

The Impact of Motivational and Contextual Factors in First- and Second-Order Elections


André Blais

Cite this paper

Downloaded from [Academia.edu](#) 

[Get the citation in MLA, APA, or Chicago styles](#)

Related papers

[Download a PDF Pack](#) of the best related papers 



[The impact of motivational and contextual factors on turnout in first-and second-order elect...](#)

Hanna Wass

[The legacy of lethargy: How elections to the European Parliament depress turnout](#)

Sara Hobolt

[Individual characteristics, institutional incentives and electoral abstention in Western Europe](#)

Eva Anduiza



The impact of motivational and contextual factors on turnout in first- and second-order elections

Peter Söderlund^a, Hanna Wass^{b,*}, André Blais^c

^a Social Research Institute, Åbo Akademi University, Finland

^b Department of Political and Economic Studies, University of Helsinki, P.O. Box 54, Unioninkatu 37, Helsinki, FIN 00014, Finland

^c Canada Research Chair in Electoral Studies, Université de Montréal, Canada

ARTICLE INFO

Article history:

Received 7 December 2010

Received in revised form 14 June 2011

Accepted 17 June 2011

Keywords:

Turnout

Second-order elections

Political interest

Compulsory voting

Electoral competition

Effective number of parties

ABSTRACT

Based on voter survey from European election study 2009, we examine the impact of one individual-level motivational factor, i.e. interest in politics, and its interactions with institutional and contextual factors such as compulsory voting, electoral competition and the number of parties on participation in 2009 EP elections and previous national elections. The results show that political interest is more closely connected to turnout in second-order elections which are usually considered less salient. Correspondingly, also the contingent effect of compulsory voting and competition is more evident in EP elections. While compulsory voting substantially decreases the turnout gap between the most and least politically attentive voters in both types of elections, the moderating effect of competitiveness is found only in EP elections.

© 2011 Elsevier Ltd. All rights reserved.

1. Introduction

Macro- and micro-level studies conducted in the field of electoral participation since the late 1940s have established an impressive list of factors related to turnout. At the macro level, voting has been shown to vary according to the institutional setting, the party system and the socio-economic environment (Geys, 2006; Blais, 2006). An individual's propensity to vote is strongly connected to characteristics such as religiosity, sense of civic duty, party identification, political interest, and political efficacy alongside with socio-demographic and socio-economic factors (Blais, 2000, 2006). With the developments in advanced multi-level techniques, there is an increasing interest in examining demand- and supply-side factors simultaneously as well as cross-level interactions (Bühlman and Freitag, 2006; Clarke et al., 2009; Fieldhouse et al., 2007; Hadjar and Beck, 2010; Hobolt et al., 2009; Kittilson and Anderson, 2011).

The elections for European Parliament held simultaneously in every fifth year in 27 member states constitute an ideal setting for cross-national comparison both in terms of macro- and micro-level factors (van der Eijk et al., 1996) and their covariance. Firstly, in contrast to comparative studies of national parliament elections, the role of the elected institution is the same in every member states in the case of EP elections. Secondly, the second-order character of EP elections, apparent also in most local elections, suggests that there is less stake at stake, and consequently turnout is lower compared to national elections (Reif and Schmitt, 1980, 8–10). The low salience of EP elections¹ highlights the importance of factors related to voters' motivations and parties' attempts to enhance turnout. Finally, the relative low aggregate-level turnout embodies substantial cross-country

* Corresponding author. Tel.: +358 9 191 24919; fax: +358 9 191 24832.
E-mail address: hanna.wass@helsinki.fi (H. Wass).

¹ Given their second-order character, the salience of EP elections varies according to national electoral cycle. EP elections receives more attention once held soon before next national elections as their results can be considered as an indication of support for parties in the first-order electoral arena (Franklin, 2001, 316).

variation, emphasising the impact of institutional settings and electoral contexts.

Based on the European Elections Study, we systematically compare the effect of one particular individual-level motivational factor, i.e. political interest, and its interaction with factors related to institutional and electoral contexts in turnout in the 2009 elections for European Parliament and in previous national parliamentary elections, which in most countries are considered as first-order elections.² We expect the relationship between interest-related motivation and voting to be stronger in less salient EP elections compared to national elections. The reason is simple. While citizens with weak motivations can sometimes be persuaded by the parties, the media or their friends to vote in first-order elections, the urge to stay home may be overwhelming in elections that are regarded less important.³

We also test several hypotheses concerning the interactions of interest with institutional and contextual factors such as compulsory voting, political competition and the number of parties. The relationship between interest and participation should be weaker in compulsory voting countries where individual-level variations are more limited (Lijphart, 1997, 1). As average turnout even in these countries is somewhat higher in national and EP elections, we expect the impact of compulsory voting to be more evident in the latter. As regards to competitiveness of electoral arena, we assume that the association between interest and turnout is weaker in elections where competition between parties is more intense. In competitive elections parties have strong incentives to mobilize voters (Cox, 1999, 390–391, for review), even the least interested of them. This effect should be stronger in EP elections in which voters' initial motivational level is lower. Finally, we argue that the number of parties may increase information costs and thus have a negative impact on turnout among low interest citizens, especially in EP elections.

The paper is structured as follows. In the next section, we discuss in more details the association between political interest and contextual factors and turnout in both types of elections and present our hypotheses. After introducing the data and research design we turn to empirical analysis in which the hypotheses are tested in separate models for EP and national elections. In the conclusion, we summarize our results and present some suggestions for next steps in the study of turnout in first- and second-order elections.

2. Motivational and contextual factors in EP and national elections

In their seminal study, Reif and Schmitt (1980, 8–10) suggested that European parliamentary elections have

several characteristics of second-order elections such as better opportunities for small and new parties, larger proportion of invalidated votes, fewer votes for government parties when EP elections are held in the middle of the national election cycle, and lower turnout. As regards to latter, the difference between national and EP elections is often referred to as the Euro-gap in turnout (Rose, 2004, 4). Several factors have been suggested to be related to this gap. For instance, EP elections have little impact on the composition of the European Commission or the Council of Ministers (van der Eijk et al., 1996, 15, referring Reif, 1985; Franklin, 2001, 323), and the decision-making role of the EP is still relatively weak despite the implementation of the Single European Act in 1987 (Flickinger and Studlar, 2007, 386). Other scholars have pointed the lack of European parties (Rose, 2004, 8) and distinct positions of the national parties on the European dimension (Franklin and van der Eijk, 1996, 8), a shorter campaign period and lower campaign costs compared to national elections (Malkopoulou, 2009, 3), and the timing of elections in June, which is a holiday period for schools and universities (Blondel et al., 1997, 253).

Irrespective of the difference in the overall turnout between EP and national parliamentary elections, the question that we are most concerned with in this study is whether the connection between motivational and contextual factors and participation varies across these two types of elections. This question has not been systematically addressed in previous research. According to van der Eijk et al. (1996, 149–150), turnout in EP elections can be examined from two separate perspectives. Firstly, EP elections may be considered simply as second-order elections as suggested by Reif and Schmitt. Secondly, EP elections can be conceived as an opportunity to study a set of elections conducted simultaneously in varying institutional and electoral settings. Earlier investigations on turnout in EP elections at the micro-level utilised the same variables that have been associated with turnout in national elections (e.g. De Vreese and Tobiasen, 2007; van der Eijk and Oppenheim, 1990; Franklin et al., 1996; Schmitt and van der Eijk, 2007; Schmitt and Mannheimer, 1991), although some analyses include attitudes towards integration and EU (e.g. De Vreese and Tobiasen, 2007; Schmitt and van der Eijk, 2007; Schmitt and Mannheimer, 1991). At the macro level, the inclusion of factors related to integration has been more common (Flickinger and Studlar, 2007; Franklin et al., 1996; Franklin, 2001; Mattila, 2003). The growing visibility of EU and EP in citizens' lives has led to the construction of euro-centred models (Flickinger and Studlar, 2007, 392). It should also be noted that so far only the analyses by Jesuit (2003) and Hobolt et al. (2009) have simultaneously examined the impact of supply- and demand-side factors. The second approach suggested by van der Eijk, i.e. to regard EP elections as a special set of elections, has been to a large extent neglected. We adopt both perspectives in this research.

The point of departure for our investigation is to explore how one's general level of political interest affects the decision to vote or not to vote in EP and in national parliamentary elections. As Brady et al. (1995, 271) have argued, there are three reasons why some people don't participate: because they can't, because they don't want to, or because nobody

² It should be noted that the concept of first-order elections refers to most decisive elections in a country, i.e. parliamentary elections in the parliamentary systems and presidential elections in the presidential systems such as France (Reif and Schmitt, 1980, 8,40).

³ A survey from Finland shows interestingly that only 26 per cent of the respondents considered voting in the EP elections important for them while the corresponding figures for parliamentary, local and presidential elections were substantially higher (74%, 65% and 64%, respectively) (Elo and Rapeli, 2008, 104).

asked. In the case of turnout, we would argue that the second reason, not wanting, which we take to be simple lack of interest, is the most important. While proposing a model giving priority to lack of resources, (Brady et al. 1995, 283) admit that political interest is a much more important factor than resources in accounting for turnout.

Several studies have shown that interest in politics increases a person's propensity to vote (Denny and Doyle, 2008; Hadjar and Beck, 2010; Milbrath, 1965; Pattie and Johnston, 1998; Powell, 1986; Squire et al., 1987). A similar finding has been reported in the context of EP elections (van der Eijk and Oppenhuis, 1990; De Vreese and Tobiasen, 2007). In his analysis of nine industrialized democracies, Powell (1986, 30) found that the main difference lies between voters with very low and some level of interest. The effect of interest can be related to information as voters with high level of interest have a higher propensity to acquire information which in turn reduces the cost of voting (Denny and Doyle, 2008, 298). Pattie and Johnston (1998, 278) argue that the impact of interest can also be interpreted from a rational choice perspective in the sense that voters need to have interest in the outcome of elections in order to want to bear the cost of opinion formation and voting. Moreover, it has been suggested that political interest may mediate the impact of macro-level variables such as maturity of democracy as citizens are more interested in politics and thus have a higher level of turnout in more established democracies (Hadjar and Beck, 2010, 537).

Our first hypothesis is that the level of interest has a particularly large impact on turnout in low salience elections such as EP elections. When an election is widely considered to be important, even those voters who normally do not pay much attention to politics might be persuaded to vote due to mobilization by parties, media, family and friends. In elections with lower media coverage and public attention, the magnitude of these attempts is weaker, and consequently, the desire to stay at home might be overwhelming among voters with little interest in politics. We thus expect the effect of interest in politics on turnout to be stronger in elections for EP than national parliaments.

Voting, like any form of electoral behaviour, is affected by not only demand- but also supply-side factors. According to Franklin et al. (1996, 321; Franklin, 2004), the institutional and political contexts constitute the boundaries within the characteristics of individuals can play a role. Kittilson and Anderson (2011) argue in turn that instead of weighting macro- and micro-level factors against each other, we should examine how individual-level variables are either influenced by contextual factors, which then have an indirect effect, or are conditional on the context, suggesting a contingent effect. For instance, a large number of parties may enhance a voter's sense of external efficacy, which in turn increases his/her propensity to vote. Alternatively, a contingent effect implies that the impact of personal characteristics is moderated by supply-side factors. In this study, the impact of political interest is expected to be contingent on macro-level variables, i.e. compulsory voting, competition and the number of parties.

The tendency for compulsory voting to enhance participation is among the most robust findings in electoral studies (Geys, 2006, for meta-analysis; e.g. Blais and Dobrzynska, 1998; Hadjar and Beck, 2010; Jackman, 1987; Jackman and Miller, 1995, for individual studies). Among the EU member states, compulsory voting is currently in use in Belgium, Cyprus, Greece and Luxemburg. Several studies have shown that compulsory voting is among the most important variables associated with aggregate-level turnout in EP elections (Baimbridge, 2004; Flickinger and Studlar, 2007; Franklin, 2001; Franklin et al., 1996; Franklin and Hobolt, 2011; Mattila, 2003; Rose, 2004; Studlar et al., 2003). Even though the number of compulsory countries in EU has declined, it still has a substantial effect on turnout (Studlar et al., 2003, 202). Besides having an indirect effect on turnout by increasing the feeling that voting is a social norm, compulsory voting has a strong contingent impact. According to Lijphart (1997, 1) differences in participation among various socio-economic groups are much less evident in countries where voting is compulsory. Consequently, the impact of political interest is expected to be weaker in compulsory voting countries. The effect should be more apparent in EP elections, in which average turnout is lower than national elections.

According to the meta-analysis by Geys (2006, 647–648), the positive impact of closeness on electoral competition is the most often analyzed association in turnout studies. At the level of theory, it is connected to two different hypotheses, one assuming direct and another indirect effect (Cox and Munger, 1989, 217). From a rational choice perspective, the perceived closeness of elections enhances an individual voter's feeling that his/her vote might be decisive, thus increasing the benefits of voting (e.g. Cox and Munger, 1989, 218). According to Cox and Munger (1989), however, the effect may not be direct since the possibility of casting a pivotal vote is extremely small even in close elections. Another possibility is that the closeness of elections increases mobilization efforts by parties (Cox, 1999, 393; Cox and Munger, 1989), which in turn have a positive effect on turnout. We assume that the presence of a close election has a stronger impact on people who are not interested in politics and who need some additional impetus to overcome their initial predisposition to stay home. Thus, according to our hypothesis, the effect of interest in politics is mitigated in more competitive electoral contexts. In addition, we expect this impact to be more evident in EP elections which voters usually consider to be less salient, and consequently, their initial motivation to vote is lower than in first-order elections.

Finally, the number of parties has also been connected to electoral participation (for a review, Blais and Aarts, 2006). There are several theoretical arguments to expect political fragmentation to either boost or depress turnout. On the one hand, a wider range of parties increases the choices available to voters (Blais and Carty, 1990; Lakeman, 1974; Grofman and Selb, 2011). On the other hand, political fragmentation implies more complexity in vote choice (Blais and Carty, 1990, 173; Blais and Dobrzynska, 1998, 248–249). In addition, a higher number of parties increases the probability of coalition governments, in which case

elections tend to be less decisive (Jackman, 1987). Most empirical studies have reported the number of parties to have a negative effect on turnout (Blais and Aarts, 2006), which is also our expectation. In addition, we follow the logic in Kittilson and Anderson (2011) who found the impact of external political efficacy to be moderated by party fragmentation in the case of national elections. More precisely, we expect a more ideologically fragmented political system to decrease the propensity to vote only among less interested voters, and consequently, the impact of interest on turnout to be stronger as the number of parties increases, particularly so in EP elections.

In addition to the aforementioned variables, the most common indicators of an individual's social background, i.e. gender, age and education, are included in the models. The differences in political interest in accordance with gender, age and education are well-documented in the literature showing that the level of interest is lower among women, young and less-educated citizens (Bennett and Bennett, 1989; Gidengil et al., 2004; Glenn and Grimes, 1968; Schlozman et al., 1995). The expected relationship between each micro- and macro-level variable and their interactions are summarized in Table 1.

2. Data and research design

While examining simultaneously demand- and supply-side factors, the study is based on both micro- and macro-level data. Individual-level data are drawn from the voter survey collected as a part of European Election Studies 2009 (<http://www.piredeu.eu/>). The interviews were conducted in all 27 member states soon after the elections, between 15 June and 7 July, 2009. Each country sample consists of roughly 1000 persons, totalling 27,069 respondents. Due to missing data for some of our dependent and independent variables, 25,772 (eligible in EP elections) and 20,870 (eligible in national parliamentary elections) respondents are included in the analyses. In the statistical models, the

respondents are grouped into 28 clusters, instead of 27, since Wallonia and Flanders in Belgium are treated as different entities.⁴ In the following paragraphs, the operationalization of the dependent and independent variables and the structure of statistical models are described in more details.

Our dependent (response) variable is a binary indicator of whether the respondent voted or not. Individual turnout in the 2009 EP elections is derived from the survey question: 'A lot of people abstained in the European Parliament elections of June 4, while others voted. Did you cast your vote?'. Respondents who answered yes are coded as 1 and those who answered no as 0. Turnout in the previous national parliamentary elections is measured by a following open-ended recall question: 'Which party did you vote for at the [general election] of [year]?'. Respondents reporting that they voted are coded as 1 and those who explicitly reported they did not vote as 0. The distribution of countries over the election years is as follows: 2004 (1 country), 2005 (4 countries), 2006 (7 countries), 2007 (8 countries) and 2008 (7 countries).⁵ Self-reported turnout is much higher in first-order national elections (86.9%) than in second-order EP elections (71.0%).

The individual-level independent variables include political interest, gender, age and education.⁶ Subjective political interest is measured by the question: 'To what extent would you say you are interested in politics? Very, somewhat, a little, or not at all?'. The responses are coded as four separate dummy variables. Gender is represented by a 0/1 dummy for women (*female*). The impact of age is tested using continuous variables *age/10* for a linear relationship and *age/10 squared* for a curvilinear relationship. Education is also categorized into four dummy variables. A country-comparable education variable based on ISCED coding (V200) is utilized. The four education categories are: *none or primary* (levels 0 and 1), *lower secondary* (level 2), *upper secondary* (levels 3 and 4) and *tertiary* (levels 5 and 6).

Three institutional-level variables will be tested, i.e. compulsory voting, closeness of elections and the effective number of parties. *Compulsory voting* is a dummy variable coded 1 for Belgium, Cyprus, Greece and Luxembourg, and

Table 1

Expected impact of micro- and macro-level variables on turnout by type of elections.

Variables	Impact on turnout	Difference between types of elections
Interest in politics	Increases turnout	Stronger in EP elections
Compulsory voting	Increases turnout	Stronger in EP elections
Electoral competition	Increases turnout	Stronger in EP elections
Number of parties	Decreases turnout	Stronger in EP elections
Interest × compulsory voting	The impact of interest is weaker when voting is compulsory	More evident in EP elections
Interest × electoral competition	The impact of interest is weaker in more competitive elections	More evident in EP elections
Interest × number of parties	The impact of interest is stronger with higher number of parties	More evident in EP elections

⁴ The reason for this is that there exist two separate party systems with different sets of parties in Belgium. Unless we account these separate party systems, one of our macro-level variables, i.e. effective number of parties, would skew the empirical estimates. When aggregated at the national level, the effective number of electoral parties is 10.7 (EP elections) and 9.0 (national parliamentary elections) in Belgium. At the sub-national level, however, Wallonia has 4.4 and 4.5 and Flanders 6.2 and 4.8 'effective' parties.

⁵ National parliamentary elections were held in 27 member states in the following years: Austria (2008), Belgium (2007), Bulgaria (2005), Cyprus (2006), Czech Republic (2006), Denmark (2007), Estonia (2007), Finland (2007), France (2007), Germany (2005), Greece (2007), Hungary (2006), Ireland (2007), Italy (2008), Latvia (2006), Lithuania (2008), Luxembourg (2004), Malta (2008), Netherlands (2006), Poland (2007), Portugal (2005), Romania (2008), Slovakia (2006), Slovenia (2008), Spain (2008), Sweden (2006), and United Kingdom (2005).

⁶ We have also tested our models using party identification as a control variable as part of the mobilizing impact of political interest might be attributable to party identification which in turn increases interest in politics. The results are reported in endnote 11.

0 for every other country.⁷ *Closeness of elections* is quantified by calculating the raw vote margin between the first-place and second-place parties ($v_1 - v_2$).⁸ The measure of closeness, or the two-party margin, varies between 0.3 and 20 percentage points.⁹ Hungary is an outlier with a two-party margin of 39 percentage points. In the statistical models, the score is adjusted to 20 points in order to ensure reasonable linearity and weaken the outlier effect (a raw margin of 17 percentage points is the second highest value). This adjustment does in fact reduce the numerical value of the closeness coefficient in the models. *Effective number of electoral parties* is measured by dividing 1 by the sum of the squares of proportions of votes ($1/\sum v_i^2$). This is one of the most frequently used measures of party-system fragmentation. In the EP elections, the values for effective number of parties vary between 2.2 (Malta) and 7.8 (Netherlands). The corresponding minimum/maximum values for national parliamentary elections are 2.1 (Malta) and 8.9 (Lithuania).

In the analyses, the continuous variables are grand-mean centered and the dichotomous variables uncentered. The two ordinal variables, political interest and education, are converted to a series of dummy variables. As discussed earlier in the theoretical section, we test a number of cross-level interactions between political interest and macro-level variables. The cross-level interaction variables are constructed by forming the cross-product of each political interest dummy and the macro-level variable. Since the meaning of interactions terms in non-linear models may be ambiguous (Norton et al., 2004), we estimate predicted probabilities to illustrate the joint impact of individual and contextual factors.

⁷ According to Franklin (2001, 314–315), also Italy, in which compulsory voting was abolished in 1993, should be included in compulsory voting countries as its small decline in turnout would suggest that the impact of the reform will become only gradually evident with the passage of time. As turnout in Italy in 2009 EP elections was already 6 percentage points lower than in 2004 elections and 16 points lower than the last EP elections held under compulsory voting in 1989, it is justified to treat it as non-compulsory country.

⁸ This measure of closeness can be regarded as a surrogate for the perceived closeness before the actual elections (Franklin and Hobolt, 2011, 71). It may also be used as a proxy for party mobilization as closeness may increase parties' mobilization attempts (Cox, 1999, 393; Cox and Munger, 1989) as noticed earlier. This is a particularly important point as the data do not include a direct measure of mobilization which could be expected to be a highly relevant factor in relation to turnout among voters with low level of political interest. From the technical point of view, we are aware that the measure of closeness used here is problematic to certain extent as the margin is largely dependent on party system type: i.e. whether there is one dominating party, a few large parties or many medium and small-sized parties, and the margin tends to be naturally larger in majoritarian than proportional systems. Difficulties related to usage of two-party margin are, however, alleviated because party-system fragmentation is controlled for in the statistical models. Complementary measures of the closeness of elections have also been computed and tested: indices for multiparty margin ($(v_1 - v_2)/\sum(v_i)$), three-party competition, four-party competition and five-party competition (Galatas, 2004; also Blais and Lago, 2009).

⁹ Electoral data for the 2009 European parliamentary elections were obtained from the European Parliament's Internet site (<http://www.europarl.europa.eu/parliament/archive/elections2009/>). Data for national parliamentary elections are available, e.g. via the NSD European Election Database (http://www.nsd.uib.no/european_election_database/).

In accounting for turnout in EP and national elections, we use multi-level logistic regression models (fitted by maximum likelihood estimation) with individuals at the first level and countries at the second level. The independent variables are entered block wise to build up the full model: an empty model without any predictors (model 0), models with only micro-level variables (models 1 and 2), model where macro-level variables are added (model 3) and models which have cross-level interaction variables (models 4, 5 and 6). It should be noted that a relatively small number of level-2 units, i.e. countries, constrains the precision of the estimate of each macro-level variable.

3. Empirical analysis

Multi-level logistic regressions models 0 to 6 for EP and national elections are shown in Tables 2 and 3. Multi-level models are appropriate for our data since there are considerable differences in turnout between the country samples. Self-reported turnout across the 28 clusters varies between 45 and 94 per cent for EP elections ($M = 72\%$, $SD = 15\%$) and between 71 and 87 per cent for national parliamentary elections ($M = 87\%$, $SD = 8\%$). The correlation between the survey-based and official turnout figures is strong for both EP elections ($r_{xy} = 0.88$, $p < 0.01$, $N = 27$) and national elections ($r_{xy} = 0.78$, $p < 0.01$, $N = 27$). Likelihood-ratio tests comparing our estimated multi-level models to ordinary logistic regression models (without random effects) show that differences across countries are highly statistically significant ($p < 0.000$). Intraclass correlation coefficients (ICCs) calculated from the empty models 0 (without any explanatory variables) amount to 0.16 which indicates substantial between-country variation in turnout. These coefficients are obtained by dividing the variance component by the sum of the same variance component and $\pi^2/3$.

Models 1 and 2 are random intercept models in which the intercept is allowed to differ across clusters. In model 1, *female*, *age/10*, *age/10 squared* and *education* are included, whereas in model 2 *political interest* is added to detect the possible changes in the regression coefficients of the previous model. Statistically significant reductions in deviances ($-2 \times \log$ likelihood) reported in the tables indicate that the models improve with the introduction of these level-1 variables. Before focussing on the relationship between political interest and turnout, we review the effects of the other covariates.

The impact of education is uniform across the elections. As can be expected on the basis of earlier research, persons with higher education have a stronger propensity to participate in elections. The strength of the relationship decreases with the addition of political interest in model 2 simply because people with higher education tend to be more interested in politics. In line with earlier investigations, age is strongly connected to turnout. For every additional ten years of age, the odds of casting a vote increase by a factor of 1.30 in EP elections and 1.35 in national elections. Interestingly, the curvilinear relationship between age and turnout is not detected in EP elections. In national elections, the curvilinear regression line indicates that individual turnout is at peak around age 65,

Table 2a

Multi-level logistic regression analyses of voter turnout in EP elections of 2009 (odds ratios).

	Model 0	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
	OR (95% CI)	OR (95% CI)	OR (95% CI)	OR (95% CI)
Fixed effects				
Political interest: little interested	–	–	2.50 (2.29, 2.74)**	2.51 (2.29, 2.75)**
Political interest: somewhat interested	–	–	4.73 (4.30, 5.21)**	4.74 (4.31, 5.22)**
Political interest: very interested	–	–	7.29 (6.41, 8.30)**	7.30 (6.42, 8.30)**
Female	–	0.91 (0.86, 0.97)**	1.06 (1.00, 1.13)(*)	1.06 (1.00, 1.13)(*)
Age/10	–	1.36 (1.33, 1.38)**	1.30 (1.27, 1.32)**	1.30 (1.27, 1.32)**
Age/10 squared	–	0.99 (0.98, 1.00)	0.99 (0.98, 1.00)	0.99 (0.98, 1.00)
Education: lower secondary	–	1.15 (1.01, 1.31)*	0.98 (0.81, 1.13)	0.99 (0.86, 1.13)
Education: upper secondary	–	1.56 (1.38, 1.76)**	1.19 (1.05, 1.35)**	1.20 (1.05, 1.36)**
Education: tertiary	–	2.39 (2.11, 2.71)**	1.55 (1.36, 1.77)**	1.55 (1.36, 1.77)**
Compulsory voting	–	–	–	2.80 (1.38, 5.68)**
Effective number of electoral parties	–	–	–	0.90 (0.75, 1.09)
Closeness of elections	–	–	–	0.95 (0.90, 1.00)(*)
Random effects				
var(u_{0j}): cons	0.65	0.74	0.72	0.43
Model summary				
Deviance	28725	27400	25993	25979
Individuals/groups	25772/28	25772/28	25772/28	25772/28

** $p < 0.01$; * $p < 0.05$; (*) $p < 0.10$. Note: Likelihood-ratio χ^2 comparisons: model 1 vs. model 0 = 1325, $p < 0.01$; model 2 vs. model 1 = 1407, $p < 0.01$; model 3 vs. model 2 = 14, $p < 0.01$.

Table 2b

Cross-level interactions: multi-level logistic regression analyses of turnout in EP elections of 2009 (odds ratios).

	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6
	OR (95% CI)	OR (95% CI)	OR (95% CI)
Fixed effects			
Political interest: little interested	2.69 (2.39, 3.01)**	2.63 (2.35, 2.94)**	2.60 (2.34, 2.88)**
Political interest: somewhat interested	5.22 (4.49, 6.08)**	4.90 (4.22, 5.69)**	4.82 (4.23, 5.51)**
Political interest: very interested	8.19 (6.59, 10.2)**	7.81 (6.31, 9.68)**	7.67 (6.36, 9.25)**
Compulsory voting	3.43 (1.59, 7.40)**	3.04 (1.44, 6.44)**	3.01 (1.43, 6.33)**
Effective number of electoral parties	0.88 (0.72, 1.08)	0.86 (0.70, 1.05)	0.89 (0.73, 1.08)
Closeness of elections	0.94 (0.88, 0.99)*	0.94 (0.88, 0.99)*	0.93 (0.88, 0.99)*
Compulsory voting \times little interested	0.85 (0.62, 1.16)	–	–
Compulsory voting \times somewhat interested	0.57 (0.38, 0.85)**	–	–
Compulsory voting \times very interested	0.67 (0.38, 1.17)	–	–
ENEP \times little interested	–	1.04 (0.97, 1.12)	–
ENEP \times somewhat interested	–	1.05 (0.95, 1.16)	–
ENEP \times very interested	–	1.03 (0.89, 1.19)	–
Closeness of elections \times little interested	–	–	1.01 (0.99, 1.03)
Closeness of elections \times somewhat interested	–	–	1.04 (1.01, 1.07)**
Closeness of elections \times very interested	–	–	1.05 (1.01, 1.08)*
Random effects			
var(u_{0j}): cons	0.47	0.47	0.47
var(u_{1j}): political interest	0.02	0.02	0.01
Model summary			
Deviance	25932	25939	25932
Individuals/groups	25772/28	25772/28	25772/28

** $p < 0.01$; * $p < 0.05$. Note: the individual-level variables female, age/10, age/10 squared and education are controlled for but the estimates are not displayed here. Likelihood-ratio χ^2 comparisons: model 4 vs. model 3 = 46, $p < 0.01$; model 5 vs. model 3 = 39, $p < 0.01$; model 6 vs. model 3 = 47, $p < 0.01$.

and after that the propensity to vote clearly drops. Gender becomes more strongly related to turnout when political interest is added: women tend to report lower levels of political interest, yet they turn out to vote in somewhat higher numbers than men. The stronger impact of gender in national elections is however more puzzling. In national parliamentary elections, female voters have higher odds ratio compared to men to begin with (OR 1.07) which only increases when including political interest (OR 1.25). In EP elections, the initial correlation (OR 0.91) between gender

and voting is negative, that is, women are slightly less inclined to vote, but this turns into to a weak positive correlation (OR 1.06) when interest is added.¹⁰

¹⁰ Both of these results however differ from the impact of gender in the multi-level analyses of turnout in parliamentary elections in 24 European countries by Hadjar and Beck (2010). Non-significant and positive effects of gender turned into significant and negative when macro-level and socio-psychological variables, including political interest, were included.

Table 3a

Multi-level logistic regression analyses of voter turnout in previous national parliamentary elections (2004–2008) (odds ratios).

	Model 0	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
	OR (95% CI)	OR (95% CI)	OR (95% CI)	OR (95% CI)
Fixed effects				
Political interest: little interested	–	–	3.10 (2.76, 3.48)**	3.11 (2.77, 3.49)**
Political interest: somewhat interested	–	–	6.61 (5.80, 7.53)**	6.63 (5.82, 7.56)**
Political interest: very interested	–	–	7.11 (5.89, 8.58)**	7.12 (5.90, 8.59)**
Female	–	1.07 (0.98, 1.17)	1.25 (1.14, 1.37)**	1.25 (1.14, 1.37)**
Age/10	–	1.42 (1.38, 1.47)**	1.35 (1.31, 1.39)**	1.35 (1.31, 1.39)**
Age/10 squared	–	0.95 (0.93, 0.96)**	0.95 (0.93, 0.96)**	0.95 (0.93, 0.96)**
Education: lower secondary	–	1.17 (0.96, 1.42)	0.98 (0.80, 1.20)	0.99 (0.81, 1.21)
Education: upper secondary	–	1.57 (1.30, 1.88)**	1.15 (0.95, 1.39)	1.16 (0.95, 1.40)
Education: tertiary	–	2.54 (2.09, 3.08)**	1.50 (1.23, 1.84)**	1.51 (1.23, 1.85)**
Compulsory voting	–	–	–	1.87 (0.95, 3.68)(*)
Effective number of electoral parties	–	–	–	0.86 (0.72, 1.03)(*)
Closeness of elections	–	–	–	0.99 (0.93, 1.04)
Random effects				
var(u_{0j}): cons	0.64	0.69	0.57	0.45
Model summary				
Deviance	15080	14123	13209	13203
Individuals/groups	20870/28	20870/28	20870/28	20870/28

** $p < 0.01$; * $p < 0.05$; (*) $p < 0.10$. Note: Likelihood-ratio χ^2 comparisons: model 1 vs. model 0 = 957, $p < 0.01$; model 2 vs. model 1 = 914, $p < 0.01$; model 3 vs. model 2 = 6, n.s.

Table 3b

Cross-level interactions: multi-level logistic regression analyses of turnout in previous national parliamentary elections (2004–2008) (odds ratios).

	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6
	OR (95% CI)	OR (95% CI)	OR (95% CI)
Fixed effects			
Political interest: little interested	3.18 (2.78, 3.65)**	3.18 (2.79, 3.62)**	3.18 (2.79, 3.62)**
Political interest: somewhat interested	7.24 (6.06, 8.64)**	6.74 (5.69, 7.98)**	6.79 (5.74, 8.03)**
Political interest: very interested	7.59 (5.86, 9.83)**	7.59 (5.93, 9.71)**	7.52 (5.90, 9.60)**
Compulsory voting	2.15 (1.04, 4.45)*	2.00 (1.00, 3.99)*	2.01 (1.01, 4.00)*
Effective number of electoral parties	0.86 (0.72, 1.03)(*)	0.84 (0.69, 1.01)(*)	0.86 (0.72, 1.03)(*)
Closeness of elections	0.99 (0.93, 1.04)	0.99 (0.93, 1.05)	0.99 (0.93, 1.05)
Compulsory voting \times little interested	1.04 (0.68, 1.60)	–	–
Compulsory voting \times somewhat interested	0.56 (0.35, 0.92)*	–	–
Compulsory voting \times very interested	0.91 (0.47, 1.77)	–	–
ENEP \times little interested	–	1.04 (0.96, 1.13)	–
ENEP \times somewhat interested	–	1.06 (0.95, 1.18)	–
ENEP \times very interested	–	0.98 (0.84, 1.14)	–
Closeness of elections \times little interested	–	–	0.99 (0.96, 1.02)
Closeness of elections \times somewhat interested	–	–	0.99 (0.95, 1.02)
Closeness of elections \times very interested	–	–	1.00 (0.95, 1.05)
Random effects			
var(u_{0j}): cons	0.44	0.45	0.45
var(u_{1j}): political interest	0.01	0.02	0.02
Model summary			
Deviance	13183	13190	13193
Individuals/groups	20870/28	20870/28	20870/28

** $p < 0.01$; * $p < 0.05$; (*) $p < 0.10$. Note: the individual-level variables female, age/10, age/10 squared and education are controlled for but the estimates are not displayed here. Likelihood-ratio χ^2 comparisons: model 4 vs. model 3 = 19, $p < 0.01$; model 5 vs. model 3 = 12, $p < 0.05$; model 6 vs. model 3 = 10, $p < 0.05$.

Next, we turn to our main analysis in which *individual-level turnout* is the dependent variable, *political interest* the focus explanatory variable and *electoral context* the moderator variable. Firstly, we focus on the strength of the relationship between political interest and individual turnout in both EP and national parliamentary elections. We hypothesize that political interest is connected more strongly to turnout in EP elections compared to national elections, evidenced by a steeper relationship between the variables. To put it more concretely, people who are less politically interested are more inclined to cast a vote in first-order national

parliamentary elections than in second-order EP elections, whereas the most politically interested people will tend to vote in both types of elections. Secondly, we examine how the relationship between political interest and turnout varies according to the institutional and electoral context. This would imply that macro-level variables have a mediating effect on the relationship between political interest and individual turnout. The interaction terms between political interest and each contextual variable are added block wise. Cross-level interactions are separately estimated in three different models to avoid too complex models. We show the

results from random coefficient models where both the slope and intercept are allowed to vary across clusters.¹¹

In line with our hypothesis, the results from both bivariate cross-tabulation analyses and odds ratios and estimated voting probabilities obtained from multi-level logistic analyses show that turnout in second-order elections converges to turnout in first-order elections as we move up the political interest scale among individuals (*not at all interested, little interested, somewhat interested and very interested*). In Table 4, showing cross-tabulation of turnout and political interest, a linear relationship can be observed between the two variables as propensity to vote increases with political interest. Two empirical observations verify that political interest is more strongly connected to turnout in EP elections. First, the relationship is steeper as indicated by a larger difference in turnout between the least and most politically interested: a 45 percentage points difference in turnout between the not at all interested and very interested in EP elections and a 33 percentage points difference between the groups in national elections. Second, the relationship is more linear in the case of EP elections. The differences between the political interest categories are 22, 14 and 8 percentage points, respectively. In national parliamentary elections, the corresponding gaps are 22, 8 and 2 percentage points.

Consequently, the cross-tabulation results provide *prima facie* evidence that the impact of our motivational factor, i.e. political interest, is stronger in second- than first-order elections. The findings are only partly supported by the multi-level regression analyses presented in Tables 2a and 3a. When we compare very interested respondents with those who are not at all interested in politics, the odds ratio estimates are similar in the two sets of elections (OR 7.3 and 7.1, respectively).¹²

Table 5 reports the estimated probability of voting according to level of political interest, holding the other independent variables at their means. Median probabilities have been computed based on the multi-level regression estimates. The estimated probabilities bear close resemblance to the cell proportions presented in Table 4. We can see that in EP elections, the mean estimated probability of voting is 49 per cent among those not at all interested and 88 per cent among the very interested, comprising a 38-point gap. In national elections, the estimated turnout probability rises from 75 per cent to 96 per cent, an increase of 'only' 21 percentage points.

What these probabilities tell us is that, in line with our hypothesis, the turnout gap between the very and the not at all interested is larger in EP than in national elections. In addition, the turnout gap between the two elections is highest among those not interested in politics. At the same time, however, the similar odd ratios and logit coefficients

in Tables 2a and 3a indicate that these differences basically reflect ceiling effects. Because the turnout rate of the politically inattentive is so low in EP elections, there is more room for 'improvement' among the politically attentive.

In models 3, the independent effects of system-level variables (or level-2 variables) on turnout are estimated. Likelihood-ratio tests based on the difference between the deviance statistics imply that model 3 improves the fit in a statistically significant manner for EP elections, but not for national parliamentary elections. Another way of demonstrating that the three contextual variables appear to be more important in EP elections is by computing the explained context-level variance according to the "proportional reduction of error" logic (Powers and Xie, 2008, 129; Windzio, 2008, 132). The difference between level-2 variances in models 3 and 2 is divided by the variance in model 2. For EU elections, about 40 per cent of the variance between countries is explained by compulsory voting, effective number of parties and closeness of elections $((0.72-0.43)/0.72 = 0.40)$. For national parliamentary elections, about 21 per cent of the variance is explained by the macro-level variables $((0.57-0.45)/0.57 = 0.21)$.¹³

In terms of the institutional and electoral context, we can notice that compulsory voting substantially increases the propensity to vote as expected. Turnout is in general higher in the four countries which utilise some form of mandatory voting, i.e. Belgium, Cyprus, Greece and Luxembourg. In EP elections, the estimated odds of voting in compulsory voting systems are 2.8 times the odds in non-compulsory voting systems. The odds ratio is smaller (OR 1.87) in national parliamentary elections and statistically significant only at the 0.10 level (model 3 in Tables 2a and 3a). The interaction effects between political interest and compulsory voting show in turn that the institutional context moderates the impact of interest on electoral participation. In accordance with our hypothesis, the impact of interest is weaker in countries with compulsory voting, and this moderating effect is particularly evident in EP elections, indicated by odds ratios which are below 1 for the interaction variables in model 4 in Table 2b. One out of three interaction variables is statistically significant both in the case of EP elections and in the case of national parliamentary elections. Mean probabilities based on the multi-level logistic regression models are reported in Table 6. The estimates for EP elections suggest that the turnout gap between the most and the least interested is 'only' 21 points under compulsory voting, compared to 43 points where voting is not compulsory. The difference is not as stark in national elections, where the gap between the two same

¹¹ We have also run our models including party identification as a control variable. The introduction of party identification into the models reduces the odds ratios for the political interest dummies by 9–20 per cent for EP elections and by 19–39 per cent for national parliamentary elections. The odds ratios for the other independent variables remain relatively stable.

¹² The same pattern holds when comparing the logit coefficients rather than the odds ratios.

¹³ Only the proportionate reduction in group-level variance between models 2 and 3 is quantified. In multi-level logistic regression, the individual-level variance component is fixed and not included in the model output. Therefore explained variance at the individual-level cannot be estimated by calculating the proportional change in the individual-level variance relative to the variance of the empty model. In addition, it is common that the introduction of individual-level covariates increases instead of decreasing the group-level variance because the residual variance at the individual level is effectively reduced (Powers and Xie, 2008, 119–120). When single-level logistic regression models for each country are run, the average pseudo R-square (McFadden) is 0.109.

Table 4

Turnout by political interest in EP elections (2009) and previous national parliamentary elections (2004–2008) (%).

	Voted in 2009 EP election (%)		Total (N)	Voted in the previous national elections (%)		Total (N)
	Yes	No		Yes	No	
Political interest						
Not at all interested	42.5	57.5	3430	62.1	37.9	2511
Little interested	64.8	35.2	8988	84.5	15.5	7024
Somewhat interested	79.3	20.7	10,267	92.9	7.1	8470
Very interested	87.7	12.3	4144	95.0	5.0	3614
Total (%)	71.0	29.0	100.0	86.9	13.1	100.0
(N)	19059	7770	26829	18797	2822	21619

groups is 14 points and 26 points, respectively. The contingent effect of compulsory voting is thus more pronounced in EP elections, as hypothesized.

Closeness of elections is also fairly strongly associated with turnout in EP elections. The closer the electoral contest, the higher the rate of turnout. The odds ratio estimate specifies that every percentage point difference between the first- and second-placed parties in EP elections decreases the odds of voting by a factor 0.95. The coefficient does not reach conventional levels of statistical significance, but it is significant at the 0.10 level (model 3, Table 2a). Closeness does not, however, seem to be a significant explanatory variable for turnout in national parliament elections. The odds ratio very close to 1 indicates that differences in turnout are not a function of the margin between the first- and second-placed parties (model 3, Table 3a). The hypothesis that electoral competition matters more in EP elections is thus accepted as in fact it is not clear whether it has any effect in national elections.

In cross-level interactions, the degree of competitiveness moderates the relationship between political interest and individual turnout in EP elections, as suggested. As shown in Table 7, the relationship between interest and turnout is mildly steeper when and where competition is less intense. In elections in which margin of victory between the first-place and second-place parties is at least ten percentage points, the gap in propensity to vote between the most and least interested voters is 42 percentage points. When the margin of victory is reduced to a maximum of 4.9 percentage points, the corresponding difference in estimated turnout decreases to 36 percentage points.

The effective number of parties is negatively correlated with turnout in both set of elections as proposed in our hypothesis. When there is a relationship, turnout decreases with increasing number of effective parties. The odds ratio is

Table 5

Estimated probability of voting in EP elections (2009) and previous national parliamentary elections (2004–2008) by political interest.

	EP elections	national elections
Political interest		
Not at all interested	0.490	0.749
Little interested	0.701	0.903
Somewhat interested	0.820	0.952
Very interested	0.875	0.955
Difference between the most and least interested	0.385	0.206

Note: median predicted probabilities are based on the multi-level logistic regressions reported in model 3 in Tables 2a and 3a.

Table 6

Estimated probability of voting in EP elections (2009) and previous national parliamentary elections (2004–2008) by political interest and compulsory voting.

	EP elections		National elections	
	Compulsory voting		Compulsory voting	
	Yes	No	Yes	No
Political interest				
Not at all interested	.722	.430	.827	.687
Little interested	.855	.671	.941	.877
Somewhat interested	.886	.798	.952	.942
Very interested	.935	.861	.971	.944
Difference between the most and least interested	.213	.431	.144	.257

Note: median predicted probabilities are based on the multi-level logistic regressions reported in model 4 in Tables 2b and 3b.

0.90 but not statistically significant in EP elections, whereas the odds ratio is 0.86 and statistically significant at the 0.10 level in national parliamentary elections. Opposite to our expectation, we do not detect any cross-level interaction between political interest and party-system fragmentation. We also tested a more refined measure of party-system polarization developed by Dalton (2008) in EP elections based on respondents' assessment of parties on the left-right scale, i.e. the same measurement used in Kittilson and Anderson (2011).¹⁴ The party-system polarization index did not, however, show any relationship between polarization and turnout.

In terms of the cross-level interaction effects, our findings are thus somewhat mixed. Firstly, the presence of compulsory voting in a political system clearly moderates the relationship between political interest and turnout, especially in second-order elections. Even voters with low level of political interest are effectively encouraged to participate in elections in compulsory voting systems, and consequently, the differences in turnout are small between groups with various levels of political interest. In non-compulsory systems, turnout in turn sharply decreases along with the political interest scale. Secondly, the degree of competitiveness partially moderates the relationship between political interest and electoral participation in EP elections. The smaller the margin between the first-placed

¹⁴ Whereas political fragmentation refers to number of parties, political polarization reflects the distance between various parties. We thank an anonymous referee for pointing out this conceptual distinction.

Table 7

Estimated probability of voting in EP elections of 2009 by political interest and closeness of elections.

	Margin of victory		
	0–4.9	5.0–9.9	10.0–20.0
Political interest			
Not at all interested	0.487	0.470	0.452
Little interested	0.696	0.693	0.684
Somewhat interested	0.786	0.802	0.803
Very interested	0.848	0.863	0.867
Difference between the most and least interested	0.361	0.393	0.415

Note: median predicted probabilities are based on the multi-level logistic regressions reported in model 6 in Table 2b.

and second-placed parties in the EU elections, the weaker the turnout gap between the most and the least politically interested individuals. Finally, while the number of parties had a negative impact on turnout in national elections, its interaction with political interest did not reach the level of statistical significance in either type of elections.

4. Conclusion

As suggested by van der Eijk et al. (1996), European parliamentary elections constitute an exceptional case to study turnout either by comparing the differences between first- and second-order electoral arena or to examine the effect of macro-level factors in a set of elections held simultaneously in 27 member states with different institutional settings and electoral contexts. In this study, we utilised both perspectives in studying the impact of one particular individual-level motivational factor, i.e. interest in politics, on participation and its interactions with system-level variables in both EP and national elections.

Our results show that compared to first-order elections, the role of personal motivation is more important in EP elections. As the initial level of participation is lower in second-order elections, there is at the same time more room for contextual variations. We tested the impact of three system-level variables, i.e. compulsory voting, closeness of elections and party-system fragmentation, which we expected to have a contingent effect on the relationship between interest and voting, especially in EP elections. In line with our hypotheses, we found the difference in the estimated probability of voting between the most and least interested voters to be smaller in countries utilising compulsory voting. Moreover, this gap was larger in EP than national elections. Similarly, the closeness of the contest, measured by the margin of victory between the first-place and second-place parties, decreased the impact of interest in EP elections.

The findings suggest that both demand- and supply-side factors are important in accounting for voting. Including system-level and contextual variables along with micro-level factors decreases between-country heterogeneity. The finding is in line with Franklin et al. (1996, 321; Franklin, 2004), who argue that individual-level differences have only room within limits of institutional and political factors. Our study demonstrates that the effect of individual

motivation is substantially attenuated when electoral context is favourable for participation. As expected, the impact is more evident in second-order elections usually characterized as less salient. While we should expect some level of differences in turnout in EP elections between member states related to variations in the institutional setting of elections, such as use of compulsory voting, the individual-level gaps in participation can be moderated by more competitive electoral context.

Because there is less mobilization by the parties and the media, one could argue that second-order elections are more pure cases if we wish to understand how citizens' motivations affect the decision to vote or not to vote and how contextual factors interact with individual motivations. The bottom line is that most elections are relatively low stake and thus 'second-order'. There is as much to learn from citizen behaviour in 'normal' low stake elections as there is from 'important' national elections. The most fruitful approach, we would argue, is to compare citizens' decisions in different sets of elections.

Acknowledgements

This article is a part of the research projects 'Electoral volatility in Western Europe: a multi-level modelling approach' and 'Generations and political behaviour. Generational effect in electoral and other forms of political participation' funded by the Academy of Finland (projects number 121709 and 131701, respectively). The authors would like to thank two anonymous referees for their useful suggestions, Sami Borg and Kimmo Elo for commenting the paper and Nathalie Griger for valuable instructions with multi-level models.

References

- Bühlman, M., Freitag, M., 2006. Individual and contextual determinants of electoral participation. *Swiss Political Science Review* 12 (4), 13–47.
- Baimbridge, M.D., 2004. Euphoria to apathy: EP turnout in the new member states. In: Lodge, J. (Ed.), *The 2004 Elections to the European Parliament*, pp. 45–54.
- Bennett, L.L.M., Bennett, S.E., 1989. Enduring gender differences in political interest: the impact of socialization and political dispositions. *American Politics Research* 17 (1), 105–122.
- Blais, A., 2000. *To Vote or Not to Vote: The Merits and Limits of Rational Choice Theory*. University of Pittsburgh Press, Pittsburgh.
- Blais, A., 2006. What effects voter turnout? *Annual Review of Political Science* 9, 111–125.
- Blais, A., Aarts, K., 2006. Electoral systems and turnout. *Acta Politica* 41 (2), 180–196.
- Blais, A., Carty, R.K., 1990. Does proportional representation foster voter turnout? *European Journal of Political Research* 18 (2), 167–181.
- Blais, A., Dobrzynska, A., 1998. Turnout in electoral democracies. *European Journal of Political Research* 33 (2), 239–261.
- Blais, A., Lago, I., 2009. A general measure of district competitiveness. *Electoral Studies* 28 (1), 94–100.
- Blondel, J., Sinnott, R., Svensson, P., 1997. Representation and voter participation. *European Journal of Political Research* 32 (2), 243–272.
- Brady, H.E., Verba, S., Schlozman, K.L., 1995. Beyond SES: a resource model of political participation. *American Political Science Review* 89 (2), 71–95.
- Clarke, H.D., Sanders, D., Stewart, M.D., Whiteley, P.F., 2009. *Performance Politics and the British Voter*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.
- Cox, G.W., 1999. Electoral rules and the calculus of mobilization. *Legislative Studies Quarterly* 24 (3), 387–419.
- Cox, G.W., Munger, M.M., 1989. Closeness, expenditures, and turnout in the 1982 U.S. house elections. *American Political Science Review* 83 (1), 217–231.

- Dalton, R.J., 2008. The quantity and the quality of party systems: party system polarization, its measurement, and its consequences. *Comparative Political Studies* 41 (7), 899–920.
- De Vreese, C., Tobiasen, M., 2007. Conflict and identity: explaining turnout and anti-integrationist voting in the Danish 2004 elections for the European parliament. *Scandinavian Political Studies* 30 (1), 87–114.
- van der Eijk, C., Oppenhuis, E., 1990. Turnout and second-order effects in the European elections of June 1989 – evidence from the Netherlands. *Acta Politica* 25 (1), 67–94.
- van der Eijk, C., Franklin, M.N., Marsh, M., 1996. What voters teach us about Europe-wide elections: what Europe-wide elections teach us about voters? *Electoral Studies* 15 (2), 149–166.
- Denny, K., Doyle, O., 2008. Political interest, cognitive ability and personality: determinants of voter turnout in Britain. *British Journal of Political Science* 38 (2), 291–310.
- Elo, K., Rapeli, L., 2008. *Suomalaisten Poliittikattietämys. Oikeusministeriön Julkaisu* 2008, vol. 6. Oikeusministeriö, Helsinki.
- Fieldhouse, E., Tranmer, M., Russell, A., 2007. Something about young people or something about elections? Electoral participation of young people in Europe: evidence from a multilevel analysis of the European social survey. *European Journal of Political Research* 46 (6), 797–822.
- Flickinger, R.S., Studlar, D.T., 2007. One Europe, many electorates? Models of turnout in European parliament elections after 2004. *Comparative Political Studies* 40 (4), 383–404.
- Franklin, M.N., 2001. How structural factors cause turnout variations at European parliament elections. *European Union Politics* 2 (3), 309–328.
- Franklin, M.N., 2004. Voter Turnout and the Dynamics of Electoral Competition in Established Democracies since 1945. Cambridge University Press, New York.
- Franklin, M.N., van der Eijk, C., 1996. The problem: representation and democracy in the European union. In: van der Eijk, C., Franklin, M.N. (Eds.), *Choosing Europe? The European Electorate and National Politics in the Face of Union*. University of Michigan Press, Ann Arbor, pp. 3–10.
- Franklin, M.N., van der Eijk, C., Oppenhuis, E., 1996. The institutional context: turnout. In: van der Eijk, C., Franklin, M.N. (Eds.), *Choosing Europe? The European Electorate and National Politics in the Face of Union*. University of Michigan Press, Ann Arbor, pp. 306–331.
- Franklin, M.N., Hobolt, S.B., 2011. The legacy of lethargy: how elections of the European Parliament depress turnout. *Electoral Studies* 30 (2), 67–76.
- Galatas, S.E., 2004. Electing the first parliament: party competition and voter participation in Scotland. *Party Politics* 10 (2), 213–233.
- Geys, B., 2006. Explaining voter turnout: a review of aggregate-level research. *Electoral Studies* 25 (4), 637–663.
- Gidengil, E., Blais, A., Nevitte, N., Nadeau, R., 2004. *Citizens*. UBC Press, Vancouver.
- Glenn, N.D., Grimes, M., 1968. Aging, voting and political interest. *American Sociological Review* 33 (4), 563–575.
- Grofman, P., Selb, P., 2011. Turnout and the (effective) number of parties at the national and the district level: a puzzle solving approach. *Party Politics* 17 (1), 93–117.
- Hadjar, A., Beck, M., 2010. Who does not participate in elections in Europe and why is this? *European Societies* 12 (4), 521–542.
- Hobolt, S.B., Spoon, J.-J., Tilly, J., 2009. A vote against Europe? Explaining defections at the 1999 and 2004 European parliament elections. *British Journal of Political Science* 39 (1), 93–115.
- Jackman, R.W., 1987. Political institutions and voter turnout in industrial democracies. *American Political Science Review* 81 (2), 405–424.
- Jackman, R.W., Miller, R.A., 1995. Voter turnout in the industrial democracies during the 1980s. *Comparative Political Studies* 27 (4), 467–492.
- Jesuit, D., 2003. The regional dynamics of European electoral politics participation in national and European contests in the 1990s. *European Union Politics* 4 (2), 139–164.
- Kittilson, M.C., Anderson, C.J., 2011. Electoral supply and voter turnout. In: Dalton, R.J., Anderson, C.J. (Eds.), *Citizens, Context and Choice: How Context Shapes Citizens' Electoral Choices*. Oxford University Press, Oxford, pp. 33–54.
- Lakeman, E., 1974. *How Democracies Vote: A Study of Electoral Systems*. Faber, London.
- Lijphart, A., 1997. Unequal participation: democracy's unresolved dilemma. *American Political Science Review* 91 (1), 1–14.
- Malkopoulou, A., 2009. Lost Voters: Participation in EU Elections and the Case for Compulsory Voting. CEPS Working Document No. 317/July 2009. <http://www.ceps.eu/files/book/1886.pdf>.
- Mattila, M., 2003. Determinants of turnout in the European elections. *Electoral Studies* 22 (3), 449–468.
- Milbrath, L.W., 1965. *Political Participation*. Rand McNally, Chicago, IL.
- Norton, E., Wang, H., Ai, C., 2004. Computing interaction effects and standard errors in logit and probit models. *Stata Journal* 4 (2), 154–167.
- Pattie, C., Johnston, R., 1998. Voter turnout at the British General Election of 1992: rational choice, social standing or political efficacy? *European Journal of Political Research* 33 (2), 263–283.
- Powell Jr., G.B., 1986. American voter turnout in comparative perspective. *American Political Science Review* 80 (1), 7–43.
- Powers, D., Xie, Y., 2008. *Statistical Methods for Categorical Data Analysis*, second ed. Emerald, London.
- Reif, K., 1985. Ten second-order elections. In: Reif, K. (Ed.), *Ten European elections: campaigns and results of the 1979/81 first direct elections to the European Parliament*. Gower, Aldershot, pp. 1–36.
- Reif, K., Schmitt, H., 1980. Nine second order national elections: a conceptual framework for the analysis of European election result. *European Journal of Political Research* 8 (1), 3–44.
- Rose, R., 2004. Europe Expands, Turnout Falls: the Significance of the 2004 European Parliament Election. International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance, Stockholm.
- Schlozman, K.L., Burns, N., Verba, S., Donahue, J., 1995. Gender and citizen participation: is there a different voice? *American Journal of Political Science* 39 (2), 267–293.
- Schmitt, H., van der Eijk, C., 2007. Non-voting in European Parliament elections and support for European integration. In: Brug van der, W., Eijk van der, C. (Eds.), *European Elections and Domestic Politics – Lessons from the Past and Scenarios for the Future*. University of Notre Dame Press, Notre Dame, Ind, pp. 145–167.
- Schmitt, H., Mannheimer, R., 1991. About voting and non-voting in the European elections of June 1989. *European Journal of Political Research* 19 (1), 31–54.
- Squire, P., Wolfinger, R.E., Glass, D.P., 1987. Residential mobility and voter turnout. *American Political Science Review* 81 (1), 45–66.
- Studlar, D.T., Flickinger, R.S., Bennett, S.E., 2003. Turnout in European parliament elections: towards a European-centred model. *Journal of Elections, Public Opinions & Parties* 13 (1), 195–209.
- Windzio, M., 2008. Social structures and actors: the application of multilevel analysis in migration research. *Romanian Journal of Population Research* 2 (1), 113–138.