

Nevertheless, also Europe matters in European elections. In countries where citizens have a more positive image of the EU, parties in government at the national level receive more votes at the European elections than in countries where citizens have a more negative image. This makes sense since in general ruling parties tend to have a

more positive orientation towards the EU as compared to those in opposition. Moreover, we can see that there is an effect of the campaign in citizens' choice at the European level. In those countries where citizens are more interested in the campaign for the EP elections, parties in the government receive fewer votes than parties in countries where the citizens are not interested in the campaign. Unfortunately with the available data is not possible to assess whether this is due to a different campaign strategy of parties in government and in opposition. The campaign also affects the vote choice through the position of the parties in relation to Europe. The more the parties in the government defend the EU the more votes receive in European elections. We have no explanation why the campaign affects in such a way. But this encourages us to further investigate how campaigning at the European level works.

<--- Table 2 Right Here --->

The estimates of the models when the dependent variable is the vote gap between national and European levels for each party in government - Table 3 - allow us to observe some interesting differences with respect to the models that predict the simple vote share for governments in EP elections. For here the importance of European issues gets higher as compared to the previous models. The second and third predictors with higher standardized coefficients are both related to the European dimension. Governments from countries with more positive mass attitudes towards the EU are less likely to lose votes in EP elections. On the contrary, governments from countries in which citizens are very interested in the European campaign have a higher (negative) gap between national and European elections. In relation to issues based at national level, the electoral cycle, the popularity of the government and whether a country is an old or a new member of the EU also affect the gap between both elections. The longer the time since last national Parliamentary elections the higher the gap in European elections. More popular governments and those from old member states have a smaller gap than more unpopular governments and those from new member states.

<--- Table 3 Right Here --->

## **Conclusions**

It seems that when voting in European elections, citizens use cues based principally at national level. The electoral cycle (that is, the time elapsed since last national Parliamentary elections have taken place), the popularity of the government, or whether a country is from new or old members are all important determinants of the vote at European level. Europe also matters, although much less than national aspects. Citizens' attitudes towards the EU and the interest they have in the campaign affect their vote choice at the European level. Indeed, when trying to explain the gap between both elections, Europe is more important than previous studies have shown. Mass attitudes towards the EU and the interest citizens have in the campaign, which were also significant determinants of the vote in European elections, gain explanatory power in clarifying the gap between both elections. As a result, it seems that the electoral campaign at the European level affects people choice in an important sense. More research in this topic with new data on the content of the campaign and the salience of the topics is needed. That would allow to better understand how European campaign affects the choice people make in European elections and the seemingly unavoidable gap governments suffer between both types of elections.

**Table 1 – Countries under analysis and parties in government**

<b>Country</b>	<b>Parties in Government</b>	
Austria	SPÖ	Social Democratic Party of Austria
	ÖVP	Austrian People's Party
Belgium	CD&V	Christian Democratic and Flemish
	N-VA	New Flemish Alliance
	MR	Reformist Movement
	VLD	Flemish Liberals and Democrats
	CDH	Humanist Democratic Centre
	PS	Socialist Party
Bulgaria	BSP/kZb	Coalition for Bulgaria
	DPS	Movement for Rights and Freedoms
Czech Republic	ODS	Civic Democratic Party
	CSSD	Czech Social Democratic Party
Denmark	V	Venstre, Liberal Party of Denmark
	KF	Conservative People's Party
Estonia	RE	Reform Party
	ILR	Pro Patria and Res Publica Union
Finland	KESK	Finnish Center Party
	KOK	National Coalition Party
	VIHR	Green League
	SFP	Swedish People's Party
France	UMP	Union for Popular Movement
	MPF	Movement for France
Germany	CDU/CSU	Christian Democratic Union
	SPD	Social Democratic Party of Germany
Greece	ND	New Democracy
Hungary	SZDSZ	Free Democrats
	MSZP	Hungarian Socialist Party
Ireland	FF	Soldiers of Destiny/Fianna Fail
	GP	Family of the Irish/Finne Gael
	PD	Progressive Democrats
Italy	PDL	People's Freedom
	LN	Northern League
Latvia	JL	New Era
	TP	People's Party
	ZZS	Union of Greens and Peasants
	TB/LNNK	Fatherland and Freedom
	PS	Civic Union
Lithuania	TS-LKD	Homeland Union - Christian Democrats
	TPP	Rising Nation Party
	LRLS	Liberals' Movement of the Republic of Lithuania
	LICS	Liberal and Centre Union
The Netherlands	CDA	Christian Democratic Appeal
	PVDA	Labour Party
	CU	Christian Union

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<b>Country</b>	<b>Parties in Government</b>	
Poland	PO	Civic Platform
	PSL	Polish People's Party
Portugal	PS	Socialist Party
Romania	PDS + PC	Social Democratic Party + Conservative Party
	PDL	Democratic Party
Slovakia	SMER-SD	Direction - Social Democracy
	SNS	Slovak National Party
Slovenia	LS-HZDS	People's Party - Movement Democratic Slovakia
	SD	Slovenian Democratic Party
	Z	For Real
	LDS	Liberal Democracy of Slovenia
Spain	DeSUS	Democratic Party of Pensioners of Slovenia
	PSOE	Spanish Socialist Workers' Party
Sweden	M	Moderate Party
	C	Center Party
	FP	Liberal People's Party
	KD	Christian-Democrats
United Kingdom	LAB	Labour Party

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**Table 2** – Regression Estimates (OLS) Models 1-4

	<b>Second Order</b>	<b>Mid-term</b>	<b>European Politics</b>	<b>Composite Model</b>
votelast	0.734*** (0.844)			0.662*** (0.791)
turnout	-0.0752 (-0.128)		-0.125 (-0.215)	
time	-0.0801 (-0.0917)	0.0355 (0.0381)	0.126 (0.147)	-0.137* (-0.154)
old_new	4.272** (0.187)			3.675* (0.161)
popgovt2		0.313*** (0.576)		0.0898* (0.160)
unemployment2		1.165** (0.363)		
Npig		-6.751*** (-0.557)		-1.122 (-0.0967)
interest2			0.199 (0.185)	-0.256** (-0.185)
eumassat			-0.0307 (-0.0258)	0.249* (0.199)
proconeu			3.085** (0.313)	1.041 (0.110)
partylr			0.190 (0.0285)	
Observations	60	44	57	47
Adj R-squared	0.732	0.407	0.104	0.777

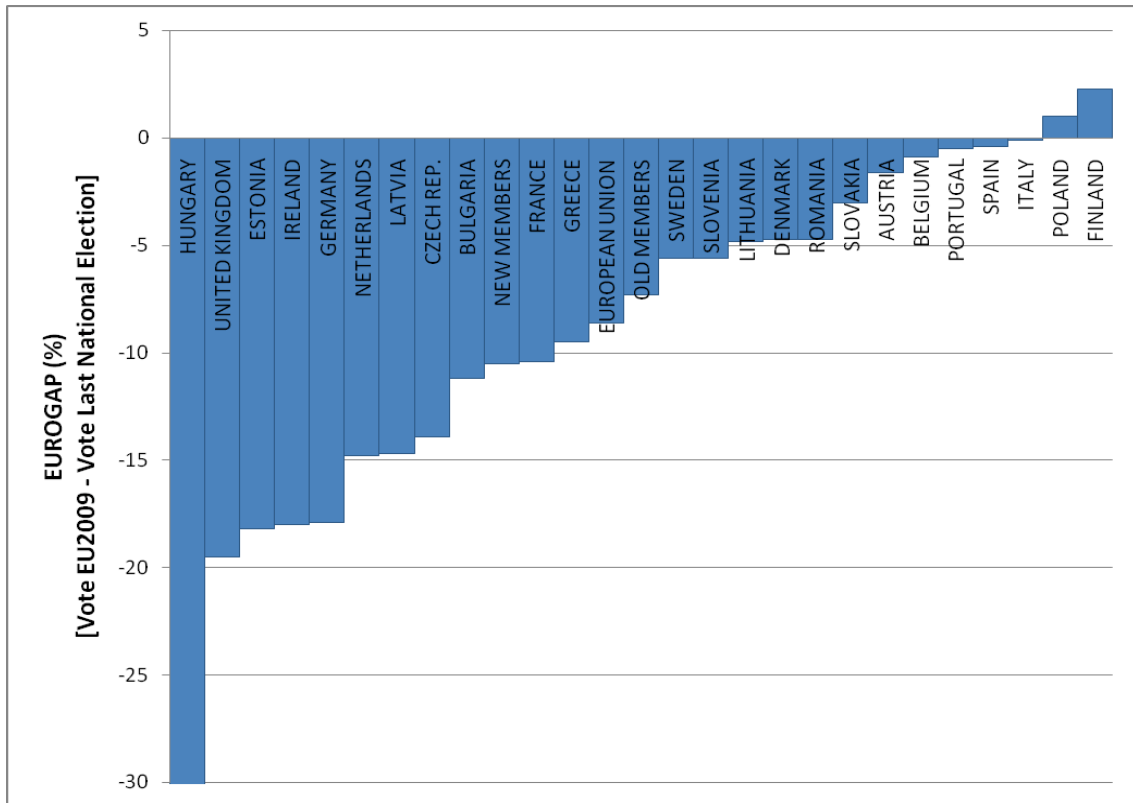
*Note:* Dependent variable: vote in 2009 European elections. Standardized coefficients in parentheses. \*\*\* p<0.01, \*\* p<0.05, \* p<0.1

**Table 3** – Regression Estimates (OLS) Models 5-8

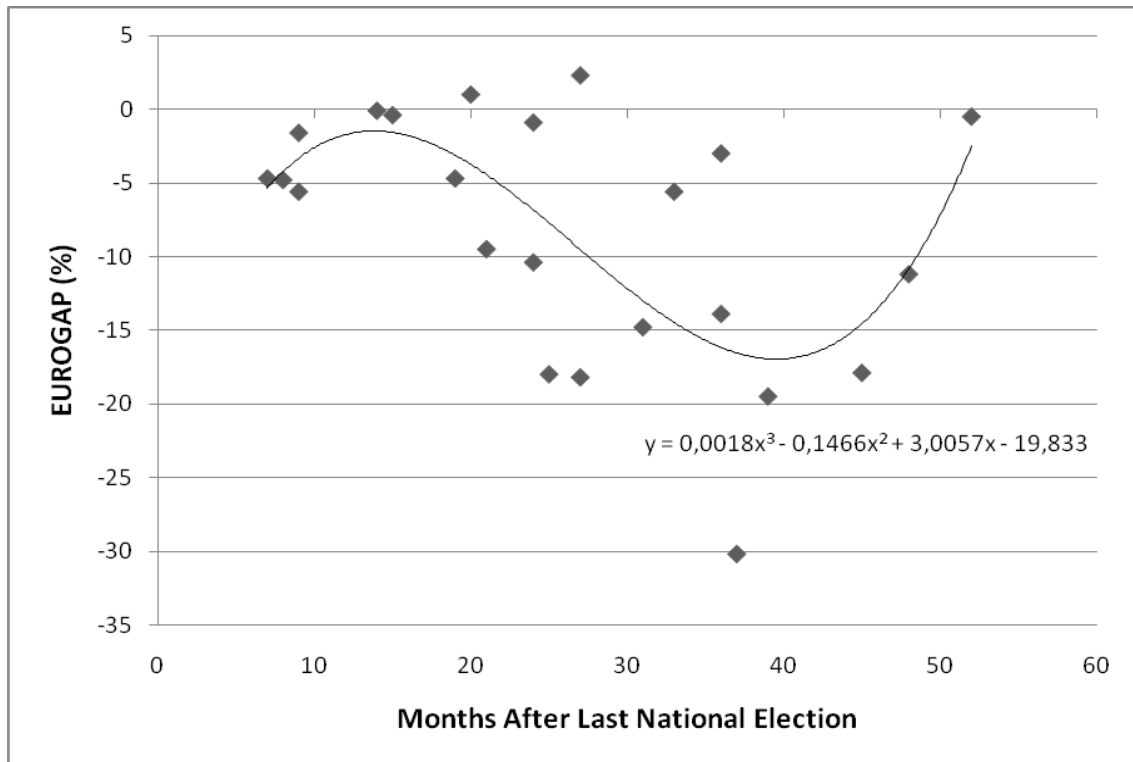
	<b>Second Order</b>	<b>Mid-term</b>	<b>European Politics</b>	<b>Composite Model</b>
votelast	-0.266*** (-0.509)			-0.338*** (-0.667)
turnout	-0.0753 (-0.214)		-0.0112 (-0.0317)	
time	-0.0800 (-0.153)	-0.0960 (-0.173)	-0.0777 (-0.149)	-0.137* (-0.253)
old_new	4.273** (0.312)			3.678* (0.266)
popgovt2		0.0201 (0.0623)		0.0898* (0.264)
unemployment2		-0.0255 (-0.0134)		
npig		1.256 (0.174)		-1.123 (-0.160)
interest2			-0.00229 (-0.00348)	-0.255** (-0.305)
eumassat			0.204* (0.281)	0.249* (0.328)
proconeu			-0.396 (-0.0659)	1.041 (0.181)
partylr			0.303 (0.0745)	
Observations	60	44	57	47
Adj R-squared	0.255	-0.001	0.010	0.397

Note: Dependent variable: gap between national and European elections. Standardized coefficients in parentheses. \*\*\* p<0.01, \*\* p<0.05, \* p<0.1

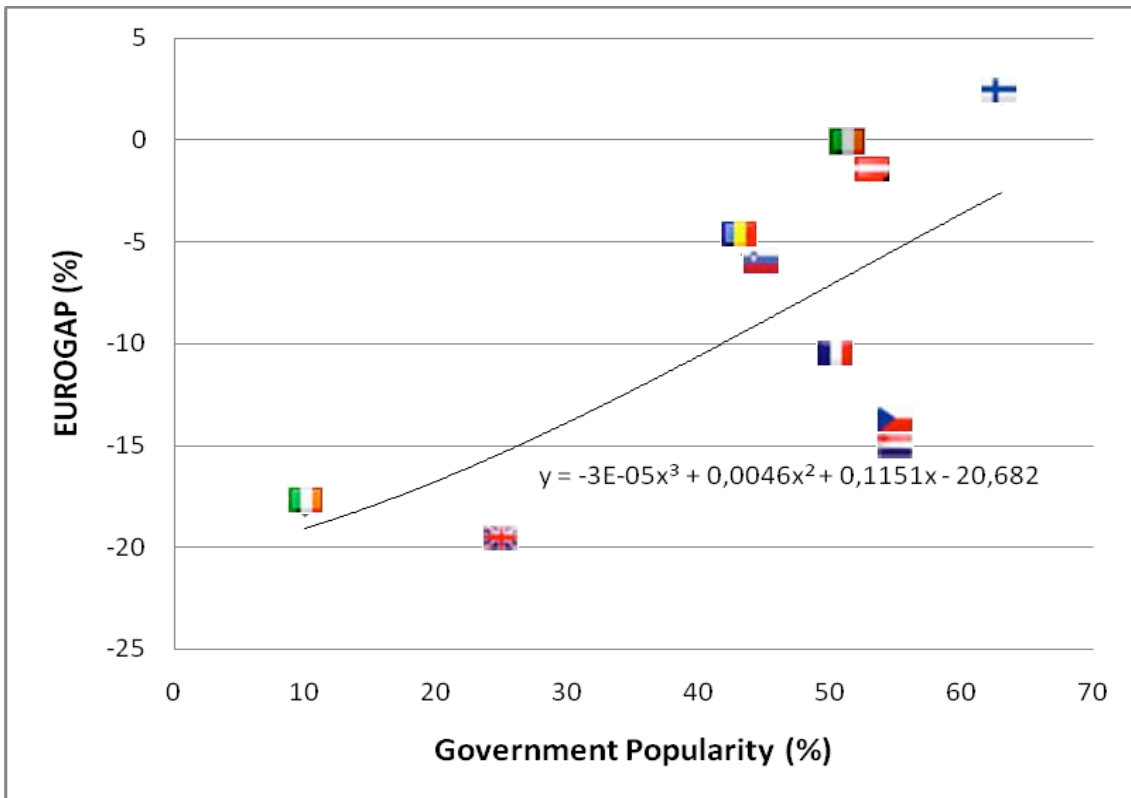
**Figure 1** – ‘Eurogap’ for Parties in Gov’t (last EP election minus last national election)



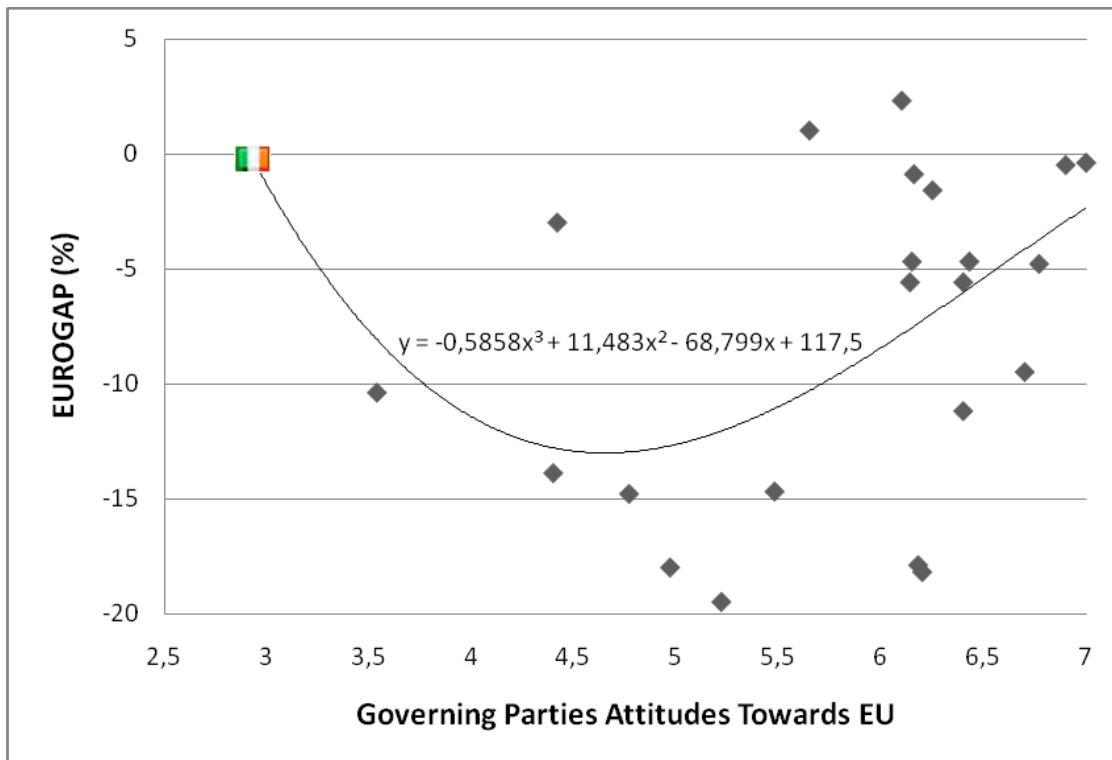
**Figure 2** – Timing of EU Election within the National Electoral Cycle \* Eurogap



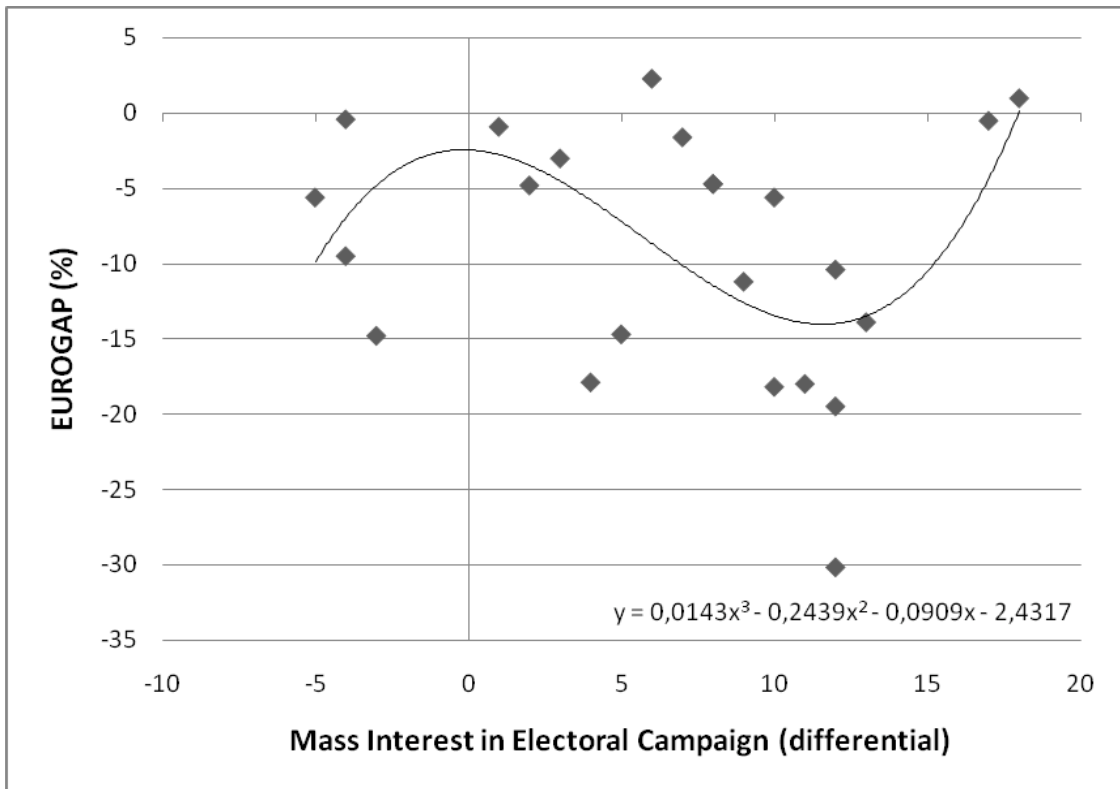
**Figure 3 - Government Popularity \* Eurogap**



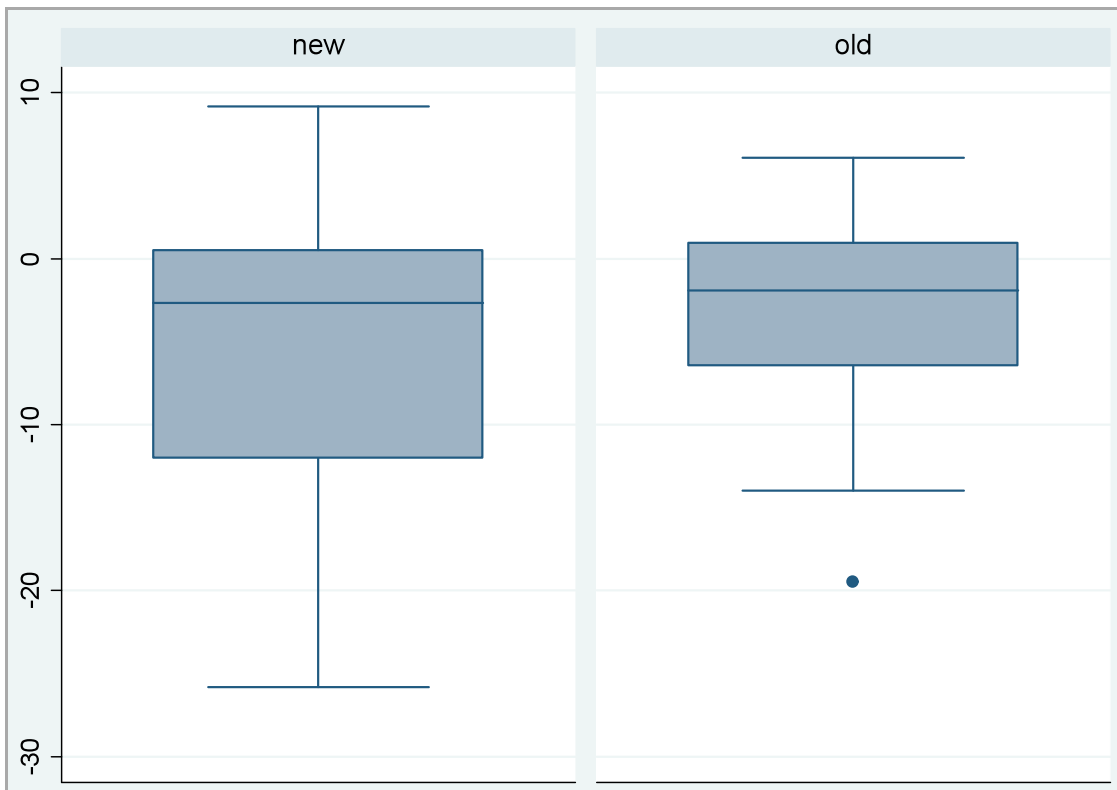
**Figure 4 – Government Attitudes Towards European Integration \* Eurogap**



**Figure 5 – Mass Interest in the Campaign ( $t_2 - t_1$ ) \* Eurogap**



**Figure 6 – Eurogap: Old vs. New Members of the EU (mean, std. deviation and range)**



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## **Appendix: Sources and Question Wording for Government Popularity<sup>5</sup>**

### **Austria**

Source: OGM

Question Format: “Do you have confidence in Social-Democratic Party of Austria leader Werner Faymann?” [YES / NO]

Methodology: Telephone interviews with 500 Austrian voters, conducted on June 8<sup>th</sup> 2009. Margin of error is 4.5 per cent.

### **Czech Republic**

Source: The Public Opinion Research Centre under Institute of Sociology of the Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic

Question Format: Trust in Czech Government [scale from 1 to 100; data represents the percentage of respondents scoring their trust in government above 59 points]

### **Finland**

Source: Suomen Gallup for Helsingin Sanomat

Question Format: “How would you score the Finnish government?” [data represents the percentage of respondents giving the Government either ‘very good’ or ‘quite good’ grade]

Methodology: Telephone interviews conducted 8-17 June 2009; 1002 respondents; margin of error +/- 3%

### **France**

Source: Observatoire de la Politique Nationale

Question Format: “What is your opinion about François Fillon as Prime Minister?” [data represents the percentage of respondents with a positive opinion of French Prime Minister]

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<sup>5</sup> In the remaining countries, due to inavailability of the data on government popularity, we used voting intentions for governing parties shortly before the EU election as a proxy of their popularity among the electorate.

## **Ireland**

Source: RTE News - TNS/mrbi

Question Format: “Would you say that you are satisfied with the government’s performance?” [data represents the percentage of respondents ‘very satisfied’ or ‘fairly satisfied’ with the government]

## **Italy**

Source: CiRCaP, University of Siena - Government popularity database

Question Format: How would you evaluate the work of the government until now? Very positive, positive enough, negative enough, completely negative?

## **Slovenia**

Source: Faculty of Applied Social Sciences - Nova Gorica (Quoted in “Finance”)

## **The Netherlands**

Source: Sociaal en Cultureel Planbureau / COB

Question Format: “Hoeveel vertrouwen heeft u op dit moment in de volgende instellingen in Nederland? – De Regering” [How much trust do you have at this moment in the Dutch government – on a scale from 1 to 10? Data represent the percentage of respondents scoring the government with 6 or more]

## **United Kingdom**

Source: YouGov – Sunday Times Survey

Question Format: Do you think Gordon Brown is doing well or badly as prime minister? [data represents the percentage of respondents scoring Brown ‘very well’ or ‘fairly well’ as Prime Minister]