

Sources of Influence and Voter Turnout:

How exposure to different sources of influence in the framing of the 2009 European Parliamentary elections explain variation in voter turnout

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Abstract

European Elections in general attract much less voters to cast their votes than national elections do. The question *why* has been mainly, but not only, addressed with “second order” elections theory; voters do not care a lot about elections at the EU level. Even though low turnout in the EP elections has declined severely over the years, it actually decreased only slightly among the old member states. My point of departure, therefore, ties with the fact that it is the new member states that joined the EU in 2004 and after that contribute with very low turnout. Hence, my study investigates factors that explain variation in voter turnout between and across countries. The context of this study is the 2009 EP elections and a cross-national voter survey and media content analysis conducted in 27 EU member states in the frame of PIREDEU is used as a dataset. I am expecting to find that the use of different framing strategies, exposure to distinct sources of influence and also effects that exposure to specific media outlets have on voter turnout all matter in explaining the way voters behave at European elections.

Keywords: election campaigning, framing strategies, media framing, political elite framing, European Parliamentary elections

1. Introduction

European Union is not only an economic but also a political entity. On many levels it is functioning as a state implementing common policies that apply to every individual member of the European union. It is obvious, however, that not every level of engagement is equally successful – researchers have for instance found that individuals do not mobilize with the same enthusiasm for elections at the European level as they do for the elections at the domestic level. (Reiff and Schmitt 1980, Marsh 1998)

Hence, speaking of elections at the European level means speaking of elections at the national level as well. The two are interlinked by the importance elections in general have in every democratic tradition since they enable people to express their political preferences, choose their representatives and get involved in the decision making process. According to the voter turnout data EU citizens seem to appreciate more the right to choose when choosing representatives for the parliaments of their own respective countries and less when electing representatives for the European parliament. As a result to that more and more researchers have become interested in reasons explaining not only the lack of interest amongst citizens of the EU to participate at European elections but also reasons why voter turnout has been dropping rapidly in some countries, why has it remained constant in others and why has it increased in third.

Despite the fact voter turnout at the European elections has in general been dropping ever since the first elections were held in 1979, it is necessary to examine in more detail which are the factors impacting political mobilization in EU member states and look at the data individually and not only on the aggregate. Previous research has already pointed out some patterns. It has for

instance been shown that in particular new member states, those who joined the EU after 2004, are experiencing low voter turnout rates, while voter turnout in old member states has not been as problematic. (Powell 2009, Guerra 2010) Furthermore, it has been indicated that differences exist also within groups – not every new member state, for instance, is facing a low voter turnout. (Markowski 2006)

Majority of attempts to explain the variation in voter turnout within the EU member states (for recent exceptions see Bakker and de Vreese 2011, Bilska 2011, etc.) have been predominantly focusing on traditional and country level variables such as compulsory voting, concurrent elections, electoral systems, GDP *per capita*, size and wealth of the country while individual level variables have been mainly left aside. (see Powell 1982, Jackson 1987, Blais 2009) Even though traditional level predictors in fact explain a big share of the variance in voter turnout in general (for the detailed study of voter turnout in American politics for instance see Rosenstone and Hansen 2003, for the research of voter turnout in Latin America see for instance Power 2009), they do not perform as well when considering a specific phenomena such as European elections - many questions and doubts about voter turnout in this level, therefore, remain unanswered. This is the reason scholars are more or less unanimously agreeing that introduction of new explanatory elements that could provide for an explanation regarding voter turnout within the EU member states, is the direction researchers should (continue) to take in the future. My paper hopes to add to this literature.

The main theoretic background of this paper originates from democratic deficit theory which argues that European Union has not yet been able to find mechanisms that would make it “sufficiently representative, or be accountable to, the nations or the people of Europe” (Chrysochoou 2002). Since media plays an important role in the process of political mobilization, because it provides for the (essential) information that voters need prior to attend elections, to form their opinions and develop or further evolve political positions, a significant blame is to be put on media specifically. Amongst other democratic deficit theory suggests

that the more visible the campaign, political actors and information, the higher the turnout at the elections. (de Vreese et al. 2006, de Vreese 2007)

Hence, my study hopes to add to the literature by providing for new, individual level predictors – namely exposure to media and elite news framing and the effects of the strategies the sources of influence use while communicating with the voters, but also with conceptualizing two sources of influence as separate, not united source of information. More specifically this paper aims to first, establish a clear distinction between political elite and media, and secondly, to put forward a compelling link between the visibility of the EU related news, their political orientations, and people's decisions to mobilize at the time of European elections.

2. Why does voter turnout matter?

Before proceeding with the research at hands, it is necessary to look at voter turnout also from a more general perspective and importance that it has in every democracy. The chapter that follows will hopefully provide for an insight into that and help to understand where, already mentioned reasons aside, lies the true value of my research interest.

Voter turnout at European elections has been decreasing ever since the first elections were held in 1979; it has fallen from 69, 99 percent in 1979 to 43 percent in 2009 (see Figure 1). Numbers show that voter turnout has in fact dropped by 3 percent points in average at every election that happened in the last thirty years with the largest drop occurring in 1999 (7 percent). (Malkopoulou 2009) Amongst the countries that reported the lowest voter turnout in 2009 European elections are only post 2004 accession member states: Slovakia (19,64) and Lithuania (20,98) while there are four more countries (Slovenia, Poland, Czech Republic and Romania) reporting numbers below thirty percent. Amongst countries that have experienced the biggest drop in voter turnout from

2004 to 2009 we find two old member states, Greece (-10,61) and Italy (-6,67), while three new member states Estonia (+17,7), Latvia (+12,36) and Bulgaria (+9,77), have reported a rather significant increase in electoral participation. A closer look in the data also shows that more than a half of all EU member states throughout the period 2004 and 2009 experienced a decrease in voter turnout, while only very few reported a significant increase. The obvious question that comes to mind here is, what are the reasons for low political participation, and in particular variation in voter turnout, within the EU member states and why is the prevailing trend showing that numbers are decreasing. The answer to this question is in fact addressed throughout this research paper, while this chapter in particular tries to provide for reasons why is voter turnout important enough to write about at the first place.

[Figure 1]

An important finding of voter turnout studies is that voter turnout has not only been decreasing within the European union but has been rather low and dropping in other, in particular Western, democracies as well. (Malkopoulou 2009) Some authors in the US for instance have argued that public confidence in Congress, the government and social institutions has dropped and fluctuated significantly in the last two or three decades. (Capella and Jamieson 1996) Data shows that during the period from 1960 to 1988 voter turnout in congressional elections in the US declined gradually until it dropped to barely half of eligible voters in 1988. Since then it has fluctuated from a low of 52.6 percent of eligible voters in 1996 to a high of 61 percent of eligible voters in 2004, the highest level since 1968*.

However, as far as the European elections are concerned, the reasons for why voter turnout matters, can be argued for in the following lines. According to Malkopoulou (2009) the first reason why voter turnout is really important hinders behind legitimacy. European elections, just like any other elections, are the instrument for the citizens to govern through representatives they chose on the

basis of common beliefs, values and political ideologies.

However, if voters decide not to cast their votes and not to participate at the selection process, they give up their right to engage in decision making process and with it, the right to

contribute. In this way the legitimacy of European Parliament, and European Union as a whole, is severely undermined, since it has no real voice or obvious support from the majority of the population. The second reason why voter turnout really matters, not anymore turned inside, but outside, towards the rest of the democratic community, is credibility. According to Malkopoulou (2009) European Union in the eyes of the world represents “the largest humanitarian aid provider”. It has developed certain mechanisms through which it ensures that principles of democracy in human rights are served. These principles provide for a point of departure, a common base for all European member states, given the fact that the idea of the European union has been built on the grounds of war and military regimes. These political attitudes that originate from that common project unite member states and craft a “supra-national identity”, an image that wishes to be projected to the rest of the world. This is also one of the main reasons why European union cannot show any weaknesses within its own democratic regime; political participation is one of the main elements within this package and as Malkopoulou (2009) says, “if EU wants to promote this package worldwide, it must adhere to its values itself”.

*<http://www.fairvote.org/>

3. Factors Affecting Voter Turnout: A world-wide perspective

There are several studies about factors that affect voter turnout. In general literature distinguishes between two levels, an individual and country level factors. Country level

indicators are known to be indicators that include not only institutional but also social context. Examples of country level variables in the literature of voter

turnout are: country's wealth (GDP), electoral system, voting day, mandatory voting, party-group linkage, concurrent elections, the number of parties in the political game and similar. Individual level variables on the other hand are variables that have more to do with factors determining individual's age, gender, political interest, knowledge, party cleavages and so on. Voter turnout literature in general refers to both types of above mentioned examples as traditional variables.

Traditional variables

The study of voter turnout has its origins in Powell's (1982) award winning study which posited electoral participation as one of the three main indicators of democratic performance. He examined mean turnout in 17 countries in 1970 and found that turnout is higher in countries that have 'nationally competitive districts' and 'strong party-group linkage'. (Blais 2009) His main conclusion was that American voter turnout is mainly affected by institutional context.

Jackman's (1987) article followed in the same spirit, with even higher emphasis on institutions; he looked at mean turnout in 19 countries in the 1970 and found that five institutional variables affect voter turnout: nationally competitive districts, electoral disproportionality, multipartism, unicameralism, and compulsory voting. (Blais 2009)

Hypotheses explaining voter turnout with traditional variables are mainly originating from the following background: members of parliament are usually elected by proportional representation which presumably makes every vote count, as opposed to the first-past-the-post elections where only the majority votes are considered (the EU had 11 PR representation systems, 2 with the majority system (FR and GB) and 2 with mixed system (DE, IT) before the enlargement in 2004), voting is compulsory, elections are held on a rest day and not on the work day, voters are closer to their representatives, free elections are long established, citizens are materially better off. (Prusnik 2011)

The problem with traditional variables in voter turnout studies, however, is that

many of the findings are not robust and when there are it is difficult to establish micro-foundations explaining the relationship. (Blais 2009) For instance, it has been established that PR systems and voter turnout are positively related but multiparty system which is usually what proportional representation entails, and voter turnout on the other hand, are not. Jackman (1987) provides for an explanation to this finding by noting that the more parties there are the more likelihood there is that the government will be made out of a coalition of parties. Hence, the presence of many parties may mean that voters have little say in the actual selection of the government (Downs in Blais 2009) Moreover, it is particularly problematic to apply country level variables to cases where variation in variables is low, new member states for instance do not differ from one another significantly when it comes down to variables such as: day of the elections (apart from Czech Republic all new member states held European general elections in 2009 on Saturday or Sunday), mandatory voting (apart from Cyprus no new member state has really enforced mandatory voting), electoral system (except for Malta all new member states have proportional representation), etc. There is more cross country variation when looking at wealth of the countries, but setting a division line on 20.000 E *per capita*, we get only one new member state shifting its position from new to old member states group (Cyprus) and two countries from old member states (Greece and Portugal) to new member states.

Since the specifics of European Union and with it, European Parliamentary elections, dictate a new approach towards voter turnout research, my research aims at providing for further explanations of variance within and across countries.

4. The Context:

Voter turnout at EU elections

European Elections: A second order elections?

When speaking of studies related to voter turnout within the EU it is necessary to

tackle the issue of an actual importance of European elections to the citizens of European union – it is claimed to be weak when compared to the interest in national-level elections. Data shows that in most EU states (except Malta, Cyprus, Lithuania, Belgium, Luxembourg, Greece, Italy and Ireland) turnout in the 2004 EU elections was half of that registered for the elections in their respective countries (see Figure 3). (Malkopoulou 2009) Some scholars argue that media's primal interest in national-level elections, and with it neglect of European elections, bears a consequence in the electoral behavior of EU citizens. (Mattila 2003, Banducci 2005) According to those scholars it is not entirely surprising that EU citizens do not participate in the election process on the EU level in the same way they do when it comes down to the national elections. (Franklin and van der Eijk 1996) Research about the impact of such perception of elections at the EU level on voter turnout originates from “the second order election theory” (Reiff and Schmitt 1980). Reiff and Schmitt (1980) argue that the main difference between the first order and second order elections is that there is “less at stake at second order elections as compared to the first order”, but the whole phenomena is much more complex when looking at it with a greater deal of attention.

[Figure 2]

A comparison of first order elections with second order elections does not only show that there exist differences between the two types of elections member states are subject to, but a closer look at the data and literature also shows more specific distinctions. It shows, for instance, that the expenses for campaigning at the EU level are usually lower and campaign periods are shorter, less lively and less focused on real EU issues (such as adoption of EU constitution, common EU policies, etc.) but rather more centered on domestic issues instead. As observed by Malkopoulou (2009) campaigns are usually not run by MEPs themselves but by party leaders instead. Other obvious differences between the two types of elections tie with the following observations: timing of elections (the

tendency to go to elections decreases when the frequency of elections increases), polling date (month, day), lack of conviction that voters' voice counts, lack of knowledge about EU's institutional structure, a feeling of under-representation of smaller member states, increase in alternative type of politicization. (Malkopoulou 2009) All this leads to low, and still decreasing, electoral participation and ends up in an illustrative difference in voter turnout between national-level and European elections. Reif and Schmitt (1980) illustrated this comparison by listing three propositions characterizing the differences between two types of elections. They claim that: a) participation at second order elections will be lower than the participation at first order elections, b) National parties will suffer losses in EU Parliament elections and c) major and government parties will do worse and smaller parties will do better in first order elections.

The problem with political mobilization of voters in the EU is, however, not only tied with the varied importance of elections when it comes down to specific member state or a group of member states, for that matter, but with a question of EU democracy. Some argue that the development of European democracy depends on the existence of European public sphere which entails a common public debate carried out through a common European news agenda (Schelsinger in de Vreese 2006) It has been argued that a creation of a homogenized public sphere would stimulate political participation and hence trigger an increase in voter turnout – it would occur as a direct consequence of a higher visibility of the media.

Democratic deficit

According to de Vreese et al. (2006) democratic deficit has been identified as “one of the major shortcomings of European integration”. It is directly related to the absence of European public sphere and visibility of EU related news in the media. Democratic deficit is therefore considered to be one of the main reasons for the EU citizens to abstain from European elections. It has been

conceptualized in terms of “institutional design and linkage institutions that focus on national rather than EU issues” (Coultrap et al. in de Vreese et al. 2006). A vast majority of the researchers agree on the following few causes and propositions explaining why the problems with democratic deficit issue have been so persistent. First, EU’s executive branch, European Commission, is not elected by the people of Europe but proposed by European Council and then confirmed by European Parliament instead. This, in turn, results in a limited legitimacy of the Commission itself. Second, the lack of European parliamentary power in policy-making and third, the dominance of national issues in turn also reflect in a lack of popular support, legitimacy and engagement in the EU among EU citizens.

Even though researchers have been struggling with questions about how to improve the situation, many agree on one fact: the importance of the media in this process. According to de Vreese et al. (2006) whether media alleviates or contributes to the democratic deficit depends on the “media’s ability to contribute towards a shared framework of reference and a European identity”. This issue has been briefly tackled upon already in the previous chapter explaining why is it important to research political participation. Unlike 'Europe' European Union and its instances need to sufficiently promote sustaining myths and corresponding set of symbols and the best way how to do that is to use the media. It has been argued that the EU will not be able to further develop the supra national identity that the idea of European Union has been built on unless it finds a way how to develop a common public sphere with a homogenized agenda for the media. It is still not entirely clear as to what exactly such sphere would consist of and how to achieve its popularity, but as time passes and European Union faces more and more (political) challenges it is becoming clear that such public sphere is needed. Previous research has already shown that a) greater visibility of EU campaigns is associated with higher turnout in European Parliamentary elections (Banducci and Semetko 2003), b) greater visibility of EU news is related to better knowledge of EU citizens (de Vreese and Boomgaarden 2005) and c) greater visibility of pro-EU actors is related to support of the European Union (Banducci

et al. 2002).

Old and New Member States

It has already been stated that voter turnout has been dropping gradually within the EU ever since the first EU elections were held in 1979 but what has perhaps not been emphasized enough is the finding that there are mainly new member states that joined the EU in 2004 and after that are impacting the turnout negatively. However, there is a variance in voter turnout within those member states as well, making some researchers believe this distinction (old/new member states) is not to be put too much attention to either. (Franklin 2007) Scholars, however, have found proof in their research for hypotheses arguing for differences between old and new member states deriving from their political past. Biliska (2011) found that new member states have significantly less habitual voters than established EU member states, and that there is a negative correlation between a post-Communist country and being a habitual voter. On the other hand data shows, that in many new member states, voters behave differently at European elections than they do at national elections, bringing the second order theory back on the surface. Hungary*, for instance, had a voter turnout at approximately 36 percent in 2009 European Parliamentary election while voters turned out in nearly 63 percent in 2010 national elections or Slovenia, which had national level elections (63,19) a year prior to European elections (28,33). Similar applies to other new member states as well, such as for instance Slovakia, Bulgaria and Czech Republic.

Scholars examining voting behavior in national and European elections, however, believe that variance in political participation cannot be fully explained with second order theory. Guerra (2010), for instance, focuses on Bulgaria and Poland and makes several important theoretical points. First, she argues, that second order election theory cannot be applied to the new member states because their party systems differ from those in the West: “they are unstable, not consolidated, and show high volatility (both in national and European elections)”.

Second, voters in new democracies have difficulties developing party loyalties since new parties emerge and disappear on a regular basis. Consequently, not so many people can in fact identify with a party in this group of countries. Finally, the political culture is not so firm and stable in newer member states countries and that reflects in “voters’ distrust in politics and politicians, a trend that originated with the corruption and bribery scandals during the transformation and has projected into the perception of EU politics as well”.

Despite what Guerra (2010) argues on the cases of Poland and Bulgaria, it is also true that the trust in the EU and its institutions within new member states is still very high and higher than trust in their own respective institutions. Karnikova (2009) sees this as a consequence of the past authoritative political systems and as an opportunity to substitute them with new, more democratic patterns.

No matter the reasons for differences in voter turnout not only within EU in general but also within specific groups, one is true: voter turnout in new democracies is still not as high as in old democracies. For this to be examined in detail, Figure 3 provides for an overview of every individual member state, its voter turnout in 2009 elections, year of accession, GDP, election date (day), mandatory voting, electoral system and proximity with national-level elections.

*www.idea.int

Franklin (2007) argues the reason for low turnout in new member states is not necessarily much the consequence of long lasting communistic regime, even though some patterns persist. Figure 3, however, shows that factors such as concurrent elections, mandatory voting and election day also affect voter turnout. It has been argued, however, that due to the lack of variance when considering some of these predictors (election day, mandatory voting, electoral system can be applied to a big majority of all countries and therefore do not provide for opportunity to distinguish between countries) cannot explained an existing variance in voter turnout in-between states.

[Figure 3]

5. The Sources of Influence: Political Elite vs. Media

The success of political participation in an individual member state and voter turnout as a consequence, however, in majority of cases relies fully on the messages citizens get from the sources of influence, namely media (journalists, editors) and political elite (politicians, parties). This chapter tries to establish a rather clear distinction between the two.

Both, media and political elite, are responsible for how citizens make up their minds – with a careful usage of their tools they both contribute to whether citizens vote or do not vote at the end of the electoral process. Journalists and political actors are not a team in political arena, but nor are they on the completely opposite sides. In the context of elections, such as European Parliamentary elections, political actors and journalists do not report about pertaining issues with the same motivation and goals, even though they end up having a very similar audience at the end.

Bennett (2003) explains the relationship between media and political elite with his 'semi-independent' press model. Bennett's (2003) model is on the one hand giving emphasize to (a) "greater journalistic autonomy in the selection and construction of news narratives" due to the industrial shift toward ratings-driven, high-profit content and to (b) powerful officials who are "retaining control of key political messages, restoring the press-government balance in favor of government due to the declining media audience" on the other. The relationship between media and political elite is conceptualized in a similar way in this paper, and is further elaborated in the following lines.

The relationship between the two sources of influence is one of a mutual dependence since media and political elite depend on each other when communicating with listeners, readers, voters. Political actors negotiate with media what to publish, where to publish and when to publish the stories while

media requires a substantial and interesting media input provided from political elite. An important part of this relationship is also covering how they communicate with the voter. I believe that political elite and media through subtle framing transmit news which is in accordance to their needs and is depending on what they want audience and voters to believe. The key and essential point to note, however, is that media in my model does not necessarily also adopt elite's frames. This assumption is important to make since it allows us to distinguish between the two sources of influence at the first place. In my causal model, I justify this assumption by claiming that media does not necessarily adopt elites frames because journalists have the skills and tools to see through frames created by the elite, they follow certain standards of professionalism and neutrality and therefore they also have the ability and interest to create their own frames, or proceed with no frames at all, rather than just adopt elite's ways of message broadcasting. The mainstream literature finds the support for this in analyzing editors' parts of news framing. Even though it has been argued (Hänggli 2011) that media frames (also in the sections where editor's contributions have been examined thoroughly) do not differ much from the normal news coverage, I assume that editors prevalingly rely on their judgments and views, hence the chances that they will use frames different than the ones put forward by political elite, are higher.

The main reason, however, why this paper insists on advocating the position of separation of the two sources of influence, is the assumption the two sources of influence have different motivations when targeting their audience and therefore they adopt different communication strategies when addressing the masses. This paper assumes that political elite foremost intends to mobilize and convince voters seeking for their support for their political claims while journalists primarily need to inform the audience about relevant political issues. (e.g. Balkir et al. 2008) It is not possible to neglect the fact that media, however, also has motivations to gain more and more audience and increase the numbers when it comes down to selling newspapers and lifting the ratings of their TV channels. Hence, because media and political elite are driven by distinct motivations, it is

reasonable to assume that they rely on distinct communication channels when addressing the audience. In my study, the distinction between the two sources of influence is made by using voter survey data where individuals were specifically asked which outlet, and by it which source of influence, were they subject most. Even though the primary goal of this paper is to establish that potential voters when exposed to EU related news turn out more at the elections, it is also interesting to observe whether the magnitude in impact on voter turnout when looking at two distinct sources of influence will be diverse. Hence, the research question this study wishes to put forward comes as follows:

Up to what extent can a specific source of information, namely media and elite, impact voter turnout and how does the strength of such impact differ between member states?

6. Hypothesis

The hypothesis is derived from the theoretical field of communication (democratic) deficit within the EU (Semetko et al. 2000, Banducci 2005, de Vreese et al. 2006), which implicitly states that the EU has been subject to an unorganized media and public sphere. It had been argued that the continuous evolution of European democracy “depends on the existence of European public sphere which entails common debate carried out through a common European news agenda” (Schlesinger in de Vreese et al. 2005). This kind of approach to a communication deficit within the EU has been both, criticized and idealized. A common criteria for European public sphere has been elaborated. European public sphere includes “synchronous media coverage in different countries, shared points of reference, expressed in a transnational community of communication in which speakers and listeners recognize each other as legitimate participants in a public discourse that frames particular issues as common European problems” (de Vreese et al. 2005).

With simple words, European public sphere means an environment in which

European citizens can function, identify with and take an advantage from. For one thing, a more elaborated and better defined European public sphere allows for a better, easier access to information about the EU and news that concern citizens of the EU in general. A public sphere that functions in this way also enables media to report about common EU issues and relay on common sources of references from both, local and cross boarder sources. This approach towards life within the Union brings advantages in terms of sustainability and further development of democracy at the EU level to everyone in Europe. From this perspective it is clear that media could provide for an important space for public debate, increase visibility of EU actors and in turn become one of the most important contributors to the the vitality of the European public sphere. This is also the right approach towards engaging citizens of Europe to through elections participate and mobilize in a bigger extent.

Therefore the hypothesis follows:

H1: The more individuals will be exposed to EU related news from both sources of influence, namely political elite and media, the higher the likelihood they will participate at the European elections.

7. Dataset

Voter and Media study data

In order to test whether the hypothesis stated above holds or not, this study is using PIREDEU dataset consisting of: Voter Survey data for 27 EU member states and Media Study data , both performed in the context of 2009 European Parliamentary elections. (Shchuk et al. 2010) The dependent variable in this study is vote, indicating whether a respondent has voted in the 2009 EPE or not.

Voter study data was obtained by trained interviewers in a period of about four weeks prior to the European elections. Around 1000 interviewers per member state were conducted by CATI phone interviews. The voter study was designed

to get information about the amount of exposure to a specific source of influence (an outlet, TV channel, political rally or similar) while media study then tries to provide for the information of the specific content. Media study data was obtained by content analysis of the news in the campaign for the 2009 European elections in all 27 member states of the EU with the focus on national television and newspapers. The dataset includes the main national evening news broadcasts of the most widely watched public and commercial television stations for every country. It also includes two 'quality' (i.e. broadsheet) and one tabloid newspaper. In those cases where a country did not have a relevant tabloid newspaper the most sensationalist-oriented other daily newspaper was included. My overall sample therefore consists of 58 TV networks and my overall newspaper sample consists of 84 different newspapers. The content analysis was conducted for news items published or broadcast within the three weeks running up to the election (4-7 June, 2009). When it comes down to story selection, for television, all news items have been coded; for newspapers, all news items on the title page and on one randomly selected page as well as all stories pertaining particularly to the EU and/or the EU election on any other page of the newspaper have been coded (within the Political/News, Editorial/Opinion/Comment, and Business/Economy sections). In total, 52,009 news stories have been coded in all 27 EU-member countries.

Validity and Reliability

Reliability and validity* are at the core of what is accepted as scientific proof. The main idea behind reliability is that any significant result must be inherently repeatable while validity encompasses the entire experimental concept and is essential at establishing whether the results obtained in fact meet all of the requirements of the scientific research method. For the results to be inherently repeatable means that other researchers must be able to generate the same results under the same conditions. This in turn reinforces the findings and also ensures that the wider scientific community accepts the hypothesis. Validity on

the other hand consists of internal and external validity. Internal validity is in a way a validity that oversees the whole research process – no study should be inconsistent and badly structured. External validity is

the process of examining the results and questioning whether there are any other possible causal relationships. Control groups and randomization usually lessen external validity problems but no method can be flawless. This is why the statistical proofs of a hypothesis called significant, not absolute truth.

In the case of PIREDEU dataset, where human coding has been used extensively in order

<http://www.experiment-resources.com/validity-and-reliability.html>

to perform the content analysis, certain questions about reliability of the results were raised. It is known that human coding can be problematic due to a human error factor involved in such work – generally, this is the reason human coding is often combined with automated coding. Automated coding is known to produce stability (the ability of a coder to consistently assign the same code to a given text), reproducibility and accuracy while disadvantages of this technique need to be noted as well. Automated coding therefore amongst others has problems with disambiguation; automated syntactic coding makes errors on complex sentences.

PIREDEU coders implemented a test of inter-coder reliability, where coders in fact proved that reliability of the content analysis was not under question. The results of the reliability tests (Krippendorff's alpha) were largely comparable across location, pointing to the absence of training effects and assuring and reaffirming quality control over the coder training procedure (Schuck et al. 2010).

8. Method and Variables

Methodology

In order to provide for explanation of the variation in voter turnout in European Parliamentary elections within and across EU member states, this paper uses multi-level analysis. A model that adopts both, more traditional and newer, independent country level and individual variables was built. On the individual level it includes control variables such as: gender and social status while it also includes variables indicating respondents interest in politics and campaign, evaluations of levels of democracy within the EU, satisfaction with democracy within their own member states, evaluations of the goodness of EU membership and other, newly created variables indicating the exposure to the specific media outlets. Amongst the traditional, country level control variables, there are: new/old member states, electoral day, mandatory voting, electoral system. Also, country level variables in aggregate are used to depict the general amount of exposure to the news in general and news related to the EU topics and also levels of interest in campaign and politics in general. New variables describing the exposure to the left/right oriented media outlet (for data collection and method see Appendix 2) and the amount of exposure to the EU related news (media study data) per media outlet (voter study data) in each country (see Appendix 3 for a better understanding of creation of the two variables) have been created.

Model 1 focuses on the relationship between voter turnout and exposure to the sources of influence in general (how much news individuals consume on a weekly basis – in general and EU related news) while testing also for the exposure to the specific media outlet (left-right political dimension). The model also includes traditional variables.

This chapter's hypothesis originates from already established idea (de Vreese and Semetko 2002, Banducci 2005) that media plays significant role in the process of mobilization. It adds predictors related to the left/right political orientation of the main media outlets in the specific nation states and therefore aims at explaining voter turnout from that perspective.

Model_(gen):

$$Y(\text{vote}) = \alpha + \beta_1 M_Expo^* + \beta_2 E_Expo^{**} + \beta_3 \text{euroskept} + \beta_4 \text{SatDemEU} + \beta_5 \text{SatDemMS} + \beta_6 \text{polinter} + \beta_7 \text{campinter} + \beta_8 \text{Sstat} + \beta_9 \text{Gov_App} + \beta_9 \text{sex} + \beta_{10} \text{age} + \beta_{11} \text{Age} + \beta_{12} \text{newMS} + \beta_{13} \text{Year_Acc} + \beta_{14} \text{Conc_EI} + \beta_{15} M_Voting + \beta_{16} EI_Syst + \beta_{17} GDP + \beta_{18} EI_Day + u$$

$$*Expo_allnews + Expo_Prog.a + Expo_Prog.b + Expo_Nwspp.a + Expo_nespp.b + Expo_newspp.c + (\text{weightNews_LRD} + \text{weightNews_EU})$$

$$**\text{polrally} + \text{contemail} + \text{contmail} + \text{contphone} + \text{contflyer} + \text{contsocnet}$$

where *allnp* refers to exposure to all newspapers, *alltv* to all TV, *news_LRD* to left, right or tabloid newspapers, *weightNews_EU* to weighted EU related news and they are all considered to be variables of Media exposure while *polrally* refers to political rally, *contsocnet* to social network, *contemail* to contacted by email, *contphone* to contacted by phone, *contflyer* to contacted by flyer and they are all considered to be variables of Elite exposure; in the same model I also control for *euroskept* which refers to euroskepticism, *SatDemEU* which refers to levels of satisfaction with EU democracy and *SatDemMS* to levels of democracy within their own countries, *trustEU* and *trustMS* to levels of trust in EU institutions and Member State's institutions respectively, *polinter* to political interest, *campinter* to interest in campaign, *Sstat* to social status, *sex* to gender, *age* to age, *edu_yrs* to years of education, *new/old* to new and old member states, *Conc_EI* to concurrent elections, *M_Voting* to mandatory voting, *EI_Syst* to electoral system, *GDP* to country's wealth and *EI_Day* to election's day.

Variables and Coding

Dependent: My dependent variable predicting voter turnout (*vote*) is integrating voters' decisions to vote/not to vote. This variable is binary and is constructed in

a way to distinguish between those who voted (coded as 1) and those who did not vote and were undecided on the voter survey (coded 0). The question in the survey that gives me the opportunity to measure voting behavior, comes as follows:

Q24. "A lot of people abstained in the EP elections of June 5, while others voted. Did you cast your vote?"

Since my dependent variable is binary, I use generalized linear model (Logit) in order to run an appropriate analysis.

Independent:

M_expo. Media exposure is continuous, individual level variable from the voter study dataset. It refers to the amount a respondent spent exposed to news (it applies to TV, radio and newspaper). The question is asked: How many days (in a week) do you follow the news? This question offers open ended answers, it ranges from 0 (days) -7 (days) and it is coded as follows: often (=7,6 days), average (=5, 4 days), rarely (=3, 2, 1) or never (=0).

E_expo. Elite exposure is continuous, individual level variable from the voter study dataset. It is depicted with a question asking whether respondents have ever been contacted by a candidate or party organization during the election campaign. The answers entail options such as: email, internet networking, telephone, direct mail, flier through the post, face to face (calling at home), face to face (in the street), other personal contacts and are coded with 1 if contacted and 0 if not contacted.

EU_news. Amount of EU news or visibility of EU news is a variable from media study* dataset. The question the coders were asked was: Does the story mention either the European Union**, its institutions or policies or the European

parliamentary elections or the campaign?

**or synonymous such as Brussels (when EU is meant), Europe (when EU is meant), EU countries (when specifically referred to as such), EU member states (if explicitly referred to as such). EU institutions include European Central Bank, for instance. (Schuck 2010)

1=no

2=yes

This variable will be used in order to estimate the share of EU news every individual has been exposed to in two contexts: a) weighted share of exposure to the EU related news and left/right politically oriented newspapers, b) weighted share of exposure to the EU news and specific framing strategies used in that outlet.

news_Left. This variable is referring to news outlets which political orientation (prevaillingly) leans towards left on the political spectrum (for information about how this variable was created see Appendix 2).

news_Right. Appendix 2

newMS. New and old member state variable is a country level, dummy variable, with 1= new member state.

**but has not been yet used in the model this paper uses.*

EI_Day. Election's day is a country level, dummy, variable providing for information on which day (work day or rest day) a single EU member state held European elections in 2009. Those countries whose elections were held on rest day were coded as: Saturday and Sunday =1.

M_Vot. Mandatory voting is a country level, dummy, variable providing for information on whether a specific member state has implemented voting facilitation mechanisms, such as compulsory voting. 1= yes, 0= no

El_Syst. Electoral systems is a country level, dummy, variable providing for information on whether a specific member state has a proportional representation or not. 1= yes, 0=no

euroskept. Euro skepticism is estimated by respondent's answers on the following survey question: "Generally speaking, do you think your country's membership of the EU is a good thing, a bad thing, or neither good or bad?"

SatDemEU. Satisfaction with democracy within EU was measured with the question: "How satisfied are you with the way democracy works in the EU?" Answers were ranging from: 1= very satisfied, 2=fairly satisfied, 3=not very satisfied, 4=not at all satisfied.

SatDemMS. Satisfaction with democracy within MS was measured with the question: "How satisfied are you with the way democracy works in the MS (e.g. Ireland)?" Answers were ranging from: 1= very satisfied, 2=fairly satisfied, 3=not very satisfied, 4=not at all satisfied.

polinter. This is an individual level variable describing an individual's interest in politics. The question in the voter survey was: "To what extent are you interested in politics?"

campinter. Similarly, this variable describes a respondent's interest in the campaigning. The question was: "How interested were you in campaign these days?"

Sstat. Social status of an individual is a control level, individual variable. The

question asked in the survey was: “Which class would you say you belong to?”

8 Results

This paper is work in progress and as such does not provide for final and conclusive results. A model with country level variables was first run and it showed high significance of majority of country level predictors. When country level variables were run independently the results show that traditional factors such as being a new member state, the day when elections were held and the electoral system all show strongly significant, but negative effects on voter turnout, indicating how citizens of old member states, even if elections were held on a day other than weekend, seem to be more prone to vote, as expected (see Table 1). The results also show the significance of all aggregates; interestingly, aggregates of news with right and left political orientation seem to have a demobilizing impact on voter turnout, but they appear positively significant in the contexts where elections were held during the weekend. It is also interesting to see that the aggregate of EU related media news is significant and that varies between new and old member states.

Preliminary results also show that the difference between the exposure to the news deriving from distinct sources of influence, namely media and political elite, exists already at this level of research. Media variables (see Table 2) show that exposure to specific outlets is indicating a demobilizing effect on voter turnout and this will be further on explored in the next chapters of my thesis, since frames of news that respondents were most exposed to will be included in the analysis. Elite variables also show that exposure to news from candidates themselves or other political organizations they belong to, have demobilizing effect on respondents but interestingly some predictors, in particular attending a rally, being contacted over mail and phone, are of a much stronger significance than the rest (see Table 2). At this point these results go against the suggested hypothesis, but reasons for it can be found in the fact that weighted variables have not been included in the analysis. The first next step is to include two new variables and re-run the model: the weighted share of exposure to the EU related

news and left/right politically oriented newspapers and also a weighted share of exposure to the EU news and specific framing strategies (in particular strategic, negative and positive frames) used in that specific outlet.

Looking at more traditional variables (Table 2) it becomes clear that individuals satisfied with levels of democracy within the EU participate in greater numbers than those who think European Union has not been very democratic. Political interest related variables show demobilizing effect which was not been expected, but can have its background in political cynicism hypothesis (Jamieson and Capella 1996); those who learn more and are more interested in campaign and politics in general, are subject to a great extent of framing and biased reporting which in turn makes them develop a sort of a cynical attitude towards actors that participate in the political process and as a consequence also turn them against politics in general. Socioeconomic variables such as those indicative of social status have not proved to be statistically significant and were therefore dropped from further analysis.

Even though I already started to examine how different sources of influence (media and elite) in the case of electoral campaign at the EU level impact voter turnout in between and across EU member states, more in-depth results and analysis are to be expected in the next research paper. Preliminary results indicate that the significance and the magnitude of these effects are diverse when looking at two distinct sources of influence but further evidence in order to support the hypothesis should be provided. At this point, the conclusion can be made that the more the individuals are exposed to the information about EU related news, the more they respond to what they hear, even though it has not been proved that the impact on political mobilization is positive. It has been however shown that both, elite and media, seem to impact political participation significantly and that that it is not irrelevant which outlet they are being exposed to.

9 Conclusion

European Union is still a very young political entity; it has barely lived through one generation from a childhood to an adult age. Expectations towards it are, nevertheless, high. One of the major shortcomings of the European Union are definitely deriving from its lack of transparency and somewhat complicated and bureaucratic structure. Citizens of the EU27 feel they cannot really participate in such organization and they cannot identify well with their representatives and those who should be held accountable when specific dis-satisfactions occur. This, unclear division of work and responsibilities, amongst other things, drives people of Europe away from an active participation in political sphere. Instead of transferring their democratic rights to vote from their national political countries, potential voters at the European elections seem to abandon that right.

Voter turnout in the EU is already low and still decreasing. With the media opening up space for a public debate, however, this can change. It is not only media, however, that contributes or should contribute with news inflow but also political actors or elite who address respective voters in the period before elections – they also contribute significantly to the process of political mobilization. Hence, both contribute, or could contribute, to higher levels of voter turnout at elections.

Since previous research has shown that traditional variables do not possess convincing explanatory power, new individual and country level variables have been included in my paper. Since scholars have mainly looked at variables that apply to the old member states and not those that apply to the countries that have joined the EU in the last two waves of accession, variables such as media and elite exposure and exposure to specific framing strategies have not been vastly (for some exceptions see e.g. Bilaska 2011) used as predictors of voter turnout in the EU27.

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Appendix 1: Tables

Table 1: Country Level Variables

Vote in the European Parliamentary Elections 2009	Coeff.	s.s.
Mandatory Voting	0,213363	(0,063390)**
New Member State	-3,373308	(0,840175)***
Electoral day	-0,747681	(0,185827)***
Electoral System	-1,189783	(0,267081)***
Country-level EU related news	-0,019333	(0,007844)*
Country-level amount of news with right political orientation	-0,016213	(0,004650)**
Country-level amount of news with left political orientation	-0,025061	(0,005375)***
ED*Country-level amount of news with right political orientation	0,024946	(0,005187)***
ES*Country-level amount of news with left political orientation	0,015290	(0,004345)**
NMS*Country-level amount of news with left political orientation	0,037891	(0,010207)**

Observations: 27,068; ***p<0,001, **p<0,01, *p<0,05

Table 2: Model 1

Vote in the European Elections 2009	Coeff.	s.e.
Elite Exposure		
Attended a political rally	-0,0748865	(0,0095380)***
Contacted through direct mail	-0,0529121	(0,0063245)***
Contacted through email	-0,0139917	(0,0119964)
Contacted through phone	-0,0297457	(0,0088039)***
Contacted through flyer	-0,0056603	(0,0059736)
Contacted through social networking	-0,0109183	(0,0158128)
Media Exposure		
Exposed to all news	-0,0005149	(0,0017324)
Exposed to suggested TV	-0,0026825	(0,0010655)*

program a		
Exposed to suggested TV program b	0,0043691	(0,0010308)
Exposed to suggested newspaper a	-0,0015051	(0,0012430)
Exposed to suggested newspaper b	-0,0028830	(0,0014958).
Exposed to suggested newspaper c	0,0002403	(0,0016118)
Other		
Evaluating EU as a good thing	-0,0376307	(0.0095156)***
Satisfaction with democracy within EU	0,0345058	(0.0123354)**
Satisfaction with democracy within MS	-0,0351984	(0.0106930)***
Interested in politics	-0,0530532	(0.0094337)***
Interested in campaign	-0,1054605	(0.0103685)***
Social status - middle class	-0,0303004	(0.0081233)***
Social status – upper class	-0,0195833	(0,0253810)
Social status – working class	0,0114839	(0,0088774)
Government disapproval	-0,0018764	(0,0059838)
Sex – Male	0,0082228	(0,0054916)
Age	-0,0248210	(0,0001857)***
Intercept	0,04444826	(0,0179087)***

Observations: 27,068; ***p<0,001,**p<0,01,*p<0,05

Table 3: Individual Member States Compared: Traditional Level Variables

Country	New and Old MS	GDP (in Euro)	Electoral Day	Voter Turnout	Mandatory Voting	Electoral System	Concurrent Elections
Above 20.000							
United Kingdom	Old MS	27, 700	Thursday	34.70%	no	STV	2010
The Netherlands	Old MS	36, 100	Thursday	36.75%	no	PR	2012
Luxembourg	Old MS	82, 700	Sunday	90.75%	yes	PR	June 2009 (conc.)
Italy	Old MS	26, 000	Sat & Sun	65.05%	no	PR	2008
Ireland	Old MS	34, 900	Friday	58.64%	no	STV	2007
Germany	Old MS	31, 400	Sunday	43.30%	no	PR	May 2009
France	Old MS	29, 800	Sunday	40.63%	no	PR	2007
Finland	Old MS	35, 600	Sunday	40.30%	no	PR	2007
Sweden	Old MS	41, 000	Sunday	45.53%	no	PR	2010
Spain	Old MS	23, 300	Sunday	44.90%	no	PR	2008
Belgium	Old MS	33, 600	Sunday	90.39%	yes	PR	2010
Cyprus	New MS	22, 000	Sunday	59.40%	yes	PR	2011
Austria	Old MS	35, 800	Sunday	45.97%	no	PR	2008
Denmark	Old MS	43, 100	Thursday	59.54%	no	PR	June 2009 (conc.)
Below 20.000							
Slovenia	New MS	17, 400	Sunday	28.33%	no	PR	2008
Slovakia	New MS	12, 700	Saturday	19.64%	no	PR	April 2009
Romania	New MS	5, 800	Sunday	27.67%	no	PR	2008
Portugal	Old MS	16, 100	Sunday	36.78%	no	PR	Sept 2009
Poland	New MS	9, 300	Sunday	24.53%	no	PR	2010
Malta	New MS	15, 300	Saturday	78.79%	no	STV	2008
Lithuania	New MS	9, 500	Sunday	20.98%	no	PR	May 2009
Latvia	New MS	9, 700	Saturday	53.70%	no	PR	2006
Hungary	New MS	10, 100	Sunday	36.31%	no	PR	2006
Greece	Old MS	19, 000	Sunday	52.61%	yes	PR	October 2009
Estonia	New MS	11, 900	Sunday	43.90%	no	PR	2007
Czech Republic	New MS	14, 700	Friday	28.20%	no	PR	2010
Bulgaria	New MS	4, 800	Sunday	38.99%	no	PR	July 2009
EU Average	/	25, 100	43	43	/	/	June 4-7, 2009

Figure 1: Average Turnout at EP Elections

chart
Figure 2: First order elections vs. Second order elections
chart

Appendix 2: Left-right political orientation

This data was collected using short questionnaires sent via emails to citizens of specific EU member state (N= 54) with a single question: “According to your opinion, what is the political orientation of the following three media outlets?” After I collected the questionnaires, I compared the answers to data I obtained with the help of internet research tools. I followed two research paths: First, I visited websites of individual newspapers and tried to find information about their political orientation from their websites, but mainly, also because a big majority of the outlets I wanted to read did not write in English, I relied on media portal: <http://www.eurotopics.net/>. Euro|topics is a service provided by the Federal Agency for Civic Education of the European Union. It has been created in order to stimulate European public sphere; it sifts through more than 300 newspapers, magazines and blogs in 28 countries (the EU plus Switzerland), select the most important commentaries, essays and reflections and translate the most cogent quotes. It aims to convey a realistic picture of national debates and discourse. To achieve this, articles are quoted from European media that are considered relevant for public opinion in the countries in question. The press review promotes trans-European discussion and creates new networks for media, cultural and political exchange. euro|topics has an extensive and constantly growing archive of around 23,000 articles. Euro|topics is particularly strong when it comes down to its media index. Their media index was my main source of information about collected newspapers; it comprises more than 300

newspapers, magazines and blogs.

With the help of the answers obtained with questionnaires and then compared to the information on Euro|topics, a particular outlet was proclaimed left or right.

Following this criteria, the chart below was created:

Country	Newspaper 1	Orient.	Newspaper 2	Orient.	Newspaper 3	Orient.
Slovenia	Dnevnik	left	Slovenske Novice	tabloid	Delo	left
Austria	Der Standard	left	Die Presse	left	Neue Kronen Zeit.	right
Belgium	De Morgen	indpd	De Standaard	right	Het Laatste News	tabloid
Bulgaria	24 Chasa	left	Dnevnik	right	Trud	tabloid
Cyprus	Charavgi	left	Fileleytherus	right	Simerini	right
Czech Republic	Blesk	tabloid	Mlada Fronta	right	Pravo	left
Denmark	Ekstra Bladet	left	Morgen. Jyllandsp.	right	Politiken	left
Estonia	Eesti Ekspress Wochenblatt	indpd	Postimees	?	SL Ohtuleht	tabloid
Finland	Helsing Sanomat	indpd	Aamulehti	left	Ilta-Sanomat	tabloid
France	Le Figaro	right	Le Monde	left	Liberation	left
Germany	Bild	right	FAZ	left	Sued. Zeitung	left
Greece	Eleftherotypia	left	Kathimerini	right	Ta Nea	left
Hungary	Blikk	tabloid	Magyar Nemzet	right	Nepszabadsag	left
Ireland	Eleftherotypia	right	The Irish Times	left	The Daily Star	tabloid
Italy	Il Corriere della Sera	indpd	Il Giornale	indpd	La Repubblica	left

Latvia	Diena	right	Latvijas Avize	right	Vesti Sagodnya	indpf
Lithuania	Lietuvos rytas	left (?)	Respublika	right	Vakaro zinios	left
Luxembourg	Tageblatt	left	Voix du Lux.	?	Wort	right
Malta	Nazzjon	right	Orizzont	left	The Times (engl.)	right
Netherlands	De Telegraaf	right	De Volkskrant	left	NRC Handelsblad	left
Poland	Fakt	right	Gazeta Wyborcza	left	Rzeczpospolita	left
Portugal	Correio de Manha	tabloid	Jornal de Noticias	right	Publico	right
Romania	Evenimentul Zilei	right	Jurnalul National	right	Libertatea	tabloid
Slovakia	Daily Pravda	left	Novy cas	tabloid	Sme/Praca	right
Spain	El Mundo	right	El Pais	left	ABC	right
Sweden	Dagens Nyheter	indpd	Sven. Dagbladet	left	Aftonbladet	tabloid
UK	Sun	right	The Daily Tel.	right	Guardian	left

Appendix 3: Variables

(www.piredeu.eu)

Variable	Description	Survey Question
Dependent Variable		
vote	Vote at EP Election in 2009	“Did you cast your vote at 200 EPE?” Yes (=1), no (=2)
Elite Exposure Variables		
polrally	Attended Political Rally	“How often did you attend a public meeting or rally about the election?” Often, sometimes, never.
contmail	Contacted by direct mail.	“Have you ever been contacted by a candidate or party organization during the election campaign by direct mail?”

		Dummy; Contacted=1
contemail	Contacted by email.	“Have you ever been contacted by a candidate or party organization during the election campaign by email?” Dummy; Contacted=1
contphone	Contacted by phone.	“Have you ever been contacted by a candidate or party organization during the election campaign by phone?” Dummy; Contacted=1
contflyer	Contacted by flyer through the post.	“Have you ever been contacted by a candidate or party organization during the election campaign by flyer?” Dummy; Contacted=1
contsocnet	Internet networking contact such as MySpace, LinkedIn, Facebook	“Have you ever been contacted by a candidate or party organization during the election campaign by internet networking?” Dummy; Contacted=1
Media Exposure Variables		
Expo_allnews		Q7.“In a typical week how many days do you follow the news?”; 0-7 days
Expo_Prog.a		Q8a.“In a typical week how many days do you follow the following news program?”; 0-7 days
Expo_Prog.b		Q8b.“In a typical week how many days do you follow the following news program?”; 0-7 days
Expo_Nwspp.a		Q12a.“In a typical week how many days do you read the following newspaper?”; 0-7 days
Expo_Nwspp.b		Q12b.“In a typical week how many days do you read the following newspaper?”; 0-7 days
Expo_Newspp.c		Q12c.“In a typical week how many days do you read the following newspaper?”; 0-7 days
Country Level		
M_voting	Compulsory voting	Dummy; 1=yes
year_acc	Year of Accession	year=year
newMS	New member states (2004, after)	Dummy; 1=new MS
El_Syst	Electoral System	Dummy; 1=PR
GDP	Wealth of the Country	In numbers
El_Day	Electoral Day	Dummy; 1=Saturday or Sunday
Country Level_EU_news	Country level amount of EU news; aggregated to national level with rowsum	“Does the story mention either the EU, its institutions or the EPE or the campaign?”, 1= no, 2=yes.

Individual Level		
euroskept	Evaluating levels of euroskepticism	“Generally speaking, do you think your country’s membership of the EU is a good thing, a bad thing, or neither good or bad?”
SatDemEU	Satisfaction with the democracy within EU	“How satisfied are you in the whole with how democracy works in the EU?”
SatDemMS	Satisfaction with the democracy within MS	“How satisfied are you with the way democracy works in the MS (e.g. Ireland)?”
GovApp	Government Approval	“Do you approve or disapprove the government's record to the day?” 1=approve, 2=disapprove
campinter	Interest in the campaign	“How interested were you in the campaign these days?” Very, somewhat, a little, not at all.
polinter	Interest in politics	“To what extent would you say you are interested in politics?” Very, somewhat, a little, not at all.
Sstat	Social status	“Which class would you belong to?”
Sex	Male, Female	Dummy; male=1
Age	Recoded into years from date of birth	

