

Boosting turnout in second-order elections

A quantitative study on the benefits of holding local elections
at the same day as the European Parliament election

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Abstract

Since the instalment of direct elections to the European Parliament, turnout has been falling. The implications of low, and ever falling, turnout are many. By holding second-order elections in the form of local elections on the same day as the election for the European Parliament, which also is a second-order election, turnout increases. This thesis estimates that turnout would increase by approximately 8-9% when elections are held concurrently. This is tested using panel data for all member states of the European Union in the elections of 2004-2014. Also, the underlying factors for this effect on turnout are examined in all concurring national- and EP elections between 1979-2014. The two competing factors are the cost of voting and the salience of the election. Of the two it is the cost of voting that mostly explains the positive effect of the concurrent elections.

By testing the concurrent second-order elections over time and across countries it provides a more robust understanding of the phenomena, adding to the previous research. Moreover, it displays a low-cost tool for policymakers to boost turnout in less important elections by holding them together with either other less important elections (second-order) or with more important elections (first-order).

Key words: Turnout, Concurrent elections, European Parliament, Second-order, Cost of voting, Salience.

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Table of contents

1	Introduction	1
1.1	Problem formulation	2
1.2	Aim of the thesis	3
1.3	Disposition	3
2	Theory	5
2.1	Previous research	5
2.2	Concurrent elections	7
2.2.1	Cost of voting	8
2.2.2	Salience of the election	9
2.3	Theoretical framework and hypotheses	9
2.3.1	Part one – Testing CSOE over time and across countries	9
2.3.2	Part two – Testing the underlying variables of CSOE	11
3	Method	14
3.1	Case selection	15
3.2	Statistical analysis	16
3.2.1	Part one – Panel Data	16
3.2.2	Part two – Descriptive statistics	19
3.3	Variables and operationalization	20
3.3.1	Empirical Data	20
3.3.2	Dependent variable	21
3.3.3	Independent variable	21
3.3.4	Control variable	22
3.4	Descriptive statistics and diagnostics	23
3.5	Models	26
3.5.1	Reliability and validity	27
4	Results	29
4.1	Part one – CSOE over time	29
4.2	Part two – Underlying variables of concurrent elections	32
5	Analysis	36
6	Conclusion	41
7	References	43
8	Appendix	I

Table and Figures

Tables

2.1	Variables that has the highest success rate in explaining turnout.....	6
3.1	List of all variables.....	21
3.2	Descriptive statistics.....	23
3.3	Correlation Matrix 1, all variables.....	24
3.4	Correlation Matrix 2.....	24
3.5	Diagnostics tests.....	25
3.6	Test between fixed effects and OLS with dummies.....	26
3.7	All hypotheses, how they are answered and where to find it.....	27
4.1	GLS Regression analysis using Panel Data.....	29
4.2	All CFaSOE during 1979-2014.....	32
4.3	Descriptive statistics for the underlying variables.....	34
5.1	Answers to the hypothesis and if they are significant.....	40
8.1	Concurring elections with the EP elections in 2004, 2009 and 2014.....	I
8.2	GLS Regression analysis using Panel Data without robust standard errors.....	II

Figures

2.1	Cost of voting.....	11
4.1	Means of Salienc measurements for the years 2004, 2009 and 2014.....	31
4.2	Boxplot, Difference in turnout between national- and EP elections.....	23

1 Introduction

Since the instalment of direct elections of the European Parliament (EP) election in 1979 the turnout has been in decline. During the EP election of 2014 it hit an all time low at 42.5 per cent (IDEA, 2017). The global downward trend of falling turnout can be observed in most elections, but are most prominent in the second-order elections.¹ With ever-lower turnout, the legitimacy of the European Union (EU) could be damaged. Moreover, lower turnout can lead to an unequal representation since the voters that abstain of voting generally belong to the less well-off individuals within a society (Lijphart, 1997). The winner of an election with low turnout can hardly be argued to be representative of the population it is set to rule (Oscarsson & Holmberg, 2006:27). Over the years the EP has accumulated more power making it into an increasingly important legislator for its member states (Hooghe & Marks, 2001; Schmitt, 2005). Also, the EU is accused of suffering from a democratic deficit (e.g., Hix, 2008; Scharpf, 2009; Bartolini, 2006). Hence the falling turnout is indeed a pressing issue to address.

Taking a closer look at the EP elections there are interesting tendencies that can be observed. The highest upturn of turnout in the EP election of 2014 was in Lithuania with an increase of 26.4 per cent (IDEA, 2017). One explanation for this is likely that a concurrent election, in the form of the second round of the presidential election, was held on the same day as the EP election. The positive effect of concurrent elections has been proven for both the combination of first- and second order elections (CFaSOE) (e.g., Boyd, 1989; Geys, 2006; Nikolenyi, 2010; Schakel & Dandoy, 2014; Vetter, 2014; Cansela & Geys, 2015) and for two concurring second-order elections (CSOE) (Leininger, Rudolph & Zittlau, 2016; Rallings & Thrasher, 2005). However, for the latter of the two less evidence has been presented. Neither has there to my knowledge been a study that looks at the effects of CSOE between countries over time. Regarding the underlying factors of CSOE there is also a bit of a lack in research. The existing theories of why concurrent elections have a positive effect on turnout are firstly the cost of voting (Carter, 1984; Filer & Kenny, 1980) and secondly, the salience of the election (Cox & Munger, 1989).² It is however unclear in the literature which of these theories that has the most explanatory power.

¹ The EP election has been deemed as second-order (e.g., Reif & Schmitt, 1980, 1997; Hix & Marsh, 2011; Hobolt & Wittrock, 2011; Boomgaarden, Johann & Kritzing, 2016). Two of the characteristics of a second-order election are lower turnout and less media attention (see e.g., Reif & Schmitt, 1980 for a full list). Other second-order elections are for example local or regional elections. First-order elections are usually elections.

² Cox and Munger (1989) uses the term 'media effect', but as I will soon present this is included in this thesis definition of salience.

It is not feasible to propose that the member states of the union all have to change their national elections to coincide with the EP election. The implications of such a transition would include radical change to the national systems in order to harmonize the election terms and how the procedures take place. However, changing the dates of local and regional elections or referendums in order to coincide with the EP election is possible and provides a low-cost alternative to increase turnout in second-order elections. With an increased turnout the EU combat the risk of an unequal representation and avoid having their legitimacy questioned, both on the supranational- and the local level. Therefore the understanding of the effect and underlying effects of concurrent elections are essential in order to utilise this phenomenon to improve turnout.

1.1 Problem formulation

The notion that the falling turnout is an issue that has to be addressed builds on the assumption that the EP needs to increase its turnout rates in protection of its legitimacy. The aim of this thesis is not to handle the question of legitimacy, accountability or the democratic deficit of the EU. It is however important to point out the connection between these concepts and turnout. There are those who argue that the EP does not have to hold up to the democratic standards of the member states (Moravcik, 2003, 2008). Others even argue for the dismantling of the EP due to the lack of a European demos (Menon & Peet, 2010). This thesis take the stance that with the increased powers of the EP it is to late to argue that one can ignore the critic of a democratic deficit unless the EP would see a drawback of its powers. Moreover, depending on how one define demos the argumentation form Menon and Peet might be questioned. If a European demos requires that the electorates need to share a common language and access to the same media then countries as Switzerland, India, South Africa and many others do not reach this criterion (Corbett, 2014). Hence, the problem cannot be ignored.

What has been done to change this downward trend of falling turnout? The EU has not been idle in the face of the adversity. In order to remediate the trend of lower voter turnout and to decrease any alleged democratic deficit in the EU several campaigns, investments and educational enterprises has been utilised. Neither of which has stopped the falling turnout. Prior to the 2014 EP election the EP instituted the so-called *Spitzenkandidaten*. The background for this was that the Commission (2013) issued a recommendation and the EP (2012, 2013) issued resolutions that called for the political parties to nominate candidates for the presidency of the Commission in order to strengthen the connection between the two institutions. In spite of the measurements taken it has not been enough. The turnout rate has continued to decrease. It has been argued that the timespan from the introduction of the *Spitzenkandidaten* prior to the election was too short to increase the interest of the electorates. Until the next EP election in 2019 the citizens would however have had more time to recognize the candidates and therefore increase turnout (Put et al., 2016:18f; Van der Brug, Gattermann & de

Vreese, 2016:47f; Schmitt, Hobolt & Popa, 2015:364; Schulze, 2016:32). This is only speculative. Hence, more aspects to stop the falling turnout rates have to be scrutinised. CSOE is only one way to approach this problem, however it presents a low-cost alternative that can be implemented with relative ease. It would save the involved parties time away from campaigning if they could pool their resources into one election rather than several elections spread out over time.

One could criticise concurrent elections in that one of the elections are likely to be overshadowing the less important election in the campaigns and media coverage. With less coverage and a decreasing importance of the combined election the accountability of the less important election could decrease. The weight of this argument depends in part on the result of the study. If it is the salience of the election that is the primary underlying factor then this argumentation falls. If the salience increases then people do care about the less important election. However, if it is the cost of voting that is in play then the issue of a loss of accountability needs to be discussed. To cast an additional vote while at the polling booth do not necessarily denote an interest in both elections. Moreover, the previous research conducted of CSOE has not been tested between countries and over time. Neither has there been any research that determines which of the cost of voting and the salience of the election that is the most explanatory factor of this presumed positive effect of concurrent elections.

1.2 Aim of the thesis

The aim of this thesis is to add to the research of concurrent elections on the same day by first look at the effects of CSOE over time and across countries, then to determine which of the two underlying variables (the cost of voting and the salience of the election) that drives this effect. This does not only add to the academic field by filling in a gap of the research, but it can also be utilised in policies and therefore has an importance outside of academia. This will be tested in the case of the EP election in two steps. Firstly, the across country time effects of CSOE on turnout in the EP elections of 2004, 2009 and 2014 will be examined using statistical analysis. Secondly, the study will focus on which variable that is the dominant underlying factor for the assumed positive effect of concurrent elections. This will be done by looking at the difference in turnout between coinciding national- and EP election spanning over the time since the instalment of direct elections to the EP to the latest (1979-2014).

1.3 Disposition

The thesis starts with the presentation of the issue that will be tested and provides a brief background and situates the problem amongst the excising overarching

issues connected to the research. In the following chapters there is a divide between the first part of the study, the effect of CSOE over time and across countries and then in the second part which of the two underlying variables who has the most explanatory factor. In the theory chapter, the previous research in what has an effect on turnout will be examined followed of a deeper look at the theory of concurrent elections and the two underlying factors related to this theory. Using the allocated knowledge of other researchers the theoretical framework will be constructed together with the hypotheses that will be answered in order to get a comprehensive understanding of concurrent elections. Next, the methods chapter will make clear the positioning this thesis has in regards to knowledge and what case selection that has been made. Then the methodical choice to answer the hypotheses formulated in the theory chapter will be presented. Based on the method and the empirical data that is derived from the case selection the variables will be constructed. Thereafter, descriptive statistics will give an overview of the selected variables for the first part of the study. Subsequently, using all previous presented knowledge the models will be constructed followed by an argumentation for the validity and reliability of the study. Next, in the results chapter the results from the models will be tested and presented. Then in the analyse chapter the results will be examined in regards to the hypotheses. Thereafter, the in conclusion chapter the results will be summarized and suggestions for previous research will be made. Lastly, the references and the appendix will be presented.

2 Theory

The research field of the predictors of turnout is vast and ever growing. Between the years 2000 to 2014 the number of published articles within this field increased from 50 to 197 articles per year, almost four times as many (Cancela & Geys, 2016:264f). In this section, the theories of what effects turnout will be covered. Despite, or perhaps because the vast amount of studies there is no operationalized core model used in the study of voter turnout. This leaves a jungle of different variables that are used related to turnout.³ A valid critic against the lack of a core operationalization has been raised (e.g., Blais, 2006; Geys, 2006, Smets & van Ham, 2013:2, Cancela & Geys, 2016; Stockemer, 2016).). In coherence with this critic this thesis aims to use variables that has been acknowledged as important factors of turnout. Hence, only a few important variables related to the aim of this study will be covered (see the meta-analysis and review articles by Blais, 2006; Geys, 2006; Smets & van Ham, 2013; Cox, 2015; Cancela & Geys, 2016; Stockemer, 2016 for a full coverage). Then a deeper examination of the effects of concurrent elections and the underlying variables for the variable will be reviewed. After establishing the existing research field that relates to the aim of the thesis, the theoretical framework will be presented followed by the hypothesis that will be tested.

2.1 Previous research

In the overall research of turnout, the variables are usually divided into categories of institutional-, socioeconomic- and political variables. The variables themselves often coincide and affect each other, blurring the lines between the categories. The main focus of the thesis is concurrent elections, which falls under the category of institutional variables. However, as stated before the variables coincide and therefore other categories are of importance- This segment will provide a thematic overview of the relevant variables.

Looking at the two latest aggregated research done on the subject one can find three important variables that has an effect on turnout. The variables that Stockmer (2016) argued had the highest success rates are: compulsory voting, importance of the election and population size (see Table 2.1). Cancela and Geys (2016) also find these three as repeatedly being significant.

³ One example of this is Smets and van Ham (2013:2) who find 170 different variables within their selection of 90 studies.

Table 2.1: Variables that has the highest success rate in explaining turnout

<i>Variable</i>	<i># of studies</i>	<i># of models</i>	<i>Success</i>	<i>Failure</i>	<i>No link</i>	<i>Success rate</i>
Compulsory voting (sanctions)	32	74	72	0	2	0.97
Compulsory voting (no sanctions)	21	54	52	0	2	0.96
Important election (salience)	16	42	37	0	5	0.88
Populations size	15	58	43	8	7	0.74

Compiled from the meta-analysis done by Stockemer (2016). The ‘salience’ within the parentheses under the ‘important election’ has been added.

Going back in time to the two pioneers of this research field Powell (1982, 1986) and Jackman (1987), they focused mainly on institutional variables such as compulsory voting. In today's literature there is a consensus regarding the positive effects of compulsory voting on turnout (e.g., Blais, 2006; Geys, 2006; Smets & van Ham, 2013; Cancela & Geys, 2016; Stockemer, 2016). Blais (2006:112f) calculates the effect of compulsory voting on voter turnout is to be between 10 and 15 per cent, (e.g., Jackman, 1987; Franklin, 1996; Blais & Dobrzynska, 1998). Compulsory voting is sometimes divided into those countries that enforce the law and those who do not. Turnout is higher when the law is enforced, but it has a positive significant effect in both cases (Stockemer, 2016).

Another variable that is within the category of institutional variables are the importance of the election. When diving deeper into the variable it falls under the political category, as will be shown. The perceived importance (i.e., salience) of the election in the minds of the electorates corresponds with the turnout (e.g., Franklin, 1996; Franklin, van der Eijk & Oppenous, 1996; Franklin & Hircy, 1998). Or put simply, if a person finds the election important they will vote. To avoid confusion the importance of the election will henceforth be referred to as salience. The argumentation that salience of the election have a positive effect on turnout builds on the logic that it will increase the political contestation. This in turn will raise the attention of the media that through agenda setting, leading to an increase of interest in the elections (Scheufele, 2000; Schuck et al., 2011). The power of the media in the form of agenda setting cannot influence what the elector vote for, but can influence what they think about (McCombs & Shaw, 1972). This is called putting ‘pictures in their heads’ (McCombs, 2006). News media tend to report the news in which there are two sides that are in conflict with each other (Neuman et al., 1992), and more frequent media coverage increases the salience of the election for the elector (Dearing & Rogers, 1996). The importance of the election can differ depending if it is the first time it is held or if it is an established election. According to Matilla (2003) the first time the EP election is held in a country it has a positive effect on turnout.⁴ Flickinger and Studlar (2007)

⁴ Matilla (2003:457) refers to the first time the EP election was held in Portugal 1987 turnout was 73 per cent and in 1989 it had decreased to 31 per cent. In Finland the turnout decreased from 60 per cent in their first EP election 1996 to 30 per cent in 1999.

questioned that there is a positive effect on turnout during a countries first EP election. This argument rests on that the ten added member states that were incorporated into the union in 2004 was not accounted for in the study by Matilla in 2003.⁵ Although their critic is valid, the theory of the first EP election is not refuted.

The third and last of the variables deemed to be of extra importance to turnout is population size and falls under the socioeconomic category. The argument for this is that within smaller countries the citizens are more homogenous and have a closer connection to its representatives (Stockemer, 2016). In a larger country the distance between the elected and the electors is greater, leading to a disconnection. It is of importance that the citizens feel that their vote makes a difference (Semts & van Ham, 2013). As such, one should observe a higher turnout the smaller the country is.

2.2 Concurrent elections

Dealing with concurrent elections it is important to differ between elections held within the same year and the same day. Holding several elections during a year can lead to voter fatigue that in turn lowers turnout. Both the USA and Switzerland are used as examples of this (Boyd, 1981; Henderson & McEwen, 2010). The meta-analysis by Smets and Van Ham (2013) confirms this notion. To be clear, this thesis only focuses on concurrent elections on the same day. Henceforth concurrent elections will refer to two or more elections on the same day and not to elections during the same year.

The effect of concurrent elections is not a new area of research. It has been argued that the falling turnout rates in contemporary democracies are due to the high frequency of non-concurring elections (Jackman & Miller, 1995:482f; Cox, 1999:407-411). Looking at recent review articles and meta-analysis there is a consensus regarding the positive effects of concurrent elections, although non-trivial amounts fail to prove a significant effect (Geys, 2006; Cancela & Geys, 2016). In the review and the meta-analysis there is no distinction between concurrent first and second-order elections and CSOE. Regardless if the concurrent elections are first- or second-order, the theories why they have an effect are the same. The difference lies in that a first-order by its definition draws more voters, hence it should have a larger impact on the combined election than if it would have been only a second-order election. The same goes for the underlying variables. The underlying variables being: the cost of voting (Carter, 1984; Filer & Kenny, 1980) and the salience of the election (Cox & Munger, 1989).

⁵ In 2004, after the study by Matilla (2003), Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Slovakia and Slovenia joined the EU. Also in 2007 Bulgaria and Romania joined followed by Croatia in 2013.

For the combination of a first- and second-order election there are plenty of research conducted (e.g., Boyd, 1989; Geys, 2006; Nikolenyi, 2010; Schakel & Dandoy, 2014; Vetter, 2014; Geys & Cansela, 2015). The CSOE is a field that is lacking. Previous studies has been conducted in specific countries or regions within the country such as Lower Saxony in Germany in the 2014 EP election (Leininger, Rudolph & Zittlau, 2016) or for the EP election of 2004 in the U.K. (Rallings & Thrasher, 2005). As there have been a number of studies that has not been able to show a significant effect of concurrent elections it would benefit from a more rigorous test that spans over time and across countries.

2.2.1 Cost of voting

The cost of voting refers to the personal cost of the individual voter to take part in the voting procedure. Assuming that the cost of voting is fixed it should increase turnout when two elections are held simultaneously (Carter, 1984; Filer & Kenny, 1980). As such it do not add any cost for the electorate to vote in more then one election at the same time, which should lead to higher turnout. This conclusion is build on the assumptions that the voters perceive either that they will gain some benefits from voting or feel obligated to do so (Carter, 1984:200). The perceived feeling that one must vote, i.e. civic duty, prevails independently if the voter perceive him/herself as important for the outcome of the election (Blais, 2000). Measuring civic duty as its own variable it has a positive effect on turnout (Smets & van Ham, 2013:23). While the cost benefit is based on the rational choice perspective and is reliant on how much the voter perceives that they would gain from voting (Aldrich, 1993). Thereby small changes of what is at stake in an election would increase the turnout (Mattila, 2003). Also, a voter has to feel that their vote has an effect on the outcome of the election to be willing to cast their vote in the ballot (Downs, 1957). Smets and van Hams (2013:22) argument that higher costs of voting have a negative effect on turnout substantiates this assumption. The cost of transportation to the ballot is one of the most contributing factors to why the cost of voting increases turnout (Fauvelle-Aymar & François, 2015). Since concurrent elections will bring different cohorts of voters that have an interest in either of the elections they are likely to vote in the other election that was not as important for them. An interesting country to look at when it comes to concurrent elections is Sweden. Since 1970 they have held their national, regional and municipal elections at the same day. According to a report by Statistics Sweden (SCB) the three elections only differed by a tenth of a per cent until 1976. In all consecutive elections the diffractions between the national election and the local elections grew to a few percentiles.⁶

⁶ The report points out that foreign citizens were allowed to vote in the regional and municipal elections from 1976. Less foreign citizens tend to vote hence the distance between the national and the two local elections grew. Looking at only Swedish citizens, who can vote in all three elections, 98 per cent of those who voted in the national election also cast their vote in the municipal election (SCB, 2012:30).

2.2.2 Salience of the election

The theoretical arguments for the salience of the election have been discussed under the section for previous research. Combining two elections increases the chance of more political contestation. Cox and Munger (1989) argue that concurrent elections also increase the campaign expenditures, which also leads to more media exposure. Examining the variables connected to campaign expenditure closer however, one can see that direct campaign advertisement do not have a direct effect on turnout. One thing that does have an effect is watching news from TV, newspapers or radio (Smets & van Ham, 2013:19). Consequently, the campaign expenditures that directly reach the voters do not have an effect, but the expenditures that are channelled through the media do have an effect.

2.3 Theoretical framework and hypotheses

In this segment, the theoretical framework will be presented and the hypotheses that will be tested will be stated.

2.3.1 Part one – Testing CSOE over time and across countries

In the first part, the theoretical framework is rather straightforward. It will first test the effect of CSOE and then also test a number of control variables that could have an impact of this effect. The CSOE will be tested for EP elections held during the years 2004, 2009 and 2014. Holding local elections or referendums on the same day, as the EP election, should according to previous research increase the turnout. The aim is to provide a more robust understanding of CSOE over time and across countries. This will also be tested for concurrent first- and second order elections. Also, the combinations of first- and second-order elections will be tested to see the differential of the assumed positive effect. An expected positive effect will be indicated with (+) at the end of the hypotheses or with (-) if a negative result is expected.

H_{A1} Concurrent second-order elections increase turnout. (+)

H_{A2} Concurrent first- and second-order elections increase turnout. (+)

H_{A3} The combination of concurrent first- and second-order elections has more of a positive impact than concurrent second-order election. (+)

Compulsory voting is arguably one of the most acknowledged factors of turnout. It has been shown to have a positive impact on turnout regardless if the laws are enforced or not. Since this thesis do question this effect but merely account for the factors that possibly could affect the outcome. Therefore the study will not take

into account if the laws of compulsory voting are upheld in the member states or not.

H_{A4} *Compulsory voting increase turnout. (+)*

Saliency of the election is said to increase turnout. In order to measure the saliency of the election one can look at various variables. In the context of the EP elections Hix (2006) claims that more political contestation would increase turnout, but is contested (c.f., Bartolini, 2006). More ‘soap opera’ in EU politics would draw the attention of the media who in turn would increase the public’s interest (Hix, 2008). Media’s effect on voters has previously been proven for the case of the EP election of 2009 in the form of conflict framing in the media (Schuck, Vliegenthart & de Vreese, 2016). For the 2014 EP election it has also been proven that the media had an effect on the voters (de Vreese, Azrout & Moeller, 2016). It is not feasible for this study to do an analysis of the media from all member states during the three EP elections. Hence, a different measurement has to be used. Acknowledged ways to do this is to either look at party manifestos or at expert surveys. Manifestos show the intentions of the parties and are argued to be what the media portrays. This makes it a good measurement for the effect of media coverage. The more an issue is addressed, be that negative or positive, the more of a saliency the issue receives. For the expert survey, the argument is that the experts taking the survey calculate what is in the manifestos with what the parties do in the media (Netjes & Binnema, 2007). It has also been argued that the focus do not lie on the EU-issues during the campaigns but rather on national conflicts (Franklin, 2001; Weber, 2007). Hence the political contestation could also be measured as polarization on a traditional left/right scale. Although this has been questioned and it has been argued that EU-issues have an effect in at least some member states (Flickinger & Studlar, 2007) and therefore have an impact on voter behaviour. Testing the saliency over time and across countries will add to the debate regarding the increase of the saliency of the EP election during the last three elections.⁷

H_{A5} *The accumulated mentioning of EU-issues within party manifestos increase turnout. (+)*

H_{A6} *More political contestation over EU-issues increases turnout. (+)*

H_{A7} *A higher polarized election on a left/right scale increases turnout. (+)*

H_{A8} *The saliency of the EP elections increases over time. (+)*

⁷ The saliency of the EP election increased from 1999 to 2004 (de Vreese et al., 2006) and did so again for the 2009 election (Schuck et al., 2011). Schuck et al. (2011) also predict that it will keep increasing, especially if more Eurosceptic parties enter the campaign, thus increasing the political contestation. In the 2014 EP election, the Eurosceptic parties have been declared as the most prominent factor (e.g., Trieb, 2014; Schmitt, Hobolt & Popa, 2015; Schulze, 2016). As such, one should observe an increase of the saliency of the EP election over time. This is by itself contradictory since the turnout is falling, but this could be due to other uncontrolled variables.

Population size is said to be important for turnout. The smaller the country the more people feels that their vote is significant and therefore they vote. Reversing the argument one can predict that the larger a member state is more individuals feel that their votes has less effect on the outcome of the election and therefore abstain to vote. Lastly, the predicted positive effect of the first time an election is held will also be tested. This was as presented in the segment covering the previous research a contested but not rejected presumption. Therefore this is interesting to test for.

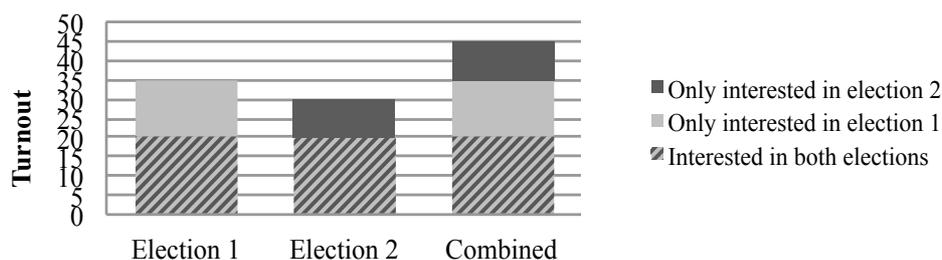
H_{A9} *A larger population size decreases turnout. (-)*

H_{A10} *First time a member state holds an EP election the turnout is higher. (+)*

2.3.2 Part two – Testing the underlying variables of CSOE

In order to examine the underlying variables of concurrent elections one has to isolate either the cost of voting or the added salience spill over effect that the additional election brings. The problem is that the two variables not necessarily exclude each other. In fact, it is likely that both are in play. The EP election interests a certain cohort of electorates that will turn out and vote. When there is a concurrent election in the form of a local election, it will interest a different cohort of voters who have an interest in the specific local election. These two cohorts may overlap but there are likely electorates in both groups who only have an interest in one of the elections. According to the cost of voting the turnout increases since the electorates vote in both elections, even though they only went to the polling booth because of an interest in one of them. Lets say that 35% of the electorates within a certain area would have voted in a single election (election 1). Within the same area 30% would have voted in a different single election (election 2). Among the electorates 20% would have voted in any of the elections (displayed as the striped part in the bar chart). As such 15% are only interested in voting in election 1 (displayed as light grey in the bar chart) and 10% are only interested in election 2 (displayed as dark grey in the bar chart). If the elections were held simultaneously this would lead to an increase of 10% if one calculates the increase in relation to election 1 and 15% if the election 2 were used as a base (see Figure 2.1). As such the turnout would have been 45% in a combined election.

Figure 2.1: Cost of voting



An example of the functioning of the cost of voting.

The problem arises when one take into consideration why people find any of the elections as important, i.e., the salience of the election. The added media attention that the additional election brings increases the awareness of the electorates who then find either or both of the elections important enough to go and vote. With concurrent elections, the media are likely to report more on issues regarding the elections. This is especially true in the case that the political contestation is high within any of the elections. As such a person can be influenced to vote in one of the elections because of the higher salience that the election brings and while voting for that specific election also voted for the concurrent election. For this reason, it is hard to determine for what reason the electors turned out, unless you collect survey data from the polling booths. Since there is no access to such data a different test to measure which of the two underlying variables that has the most effect will be conducted. To do this a case in which one of the elections had a high salience and one that had a low salience is needed. This could be done with CSOE. However, both elections are by their definition as second-order low in salience. Hence the selection process of the cases becomes prone to bias. In order to avoid any bias in this selection one could look at the differences of turnout between a first- and second-order election. The function of the underlying variables is the same regardless of the election is first- or second-order. Doing this one can look at concurrent elections over time and be relative sure that the first-order election, by its definition is having a higher salience.

As one cannot know what election that made the electorates to turnout and vote without survey data from the poling booths the salience of the lection argument cannot be measured by it self. Hence, it depends on whether the cost of voting can be proven or disproven. If the cost of voting is the dominant of the two factors then the difference between the combined elections should be the same, regardless that one election is more important than the other. In the case that one can see a difference towards that the election with the higher salience then it could be argued that the salience of the election is what is the more important. In the case that the election with low salience receive the highest turnout then the theories needs to be overlooked. There are not to my knowledge any pre-decided assessment on how much a difference in turnout that would constitute any support for either of the theories. As such it is my biased opinion on how much difference that would be allowed for either of the theories to be correct. Assuming that a zero difference between the elections would exist for the cost of voting theory to be true is rather harsh. Wanting to take a strict approach to the matter but allowing for some variance, any difference more then +/- 0.5 per cent in turnout would indicate that the salience is of more importance. This would not take away from the explanatory factor of the cost of voting theory but if this is the most predominant underlying variable one should see close to perfect distribution amongst the combined elections. Neither would the salience theory loose its importance if a perfect distribution were the case.

H_{B1} *The difference in turnout between a high salient election and a low salient election is the same. (Cost of voting)*

H_{B2} *When combining a high salient- and a low salient election the turnout is greater in the election with high salience. (Salience of the election)*

The theoretical framework presented does not take into account other factors that might have an effect on turnout. Going back to the previous research discussed in the formulation of the theses H_{A1}-H_{A10} two of variables will also be used. The variables that will be tested are compulsory voting and the first time an EP election is held. Both of the variables is said to have a positive effect on turnout and both can be answered with a simple yes and no answer. This makes it easy to test for. The remaining variables are numeric on an interval scale, hence it makes it harder to control for. A member state with compulsory voting would have a higher turnout. With a higher number of electorates voting, any additional variables will have a lower degree of impact. If you are already going to vote you are not effected by the added salience and the electorates that in not voting are fewer. Hence, there are fewer individuals that could be affected by the added salience. This should have a mediating effect on the difference in turnout between a concurrent first- and second-order election. It is argued that the first time an EP election is held it increases turnout due that it makes the election more salient. Therefore, when the EP election is held for the first time the turnout should be higher. Thereby making the election results between the first- and second-order election closer. Hence, it has a mediating effect on the salience of the national election decreasing any difference in turnout.

H_{B3} *Compulsory voting takes away from the assumed positive effect of the salience of the election during concurrent first- and second-order elections.*

H_{B4} *The first time an EP election is held the turnout is higher mediating the effects of lower salience that a second-order election has.*

3 Method

My ontological position is that of objectivism, the other possible position is that of constructivism. Objectivism means that social phenomena and its significance exist independently of the social actors and its actions. Constructionism implies that reality is seen from social actors, which, in turn create social phenomena where reality is constantly changing (Bryman, 2010:36f). Objectivism is criticised since it can be hard for the researcher to stay value free (Bryman, 2010:43). However, I would argue that the research is constructed in such a way that I cannot influence the outcome. This comes with a disclaimer regarding the choices of variables that could potentially affect the outcome. The question of how I value knowledge, i.e. my epistemological position, is that of positivism. As stated above, I argue that I am separated from the objects that are studied and are trying to explain social phenomena. Another epistemological position is post-positivism. It would not be as fitting since I am trying to explain rather than understand the phenomena and argue that the researcher does not influence the knowledge (Della Porta & Keating, 2008:23). Positivism is suitable for quantitative methods that analyse hypotheses that are constructed from previous research (Bryman, 2010:30). It is as such an empiricist hypotheses testing using observation (Della Porta & Keating, 2008:32).

The study is deductive. The theory will be tested on a number of observations providing us with the results. The deductive process is as follows: Theory – Hypotheses – Data collection – Results – The hypotheses is confirmed or rejected – Reformulation of the theory (Bryman, 2010:26-28). I am not trying to create new theories, i.e. an inductive approach. Instead I am aiming to confirm and develop existing theories with the presented empirical material. The aim of the study is to stay objective and analyse the possible correlation of concurrent local elections and an increase of the turnout levels in second-order elections. The objectivity of the study is strengthened in that the variables are grounded in existing theories. Hence, it is not my subjective understanding that is the basis for the choice of variables.

The method is that of a quantitative statistical analysis. The choice of method is based on the presented view of the researcher and of the kind of empirical data that will be used. The quantitative method is preferable when trying to explain correlation by measuring and studying causality (Bryman 2010:169). With the statistical method, it is possible to assess rival explanations through statistical testing. It does this by establishing a general relationship amongst two or more variables. This is done while all other variables are held constant. If this is not done one cannot be sure of that relationship is true (Lijphart, 1971:683f). The study is based on numeric measurements and together with the presented ontological and epistemological stance presented it is not fitting to use a

qualitative method such as textual analysis to answer the research question. Interviews such as surveys could have been a possible method of collecting the data. However, it is hard to do surveys on why voters turned out to the ballots several years retrospectively after the elections and there is not to my knowledge any database with the information required to conduct this study.

3.1 Case selection

The EP elections provide a good natural setup to test the effects of concurrent elections. The EP election is held in similar ways since the electoral system is a proportional representation. The EP elections are also held during the same day, hence it discards any argument that electoral turnout is effected by the time of the year (Rallings, Thrasher & Borisyuk, 2003).⁸ The selection of the EP elections held in 2004, 2009 and 2014 is based on the availability of data among the member states of that held CSOE.⁹ Moreover, for the three years of EP elections under scrutiny there was a variance of CSOE within some of the member states. As such it becomes harder to argue that it is the national differences that are being measured instead of the effect of CSOE. There are however some issues with this. There is a variance of the amount of CSOE within each member state (see table 8.1 in the appendix). In some member states the local elections or referendums was held in the whole state.¹⁰ In other member states it was only CSOE in parts of the member state.¹¹ Hence the effect of CSOE are likely to be lower within the group of member states that only had partial CSOE then those who held their CSOE nationwide. In order to get the most accurate results one should use data on a municipality level for each member state. No such database is available and it is outside of the time scope of this thesis to create one, hence the measurement has to be done at the national level. Regardless that it is not ideal it should be significant enough to show a result in regards to previous election results, be that positive or negative.

For the case selection of the second part of the study the focus is on the underlying variables that has most explanatory factor. Since the function of the underlying variables is the same regardless of the concurrent elections are first- or second-order the time frame for the case selection is much larger than for the first part of the study. In keeping to the cross-national view no single country such as the example of Sweden in the theoretical framework chapter will be used. Instead

⁸ The argument that the day of the election has an importance for the turnout is however refuted by Stockemer (2016).

⁹ Countries who held CSOE during 2004-2014 was: Belgium, Denmark, Germany, Italy, Malta, Ireland, Greece, Spain, Latvia and the United Kingdom (see table 8.1 in the appendix)

¹⁰ Belgium (2004, 2009 and 2014), Ireland (2004, 2009 and 2014), Denmark (2009 and 2014), Greece (2014) and Latvia (2009).

¹¹ Germany (2004, 2009 and 2014), Spain (2004, 2009 and 2014), Italy (2004, 2009 and 2014), the United Kingdom (2004, 2009 and 2014) and Malta (2004 and 2009).

the second-order election that is of interest is at the supranational level. Moreover, with the need for the concurring elections to have a salience that differ as much as possible the CSOE cannot be used. National elections are first-order and there have been several times that the member states national elections have been concurrent with the EP elections. Such data are easy to access hence all national elections that coincide with the EP elections from 1979-2014 will be examined. During this time period six member states held at one or more times combined elections, resulting in 14 observations.¹²

3.2 Statistical analysis

With the theoretical framework and the case selection presented it is time to move on to the statistical method. Following the structure of the rest of the study the presentation of the statistical method is reversed from what is customary. In the first part the panel data will be covered followed by the descriptive statistics in the second part. The statistical program that will be utilized in this study is Stata.

3.2.1 Part one – Panel Data

The reason to look at CSOE over several elections is to increase the number of observations. However, the selected case (i.e., the election of the EP) brings a problem. The member states within the union have been as many as 28 at one given election. With such a low number of observations, a 'pooling' of data stretching over more years of elections and over several countries is necessary. Using panel data to 'pool' the countries together accounts for their individual difference. In other words, it accounts for the individual heterogeneity. The issue of a small number of observations (N) can be avoided with such a statistical model. Since the EU has been expanding the number of members during the years between 2009 and 2014 the number of observations (i.e., member states) vary over time. The variation being between 26-28 member states depending on the year of the election. Pooling the data over three elections we end up with an N of 83, making any result of the regression analysis sturdier. Ideally one would like to observe the effect over time and in several observations in order to get a stronger statement. Otherwise the observed effect can only to be said to be true in the context of that specific snapshot of time. It would still be relevant but less strong. A larger N would be preferable since it increases the ability of: specify the conditions under which causal effects are felt; specify the nature of the causal effects; and specify how likely it is that the effects are real rather than happenstantial (Franklin, 2008:243). However, the available data is limited. To

¹² Belgium, Greece, Ireland, Lithuania, Luxembourg and Portugal.

remedy this issue data from the local elections of the various member states could have been used to increase the observations. No such database is to my knowledge available unless it is collected from each member states official electoral authority. Such a time-consuming undertaking is outside of the time frame of this study.

There are mainly two theories of how to do a time-series analysis. Firstly, we have the panel data method, which is developed mainly for econometric study of data sets in which the N is larger than the time periods (T). The second is the Time-Series Cross-Section (TSCS) analysis that is developed for the opposite, $T > N$ (Wilson & Butler 2007:102). According to Beck (2001:272-274) there is no strict law of how many repeated observations over time that is required to use the TSCS, but he proposes a minimum of 15 repetitions. For lower number of repeated observations (down to two repeated observations) over time, panel data works well. Since my data has a much larger N than T the panel data method will be utilized.¹³ Using a panel data model do not only have advantages, it also comes with some implications. In order to address these implications and to avoid the pitfall of blindly adopting the existing methods as has been the case in a “*non-trivial number of studies*”, remarked by Wilson and Butler (2007:102) I will check my data in a series of test.¹⁴

Depending on if it is the impact of a variable over time or between the panels that are of interest one can use fixed effects or random effects. Since it is the effect of CSOE that are of interest the fixed effect is the logical choice since it varies within the panels (i.e., member states) depending in the year of the election. Hence, it is the effect within each member state that is of interest. Using fixed effects account for time-invariant variables such as culture (Kohler & Kreuter, 2008:245). In other words fixed effects do only work as long as there is a variance in time. This is an issue with some institutional variables since they are not changing over time (Beck, 2008:483). One example of this that will have an impact on this study is compulsory voting. During the selected timeframe (2004-2014) the laws regulating compulsory voting do not change within the member states at all and will therefore be omitted when using fixed effects. For this variable, random effect is more suitable (Beck, 2008:483).¹⁵ There is a test that can be conducted in order to decide between the fixed- and random effects. It is called a Hausman test.¹⁶ If the null hypothesis is rejected fixed effects are to be preferred (Torres-Reyna, 2007:29). Furthermore, the fixed and random effects use General Least Square (GLS) regressions. The alternative is to use Ordinary Least Square (OLS) regressions. The Breusch-Pagan Lagrange multiplier test if a

¹³ The command in Stata to use panel data is *xtset* where the country (the panels) and year (the time variables) is specified for the program. Each country has been given a number for the program to know the countries from each other. The command for the regressions is *xtreg*.

¹⁴ This comment refers to issues in TSCS methods but it is as true for panel data.

¹⁵ The command for fixed effects in Stata is *fe* and *re* for random effects (example: *xtreg y x1, fe*).

¹⁶ To do a Hausman test Fixed- and Random Effects are done individually saving the estimates. Then the command *hausman fixed random* is used to produce the results.

random effects regression or an OLS regression is the best option.¹⁷ If the null hypothesis is rejected it indicates that there is a significant difference across countries and a random effect regression should be used (Torres-Reyna, 2007:32). Later in this segment will be describes how to decide between fixed effects or OLS using country specific dummies.

If explanatory variables are highly correlated to each other (i.e., has the same effect on the dependent variable) this could lead to a large variance in the coefficients. This is known as multicollinearity, it is common that the control variables are highly correlated. In this study the variables regarding the salience of the election runs this risk due to that they are trying in essence to measure the same thing. However, if that would be the case one can still draw conclusions from other variables that are of importance (Wooldridge, 2015:86f). A correlation matrix will give an overview if there is any multicollinearity present in the data. Any value over 0.8 would suggest a problem with multicollinearity (Djurfeldt, Larsson & Stjärnhagen, 2003:366).

Two of the most important things to test for using panel data are homoscedasticity and autocorrelation. The first of the two is when the spread of the variance the confidence interval is evenly distributed and not concentrated in any area. The opposite of this is heteroskedasticity and if the model suffers from it the explanatory value decreases. Autocorrelation is a when the error terms in a time series is correlated with the error term from the previous time period. It is a common problem when dealing with time-series. (Studenmund, 2013:322). The testing for heteroskedasticity will be done using the modified Wald test. It is tested using a Fixed Effect regression model.¹⁸ If the null hypothesis is rejected there is a presents of heteroskedasticity in the data (Torres-Reyna, 2007:35). To control for autocorrelation on can use the Durbin-Watson test or a Breusch-Pagan test. However, these tests do not work for several panels. Instead the Wooldridge test¹⁹ can be conducted (Dukker, 2003). Another test that can be conducted is the Cumby-Huizinga test for autocorrelation.²⁰ It is a post regression estimator that uses time lags. To run the test one needs to use an OLS regression (Baum & Schaffer, 2013). To test if the results from an OLS regression can be used we first need to compare the GLS fixed effects with fixed effects with the OLS using country dummy variables that absorb the effect from each individual country.²¹ By running both regressions and the storing the estimates and the producing a table with the estimates we can see if the regressions renders the same results. (Torres-Reyna, 2007:17-22). If the OLS is the same as the GLS then we can run the Cumby-Huizinga test for autocorrelation. If the null hypothesis is rejected the data has autocorrelation. If it is detected that autocorrelation exist within the data

¹⁷ The command for the Breusch-Pagan Lagrange multiplier in Stata is *xttest0* after the GLS regression using random effects is done.

¹⁸ The command for the Modified Wald test in Stata is *xttest3* after the GLS regression using fixed effects is done.

¹⁹ The command for the Wooldridge test is *xtserial*.

²⁰ The command for the Cumby-Huizinga test is *actest, lag(1)* and is conducted after the regression is made.

²¹ The command for OLS with using dummy variables for the countries are *xi:regress y x1 i.country*.

a common way of treating it is by using a lagged dependent variable (Beck, 2008:478). However, it is not guaranteed that a lagged dependent variable resolves the issue of autocorrelation (Wilson & Butler 2007:107). With a data set where T is smaller than three, a lagged dependent variable should not be used (Beck, 2001:274). If autocorrelation is detected in the data then the choice of a GLS method is sound. It corrects for autocorrelation (Studenmund, 2013:338). If the data is heteroskedastic then the command *robust* can be used instead (i.e., The Huber/White estimators). The commands work well with fixed effects (Hoechle, 2007:6).

3.2.2 Part two – Descriptive statistics

For the second part of the study the method is simpler, using descriptive statistics. The presented theoretical framework makes clear that the dominant underlying factor can be determined from looking at the difference in turnout between one election with high salience and one with lower salience. If the turnout is the same within both elections then it is the cost of voting that is the dominant underlying variable. If not then it is the salience that is more significant. In the case selection the combination of national and EP elections is chosen. More precisely every combined national- and EP elections since the first election of the EP (1979-2014). In this the central tendencies are of interest. The reason to pooling the elections and taking the average from them is to avoid any bias in the selection of cases. To only observe the difference in turnout in one combined election will only tell us what went on in that specific election. With a larger number of observations, the individual tendencies of one specific case are reduced. No difference will be made if the national election is a presidential- or a parliamentary election since both are first-order elections. During the history of EP elections there have been 14 concurrent national elections.²²

To find the average between the combined elections the mean will be used. This is due to that the variable (i.e., the difference in turnout) is on an interval scale. The mean gives the reader the value that represents the total amount of variable values divided by N . When the mean is presented the researcher can also measure the standard deviation (the average spread from the mean), which can be understood as a sort of average deviation. However, the mean is sensitive for extreme values. Hence, the median and mode will also be presented in case that the data has problems with any extreme values. Median equals the observation that is located in the middle, after ranking the answers in an ascending order. The mode represents the most frequent used value for each observed variable (Edling & Hedström 2014:24). A boxplot will be used to present the spread to identify if there are any extreme values (Djurfeldt, Larsson & Stjärnhagen, 2003:59-66).

²² In: Belgium 1999 and 2004; Greece 1981; Ireland 1989; Lithuania 2004 and 2014; Luxembourg 1979, 1984, 1989, 1994, 1999, 2004 and 2009; Portugal 1989.

In order to prove or disprove that the cost of voting is the dominant underlying variable these tests will suffice. The surrounding circumstances should not have any importance for the cost of voting hypotheses as long as the individual electorate can vote in both elections in the same day at the same place. However, for the salience theory the circumstances surrounding the election could be of interest. Such circumstances could consist of compulsory voting laws or if it was the first time the EP election was to be held in that specific member state.

3.3 Variables and operationalization

In this segment the empirical data that the variables are collected from will be revised. The variables will also be presented, operationalized and diagnosed in order to create models to answer the hypotheses.

3.3.1 Empirical Data

The empirical data that will be used in this study is firstly the election results from the EP elections of 2004, 2009 and 2014 collected from the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (IDEA).²³ Turnout from national elections that coincide with the EP election during the years 1979-2014 will also be collected from IDEA. The report from the Organization for European Interstate Cooperation (OEIC, 2014) will be used in order to find out which member states that held CSOE and concurrent first- and second-order elections from 2004-2014. IDEA will be used to find national elections and their turnout between the years 1979-2014. For testing the salience data will be collected from the Comparative Manifesto Project,²⁴ Chapel Hill Expert Survey (CHES)²⁵ and ParlGov Database. Both the population size and compulsory voting will be collected from IDEA.

The empirical data is collected from various secondary sources. Using secondary sources have some drawbacks, as one cannot control the quality of the collected data (Bryman, 2010:304). With this being said the sources are either themselves acknowledged databases or are a report to the EP (OEIC). Therefore, they are deemed as qualitative enough to base the study upon. Moreover, all data used in the study are publicly accessible and do not violate any of the ethical principles (Bryman 2010:131f). The variables that will be used are compiled in table 3.1.

²³ During the 2004 election Croatia was not yet a member and the election results from Bulgaria and Rumania are from 2007. The result for Croatia during the 2009 election is from 2013.

²⁴ The manifestos are for national elections and do not necessarily correlate with the EP election, hence the manifesto that have been used are either within the same year as the EP election or the one within closest proximity prior to the EP election. This brings a problem in that there might differ up to four years between the manifesto and the EP election. Malta has missing data from 2004, 2009 and 2014 and Austria from 2014.

²⁵ There is data missing from Malta, Luxembourg and Cyprus during 2004 and 2009.

Table 3.1: List of all variables

<i>Type</i>	<i>Variable</i>	<i>Collected from</i>
Dependent variable	Turnout 1979-2014	IDEA
Independent variables	CSOE	OEIC
Control variables	Concurrent first- and second order elections	OEIC
	Compulsory voting	IDEA
	Population Size (in total numbers)	IDEA
	Saliency Manifesto	Comparative Manifesto Project
	Saliency Expert Survey	Chapel Hill Expert Survey
	Polarization Index	ParlGov Database

3.3.2 Dependent variable

Turnout is the dependent variable and the way it is measured could have a big impact on the results. Geys (2006:639) identifies three ways to define how to count the voters. The first one is population of voting age. This method only excludes the population that is below the voting age. The second measurement includes the part of the population that is eligible to vote, excluding those under the voting age and citizens that has lost their right to vote (e.g., convicts). Lastly, one can only include those who are registered to vote. The problem with this way of measuring is that the registration laws within a country could discriminate certain parts of the population that in turn could give a skewed result. Another important aspect of measuring turnout is how the data is collected. Smets and van Ham (2013:8f) mention three ways to do this. Firstly, one can measure turnout by post-election surveys. The problem with this is that it can be affected by recall bias and social desirability. The second way is by using validated turnout data from official voter records. By doing this one could avoid the issues that arises from the previous method of obtaining voter turnout. However, there are some countries that do not keep validated turnout data and therefore it can be hard to acquire. Lastly, one can use surveys to ask people what they would vote for if it were an election tomorrow. The method is called turnout intention and faces the same issues that the post-election surveys do.

This study will measure the electorates that are registered to vote and do so by obtaining the turnout data from validated sources. By doing this, the validity of the study will be high. The coding is in percentage points of the registered electorates that voted.

3.3.3 Independent variable

The independent variables consist of the CSOE. It will be measured by using dummy variables, which is a binary variable that only can take the value of 0 and 1 (Edling & Hedström 2014:102). Hence, CSOE will be coded as 1 and the rest

will be coded as 0. The benefit of recoding into dummy variables is that the variables can be used in a regression analysis even if the original scale was nominal or ordinal (Hardy, 1993:20f).

3.3.4 Control variable

For the control variables we start with compulsory voting and concurrent first- and second-order elections (CFaSOE). The member states that still employ this rule are: Belgium, Luxembourg, Greece and Cyprus (Birch, 2013:22-24). The compulsory voting will be measured using a dummy variable with 1 indicating the use of compulsory voting and a 0 for the rest. CFaSOE will also be coded as a dummy variable with the same principals.

In the case of the salience of the election four variables will be constructed. The three first measures the salience in each member state while the third accounts for if it is the first time an EP election is held in that specific member state. The first variable will be based on the Comparative Manifesto Project data. In this data set, there are two categories that register positive and negative mentioning within the party manifestos. By adding the pro/anti EU mentioning and then dividing it on the number of parties within the given member state in order to see how much space the EU-issues receive and at the same time avoid bias of more party numerous elections.²⁶

The second variable extracts the political contestation in the expert survey data. It is constructed from a variable named EU Salience in the expert survey in CHES database.²⁷ The aim is to measure the political contestation within each member state. The variable will be called Salience expert survey 'SES'. In order to do this I will utilize the polarization index constructed by Dalton (2008:906) but measuring political contestation instead of the salience of EU-issues rather than polarization on a left/right scale. Party vote share is used to not skew the results from small parties that might have more extreme views. The i represents the individual parties.

$$SES = \text{SQRT}\{\sum(\text{party vote share}_i) * ([\text{party pro/anti-EU Salience score}_i - \text{party system average pro/anti-EU Salience score}] / 5)^2\}$$

This provides a number for each member state and year in which a 0 indicates that all parties agree amongst themselves and a 10 indicates that there is a political contestation between them. Lastly, a measure of polarization on a left/right scale will be used. The polarization index will utilize the version used by Dalton (2008). The data is collected from ParlGov's database.²⁸

²⁶ (per 108) *European Community: Positive* and (per 110) *European Community: Negative*.

²⁷ EU_SALIENGE = *Relative salience of European integration in the party's public stance*. It is coded from 0-10 with 0 = *European Integration is of no importance* and 10 = *European Integration is of great importance*.

²⁸ It is measured on a 0-10 scale mean value in left/right dimension.

$$PI = \text{SQRT}\{\sum(\text{party vote share}_i) * ([\text{party L/R score}_i - \text{party system average L/R score}]/5)^2\}$$

As in the previous variable, this also produces an index on a scale from 0 to 10 in which 0 indicates that there is low polarization and 10 that it is high. The first time an EP election is held within a member state is measured as a dummy variable with 1 if it is in fact the first time the EP election was held and 0 if it is not.

3.4 Descriptive statistics and diagnostics

The descriptive statistics presented in table 3.2 is the pooled data from the election years of 2004 to 2014 for part one. For the variables that will be used in the second part the data is pooled from the national and EP elections from the years 1979-2014 and will be presented in the results chapter.

Table 3.2: Descriptive Statistics

<i>Variable</i>	<i>Acronym</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>Min</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Max</i>	<i>Std. Dev</i>
<i>Turnout 2004-2014</i>		83	13.1	44.9723	91.4	19.0649
<i>Concurrent Second-Order Election</i>	<i>CSOE</i>	83	0	0.2530	1	0.4374
<i>Concurrent First- and Second-Order Election</i>	<i>CFaSOE</i>	83	0	0.0602	1	0.2393
<i>Compulsory Voting</i>	<i>CV</i>	83	0	0.1446	1	0.3558
<i>Population size</i>	<i>PS</i>	83	304263	1.45e+07	6.81e+07	1.84e+07
<i>Saliency Manifesto</i>	<i>SM</i>	79	0.08	2.6135	7.233	1.5468
<i>Saliency Expert Survey</i>	<i>SES</i>	76	0.6174	2.4896	4.6507	0.9716
<i>Polarization Index</i>	<i>PI</i>	83	1.5991	4.4457	6.7692	0.9515
<i>First EP election</i>	<i>FEP</i>	83	0.1566	0.3656	0	1

Source: IDEA, 2017; OEIC, 2014; CHES, 2014; ParlGov, 2017; Comparative Manifesto Project. 2014.

The descriptive statistics show, what was presented earlier when discussing the individual variables, that the number of observations is not consistent. For the vast majority the *N* is at 83, but for two of the measurements of saliency it is lower. With an already low *N* this could have a great effect on the outcome of the rest of the study. To avoid that the results are misrepresenting due to a lack of observations this will be taken into account when formulating the models.

Multicollinearity can be observed using a correlation matrix (see Table 3.3). Since we could see that there is a difference in *N* amongst the variables, the two variables with less than 83 observations will be removed in a second correlation matrix (see Table 3.4). This will show any potential differences that the amount of observations entails.

Table 3.3: Correlation Matrix 1, all variables

	CSOE	CFaSOE	CV	PS	SM	SES	PI	FEP
CSOE	1							
CFaSOE	0.036	1						
CV	0.194	0.149	1					
PS	0.399	-0.126	-0.177	1				
SM	0.063	-0.087	-0.082	0.228	1			
SES	0.014	0.002	-0.198	0.153	0.101	1		
PI	0.062	-0.182	0.086	0.139	0.024	-0.021	1	
FEP	-0.232	0.119	-0.138	-0.166	0.181	-0.036	-0.199	1

All variables are defined in table 3.2

The correlation matrix shows us that the variables do not correlate highly. The highest correlations can be found between ‘PS’ and ‘CSOE’ (0.399), ‘FEP’ and ‘CSOE’ (-0.232) then ‘SM’ and ‘PS’ (0.228). Nether of the correlations have an obvious explanation. Although all of them can be considered low being that they are far below 0.8. There is no signs of multicollinearity in the data. Removing the variables with lower N in the second correlation matrix (table 3.4) produced some changes.

Table 3.4: Correlation Matrix 2

	CSOE	CFaSOE	CV	PS	PI	FEP
CSOE	1					
CFaSOE	-0.031	1				
CV	0.076	0.328	1			
PS	0.369	-0.161	-0.224	1		
PI	-0.083	-0.182	0.231	0.137	1	
FEP	-0.175	0.030	-0.083	-0.185	-0.162	1

All variables are defined in table 3.2

All variables still have low correlations, which indicates that there are not any signs of multicollinearity. The four highest correlations are firstly between ‘PS’ and ‘CSOE’ (0.369), roughly the same result as in table 3.3. Secondly, ‘CV’ and ‘CFaSOE’ (0.328) which could be explained by the fact that two out of the three member states who have compulsory voting laws held concurrent national elections in some of the election years (see Table 7.1 in the appendix). Thirdly, ‘PI’ and ‘CV’ correlate much higher then in table 3.3 (0.231). Lastly, ‘CV’ is negatively correlated with ‘PS’ (-0.224). The correlation is most likely due to that the member states that have compulsory voting laws are smaller countries. In neither of the correlation matrixes there seems to be any problem with multicollinearity. The changes between the two correlation matrixes gives us a some warning that the data might change in the regression analysis dependent on how many observations it is based on.

Moving on the some other test of the data the knowledge of the variation in the outcome depending on the amount of observations demonstrated in the correlation matrixes will be take into account. The results of the tests can be seen

in table 3.5. As for the correlation matrixes these tests has firstly been done with all the variables (Test 1) and then without the variables ‘SM’ and ‘SES’ due to a lower number of observations (Test 2.1). For the Hausman test another division is added, one test that include the variable ‘CV’ and one that exclude it (Test 2.2). Starting with the Hausman test we can observe that the null hypothesis in not rejected in Test 1 and in Test 2.2 indicating that a random effects is preferable. This could be explained by that the variable ‘CV’ does not vary over time and skews the result. In Test 2.2 the variable ‘CV’ is removed resulting in a rejection of the null hypothesis, suggesting fixed effects. As the variable CSOE is the central focus for this study and that the Hausman test without the variable ‘CV’ indicated that a fixed effects model should be used the regressions will be tested using fixed effects. To account for the effect of ‘CV’ a random effects test will also be used. Now that we know that both random- and fixed effects will be used we look at the Breusch-Pagan Lagrange multiplier to test between using OLS or fixed effects. We can see that the null hypothesis is rejected indicating that there is a significant difference across countries. Hence, the random effects regression is justified.

Table 3.5: Diagnostics tests

	Test 1	Test 2.1	Test 2.2
Hausman test (hausman)	10.63 (0.1005)	7.66 (0.1049)	403.11 (0.0000)
Breusch-Pagan Lagrange multiplier (xttest0)		37.72 (0.0000)	
Modified Wald test (xttest3)	4.7e+05 (0.0000)	1.4e+06 (0.0000)	
Cumby-Huizinga test (actest)	0.0000 (1.000)	0.0000 (1.000)	

Table shows test statistics from different tests, p-values are presented in parentheses. Test 1 includes all variables; test 2 excludes the variables ‘SES’ and ‘SM’; test 3 also excludes the variable ‘CV’.

Next, the Modified Wald test is conducted to control for hetroskedasticity. The test rejects the null hypothesis indicating hetroskedasticity. To account for this both the models for fixed- and random effects will use robust standard errors. Lastly we test for autocorrelation. The Wooldridge test could not be conducted. Instead we conduct the Cumby-Huizinga test. Before the test is conducted we have to compare the GLS fixed effects model against the OLS regression using country dummy variables (see table 3.5). The comparison was firstly done with all variables and then without the ‘SES’ and ‘SM’ variables. Both tests generate the same result with the exception of compulsory voting that is omitted in the fixed effects model. The Cumby-Huizinga test indicates that there is no autocorrelation in the data. However, looking at the χ^2 in the test it is at zero. Hence it is likely that the test failed to examine what it was intended to. As such I cannot know if the data has autocorrelation or not. Moreover, according to Studenmund (2013:338) a GLS method corrects for autocorrelation, and since it is the model that is already in use. Therefore it should not matter too much whether autocorrelation is present in the data or not.

Table 3.6: Test between fixed effects and OLS with country dummies

<i>Variables</i>	All variables		Without 'SES' and 'SM'	
	<i>Fixed</i>	<i>OLS</i>	<i>Fixed</i>	<i>OLS</i>
CSOE	10.5639**	10.5639**	8.7308**	8.7308**
CFaSOE	13.7954**	13.7954**	11.3849**	11.3849**
Compulsory voting	n/a	-2.7476	n/a	-10.175
Population size	-7.508e07	-7.508e07	-8.838e-07	-8.838e-07
Saliency Manifesto	-0.55	-0.55		
Saliency Expert Survey	0.8843	0.8843		
Polarization Index	2.5280	2.5280	2.7684	2.7684
First EP election	1.6486	1.6486	2.2979	2.2979
Constant	38.6306*	73.0765	42.2524**	83.082

Entries are unstandardized regression coefficients (*B*). Fixed is a GLS regression with fixed effects and OLS is using country dummies. The country specific dummy variables for the OLS are not added in the table. n/a indicates that the variable has been omitted.

***=p<0,001. **=p<0,01. *=p<0,05

To summarize the tests both fixed- and a random effects will be used to account for different variables. Comparing random effects and an OLS regression the random effects was a better fit for the data. A comparison between fixed effects and an OLS using country specific dummy variables indicated the same results with the exception of one time invariant variable. In order to stay consistent in the tests the fixed effects will be used. The data had hetroskedasticity but there could not be established if autocorrelation was present or not. As the models use GLS this should not be too much of a problem. Robust standard errors will be used to account for the hetroskedasticity.

3.5 Models

In all models that will be presented for the first part of the study all of them are GLS regressions using panel data. Moreover, all the models will use robust standard errors. First of all, the variables will be tested in a bivariate regression analysis using fixed effects (model 1) in order to see the individual effects of the dependent variable and the control variables on the independent variable. Model 1 will give a first look indication if H_{A1} , H_{A2} , H_{A3} , H_{A4} ,²⁹ H_{A5} , H_{A6} , H_{A7} , H_{A9} and H_{A10} are significant.

Secondly, a multivariate regression using fixed effects will be conducted with all the variables (model 2). This will show how the various variables affect each other when all are accounted for. Model 2 will strengthen the test from model 1 by controlling for the various variables. However, since model 2 has fewer observations the outcome of it will mainly tell us about two variables that draw

²⁹ Compulsory voting will be tested with random effects instead of fixed effects.

down the number of observations ('SM' and 'SES'). Therefore model 2 will mainly answer H_{A5} and H_{A6}.

Thirdly, the two measurements of salience of the election ('SM' and 'SES') will be excluded to remedy the issue of missing observations (model 3). With the 'PI' and 'FEP' still in the model the salience of the election is still accounted for. Model 3 also aims at strengthening the results from model 1 and at the same time account for the missing observations of two of the variables. It is also a multivariate regression using fixed effects. The hypotheses tested in model 3 are H_{A1}, H_{A2}, H_{A3}, H_{A4}, H_{A8}, H_{A9} and H_{A10}.

Fourthly, the compulsory voting laws do not change during the time frame this study and therefore the variable will be omitted in model 2 and 3. To account for H_{A4} (i.e., compulsory voting) a regression using random effects will be done including the same variables as in model 3 (model 4).

To see if the salience of the election increases over the years a line chart will be constructed with the mean for each of the three variables measuring salience (i.e., 'SM', 'SES' and 'PI') across the years 2004-2014. This will give an answer to H_{A8}. For the second part of the study H_{B1} – H_{B4} will be answered by descriptive statistics such as the mean, median and the mode.

In table 3.6 all hypotheses, how they are answered and where to find the answer is summarized.

Table 3.7: All hypotheses, how they are answered and where to find it

	<i>Short explanation</i>	<i>Answered</i>	<i>Presented in</i>
H _{A1}	CSOE have a positive effect on turnout	Model 1 and Model 3	Table 4.1
H _{A2}	CFaSOE have a positive effect on turnout	Model 1 and Model 3	Table 4.1
H _{A3}	CFaSOE has more of a positive effect then CSOE	Model 1 and Model 3	Table 4.1
H _{A4}	Compulsory voting increase turnout	Model 1 and Model 4	Table 4.1
H _{A5}	Higher salience in party manifestos increase turnout	Model 1 and Model 2	Table 4.1
H _{A6}	More political contestation increase turnout (Expert survey)	Model 1 and Model 2	Table 4.1
H _{A7}	More polarization increase turnout	Model 1 and Model 3	Table 4.1
H _{A8}	The salience of the EP election increases over time	Line chart	Figure 4.1
H _{A9}	A larger population decreases turnout	Model 1 and Model 3	Table 4.1
H _{A10}	The first time an EP election is held turnout is higher	Model 1 and Model 3	Table 4.1
H _{B1}	Cost of voting	Descriptive statistics	Table 4.3
H _{B2}	Salience of the election	Descriptive statistics	Table 4.3
H _{B3}	Compulsory voting mediates the effect of CFaSOE	Descriptive statistics	Table 4.3
H _{B4}	The first time an EP election is held mediates the effect of CFaSOE	Descriptive statistics	Table 4.3

3.5.1 Reliability and validity

The presentation of the collection of data and how the data then was to be operationalized has intended to be clear in order to be as transparent as possible. As the empirical data is derived from secondary sources others can easily access it. The statistical methods are as well specified for each model. Moreover, the

practicalities regarding which commands that will be used in Stata has been presented. It is likely that another researcher would come to the same conclusions if the study were to be replicated. As such it can be argued that the reliability of the thesis is high (Bryman 2010:49). Several steps have been made to achieve the aim of staying objective. With this said the choice of empirical data and method could always be questioned. It is especially true in regards to the choice of variables. This is why the variables have been based on existing theory and have followed the call from previous researchers for a core operationalization. With the exception of the first time an EP election is held, only variables acknowledged for its effect has been used. Content validity regards how well the measure is consistent with what it intends to measure. I would argue for that the content validity is strong. One small disclaimer in this is the choice of variables measuring the salience of the election. The exact design for the measurement of salience has not reached the same consensus as the other variables. However, all the measurements of salience are used in previous research, hence the content validity is still strong. With this said there is always a risk that any causality is due to other variables than what was measured for. (Esaiasson et al, 2012:57-65).

4 Results

This chapter presents the results from the regressions discussed in the methods chapter in order to answer the hypotheses set up in the theoretical chapter. Consequently, the descriptive statistics that will answer the questions regarding the underlying variables of CSOE, the cost of voting and the salience of the election, will be presented.

4.1 Part one – CSOE over time

This segment will firstly present the regressions made in model 1-4 (see table 4.1) and then discuss the independent variables effect on the dependent variable (i.e., turnout), together with the change in the independent variables in the various models. The variables will be dealt with in the same order as they are presented in table 4.1. Any difference between model 2 and model 3 could be said to be due to the number of observations in the models and will therefore not be commented in the text. It has been made clear in which model the individual variables will be answered (see table 3.6 for an overview). After the variables have been examined one by one within each model design to test the specific variable, the model 2-4 will be commented in their entirety. Since the variables have been examined there is no need to discuss model 1, as it is in essence not a model but a collection of the bivariate regressions of each individual variable.

Starting with CSOE we can see that in the bivariate model (model 1) it has a positive significant effect (8.95) on turnout. When the other variables are accounted for (model 3) the effect drops a little (8.7308), but the change is quite small. The main change is in the drop from a significant level at 10 per cent to one at 5 per cent. However, since it stays significant this is not an issue. The highest value and the strongest significance can be seen in model 4 (12.8291).

Secondly, for CFaSOE the effect on turnout in model 1 (10.4667) was not significant. This could be due to the standard errors being robust to account for heteroskedasticity. If the same regression was made without the robust standard errors the result was significant (see table 8.2 in the appendix). Moreover, in model 3 the effect stayed non-significant but increased slightly (11.3849). When tested using random effects in model 4 the positive effect increased a little more (11.9533) and became significant. However, it is the result in model 3 that is of interest when this variable is to be analysed.

Table 4.1: GLS Regression analysis using Panel Data

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
<i>Variables</i>	<i>Bivariate, FE</i>	<i>Multivariate, FE</i>	<i>Multivariate, FE</i>	<i>Multivariate, RE</i>
CSOE	8.95** (3.0269)	10.5639* (4.4131)	8.7308* (4.0293)	12.8291*** (2.9543)
CFaSOE	10.4667 (7.051)	13.7954 (9.6023)	11.3849 (6.6075)	11.9533* (5.9519)
Compulsory Voting ^A	34.3843*** (8.4646)	n/a	n/a	29.144*** (6.649)
Population size	-9.24e-07 (5.30e-07)	-7.51e-07 (7.27e-07)	-8.84e-07 (6.29e-07)	-5.24e-08 (1.08e-07)
Saliency Manifesto	0.3298 (0.8191)	-0.55 (0.4629)		
Saliency Expert Survey	0.1358 (0.9996)	0.8843 (1.1508)		
Polarization Index	1.6115 (1.7300)	2.5281 (1.4868)	2.7684 (1.7264)	1.3552 (1.8584)
First EP election	1.949 (2.4716)	1.6485 (1.9162)	2.2979 (2.1936)	1.2106 (2.897)
Constant		38.6306** (13.8792)	42.2524** (11.737)	31.1834*** (10.1027)
R ²		0.38	0.29	0.62
N		74	83	83

Entries are unstandardized regression coefficients (*B*) with robust standard errors (*Robust SE*) in parentheses. All models use the *robust* option in Stata. R² in Fixed Effect is derived from within R². In the Random Effect R² is derived from the between R². ***=p<0,001. **=p<0,01. *=p<0,05

^A Is estimated using a Random Effects instead of a Fixed Effects in Model 1.

n/a indicates that the variable has been omitted.

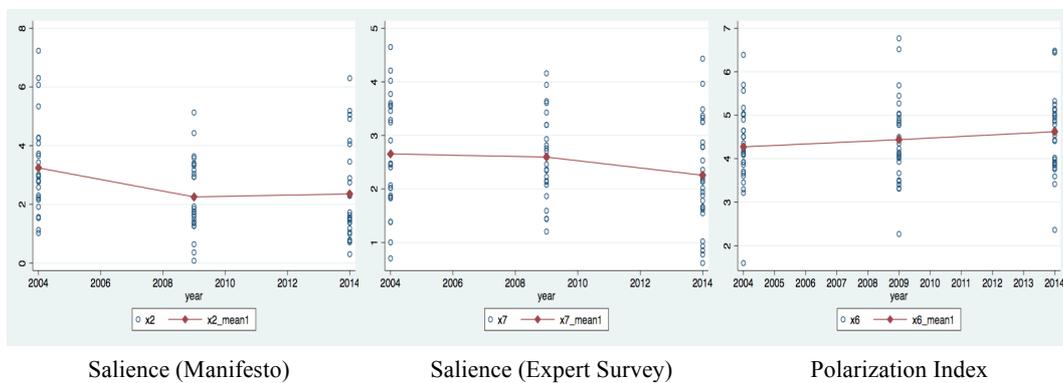
Not surprisingly compulsory voting generated a large impact on turnout. When tested in model 1 the effect was both the highest (34.3843) and significant. In model 4 it dropped a bit (29.144) but indicated a strong positive effect that was significant. Worth noticing is that compulsory voting was not measured using fixed effects in model 1. This due to the variable being time invariant rendering in becoming omitted when fixed effect is used. Instead it was tested using random effects. The size of the population did as predicted indeed have a negative effect on turnout (-9.24e-07) in model 1. In model 2 the effect dropped some but stayed negative (-8.84e-07). In both models the result was not significant.

The saliency from the accumulated mentioning of EU issues in manifestos had a non-significant positive effect (0.3298) in model 1 which then changed to a non-significant negative result (-0.55) in model 2. The question is why the effect went from positive to negative when accounting for other variables. It is not unlikely that the three measurements of saliency affect each other. Looking at the correlation matrix in table 3.3 we can see that the saliency measured from manifestos correlated with population size (0.228) and it could therefore be this variable that changes the effect from positive to negative. Yet, with a non-significant result in any of the two variables we cannot know. For the saliency variable (SES) that was based on the experts collected estimation the regression shows that its effect on turnout was (0.1358) in model 1 and (0.8843) in model 2. This indicates that the political contestation amongst the parties increase turnout,

however the results are not significant. Also for this variable it is hard to know why the effect increases when accounting for other variables. The last of the salience variables is the Polarization index, which had a positive effect in all models. This variable was the only of the three variables measuring salience that did not have any missing data. Thus, it is model 1 (1.6115) and model 3 (2.7684) that is of interest. Neither of the positive results proved to be significant.

Taking a closer look at the effects of the three variables measuring the salience of the election we can see that only the polarization index increases over time (see Figure 4.1). The Salience Manifesto decreases from 2004 to 2009 and then slightly increases in 2014. The Salience Expert Survey decreases between each election during the same time period.

Figure. 4.1: Means of Salience measurements for the years 2004, 2009 and 2014



First EP election also indicated a non-significant result (1.949) in model 1. In model 2 the positive effect increased (2.2979) but was still not significant.

Taking a step back from the individual variables and looking at the models in their entirety we can see how much of the variables in each model is predicted to say about the phenomena. With model 1 being a collection of bivariate regression there is not much to say about it that has not already been covered when presenting the individual variables. In model 2 all the variables was included using fixed effects and with robust standard errors. Due to fewer observations (74) this model was constructed to test two of the salience measurements: Salience Manifesto and Salience Expert Survey. Neither of which rendered a significant result. The model as a whole is estimated to explain 38 per cent of the turnout. Moving on to model 3, the only difference between model 2 and model 3 is that in model 3 more observations is included due to the removal of the variables Salience Manifesto and Salience Expert Survey. The significant variable in the model was CSOE and the model as a whole is calculated to explain 29 per cent of the turnout. Lastly, we have model 4 that is the only model that was not using fixed effects but random effects for accounting for compulsory voting that due for being time invariant could not be calculated in previous models. The variables compulsory voting CSOE and CFaSOE was all found to be significant. The model itself was estimated to explain 62 per cent of turnout.

4.2 Part two – Underlying variables of concurrent elections

Moving on to the underlying variables of concurrent elections. First the member states that held concurrent national elections with the EP election will be presented (see Table 4.2). Within the table it is also specified if the member state at that specific time had compulsory voting laws and/or if it was the first time that the elections were held. Turnout from the national- and the EP election are then subtracted from each other giving us a difference between the two elections. A positive result indicates that the national election received more voters and a negative number indicates that the EP election received more voters.

Table 4.2: All CFaSOE during 1979-2014

<i>Country</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Election</i>	<i>Turnout</i>	<i>Difference</i>	<i>Compulsory voting</i>	<i>First EP election</i>
Belgium	2014-05-25	Parliamentary	89.4	-0.2	Yes	No
		EU Parliament	89.6			
Belgium	1999-06-13	Parliamentary	90.6	-0.5	Yes	No
		EU Parliament	91.1			
Greece	1981-10-18	Parliamentary	81.5	2.9	Yes	Yes
		EU Parliament	78.6			
Ireland	1989-06-15	Parliamentary	68.5	0.2	No	No
		EU Parliament	68.3			
Lithuania	2014-05-25	Presidential*	47.4	0	No	No
		EU Parliament	47.4			
Lithuania	2004-06-13	Presidential	52.5	4.1	No	Yes
		EU Parliament	48.4			
Luxembourg	2009-06-07	Parliamentary	90.9	0.1	Yes	No
		EU Parliament	90.8			
Luxembourg	2004-06-13	Parliamentary	91.7	0.3	Yes	No
		EU Parliament	91.4			
Luxembourg	1999-06-13	Parliamentary	86.5	-0.8	Yes	No
		EU Parliament	87.3			
Luxembourg	1994-06-12	Parliamentary	88.3	-0.3	Yes	No
		EU Parliament	88.6			
Luxembourg	1989-06-15	Parliamentary	87.4	0	Yes	No
		EU Parliament	87.4			
Luxembourg	1984-06-17**	Parliamentary	88.8	0	Yes	No
		EU Parliament	88.8			
Luxembourg	1979-06-10***	Parliamentary	88.9	0	Yes	Yes
		EU Parliament	88.9			
Portugal	1987-07-19	Parliamentary	72.6	0.2	No	Yes
		EU Parliament	72.4			

Source: IDEA, 2017

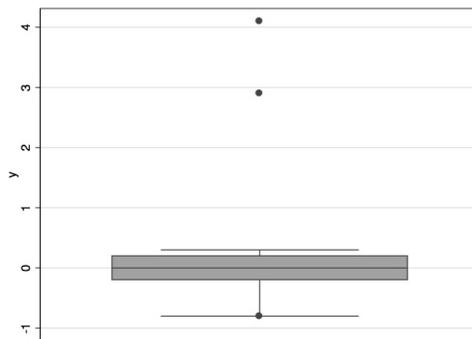
* Second round of presidential election

** European Parliament elections held during 1984-06-15 / 1984-06-18

*** European Parliament elections held during 1979-06-07 / 1979-06-10

At first glance, one can observe that the difference between the combined elections seem to be rather small in most observations. The two extreme results being Lithuania's presidential election in 2004 and Greece's parliamentary election in 1981. In both instances, it was the first time the member states held a national election at the same time as the EP election. This can clearly be seen in a boxplot (see Figure 4.2). With the two extreme outliers the median and mode will be added to the descriptive statistics.

Figure. 4.2: Boxplot, Difference in turnout between national- and EP elections



Difference in turnout

Overall, the national election drew more voter turnout. This is logical since the national elections are first-order elections whilst the EP election is considered to be second-order, which should give the national elections a larger turnout. Only Belgium and Luxembourg has held elections in which the EP election, although small, received more voters. Another thing that can be observed is that compulsory voting laws do not seem to affect the result substantially. The member states that held their first EP election combined with the national election was Luxembourg in 1979, Portugal in 1987 and Lithuania in 2004. For Greece and Portugal only one concurrent election has taken place. Therefore, it is difficult to make any assumptions. For Luxembourg and Lithuania both have held more concurrent elections. In the case of Lithuania there was a great difference from the first combined election in 2004 and in the second combined election in 2014. In 2004 Lithuania held their first combined EP- and a national election resulting in a difference of 4.1. While in 2014 the difference was 0. For Luxembourg, their first combined election in 1979 the difference between the elections was 0. In the two elections after this the difference was also 0 but for the elections from 1994 to 2009 it has been at variance of difference. Worth noticing is that the concurrent elections held in Luxembourg during 1984 and 1979 was not completely on the same day. The national election was held during one day and the EP election was held in four consecutive days. The more days available to vote in the EP election did not produce any less or more turnout then for the national election that was limited to the normal one election day. What this tells us is hard to draw any conclusions about in this limited amount of data. It could be that most voters cast their vote in one day for both elections and that the ballots stood empty the other days when it was open for the EP election. However, it is more likely that the larger number of days to vote helped to increase the turnout numbers for the EP

election. Luxembourg is also interesting since it has held its parliamentary elections consistent with all the EP elections, with the exception of the last EP election in 2014.

With this first look at the data we can see some variance with a few instances where the difference is higher than the set limit of 0.5. It is therefore unclear if it is the cost of voting or the salience of the election that is the most predominant underlying factor. The next step is to look at the descriptive statistics to see what the combined result for the concurrent elections give us (see table 4.3).

Table 4.3: Descriptive statistics for the underlying variables

	<i>N</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Median</i>	<i>Mode</i>	<i>Min</i>	<i>Max</i>	<i>Std. Dev</i>
Total	14	0.42	0	0	-0.8	4.1	1.35
First time EP election	4	1.8	1.55	n/a	0	4.1	2.02
Without first time EP election	10	-0.12	0	0	-0.8	0.3	0.34
Compulsory voting	10	0.15	0	0	-0.8	2.9	1.02
No compulsory voting	4	1.13	0	n/a	0	4.1	1.99

Source: IDEA, 2017

Starting with the total sample of concurrent elections, we can see that the mean is 0.42. This is a rather small difference between the concurrent elections, especially as the mean is tilted up by two of the observations. To account for this we also observe the median and mode which both indicate that there is no difference in turnout. This implies that it is the cost of voting that is the more important of the two variables.

Accounting for various differences such as compulsory voting laws and if it is the first time that the EP election is held in the specific member states the answer is not as clear. If one subtracts the observations in which the member states held their first EP election the mean drops to -0.12. With the minuscule difference in turnout one could ascribe this to the cost of voting theory. On the other hand if one observe only the concurrent elections the first time a member state held their EP election the mean is much higher, 1.8. Holding a new type of election for the first time in these cases resulted in less interest for the new elections in comparison to the already established national election. When looking at the median and mode for the first time an EP election is held the mean is 1.55, which is around the same number as the mean. However, with such a low number of observations one has to be careful in using the median and mode due it can be misleading. This can be seen for the mode in both the first time EP election and for compulsory voting that both only have four observations. With the low number it is hard to draw any conclusions from a mode or median.

Moreover, it seems like compulsory voting laws also produces low difference in turnout. The mean from member states who at the time of the election had compulsory voting laws is 0.15 which also is so close to zero that it could be argued that it is the cost of voting that is in play. For the member states that have no laws regarding compulsory voting the mean is 1.13. The median and mode is either at zero or cannot produce a number. The result indicates that when you are forced by law to vote then the salience of the election is less important, giving

more weight to the cost of voting theory. With compulsory voting being one of the most acknowledged variables to have a positive effect on turnout, countries that uphold such laws normally have higher turnout. The higher the turnout is the less effect the added variables bring. In other words, the salience of the election has more effect the lower the turnout level is and less effect when the opposite is true.

5 Analysis

In this chapter the hypotheses will be presented followed by the answer for each of them. For an overview of the hypotheses, if they were confirmed and if the results were statistically significant can be found in table 5.1.

H_{A1} *Concurrent second-order elections increase turnout. (+)*

Starting with the essential first assumption of the thesis, the positive effect of CSOE, the result indicates that turnout increases by 8.73 per cent when a local election are held at the same day as an EP election. As well as adding a more robust understanding of the effects of CSOE across time and countries to the previous literature (e.g., Leininger, Rudolph & Zittlau, 2016; Rallings & Thrasher, 2005) this is good news for the EU. If local elections in the member states were changed when possible to coincide with the EP election it could be one piece of the puzzle in solving the issue of falling turnout rates.

H_{A2} *Concurrent first- and second-order elections increase turnout. (+)*

H_{A3} *The combination of concurrent first- and second-order elections has more of a positive impact than concurrent second-order election. (+)*

Now that we know that CSOE has a positive effect on turnout it is time to look at the assumed positive effect on turnout on CFaSOE so we consequently can compare the two. When a national election was held simultaneously as the EP election during the years 2004, 2009 and 2014 this study indicates that it increased turnout by 11.38 per cent. This is a difference of 2.65 per cent from the effect of CSOE. The issue is that the result from the CFaSOE is not significant. While this is an issue it could be due to that national elections and the EP election only coincided five times during the time span (see table 8.1 in the appendix). When the regressions were conducted without accounting for hetroskedasticity the results were significant at a 5 per cent level (see table 8.2 in the appendix). One cannot change the models just to prove a point but with the previous research on the subject (e.g., Boyd, 1989; Geys, 2006; Nikolenyi, 2010; Schakel & Dandoy, 2014; Vetter, 2014; Geys & Cansela, 2015) it seems reasonable to assume that CFaSOE has a positive effect on turnout. Although, since the test failed to produce a significant result it is only speculative to state anything regarding which of the variables that has more effect on turnout.

H_{A4} *Compulsory voting increase turnout. (+)*

Being one of the most acknowledged indicators for turnout it is no surprise that compulsory voting had a big impact on turnout. Based on the test constructed in this study compulsory voting would increase turnout by as much as 29.14 per cent. No one questions the positive effect compulsory voting have on turnout, but

compared to earlier studies that said that compulsory voting increases turnout from 10 per cent to 15 per cent (Jackman, 1987; Franklin, 1996; Blais & Dobrzynska, 1998) this result is extremely high. As such this results strengthen the effects of compulsory voting.

H_{A5} *The accumulated mentioning of EU-issues within party manifestos increase turnout. (+)*

H_{A6} *More political contestation over EU-issues increases turnout. (+)*

H_{A7} *A higher polarized election on a left/right scale increases turnout. (+)*

H_{A8} *The salience of the EP elections increases over time. (+)*

When the mentioning of EU-issues in political manifestos was tested for itself it had a positive effect on turnout with 0.33 per cent, but it became negative when other variables were accounted for. The negative effect was at -0.55 per cent. Thus one cannot say that the accumulated mentioning of EU-issues within party manifestos increase turnout. Since the results are not significant one cannot draw the conclusion that it neither has a negative affect. The argument that more political contestation that exist the higher the turnout holds true. This would indicate that political contestation does increase turnout by 0.88 per cent, but with no significant results the reliability of this is questionable. More polarization also seems to increase turnout by 2.78 per cent. However, as with the other salience tests this is not significant either. The small impact on turnout for the accumulated mentioning of EU-issues in the political manifestos and the political contestation in EU-issues measured by the expert survey that can be observed would indicate that EU-related issues are not of much importance in the eyes of the voters. Polarization on a left/right scale had more of an impact, suggesting that domestic issues is of more importance when voting in the EP election. However the effect of polarization was still rather small.

One has to be careful in drawing any conclusion from H_{A5} – H_{A8} since neither of the tests was significant. It is possible that it is the construction of the variables that is flawed and therefore do not explain what they were intended to explain. With that said it could also be that it is also possible that the constructions of the variables are composed correctly. If one assumes that the variables was constructed correctly the conclusion is that the salience of the election has not gone up in either the mentioning of EU in parties manifestos or that more political contestation amongst the parties within each member state has increased. This contradicts the claim made by Schuck et al. (2011) that the salience of the EP increased from 2004 to 2009. In figure 4.1 one can see that the salience decreased in both the political manifestos and for the political contestation. It was also predicted that the salience was to increase from 2009 and 2014 (Trieb, 2014; Schmitt, Hobolt & Popa, 2015; Schulze, 2016). One could observe a minuscule increased in the political manifestos but for political contestation it sustained to fall. Only the polarization index followed the predicted trajectory of an ever-increasing divide amongst the member states own parties. Although, an increased polarization on the left/right scale does not automatically entail that it is the issue

of the EU that is central in the conflicts it provides an understanding of the political climate. If there is more heated debate it is not unlikely that the issues regarding the EU will be discussed more in the media. However, since the two measurements that was intended to see if EU issues were a topic of increased interest for the parties failed to prove such a point one cannot be sure. It is more likely that the increased polarization on a left/right scale is due to other reasons than an increased salience of the EU.

H_{A9} *A larger population size decreases turnout. (-)*

Following the collected wisdom stating that smaller countries have higher turnout because the distance between the electorates and the elected is perceived as smaller. As such the electorates cast their vote with the sense that their vote matters. The construction of the variable was that the larger the population within a country was the lower the turnout would be. This also proved to be the case with -8.84 per cent, but many of the variables this was not significant. Hence, one cannot validate or reject this hypothesis. Although, with the previous research leaning heavily on that a countries with smaller size of the population has higher turnout it is more likely then not that population size is an important factor.

H_{A10} *First time a member state holds an EP election the turnout is higher. (+)*

This hypothesis was contested but not refuted in earlier studies (Flickinger & Studlar 2007). With the added data from two more elections then the previous research the result suggests that the first time an EP election is held it generates more interest resulting in higher turnout by 2.3 per cent, but it is not significant. As such this study cannot refute the hypothesis, but it cannot validate the conclusion made by Matilla (2003) either. In any way the difference of 2.3 per cent in turnout is rather small and therefore is not one of the more important variables that increases turnout.

With the assumed positive effect of CSOE on turnout proven it is now time to understand which of the two underlying variables that has the most explanatory factor.

H_{B1} *The difference in turnout between a high salient election and a low salient election is the same. (Cost of voting)*

H_{B2} *When combining a high salient- and a low salient election the turnout is greater in the election with high salience. (Salience of the election)*

In the segment of the theoretical framework a pre-set limitations for how much of a difference that is tolerated between the concurrent elections for the cost of voting theory to hold true was set at 0.5 in the differences of turnout. The total mean difference was 0.42, being close to the set limits. When accounting for the median and mode, which both was at 0 one can draw the conclusion that it is the cost of voting that is the most important of the two variables. As will be demonstrated answering the last two hypotheses the difference in turnout fluctuates a bit when testing for more variables. Thus the salience of the election held more of an explanatory factor during certain circumstances.

H_{B3} *Compulsory voting mediates the effect from the assumed positive effect of the salience of the election during concurrent first- and second-order elections.*

H_{B4} *The first time an EP election is held the turnout is higher mediating the effects of lower salience that a second-order election has.*

For those member states with compulsory voting laws the difference between the national- and EP election was miniscule or zero. With a mean of 0.15 there is not much of a difference. Compared to the mean of the combined difference from all concurrent national- and EP elections of 0.42 it can be said that compulsory voting mediates the effects of the salience of the election, tilting the results towards the cost of voting. This is also evident when looking at member states that do not have compulsory voting laws. For those countries the mean difference was at 1.13. The reason for the mediating effects is likely due to that at a certain level of turnout any added variable will have less impact on turnout. With a high percentage of voters already turning out at the polling booth, the added salience mostly has an effect on those who would turnout anyway and not on the diminishing number of electorates defying the compulsory voting laws.

The first time an EP election is held it does not seem to mediate the effect between the national- and EP election. It had the highest difference mean of the variations tested in table 4.3 with 1.8. If the member states that held their first EP election were excluded from the calculation of the difference mean it fell down to -0.12. This is surprising considering the previous research and the results from the first part of the study that showed a positive effect of holding first time EP elections on turnout. The result in the regression was not significant, but if the previous research were taken into consideration, as well one would assume that it would have a mediating effect. However, it could be that the four cases of national- and first time EP elections had a highly salience national election. Also, the previous research and the variable do not specify anything in regards to any concurring election. To be clear, this part of the study does not take into account the level of turnout, only the difference between the concurring elections. Nevertheless, surprising as it may be holding the EP election for the first time does not mediate the mean difference between the national- and EP election.

The amount of concurrent elections with member states that have, or at the time of the election, had compulsory voting laws is an issue that has to be addressed. Belgium, Luxembourg and Greece had at the time of the election compulsory voting laws. That is half of the member states included in the second part of the study. The problem is that these member states account for ten of the fourteen observations. For the remaining member states without compulsory voting there are only four observations. With a means difference of 1.13 for the member states that do not have compulsory voting compared to the 0.15 for those that has the laws it is evident that the total mean difference will be effected. Nevertheless, with the data available for testing concurring national- and EP elections the result is that it is the cost of voting that has the most effect.

Table 5.1: Answers to the hypotheses and if they are significant

	<i>Short explanation</i>	<i>Conclusion</i>	<i>Significant</i>
H _{A1}	CSOE have a positive effect on turnout	Yes	Significant
H _{A2}	CFaSOE have a positive effect on turnout	Yes	Not significant
H _{A3}	CFaSOE has more of a positive effect then CSOE	Yes*	Not significant
H _{A4}	Compulsory voting increase turnout	Yes	Significant
H _{A5}	Higher salience in party manifestos increase turnout	No	Not significant
H _{A6}	More political contestation increase turnout (Expert survey)	Yes	Not significant
H _{A7}	More polarization increase turnout	Yes	Not significant
H _{A8}	The salience of the EP election increases over time	No	Not significant
H _{A9}	A larger population decreases turnout	Yes	Not significant
H _{A10}	The first time an EP election is held turnout is higher	Yes	Not significant
H _{B1}	Cost of voting	Yes	
H _{B2}	Salience of the election	No	
H _{B3}	Compulsory voting mediates the effect of CFaSOE	Yes	
H _{B4}	The first time an EP election is held mediates the effect of CFaSOE	No	

* Not in the random effect model

6 Conclusion

The aim of this thesis was firstly to provide a more robust understanding of CSOE by testing it over time and across countries. The test was conducted on the member states to the EU during the EP elections in 2004, 2009 and in 2014. The presupposition of a positive effect from CSOE on turnout was proven. The results estimated that holding a local election on the same date as the EP election increased turnout by approximately 8-9 per cent. Consequently this study adds to the previous research by providing a more robust understanding of CSOE. The study also produced a lot of non-significant results, but neither of those were at the centre of focus. The result with a positive effect on turnout but that failed to reach significance was: the positive effect of CFaSOE, that CFaSOE have more positive effect than CSOE, political contestation increases turnout, polarization increases turnout, a smaller population increases turnout and that the first time an EP election is held turnout is higher. The results that had a negative effect on turnout but that also failed to reach significance was that the accumulated mentioning of EU-issues in party manifestos. Also, no evidence was found to support that the salience of the EU increases over time. However, since this result was not significant this does not mean that the previous research that claim that the salience of the EP election increases is wrong. Moreover, one variable that did have an effect, and a strong one, was compulsory voting. According to this study having compulsory voting laws, regardless if they are enforced or not, increases turnout by approximately 29 per cent.

Regarding why concurrent elections have an effect, the two main theories were tested. Both the cost of voting and the salience of the election are important for the effect of concurrent elections. This was tested for all concurrent national- and EP elections between 1979-2014. With a combined mean difference in turnout between the elections at 0.42 and a median and mode at 0, the cost of voting is the more important underlying variable. The positive results indicate that the national election still drew more voters. There are a few factors that could contribute to this result. The strong effect of compulsory voting was shown in the first part of the theses. Thus member states with compulsory voting laws generally have higher turnout. Moreover, holding the EP election for the first time did not cancel out the predicted difference in turnout. Instead during those cases the mean difference was the highest. When the turnout is in the higher percentages and/or the population is more accustomed to the specific elections then the difference between the elections decline a bit, strengthening the effect of the cost of voting. Considering that today only four out of all the member states have compulsory voting laws this needs to be tested further. Especially since ten out of the fourteen observations in the second part of the study had compulsory voting laws at the time of the election.

What are then the implications and possibilities that comes with the cost of voting as the predominant underlying factor? First of all, it builds on to the argument that if the officials would only change local elections to coincide with the EP election it would be beneficial. As long as the added election brings additional cohorts of electorates to the polling booths there will be an increase in turnout, most likely in both elections. If a local election is to be held approximately close to an EP election, say within the same year, it would be a low-cost way to boost the turnout rates. It could even be cheaper thanks to not having to pay for the logistics of an election twice. Another thing that becomes important is to make sure that voting is as easy as possible. The easier it is to vote the more electorates will turn out and if there is a concurrent election it is likely that electorates cast a vote for the election to them deemed as of less importance. One consideration that has to be in the minds when combining elections is that even if both elections receive higher turnout, the lesser important of the two elections might fall in the shadow of the more important election. People might vote but they might not care all that much what it is that they are voting for. The elections are supposed to be a way for the citizens to make informed decisions to put their vote on someone they think will proceed with the policies best for that elector. If a large number of electorates vote in an election without knowing what it is that they are voting for it could be damaging for the accountability. If you do not know what you are voting for it is unlikely that you will hold the elected officials accountable for their actions.

To sum up and adding a few thoughts for further research, yes CSOE increases turnout and the main underlying variable is cost of voting. This thesis only examines the effect of CSOE on the turnout for the EP election. However, if the results are to be used for policies to move local elections to coincide with the EP election the opposite way of looking at the issue could be beneficial. The argumentation in the beginning of the thesis was that it would be a low-cost alternative, and it is, but it still brings some administrative hassle for which any authority responsible for the practicalities surrounding the combination of elections have to deal with. It is however likely that the results would be similar to this thesis. All of the measurements used in the study are focusing on the top down relationship of parties on voters. Another way to look at this would to use a bottom up approach. In order to do this however, one would have to have survey data from the voters. Hence, it would be interesting if any future research would conduct surveys on election stations while a CSOE are held. Member states who are likely to hold concurrent second-order elections with the next EP election based on that they held it during 2004, 2009 and 2014 are: Germany, Ireland, Italy, Malta and Spain. If the United Kingdom have not left the EU it is also likely that they would hold concurrent elections. Also, it would be a good idea to collect the data from all member states local elections in a single database for any further studies that regards elections at both the supranational- and local-level.

7 References

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8 Appendix

Table 8.1: Concurring elections with the EP elections in 2004, 2009 and 2014.

Country	Turnout			Concurrent election on the same day	
	2004	2009	2014	Second-order elections	First-order election
<i>EU</i>	45.5	43	42.5		
Belgium ^{CV}	90.8	90.4	89.6	Regional elections 2004, 2009 and 2014.	National election 2014.
Bulgaria**	29.2	38.9	35.8		
Czech Republic	28.3*	28.2	18.2		
Denmark	47.9	59.5	56.3	Referendum 2009 and 2014.	
Germany	43	43.3	48.1	2004: local elections in 6 regions and 1 state election. 2009: Local elections in 6 regions, partial local elections in 1 region. 2014: Local elections in 11 regions, partial local election in 1 region and a local referendum in 1 region.	
Estonia	26.8*	43.9	36.5		
Ireland	58.6	57.6	52.4	Local election 2004, 2009 and 2014.	
Greece ^{CV}	63.2	52.7	60	Local elections second round 2014.	
Spain	45.1	44.9	43.8	Partial local elections 2004, 2009 and 2014. 1 regional election 2014.	
France	42.8	40.6	42.4		
Croatia***		20.8*	25.2		
Italy	71.7	65.1	57.2	Partial local elections 2004, 2009 and 2014. 2 regional elections 2014.	
Cyprus ^{CV}	72.5*	59.4	44		
Latvia	41.3*	53.7	30.2	Local elections 2009.	
Lithuania	48.4*	21	47.4		First round presidential election 2004. Second round presidential election 2014.
Luxembourg ^{CV}	91.4	90.8	85.6		National election 2004 and 2009.
Hungary	38.5*	36.3	29		
Malta****	82.4*	78.8	74.8	Partial local elections 2004 and 2009.	
Netherlands	39.3	36.8	37.3		
Austria	42.4	46	45.4		
Poland	20.9*	24.5	23.8		
Portugal	38.6	36.8	33.7		
Romania**	29.5*	27.7	32.4		
Slovenia	28.4*	28.3	24.6		
Slovakia	17*	19.6	13.1		
Finland	39.4	40.5	39.1		
Sweden****	37.9	45.5	51.1		
United Kingdom	38.5	34.7	35.6	Partial local elections 2004, 2009 and 2014. 1 regional election in 2004	

Source: Eurostat and OEIC, 2014

^{CV} Compulsory voting

* First time EP election

** The turnouts for the 2004 election are from 2007

*** The turnout for the 2009 election is from 2013

**** In Malta there were partial local elections in 2014 that included 2,4 per cent of the population. In Sweden there was local referendums in 7 of the 290 municipalities.

Table 8.2: GLS Regression analysis using Panel Data without robust standard errors

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
<i>Variables</i>	<i>Bivariate, FE</i>	<i>Multivariate, FE</i>	<i>Multivariate, FE</i>	<i>Multivariate, RE</i>
CSOE	8.9499** (3.508)	10.5639** (3.6250)	8.7308** (3.2518)	12.8291*** (3.0007)
CFaSOE	10.4667** (4.0444)	13.7954** (4.3924)	11.3849** (3.8238)	11.9533** (3.8824)
Compulsory Voting ^A	34.3843*** (7.7603)	n/a	n/a	29.144*** (6.4758)
Population size	-9.24e-07 (9.21e-07)	-7.51e-07 (8.03e-07)	-8.84e-07 (8.14e-07)	-5.24e-08 (1.24e-07)
Saliency Manifesto	0.3298 (0.6045)	-0.55 (0.6111)		
Saliency Expert Survey	0.1358 (1.2418)	0.8843 (1.2041)		
Polarization Index	1.6115 (1.6594)	2.5281 (1.4598)	2.7684 (1.5366)	1.3552 (1.3952)
First EP election	1.949 (2.0629)	1.6485 (2.1555)	2.2979 (1.8802)	1.2106 (1.9606)
Constant		38.6306** (16.1865)	42.2524** (13.7705)	31.1834*** (6.7316)
R ²		0.38	0.27	0.62
N		74	83	83

Entries are unstandardized regression coefficients (*B*) with standard errors (*SE*) in parentheses. R² in Fixed Effect is derived from within R². In the Random Effect R² is derived from the between R².

***=p<0,001. **=p<0,01. *=p<0,05

^A Is estimated using a Random Effects instead of a Fixed Effects in Model 1.

n/a indicates that the variable has been omitted.