



# She Loves Me, She Loves Me Not:

## Vote Choice in Domestic and European Elections

Jonathan Polk and Ryan Bakker

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Centre for European Research (CERGU)

University of Gothenburg

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**She Loves Me, She Loves Me Not:  
Vote Choice in Domestic and European Elections**

Jonathan Polk

Centre for European Research (CERGU) and Department of Political Science

University of Gothenburg

[jonathan.polk@gu.se](mailto:jonathan.polk@gu.se)

Ryan Bakker

School of Public and International Affairs

The University of Georgia

[rbakker@uga.edu](mailto:rbakker@uga.edu)

Since the first elections to the European Parliament in 1979, political scientists have struggled to understand the relationships between vote choice at the national and European levels. Seven European Parliament (EP) elections and over 30 years later, domestic politics continues to appear as a key to EP vote choice, but scholars recognize that both domestic political considerations and issues pertaining to European Union (EU) integration have an impact on elections to the EP. Recent research shows this empirically as well as in experimental contexts (Clark and Rohrschneider 2009; de Vries, et al. 2011; Ferrara and Weishaupt 2004; Hix and Marsh 2007; Hobolt, et. al 2009; Hobolt and Wittrock 2011; Schmitt 2005; Stockemer 2012; Van Aelst and Lefevere 2012).

A closely related body of research calls for a renewed focus on dependent variable choice in studies of European elections (van der Eijk, et al. 2006), much of which stresses the importance of using individual rather than aggregate models and data in order to build solid micro-foundations of individual vote choice and overcome problems of observational equivalence (Clark and Rohrschneider 2009; Hobolt et al. 2009; Hobolt and Wittrock 2011; Schmitt, et al. 2008; Tiemann 2009; Weber 2011). This article contributes directly to these lines of scholarship by taking yet another step toward untangling the complexities of vote choice in the European electorate and building profiles of voters who fall into different categories of vote type.

To better understand voting behavior across national and EP elections, we must capture both the quantity *and* quality of vote choice. An individual's combination of votes across the two elections can almost always be understood through a variety of theoretical lenses—and these

different lenses often lead to conflicting explanations of vote choice. Our goal is to analyze vote choice in such a way as to provide an opportunity to adjudicate between conflicting explanations.

Using European Election Studies (EES) data from 1999 and 2004 on self-placement and placement of parties on the general Left/Right and European Union integration scales<sup>1</sup>, we determine whether or not voters chose sincerely – based on proximity (Blais et al. 2001; Downs 1957; Enelow and Hinich 1984; Westholm 1997) – in both elections. We also observe whether citizens voted consistently or switched their vote choice across the two elections. For the quarter of our sample that switched votes between electoral levels, vote switching does not always reflect punishment of governing parties nor is it always a protest vote against the EU. Our analysis finds that some voters chose sincerely on two separate dimensions in the two electoral arenas, which is consistent with recent arguments that more than one voting behavior exists simultaneously among the European electorate (e.g. Schmitt, et al. 2008).

The paper begins with an overview of the research on EP elections. From there, the thorny issue of observational equivalence in EP election studies is brought forth. Our categorization scheme is then more fully introduced as an attempt to overcome some of the difficulties pertaining to observational equivalence that impede this type of research. After exploring the profiles of the different voter types, we conclude with a discussion of the limitations of the present study as well as its contributions and implications for further analysis of European elections.

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<sup>1</sup> Both questions ask respondents to place themselves on scales ranging from 1–10. 1 represents extreme left wing positions and 10 extreme right wing positions on the L/R scale. 1 represents anti-European integration sentiment (feeling integration has gone too far) whereas 10 represents the desire for more integration on the EU scale. The EU placement questions were not included in EES surveys until 1999.

## *European Parliament Elections as Second-Order National Contests*

Since its introduction by Reif and Schmitt (1980), second-order election (SOE) theory has become the primary lens of analysis for EP and other non-national elections (Marsh and Mikhaylov 2009). The classic view understands EP elections as second-order national contests (Reif and Schmitt 1980; Reif 1984; Reif 1985; Marsh 1998; van der Eijk and Franklin 1996), which suggests that EP elections are still primarily competitions over national government office and that vote choice is dominated by more salient first-order domestic political concerns. According to the second-order thesis, parties do not compete at the EP-level on alternative conceptions of how the EU should be governed, but on domestic platforms, which tend to minimize differences between parties on European integration (Hix 1999). The subordinate position of the European Parliament relative to other EU institutions, the lack of immediate impact on the distribution of power within member states, and the allocation of fewer resources to EP campaigns by most parties contribute to the belief that less is at stake in EP elections. This leads to lower turnout and voters casting their ballots in such a way as to make a statement about national politics rather than voting for parties they believe are well qualified to run the EU.

EP elections more readily provide citizens the opportunity to vote sincerely rather than strategically. Voters are able to cast a ballot for niche parties closer to their ideal positions on various policy matters, as opposed to larger parties that might be further from a given voter's preference but stand a greater chance of forming government in national politics. This ability to 'vote with the heart' tends to favor smaller parties at the expense of larger parties – whether in or out of government — at European Elections. However, EP elections also allow voters to express dissatisfaction with governing parties in the domestic arena by voting 'with the boot' for

opposition or fringe parties at the Euro-level (Oppenhuis, van der Eijk, and Franklin 1996). On the whole, the second-order conception of EP elections fosters the ironic yet dominant understanding that in European elections, Europe matters relatively little. Although a second-order perspective of EP elections holds that EU level issues are of less significance than those at the national level in EP elections (see Marsh and Mikheylov 2009; Hix and Marsh 2007; Schmitt 2005 for comprehensive overviews of SOE theory and research), others are more apt emphasize European concerns.

### *Europe Matters in European Parliament Elections*

The findings of several studies suggest that various EU level factors impact voting behavior in EP elections more than the second-order model would expect.<sup>2</sup> Citizens in favor of European integration are more likely to vote in EP elections and member states that directly benefit from the EU budget and those with higher aggregate levels of support for membership have higher turnout (Blondel, et al. 1997; Mattila 2003; Studlar, et al. 2003; Stockemer 2012). EP elections are more prominently covered by the media in countries where parties are more polarized on European issues (Schuck, et al 2011), and citizens are more likely to vote on EU issues when parties and media provide more information on EP elections (de Vries, et al 2011; Hobolt and Wittrock 2011).<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> A separate but related body of literature questions the applicability of SOE to elections and referendums other than EP elections. See, e.g., Cutler (2008) on provincial elections in Ontario, Canada; Garry, et al. (2005) on EU referendums, but see Heath, et al. (1999) for the applicability of SOE to local elections in Britain.

<sup>3</sup> Another assessment of the 2009 EP elections stresses that voting behavior in line with second-order expectations is largely due to national parties treating EP elections as such, leaving voters little choice but to do so as well (van der Veen 2009), further corroborating the importance of party contestation in determining electoral behavior.

At the party level, Ferrara and Weishaupt (2004) report that parties displaying greater internal consistency on questions of EU integration systematically outperform parties marked by higher levels of internal fractionalization. Parties of the far right and far left are more likely than centrist parties to hold policy preferences that are inconsistent with the more mainstream EU policy program (Hooghe, et al. 2002; Ray 1999; Taggart 1998). Voters looking to steer the EU away from its present policy course, and those citizens driven to vote for parties closer to their ideal positions provide a boost to non-governing and/or anti-EU parties of both the right and left in EP elections (de Vries 2010; Hix and Marsh 2007; Hobolt, Spoon, and Tilley 2009).<sup>4</sup>

These studies of voting behavior at European Parliament elections all suspect – and find some evidence – that attitudes towards Europe have an impact on vote choice.<sup>5</sup> Carrubba and Timpono suggest – as Fiorina (1992) and Kedar (2005) have argued in more general terms – that voters “want different preferences represented at different levels of government” and that “there is the real possibility that second-order voting will decline and more EP-focused voting will increase as the chamber gains power” (2005, p.279). It is, however, important to emphasize that this line of research explicitly calls for approaches to EP electoral behavior that are capable of explaining when and why behavior will be consistent with second-order expectations for some sub-section of the electorate, driven by arena-specific European concerns for others, and

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<sup>4</sup> But see Hix and Marsh (2011) for recent evidence that specifically anti-EU parties are in relative decline in EP elections.

<sup>5</sup> As the EU becomes increasingly politicized in member states, European integration is now also a contested issue in national elections (Evans, 1998, 2002; Gabel, 2000; Tillman, 2004; de Vries, 2007, 2009). In some circumstances, attitudes towards EU integration actually condition vote choice at the domestic level. Referring to the practice as *EU issue voting*, de Vries (2007) concludes this behavior is more likely to take place when conflict over European integration is high among parties and when EU issues are salient among voters, a finding consistent with several other studies of EU issue voting (Tillman 2004, Schoen 2008; de Vries 2009).

determined by left/right orientations for still others. The second-order model has substantial explanatory power and the challenge for students of EP electoral behavior moving forward is untangling the thicket of explanations and motivations available to explain change from the national to supranational electoral arena, because as Hobolt, Spoon, and Tilley state “on both the contextual and individual levels, it appears that Europe can matter when voters go to the polls” (2009, p.111).

### *Problems of Strategic and Sincere Voting*

Studies of EP elections often conflate three reasons for different behavior in national and EP elections: sincere voting, strategic protest voting, and arena-specific voting. Recalling the prior discussion of SOE expectations, EP elections ostensibly provide voters both the opportunity to cast a sincere vote for the candidate or party closest to a voter’s ideal policy position as well as a chance to express dissatisfaction with the policies of the incumbent government. In essence, the literature gives little guidance as to when a voter in an EP election would cast a vote that reflects the sincere preference of the voter, one that serves as a signal of protest to a separate party currently governing domestically, or if one vote is serving both purposes at once. The inherent contradiction of the last proposition is that a single vote could take on both a sincere and strategic dimension.<sup>6</sup>

The most conventional example of strategic voting involves a citizen voting for a candidate who is further from the voter’s ideal preference because the voter believes that candidate has a better chance in the election than another candidate closer to the voter’s ideal

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<sup>6</sup> See Hobolt and Wittrock 2011 (pages 31-32) for similar concerns on distinguishing between sincere and strategic voting behavior in the second-order election theory framework.



position but less viable in the contest (McKelvey and Ordeshook 1972). In a simple plurality election, strategic voting means, “voting for a lower-ranked candidate that one believes is stronger, rather than for a higher-ranked candidate that one believes is weaker” (Cox 1997, p.72). In an EP election, a vote cast in order to signal unhappiness with the policies of an incumbent government indicates that the voter casting the ballot hopes to influence the policy choices of that government through the ballot box. Although this voting behavior does not conform to the ‘choosing the lesser of two evils’ form of strategic voting, it is equally clear that it contains a strategic element qualitatively different from a sincere vote. While this type of punishment vote may not be a strategic vote in the strictest sense of the term, we hold that it would be problematic and inaccurate to view a vote as a sincere vote *and* punishment vote.<sup>7</sup>

In an attempt to uncover when and why voters rely on sincere, strategic and arena-specific considerations in EP elections, Hobolt and Spoon (2012) argue that, at the individual-level, the type of party a voter normally supports has an effect on what motivation drives vote choice. Their analysis also finds – consistent with prior research on EU issue voting – that the degree to which the EU has been politicized in the domestic debate shapes the amount of arena-specific voting. We acknowledge and confront Hobolt and Spoon’s concerns about the conflation of sincere and strategic voting, and develop a categorization scheme that allows us to understand what portion and what type of the electorate votes in a way consistent with the second-order model, what portion votes according to left/right orientation, and for which group(s) it appears Europe matters enough to drive vote choice at EP elections. The preceding

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<sup>7</sup> Admittedly, separating sincere and punishment votes likely complicates analysis by, at the very least, introducing yet another potential form of observational equivalence, but in the difficult task of unpacking the impact of domestic-level and European-level issues on EP elections, it is important to cleanly differentiate fundamentally separate concepts in our analysis.

review of scholarship leads us to agree with Schmitt, et al.'s assertion that "[a]ll in all, it is probably fair to say that there is hardly a consensus in the literature about the reasons for vote switching" (2008, p.5).

### *Observational Equivalence*

As Hix and Marsh (2007, pp. 498-99) acknowledge, and other scholars of EP elections stress (Clark and Rohrschneider 2009; Hobolt and Wittrock 2011; Tiemann 2009; Weber 2011), it can be difficult to ascertain whether voters abandon larger parties, including those in government, due to primarily domestic or European concerns, particularly when looking at aggregate data. The 'second-order' and 'Europe matters' theses often bring about similar expectations regarding electoral behavior. A voter may leave the party she voted for in the last domestic election due to frustration with the economic performance of the country since that election. She may also leave the larger party she voted for in the national election for a green party in an EP election because of concern for environmental governance at the EU level. The former scenario is consistent with the expectations of the second-order understanding of EP elections, while the latter conforms more to the argument that European issues determine the performance of a party in European elections. The behavior of the voter, however, does not easily reveal which approach better explains the party defection.

Several scholars (Caramani 2006; Hix, et al. 2005, 2006; Kreppel and Tsebelis 1999; Thomassen and Schmitt 1999; Tsebelis and Garrett 2000, pp. 30-31) suggest that the primary cleavage line in the European Parliament falls along the conventional Left/Right spectrum. Additionally, previous research about party preferences on European integration has found that these are largely determined by party families' positions on socio-economic issues (Hooghe, et

al. 2002; Marks and Wilson 2000). Finally, one line of research has found that there is not a substantial gap between the policies of national parties on European issues and the position of the parties' voters on Europe (Carrubba 2001; van der Eijk, et al. 1999). If these relationships hold, voters selecting in EP elections on the basis of EU socio-economic policy would likely vote for the same parties that they support in national contests, potentially providing yet another stumbling block of observational equivalence.

Other research, however, suggests that with each European election an autonomous cleavage, separate from the conventional left/right divide, has been taking shape (Grunberg, et al. 2002). The politicization of Europe surrounds questions of identity that cut against the conventional left/right socio-economic dynamic that has dominated European politics (Hooghe and Marks 2009). If, as this research suggests, the politics of the EU is moving away from contestation along socio-economic policy differences towards identity politics, the preceding problem of observational equivalence may be more manageable in recent rounds of EP elections. The next section describes our attempt to make progress on the matter of observational equivalence in this paper by clearly operationalizing what is meant by a sincere and strategic vote.

### *Operationalization*

One major implication of the previous discussion is that, thus far, researchers in the field of EP elections have been talking past each other in several important ways. Most importantly, work in this area has frequently operationalized the dependent variable in different ways. We concur with van der Eijk, et al.'s (2006) assessment that for scholars studying elections and voting "election surveys should devote rather more space than is customary to questions

pertaining to the dependent variable” (pg. 445).<sup>8</sup> The differences in dependent variables of EP election studies come in two broadly defined types: level of measurement and sample selection.

Most research has treated the vote share of parties in national and European elections as the dependent variable. Generally, researchers following this line of reasoning model the vote differential between national and EP elections at the party-level, which is problematic in two ways. First, any discussion of voter motivation in elections is, at its base, a discussion of individual decision-making. By analyzing party-level vote shares, however, previous research has danced the fine line of ecological fallacy. That is, we should (and can) not make individual level inferences based upon aggregate-level data. Although solutions to this problem have been proposed (King 1997), none of the work in this area has implemented ecological inference to overcome the level of measurement problems inherent in their research designs.<sup>9</sup>

While party-based inferences are useful and provide insight as to what types of parties are likely to benefit or suffer in EP elections relative to national elections, much of the literature cited in the previous sections also suffers from a form of selection bias. That is, this work often has focused on a certain type of party (e.g. green, government, niche) when analyzing and comparing electoral performance across the two electoral venues. These choices almost certainly bias the results and limit the types of inferences we can make. Focusing on only

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<sup>8</sup> This paper does not, however, implement van der Eijk, et al.’s dependent variable of choice, observed utilities derived from a voter’s propensity to vote for a given political party.

<sup>9</sup> Scholars of EP elections and SOE theory have only recently begun to address the micro-foundations of the theories used in this research and the importance of individual-level data in analyses of EP elections. See Clark and Rohrschneider 2009; Hobolt and Wittrock 2009; Marsh and Mikhaylov 2009; Schmitt, et al. 2008; and Tiemann 2009 for similar concerns about aggregate level data and attendant problems of observational equivalence in studies of EP elections.

government parties, for example, undercuts the ability to generalize findings to all parties in a given system and their relative performances in EP and national elections.

More recently, scholars in this field have modeled individual-level data in order to better understand voter motivations in the two types of elections. This strategy overcomes the inherent ecological fallacy in party-based research and, for that reason, is a superior strategy for understanding voter behavior. Similar to party-based research, however, the work using individual-level research has often only included certain types of party supporters in its models (see, e.g., Carruba and Timpone 2005; Hobolt et al. 2009). By limiting samples to specific choices of voters in national elections, these researchers learn more about particular types of voters, but necessarily do so at the expense of their ability to infer to the general voting public.

The direct implication of these different modeling choices is that different conclusions are reached depending on how and whom one models. These decisions impact the degree to which one finds support for the second-order or Europe matters hypotheses. For instance, looking only at government party supporters leads to the finding that vote switching between national and EP elections is mostly in the Euroskeptic direction. Party-level models, on the other hand, tend to provide more evidence of second-order electoral behavior.

Again, we stress that we do not believe these are necessarily competing hypotheses. That is, one of the goals of the present research is to move beyond the need to classify EP voting behavior as protest *or* sincere, as second-order *or* Europe matters. The data exhibit evidence of both types of votes and voting motivations and, therefore, it is most likely the case that there are multiple complimentary hypotheses that can be developed to help explain these different behaviors. Given the nearly omnipresent issue of observational equivalence in voting behaviors

and the difficulties inherent in adjudicating between contrasting explanations of individuals' motivations, we propose a new method of classifying voters in this literature. This method clarifies what is meant by a sincere vote and allows for more confident discussion of voter motivations.

The survey data from the European Elections Studies (EES) (<http://www.ees-homepage.net/>) provide information on whether a voter switched her vote between national and European elections. The EES data can also be used to determine whether or not a vote was sincere in the national and/or the European election based on the proximity model of sincere voting. The surveys ask respondents to place themselves on a left/right scale (1 = left, 10 = right) as well as an EU integration scale (1 = anti-EU, 10 = pro-EU). Respondents are also asked to place all of the parties in their respective systems on the same dimensions. If a voter casts a vote for a party that minimizes the distance between their self-placement and the placement of the party, this voter is coded as sincere. The absolute value of the distance between voters and parties on the left/right dimension determines sincerity at the domestic level and the European integration dimension determines sincerity at the European level. Combining this information with whether or not the voter switched parties or remained consistent across the two elections allows a researcher to categorize each voter in terms of their switching/consistency across the two elections as well as the proximate sincerity of both of these votes.

First, however, it must be shown that the left/right and EU dimensions measure different concepts. The EES does not ask policy-specific questions from which left/right and EU positions can be estimated, which limits our ability to assess the measurement qualities of these scales. We can show, though, that the two scales capture different aspects of voter and party

placements by observing the correlation between the different placement dimensions. The correlations between left/right and EU self-placements and left/right and EU party placements are sufficiently small (-0.02 and 0.13 respectively) to assure us that these variables are, in fact, measuring different concepts.

This information allows the analyst to provide a profile of any variant of sincere/insincere, switcher/consistent voters in terms of their attitudes toward a variety of issue-specific questions included in the surveys. We can, for example, determine whether or not a voter who casts sincere votes at both elections is more Euro-skeptic than other voters or not. With this operationalization, we are no longer forced to choose between two (or more) observationally equivalent explanations of vote switching behavior for some subsets of the data.

Our categorization scheme, then, builds on the work of Schmitt, but differs in two important ways. First, we categorize each vote (national and EP) as being either sincere or strategic as described above. Second, abstainers are not included in our categorization. Schmitt, et al. (2008) devote much of their research to determining the quality of abstentions in the data. That is, whether or not an abstention is sincere or strategic. Although potentially very important, there is too much uncertainty surrounding the reasons for abstention and, given our interest in diminishing the problems of observational equivalence, we remove abstainers from the present analysis. Following this logic, in order to be included in our categorization, survey respondents must have answered all questions relating to self and party placements (for the parties that they chose) and have voted in both elections. This yields a sample of 8,274 respondents across 14 countries (EU-15 minus Luxembourg) and two rounds of EP elections (1999 and 2004).

Figure 1 presents the distribution of our sample across eight vote-type categories of the European electorate (discussed in detail below) and a theoretical perspective that appears to most readily explain the given type of voting behavior for each sub-group. Black bars represent categories of voters where left/right politics structures vote choice. Dark grey bars represent categories best explained by the Europe matters thesis. Light grey bars categorize second-order switchers, and the white bar is an undetermined category.

[Figure 1 Here]

### *The Categories: Eight types of voters*

Having classified all qualified respondents in the EES 1999 and 2004 data sets as one of the eight voting types, we present a more detailed view of individual voting motivations. The following section provides a description of each of the eight categories. We attempt to draw as clear a picture as possible of how voters in various categories differ on a range of measures, conditional on available data. To do so, we explore differences between voters of specific types and all other voters on the following variables: left/right self and party placement, EU self and party placement, and party attachment (the percentage of each category that feels strongly attached to a political party). We discover a series of patterns across the groups that allow us to make more informed inferences about the motivations underlying individual voting behavior and the relevance of different models (SOE/Europe Matters) for different groups. We now move to a detailed description of the individual categories and some preliminary tests of simple hypotheses regarding expected behaviors.

### *Left/Right Voters*



Sincere votes in both elections and consistent party choice in domestic and EP elections:

The factors motivating vote choice for this sub-group of the electorate appear partially obscured by observational equivalence. Since the same party is closest to the voter's own position on the left/right and EU scales, it is unclear whether the voter chose the party in EP elections because of domestic or Euro-level concerns. Evaluating between the second-order and Europe matters arguments for this sub-group is challenging with the present data, but not impossible. Concerning our expectations for this group of voters, the consistency in vote choice across electoral arenas leads us to hypothesize that people in this category will have stronger party attachment than voters in other categories. We expect people in this category to be party loyalists, and we do in fact find that their party attachment is much stronger than the rest of the electorate.

In an attempt to decide between the second-order and Europe matters theses, we compare the absolute value of the distance between the voter and the party chosen on both the L/R and EU dimensions. The dimension with the smallest average distance between the voter and the party chosen should be the dimension along which the voter sees herself as being closest to the party. Pooling across all countries, the average distance between the voter and the party chosen on the L/R dimension is .47 (on a ten-point scale). The average EU distance is .78, which indicates that voters see themselves as closer to the party chosen on the Left/Right dimension than the EU dimension. Although it is not conclusive, this evidence coupled with our knowledge that this type of voter has stronger party attachment suggests that L/R considerations shape preferences in both electoral arenas.

Sincere vote in domestic elections and a strategic vote for the same party in EP elections:

The apparently strategic voting behavior of this sub-group at the EP level must be more fully explored. If the left/right dimension determines vote choice in EP elections as it does in domestic contests, then a party chosen at the EP level that initially appears strategic (in its failure to minimize the EU distance between voter and party) could actually be a sincere L/R vote in the EP election. If this were the case, familiar concerns of observational equivalence would complicate our ability to determine if L/R concerns of a primarily domestic or European nature shape vote choice at the EP level, but the lack of salience for the EU dimension – as signified by the non-sincere EU vote – does not appear to support a conventional version of the Europe matters argument.

As with the previous category, consistent support of one party across electoral arenas in this sub-group leads us to expect that individuals in this group of voters will have relatively stronger party attachment than those of most other categories, which is in fact the case. The prevalence of strong party attachment for these voters and their tendency to support major parties suggests that these people are more likely to be party loyalists. These people also choose parties more pro-EU than themselves but that minimize the difference on L/R, which indicates that the L/R dimension structures their vote at the EP level as it does in the national election. Taken together, these first two categories composed of voters for whom left/right considerations structure vote choice make up over 50 percent of sample, which indicates that partisan loyalty and left/right proximity remain key components in understanding voting behavior in domestic and EP elections.

### *Second-Order Switchers*

Strategic vote in domestic election and a sincere vote for a different party in EP elections:

This group of voters initially appears easily explained by a Europe matters argument because the EP vote minimizes distance on the EU dimension. If, however, the party chosen at the EP election also decreases the distance between the voter and the party on the L/R dimension, the voting behavior becomes readily understandable from the second-order perspective as well. In this scenario, the distance between the voter and the party of choice would be decreased on both dimensions at the EP level and observational equivalence would again become a concern. But if the party chosen at the EP level does not decrease the distance between the voter and the party on the L/R scale, this would only provide support for the Europe matters thesis.

If the party choice at European Parliament decreases the distances between voter and party on the L/R dimension, it is consistent with the expectations of the second-order model. If, however, the vote does not decrease the distance on the L/R dimension, we take this as support for a Europe matters hypothesis. Table 1 shows that about 70 percent of these people chose a party at the EP election closer to their self-placement on the L/R scale than the party they chose in the domestic election and 80 percent of those that closed the distance on L/R chose the party that minimized the L/R distance. Additionally, strategic/sincere/switchers were not more pro or anti-EU, in terms of self-placement, than the voters in the other sub-groups. We take this lack of a strong opinion on EU integration as further evidence that the second-order model is likely applicable to many voters in this group.

[Table 1 here]

Strategic vote in domestic election and a strategic vote for a different party in EP elections:

Again, the apparently strategic vote choice at the EP level by this sub-group contradicts the expectations of both the conventional second-order story and the Europe matters narrative. This potentially hyper-calculating citizen does not vote with the heart at the EP level on the EU dimension. However, as with other apparently strategic votes at the EP level, we must investigate if the EP vote choice decreases the L/R distance between the voter and party chosen at the domestic level. If so, that sub-section of voters in this category are behaving in a manner consistent with the second-order model's expectations.

[Table 2 here]

Table 2 indicates that over 60 percent of the voters in this category switched to a party at the EP election closer to their self-placement on the L/R dimension. Further, 75 percent of those voters chose a party that was a sincere L/R choice. The party chosen at the EP election, however, was closer to the self-placement of the voter on the EU dimension for only 20 percent of this group and of the people that decreased the distance on the EU dimension; none of them minimized the distance. We take this as an indication that the majority of people in this sub-group voted on L/R considerations and as somewhat supportive of the second-order model's expectations.

### *Europe Matters*

#### Sincere votes in both elections but voted for different parties in domestic and EP elections:

The second-order view of European elections has difficulty accounting for this type of voting behavior, because this type of voter appears to vote with the heart in each election, but on a different dimension in European than domestic elections. Matters of European integration

rather than Left/Right position appear to explain the vote switching across electoral arenas, an outcome most consistent with the Europe matters thesis.

Turning to questions of *how* Europe matters, the party that represents the voter's sincere preference in the domestic arena may be more pro-EU than the voter. Table 3 show that when this is the case, the voter switched to a party that the voter identified as more anti-EU in the EP elections. Conversely, when a voter chose a party she saw as more anti-EU than herself in the domestic elections, she switched to a more pro-EU party in the EP election. Taken together, these findings support the argument that, for this type of voter, Europe does indeed matter in determining their vote at the EP level.

[Table 3 here]

#### Sincere vote in domestic elections and a strategic vote for a different party in EP elections:

The voting behavior of this sub-group is difficult for the second-order thesis to explain. The choice of a different party in the EP elections than the party chosen in the domestic contest, which was the party that minimized the distance on the L/R scale, suggests that Europe matters to this type of voter. Further, sincere voting in the domestic election and strategic voting in the EP contest also deviates from second-order expectations.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> An apparently strategic vote choice, however, warrants further investigation. If, for example, the EU dimension is salient in EP elections for this particular category of voters, the direction of a supposed strategic vote may be important. A voter that holds a relatively anti-EU position and views most parties (particularly the one she voted for in the domestic election) as pro-EU may choose a party in the EP election that she believes is more extreme in its anti-EU position, but still in the same direction as her general preference on European integration. A voter that makes her choices in this might be better explained by the directional rather than proximity approach to the spatial model (see, e.g., Rabinowitz and Macdonald 1989), and would also complicate our ability to refer to votes as strategic or sincere. It would, however, potentially provide an explanation consistent with the Europe matters thesis for individuals who vote sincerely in a domestic election but apparently vote strategically in an EP contest. We therefore probed the applicability of directional voting for strategic voters in this and other categories

These voters: 1) choose a party that is more anti-EU than the party they chose in the domestic election, but 2) the party chosen is still more pro-EU than the voter's self-placement on the EU scale. This sub-group, however, is 3) much closer to the EU score of the party chosen in the EP election than the sub-group that was sincere/strategic/consistent, which means that if a sincere/strategic voter does switch parties, the switch is to a party closer to the voter on the European dimension. These people appear to vote in a manner consistent with the Europe matters argument, and are voting for more Euroskeptic parties, which suggests they are voting against Europe.

[Table 4 here]

Strategic vote in domestic election and a sincere vote for the same party in EP elections:

The voting behavior of this sub-group is also difficult to explain from a second-order perspective. The strategic vote choice at the domestic level is consistent with second-order expectations, but when provided with the opportunity to choose the party that the individual identifies as closest to herself on the L/R scale at the EP election, the voter instead chooses a party that she sees as closest to her own position on EU integration.

The Europe matters thesis could provide an account of this category of voters. The strategic vote in the domestic arena makes sense given the high stakes of the election and the importance of choosing a viable party in that contest. When, however, this type of voter is given

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that involve strategic votes. Our suspicion about the applicability of the directional model of voting is not, however, supported for this group of voters because they vote for parties that are not as anti-EU as themselves. On the whole, we found little support for directional voting, but note that the EES survey questions do not provide a meaningful zero point, and are not policy-specific, both of which make them less than ideal for testing directional voting behavior.

the opportunity to express a preference on European integration at the EP election, this category of voter chooses the same party, which is also the party that most closely reflects the voter's position on European integration. As described above, recently scholars have argued that in some circumstances, the European dimension may structure vote choice at both the EP and domestic level (e.g. Tillman 2004; de Vries 2007). The willingness of this type of voter to engage in strategic voting at the national level, but sincere voting on the European dimension at EP elections suggests that this voter has strong opinions about the EU, perhaps strong enough to impact domestic vote choice as well.

This group of voters is considerably more pro-EU than individuals in the remainder of our categories. This supports the Europe matters thesis and we note that for this group of voters as opposed to the sincere/strategic/switchers, Europe matters in a qualitatively different way. Whereas voters in the previous category cast protest votes against Europe, these voters are more Europhilic than most, are more likely to see the EU as good, and vote accordingly.

#### *Undetermined*

#### Strategic vote in domestic election and a strategic vote for the same party in EP elections:

The apparently strategic vote choice at the EP level by this sub-group contradicts the expectations of both the conventional second-order story and Europe matters narrative. People in this category do not have stronger party attachment than the rest of the groups, which differs from all other consistent voting groups, but their voting behavior is difficult to interpret with any of the theoretical expectations and voting models we work with in this paper. The willingness of

this type of voter to support a party so far from her own ideal point on both the L/R and EU dimensions is very interesting, but challenging to explain.

### *Discussion*

The categorization of vote choice developed in this paper allows us to say more about why people choose the parties they choose in national and European Parliamentary elections. Problems of observational equivalence are not overcome entirely for all categories of voters. However, making use of relatively little information about a voter's self-placement and placement of parties on two dimensions, it becomes possible to identify groups of voters for whom left/right concerns determine vote choice at both levels, including those that follow a conventional second-order logic, and those that appear to be choosing on the European dimension at EP elections.

For example, of the over 8,000 people in our data, nearly 25 percent of them voted in national and EP elections in a way that was consistent with a Europe matters argument. Of this 25 percent that vote on the European dimension, our categorization system helps us uncover that people in one category (strategic/sincere/consistent) voted in a pro-EU fashion, while those in another category (sincere/strategic/switcher) appear to have cast their votes in such a way as to protest the European integration project.

Our results indicate that for large numbers of the European electorate (over 60 percent), the left/right dimension proved to be important in determining vote choice at both the national and EP elections. For some categories in this 60 percent (strategic/sincere/switcher and strategic/strategic/switcher) the importance of the Left/Right dimension more clearly manifested



itself in second-order style vote switching. For other categories (sincere/sincere/consistent and sincere/strategic/consistent), however, the importance of the left/right dimension does not manifest as many classic second-order effects.

The results in this paper are of a preliminary nature. More work, of course, remains to be done, but our categorization speaks to an array of substantive conclusions now available to scholars in this field. The different types of relationships that can be examined following this schema allow researchers to unpack some of the problems with observational equivalence that are rampant in most previous analyses of European Parliamentary electoral behavior, particularly those which are concerned with explaining why voters make the choices they do in national and European elections.

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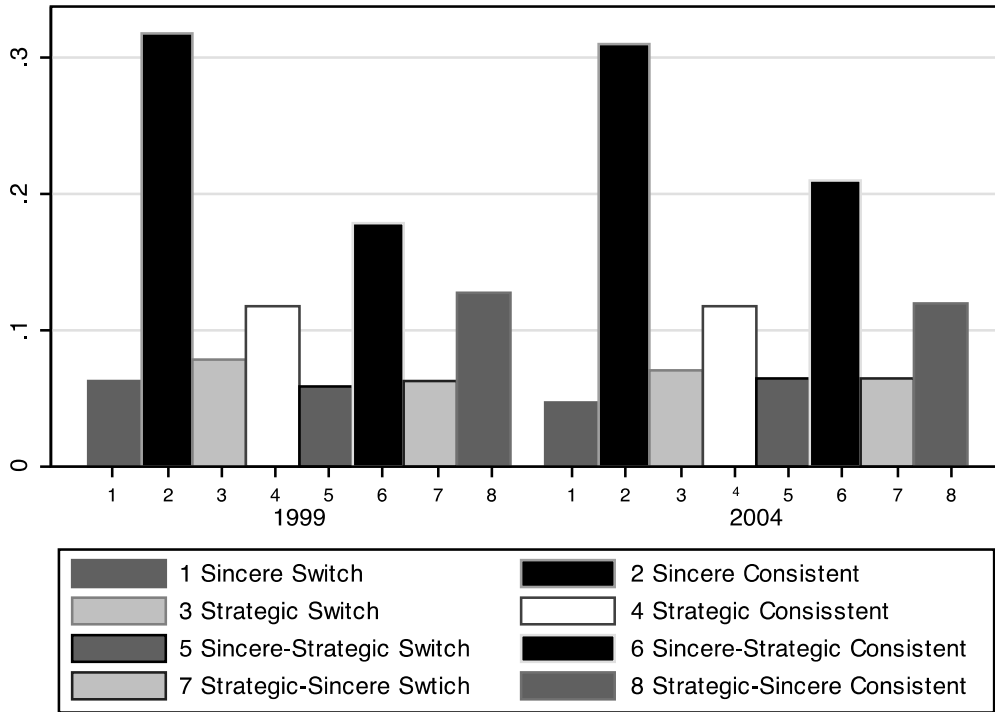
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**Figure 1. Distribution of Categories**



**Figure 1.** Black bars represent categories of voters where left/right structures vote choice. Dark grey bars represent categories best explained by the Europe matters. Light grey bars categorize second order switchers. The white bar is an undetermined category.

**Table 1. Relationship of L/R Distances between National and EP Votes for Strategic Sincere Switchers**

<b>Closed the L/R Gap?</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Minimized the L/R Distance?</b>	<b>N</b>
<b>NO</b>	151	<b>NO</b>	75
<b>YES</b>	374	<b>YES</b>	299



**Table 2. Relationship of L/R and EU Distances between National and EP Votes for Strategic Switchers**

<b>Closed the L/R Gap?</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Minimized the L/R Distance?</b>	<b>N</b>
<b>NO</b>	239	<b>NO</b>	93
<b>YES</b>	373	<b>YES</b>	280
<b>Closed the EU Gap?</b>		<b>Minimized the EU Distance?</b>	
<b>NO</b>	493	<b>NO</b>	119
<b>YES</b>	119	<b>YES</b>	0

**Table 3. Distance between National and European Parties' EU-Dimension Placements for Sincere Switchers**

<b>Country</b>	<b>Pro-EU Sincere Switchers</b>	<b>Anti-EU Sincere Switcher</b>
Austria	1.33	-1.44
Belgium	-0.33	NA
Britain	0.74	-2.61
Denmark	-0.24	-3.0
Finland	0.50	0.0
France	0.50	NA
Germany	0.42	-2.6
Greece	0.88	-0.5
Ireland	0.53	-1.11
Italy	0.25	-0.35
Netherlands	0.40	-1.0
Portugal	0.33	0.0
Spain	-0.21	NA
Sweden	-0.60	-2.5
<b>All countries</b>	<b>0.31</b>	<b>-1.74</b>

**Table 4. Mean Shift in EU placement between National and EP Vote Choice for Sincere Strategic Switchers**

<b>Country</b>	<b>Mean Shift in EU Placement</b>
Austria	0.23
Belgium	0.43
Britain	0.79
Denmark	-1.81
Finland	-0.25
France	-1.55
Germany	-0.68
Greece	-0.35
Ireland	-0.14
Italy	-0.28
Netherlands	-0.68
Portugal	-0.43
Spain	-1.33
Sweden	0.10
<b>All Countries</b>	<b>-0.54</b>