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Citation

Eijk, C. van der, & Oppenhuis, E. (1990). Turnout and second-order effects in the European elections of June 1989. Evidence from the Netherlands. *Acta Politica*, 25: 1990(1), 67-94. Retrieved from <https://hdl.handle.net/1887/3449819>

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Note: To cite this publication please use the final published version (if applicable).

Onderzoek

Turnout and second-order effects in the European elections of June 1989 - evidence from The Netherlands

Cees van der Eijk and Erik Oppenhuis

Introduction

June 1989 was the third time, after 1979 and 1984, that the electorates of the member-states of the European Community were to determine the composition of the European Parliament by means of direct elections.

The experience of the two previous direct elections had been quite sobering in a number of respects.¹ Throughout the community, interest and popular involvement in these elections had turned out to be low. In countries without an obligation to turn out and vote this resulted in a low to extremely low percentage of voters casting votes, and even where voters were required by law to show up at the polling booths, the numbers doing so were lower than at national elections. Furthermore, in most countries party-choice seems to have been determined almost completely by factors and considerations derived from the national political scene, which is little surprising in view of factors such as the national (rather than trans-national) procedures of nomination of candidates and party-lists, the absence of serious inter-party differences in terms of European policy², and the generally perceived impotence and irrelevance of the European Parliament itself. Voters were evidently hardly able or willing to express in their vote political preferences or evaluations relating to the European Community or to European integration.

As the factors which contributed to the character of the European elections in 1979 and 1984 had hardly, if at all, changed, 1989 could scarcely be very different, an expectation which generally turned out to be correct.³ Paradoxically, their nature of being somewhat of a non-event, their low turnout and lack of distinct 'European' features in party choice turn these elections into very interesting ground for research. Because they arouse so much less involvement than national elections but still require the same kind of decision making from voters, they broaden the range of conditions under which voter behavior is observed. Therefore they allow a mo-

re general understanding of what voters do and how elections are decided than the customary near-exclusive focus on national elections permits.

In this short article we will focus on the European elections of 1989 in the Netherlands.

First of all we will consider *turnout*. Compared to the elections to the Second Chamber of Parliament, the Euro-elections registered an extremely low turnout. Since the abolition of compulsory voting in 1971, the average turnout for parliamentary elections had been 84.0%, while turnout for the European elections of 1979, 1984 and 1984 was 58.1, 50.5 and 47.2% respectively. The high level of turnout in national elections leads to such small numbers of non-voting respondents in surveys, that research into the determinants and consequences of electoral participation is severely hampered. Surveys of voter behavior in the European elections remedy this quite easily. We will replicate analyses on factors influencing electoral participation which have been reported for national elections. In addition we will also investigate to which extent the low level of turnout can be attributed to the perceived un-importance of the European Parliament, or to feelings of indifference or hostility towards the European Community or the process of European integration.

Secondly, we will look at *party choice* and address the question to which extent the election result would have been different if national elections had been at stake. Any such differences could conceivably have been brought about by two distinct phenomena. One pertains to the phenomenon that the European election is to some extent a 'national beauty contest' without the formal consequences of a real national election. This may affect the way in which voters make their choice, the so-called 'second-order election effect'. A second source of possible differences between the distribution of party vote in European and national elections is the dramatic difference in turnout. To the degree that turnout is selective, it may influence the relative electoral strength of parties.

The data

The analyses to be reported below are based on data from the third wave of interviews in The Netherlands of the European Voter Study 1989. A brief description of the entire study is contained in appendix 1 to this article. The interviews were conducted in the period directly following the European elections of June 15, 1989, lasting until the beginning of July. Face-to-face interviews were held with a representative sample of the Dutch population aged 15 and older; for our purposes respondents below

the legal voting age were excluded from the analyses, leaving a representative sample of the Dutch electorate (n=948). For ease of presentation, the data were weighted in such a way as to reflect the exact election outcome.⁴

Turnout in The Netherlands – a comparison with national elections

The most important analyses of the determinants and consequences of voting versus non-voting in national elections have, for The Netherlands, been reported by Schmidt (1981, 1983), Jaarsma a.o. (1986), Leijenaar (1989) and Schram (1989). Although they differ in focus, detail and analytical approach, their substantive results are quite similar, and can be summarized as follows:

- Individual turnout can only to a limited extent be explained by whatever characteristics of voters. This is partly due to the fact that a substantial amount of the non-voting in national parliamentary elections is caused by factors beyond voters' own control or motivation, such as sickness, absence etc. To the extent that such factors are random in nature (which seems a plausible assumption), they tend to depress the relationship between individual turnout and whatever explanatory variables one includes in the analysis.
- With respect to social and demographic characteristics, it has repeatedly been found that individual turnout is higher amongst older voters, religious voters, those with higher incomes, higher education, or a higher self-ascribed class position. Although statistically significant, none of these relationships is very strong. Furthermore, they have been found to be relatively unstable over time, which may be partly due to sampling and coding incomparabilities which obstruct a simple comparison of such relationships between elections.⁵ Bivariate relationships with gender, and occupation have frequently been found not-significant. Contextual variables such as urbanization are usually related to individual turnout, albeit that this seems to be a consequence of difference in population composition between more and less urbanized areas rather than a real contextual effect.
- Motivational factors are at least as strongly related to individual turnout as more objective social and demographic factors. Interest in political affairs, knowledge of politics, political involvement of various kinds (particularly identification with parties or ideology) have been found to

advance individual turnout significantly.

- Political preferences and orientations have rarely been found to be significantly related to individual turnout. This has led to the conclusion that in a series of national parliamentary elections the final outcome would not really have been different had all those eligible to vote really done so. Analyses of the 1979 and 1984 European elections in The Netherlands reached the same conclusion.⁶

The first step in our analyses of individual turnout is simply a descriptive review of relationships. The selection of variables to be included in the analyses has been guided by previous research on the topic in The Netherlands, as summarized above. In terms of bivariate relations (expressed as tau-coefficients) the results are reported in table 1.⁷

By and large the results resemble those reported in the literature in terms of which variables are or are not significantly related to individual turnout and in terms of the range of coefficients reported for various 'independent' variables.⁹

Table 1: Bivariate relations between background characteristics, political involvement and turnout

<i>background characteristics</i>	tau
gender	.03 (ns)
age	.12
subjective social class	.21
family income	.11
age respondent left school	.11
religiosity	.19
<hr/>	
<i>political involvement</i>	
political interest	.33
closeness to party	.32
membership of party	.15
membership of labor union	.02 (ns)
knowledge of party positions	.21
lack of political selflocation	.22
extremity of selflocation ⁸	.13

To assess the total explanatory power of the variables discussed above, we performed a number of multivariate analyses with individual turnout as dependent variable. In the first analysis the set of background characteristics has been used as independent variables in a multinomial logit analysis. In the second, the variables indicating political involvement have been added to the analysis. At this place we are mainly interested in the degree to which these sets of variables are able to explain variation in individual turnout. Using the pseudo-R² coefficient suggested by Maddala (1983) we arrived at values of .11 and .22 respectively.¹⁰ These results show clearly that background characteristics are very weakly related to individual turnout and provide no basis for any substantive explanation. Motivational factors (listed above under the heading of involvement) are much more powerful than background characteristics in explaining turnout. But even when all variables discussed above are combined, their explanatory power falls short of a satisfactory account of why some people vote and others do not.

Up to this moment our analysis has only employed explanatory variables which have also been used in explaining individual turnout in national elections. We can attempt to expand the analyses by introducing attitudes and orientations which concern the specific context of European elections. Two factors in particular have been suggested in the literature as possible explanations for the low turnout in these elections. First, positive versus negative orientations vis-a-vis the European Community and its institutions may influence individual turnout. Second, the degree to which the European Parliament is perceived to be (ir)relevant may also affect a voter's decision to either turn out and vote or to stay home alternatively. Constructing a variable which measures the first of these two orientations yielded no special problems; its definition is reported in appendix 2. With respect to the other variable, the perceived (ir)relevance of the European Parliament, a small digression is required, after which we will report an expanded analysis of turnout.

Perceived (ir)relevance of political institutions

A simple and plausible explanation of individual turnout in any kind of elections may focus on the degree to which voters are convinced that the institution which they will elect is relevant to their own interests and concerns. Why bother to vote if one is convinced that the elected body in question would in no way be of any consequence to whatever one personally deems important? Obviously, the reverse is not true: one may re-

cognize the (actual or potential) importance of the assembly in question, and still not vote, owing to other factors or considerations.¹¹ In order to tap perceptions of relevance, the following survey question has been included in the European Voter Study:

'Using this card, please tell me how important for your personal life is what is discussed and decided upon in the European Parliament?' Choice options for response: very important/important/not very important/not at all important

Using the answers to this question, it turns out that indeed individual turnout is positively related to the degree in which one deems the European Parliament important. 55.3% of those who perceive the European Parliament as very important cast their vote. This percentage drops to 8.1% for the group which states that the European Parliament is not at all important, while the intermediate groups score 48.5% and 30.8% respectively. At first sight, this seems to settle the matter. There is, however, a caveat in the interpretation of this question. It has been suggested that responses to survey questions purported to measure attitudes, orientations and perceptions with respect to 'Europe' may very well be manifestations of more general orientations towards politics. Were such to be the case, one would find that such 'European' attitudes would also be related to national or local political behavior, and, conversely, that similar attitudes with respect to 'national' or 'local' political systems would also 'explain' behavior in European elections. Such seemingly paradoxical results have been reported, on the basis of a 1984 survey, for the survey-question listed above.¹² Consequently, we have to assess how the answers given to the question on the importance of the European Parliament have to be interpreted. In doing so, we can make use of the fact that the above question has not only been asked for the European Parliament, but in an identical wording also for the respondent's local assembly ('Gemeenteraad'), regional assembly ('Provinciale Staten') and national parliament. Analysis of the responses to this set of questions shows that they form a strong cumulative scale, or, in other words, that they tap a single, unidimensional latent attitude (for details, refer to appendix 2). Obviously, this latent dimension refers as little to the European Parliament and its (in)significance per-se as it does to the local, regional or national parliaments. Rather, it refers to the feeling that elected assemblies are or are not important. Respondents vary in terms of their position in terms of this latent dimension. In other words, the importance they attribute to the European Parliament varies parallel to the importance they attribute to other kinds of parliaments. Furthermore, the order of the items in the scale reflects a, largely shared, feeling that some institutions are more important than others, with the European

Parliament figuring as the least important one. Substantively this is an interesting, intriguing and non-trivial result. It implies that in spite of the agreement between most persons as to the ordering of importance of the various parliaments, they do not agree on how important each of them is.¹³ These differences can not be discarded as mere variations in response behavior as they are related to differences in observed individual behavior (turn-out).

Pragmatically, the relevance of these findings is that respondents can be classified, on the basis of this unidimensional scale, as scoring low or high on this latent dimension. We will refer to this scale, and respondents' scores on it, as the 'importance of (elected) institutions' scale, which we will use as a new (independent) variable in the explanation of individual turnout.

Euro-turnout – the expanded analysis

Having constructed two new variables to be included in the explanation of individual turnout, we will now employ them in the analysis. In terms of bivariate correlations (tau-coefficients) we find:

- affective orientation towards European Community .25
- score on 'importance of elected institutions' scale .22

Although these bivariate relations are clearly significant, and indeed rather high compared to the variables discussed earlier, it is, owing to possible correlations with other explanatory variables, not quite evident how much they will add to a multivariate explanation of turnout. Including them in a multinomial logit analysis together with all variables previously discussed, yields a (pseudo-)R² of .25, which constitutes only a marginal improvement over the previous analyses. These results prompt two comments:

- the small increase in explained variance by these two variables is caused by their interrelations with other variables which were already included in the equation. Just as is the case in linear regression, it is impossible to specify and test in logit analysis a hypothesized structure of relationships between the variables employed in the analysis. Consequently, the estimated coefficients may not simply be regarded as reflecting causal effects. Therefore we will not report them here, and conclude that only explicit causal modelling would allow the disentangling of the cluster of interrelated independent variables into a network of causal relationships, from which can also be derived to which extent each of the variables contributes to turnout. We will leave such analyses for future reports.

– in our opinion the total explanatory strength of the analysis is not negligible, but, on the other hand, far from impressive. The entire set of variables which was used as independents falls short of a satisfactory account of why some people vote and others do not. This could indicate the need to incorporate still other variables in the analysis, although it is not quite evident to us which ones they should be. Alternatively, one could look at this outcome as showing that, to a large extent, the decision to participate in elections is determined by idiosyncratic and possibly random factors.

In order to illustrate the substantive results and marginal effects of these multivariate analyses, we will not report the logit analyses in detail, but rather show in a more accessible manner the relevance of some of the explanatory variables. To this avail we will use the method of elaboration. First of all we will show the effect of the two variables which were introduced in this section, while controlling for the effect of one of the strongest explanatory variables from the earlier analyses, political interest. The relevant information is presented in figure 1.¹⁴

Figure 1 allows the following conclusions:

- Political interest has a strong marginal effect on turnout.

Figure 1: Breakdown of turnout (in percentages)

		Total electorate											
		L				M				H			
Political interest		32.3		47.0		68.6							
Importance of elected institutions		L	H	L	H	L	H	L	H	L	H	L	H
Affective orientation towards EC		-	+	-	+	-	+	-	+	-	+	-	+
N=		17.0	30.7	33.2	41.2	27.0	25.8	45.0	54.6	56.9	30.5	55.7	73.0
N=		95	44	116	162	20	16	84	118	3	13	43	235
Conditional tau-b		.16		.08		-.01		.09		-.21		.14	

- After controlling for political interest, the importance attributed to elected institutions still differentiates strongly, or, in other words, still exerts strong marginal effects on individual turnout.
- Affective orientations towards the EC matter, even after the effect of the other two variables has been partialled out. In all comparisons where sufficiently large numbers of cases are involved, the conditional correlation between (positive) affect and turnout is positive. The only two occasions where this coefficient is negative, involve groups which are very small, 20 and 16, respectively 3 and 13 cases. This corroborates the hypothesis that electoral participation in Euro-elections is partly an expressive act of support for the EC. At the same time, the weakness of the relationship evinces that individual turnout cannot be reduced to such expressive behavior.
- A comparison of the numbers of cases involved in the various ‘branches’ in figure 1 shows that the three explanatory variables are positively correlated with one another.

A second illustration by means of elaboration concerns the effect of gender in explaining turnout. The multivariate logit analysis showed that the bivariate correlation between turnout and gender ($\tau = -.03$, n.s.) is a spurious zero-correlation. Particularly when controlling for political interest, gender turns out to be correlated with turnout, as figure 2 displays.

Figure 2 shows clearly that the effects of political interest and gender on turnout are not additive, as regression and logit analysis or causal model-

Figure 2: Breakdown of turnout (in percentages)

		Total electorate					
		L		M		H	
Political interest		32.3		47.0		68.6	
Gender		M	F	M	F	M	F
N=		33.8	31.5	38.0	55.0	66.3	72.8
N=		150	267	112	126	191	102
Conditional tau-b		-.02		.17		.07	

ling commonly assumes. Having acquired a certain degree of political interest, electoral participation of women is actually higher than of men, while at the lowest levels of political interest there is no noticeable difference. Owing to the heavy overrepresentation of women in the lowest interest category, this does not show up in bivariate relations.

Apart from the current context, this result is interesting as it is of consequence for the debate on the source of gender differences in political participation. As theories of participation are not the main focus of this article, and as individual turnout covers only a small part of the domain of political participation, we will limit ourselves in our reflections on this topic, and leave further analyses along these lines for other occasions.

Verba *a.o.* (1978: 234-268) wonder whether lower participation rates of women are caused by abstention ('women do not care about politics') or inhibition ('women are not offered the opportunity to participate'). Abstention would involve differences in political interest, but not in participation after controlling for interest. Inhibition of one kind or another would manifest itself by lower participation by women after controlling for involvement. Neither of these two ideal type processes leads to the expectation that, either before or after controlling for involvement, women would participate more than men. Still, that is exactly what we find for electoral participation, at least for medium and high levels of interest. This result could signify several things. For one, it could be that there is no inhibition, but rather the reverse. This possibility seems not plausible in the face of much other reported evidence concerning not only turnout, but a wide spectrum of participatory activities (Leijenaar 1989; Castenmiller and Dekker 1987). Secondly, it could imply that the relative importance of Euro-elections is perceived differently by men and women (refer also to note 9). Finally, and in line with suggestions by Leijenaar (1989: 190), it could signify that the calibration of indicators of political involvement is different for men and women (an interpretation which could also account for the interaction effect between gender and interest which showed itself in figure 2). We suffice at this moment with calling attention to these results and to the questions which they raise, and leave further analyses for future research.

Party choice: second-order election effects

In this and the following section we will look into party choice in the European elections. We will focus in particular on two different questions. First, to what extent is party choice in this election affected by its generally

perceived political insignificance? Second, to which extent is the result of the election influenced by the extremely low turnout? In these sections we will *not* develop an explanatory model for party choice in the European elections because this is, as we will see, exceedingly similar to party preference for the national parliament. Such an attempt at modelling would therefore not add much to existing knowledge.¹⁵ Furthermore, we will assume that the reader is cognizant of the domestic political situation in The Netherlands at the time of the European elections. For a brief review of recent political events at that time we refer to Van der Eijk (1989), and we will abstain here from a further description or analysis. The results of the European elections of 1989 and 1984 and of the elections to the Second Chamber of 1986 and 1989 are reported in appendix 3.

Although the European elections formally only relate to the allocation of seats in the European Parliament, they affect the national political system in a material and indirect way: they constitute a kind of unofficial general election for the national political system. The fact that this is widely perceived to be the case renders them into second-order elections for the national system.¹⁶ With respect to the task which voters face when choosing a party, one could even state that in The Netherlands, the Euro-elections are almost exclusively (national) second-order elections, and that the election-specific political arena (the European Parliament and the EC) has hardly any bearing on people's party choice.¹⁷ Consequently, in interpreting voters' choices and the outcome of European elections, the question comes up whether or not party preference in second-order elections is determined in the same manner as in first-order elections, and if not, what the differences are. Reif and Schmitt (1980) have formulated a number of hypotheses with respect to this question. Most important is that, as a definitional characteristic, there is less 'at stake' for the first-order arena in second-order elections. From this they deduce the expectations that:

- electoral participation will be lower than in first-order elections (refer to the previous sections);
- party choice will be more expressive and experimental. Voters can, without fear for direct consequences, vote with their hearts rather than their heads, that is, they can afford to leave strategic considerations aside. This may possibly lead to better prospects for small and new parties. Voters may also use the occasion to give their preferred party a 'warning' by supporting another one, a phenomenon which is most likely to hurt government parties as those are most directly compromised by an almost unavoidable inability to fulfill (all) election promises.¹⁸

In order to assess empirically to which extent these hypotheses are upheld,

and how first- and second-order party choice are related, we cannot just compare the previous national election (1986) with the Euro-election of 1989. National political developments since 1986 would make the comparison invalid.¹⁹ Instead, we will compare party choice in the Euro-elections of 1989 with the then existing intended party choice for national elections.²⁰ The relevant information is reported in table 2.

From table 2 the following conclusions can be drawn:

- In most cases the magnitude of a positive or negative second-order effect is limited, particularly in view of the number of cases involved in the calculation of these effects. Only for D66 and Rainbow are the effects sizeable, and amount to roughly 3 seats for the national parliament. In view of the relatively small size of these parties this is indeed far from negligible.
- As expected by Reif and Schmitt, small parties (the left-of-Labour Rainbow coalition of Communists, Pacifists, Radicals and a few others and the orthodox-protestant electoral pact of SGP, GPV and RPF) do better in the European elections than in term of intended national party choice. The glaring exception is D66.
- Government parties do worse in the European elections than in terms of national vote-intention, as was hypothesized. In view of the fall of the CDA-VVD coalition only 6 weeks before these elections, it is noteworthy that both previous partners suffer from a second-order election effect.

The positive second-order effects for Rainbow and the combined orthodox-Protestant lists seem to originate from a tendency to vote 'with one's

Table 2: Party choice in European elections (EE), party preference if national elections (NE), and second-order effect for each party

Party	vote		2nd-order effect
	EE	NE	EE - NE
PvdA	30.3	29.6	0.7
CDA	34.6	35.7	-1.1
VVD	13.8	14.6	-0.8
D66	6.0	7.9	-1.9
Regenboog	7.1	5.1	2.0
SGP-GPV-RPF	5.8	4.9	0.9
other	2.4	2.2	0.2
N=	439	439	

heart', unconstrained by strategic considerations. This 'gain' for Rainbow is particularly at the expense of the PvdA (Labour), and that of the SGP-GPV-RPF list is obtained at the expense of the (Christian-Democratic) CDA. The fact that the second-order effect is still positive for Labour is accounted for by gains at the expense of CDA and (conservative-Liberal) VVD. Why exactly D66 is hurt by a second-order effect is not quite clear. One could argue that its success in national parliamentary elections is partly dependent on the popularity of and esteem for its political leader²¹, a factor which would largely be irrelevant in Euro-elections. To the extent that this explanation would be correct, it could be applicable as well to the negative effect for the CDA, which was likewise lacking the possibility to exploit in this election the popularity of its party leader and prime minister. This interpretation concurs with the data, but it would weaken another interpretation, namely that the CDA suffers from a negative second-order effect because it is a government party.

All in all, the evidence on second-order effects is not totally unequivocal in its meaning. Detailed comparisons of the kind reported above are required for other instances of first- and second order party preferences than only the 1989 Euro-election, before we can arrive at tenable and general propositions on second-order effects in The Netherlands.

We could also test for the existence of second-order effects in a totally different manner. As second-order elections have no formal or direct consequences for the national political arena, voters can afford to disregard all kinds of 'strategic' considerations which they would use in case of national (first-order) elections. From this stems the hypothesis that they will, on average, be 'more inclined to vote with their hearts than with their heads'. Were this phenomenon indeed to occur, we expect that the general factors which guide party-choice will operate more clearly than in national elections. Earlier work by Van der Eijk and Niemöller proposed that the dominant factor in party choice in The Netherlands is left-right ideology, and that secondary factors may operate which will deflect slightly from optimality in terms of left-right choice.²² Combining these strands of thought results in the expectation that in Euro-elections party-choice will be more optimal in terms of the voters' left-right ideology than in national elections. These expectations can be tested by means of the so-called 'smallest distance hypothesis', which states that voters will vote for the party which is, in left-right terms, closest to their own ideological position. In table 3 we report the extent of smallest-distance voting in the national elections of 1981, 1982 and 1986, and in the European elections of 1984 and 1989.²³

Table 3: Extent of smallest-distance voting in national elections (NE) of 1981, 1982 and 1986, and in European elections (EE) of 1984 and 1989

	NE'81	NE'82	NE'86	EE'84	EE'89
votes according to smallest distance	60.3%	59.1%	55.0%	65.3%	66.9%
votes 1 place more distant than smallest distance	22.9%	24.9%	23.0%	21.0%	17.2%
votes 2 or more place more distant than possible	16.8%	16.0%	22.0%	13.6%	15.9%

Table 3 shows that choosing a party on the basis of optimizing ideological similarity is more frequent in European (second-order) than in national (first-order) elections. This is a general, not party-specific manner in which second-order effects operate.²⁴

Turnout effects on party choice

To what extent did the extremely low turnout in the European elections affect the outcome? Different perspectives on this question may foster different expectations.

First of all, one could, in the tradition of many political sociologists and political psychologists, expect that those parties stand to lose from low turnout, which draw their electoral strength predominantly from the lower educated and politically less involved strata of society. According to this reasoning it would be mainly the PvdA and the CDA who are vulnerable to turnout effects, which for the CDA might be mitigated by the traditionally higher turnout of religious voters.

A second perspective may draw on the fact that most of the relationships on which the previous reasoning rests turn out to be exceedingly weak.²⁵ Furthermore, it may be argued that many voters, irrespective of their social position, perceive several parties (rather than just a single one) as attractive options to support. This would tend to spread the effects of turnout over many parties, or, in other words, to generate no large *net* effects. Empirically, the conclusion of no net effects of turnout has been drawn in a number of Dutch studies²⁶, but these focused on the difference between national election results (on average 84% turnout) and the hypothetical results which would have occurred with complete (100%) turn-

out. Obviously, when turnout drops to levels as low as recorded for the Euro-elections, such empirical conclusions may cease to be valid.

Table 4 reports the results of our analyses on turnout effects. The analysis involves a comparison of the distribution of European party choice of the actual Euro-voters on the one hand, and of the entire electorate on the other.²⁷

With respect to the effects of turnout, the following conclusions can be drawn:

- Turnout effects in the European election of 1989 were not negligible. They are strongly negative for the two largest parties, PvdA and CDA, strongly positive for the VVD, and positive, but weaker, for all other parties. Owing to the fact that The Netherlands occupies only 25 seats in the European Parliament, turnout effects were not large enough to drastically affect the 1989 distribution of seats in Strasbourg, but in terms of the national parliament, their size would have affected quite a number of seats.
- The positive turnout effect for Rainbow and the orthodox-Protestant list may be explained to some extent by higher electoral mobilization of ideologically extreme voters (refer also to note 8). This explanation, however, does not fit the positive turnout effect of D66, which attracts predominantly centrist voters.
- The strong positive turnout effect of the VVD may, paradoxically, be due to their precipitous decline in electoral appeal which was not at all interrupted by their role in the cabinet-crisis of May 1989. Potential

Table 4: Party choice in European elections (EE), national party preference (NE for Euro-voters only, and NE2 for the entire electorate), computed party choice of entire electorate for European elections (EE2), and turnout effect for each party

Party	voters		entire electorate		turnout effect EE2 – EE1
	EE1	NE	EE2	NE2	
PvdA	30.3	29.6	32.9	32.1	-2.6
CDA	34.6	35.7	36.3	37.4	-1.7
VVD	13.8	14.6	11.4	12.0	2.4
D66	6.0	7.9	5.6	7.4	0.4
Regenboog	7.1	5.1	6.2	4.4	0.9
SGP-GPV-RPF	5.8	4.9	5.2	4.4	0.6
other	2.4	2.2	2.5	2.3	-0.1
N=	439	439	801	801	

VVD voters with weak attachments to this party had already left, leaving an on average more dedicated potential VVD-electorate which, because of this stronger dedication, turned out in higher numbers than that of other parties.

- The more or less established insight from recent studies that turnout does not matter very much for the distribution of parties' strength, may be correct for national elections where turnout is generally high (over 80%), but it is apparently not applicable when only about half of the electorate votes.

Concluding remarks

The European elections of 1989 may have been little interesting from a political point of view. The assembly elected is generally perceived as little relevant and largely impotent. Furthermore, the possible indirect effect of their results on domestic politics was in The Netherlands minimal, owing to the fact that a new national parliament was to be elected only two and a half months later. Still, from a research perspective, these European elections present an invaluable contrast with the high-stimulus first-order elections from which most of our knowledge on voters and elections stems. Therefore, the insights gained from Euro-elections may also be of use in the as yet little investigated area of local and regional elections in The Netherlands. These sub-national elections are also low-stimulus in character when compared to those to the Second Chamber of Parliament.

The kind of analyses reported here can, of course, also be used for cross-national comparative purposes. The results thereof would yield insights in turnout- and second-order effects in the various member states of the EC. In addition, they would provide indicators of their respective political cultures, which could in turn be utilized in comparative analyses by relating them to other systemic characteristics. It is obvious that the confines of a single article are too narrow for such an undertaking, which will be reported elsewhere.

Appendix 1: The European Voter Study 1989

The European Voter Study 1989 consists of three independent surveys which were conducted in all member-states of the European Community. The questionnaires of these surveys were actually contained in the European Omnibus Surveys which were conducted in November 1988, March 1989 and June 1989. The Euro-

pean Omnibus Surveys consist themselves of the Eurobarometer surveys, occasionally supplemented by questionnaires of other projects, as was the case with the European Voter Study. Owing to this combination, and with the kind permission of the director of Eurobarometer, it is possible to derive from the Eurobarometer proper a number of variables such as demographic and background characteristics, as well as some substantive questions. The relevant Eurobarometer surveys were nrs. 30, 31 and 31a.

Each of the surveys in each of the three waves contains approximately 1000 completed interviews; for Luxembourg this number is lower, approximately 300, and for the United Kingdom the sample consists of approximately 1300 cases, 300 of which form a separate sample from the Northern Irish population.

The European Voter Study has been designed and organized by a core group of researchers, consisting of Roland Cayrol (Fondation Nationale de Science Politique, France), Cees van der Eijk (University of Amsterdam, The Netherlands), Mark Franklin (formerly University of Strathclyde, UK, currently University of Houston, USA), Manfred Kuechler (City University of New York, USA), Renato Mannheimer (University of Milano, Italy) and Hermann Schmitt (University of Mannheim, Germany; acting as co-ordinator of the core group). The first two waves of the study were sponsored by consortia of European mass media and various other institutions, amongst which the Dutch Labour Party (PvdA). The third wave has been made possible by a grant from the Economic and Social Research Council (UK).

Access to the data is temporarily restricted to researchers involved in the planning and execution of the study, this embargo will be lifted in the course of 1991, after which the data will be archived for secondary analysis.

Appendix 2: Scales and constructed variables

In this article we use scores on a number of constructed variables, which will be described in this appendix to the extent that that has not been done in the text. First of all, scores on three scales are used in the analyses: affective orientations towards the European Community, political interest, and the perceived importance of elected institutions. Secondly, in the logit analyses we used two indicators of political involvement, knowledge of party positions, and lack of political selflocation. The construction of both kinds of measures will be described below.

Scales constructed—The three scales are constructed by using the Mokken scale analysis, a stochastic cumulative scaling model, which elaborates the basic ideas of the Guttman scale into a versatile probabilistic model (refer to Mokken (1971) and Niemöller and Van Schuur (1983)). This method requires dichotomization of the responses of items to be scaled, the positive response indicating the trait to be measured. Below we will present the results of the scale analyses, as well as question wording of the various items.

The homogeneity of a unidimensional scale, and the contribution of its items to this, are expressed in coefficients H and H (i), which are reported below. They can be interpreted as follows:

- H < .30 no scale (no scale item)
- .30 < H < .40 a weak scale (weak item)
- .40 < H < .50 a moderate scale (moderate item)
- .50 < H a strong scale (strong item)

SCALE 1: AFFECTIVE ORIENTATIONS TOWARDS THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITY

Variables	H = .58	% pos.
	H (i)	answ.
Would R feel sorry if EC was abandoned	.65	50.4
Has country benefited from EC Membership	.52	68.0
Membership of European Community:		
Good-Bad	.50	77.5
Is Respondent for or against European Unification	.65	78.7

Respondents scores on the scale are determined by counting the number of 'positive' responses; consequently score-values range from 0 'no affection for European Community' to 4 'high affect for the European Community'.

Question wording and positive categories

- *Would R feel sorry if EC was abandoned*

Question: If you were to be told tomorrow that the European Community (Common Market) has been scrapped would you be very sorry about it, indifferent or relieved?

- 1 very sorry - positive answer
- 2 indifferent
- 3 relieved
- 0 don't know, no answer

- *Has country benefited by EC Membership*

Question: Taking everything into consideration, would you say that The Netherlands has on balance benefited from being a member of the European Community (Common Market)?

- 1 benefited - positive answer

- 2 not benefited
- 0 don't know, no answer

- *Membership of European Community: Good-Bad*

Question: Generally speaking, do you think that The Netherlands' membership of the European Community (Common Market) is...

- 1 good thing - positive answer
- 2 bad thing
- 3 neither good nor bad
- 0 don't know, no answer

- *Is Respondent for or against European Unification*

Question: In general, are you for or against efforts being made to unify Western Europe?

- 1 for - very much - positive answer
- 2 for - to some extent - positive answer
- 3 against - to some extent
- 4 against - very much

SCALE 2: POLITICAL INTEREST

	H = .84	% pos.
	H (i)	answ.
Interested in European Community politics	.84	38.0
Interested in politics	.84	59.2

The values of the scores on this scales range from 0 'low political interest', to 2 'high interest in politics'.

It should be emphasized as a substantively important finding that interest in EC politics is empirically not a different phenomenon from interest in politics in general (or, as has been demonstrated in similar analyses elsewhere, from national politics). Consequently, it does not make sense conceptually to distinguish between the two.

Question wording and positive categories

- *Interested in politics*

Question: To what extent are you interested in politics?

- 1 a great deal - positive answer
- 2 to some extent - positive answer

- 3 not much
- 4 not at all
- 0 don't know, no answer

– Interested in European Community politics

Question: And as far as European Community politics are concerned, that is matters concerning the European Community. To what extent would you say you are interested in European Community politics?

- 1 a great deal – positive answer
- 2 to some extent – positive answer
- 3 not much
- 4 not at all
- 0 don't know, no answer

SCALE 3: IMPORTANCE OF ELECTED INSTITUTIONS

	H = .52 H(i)	% pos. answ.
European Parliament	.43	53.0
Regional assembly	.51	60.6
Local assembly	.56	78.1
National parliament	.63	87.9

Scores on this scale range from 0 'none of these institution is perceived as important' to 4 'all these institutions are seen as important'.

Question wording and positive categories

Question: Using this card, please tell me how important for your personal life is what is discussed and decided upon in the following institutions?

A: Very important – positive answer	C: Not very important
B: Important – positive answer	D: Not at all important
	?: Don't know, no answer
	A B C D ?
Local assembly	1 2 3 4 0
Regional assembly	1 2 3 4 0
National parliament	1 2 3 4 0
European Parliament	1 2 3 4 0

Other variables constructed

Knowledge of party positions – The data contain few satisfactory indicators of political knowledge. We used for this purpose the extent to which respondents were able to indicate the location of a number of political parties on a 10-point left-right

scale. The parties for which such a perception was asked were CDA, PvdA, VVD, D66, PPR, PSP, SGP, GPV and RPF. Except for the RPF, which is represented in the Second Chamber since 1981, all parties have been part of the Dutch party system for decades. The ability to place these parties in left-right terms can, in our opinion, be interpreted as indicative of political knowledge, particularly in view of the importance of this dimension in Dutch politics (refer also to the section on second-order effects in this article). The variable employed consisted of the inverse of a simple count of the number of times a respondent has answered 'don't know'.

Lack of political selflocation – in addition to locating the parties on a left-right scale, respondents were also asked to do so for themselves. Inability to locate oneself in terms of this dimension, which is of central importance to Dutch politics and which is commonly used in mass media reporting and commentary, is interpreted here as indicating lack of political involvement. The main problem with this variable is that it is heavily skewed, no more than 8.8% is unable to provide a left-right selflocation.

Appendix 3: Election results

Results of elections to the European Parliament of June 1989 and June 1984, and of elections to the Second Chamber of May 1986 and September 1989

	European elections		Second Chamber	
	1989 votes	1984 seats	1986 votes	1989 seats
Christian-Democrats (CDA)	34.6	10	30.0	8
Labour (PvdA)	30.7	8	33.7	9
Liberals (VVD)	13.6	3	18.9	5
Democrats 66 (D66)	5.9	1	2.3	–
Rainbow/Green Left*	7.0	2	5.6	2
orthodox protestants**	5.9	1	5.2	1
others	2.3	–	4.3	–
turnout	47.2		50.5	
			85.5	80.1

* In the 1989 European elections an electoral combination existed of communists (CPN), pacifists (PSP), radicals (PPR) and left evangelicals (EVP), and several independent left candidates. This combination was named 'Regenboog' (Rainbow) in the 1989 European elections, in the national elections of September 1989 the same combination operated under the name of 'Groen Links' (Green Left).

In 1984 CPN, PSP and PPR also had a combined list in the European election, which at that time was not yet known as either Rainbow or Green Left. In the national elections of 1986 the various small left parties operated separately. This table lists for 1986 their combined result.

** In the European election, a combined list existed of SGP, GPV and RPF, three orthodox Protestant parties. In the national elections of 1986 and 1989 they had separate lists on the ballot, this table lists their combined result.

Notes

1. Useful reviews and analyses of the European elections of 1979 and 1984 can be found in, amongst others, Blumler (1983), Reif (1984a, 1985), in special issues devoted to these elections of the *European Journal of Political Research* (1980, vol. 8, nr. 1) and *Electoral Studies* (1984, vol. 3, nr. 3 and 1989, vol. 8, nr. 3).

2. This statement should not be read as to imply that there were absolutely no differences between parties with respect to 'Europe', but rather that any such differences were insignificant compared to issues from the national political theatre. The most notable exception to the general absence of serious inter-party differences with respect to the EC is Denmark, where particularly in 1979 and in 1984 the elections to the European parliament had somewhat the character of a renewed referendum on the desirability of Denmark's membership of the EC.

3. For analyses of the 1989 European elections, refer to the special issue of *Electoral Studies*, vol. 8, nr. 3, December 1989, and to a forthcoming special issue of the *European Journal of Political Research*.

4. A direct weighting to replicate the election result not only redresses small disparities between the distribution of party strengths in the sample and the election result, but also increases the weight of non-voters who were somewhat underrepresented in the sample. To avoid party-choice related biases, the procedure assigned different weights to non-voters, dependent on their intended party choice for national elections. Refer also to note 27.

5. Schram (1989) reports in detail a multivariate logit analysis on the basis of election surveys from 1972, '77, '81, '82 and '86 (separate analyses as well as an analysis on the pooled data). As explanatory variables he used sex, income, education, subjective class, objective class, religiosity, party membership, union membership, age and (in the pooled analysis) dummies for the various election years. The explained variance (pseudo- R^2) ranges between 11 and 18% for the various election years. It is, however, not the same set of variables which is significantly related to turnout in the various years, and there is little stability to be discerned in the size of the individual coefficients over time. How weak the various relationships are can be deduced from the fact that in the pooled analysis the dummies for the election years (which do not represent individual but temporal-contextual variance) are stronger related to the dependent variable than all voter characteristics except age and party membership (a rather trivial variable in this context).

6. Refer to Van der Eijk (1984a, 1984b).

7. Appendix 2 describes the definition of a number of variables used in the analyses.

8. Left-right self location cannot by itself be interpreted as a measure of the degree of political involvement, but rather of the direction of such involvement. In line with earlier research, it turns out not to be related to individual turnout in a significant manner: $\tau = -.01$, $r = -.00$. If, however, measures of non-linear association are employed, a significant relationship manifests itself: $\eta = .13$ ($p < .05$). This phenomenon has been reported earlier, but it never received much attention (cf. Schmidt 1981, p. 58). The nonlinearity involves that people who place themselves at ideological extremes, either at the left or at the right, vote in higher proportions than those locating themselves in the center. When viewed from this perspective, one could consider the 'extremity' of left-right selflocation as an expression of intensity of political involvement, reason for us to include it in the set of explanatory variables.

9. Differences in question wording and format prevent us to compare our results in an unequivocal way with results reported in the literature with respect to turnout in Dutch national elections. Such a comparison remains an important topic for future research, however, as its various possible outcomes have different implications for our understanding of turnout and its correlates.

Were we, for example, to find that relationships are more pronounced in the case of European elections, then the implication would be that the relationships found in national elections are weakened by the proportionately larger number of 'involuntary' non-voters (illness etc.). Were we to find some relationships decrease in strength while others increase, then it would be likely that the relative value of participating in different kinds of elections varies for different social categories, which would suggest the existence of socially structured differences in perceived importance of various kinds of elections.

Were we to find all relationships with social structural variables to decrease in magnitude, then it would suggest that differences in perceived importance of various kinds of elections exist, but are not socially structured.

In order to determine which of these various possibilities (or of several others not spelled out here) is applicable, individual turnout in national elections has to be reanalyzed in such a way as to overcome as much as possible the problems of differences in operationalization and coding. Such an exercise is clearly beyond the scope of the present article, and will be reported elsewhere.

10. The expression to determine this pseudo- R^2 is the following:

$$\text{pseudo-}R^2 = (1 - (L_o/L_e)^{2/n}) / (1 - L_o^{2/n})$$

in which L_o is the maximum likelihood when all coefficients except the regression constant are zero, and L_e is the maximum likelihood for the estimated equation, and n is the number of observations.

11. With respect to such other factors, one could think of, inter alia, the degree to which the various options for choice are perceived as different in relevant ways.

To the extent that they are perceived as (near) identical, there is also little to be gained from turning out and casting a ballot. This specific argument has also been advanced at times to explain the low turnout at the European elections: in The Netherlands all parties seem to favor European integration, and they hardly attempt to emphasize whether or in what ways they differ in their proposed policies vis-a-vis Europe. In our opinion, this explanation for low turnout is not totally plausible for two reasons. First of all, in spite of the fact that differences with respect to 'Europe' between parties are restricted, they are not totally absent. Perceptions of party positions with respect to European integration differ sufficiently to allow voters a choice on the basis of this criterion, if that is what they would like to use in their choice. Second, attributing low turnout to restricted variation in party positions makes only sense if the elections are regarded as first-order elections (refer also to note 16). Such a premise seems unwarranted, as will be argued in one of the later sections of this article. If, however, the Euro-elections are regarded as second-order elections, the relevant aspects for discriminating between parties are those used in national elections, which could therefore not be involved to explain differences in turnout between national and European elections.

12. Refer to Van der Eijk (1984b, p. 304), Van der Eijk and Niemöller (1985, p. 4-7).

13. These results pose an interesting question for further research. Do differences between respondents in terms of their score on this latent dimension reflect differences in the democratic value which is attached to elections and elected bodies as such, or do they reflect differences in the attributed importance of (whatever) government, or do they reflect differences in cynicism, or what? The answer to this question is immaterial for the discussion in the text of this article, but worthwhile in its own right.

14. For clarity of presentation some of the variables used in figure 1 have been dichotomised. This does not affect the pattern of results displayed.

15. Refer, amongst others, to Van der Eijk and Niemöller, 1983, 1987, 1990.

16. First-order elections are those through which the most powerful and important political positions in a political system are allocated (to the extent that that is achieved by means of elections). In The Netherlands elections to the Second Chamber of the (national) parliament are without any doubt the only first-order elections. Second-order elections are all other elections in the same political system, in which more or less the same set of parties participate, and the results of which are consequently interpreted as indicative of parties' current electoral strength in the national political arena. For an elaborate and well-reasoned account of these concepts, refer to Reif and Schmitt (1980).

17. Very briefly, the basis for this assertion can be summarized in the following points:

- parties wage their European election campaign predominantly in terms of national political symbols, issues and conflicts, and avoid distinguishing themselves from one another in terms of EC policy;
- voters have very few specific cognitions and experiences with the EC, and to the

extent that these exist they are (partly as a consequence of the previous point) little politicized in terms of the options available for choice: roughly the same set of parties which are on the ballot in national elections.

18. Under specific circumstances the expectation of electoral losses for government parties in second-order elections can also be deduced from theories of electoral cycles, of which the period is defined by the spacing in time of first-order elections. See: Reif and Schmitt (1980) and Reif (1984). Such theories are, however, not of central importance to our present concerns. For an empirical discussion of the merits of theories of electoral cycles in The Netherlands, refer to Van der Eijk (1987).

19. For a brief review of political developments in The Netherlands between the national elections of 1986 and the European elections of 1989, and in anticipation of the early national elections of September 1989, refer to Van der Eijk (1989).

20. The disadvantage of this is, of course, that intended party choice may differ from actual choice in a real election in the same way as choice in a second-order election party choice may differ from first-order choice. By using intended national party choice we therefore risk underestimating second-order effects. On the other hand, the generally known fact that national elections were to take place in September may have diminished the hypothetical (i.e. 'nothing at stake') aspect of intended choice and therefore also of the risk of underestimating second-order effects. In the concluding paragraphs of this section we will circumvent the problem of underestimating second-order effects by focusing not on party choice directly, but on the degree of ideological voting instead.

The distribution of EE-vote in table 2 (and in table 4, later in the text) is slightly different from the actual election result, owing to the fact that for these analyses those (few) respondents had to be deleted who had cast a vote in the Euro-elections but who did not express a national party-preference. Appendix 3 lists the actual election results.

21. Refer, amongst others, to Van der Eijk, Anker and Oppenhuis (1987) and Irwin a.o. (1987).

22. Refer also to Van der Eijk and Niemöller (1983) for further discussions on this point (including the smallest-distance hypothesis and the interpretation of the resulting percentages), to their 1987 and 1990 publications for models in which left-right ideology is included in combination with other choice-determining factors, and to Van der Eijk, Niemöller and Tillie (1986) for analyses which show that secondary factors of a 'strategic' nature deflect to some degree from an optimal choice in left-right ideological terms (without, however, leading to choices which are incompatible with one's ideological preferences).

23. The data for 1981, 1982 and 1984 were earlier published by Van der Eijk and Niemöller (1985), and those for 1986 by Van der Eijk and Van Praag (1987).

24. One might object to these analyses that the number of respondents is quite different for national party choice than for European party choice, owing to the high incidence of non-voting in the latter case. We can control for this by comparing the extent to which the smallest-distance hypothesis holds in the following three ways:

- a. on the basis of European party choice (i.e. the same way as reported in table 2 in the text);
- b. on the basis of national vote intention, as measured in the European Voter Study. This almost doubles the number of cases for which the hypothesis can be tested, owing to the fact that more people report a national party preference than a vote cast in the Euro-elections;
- c. as b. but then only for those respondents who were included in the analysis sub a.

The results of a. and c. are almost identical: 66.9 / 17.2 / 15.9% (for a. in the order as presented in table 2 in the text) and 67.0 / 18.0 / 15.0% for situation c. This shows that at moments which are outside the context of a first-order election campaign, questions pertaining to national vote-intention yield responses which are similar to second-order party-choice, that is, less influenced by secondary and strategic considerations than party-choice in real first-order elections. The results for condition b. were 64.7 / 19.5 / 15.6%, which indicates that the differences in table 3 between national and European elections cannot be accounted for the difference in the number of voters in the two kinds of elections, but that they reflect real differences in the extent to which ideological voting occurs.

25. Refer to Van der Eijk and Niemöller (1987, 1990).

26. Refer to, amongst others, Schmidt (1981, 1983).

27. As non-voters were not asked what they would have voted had they turned out, an estimate of their European party choice had to be made before turnout effects can be assessed. In view of the very strong similarity between national and European party choice, this estimate is based on the national party preference of respondents. Furthermore, it was assumed that second-order effects would be identical for actual Eurovoters and Euro-non-voters. The magnitude and direction of these second-order effects is known from the data for voters (refer to the previous section in the text), and this can be applied to the observed distribution of national party preference of non-voters, yielding an estimate of the distribution of their Euro-party-preference. This procedure ensures that second-order effects and turnout effects do not become confounded in the analysis.

For the small group of respondents who were not willing or able to give a national party preference, this procedure offers no solace, consequently they were omitted from this analysis. The size of this group is 15.5% of the weighted sample.

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Literatuur

Cognitieve ideeën en internationale politiek

Naar aanleiding van:

- Little, Richard, en Steve Smith (red.), *Belief systems and international relations*, Basil Blackwell, Oxford 1988, ix + 270 p.
- Shlaim, Avi, *The United States and the Berlin blockade 1948-1949. A study in crisis decision making*, University of California Press, Berkeley 1983, xii + 463 p.
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I. Inleiding

De afgelopen 15 jaar hebben twee benaderingen opgang gemaakt binnen de leer van de internationale betrekkingen. Enerzijds groeit de tak van literatuur die beoogt de uitgangspunten van het realisme steviger theoretische grondslagen te geven en aan strakkere empirische toetsing te onderwerpen. Men grijpt daarbij terug op de centrale rol van nationale staten en de beslissende invloed van het veiligheidsdilemma dat de positie van deze actoren in het internationale politieke systeem kenmerkt. Ik noem deze tak voor het gemak 'neorealisme'.¹ Anderzijds zijn die werken in opmars die trachten op meer systematische wijze dan voorheen inzichten uit de cognitieve psychologie te koppelen aan verklaringen van internationale politiek. Hierbij staan individuele beleidsmakers en de manier waarop zij omgaan met uit hun omgeving op hen afkomende informatie centraal. Het zojuist verschenen, door Richard Little en Steve Smith geredigeerde boek, *Belief systems and international relations*, behoort tot de laatste categorie.² Het is verleidelijk om het neorealisme en de cognitieve benadering te bestempelen als twee invalshoeken die zich op twee verschillende analyse-niveaus bevinden en ze af te doen als onderdelen van respectievelijk een theorie van internationale betrekkingen en een theorie over de totstand-koming van buitenlands beleid. Ik zal deze verleiding weerstaan en probe-ren duidelijk te maken dat het onderhavige boek ons de mogelijkheid biedt een verbinding tot stand te brengen tussen de twee analyse-niveaus, iets waar de auteurs zelf trouwens geen oog voor hebben.

De probleemstelling van het boek luidt hoe de rol van cognitieve ideeën van politici, hun *belief system*, in processen van internationale politiek kan worden aangegeven (Little en Smith 1988: 1). De volgende drie thema's