2012

Multi-level elections in Western Europe: determinants of voting and the role of salience.

Johns, Jeremy

http://hdl.handle.net/10026.1/985

COPYRIGHT STATEMENT

This copy of the thesis has been supplied on condition that anyone who consults it is understood to recognise that its copyright rests with its author and that no quotation from the thesis and no information derived from it may be published without the author's consent.

Multi-level elections in Western Europe: determinants of voting and the role of salience.

By

Jeremy Johns

A thesis submitted to the University of Plymouth

in partial fulfilment for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

School of Management

Plymouth Business School

September 2011

Multi-level elections in Western Europe: determinants of voting and the role of salience

ABSTRACT

Previous comparative research into the determinants of voting using aggregate data has suffered from two limitations: it relied predominantly on country-level data; and it seldom ventured beyond a consideration of one or two types of elections. In order to overcome these shortcomings, we use an original dataset in which data are aggregated to sub-national units; and include examples of national, sub-national, and supra-national elections. A total of 66 elections between 1995 and 2008 are included, drawn from ten Western European countries: Belgium, England, Finland, France, Greece, Ireland, Italy, the Netherlands, Spain, and Sweden. For each country, the same sub-national geographical units are used for all election types, allowing the direct comparison of the effects of our selected institutional and socio-demographic variables. We find that the effects of the institutional determinants of voting are substantially and systematically reduced as the salience of the election type increases. For the socio-demographic variables, no such systematic relationship with salience is found. However, for some variables, the direction of effect is the opposite for European Parliament elections to that found for Municipal and Lower House elections, and supports the idea that EP elections differ sufficiently from sub-national, second-order elections to justify their 'third-order' classification. When we turn our attention to the effects of the socio-demographic variables in five individual countries, we find that the results are often consistent across different types of elections, and for all five countries. However, we also find that the effects of some variables have different effects in different countries. In these cases, we suggest explanations which relate turnout differences to wider political and social factors.

CONTENTS

List of Figures and Tables

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

AUTHOR'S DECLARATION

At no time during the registration for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy has the author been registered for any other University award without the prior agreement of the Graduate Committee.

Word count of main body of the thesis: 62, 282 (excluding all tables and figures).

Jeremy Johns

28 March 2012

Chapter 1 – Introduction

This thesis is about electoral turnout in Western European countries: how it varies between different types of elections, and how it varies from place to place. We investigate the role of institutional and socio-demographic factors in explaining the levels of turnout in national, supra-national, and sub-national elections. In addition, we examine whether these variables are consistent in their effects when we consider the differences in turnout across the geographical regions within individual countries. We use an original dataset which combines election turnout data, characteristics of the electoral system, and socio-demographic information about the electorate. In contrast to much previous comparative research which has used country-level data, we use sub-national regions as the unit of analysis. This means we can look at how turnout varies *within* countries as well as between them; in so doing we find that, although there are similarities, these are often outnumbered by the differences.

In this introductory chapter, we first consider the reasons for studying participation in elections, then provide a brief overview of how characteristics of elections and of electorates can influence turnout. Although a number of determinants of voting have been suggested by previous research, we suggest that there are reasons to expect that the relationships between these and the level of turnout may vary from one type of election to another, and from country to country. We then consider the relative merits of individual or aggregate data for our investigation, before concluding with an outline of the chapters which follow.

Why study elections?

'Elections are the lifeblood of democracy' (LeDuc, Niemi et al. 2002:1), and citizens are expected to play their part by voting in elections (Dalton and Klingemann 2007). That not

all citizens vote in any given election is nothing new, and improving turnout by changing aspects of the electoral rules was considered as long ago as the Roman Empire (Staveley 1972). Similarly, it has long been known that participation rates can vary with different electoral systems or the characteristics of individual voters (Gosnell 1930). More recently, perceptions that turnout is low or declining has led to renewed interest in those factors which are associated with different patterns of turnout. Unequal participation by various groups within the electorate can influence who gets elected and hence the policy choices which are ultimately made. Because elections are supposed to provide the means by which public preferences can be legitimately transformed into collective decisions, non-voting poses problems for representative democracy (Lijphart 1997; Saward 2006). There are important, normative reasons, then, for wishing to better understand the reasons for variations in turnout. Further, because various aspects of elections and electorates are easily quantifiable, the study of electoral participation is particularly attractive to those researchers who seek to uncover regularities and patterns, and thus to suggest reasons for observed behaviour (Taagepera 2009).

Determinants of voting?

Not surprisingly, then, turnout in elections has long been the subject of research. The resulting literature is extensive, as is the list of factors which have been suggested as influencing electoral behaviour. In this thesis, we will focus on three main areas: institutional factors; the relative importance of different elections (salience); and the socio-demographic characteristics of the electorate. Later, we will discuss these areas in more detail, along with a review of the literature relating to turnout in elections. Here, we will provide a brief overview in order to provide some context to the rest of this chapter.

Institutional Factors relate to the electoral system and associated rules, such as the degree of proportionality of the electoral system, or whether voting is compulsory. The effects of these factors can be usefully discussed with reference to rational choice theory[1] (RCT), which suggests that individuals take into account the costs and benefits involved when deciding on a particular course of action. Although voting is usually seen as requiring less effort than many other forms of political activity, voting is not entirely without 'cost' to the voter. At a minimum, some time has to be spent in casting a vote, and that time could be used doing something else. Various electoral arrangements can influence this decision. An obvious example is when voting is compulsory and non-voters are penalised in some way; the costs of non-voting increase and the result is that more people vote. Alternatively, arrangements may reduce the costs of voting, for example by holding the election at the weekend when people may have more free time. Rather than affecting the costs of voting, other institutional factors may enhance the perceived benefits: thus, a more proportional system may encourage people to vote because there is more chance that their vote will 'count' (see, for example: Blais and Carty 1990; Jackman and Miller 1995; Massicotte, Blais et al. 2004; Norris 2004).

The importance of the election can also be seen in terms of rational choice theory. Different *types* of elections are not viewed equally by the electorate (nor, it might be added, by political scientists), but vary in how consequential, competitive, visible, and meaningful they are: in short, some are more 'salient' than others (Karp and Brockington 2005; Louth and Hill 2005). Those that result in the selection of the national government or the president are known as 'first-order' elections, and attract a high number of voters - turnout of around eighty per cent is common in some countries. In other types of elections, such as those for the local council or for the European Parliament, there is

---

[1] Which is discussed, along with its shortcomings, in more detail in Chapter 2

'less at stake', and turnout is often markedly lower than in first-order elections. These less important elections have often been considered as 'second-order' elections (Reif and Schmitt 1980). That turnout should vary with the importance of the election makes sense from a rational choice perspective: the potential benefits are smaller in lower-order elections but the costs of voting, at least in terms of actually going to the polling station and physically casting a vote, are the same. In lower-order elections, then, more people weigh these factors and decide not to bother.

Socio-demographic factors. As we have seen, turnout is influenced by various characteristics of the electoral system and by the importance of the election. However, in any given election, with its associated set of electoral arrangements, participation is not even across various groups within the electorate. These different levels of turnout are often seen as reflecting different individual-level characteristics among the electorate. One such characteristic which has received a lot of attention is education: although voting is relatively straightforward compared to many other forms of political participation, it has been suggested that some minimum level of skills or resources is necessary. Education can contribute to those skills and resources, and therefore better equip citizens with the tools to overcome the opportunity costs of voting. Further, as the number of years spent at school or university increases, individuals are likely to become better informed about politics in general. Thus, it could be expected that better educated voters are more likely to vote. This has indeed been shown to be the case whether we examine turnout differences within, or between, countries[2] (for example, Wolfinger and Rosenstone 1980; Blais and Dobrzynska 1998).

---

[2] However, although overall levels of education have increased in the past few decades, turnout in many countries has fallen. Various authors have sought to account for declining turnout by noting that there are inter-generational differences in political interest, sense of duty, and propensity to vote, but there is a lack of convincing explanations of why this should be the case (Blais 2007).

As we have seen, there is empirical evidence to support the idea that various institutional arrangements, the importance of an election, and the socio-demographic characteristics of the electorate can all have an influence on turnout. However, as we will see later, few of the variables which have been suggested by previous research are entirely consistent in their effects. This is particularly so in the case of socio-demographic measures. Indeed, Franklin (2004:206) suggested that, because the relationships between individual-level characteristics and the act of voting vary because of variations in the character of elections, these relationships are conditioned by the level of turnout itself.

Why should this be so? In Franklin's view, voting is an acquired habit; the nature of any given election will have a greater influence on first-time voters than on older voters who have already become accustomed to voting (or to non-voting). If, for example, an election is particularly competitive, more of these first-time voters will be likely to vote: not only in that election, but also in subsequent ones. Because a number of other individual-level characteristics are age linked, the relationships between these and voting 'may well be different in different countries, depending on the historic pattern of turnout variation in those countries' (Franklin 2004:207).

This strikes us as an interesting suggestion, as it leads us to expect differences in patterns of turnout, rather than being surprised by them. Because we will be dealing with a relatively short time-frame, the effects of ageing cohorts of voters would be rather modest. For this reason, we will not concern ourselves with turnout changes from one election to the next. We will, though, examine the relationships between voting and the characteristics of the electorate under different levels of turnout. We will do this in two ways: by considering different types of elections, *and* by using geographical units *within* countries.

Why Different Types of Elections?

As outlined earlier in this chapter, it was the very low turnout in first European Parliament elections in 1979 that inspired the original distinction between first- and second-order elections. Since then, EP elections have attracted a fair amount of research. It has been shown that some factors, such as compulsory voting and weekend voting (van der Eijk, Franklin et al. 1996) can affect turnout in both national and EP elections. In fact, because there is so much less at stake and the threshold for non voting is consequently lower, those factors which can be seen as affecting the costs and benefits of voting may have a *larger* effect on turnout in EP elections than on national elections (Mattila 2003). On the other hand, various socio-demographic variables have been found to have much smaller effects on turnout in EP elections than previous literature would lead us to expect (Oppenhuis 1995:54). Indeed, it has been suggested that there are few differences between voters and non-voters in elections for the EP; and that '…there is a reduced likelihood to vote for *everyone*, *just as in other low salience elections*' (Oppenhuis 1995:169 - emphasis added).

Such a view would seem to support the first-order second-order distinction we touched on earlier in this chapter. But Reif himself was the first to point out that there was 'little, if anything at all' at stake in EP elections, which were 'in danger of constituting a category of their own…with barely more relevance than that of an official opinion poll' (Reif 1984:253). The remedy Reif prescribed to rectify this was to bestow more powers on the European Parliament (which at the time of Reif's study had very few). However, although the European Parliament has indeed acquired more power in the intervening decades, many voters (and indeed, many politicians, party-activists, and parts of the media) still behave as if there was even less at stake in EP elections than in second-order elections. The very low turnout for EP elections in some countries supports a further

distinction: elections for sub-national levels of government can be considered second-order, and the EP elections as third-order (Marsh 1998; Heath, McLean et al. 1999; Rallings and Thrasher 2005).

Although the 'less at stake' dimension is clearly important, Reif and Schmitt (1980) also noted that various other characteristics, including those relating to the specific political arena, may differ between first- and second-order elections. For instance, different parties may compete in EP and national elections, resulting in a different range of choices set before the electorate. Even when the same parties compete, their respective party allegiances or coalition arrangements, policy agendas, and campaigning efforts may well be different according to the type of election being contested; as may, indeed, the powers associated with those 'positions of control that *are* at stake' (Reif and Schmitt 1980:10 emphasis in original), the role of partisan allegiances, and aspects of sub-national identity and culture. It is worth emphasising this point: certain characteristics of the electoral context may vary, not just from country to country, but also from one type of election to another; including between those individual types of elections often grouped together within the second-order category. Indeed, Reif and Schmitt considered that, because EP elections transcend national borders, these elections are quite distinct from all other second-order elections which take place within sub-national arenas (Reif and Schmitt 1980:11).

Of course, Reif and Schmitt's intention was to compare EP and national elections – and as we have seen there are important differences. However, the fact that EP elections may also differ from other second-order elections lends support to the first-, second-, third-order distinction discussed previously. Further, it would mean that previous

comparative (cross country[3]) research, which has seldom ventured beyond first-order and EP elections when examining variations in turnout, has barely scratched the surface of second-order elections; which indeed, would only have been subject to partial testing (Lyons and Sinnott 2003a). Consequently, there are questions to which we do not yet have answers. For example, if the threshold of non-voting in municipal elections lies somewhere between that of first-order and third-order elections, we would expect that the effects of the institutional arrangements on municipal elections would be greater than on elections to the national legislature, but smaller than on EP elections. Would our expectations be confirmed in a cross-country analysis which included first-, second-, and third-order elections? Similar questions apply when we consider the role played by various socio-demographic characteristics. These may well have a lesser effect on turnout in EP elections than in first-order elections; but what about municipal elections: somewhere between the two, or do quite different sets of relationships appear?

Why different regions?

As well as considering national, supra-national, and sub-national elections, we will also examine the differences in turnout *within* individual countries. Even in elections with high turnout, there are often substantial variations when we consider the geographical regions of a country. For example, nationally, turnout in the 2006 Italian Lower House election was over 80 per cent; but across 98 geographical units within Italy, turnout actually varied by over 20 percentage points: from a low of 68.7 per cent to a high of 90.6 per cent. Further, sub-national variations in turnout can be quite stable. Figure 1.1 shows the regional turnout for recent Lower House and EP elections in Spain as can be seen, the pattern across the regions is very similar for both elections.

---

[3] In this thesis, 'comparative' refers to research which included more than one country.

Figure 1.1 : Turnout in Spanish Lower House and EP Elections – Regional Variations
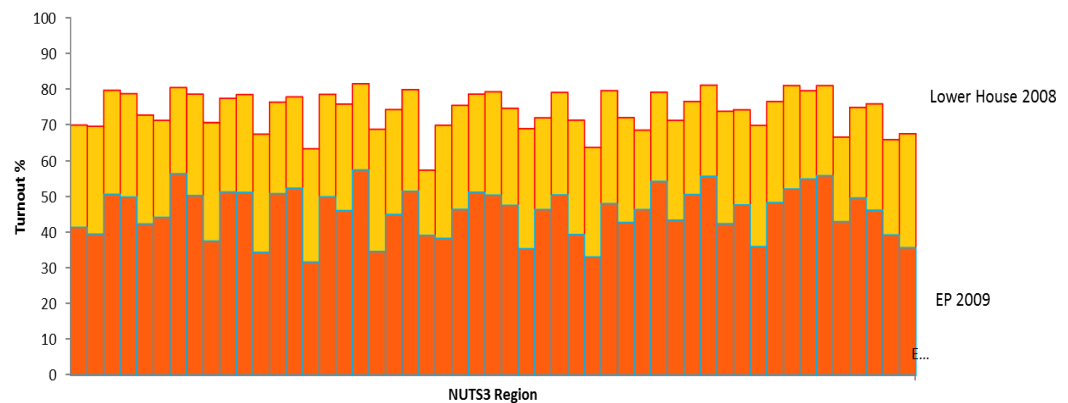
These regions differ on the basis of several of the socio-demographic measures which previous research using country-level data has suggested are associated with differing levels of turnout. So, we have a further series of questions: Do these characteristics have the same relationship with turnout *within* each country? Are the relationships similar across the different types of elections? Or, as Franklin might expect, do these relationships vary?

In this section, we have seen that there may be complex relationships between the socio-demographic characteristics of the electorate and the level of turnout. We have suggested that variations in turnout between different types of elections, and between different geographic regions within countries, provide opportunities to investigate the nature of these relationships. We have also set a number of questions for ourselves. In the following section, we consider the relative merits of using individual or aggregate data in attempting to answer these questions.

Individual or Aggregate?

In Chapter 2, we will consider previous research in more detail; for the moment, though, we limit ourselves to weighing the suitability of using individual or aggregate data to answer the questions we seek to investigate.

Research using individual-level survey data has led to important insights into the reasons that people vote and to the development of different explanations of political participation. Famously, Brady, Verba, and Schlozman suggested that people don't participate 'because they can't, because they don't want to, or because nobody asked' (1995:271). More specifically, survey data has identified numerous aspects of an individual's resources, their interest in politics, and the mobilising effects of their wider social environment as explaining whether they vote in an election.

Survey data, though, suffer from a number of limitations, one of which is particularly relevant to studies into turnout in elections. Charitably put, people are often not very good at remembering if they voted: typically, substantially more people report having voted than actually did so. In studies where validation has been possible, it has been found that over-reporting of over twenty per cent is common, and over-reporting of forty per cent is not unknown. Thus, a post-election survey may suggest that eighty per cent of respondents voted, whereas the actual turnout may only have been sixty per cent. In fact, the picture becomes even worse when we consider the other side of the coin – twenty per cent of people declare that they did not vote, whereas the actual figure is double this number. This would not be so much of a problem if this tendency were exhibited evenly across the electorate. However, different groups within society are more prone than others to over-report their participation in elections. Further, the level of over-reporting varies from country to country (Bernstein, Chadha et al. 2001; Milligan, Moretti et al. 2004; Karp and Brockington 2005). This then, presents challenges

when we seek to investigate those factors which often have only marginal effects on turnout in elections.

A second drawback is that surveys often vary considerably in their sampling frames, sampling methods, application methods, and questionnaire design. Because they have different aims, some surveys include questions that are of no interest in other countries. Even when similar questions are included, the responses are often categorised in different ways, which can lead to difficulties when trying to assemble a coherent data-set from different countries. Although considerable efforts have been made at standardisation in order to reduce these problems, substantial differences often remain (see, for example Schmitt and Loveless 2004; Curtice 2007; Howell and Jusko 2009).

A third disadvantage of survey data relates to our aim of investigating turnout differences, not just between countries, but from place to place within them. For example, in France, we wish to investigate turnout differences between the *départements,* of which Metropolitan France comprises ninety-six*.* In cross-national surveys, the number of respondents per country is typically between one and two thousand. On average, then, we would be faced with only ten to twenty respondents in each of the French *départements.* Further, although cross-national surveys provide a great deal of information for the individual respondent, they often provide only very coarse geographical information; and thus do not provide the detail we need. For example, the European Social Survey and the Asia Europe Survey assigned respondents to one of the nine top-level administrative regions in France, not to their individual *départements.* Finally, our aim is to investigate turnout across different types of elections. Most surveys are interested in only one or sometimes two types of elections,

and would be of little use to us in investigating turnout in municipal or regional elections, for example.[4]

Because of the aforementioned limitations of survey data, we decided to use aggregate data. Aggregate data have the advantage of dealing with what people actually did, rather than what they say they did. Further, at the aggregate level, a number of individual idiosyncrasies tend to cancel each other out[5] (Geys 2006a, citing Matsusaka and Palda).

As with survey data, aggregate data has often been used to analyse turnout within a single country. Thus, in a recent meta-analysis of over eighty studies which used aggregate data, about three-quarters of these focused only on a single country; and often, indeed, on a single election (Geys 2006a). Several investigations, though, have used aggregate data to systematically compare turnout across countries and to identify the reasons for the differences. Partly as a consequence of the growing number of democracies, the breadth of these analyses had increased; from thirty countries for Powell in 1980, to 91 countries for Blais and Dobrzynska (1998) less than twenty years later. Such analyses have generated an ever-increasing list of institutional, demographic, and political factors which have been suggested as affecting turnout in elections.

However, there is often a lack of consistency when comparing results of one study to another: as Geys noted, numerous explanatory variables have been proposed, but none of these is 'omnipresent in the literature' (Geys 2006a:641). For almost every suggested variable, at least one piece of contradictory research can be found. In part, this is because comparative studies have differed, not only in the countries they have included,

---

[4] ASES is the only survey we are aware of that asked about voting behaviour in three types of elections: national legislature or presidential, EP, and local. However, a comparison of reported and actual turnout suggested that over-reporting was broadly in line with that noted above. Further, as mentioned, the geographical detail was not fine enough for our needs.
[5] Of course, we could combine individual and aggregate data; however, this would not overcome the limitations of existing survey data; notably the low numbers of respondents, our concerns over their powers of recall, and the lack of detail regarding their geographical location.

but also on the variables they have studied, and the questions which they sought to answer.

Further, it would be easy to conclude that, when more than one country is included in the analysis, 'aggregate' is synonymous with 'country-level'; of the score or so comparative (cross country) studies which Geys considered, all but two used a single, national turnout figure for each of the elections included in the analysis. Such an approach is certainly of use in identifying those factors which are associated with different levels of turnout *between* countries, but it is impossible to use *these same data* to explore the variations in turnout *within* countries. Indeed, beyond creating 'dummy' variables for countries which in some way do not 'fit' the more general pattern, it is difficult to go much further with country-level data.

That most comparative research has been limited to investigating turnout variation at the country-level, and have usually considered only one or two types of election, is surely not due to a lack of curiosity – plenty of single-country studies have examined the reasons for turnout variations across constituencies or other geographical units within countries, or across different types of elections. Rather, the necessary data were not previously available in order to conduct a meaningful, cross-country analysis. For example, even when turnout data for different types of elections were available for the component geographical units within countries, these units often differed in complex ways from one election type to another, making aggregation to a common level impossible. Census data for sub-national regions, when it could be obtained, varied from country to country, not only in terms of the topics they included, but also in the specific questions they asked and the measures they used. When trying to combine census data with the corresponding turnout data, these difficulties would, of course, be compounded.

Given these constraints, it is perhaps not surprising that few comparative studies into the factors which influence turnout have used aggregate data *below* the country level. One notable exception was the investigation by Hoffmann-Martinot, Rallings and Thrasher (1996), which used turnout and census data aggregated to the level of the local government unit. Although this study uncovered some interesting similarities and differences, it was limited to only two countries and one type of election. A more comprehensive attempt to examine differences in electoral turnout across several countries *and* across multiple types of elections was made under the auspices of the '*Democratic Participation and Political Communication in Systems of Multi-level Governance'* (DEMPART nd). This project, carried out under the umbrella of the European Community's Fifth Framework Programme for Research and Technological Development, sought to identify the nature and sources of political participation and abstention in order to make recommendations aimed at increasing electoral turnout, and hence to enhance democratic legitimacy. The authors noted that, although participation varies across the different levels of governance, previous research in this area had usually focused only on national level elections, or had occasionally ventured one step further to include *either* sub-national *or* supranational elections (Lyons and Sinnott 2003a). In contrast, this project set out to investigate turnout in elections at all levels of government in the then 15 member-states of the European Union. Because some of the original ambitions were ultimately not achieved, it is worth looking at this project in more detail.

Despite the intention to include 15 countries in the analysis, it appears that a lack of suitable data constrained this original aim; and the resulting 'working papers' which reported on multi-level turnout only covered six of the EU member-states (Denmark, France, Germany, GB, Ireland, and Spain). Even in this restricted group of countries, the aims to include all types of elections were not always met. For example, for France *none*

of the three types of sub-national elections (municipal, departmental, or regional) were included (Abrial, Cautres et al. 2003). For Germany, national, EP, and *Land* parliament elections were included, but municipal elections were not (Rattinger and Wagner 2003). In Ireland, municipal elections were only considered by way of country-level turnout data (Lyons and Sinnott 2003b).

Reference to the separate country studies provides some evidence that there are differences in how various factors are associated with turnout, depending on the type of election being considered. For example, in England, variables such as age and education appeared to be useful in differentiating between voters and non-voters in national elections; but were less useful in the case of local elections, and not at all for EP elections (Rallings and Thrasher 2003). Further, some variables (or groups of variables) were sometimes found to have different effects from one election type to another. Thus, for France, one group of variables (derived by factor analysis) which the authors christened 'social constraint' was shown to have an opposite direction effect in EP elections to that found in national elections (Abrial, Cautres et al. 2003). Similarly, in Denmark, higher levels of education were found to be associated with higher turnout in EP elections, but with lower turnout in municipal elections (Svensson and Thomsen 2003).

However, because different units of analysis were sometimes used for different elections, or even within a single type of election (for example, Abrial, Cautres et al. 2003; Rallings and Thrasher 2003), the interpretation of results for individual countries is not always straightforward. Further, different sets of explanatory variables were used in different countries, and occasionally even for different types of elections within a single country. When there were few such variables, their individual effects were examined by means of bi-variate and/or multi-variate methods. However, for Denmark, France, and

Germany, the lists of independent variables were more extensive; and for these countries, the respective authors opted for factor analysis (supplemented by cluster analysis in the case of Germany), with the resulting factors then being subjected to regression analysis (Abrial, Cautres et al. 2003; Rattinger and Wagner 2003; Svensson and Thomsen 2003). It is obviously difficult to draw conclusions about the influence of individual variables once they have been combined with one or several other variables by means of factor analysis; even more so to compare the results from one country to another.

The combination of data availability problems and a lack of methodological consistency probably explains, at least in part, the absence of any comprehensive, over-arching conclusions to this project. Further, the stated intention of going beyond national elections to include *both* supranational *and* sub-national elections was, at best, only partially fulfilled. Indeed, the latter phase of the project seemed to focus *only* on EP elections; and even this lacked any attempt to draw together the findings from the different strands of research carried out in the individual countries. In summary, then, despite the authors' initial criticisms of previous work as often lacking in coherent and consistent research design (Lyons and Sinnott 2003a:10), their own project seemed constrained by these very same limitations.

There are three valuable lessons to be learned from the eventual shortcomings of the DEMPART project. Firstly, it would be easier to draw meaningful conclusions regarding the factors which are associated with patterns of turnout if the *same units of analysis* were used for all types of election within each country. In this way, we would be more confident that any differences in the associations between turnout and the explanatory variables which we discovered were real, rather than being artefacts of using different units of analysis. Secondly, conclusions about the role of the explanatory variables would

16

be more reliable were we to maintain the *same set of variables* across all election types *and* for all of the individual countries under consideration. Thirdly, interpretation of the results would be more straightforward were we to adopt a *consistent methodological approach* for all types of elections and all countries.

These aims are, of course, contingent on having suitable data to work with. Two recent developments mean that, for the first time, it has become possible to construct a dataset in which we *can* maintain the same sub-national geographical basis for turnout in all types of elections within each country, *and* to characterise the corresponding electorate using the same socio-demographic characteristics, measured in the same way, across multiple countries. Firstly, *EUROSTAT* (the statistical service of the European Union) has compiled, and made easily available, census data for the individual geographical units – known as NUTS units – within member countries. Secondly, a number of European countries have shown increasing enthusiasm to make available election results for different types of elections in considerable geographic detail. Further, the geographical basis for these results often corresponds to, or can be aggregated to, the NUTS units used in the Eurostat database of socio-demographic statistics.

We have drawn on these resources in order to construct an original dataset (described in more detail in Chapter 4) which combines characteristics of the electoral systems, election turnout, and selected socio-demographic variables. We have assembled information for a total of 66 elections in ten western European countries: Belgium, Finland, France, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Netherlands, Spain, Sweden, and England. For all but one country, we have been able to include instances of first-, second-, and third-order elections. For each country, turnout for all types of elections is aggregated to the same geographical units. There are over four hundred of these component units in total, and for each of them we have the same core set of socio-demographic variables.

Thus, we will be able to investigate whether the effects of our institutional and socio-demographic variables are similar across different types of elections; or, if they differ, whether they do so in a systematic way with varying levels of turnout. Further, and in contrast to most previous comparative studies, there are sufficient data to allow us to examine variations in turnout across regions and elections within five of the countries.

This is especially important when considering the findings of previous comparative research which used country-level data. Such research has suggested a number of factors which are associated with variations in turnout *between* countries; these factors may well exhibit similar associations with turnout variations *within* countries, but it would be cavalier to infer that this is so. Indeed, it is known that using different geographical scales can sometimes lead to quite different research findings: a phenomenon which has come to be known as the Modifiable Areal Unit Problem (MAUP). This, and the related fallacies of cross-level inference, will be discussed in the following section.

Modifiable Areal Unit Problem (MAUP)

The MAUP states that 'the results of cartography, statistical analysis, and any spatial modelling are dependent on the definition of the studied units' (ESPON 2006:xix). In effect, the choice of the spatial unit can act as a filter which can lead to changes in the statistical results, and thus places limitations on the generalisability of results from one scale of observation to other scales. A pragmatic approach is to use the data from the lowest possible level (ESPON 2006:xxxiii); although this does not *necessarily* lead to a minimisation of the MAUP. In general, though, the lower the level of aggregation to which the data relate, the better: both from the point of view of the number of cases available for analysis and from the point of view of getting at the substantial variation that can occur within higher level units (Kavanagh, Mills et al. 2004). The Eurostat socio-

demographic data used herein are indeed at the lowest possible level commensurate with the available electoral turnout data.

However, there are also two closely related statistical traps of which we must be aware when considering different levels of measurement (Achen and Shively 1995; Subramanian, Jones et al. 2009). Both relate to the incorrect cross-level inferences which may be drawn when the correlations between two variables are not the same at different levels of measurement: firstly, the ecological fallacy may be committed when we incorrectly ascribe otherwise unobservable lower level relationships from higher level data (Robinson 1950, 2009). The second is the atomistic fallacy, where we commit the reverse error, of incorrectly inferring higher level relationships from lower level data (Hox 2010)[6]. A simple example will serve to demonstrate both of these fallacies.

Figure 1.2 is a scatter plot of (fictional) data showing the relationship between variables X and Y for three countries, as shown by lines 1, 2, and 3. In each country, there is a clear, *negative* relationship between the variables: in all three countries, as X increases, Y decreases. However, when we consider all data pooled together (or we consider only the mean values of X and Y for each country, as would be the case with country-level, aggregate data), a second relationship is apparent, as represented by line 4. Here, the relationship between the variables X and Y is *positive*; that is, the reverse to that observed for each of the countries when examined individually.

---

[6] It is not uncommon for those keen on multi-level analysis to cite these two fallacies as the very reason to use multi-level regression approaches when investigating nested or hierarchical data. However, multi-level regression analysis makes sense only when there are sufficient upper level units, typically at least 100 (Hox 2010:48). Here we have a maximum of ten (countries).

Figure 1.2 : Stylised scatter-plot - Cross-level inference
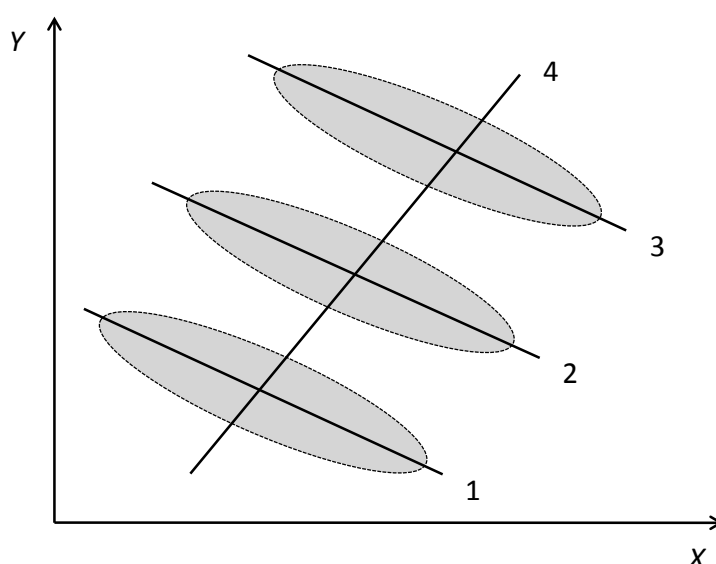
Clearly, were we to have relied only on country-level data, we would have fallen foul of the ecological fallacy had we inferred that a positive relationship also existed within each of the individual countries. To guard against making such an error, our analyses in Chapter 5 will begin with a comparison of analyses based on both country-level and regional-level data.

The structure of this thesis

In this introductory chapter, we have laid out our broad aim to contribute to the understanding of electoral participation by systematically investigating the levels of turnout in different types of elections *and* within different countries. We have briefly noted that electoral participation can vary according to the electoral system and rules, and the importance of the election, and the characteristics of the electorate. In Chapter 2 we will review in more detail the relevant literature concerning turnout in elections. We begin with rational choice theory and the 'calculus of voting', and show that empirical evidence supports the idea that people are influenced by the various costs and benefits associated with different institutional arrangements. However, although the

institutional determinants of voting have measurable effects on turnout, they do not tell the whole story. We then examine a number of socio-demographic factors, and discuss how turnout varies with the relative importance of different types of elections.

In Chapter 3, we provide a brief, descriptive overview for each country included in our dataset, and place their contemporary layers of elected government in historical context. The role and status of sub-national government varies from country to country, and we attempt to quantify these differences in terms of population, number of employees, and tax raising powers. Similarities and differences are then discussed in light of the various typologies which have been suggested by previous authors. These characteristics are necessarily measured at the country-level; but we also use Keating's (1998) measure of 'regionalism' to look at variations within countries. We then provide details of the 'rules of the game' which apply to the national, sub-national, and supranational elections which are held in each country.

Chapter 4 will discuss the data and methods which will be used in our analyses. We begin by showing that some of the variables used in previous comparative research, which included both developed and less-developed countries, are of limited use when examining turnout variations in Western European countries. We then describe the construction of the dataset, and develop hypotheses for each of the variables which will be examined. Descriptive statistics for turnout in elections and for the socio-demographic variables are provided, before concluding the chapter with a discussion of the methods which will be used to test our hypotheses.

In Chapter 5, we present our first series of regression models, for which data from all countries are included. We begin by examining the institutional variables, and compare the results we obtain when using country-level and regional-level data. We then add our

core set of socio-demographic variables and discuss the effects of these variables in light of previous research. Because they are often considered as being markedly different in character to other elections, we then exclude EP elections from the model, and examine the differences in the resulting regression analysis. This is followed by regression models which examine EP, municipal and lower house elections individually.

In Chapter 6, we look at how well our model predicts turnout for individual countries, and find that there are substantial country-to-country differences. We seek to improve the model by testing additional variables: beginning with the geographical coverage of political parties, and the membership of a trade union or political party. Next, we investigate the effects of public employment, tax raising powers, and mayoral strength. We then shift to the European level to see whether those regions with representative offices in Brussels have a higher turnout in European elections. Finally, we consider how turnout varies across different election types according to a measure of 'regionality'.

The first section of Chapter 7 takes advantage of our regional-level data to take a closer look at the associations between turnout and our socio-demographic variables across different types of elections *within* five countries. These results are discussed in light of our findings in Chapter 5. We find that although some of the variables have similar effects across all five countries, the other variables are far less consistent. Further, we will see that, more often than not, two of our variables have the opposite effect *within* countries to that found when we considered all countries together. In the second section, we examine different aspects some of the variables, and find that these also vary in their effects from country to country.

In Chapter 8 we summarise our findings from previous chapters, and pull together what we have learnt about variations in turnout across different elections, and from country to country. We examine the implications of our findings in light of past research; discuss

the limitations of our own approach, and suggest avenues for further investigations into

the factors which influence turnout in elections.

Chapter 2 : Voting and its Determinants

Introduction - Turnout in elections

Aside from obeying the law, citizens in liberal democracies are expected to play their part by voting in elections (Saward 2006). That not all citizens vote in any given election is nothing new; indeed, the manipulation of participation rates, either by means of compulsion or by postal voting, was considered as long ago as the Roman Empire (Staveley 1972). Similarly, it has long been known that participation rates can vary not only with different electoral systems, but also with the characteristics of different members of the population (Gosnell 1930).

As early as the 19th century, political scientists were making predictions of turnout at elections based on the prosperity and education of the prospective voters. They reasoned that the well-off and the well-educated would conclude that the effects of their vote would be drowned out by those of the newly enfranchised masses, and thus not bother to vote (Lijphart 1997 citing Gosnell and Tingsten). Although this prediction was subsequently shown to be wrong, the idea that participation rates would vary according to the different characteristics of the population clearly has a long history. However, prior to the development of Rational Choice Theory (RCT), the act of voting itself (rather than the choices expressed by that vote) was generally assumed to be 'normal' with non-voting seen as aberrant, and often linked in some way to ideas of social alienation (Blais 2000).

Rational choice theory turned this proposition on its head, and suggested that the act of voting was irrational. This presented a number of challenges, not least to the workings of democracy itself: although it is possible to imagine a system of government where

representatives (along with all other roles in society) are selected by chance (Borges 2000), contemporary systems of representative democracy rely on the active participation of individual voters.

Fortunately for democracy, many people do vote. This apparent paradox has led some to dismiss rational choice theory in its entirety. Others, though, consider that rational choice theory can usefully be retained, but that it needs to be supplemented with other approaches which, in one way or another, take account of the fact that humans are social animals who interact with others and are influenced by them. Subsequent theories of voting, such as the party identification model or the sociological model, developed these ideas, and proposed that electors identify with a political party, or vote in a manner that reflects the social group to which they belong (Heywood 2002:242). Many such theories, though, seek to explain 'how people vote' – that is, what choices they make between the candidates and policies on offer.

This chapter will firstly consider the more fundamental question of why people bother to vote at all. We begin with rational choice theory, and more specifically with the 'paradox of (non) voting', and we show that, despite the criticisms and controversy that rational choice theory has attracted, the decision of whether or not to vote does seem to be influenced by the costs and benefits involved. However, rational choice theory appears to offer but a partial explanation, not least because, whilst the formal rules do appear to affect people's behaviour, individual voters are also exposed to a range of social, political and economic environments which impinge on their decisions. Indeed, although the institutional determinants of voting have substantial effects on turnout, they are generally unable to account for the patterns of turnout which are seen within countries. To explain these variations, previous authors have identified a number of socio-demographic determinants of turnout; however, it will be shown that the findings of

previous research are often less consistent than is the case for the institutional determinants of voting.

We then turn to the relative importance, or 'salience', of different types of elections. Previous comparative research has generally been limited to examining the turnout differences in elections for the national legislature and/or for the European Parliament; and, in general, more people bother to vote in the former than in the latter. However, the differences in turnout vary from country to country in ways not fully explained by the local electoral arrangements; indeed, voters do appear to respond differently to these arrangements depending on the importance of the election.

Finally, we consider the limitations of previous research, be it based on survey or aggregate data.

Why people vote

Half a century ago, based on the work of Kenneth Arrow, Anthony Downs developed the idea of the rationally self-interested voter who makes voting choices on the basis of individual cost-benefit calculations (Arrow 1951; Downs 1957). In deciding whether to vote or to abstain, the voter calculates the difference in expected benefits between two candidates (B), the probability that their vote will be decisive (P) and the costs (C) of voting, according to:

$$R = PB - C > 0$$

And hence will decide to vote if the net expected utility of voting (R) is positive.

It would seem that the idea of a cost-benefit calculation does have some grounding in actual voter behaviour: various attempts at 'electoral engineering' (Norris 2004) are predicated on reducing the costs of voting, or of increasing the costs of non-voting. The

simplest example is that of 'compulsory' voting, where failure to participate in any given election results in sanctions against the abstainer. Although such sanctions can take various forms, and are often imperfectly implemented, perhaps the most obvious is that of a fine. The relatively small monetary amounts, for example, a 50 euro fine for a first offence in Belgium (The Electoral Commission 2006), nevertheless appear to result in higher levels of turnout. Alternatively, a number of proposals have focused on reducing the costs of voting, for example by introducing weekend (rather than weekday) voting, or by providing the opportunity to vote by means of a postal ballot prior to the election date, rather than having to present at the polling station on a particular day (Rallings and Thrasher 2007; Ministry of Justice 2008). However, because individual members of the electorate take into account the likelihood that their vote will actually make a difference to the outcome, abstention can be seen as rational – and conversely, the act of voting can be seen as irrational.

Clearly, this is a paradoxical finding: people do vote (Green and Shapiro 1994:50), an observation which has prompted some to question the usefulness of RCT in explaining voter behaviour. Downs himself considered his *homo politicus* as something of an abstraction, and postulated that voters may turn out to vote in order to assure the survival of the democratic system (a 'consumption' benefit). Nevertheless, the idea that voting is never without cost to the voter has prompted much research into participation rates.

In order to address the paradox of (non) voting, Riker and Ordeshook (1968) developed Downs' idea of consumption benefits into the concept of 'citizen duty', a somewhat nebulous term which nevertheless encompassed a number of purported 'satisfactions' which, critically, were neither dependent on the outcome of the election, nor on the probability that the individual voter would cast the deciding vote. Such satisfactions

27

include those of taking part in and supporting the democratic tradition, affirming a partisan allegiance, and of the act of voting itself (the latter thus being re-classified as a benefit, rather than as a cost of voting). The introduction of this citizen duty term, though, is not without its own difficulties: indeed, the calculus of voting is thus reduced to the situation where people vote simply when D (duty) is greater than C (costs of voting), leading Hasen (1996:2135) to consider the modified calculus of voting to be 'virtually devoid of explanatory power'.

More generally, RCT has been criticised as lacking a plausible account of how people's preferences are actually formed, of how they make decisions, and how these decisions are put into action (Green and Shapiro 1994; Tilly and Goodin 2006). In response, a 'myriad of theoretical models' (Geys 2006b:27) has been developed, each of which attempts to address the shortcomings of the pure RCT approach[7]. Others are 'slightly more sanguine' (Blais 2000:141), and consider the calculus of voting to offer a useful, though partial, contribution to our understanding of the voting decision; a decision which is seen as a tough test for RCT because it has minimal consequences for the voter.

Where others had sought to augment the calculus of voting by adding various terms to overcome the inherent paradox, Blais (2000) took a rather different approach and considered that the roots of the problem lay with P (the probability that one's vote would be decisive to the outcome), and the nature of the interaction of this term with B (the benefits of voting). Based on his own work and a review of previous studies, Blais considered that both strategic voting and the effects of the closeness of elections both

---

[7] Such models include 'mini-max regret', information based models, and game-theoretic approaches, each with their own sometimes questionable assumptions. More promising are those based on the 'ethical voter' who takes into account the well-being of others, or more general group-based models (Franklin 2004; Geys 2006b). However, it appears that, in considering man as a social model who interacts with, and is influenced by, others, such models also rely to a certain extent on individual values and norms being influenced by other group or societal members; this process of 'socialisation' is discussed below.

provide evidence that people have at least a vague notion that their vote could make a difference to the outcome of an election.

When voters vote strategically, they do so because they have judged that their first choice candidate has no chance of winning; and rather than wasting their vote, they instead vote for their second choice candidate if they have a better chance of winning. Because strategic voters do take some account of the probability that one or another candidate could win an election, Blais suggests that probability should also be included in the calculation of whether to vote at all. Further, Blais considered that various studies have shown turnout to be higher when the outcome of an election is finely balanced; and suggests that although people may not be aware of the actual probability of casting the decisive vote, they do have a 'vague feeling that each vote counts more' in a close election (Blais 2000:78).

However, because most people vote in a national election even if it is a foregone conclusion, Blais considers the P term to matter only marginally: indeed, he considers that people do not, as is suggested by the calculus of voting, multiply the P and B terms; rather, 'they simply add them' (Blais 2000:138). Blais found that, among those with a weak sense of citizen duty, the benefits and costs of voting, and probability of casting the decisive vote, each has a smaller effect than RCT would suggest. Further, people with a strong sense of duty, about half of the electorate in Blais' study, simply do not make the cost-benefit calculation suggested by RCT[8] (Blais 2000).

---

[8] We should also note here that views differ as to the usefulness of rational choice theory when we consider elections other than those for national government. Blais is happy to accept that rational choice theory will do less well in less important elections when trying to explain who votes (Blais 2000), yet others suggest that, in fact, voters in lower-order elections make similar cost-benefit calculations, but arrive at a different result because the election is less important (Rallings and Thrasher 2007). Participation in different types of elections is considered later in this chapter.

Clearly, the sense of duty varies across different sections of the electorate; which raises the question of where an individual's sense of duty comes from. For Riker and Ordeshook, at least some of the satisfactions which a person may derive from the act of voting rely on ideas of political socialisation (1968:28). This process, whereby individual attitudes and beliefs regarding the political system are acquired and developed, can be 'particularly important in influencing the degree of political participation that is expected of groups and individuals' (Ball and Peters 2000:83). As Assmann notes, people 'do not only live in the first person singular, but also in various formats of the first person plural' (2006:223), and their values are subject to various formal and informal influences. In childhood and adolescence, these influences include the family and school, and later in life, workplace and voluntary associations. In a similar vein, Franklin considered Riker and Ordeshook's version of the calculus of voting to be incomplete, because voters are not 'atomized'; but rather should be seen as members of social networks and of potentially winning coalitions (Franklin 2004:202).

Although various aspects of socialisation theory are disputed[9], it is clear from empirical evidence that different groups within a society do exhibit different degrees of participation, including, but not limited to, voting in elections (for example, Lijphart 1997; Burns, Schlozman et al. 2001; Franklin 2004). These groups can be defined in various ways, usually by means of demographic and/or socio-economic criteria. The last twenty years, in particular, have seen a growing number of studies which systematically compared electoral behaviour between countries. Some comparative studies have not considered turnout directly, and instead examined the political consequences of electoral systems – such as the proportionality of seats compared to votes, the type of

---

[9] It has also been suggested that invoking socialisation theory in order to account for differences in electoral participation simply dodges the issue; if behaviour is influenced by parental habits, the question then arises as to why the parents behave in the way that they do (see Franklin 2004:22).

party system (Rae 1967; Lijphart 1994), or the congruence between voters' preferences and policy outcomes (Powell 2000). However, the perception that turnout is declining in a number of western democracies, and that low turnout can exacerbate the problems of unequal participation (Lijphart 1997; Curtice and Seyd 2004), has led to increased focus on electoral turnout itself, and the factors which can influence it. The following two sections examine selected institutional and socio-demographic determinants of turnout in elections[10].

Institutional determinants of turnout

A number of institutional determinants of voting have been suggested in previous research. Here, we focus on compulsory voting, the use of proportional representation, weekend voting, and the holding of more than one type of election simultaneously. According to rational choice institutionalism, these various arrangements directly affect the behaviour of citizens, including their decisions as to whether or not to vote in an election (Norris 2004). Hence, each of these factors will be discussed in relation to the costs and benefits of voting, as discussed in the previous section.

Compulsory Voting

In the first study to directly investigate how and why turnout varies between countries, Powell (1980) examined average turnout in the legislative and presidential elections in thirty countries between 1968 and 1978. Compulsory voting was associated with around ten per cent higher turnout (with changes of a similar magnitude being reported in countries where compulsory voting was introduced or withdrawn). Several subsequent analyses, which also investigated turnout in legislative or presidential elections, have

---

[10] A further group of factors concern aspects of party competition. Though these have been shown to be important in explaining the change in turnout between elections, they will not be considered further here (in particular, see Franklin 2004)

largely confirmed the effects of compulsory voting first reported by Powell. Although differing in the time periods and countries considered, and the other variables included, compulsory voting is consistently associated with higher turnout, usually in the range of 10 to 20 percentage points compared to elections where voting is not compulsory (for example, Crewe 1981; Jackman 1987; Colomer 1991; Jackman and Miller 1995; Blais and Dobrzynska 1998; Blais 2000; Perez-Linan 2001; Siaroff and Merer 2002). The explanation for this is not particularly contentious: the threat of sanctions for not voting has a direct impact on the potential voter's cost-benefit calculation[11].

Weekend Voting

Rather than increasing the costs of abstention, electoral arrangements may serve to reduce the costs of voting. Weekend voting has been shown to influence turnout, with the usual explanation being that people have more spare time at the weekend than during the week when they may be working or otherwise busy, and hence are more likely to vote as the (opportunity) costs are lower at the weekend. Although the effects are generally less marked than for compulsory voting, weekend voting has been associated with turnout up to ten per cent higher than in countries where elections are held on weekdays (Oppenhuis 1995; Mattila 2003).

However, it should be noted that some studies have failed to find an effect for weekend voting. For example, in a study which included national election results from 37 countries, Franklin (1996) found weekend voting to be associated with around five per cent higher turnout, but he later cast doubt on the reliability of this finding (Franklin 2004). Siaroff and Merer (2002) conducted separate bivariate analyses for weekend and for Sunday voting in national legislative elections, and found that weekend voting was

---

[11] Though it has also been noted that the nature of the sanction, and degree of enforcement, are important aspects of compulsory voting (Siaroff and Merer 2002).

not significant. Contradicting much previous research, Sunday voting was actually found to have a negative effect [12]. Further, Blondel *et al.* (1997), although finding that fewer people cite 'lack of time' as the reason for not voting in EP elections held on a Sunday, also found that, for some people, weekend voting can actually decrease the chances of voting.

Proportional Representation (PR)

The type of electoral system employed has also been linked to differences in turnout. The goal of any electoral system is to convert the votes into seats, but some methods are more proportional than others. PR systems, because they tend to provide more choice and lead to fewer wasted votes, are usually associated with higher levels of turnout (Franklin 1996; Blais and Dobrzynska 1998; Brockington 2004). There are several measures of disproportionality, which, although they differ in the specific computations used, and in how they treat minor parties, seek to measure the difference between the proportion of votes cast for each party and the proportion of seats which each party wins (for a useful survey, see Kestelman 1999). It should be noted that although systems such as First Past The Post (FPTP) *tend* to produce more disproportional results than the various PR systems, this is not necessarily entailed by the system itself, but depends also on the territorial distribution of electoral support for the various political parties (Rallings and Thrasher 1997), and the potentially complex interaction between electoral system and district magnitude (Benoit 2001).

That said, the important distinction remains between PR and non-PR systems: although variations on the PR theme do lead to different levels of proportionality, these differences are minor when compared to the high levels of disproportionality which tend to be exhibited by majoritarian or plurality systems (Blais and Carty 1990). Not

---

[12] They did not, however, include either measure in their subsequent multivariate analyses

surprisingly, proportional representation has been investigated in several studies, indeed, Blais and Carty (1990) specifically set out to investigate the effects of PR on turnout. In an analysis which included a range of (country-level) control variables for other aspects of electoral systems, and which examined lower house elections since 1847 in 20 industrialised countries across three continents, the authors found PR to be associated with up to eight per cent higher turnout when compared to plurality systems. Several other studies have revealed similar effects of PR systems (or the closely related negative effect of disproportionality) on turnout (for example: Jackman 1987; Blondel, Sinnott et al. 1997; Blais and Dobrzynska 1998; Perez-Linan 2001; Kostadinova 2003).

Simultaneous Elections

Although many previous comparative studies of turnout have focused on a single type of election (such as for national legislatures, or for the European Parliament) some authors have noted the effects of other elections within a given country. It has been noted that the turnout in elections for other than the national legislature can vary according to where in the national election cycle they are held. This can be for reasons of electoral fatigue, or because electors may take the opportunity presented in a less important election to send a message to the national government. However, the greatest effect is when two (or more) elections are held simultaneously.

When two (or more) elections are held at the same time, the costs of voting (at least in terms of turning up at the polling booth) are no different than voting in one election. Thus, we would expect turnout to be higher where elections are held simultaneously. Indeed, this expectation has been borne out in a number of studies: for example, Franklin (1996) noted that turnout in EP elections is some 18 percentage points higher

when an EP election coincides with a country's elections for the national legislature[13].

Substantial effects have also been reported by Matilla (2003) and Blondel *et al.* (1997).

The institutional arrangements discussed in this section clearly have substantial effects on turnout; but they do not tell the whole story: within any given election, where the institutional environment generally remains constant for all voters in a country, some people vote and some do not. Clearly, the institutional factors which are generally constant at a country level (at least in any given election) cannot account for the substantial variations in turnout that occur within countries (Blondel, Sinnott et al. 1997). However, the choices which people make as to whether to vote or to abstain are not random; there are patterns of voting and non-voting within particular sections of society (Nevitte, Blais et al. 2009:86). The following section focuses on several socio-demographic factors which previous research has identified as affecting turnout in elections.

Socio-demographic determinants of turnout

Even though voting is the least demanding form of political participation, individuals still need a minimum level of resources and interest in politics (Brady, Verba et al. 1995). In comparative studies, it is usually not possible to measure resources or interest directly, and, instead, a number of socio-economic and demographic variables have been

---

[13] However, when they are not simultaneous, the fact that other elections exist *may* be associated with reduced turnout in elections for the national legislature. This may be particularly so where there are strong elected presidents, upper houses, or regional governments, since their presence suggests that the national legislature enjoys a reduced monopoly of power than would otherwise be the case (Blais and Dobrzynska 1998; Siaroff and Merer 2002). Further, some authors have detected the influence of upcoming national legislature elections on the turnout exhibited in other elections (Reif 1985). It has been suggested that voters may use local or EP elections, for example, as a means of 'sending a message' to the national government, and thus the effect depends on how close the local election is to the upcoming national legislature election.

suggested as affecting turnout in elections. These variables comprise two broad types: individual and aggregate. Individual variables are those which relate to the characteristics of the individual voter, such as their age, or educational attainment. Aggregate variables are characteristics of the group as a whole, and which cannot be disaggregated to the individual level, such as regional GDP, or population density.

It is important to note that, here, 'individual' and 'aggregate' refer to the type of *variable*, and not to the type of data. As we shall see, it is not unusual to use aggregate data when seeking to investigate the effects of individual characteristics. For example, rather than having information on the educational attainment of every individual voter, we may use aggregate data, such as the percentage of the electorate which has a degree level qualification. If we expect that the tendency to vote increases along with educational attainment, we would also expect that a higher percentage of degree holders would, other things being equal, be associated with increased turnout.

In this section, we firstly examine those variables which relate to the characteristics of the voter, which previous research has suggested as influencing the likelihood that they will, in fact, vote. The main focus will be on education, age, death rate, occupation, unemployment, and length of residence. Then, we will consider aggregate level variables which have been shown to be associated with the level of turnout; specifically, GDP and population density. As will become clear, and especially when compared to the institutional determinants of voting identified in the previous section, the effects of socio-demographic factors on turnout are often the subject of continuing debate.

Education

The link between education and turnout appears to be well established: the better educated are more resource-rich, better informed, and thus more likely to vote in elections. Further, the better educated are more likely to have been socialised into the

norms of participation in elections (Lijphart 1997; Johnston and Pattie 2006; Nevitte, Blais et al. 2009)[14]. Indeed, Blais considers the evidence to show that turnout is 'substantially higher among the better educated' (2007:631). However, in making this claim, Blais cites two, very different, studies. Because these studies operationalise 'education' in two very different ways, it is worth considering them both here in more detail.

Firstly, Blais cites Wolfinger and Rosenstone (1980), who showed that educational attainment has a substantial effect on turnout in elections, with holders of college degrees being, on average, 38 percent more likely to vote than those with minimal levels of schooling. The explanation for this finding is threefold: firstly, that education is a resource which, by increasing the skills necessary to acquire and process political information, decreases the costs of voting; secondly, that the better educated have a greater sense of civic duty and derive more gratification from the act of voting; and, thirdly, that schooling increases the skills necessary to overcome the bureaucratic hurdles associated with voting, and, more particularly, with registration. However, Wolfinger and Rosenstone's study focused on voting behaviour in the United States, and subsequent research has questioned how generalisable these findings are to other countries.

For example, Powell's (1986) analysis of survey data in nine industrialised democracies did show increasing participation with increasing educational level. However, Powell also noted that this effect was more marked for American respondents than for the other countries in his analysis (with the vagaries of voter registration in America being

---

[14] Though for a more nuanced relationship between affluence and education, see Jackson (1993).

suggested as a major reason for this difference[15]). Further, increasing education was

sometimes associated with *decreased* turnout, depending on the countries and variables

included in the analysis.

In an analysis restricted to turnout in 16 Western European countries between 1960 and

1992, Topf (1995) calculated the ratios of turnout between the lowest and highest

educated cohorts for each country. His findings questioned the purported link between

education and turnout, and he concluded that Western European citizens, be they of

high or low educational attainment, are equally as likely to vote in national elections.

Finally, Milligan et al. (2004) used survey and turnout data for November elections in the

US and general elections in the UK to investigate the role of education on political

participation. They found that increasing education does have a significant and positive

effect on turnout in the US, but also found that this was not the case in the UK. In line

with previous authors, Milligan *et al.* cited US procedures for voter registration as the

main reason for the difference.

The second source that Blais cites is '*To vote or not to vote'* (Blais 2000), in which he

suggests that a minimum level of education may be required in order to participate in

elections. Although voting is the least demanding form of political participation (Brady,

Verba et al. 1995:282), a minimum level of skill is required in order to cast one's vote.

When a country's literacy rate is taken as a measure of the proportion of the population

with the requisite skills, higher literacy rates are indeed significantly associated with

higher turnout in elections (Blais 2000 24). However, as with GDP, such a measure is

closely linked with a country's level of development; and the main difference is between

developed and less developed countries. When only those countries with above average

---

[15] It should be noted here that the effects of registration procedures only become apparent when turnout is calculated on the basis of the voting age population, rather than on the basis of registered voters. This point will be discussed more fully in Chapter 4.

literacy are considered, the effects of increasing literacy are very small (Blais and Dobrzynska 1998).

Clearly, the literacy rate would be of limited use when examining differences in turnout among developed, Western European countries. However, it is worth retaining a measure of educational attainment, not least because the evidence suggests that, although often associated with higher levels of turnout (for example, Franklin 2004), the effect of education does vary from country to country (Nevitte, Blais et al. 2009)[16].

Age

Young people generally vote less than older people, even after controlling for other factors such as education (Goerres 2007). Young, first-time voters may not know where to vote, or even how to vote; or they may lack a sufficient grasp of the parties, candidates, and key issues. In short: 'As young citizens confront their first election, all of the costs of voting are magnified…' (Plutzer 2002:43). However, with increasing age, people often acquire the skills and resources needed to overcome these costs as political knowledge and social ties increase. Further, people become more motivated to vote as the effects of government policy, and the taxation which funds them, are more directly felt (Rose 2007). Although some have suggested that with the onset of old-age people become less likely to vote, perhaps because of increasing physical infirmity, Wolfinger and Rosenstone (1980) found that propensity to vote continues to rise with increasing age, albeit at a slower rate than in middle-age. Using survey data from 32 national lower house elections in 23 countries, Nevitte *et al.* (2009) also found that age was significantly and consistently associated with higher turnout. However, it should be noted that,

---

[16] There is some evidence that in certain countries, the higher educated are actually less likely to vote (Perea 2002, citing Corbetta and Parisi).

though the authors claim this effect was 'consistent', age was, in fact, not statistically significant in about a third of the countries when analysed separately.

Death Rate

A measure somewhat related to the age of the population is that of life expectancy. However, this is a measure that is often used as an indicator of the 'quality of life', with the assumption that a minimum quality of life is necessary before people feel able to participate in politics (Blais 2000). As with literacy rates, this measure may be more useful when comparing developed and less developed countries.

It is known that the gap between the incomes of the poorest and wealthiest in a society is related to mortality; and that the death rate is higher among the poorer and more marginalised groups (Kennedy, Kawachi et al. 1996; Hwang, Wilkins et al. 2009). These groups are among those less likely to have the resources necessary to vote in elections. We could expect, then, that regions with a higher death rate would be associated with lower turnout in elections. However, a higher death rate may also reflect a more elderly population; and increasing age has also been shown to be associated with an increasing propensity to vote.

Occupation and Unemployment

Using American survey data, Verba and Nie (1972) showed that those with higher socio-economic status were more likely to participate in politics[17]. Closely related to socio-economic status is the idea of 'class', and though the role of class in electoral choices has generally declined, it has not disappeared. Because there are difficulties in operationalising 'class' as a variable, it is usually linked in some way to the occupation of

---

[17] Verba and Nie suggested that 'civic attitudes' – various factors conducive to participation - were an intervening effect. Such factors include a sense of efficacy, psychological involvement in politics, and a feeling of obligation to vote. As such, these civic attitudes seem to occupy similar ground to the 'sense of duty' in Riker and Ordeshook's modified calculus of voting, and to that of socialisation theory.

the voter (Evans 1999), with different types of occupation being categorised into different classes. For example, semi- and un-skilled workers could be considered as 'working class', whereas professionals and administrators could be considered as 'upper-middle class'. Some types of occupation, as well as providing further opportunities for social interactions and hence exposure to behavioural norms, may encourage the development of skills in bureaucratic and abstract tasks. In addition, some jobs may expose individuals to particular political issues, policies, and actors (Wolfinger and Rosenstone 1980). Occupational type, is of course, linked to income, and higher income groups have been shown to vote more than lower income groups (Norris 2004:175). However, there is some evidence that, even when we consider the same category of workers, there are differences between countries. In one of the few comparative studies to consider turnout in local elections, it was shown that a higher proportion of manual workers is associated with increased turnout in France, whereas in England the effect is negative (Hoffmann-Martinot, Rallings et al. 1996).

As well as suggesting that a person's occupation can influence the likelihood that they will vote, previous research has also shown that electoral participation can vary depending on whether their employment is in the public or private sector. For example, it is known that public employees may be better informed about policy issues and choices, and therefore tend to vote at a higher rate than private employees (Wolfinger and Rosenstone 1980; Braconnier and Dormagen 2007).

At the other extreme, an absence of occupation, that is unemployment, has long been associated with reduced turnout in elections (Wolfinger and Rosenstone 1980; Rosenstone 1982; Brady, Verba et al. 1995), not only because the unemployed have

fewer resources, but also because they have less desire to participate [18]. However, this too has been shown to vary from country to country (Radcliff 1992; Nevitte, Blais et al. 2009), and also seems to show a greater effect in the recently unemployed than in the longer term (Rosenstone 1982).

Membership of a trade union or political party.

The very act of joining a political party not only represents a form of political participation (Scarrow 2007), but also implies a certain degree of partisanship on the part of the member. As such, we may expect that party members would be more likely, on average, to undertake the relatively easy task of casting a vote in an election. and this has been shown to be the case in comparative studies (Siaroff and Merer 2002). Although a worker may join a trade union for non-partisan reasons, unions themselves are inherently political organisations that lobby governments and fund political campaigns; to be a union member, then, is to implicitly take part in politics (Burns, Schlozman et al. 2001:58). Further, being a member of a political party or a trade union can increase involvement in social networks, exposure to group norms, and lead to a greater awareness of political issues. Not surprisingly, then, membership of either type of organisation has been linked to increased turnout in elections (Blais 2000; Siaroff and Merer 2002).

Length of residence

As noted by Sharp (1955), the act of voting appears to be related to the length of residence in a particular community. People who have lived in a place for longer periods of time are more likely to feel more involved, be better informed about local political issues, and thus more likely to participate in politics generally, and to vote in elections

---

[18] Lower levels of participation among the unemployed are considered by some to be evidence that larger amounts of 'free-time' do not lead to increased turnout (Wolfinger and Rosenstone 1980:29)

(Geys 2006a:644). Conversely, as the turnover of the local population increases, the more any sense of community may be undermined, and the greater the social distances between individuals (Ashworth, Heyndels et al. 2002) [19]. Different measures have been used in previous research in order to take account of the stability of the population, such as population growth, or the level of home ownership[20]. Whichever measure is used, the results are generally consistent, with more stable populations being, on the whole, more likely to vote in elections (Hoffmann-Martinot, Rallings et al. 1996; Geys 2006a).

Having considered those variables which relate to the characteristics of the individual voter, we now turn to the aggregate level variables – GDP and population density.

Gross Domestic Product (GDP)

There are competing views as to the effects of the economic situation (usually measured by GDP or GNP[21]) on turnout (Bengtsson 2004). On the one hand it has been argued that when times are tough, those most adversely affected would be more likely to blame the government and hence be more motivated to vote as a means of expressing their dissatisfaction. On the other hand, those faced with financial difficulties may be less

---

[19] This may be particularly the case when considering local elections, rather than national elections where new arrivals from within the same country will have an equal chance of being informed as to the salient issues as will the pre-existing residents of a particular locale. Local elections are more likely be more concerned with local issues. This effect does not appear to have been examined in previous comparative research.

[20] Although home ownership may indeed be a measure of population stability, home owners may also be more likely to vote in elections as they may be more affected by policy decisions (Geys 2006a). Further, population growth may be organic (increased local birth rate and or declining local death rate) or the result of higher net migration; the former would necessarily result in an increase in younger age groups, whereas the latter could, for example, be the result of more retired people moving to a particular area. An additional difference may occur when we consider different types of elections; local elections are more likely to involve local issues, with new arrivals perhaps being less informed and hence less likely to vote. In the case of national elections, however, new arrivals (from within the same country) would be equally likely to be informed of the national issues as the existing residents).

[21] Both GNP (Gross National Product) and GDP are derived from a country's national accounts, with GDP being the more common measure nowadays. The major difference between the two measures is that GDP includes production within a country even when the resources used to generate that production are not owned by a country's residents. GNP only counts production from resources owned by a country's residents (Waring 1999).

likely to vote, as they are preoccupied with day to day survival and the immediate challenges of making ends meet (Rosenstone 1982).

GDP is often used in a rather different way in comparative studies; that is, to differentiate between groups of countries on the basis of their economic or industrial development. Indeed, Powell (1980) simply divided his set of countries into two groups – 'developed' and 'developing' – and reported that turnout in developed countries was some 12 per cent higher than in the developing countries. However, around the same time, Crewe noted that the correlation between turnout and GDP was very weak; and wondered just what the effects of GDP were, as turnout in most countries had remained 'unswervingly flat during a period of unprecedented economic growth...' [22] (Crewe 1981:259).

In a more recent and sophisticated analysis, Blais and Dobrzynska (1998) also found that higher GNP per capita (measured at the country level) was associated with higher turnout, but that this effect was most marked when comparing very low GNP countries to all others – and had a much smaller effect within that group of countries with above average GNP per capita[23]. In their bivariate analysis of lower house elections in 38 developed (European) countries, Siaroff and Merer (2002) found GNP to have a significant, positive effect on turnout; however, GNP was not included in their subsequent multivariate analysis.

The foregoing suggests that GDP may be a useful basis on which to ascertain how developed a particular country is, but may be less useful as a determinant of turnout when comparing only developed countries. Although the evidence generally supports

---

[22] Crewe referred to the puzzle of turnout being related to education and income at the individual level, but not at the aggregate level (Crewe 1981:260).
[23] Further, high economic growth did not appear to result in significantly higher turnout (reflecting Crewe's concerns two decades earlier).

the view that increasing economic adversity depresses turnout, it has also been shown that there are variations, even between developed countries, depending on the extent and nature of the welfare systems which they have (Radcliff 1992). Further, Colomer reported that countries with higher public expenditure (relative to the GDP) have, on average, higher turnout than countries with lower public expenditure (Colomer 1991).

Population and Population Density

It has been suggested that countries with smaller populations have a greater sense of community, and hence will have higher turnout than more populous countries. Alternatively, in terms of the calculus of voting, in a smaller population of voters, the chances of casting the deciding vote are higher. Whatever the mechanism, the relationship between population and turnout has been confirmed in a number of studies (Blais and Carty 1990; Blais and Dobrzynska 1998; Blais 2000)[24]. It has also been argued that where population density is higher, turnout will be higher because individuals will be less dispersed, feel closer to their fellow citizens and hence more likely to be exposed to group pressures and efforts at mobilisation. On the other hand, others have argued that increasing urbanisation undermines the social pressure to vote, as interpersonal bonds and social structures are weaker. Perhaps it is not surprising, given these competing theoretical views, that the evidence for this effect is somewhat mixed in studies which have measured population density at the country level. For example, Blais (2000) reports only a weak relationship between turnout and population density (see also Blais and Dobrzynska 1998). Siaroff and Merer (2002) found that, although population density was associated with increased turnout in their bivariate analysis, this relationship was not significant in any of their subsequent multivariate analyses. In a

---

[24] It has also been argued that communication between citizens is easier, and thus it is more likely that political interest would be heightened in smaller communities. However, these effects may be questionable, as even in a small community of, say, 1000 citizens, the chances that two randomly chosen people indeed communicate is actually rather small (Ashworth, Heyndels et al. 2002).

study confined to Eastern European countries, Kostadinova (2003) also found urban population to be non-significant (although in this case the coefficient was negative). In an analysis based on turnout in municipal elections in the United States and a number of Western European countries, and using seven categories of municipality population size, Morlan (Morlan 1984) found that in general, turnout declines as population increases[25].

Rather than using the simple population density measure, some studies have used descriptive categories, such as urban-rural, or centre-periphery. Even within a single country, there has been considerable debate as to whether rural dwellers are more or less likely to vote than residents of cities, a controversy which is sometimes complicated by the assumption that people who do not live in cities are all farmers (who have been shown more likely to vote than other occupational groups; see Wolfinger and Rosenstone 1980:30). Indeed, the simple urban-rural classification may be too simplistic: as shown by some studies which have taken into account the size of town in which people live (either as defined objectively by arbitrary categories based on population size, or subjectively chosen by survey respondents from lists such as 'village, town, or city') (Oppenhuis 1995; Nevitte, Blais et al. 2009). As with some other variables discussed above, there appears to be a difference between America and Europe: with mid-sized towns in America being associated with lower turnout than large cities, suburbs, or rural areas; whereas in Europe it is large cities which are associated with lower turnout than smaller towns or villages. However, although Oppenhuis reports this effect to be very similar across the European countries in his analysis, no such pattern is revealed in the individual country analyses performed by Nevitte et al. (Nevitte, Blais et al. 2009);

---

[25] Although Morlan cautioned against taking his findings as support for explanations based on a greater sense of community in smaller units. Further, when he examined turnout in territorial units which had been subject to the then fashionable amalgamation of municipalities, Morlan found that such amalgamation had not had any significant effects on turnout.

indeed, in the latter study, in most countries none of the categories (town, suburb, city) is statistically significant.

This section has identified a number of institutional and socio-demographic factors which previous research has identified as influencing the level of turnout in elections. However, not all types of elections attract the same level of turnout. In the next section, we discuss the relative importance of elections in the eyes of the voter.

First-, Second- (and Third-) Order Elections

As Miller noted concerning the public's view of local elections in Britain, 'their expectations were not high and their disappointment was not intense' (1988:244). This view is not confined to Britain, and it has long been known that electorates view national elections differently to the other elections which are held within a country (for example, Gosnell 1930:Ch 7). More recently, in a comparison of turnout in national and local elections in 14 countries, Blais (2000) found, that on average, turnout in local elections was some 13 percentage points lower than in national elections.

Even within the European countries in Blais' analysis, though, there was substantial country-to-country variation; in Britain, average turnout in local elections was found to be over 30 points lower than turnout in national elections; in Belgium the difference was less than half of one percent. A simple explanation for the small difference in Belgium is that voting there is compulsory in both national and local elections. However, if we consider France, where voting is not compulsory, the difference in turnout between the two election types is still less than two percentage points [26] (Blais 2000). A number of explanations have been suggested to account for variations in the patterns of local-national election turnout in different countries. These include differing views as to the

---

[26] Similar observations were made by Gosnell (1930) two generations prior – evidence for a remarkable stability in these differences, despite the intervening changes to franchise and suffrage in these countries.

relative importance of national and local governments, or the degree of politicisation and mobilisation. However, none of these is able to fully account for the variations in this turnout gap [27] (Blais 2000:39).

Electors are not limited to casting their votes in national and local elections. Indeed, with the advent of direct elections to the European Parliament (EP) in 1979, voters in the member states of the European Community were presented with an entirely new set of elections; and new avenues of research presented themselves to political scientists. To those with an interest in voting behaviour, these elections were of particular interest since, although they occurred more or less simultaneously across all member states, a variety of electoral systems and rules were used[28].

In the first study to compare turnout in EP elections to turnout in the respective country's national legislative elections, Reif and Schmitt (1980) coined the phrase 'second-order' to describe those elections where there is, in some sense, less at stake. Simply put, second-order elections play no role in deciding who governs the country. Hence, fewer calculate that the costs of voting are outweighed by the benefits, and turnout is lower than in first-order elections for the legislature. However, 'some second-order elections are evidently more second order than others' (van der Eijk, Franklin et al. 1996:162). Voters in many countries behave as if there was even less at stake in EP elections than in other second-order elections, and the very low turnout for EP elections in some countries supports the notion that European Parliament elections be considered as third-order (Marsh 1998; Heath, McLean et al. 1999; Rallings and Thrasher 2005).

---

[27] Blais suggested that the difference may be linked to the degree of urbanisation: turnout in municipal elections has been shown to decrease as the size of municipality increases (cited by Blais 2000:39); and it is possible that this effect is smaller in national elections. However, Blais was not able to test this hypothesis.
[28] This was more marked in early elections to the EP, when both plurality/majoritarian and PR systems were used. More recently, all countries have used PR systems, but the specific arrangements used (for example compulsory voting, or weekend voting) do still vary from country to country.

The first-, second-, third-order distinction, then, appears to be justified by empirical evidence. However, as we will see in later chapters, even after taking into account the various institutional and socio-demographic characteristics which were discussed previously, there remain between- and within-country differences in the levels of turnout for any given type of election. These differences may reflect the national or regional factors which influence the context in which the voter is situated, and thus which enhance the visibility or perceived importance of the election.

We discuss these factors in more detail in Chapter 4, but note here that they may well be specific to a particular *type* of election. For instance, at the local level we will investigate two factors, both of which can be seen as affecting what is at stake in the election. Firstly, the level of local taxation, and the autonomy that municipalities enjoy in setting these taxes, varies from country to country. Local taxes are directly felt by the electorate; and the services which they fund relate to the locality in a way that is not the case with taxes levied by central government. Higher taxes serve to increase the differential benefits that the rational voter takes into account, so we would expect the level of local taxes to have an influence on turnout in municipal elections. We are not aware of previous comparative research in this area; although it has been shown that the level of public spending (usually funded at least in part by taxes) has been shown to be associated with the level of turnout: countries with higher public spending tend to exhibit higher turnout in national, first-order elections (Colomer 1991). The second factor we will investigate at the local level relates to the powers enjoyed by the mayor; which can vary substantially from country to country (Bäck, Heinelt et al. 2006). As Evans has pointed out, various institutional and individual characteristics may be important predictors of turnout in elections, but may have much less influence if the outcome of the election is a powerless representative (Evans 2004:169). Where the local mayor wields substantive powers, he or she is more likely to make decisions which

directly impact the lives of the electorate. Compared to countries where the mayoral powers are more limited, or even purely ceremonial, there is more at stake in the election, and we would thus expect turnout to be higher.

In the case of supranational elections, that is, those to the European Parliament, measures related to the power of the elected representative or to levels of taxation are of limited applicability. However, the salience of the European Union, and by implication, that of the European Parliament, may vary from region to region within European countries. For instance, in order to better promote their interests within the policy making arenas of the European Union, many sub-national regions have decided to invest resources in establishing a permanent representative office in Brussels (Nugent 1999). That not all regions have such an office implies that some regions view the EU as more important than do others. This may be a view confined to the political elite, but it could also reflect, or encourage, similar feelings among the electorate as a whole. Were this the case, we would expect that turnout in EP elections would be higher in those regions which have a representative office in Brussels.

For elections to the national legislature, we will consider the mobilising effect of 'nationalised' party systems; that is, how widely the major parties contest the total number of constituencies in the country. Historically, the growth in the territorial coverage of political parties was often driven by the desire to mobilise increasing numbers of voters. As parties contested more and more constituencies, local support networks grew and campaigning became more efficient. This growth in the territorial coverage of political parties was often associated with a strengthening of the left-right cleavage (Caramani 2005). There are two reasons, then, to expect that turnout would be higher, at least in elections to the national legislature, in those countries where the major political parties contest all, or nearly all, of the total constituencies. Firstly, the

increased efficiency of campaigning by political parties serves to increase the proportion of the electorate who, even if they have not been contacted directly by a political party, are aware of the campaign issues, or even of the election itself. Secondly, the increased importance of the left-right cleavage serves to both clarify and simplify the choices on offer, thus reducing the information costs associated with voting.

Despite the historical nationalisation of party systems in several countries, some consider that voting behaviour is still affected by *regional* contexts; or, indeed, that in some cases the previous trend towards a territorial homogenisation of politics has been reversed (Keating 1998:101). As we will see in Chapter 3, over the past few decades, a number of Western European countries have undergone significant reorganisations of their territorial politics, and in some cases this has led to the strengthening or creation of regional level governments. However, the various regions within European countries also differ in terms of other factors, such as their culture and identity, or their patterns of economic development (Keating 1998). These factors combine and contribute to the regional context; and, where they coincide and reinforce each other, the result is strong 'regionalism'. We would expect, then, that differing levels of regionalism would be associated with differing patterns of turnout in regional elections. However, there is reason to expect that regionalism may be associated with different patterns of turnout in other types of election, because there is evidence that turnout for *national* elections tends to be lower where strong regional governments also exist (Blais and Dobrzynska 1998; Siaroff and Merer 2002).

Discussion

This chapter has provided a review of the literature relating to voting in elections. After considering the usefulness, and the limitations, of rational choice approaches, we identified several institutional and socio-demographic factors which have been

suggested as having an influence on turnout. Although there are exceptions, previous research suggests that the institutional variables are somewhat more consistent in their effects than are the socio-demographic variables.

However, even within a single type of election, and when both institutional and socio-economic variables are included in multivariate analyses, substantial country differences can remain, as evidenced by the frequent use of dummy variables by several authors. The 'usual suspects' are the USA and Switzerland (for example, Powell 1986; Jackman 1987; Blais 2000); but a number of other countries have also been subject to this treatment (or even continents, see Blais and Dobrzynska 1998; Siaroff and Merer 2002).

Further, with the possible exception of compulsory voting, none of the suggested determinants of voting is 'omnipresent' in the literature: not only do findings differ as to whether a particular variable is statistically significant; but in many cases there are contradictory findings as to the direction of the effect that a particular variable may have (Blais 2000; Geys 2006a). This is, at least in part, a reflection of the differing aims of previous researchers, the differing sets of variables which they used, and the countries which were included in their analyses.

It should also be noted that most comparative research into turnout in elections which has relied, in full or in part, on aggregate data, has been confined to the *country* level of analysis. Indeed, in a recent review of such studies over the previous three decades, only two used turnout in sub-national geographical units (both of which only compared turnout in two countries, and each was limited to a single type of election, see Geys 2006a). Although this may not present too many difficulties when we consider the institutional determinants of voting (which *tend* to remain constant for all voters in a country within a given election), the use of country-level data severely limits the

opportunity to investigate whether various social groups respond in the same way to these differing institutional arrangements (Kostadinova 2003).

More generally, findings based on country-level data may not necessarily apply *within* the countries included in the analysis. These within country variations have generally been left to those who employ individual level survey data (for a rare exception see Hoffmann-Martinot, Rallings et al. 1996 who used turnout and explanatory variables aggregated to the level of the local government unit for local elections in France and England). The results of such individual level research have often brought into question the findings based on aggregate level research, even for those variables which have generally been taken as robust in their effects. For example, based on CSES survey data, Nevitte *et al.* (2009) concluded that both age and education have significant and consistent effects on turnout in elections. However, these effects are, in fact, apparent in only two-thirds and just over one half, respectively, of the 29 countries included in their analysis. Support for 'consistent' effects of other variables in their analysis (such as size of population, or employment status) is even weaker[29].

Of course, survey data is subject to its own limitations, particularly those of selection bias and the tendency of respondents to over-report their voting in elections. The former means that voters tend to be over-represented among the respondents to election surveys. This obviously presents difficulties when investigating the differences between voters and non-voters; and these difficulties are compounded because this over-representation of voters has been shown to increase with declining response rates

---

[29] There is a further difficulty when considering individual and aggregate variables: even when they appear to be measuring aspects of the same particular characteristic, the links between the two are tenuous at best. For example, the educational attainment of a particular individual contributes, albeit in a near trivial way, to the proportion of the population with that given level of education. However, the aggregate value is often considered as also having contextual effects, which may or may not interact with the individual level measure.

(Burden 2000). However, the latter can also be a substantial problem, and has been shown to be of the order of 30 per cent (Milligan, Moretti *et al*. 2004). Further, this effect is not constant either, appearing not only to be generally higher in countries with higher participation rates, but also to vary *within* countries in ways related to the socio-economic status of the respondent (Milligan, Moretti et al. 2004; Karp and Brockington 2005).

In order to explore within country variations in turnout whilst avoiding the inherent limitations of survey data, we need an alternative approach. An obvious avenue is to use aggregate turnout and socio-demographic data for geographical units *within* countries. In Chapter 4 we will describe the development of a such a dataset.

As we have also seen in this chapter, people respond differently to different types of election; unsurprisingly, more people vote in more important elections. Previous comparative research has rarely investigated elections other than those for the national legislature or the European Parliament. We are able to go further, and include elections for sub-national governments. The organisation of territorial government varies considerably from country to country, as do the systems and rules pertaining to each type of election. This will be the subject of Chapter 3.

Chapter 3 : Governments and Elections

Introduction

All Western European countries are now democracies, but they reached this status at different times, and by different routes. Indeed, state-building itself is not a 'once and for all process' (Jessop 2006:114). Rather, it has often entailed successive waves of centralisation and decentralisation, tempered by the persistence of old customs, practices and values, and has been subject to external, as well as internal influences. Even in countries where the state is strong and centralised, the powers of a government are never all-embracing, and governing has always had a territorial dimension (Hague and Harrop 2004:228; Thoenig 2006). Because of their particular histories and cultures, and their differing settlements following internal struggles between the centre and the periphery, Western European countries differ widely in the organisation of territorial decision making processes, and, in particular, in their arrangements for sub-national government.

Of course, historical influences are not limited to the development of various levels of government, but also to the arenas in which candidates compete. Electoral systems and rules are not 'a given', but are also subject to change: not only in response to changing societal values or to the shifting allegiances within political parties, but also because political actors often seek to influence the particular systems and rules which are chosen (and for compelling empirical evidence, see Colomer 2005; Freeman 2006; Rueschemeyer 2006; Tilly and Goodin 2006; Blais 2008). Of course, such shifts in electoral systems are often presented by their proponents as having some greater democratic virtue, and merely have the 'happy coincidence' of awarding more seats to previously 'under-represented' parties (Bowler 2006:587). Whatever the underlying

causes, electoral arrangements in Western European countries often differ markedly, not only between countries, but sometimes within them.

In this chapter, we firstly present a brief historical synopsis for each country, and identify the major internal and international factors which have influenced the development of the different levels of government which exist today. Selected characteristics of each level of government are then provided, and, in the case of local government, these characteristics are discussed in relation to the typologies suggested by previous researchers. This will lead to a particular focus on those characteristics of governments which were suggested in the previous chapter as influencing the context in which the voter is situated, and which will be included in our subsequent analyses, specifically: levels of public sector employment and the tax raising powers of sub-national governments, as well as the powers enjoyed by the local mayor in each country. These characteristics are necessarily measured at the country-level; but several of the countries examined here display a degree of variation when we consider their component regions. In order to explore aspects of this 'regionalisation', we draw on the work of Keating (1998) and develop a numerical score for each region in each country. We then turn to the systems and rules which are used for electing each type of government in each country; with a particular emphasis on the institutional determinants of voting that were identified in Chapter 2.

It is appropriate here to make a brief comment on nomenclature: 'local' and 'municipal' are used interchangeably, and refer to the lowest level of sub-national government which we will consider. The 'intermediate' level lies between the local and national levels (Larsson, Nomden et al. 1999), and corresponds to, for example, the county councils in Sweden. However, a number of countries exhibit *two* tiers of government within the intermediate level; for example, France has departmental and regional levels

of government. Where this is the case, the lower and upper levels of intermediate government are identified accordingly. Note that 'upper' and 'lower' here refer simply to the geographical extent of the two tiers (with lower level units typically nested within upper level units), and, as the following discussion will make clear, do not necessarily imply hierarchical power relationships.

Country synopses

The following section will provide a brief overview of the historical development and present form of national and sub-national government for each country. The sheer range and complexity necessitates a degree of simplification; the aim here is to provide some context to the present arrangements. Although many systems of sub-national government can trace their roots to traditions of self-government in towns and cities, and to nineteenth century nation-building, it is important to recognise that each system is evolving from a different starting point (Norton 1991). Further, each country has also had to deal with its own specific challenges, and may have responded differently to similar international and European influences. Indeed, 'decentralising tendencies which may be observed in some traditionally highly centralised systems may still leave them more centralised than some other countries in which local autonomy is being eroded' (Blair 1991:42).

Belgium

Prior to its formation on breaking away from the Netherlands in 1830, the territory which was to become Belgium had long been marked by strong and independent cities; a history reflected in the decentralist legislation of 1836 which, as well as providing for the existence and finance of the provinces, gave formal recognition to the important role played by municipalities (Halvarsson nd). In the post-war period, rather more attention has been paid to cultural autonomy based on ancient language boundaries, the tensions

between which were eventually to lead to a federalised state in 1993, governed by the Constitution of 1994 (which itself has been subject to subsequent modifications).

The Constitution recognises the existence of four 'language territories' (German, French, Dutch, and the bilingual Brussels-Capital) and three language Communities (German, Flemish, and French). In addition, Belgium is divided into three geographical regions: Walloon, Flemish, and Brussels-Capital. At the top level, the three Communities and the three Regions are considered as legally equal to the Federal State itself. In addition, the Communities and Regions have their own directly elected assemblies. In this rather complex system, each level of government holds some exclusive powers, but is also obliged to cooperate and consult with other levels of government. Within these arrangements, each Region is responsible for applying existing legislation (and has the power to enact new legislation) concerning its provinces and municipalities. The ten provinces have few formal powers, though they play important roles in complex policy-making networks. The provincial councillors are directly elected, but the politically well-connected provincial governor is directly appointed by the region. The region may also appoint the municipal *burgomaster* (Halvarsson nd).

In the post-war years, the number of municipalities steadily grew, but since the 1970s, successive rounds of rationalisation and amalgamation have reduced their numbers markedly. Compared to several other European countries, Belgian municipalities control a relatively small portion of total public spending, and derive financial resources via a mixture of taxes and levies, and from allocations from central, regional and community governments. In the 1990s, growing dissatisfaction over control and coordination of various tax levying powers, and the influence of New Public Management (NPM), led to changes in the relationship between central and sub-national governments; however, similar to the situation in Spain (see below) this resulted in a centralisation of powers at

the regional and community levels, rather than a delegation of powers to local governments. The linguistic communities, regions, and provinces are constitutionally protected. Legislation for the municipalities is provided by the Municipalities Act of 1989. Belgium took part in the first direct elections to the European Parliament in 1979 (CoE 1998a; Hendriks 2001a; Plees 2005).

England

In contrast to all the other countries in the present analysis, England (as part of the United Kingdom) does not have a single document called 'The Constitution' (Gallagher, Laver et al. 2006); and the powers, structure, workings, and indeed the very existence of the various levels of government are subject to the principle of parliamentary sovereignty. As such, there is no formal constitutional protection for sub-national government in England, arrangements for which can be, and have been, altered by means of normal legislation. Local government developed sporadically in response to social changes, including industrialisation and the attendant growth of cities, into a patchwork of councils of different types and sizes, but all being constrained to perform only those duties specifically provided for by parliament. Various metropolitan county councils were abolished in the 1970s. Following the election of a Conservative government in 1979, further metropolitan councils were abolished, and the remaining councils of all categories saw their responsibilities and budgets decline. NPM practices were introduced[30], including the imposition of compulsory competitive tendering, along with unprecedented central control over local government expenditure and the hiving-off of various tasks to centrally appointed agencies. Further reforms in the 1990s aimed

---

[30] Indeed, the UK was one of the first countries to introduce NPM practices after its initial launch in New Zealand (Kettl 2006)

at increased efficiency and accountability saw some county and district councils consolidated into new unitary authorities (although with questionable success, see Chisolm 2000). Following the election of a Labour government in 1997, a London Assembly and directly elected mayor were established (along with a Scottish Parliament and a Welsh Assembly). Legislation in 2000 provided for local authorities to choose alternative management structures, including the introduction of directly elected mayors. However, the central government retained its strong position in relation to local government through tight control of grants, and the imposition of targets and various inspection regimes. Local government still accounts for a substantial portion of total public expenditure, but there is minimal opportunity for discretion to be exercised at the local level. The relatively large size of local authorities (compared to many European countries) means there has been less perceived need to encourage cooperation between authorities. Legislation in 1998 did provide for administrative regions with indirectly elected assemblies, but the aim of establishing directly elected regional governments for England was unsuccessful, hindered at least in part by the lack of strong regional traditions and identities, and of clear geographic boundaries (but see Garside and Hebbert 1989). Indeed, the only referendum held, in the North East of England, resulted in an emphatic rejection of proposals for an elected regional assembly. The national second chamber (the Lords) is not directly elected. The United Kingdom took part in the first direct elections to the European parliament in 1979. Unusually in the European Union, England (as part of the UK) did not use a proportional representation system for elections to the European Parliament until 1999 (Loughlin 2001c; BBC 2004; Wilson 2005).

Finland

After seven centuries as part of Sweden, and a century as a semi-autonomous duchy within the Russian Empire, Finland became independent in 1917. In 1919, following a bitter civil war, a constitution was adopted which contained French, American, and Swedish influences and provided for a division of powers between parliament and president. Reflecting the Nordic tradition of local self-government, and recognised in the constitution (CoE 2009), local authorities enjoy considerable powers. In the 1980s, more functions were transferred to local authorities from the central state. In the 1990s, in reaction to economic contraction as elsewhere in Europe, and to the loss of the Soviet Union as a major trading partner, mergers between local authorities were encouraged by the central government. Local authorities have both general and special competencies, the latter being delegated from central government and regulated by specific laws. Local authorities levy their own taxes, but with agreement with central government and associations of local authorities. There are also block grants from central government. The 1919 Constitution provided for an intermediate level of government, but (in contrast to Sweden), this has not been put in place (except the special case of the Åland archipelago). However, prompted at least in part by the need to administer EU structural funds, there have been 19 indirectly elected regional councils since 1994 (Lidström 2001a; Rose and Ståhlberg 2005). There is no national second chamber. Having held a one-off election in 1996 after joining the Union in 1995, Finland took part in the European Parliament elections of 1999.

France

France has often been considered as one of the most centralised states in Western Europe, but the Revolutionary image of a one and indivisible republic was something of a reaction to the high degree of cultural and social diversity, which exists to the present

day. At a national level, the constitution of the Fifth Republic divides power between the directly elected president and the parliament, which consists of the directly elected Assembly and the indirectly elected Senate. Following the Revolution, France possessed local administration rather than real local government, but, driven in part by massive social change and exodus from countryside to towns and cities, the powers of local actors increased in the post-war years. This process was accelerated by the decentralisation reforms of the 1980s. As well as granting greater autonomy and financial resources to municipalities, and reducing the powers of the state-appointed prefects, these reforms also created the present-day regional (upper intermediate) level of government. The departmental (lower intermediate) level of government, along with its directly elected councils, was left in place despite the newly created regions. However, although the departments continue to employ a greater number of people, many view the regional councils as being the more powerful political actors. French people are among those most attached to their locality, and identify much more strongly with their municipality than the state, which goes some way to explaining why so many municipalities have survived despite their small size, and in the face of various attempts by central government to abolish or amalgamate them. Although private companies had long held an important place in the local delivery of services, further privatisation and deregulation pressures, and the curtailment of the powers of the prefects, led to new windows of opportunity for sub-national actors, in particular the mayors and local politicians. The key figure in the municipality is the mayor, who may also hold other elected offices. This quasi-systematic practice (*cumul des mandats*) is a singularly French phenomenon, and, until 1985, it was possible to hold elected office at the municipal, departmental, regional, and European level, as well as in either the lower or upper house. Legislation in 1985 limited to two the number of offices held simultaneously: it is worth noting that, in 1990, nearly 90 per cent of parliamentarians held at least one other

elected position (Mény 2008:120). Local government expenditure as a percentage of GDP is relatively low but discretionary authority for local authorities is high, and the ability to levy local taxes has risen, leading some to see parallels between French local authorities and those in the Scandinavian countries. Sub-national governments in France now account for some 70 per cent of all public investment. However, there exist complex networks and overlapping policy competencies; and the central government retains its abilities to shape the various political and administrative institutions. The status of communes and departments are constitutionally protected, whereas the regional level is covered by ordinary legislation. France took part in the first direct elections for the European Parliament in 1979 (Lorrain 1991; CoE 1998b; Loughlin and Seiler 2001; Borraz and Le Galès 2005; Mény 2008).

Greece

In the 19th century, following four centuries of Ottoman rule, newly independent Greece established a centralised state along the French Napoleonic model (including provincial level prefects). However, a blend of western and non-western cultures has continued to affect the nature and practice of democracy. Territorial disputes, struggles for liberation, and the presence of hostile neighbours all contributed to an emphasis by political elites on territorial unification and centralism. In 1912, legislation abolished the previous municipalities, and established new municipalities and communes with weaker local power bases. Municipal elections were suspended during subsequent periods of dictatorship, war, and military junta. With the fall of the military junta in 1974, municipal (urban) and communal (rural) elections resumed, and have been held every four years since. Of the 5775 municipalities and communities which existed in 1993, almost 80 per cent had a population less than a thousand. As such, many local authorities were too small to adequately perform their assigned functions, and were largely dependent on

the prefectural level. Reforms in the 1980s reduced prefectural control, and for the first time local authorities sent representatives to sit on the prefectural (intermediate level) councils. Since 1995, prefectural councils have become directly elected (elections taking place on the same day as municipal elections). In 1997, central government legislated to merge the municipalities and communities, reducing their numbers to 113 and 900 respectively). Though some have claimed that Greece became a much more decentralised state during the 1990s, Loughlin (2001a) considers that (though some progress has been made) these claims must be treated with some caution. Local government is protected by the 1975 constitution. Greece became a member of the European Union in 1981, held a one-off election for members of the European Parliament in the same year, and then joined other member states for the 1984 EU-wide elections (CoE 2001; Loughlin 2001a).

Ireland

In the nineteenth century, Ireland followed a similar path to democratisation as the rest of the United Kingdom, resulting in a two-tier structure of sub-national government. With much of the character and nature of its local government system inherited from the British model, the creation of the Irish Free State in 1922, and of the Republic of Ireland in 1937, heralded a further centralisation of powers and the reduction by three-quarters in the number of local authorities. The post-war expansion of the welfare-state eventually led to calls for greater efficiency and resulted in further increases in central government control, exacerbated by the abolition of local domestic rates. In the 1960s, various (non-elected) regional level administrative bodies were created, but lacked any common geographical basis. In 1994, following criticism from the European Commission, indirectly elected regional authorities were established. Ireland benefited enormously from the European Regional Development Funds (ERDF) and enjoyed rapid economic

growth in the 1990s. But the benefits remained unevenly distributed, with much poverty concentrated in rural areas and some districts of the towns and cities. Ironically, since the whole country was declared an Objective One region (and thus entitled to receive substantial EU funds directed at *regional* development), the centralised nature of Irish state was, if anything, enhanced. In 1985, the government announced a series of reforms designed to devolve power to local authorities, but none of the main aims was achieved prior to that government losing office. In 1990, Ireland ranked lowest in Europe in terms of local government spending as a percentage of national output; although this position improved somewhat in the late 1990s, with local government receiving local motor tax revenues and a dedicated portion of national revenue. Despite further reforms announced in 1996, and eventually gaining constitutionally protected status in 1999, Irish local government remains weak in a highly centralised state. The national second chamber is not directly elected. Ireland took part in the first direct elections to the European parliament in 1979 (Barrington 1991; Loughlin 2001c).

Italy

Italy is still characterised by the deep north-south differences which existed at the time of its unification in the late nineteenth century. Centre-local relations have tended to be conflictual, with the central state generally reluctant to cede powers or financial autonomy. However, internal political crises in the 1990s led to changes in the relationship between centre and periphery. Despite coming into being at different times and with different constitutional status, by the late 1970s, all 20 of the Italian regions (upper intermediate level) had held direct elections and they now occupy an important place in the Italian political landscape. Provincial (lower intermediate level) governments have also been directly elected since 1993, but enjoy few powers. The system of local government was originally based on the Franco-Napoleonic model, in which local

government exercised only marginal powers; and by the 1970s, they had become almost entirely dependent on centrally administered grants. At the same time as the range of services which local governments were expected to provide was increased, Italy experienced a period of high inflation. The financial burden on local authorities increased greatly, and the need to control public expenditure led to the introduction of NPM techniques, along with the attendant vocabulary of privatisation, outsourcing, and performance measurement. However, a growing desire among the public for decentralisation led to reforms in the early 1990s. The powers and autonomy of municipal governments increased, partially at the expense of regional powers, but also through the introduction of a local property tax which now provides around 40 per cent of municipal revenue. Reforms also provided for the direct election of mayors, who often also hold important positions in national and regional politics. However, communes and municipalities vary greatly in size, and exercise their powers within intertwining central and regional competencies in almost every policy area. Proposals for constitutional reform in the late 1990s appeared to foreshadow further delegation of powers to regional and local authorities, along the lines of the Spanish model; but central governments, particularly under Berlusconi, have shown tendencies towards a recentralisation of powers. The national second chamber (Senate) comprises 326 members, of which 315 are directly elected. Elections take place on the same day for both houses. Italy took part in the first direct elections to the European Parliament in 1979 (Dente 1991; CoE 2000a; Loughlin 2001b; Bobbio 2005).

Netherlands

Historically, Dutch towns and municipalities had enjoyed high degrees of autonomy and independence, but these were drastically reduced with the introduction of aspects of the Napoleonic model during the Batavian French Period (1795-1813). The 1848 Constitution

of the new Kingdom of the Netherlands provided for three tiers of decentralised government. However, there is a large degree of interdependence and consensus-building between the levels. Moves towards establishing a regional (upper intermediate level) level of government were made in the mid 1990s, but these remained indirectly elected as of the early 2000s. Provinces had been the historical building-blocks of the Dutch state, but suffered a reduction of administrative powers in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. Despite being seen as the most important level of sub-national government, local authorities are responsible only for implementing centrally set policies. In the half-century since 1950, central government efficiency initiatives reduced the number of municipalities by half, with a concurrent rise in average population. In the 1980s and 1990s, economic crisis and the influence of NPM led to decentralisation, but the delegated responsibilities were accompanied by reduced funding in order to promote increased efficiency. During the same period, responsibility for EU legislation tended to be concentrated at the national level, but the opportunities for influence by local actors increased. Although municipalities are involved in a wide range of service provision, the levels of locally sourced revenue are low by international standards. Municipalities do have some leeway in setting a local property tax, but their main revenue source is central government grants, frequently accompanied with strict controls on how the money is to be spent. Mayors have few formal powers but, being appointed by central government, often have the advantage of being politically well-connected. In 1998, it was decided to revise the organisation of municipal government, concentrating administrative powers to the executive and proposing the direct election of mayors (though it was not clear how successful this would actually be). The members of the national upper house (Senat) are indirectly elected. The Netherlands took part in the first direct elections to the European Parliament in 1979 (Bekke 1991; Hendriks 2001b; Denters and Klok 2005; CoE 2008).

Spain

Prior to the democratic elections of 1977, Spain had endured four decades of authoritarian rule and the absence of representative institutions. Following the death of General Franco, a new state structure developed which had four levels of administration. The 1978 Constitution marked a reversal of forty years of centralism, and provided for the creation of Autonomous Communities (AC; upper intermediate level). By 1983, 17 ACs had been established which enjoy different levels of autonomy, but all have similar institutions, including proportionally elected assemblies. The powers of the ACs and the central government are legally defined as being exclusive, shared, or concurrent; and funding is by a combination of local taxes, national taxes and grants, and EU solidarity funds. Legislation in the early 1990s provided for all ACs to attain a similar level of autonomy, and in several cases entailed a further transfer of powers from the central state. Members of the provincial (lower intermediate) councils are elected by the municipal councillors. Spanish municipalities themselves are 'barely regulated' by the Constitution (Alba and Navarro 2003:197). Although specific arrangements differ, each municipality has a directly elected council and an indirectly elected mayor. The municipal councillors derive about 40 per cent of their income from local taxes, the balance coming from both national and AC level grants and subsidies. Many of the municipalities are small, and, being regulated by both the central state and the AC, enjoy virtually no exclusive powers; indeed, whilst themselves being on the receiving end of powers transferred from the state, the ACs have tended to centralise their own powers at the expense of their respective municipalities. In the 1980s, the development of the Spanish welfare state led to increased resources and responsibilities for local governments, but this expansion was subsequently limited by financial constraints. In the 1990s, the municipalities campaigned for greater competencies and autonomy, but resulting legislation made provision for only very limited changes. The national upper house

(Senate) comprises 257 members, of which 208 are directly elected (with elections being held simultaneously with those for the lower house). Spain joined the EU in 1986, held a one-off election to the European parliament the following year, and voted with the rest of the Union in the 1989 elections (Mateo 1991; CoE 1997; Aja 2001; Alba and Navarro 2003).

Sweden

Although sharing a history interwoven with the other Nordic countries, Sweden was created without the influence of foreign occupation. Still a relatively poor country at the end of the nineteenth century, industrialisation fuelled by the exploitation of rich primary resources led to major social changes in the early twentieth century. The post war years saw the growth of a generous welfare state and a large public sector. The county (intermediate) and local levels of government are constitutionally protected[31], and both levels enjoy wide autonomy over a wide range of functions: especially after decentralisation reforms beginning in the 1930s. The directly elected county councils are mainly responsible for health care and regional development; but have no direct authority over their municipalities. Both of the sub-national levels of government have the constitutionally protected right to levy local taxes, can charge for services, and also receive direct grants from the central government. Although declining growth in the economy and other financial pressures in the late 1970s led to organisational changes, an increased delegation of responsibilities for service provision actually led to greater local government autonomy. However, in the early 1990s, Sweden faced an economic downturn and rising unemployment, and the central government imposed a short term freeze on local tax increases. Local government structure was subject to reforms, growth

---

[31] But this status did not prevent drastic reductions in the *number* of municipalities in the 1950s and the 1970s

in the public sector was halted, and various rounds of privatisation and deregulation were implemented. Despite this, Swedish local government retains autonomy over borrowing and taxation, exercises considerable powers, and remains free to take on activities not otherwise regulated by central government. There are no local mayors, and ultimate decision-making authority rests with the full council. Since 1976, national, county, and municipal elections are held on the same day. The national second chamber was abolished in 1970. Sweden joined the European Union in 1995, elected members of the European Parliament in the same year, and then joined the other member states in subsequent elections - which are held separately from national, county, and local elections (Gustafsson 1991; Lidström 2001b; Baldersheim and Ståhlberg 2002; Rose and Ståhlberg 2005).

Characteristics of Contemporary Sub-National Government

As the foregoing country profiles show, the arrangements of sub-national government in all countries have been subject to domestic, European, and international influences. In general, the post-war years saw substantial growth in the size of the welfare state, which led to an increase in scope of activities of sub-national government. However, societal and economic changes, especially since the 1970s, led to waves of structural reform in most Western European countries. There was a general move towards using NPM practices to gain efficiencies in service provision, along with a greater involvement of the private sector and the development of more complex patterns of decision-making (Denters and Rose 2005a). But, these changes were introduced at different times and with varying degrees of enthusiasm.

Although most countries have tried to increase the size of municipalities (and thus reduce their number), substantial differences remain in the populations served by each level of government – not just between countries, but within them, as shown in Table

70

3.1. Some countries, often as a result of EU influences, have introduced or strengthened a regional tier of government; in others, though, the regional level remains little more than an administrative or statistical unit. Clearly, a great deal of variety exists in the sub-national structure of government, and in the relative powers each level may exercise. However, a number of countries share some similarities which, as the following section will show, has led some authors to identify those groups of countries which share certain characteristics.

Typologies of Sub-national Governments

An early attempt to characterise the different local government types in European countries was made by Page and Goldsmith (1987). They distinguished three broad dimensions: the functions assigned to lower levels of government; the access of local government to central government; and their discretion, in terms of legal powers and local taxation. On these measures, Page and Goldsmith detected a broad north-south difference in the characteristics of local government types - with Britain and the Scandinavian countries comprising the Northern group, and France, Italy, and Spain in the Southern group. To Page and Goldsmith these differences, at least in part, appeared to reflect different historical routes taken towards centralisation and decentralisation.

Although subsequent studies have suggested increasing the number of categories (discussed further below), often prompted by the difficulty of accommodating the British form of local government into any European typology, Page and Goldsmith's approach remains a good starting point. Indeed, despite various criticisms of the Page and Goldsmith typology, and the changes which have occurred in a number of countries since they conducted their analysis (in particular the impact of New Public Management and Europeanisation), John (2001) largely found in favour of a broad north-south distinction.

However, in developing a more nuanced approach based on aspects of governance, John (2001) provided a more detailed basis on which to characterise the local government systems of the Western European countries. Of particular interest to the current study, John attempted to assign relative importance to sub-national government bodies in terms of their average populations, and the number of people they employed compared to central government. More detailed and up-to-date data for the levels of public employment at each government level have become available since John's analysis, and are included in Table 3.2.[32] If the number of employees is indeed an indication of the relative power of a sub-national level of government, we would expect that this would be reflected in a higher turnout in elections: Further, as suggested in Chapter 2, public employees may well feel that there is more at stake in an election than would employees in the private sector; providing a second reason to expect higher turnout where there are higher number of public employees.

However, the simple measure of the number of employees tells us little about the autonomy which the local elected body may, or may not, enjoy. For instance, central government may hold the purse strings, and allocate funds to the local body which is ring-fenced for tightly prescribed activities. In order to estimate the degree of autonomy enjoyed by the local body, Table 3.2 also includes details of the taxes levied by sub-national governments as a proportion of all taxation in each country; and the proportion that these taxes represent as a share of all local government income (the balance coming predominantly from central government grants or various revenue sharing arrangements). Finally, some authors have examined the power relations between the local elected body and other levels of government, and the particular role of the local

---

[32] As noted by previous authors, it can be difficult to compile precise figures. For example, responsibilities for service provision, such as health, may be shared across levels. However, the aim here is to establish general trends.

mayor in these relationships. Heinelt and Hlepas (2006) drew on previous work and combined categories of both vertical and horizontal power relations in order to develop a typology of leadership types for each European country. Based on nine separate variables measuring different institutional factors, they then constructed an overall index of mayoral strength (Hesse and Sharpe 1991; Mouritzen and Svara 2002; Denters and Rose 2005b; Heinelt and Hlepas 2006:38). Their indices of mayoral strength are included in Table 3.2. The effects on turnout of taxation and mayoral strength, along with the relative levels of public employment, will be investigated in Chapter 6.

Table 3.1 : Population Characteristics of Sub-national Government Units

	Belgium	England	Finland	France (1)	Greece	Ireland	Italy	Netherlands	Spain (1)	Sweden
Higher intermediate units	3			22	13		20		17	
Population highest	5,865,000			10,660,000	3,523,000		8,989,000		7,315,000	
Population smallest	952,000			250,000	193,000		120,000		268,000	
Population average	3,377,000			2,573,000	789,000		2,878,000		2,380,000	
Lower Intermediate units	10			96	50		95	12	50	20 (3)
Population highest	1,629,000			2,531,000	3,523,000			3,460,000	5,182,000	1,873,000
Population smallest	240,000			73,000	21,000			379,000	94,400	127,000
Population average	918,000			590,000	201,000		559,000	1,367,000	809,000	451,000
Local units	589	455 (4)	348	36,000	1,033	34 (2)	8,100	443	8,097	290
Population highest	459,000	1,318,000	568,000		772,000	482,000	2,791,000	743,000	3,030,000	765,000
Population smallest	92	15,000	116		272	25,000	30	947	4	2,590
Population average	17,000	~100,000	13,000	1,578	11,200	~100,000	7,100	37,000	4,997	31,000

Notes: (1) 'Metropolitan' i.e. excluding the overseas departments, territories or enclaves; (2) County councils and county boroughs; (3) Excluding Gotland where county council duties are performed by the municipality; (4) UK, all types, excluding London.

Sources: Council of Europe reports various years.

Table 3.2 : Employment and Taxation Characteristics of Sub-national Governmental Units

Country	Population (000s)	All Government Employment % of population	Local + Regional Employment as % of Total Government Employment	Employees as % of population			Taxes as % of total taxes		Autonomous taxes as % of income		Mayoral Strength
				Central Government	Regional Government	Local Government	Regional Government	Local Government	Regional Government	Local Government	
Belgium	10193	21	70.1	2.7	2.7	3.5	23	5	57	73	8
England (1)	58868	17	56.3	3.7		4.7		4		13	5/8.5
Finland	5176	25	76.3	2.9		9.4		22		60	
France	59187	25	45.7	5.9	1.8	3.2		10		49	12
Greece	10975	18	10.2	7.1		0.8		1		12	10
Ireland	3804	17	11.0	7.0		0.9		2		26	5
Italy	57692	17	45.5	3.7	2.2	0.9	11	5	28	35	10
Netherlands	15924	13	72.2	1.8		4.6		4		12	5
Spain	40229	12	58.8	2.3	2.0	1.2	18	9	33	46	11
Sweden	8868	26	80.7	2.6	8.5	2.5		32		74	3
	Local unit average population						Local + Regional				
Southern (Franco)	8400	17	46	4.3			16.4	6		43	
Northern	56000	20	59	3.6				13		37	
Anglo-Saxon	100000	17	34	5.3				3		20	
Scandinavian	22000	26	79	2.8				27		67	

Note (1) data for UK. **Northern**: England, Finland; Ireland; Netherlands; Sweden; **Southern** (Franco): Belgium; France; Greece; Italy; Spain. **Anglo-Saxon**: England, Ireland; **Nordic**: Finland; Sweden (John 2001).   Sources: (OECD 1997; Heinelt and Hlepas 2006; OECD 2007; EUROSTAT 2009b; ILO 2009)

Some broad North-South differences are apparent in Table 3.2. However, the 'Northern' category contains two quite distinct sub-groups: countries with an 'Anglo-Saxon' tradition of government (the UK and Ireland (*sic*) – see Loughlin (2001: 5); and the Nordic countries of Finland and Sweden[33]. When these are examined separately (Table 3.3), a more distinct pattern emerges: The Southern (Franco) group countries have, on average, low local unit populations, moderate sub-national public sector employment, moderate sub-national taxation and tax autonomy. The Anglo-Saxon group countries have, on average, large local unit size, low sub-national public employment, low sub-national taxation and tax autonomy. The Nordic group countries have, on average, moderate local unit size, high sub-national public employment, and high local taxation and tax autonomy.

Table 3.3 : A Typology of Sub-national Government

Group	Local unit population	Sub-national Public Employment	Sub-national Taxation	Sub-national Tax Autonomy
Southern (Franco)	LOW	MODERATE	MODERATE	MODERATE
Northern	HIGH	MODERATE	MODERATE	LOW
Anglo-Saxon	HIGH	LOW	LOW	LOW
Nordic	MODERATE	HIGH	HIGH	HIGH
Central-European	MODERATE	HIGH	LOW	LOW

---

[33] Note that when we assign Northern group countries to Anglo-Saxon or Nordic groups, we are left with the Netherlands. Indeed, it has been suggested that the Netherlands should actually be considered as part of a Middle European variant group, along with Germany and Austria (see John 2001:Ch 2).

Variations within countries

It should be noted that these measures of the relative importance and autonomy of sub-national elected bodies are ascribed to the *country* under consideration, and, as such, do not take account of differences between, say, all of the local councils within a country. More generally, various sub-national governments have taken advantage of the opportunities presented by changes at the European level to increase their involvement in, and their influence on, policy-making at the national and supra-national levels (see Loughlin (2001c); Hooghe and Marks (1996)). Developing measurements of every individual elected body within each country is beyond the scope of the current research. However, we are able to take account of some differences between *regions* within countries by adapting the work of Keating (1998), who distinguished the regions of European countries in terms of culture, identity, government institutions, civil society, and economic regionalism. Drawing on Keating's approach, and converting his descriptors into numerical values, Table 3.4 characterises the individual regions of European countries. The total score is thus a measure of the varying strength of regionalism in different geographical locations within a country. In Chapter 6, we will examine whether this regionalism score is associated with turnout, and whether any such association differs, depending on the type of election under consideration.

Table 3.4 : Regionalism Indicators

Country	Region	Culture	Identity	Government institutions	Civil society	Economic regionalism	Total
Belgium	Flanders	4	4	4	4	4	20
Belgium	Wallonia	4	2	2	2	4	14
Finland	All	1	1	1	1	1	5
France	Alsace	2	2	1	1	1	7
France	Brittany	4	3	1	2	4	14
France	Corsica	4	3	1	2	4	14
France	Languedoc	2	2	1	1	1	7
France	Nord-Pas de Calais	1	1	2	1	1	6
France	Other regions	1	1	1	1	1	5
France	Rhone Alpes	1	1	2	1	1	6
Greece	All	0	0	0	0	0	0
Ireland	All	0	0	0	0	0	0
Italy	Aosta Valley	4	4	2	2	2	14
Italy	Emilia Romagna	1	1	2	1	1	6
Italy	Friuli-Venezia Giulia	4	4	2	2	2	14
Italy	Other regions	1	1	1	1	1	5
Italy	Sardinia	4	4	2	2	2	14
Italy	Sicily	4	4	2	2	2	14
Italy	Trentino Alto Adige-Sudtirol	4	4	2	2	2	14
Netherlands	All	1	1	1	1	1	5
Spain	Andalucia	3	3	3	2.5	2.5	14
Spain	Aragon	2	2	3	2.5	2.5	12
Spain	Basque Country	4	4	4	2.5	2.5	17
Spain	Galicia	4	4	4	2.5	2.5	17
Spain	Navarre	3	3	3	2.5	2.5	14
Spain	Valencia	2	2	3	2.5	2.5	12
Spain	Other ACs	1.5	1.5	2	1	1	7
Sweden	All	1	1	1	1	1	5
England	All	0	1	0	0	1	2

Source: adapted from Keating (1998)

Election Systems and Rules

The previous sections in this chapter have provided some historical background of the various levels of government in each country, and characterised each country in terms of the size of sub-national governmental units, the number of employees, and the taxation arrangements. This section addresses selected aspects of the systems and rules by which national and sub-national governments are elected, with a particular emphasis on the institutional determinants of voting which we identified in Chapter 2, and which will be included in subsequent analyses.

National Legislatures

Table 3.5 summarises selected characteristics of the electoral systems for national legislatures, along with the legal threshold, where applicable, and the size of the assembly. Also included are measures of disproportionality and the Effective Number of Parliamentary Parties (ENPP), both based on averages of the three most recent elections for each country. As can be seen, and as suggested by previous research, there is a substantial difference between the degree of disproportionality between PR and non-PR electoral systems, reinforcing the point that, what matters most is whether the system is PR or non-PR; and that variations on the PR theme have relatively minor influence on the degree of disproportionality. The effect of the electoral system on the number of political parties is perhaps less marked, though there is a tendency for PR systems to be associated with a larger number of political parties in the legislature.

Table 3.5 : Electoral Systems for National Legislatures

Country	Compulsory Voting	Weekend Voting	Proportional Representation	Legal Threshold %	Disproportionality Index (1)	ENPP (1)	Seats
Belgium	Yes	Yes	Yes	5	3.8	8.0	150
England (6)	No	No	No	-	17.3	2.3	646
Finland	No	Yes	Yes	0	3.2	5.1	200
France	No	Yes	No	-	17.8	2.8	577
Greece	No (2)	Yes	Yes	3	7.0	2.3	300
Ireland	No	No (4)	Yes (5)	-	6.2	6.2	165
Italy	No (3)	Yes	Yes	4	6.5	6.5	617
Netherlands	No	No	Yes	0	1.0	5.4	150
Spain	No	Yes	Yes	0	4.9	2.5	350
Sweden	No	Yes	Yes	4	2.3	4.2	349

(1) Calculated from Gallagher (2009) (2) Previously compulsory until age of 70; but no one ever prosecuted. Administrative sanctions officially lifted in 2000 (Malkopoulou ; IDEA 2004; IDEA 2009; Inter-Parliamentary Union 2009b) (3) Since 1993 (IDEA 2009) (4) EP elections held on weekend (5) STV (6) Disproportionality, ENPP and number of seats refer to the whole UK

Sources: (Inter-Parliamentary Union 2009b); (Gallagher 2009); National Government websites

Other elections

Although up-to-date and accurate information on various countries' arrangements for local elections have often been hard to come by, the Council of Europe (CDLR and Nohlen 1998) provided a useful summary of local election procedures, the number and average size of constituencies, eligibility to vote, and so forth. More recent work, by van der Kolk (2007), provides more extensive and up-to-date details of the relevant systems. Table 3.6 summarises features of the electoral systems used in each country for elections other than the national legislature; that is, for the upper house, regional, and local elections. Table 3.7 presents information for the European Parliament elections (although all member states of the EU now use a PR system for elections to the European Parliament, substantial variation exists within this general theme. For details, see Farrell and Scully, (2005)).

Two of our countries also have directly elected presidents with substantive powers: France and Finland (Although changes to the Finnish constitution in 2000 reduced the formal powers of the President, but the head of state retains the authority of a popular mandate and a high level of legitimacy among the population (Arter 2008)). In both countries, these elections take place on the weekend; and in neither country is voting in presidential elections compulsory. Naturally, since only a single candidate can be elected, proportional representation cannot be used.

As can be seen from Tables 3.4 and 3.5, where a country uses Proportional Representation for elections to the national legislature, it is usual for this system to be used for other elections. Likewise, where a majoritarian or plurality system is used, the tendency is for this to be used across other elections. There are, however, exceptions. For example, in England and France, elections to the national legislature are not conducted using Proportional Representation, whereas in both countries, elections to the European Parliament do use PR.

It should also be noted that certain electoral systems, such as those which have been used in municipal elections in France, Greece, and Italy, are *specifically designed* to provide the party winning the largest share of votes with a 'winner's bonus' of seats (for example, by first awarding 50 per cent of the available seats to the party with a majority or plurality of the votes; then by proportionally distributing the remaining seats to *all* parties, *including* the party with the plurality or majority). Because these systems combine both majoritarian (or plurality) and PR systems *in the same constituency*, Massicotte and Blais (1999) termed such systems 'fusion'.

Table 3.6 : Characteristics of Electoral Systems for National and Sub-National Elections

Country	Compulsory Voting	Weekend Voting	Upper House/Directly Elected	Regional Electoral System	Local/Municipal Electoral System
Belgium	Yes	Yes	Yes/Partial (1)	PR	PR
England	No	No	Yes/No	-	Plurality
Finland	No	Yes	No	-	PR
France	No	Yes	Yes/No	PR (2 Round post 1998)	Fusion
Greece	No	Yes	No	-	Fusion
Ireland	No	No	Yes/No	-	STV
Italy	No	Yes	Yes/Yes (1)	Fusion	Fusion
Netherlands	No	No	Yes/No	-	PR
Spain	No	Yes	Yes/Yes (1)	PR	PR
Sweden	No	Yes	No	PR	PR

(1) Upper House elections in Belgium, Italy, and Spain held simultaneously with Lower House elections using Proportional Representation

Sources:
Country reports from Council of Europe (LOREG-CoE Various);
(Inter-Parliamentary Union 2009a; Inter-Parliamentary Union 2009b);
(van der Kolk 2007); (CDLR and Nohlen 1998)

Table 3.7 : Characteristics of Electoral Systems for European Parliament Elections

Country	Compulsory Voting	Weekend Voting	Legal Threshold	Constituencies
Belgium	Yes	Yes	0	3
England	No	No	0	9
Finland	No	Yes	0	1
France	No	Yes	5	8 (since 2003)
Greece	No	Yes	0	1
Ireland	No	No	-	4
Italy	No	Yes	4	5
Netherlands	No	No	0	1
Spain	No	Yes	0	1
Sweden	No	Yes	4	1

Note: Since 1999, all countries use Proportional Representation for EP elections (see Farrell and Scully (2005))

Sources: European Parliament (2004); European Parliament (2002)

Conclusions

As we have seen in this chapter, national histories differ, and so does the organisation of territorial politics within countries. Often, the existence and shape of different national, local, and intermediate level governments have deep seated historical and cultural roots (Prodi 2002). Sub-national governments are often caught in a dilemma: whilst they may have specific powers of their own, it is usually the case that they are also responsible for the implementation of policies and programmes which are actually defined at the

national level (Thoenig 2006). Thus, it has often been the case that each apparent settlement has merely served as the starting point for the next round of negotiations (Tilly 2006). These processes of change are likely to continue, in response to further societal changes from within, as well as a result of external influences, be they European or international.

However, for the period covered in the current study, we have been able to summarise important aspects of each level of government in each country, and the means by which they are elected. These characteristics include those institutional determinants of voting which we identified in Chapter 2. In addition, we have provided information about the levels of public employment, tax raising powers, the powers of local mayors for each country, and the degree of regionalism within each country. This will enable us to investigate whether these factors are associated with different levels of turnout.

In the next chapter, we will turn our attention to turnout data and our socio-demographic variables, and the construction of the dataset which will be used in our subsequent regression analyses.

Chapter 4 : Data and methods

Introduction

The aim of the current study is to investigate the effects of selected institutional and socio-demographic characteristics on turnout in elections. Previous comparative studies into turnout in elections which have used aggregate data have predominantly been limited to the country level of analysis. Although such research has provided valuable insights, especially into the institutional factors which influence electoral participation, country level data is naturally of limited use when we seek to understand the variations in turnout within countries. To enable us to delve into these regional variations in turnout, the current study will use an original dataset based on sub-national geographical units. This increases substantially the number of cases available for analysis, and, as will be shown, also increases the amount of variation in the values of each of the variables. This increase in variation is, of course, a double-edged sword: without variance, there would be little to be explained; but by increasing the range of values we may also expose the limitations in the predictive powers of the very variables we have selected. Further, we include several different types of elections, allowing us to systematically investigate any differences in the influence that each of our variables may have from one type of election to another, whilst maintaining the same geographical basis for each election, and the same set of measures for each of our independent variables.

This chapter first considers the time period we will using, along with the countries and the types of elections which will be included in the subsequent analyses. Previous comparative research into election turnout has often included both developed and less-

developed countries; and it was appropriate for those studies to include variables which were closely related to a country's level of development. However, we show that variables such as the Human Development Index (or its component measures) would be of limited use when seeking to differentiate among our group of Western European countries.

Next, we provide some background to the territorial units we will be using, and the process we used in the matching of turnout data to these units. We then define each of our variables, and, based on our literature review in Chapter 2, state our hypotheses. We then present summaries of turnout for the different elections which are held in each country, and show that turnout aggregated to the national level often conceals considerable regional variations. Summary statistics for the socio-demographic variables are then provided; and these too indicate substantial regional variation within countries. The chapter concludes with a description of the methods we will use to analyse the data and test our hypotheses.

Case selection

Time frame

Our study will focus on elections between 1995 and 2008. Although *country-level* turnout data for many countries have long been used in comparative studies of electoral behaviour, it is only in the last decade or so that various European countries have begun making available official turnout data in greater geographical detail. The start point is also influenced by the nature of the socio-demographic data, which is predominantly drawn from the census data compiled by Eurostat. In the member-states of the

European Union, full censuses are carried out decennially, and the most recent round of censuses for which data are currently available was conducted in 2000-2001.

A mid-1990s start point also has two other advantages. Firstly, the relatively recent start-point means, compared to many previous studies, that we are dealing with a fairly short period of time, which serves to minimise the effects of possible long-term or inter-generational changes in turnout (Blais 2000; Franklin 2004). Secondly, as described in Chapter 3, several European countries conducted major reorganisations of sub-national government structures in the 1980s. Sometimes this involved the substantial re-drawing of boundaries, often accompanied by amalgamation of pre-existing geographical units. Such changes always present challenges for those trying to compile a coherent dataset; and, even when the arithmetic is technically possible, questions often remain as to the changed nature of what it is that voters are voting for (although see Morlan 1984 who reported no significant changes between turnout before and after amalgamation in a number of countries). Further, in some countries, a whole new level of elected government was created, leading not simply to a new stream of election results, but also raising questions as to the possible effects that the existence of a new level of government may have on the electorate's view of the relative importance of other elected bodies in the country. Such major boundary changes or the creation of new levels of government were generally completed before the period covered by the present study.

Countries and Elections

Comparative studies which have sought to explain differences in aggregate levels of turnout across a broad range of countries have occasionally included dummy variables for continental regions; however, as Siaroff and Merer pointed out, providing we have

sufficient cases, there is no reason that we cannot seek to investigate variations *within* a particular continent (Siaroff and Merer 2002:916). Indeed, in an investigation into the factors which may influence voter behaviour, there are good reasons to limit ourselves to a group of countries which share a number of similarities: as was shown in Chapter 2, several of the suggested socio-demographic determinants of voting are (often explicitly) linked to notions of how 'developed' a country is. By focusing on a set of Western European countries which all share a similar level of development, we can ascertain whether such determinants retain their applicability in explaining variations in turnout.

Further, as all are Western European countries and, indeed, all are members of the European Union, we effectively control for wider geographical variations which may exist; thus, we are better able to isolate the effects of the independent variables. For example, it has previously been shown (Blais 2000) that, even when controlling for various socioeconomic factors, there are substantial and significant differences in turnout between continents, which are perhaps due to differences in political culture.

Although 'most of Europe's outline is determined by its extensive sea coasts' (Davies 1997:8), what constitutes *Western* Europe remains open to debate, and depends on whether we use a cultural, political, or geographic basis for our definition (for example, see Budge and Newton 1997; Heywood, Jones et al. 2002). Western Europe here is meant in contrast to those countries previously part of the Eastern Bloc, comprising the Soviet Union and its satellites in Central and Eastern Europe.

Even by this restricted definition, not all Western European countries are included in the current study. This is largely due to issues of data availability. Thus, at the time of data collection, data were not available for certain countries or, in the case of Germany, not for the entire country: responsibility for conducting elections, and for collating and

publishing electoral data, rests with the individual *Länder* in Germany. Unfortunately, not all *Länder* exhibited the same level of enthusiasm for making data available. For similar reasons of data-availability, it was not possible to obtain geographically complete data for municipal elections in Italy. Thus, Italian municipal turnout is not included in the dataset.

For most countries, the electoral boundaries for lower levels of governments (for example, municipal councils) 'nest' perfectly within those of higher levels (for example, Lower and/or Upper Intermediate level governments), *and* correspond exactly with the NUTS classification. However, such a neat correspondence does not always exist. For example, in Ireland, the electoral boundaries differ from one election type to another, and do not always coincide with the boundaries of the NUTS units. Consequently, it was not possible to include meaningful turnout data for Irish elections to the European Parliament.

Clearly, it would have been preferable to have had complete data for all types of elections in each of the then EU15 member states. However, our aim is not to draw general conclusions about voting behaviour across the EU15 as a whole. Rather, we wish to investigate whether and how turnout varies from place to place, and between different types of elections. As we shall see in later chapters, the current dataset covers sufficient countries and elections to allow us to detect the differences, as well as the similarities, which exist.

The ten countries which are included in this study are: Belgium, England, Finland, France, Greece, Ireland, Italy, the Netherlands, Spain, and Sweden. We should note that two of the countries included here, France and Spain, each possess territories which lie outside of our definition of 'Europe', but which are nonetheless considered part of the

metropolitan country for various administrative purposes, and which do participate in elections[34]. In the case of Spain, the territories of *Melilla* and *Ceuta* lie on the Mediterranean coast of Morocco. Registered voters in both of these enclaves participate in national elections and elections for the European Parliament, as well as for their own municipalities. In the case of France, the list is more extensive, and comprises several *collectivités d'outre-mer* scattered across the surface of the globe – more familiarly known by the now unofficial designation of DOM-TOMs (*Département d'Outre-Mer – Territoire d'Outre Mer*). The specific legal arrangements vary, but most of these overseas territories not only hold elections for their own municipalities and cantons, but also participate in those for the French National Assembly and the Presidency.

Further, the French overseas *départements* (Guadeloupe, Guyana, Reunion, and Martinique) also take part in elections for the European Parliament (Ministère de l'Intérieur 2006; Préfet de La Réunion 2009; Ministère de l'Intérieur nd). Although election results are generally available, these overseas territories of France and Spain are *not* included in the dataset used in the present analysis. In part this is due to rather a large number of gaps in the socio-demographic data; but, more importantly, these territories clearly lie beyond what is normally considered as 'Europe', and have their own very distinctive local cultures, traditions, and patterns of turnout in elections[35].

Overseas territories aside, there would be little debate as to whether these countries are all 'European', but there may be questions (as noted in Chapter 3), historically at least, as to how long they may have been considered as belonging to 'Western' Europe,

---

[34] We also note that Gibraltar has, since 2004, been included as part of SW England for the sake of EP elections (though not for UK municipal or parliamentary elections). We do not disaggregate Gibraltar from the turnout for SW England; in part because the electorate (around 20,000) represents less than one per cent of the total for SW England (around four million).
[35] See (Johns and Brockington 2011)

particularly in the case of Finland, and perhaps of Greece. However, at least since the late 1970s, all of these countries share important similarities, as will be discussed in the next section.

Democracy and Development

Since 1972, Freedom House has produced an annual survey of *Freedom in the World*; described as 'the Michelin Guide to democracy's development' by the Wall Street Journal. All of the countries in the current study have been designated *'Free'* in the Freedom House classification since at least as early as 1978. This classification is based on a combination of scores for 'Political Rights' and 'Civil Liberties'. 'Political Rights' comprises various measures concerning the electoral process, political pluralism and participation, and the functioning of government. All of countries examined here have scored '1' (the highest level on a scale of 1 to 7) for Political Rights since at least as early as 1989[36] (Freedom House 2009). Clearly, although the countries may have very different histories, by the period covered by the present study, all could be considered as 'democratic'.

The countries also share similar levels of development: Table 4.1 provides details of the composite Human Development Index (HDI) score for each country, along with the values for contributory measures of Life Expectancy, Adult Literacy, and GDP.

---

[36] For Civil Liberties, the picture is not quite as rosy: although Finland, Ireland, Netherlands, and Sweden have consistently scored '1' from 1989 onwards, we have to wait until 2002 for the remaining countries, with the exception of Greece, to achieve this status. Greece, at the time of writing, is still rated '2' for civil liberties; a score it shares with Italy, which dropped from '1' to '2' in 2003 and has since remained at that level (Freedom House 2009).

Table 4.1 : UNDP Development Indicators as at 2000

Country	HDI (0 – 1 scale)	Life Expectancy at Birth (years)	Adult Literacy (%)	GDP Per Capita (PPP US$ 000s)
Belgium	.863	77.8	99.0[2]	32
England[1]	.823	77.8	99.0[2]	31
Finland	.825	77.6	99.0[2]	30
France	.834	78.9	99.0[2]	31
Greece	.784	77.5	96.0	22
Ireland	.855	76.8	99.0[2]	34
Italy	.825	79.5	98.4	31
Netherlands	.868	78.2	99.0[2]	36
Spain	.828	79.2	96.5	28
Sweden	.889	79.7	99.0[2]	32

Notes:
(1) Data for United Kingdom;
(2) Estimated figure used by UNDP for calculation of HDI.

Source : UN Development Programme (UNDP 2011)

As can be seen from Table 4.1, with the possible exception of Greece, all of the countries have very similar scores on both the composite Human Development Index, and on the individual measures of Life Expectancy, Adult Literacy, and GDP. Indeed, all are classed as countries with 'Very High Human Development' by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP 2011). However, as will be shown later in this chapter, differences appear between countries when we use alternative measures; or when we look below the country level of measurement and examine the characteristics of regions within countries.

Although all of the countries can be categorised as *highly developed* and as being *established democracies*, as was shown in Chapter 3, their historical paths to this status have differed markedly, as do their contemporary structures of sub-national government. Our set of countries includes examples from each of the various categories

which have been used in typologies of local government types. For example, we have both 'northern' (Finland, Ireland, the Netherlands, Sweden, and England) and 'southern' (Belgium, France, Greece, Italy and Spain) types of local government structures as identified by Page and Goldsmith (1987; supplemented by John 2001). In addition, we have examples of the more nuanced categories developed by some authors: such as 'Anglo-American' (Ireland and England); 'Nordic' (Finland and Sweden); or 'Middle European' (the Netherlands) (see John 2001; Denters and Rose 2005a).

Although all of these countries hold elections for local and national governments, and for the European Parliament, some also have direct elections for a President, for an Upper House, or for one or two intermediate levels of sub-national government. In most cases, we have been able to include at least one set of results from each country for each of these types of election. This will allow us to investigate whether the variables have consistent effects on different types of elections, and to ascertain whether there are country to country differences in other factors which influence turnout.

As noted, all of the countries in our dataset members of the European Union during the period covered in the study: Belgium, France, Italy and the Netherlands were among the founding members; Ireland, and England (as part of the UK membership) were part of the first enlargement in 1973; Greece and Spain were part of the Mediterranean enlargement of the 1980s; and Finland and Sweden were part of the fourth enlargement in 1995 (Bache and George 2006). That all of these countries are member states of the EU is an important consideration for three reasons: Firstly, it enables the inclusion of turnout data for EP elections and the comparison of differences in turnout between these and other elections in a country's election calendar. Secondly, all of the countries have been affected by the European Union's *Regional Policy*, which has contributed, at the least, to the creation of broadly comparable administrative and statistical regions in

most of the countries, and in some cases to the creation of a regional tier of elected government. Thirdly, all of the countries contribute to and are included in the *Eurostat* database. As will be discussed in the following section, this has the important consequence that data are not only available, but share commonality in the way they are measured.

EUROSTAT and Territorial Units

With its origins in the European Coal and Steel Community of the 1950s, the Statistical Office of the European Community (SOEC) became a Directorate General of the European Commission when the European Community was founded in 1958. An early task for the SOEC was to compile statistics in order to compare the standards of living of coal and steel workers in the member countries. In order to do this, it was necessary to shift from the previous reliance on statistics supplied by the respective national governments, which were piecemeal and compiled using different methodologies. The name was changed to *Eurostat* in 1973 to avoid the difficulties of using different versions of the abbreviation in the various official languages of the Community. At around the same time, work began on achieving convergence in the definitions and questions used by each member country in their ten-yearly census; and, in response to the Community's then recently created Regional Policy, a Division for Regional Statistics and Accounts was established (de Michelis and Chantraine 2003).

Since the 1970s, *Eurostat* has used a common classification of territorial units for regional statistics (NUTS: *Nomenclature d'Unités Territoriales Statistiques)* which has three levels, each with recommended minimum and maximum populations as shown in Table 4.2 (EUROSTAT 2009a).

Table 4.2 : Recommended Population Size for NUTS Levels

NUTS level	Minimum Population	Maximum Population
1	3 000 000	7 000 000
2	800 000	3 000 000
3	150 000	800 000

Each country typically applies the NUTS classification to existing institutional regions, which themselves are the result of historical and administrative factors particular to that country. However, because it is often the case that a country does not have three, pre-existing, institutional levels corresponding to the NUTS population thresholds, countries have sometimes created an additional level for statistical purposes, but which has no real administrative function (nor an elected body).

For example, in the case of France, shown in Figure 4.1, the NUTS3 units typically coincide with the historically pre-existing boundaries of the *départements*, which have their own, directly elected councils. The NUTS2 units correspond to the French regions created in the decentralisation reforms of the 1980s, and which have had their own elected councils since 1986 (Le Galès 2008). The French NUTS1 territorial units did not correspond to any pre-existing administrative units, and there are no elected governments for this level (Maps of NUTS units for all countries are provided in the Appendix). In England, too, the NUTS1 units are mere statistical entities, and do not correspond to any directly elected body. In contrast to France, in England, this is also the case for the NUTS2 units (there being no intermediate level of government between the

national and the municipal). Further, the NUTS1 units in England do not usually correspond either to the electoral constituencies for the national government, nor to the local government units. This means that, aside from requiring some manipulation of the turnout data (see the following section), NUTS2 and NUTS3 units in England are functionally different to those in France: in France, the NUTS2 and NUTS3 levels correspond exactly to the levels of regional and departmental elections, respectively; whereas in England this is not the case.

This raises a potential question when comparing turnout between countries: in France, for example, when the NUTS unit corresponds exactly with the geographical area from which an elected body draws its support, it *may* be expected that turnout would be higher than where a region is simply an administrative construct that has no direct geographical correspondence with an elected body. We could seek to control for this potential effect by means of a variable which captured any such functional-geographical relationship. However, as we shall see in Chapter 6, we will investigate the effects of a variable that does comprise regional aspects of, among other things, government institutions. Further, because, in Chapter 8, we examine *each* election type *within* individual countries, we do not consider that including a specific variable to account for any potential effects of geographical and governmental correspondence to be necessary.

Clearly, using data based on the NUTS classification provides the opportunity to investigate patterns of turnout below the country level of analysis. Nonetheless, the nature of the Eurostat data also imposes some limitations. Although significant progress has been made in bringing a degree of uniformity to the data supplied to Eurostat, some differences remain in which questions and measures that individual countries employ

when conducting their censuses. For example, although both Ireland and the UK collect official statistics on ethnicity and religion, this practice is not the norm in Western Europe; thus, no such data are collected in Belgium, France, Greece, Italy, the Netherlands, Spain, and Sweden (Simon 2007). Given that one of our stated aims is to maintain the same set of variables for all countries, it follows that we cannot include variables which take account of ethnicity or religion. This, of course, is a limitation which would apply even if we restricted our investigation to the country level of analysis.

However, even with those socio-demographic data that are collected by all countries, these data were not always available at the NUTS3 level. Thus, for Belgium, variables are measured at the NUTS2 level, rather than the NUTS3 level. Whilst this means that we are able to use data for sub-national units, these units are not always of comparable size in terms of their population. Although NUTS regions are clearly smaller than countries, it may be argued that these regions are not small enough to provide the detail necessary to investigate associations between turnout in elections and the socio-demographic charactersitics of the electorate. This may be true, but, if so, then surely the problem is even more pronounced when using country level data. Indeed, as we have seen, although NUTS level data may not be perfect for our needs, in many cases, country-level data suffers similar limitations, often more seriously so.

Clearly, using data based on the NUTS classification has some limitations. However, we consider that these are outweighed by the advantages such data offer; notably that they allow a comparison between countries and the opportunity to investigate turnout differences within countries.

In this section, we have seen that our socio-demographic data is based on the Eurostat NUTS classification.

The following section describes how turnout data for different elections are compiled for each of the NUTS units.

Figure 4.1 : NUTS Level 3 Units of Mainland France
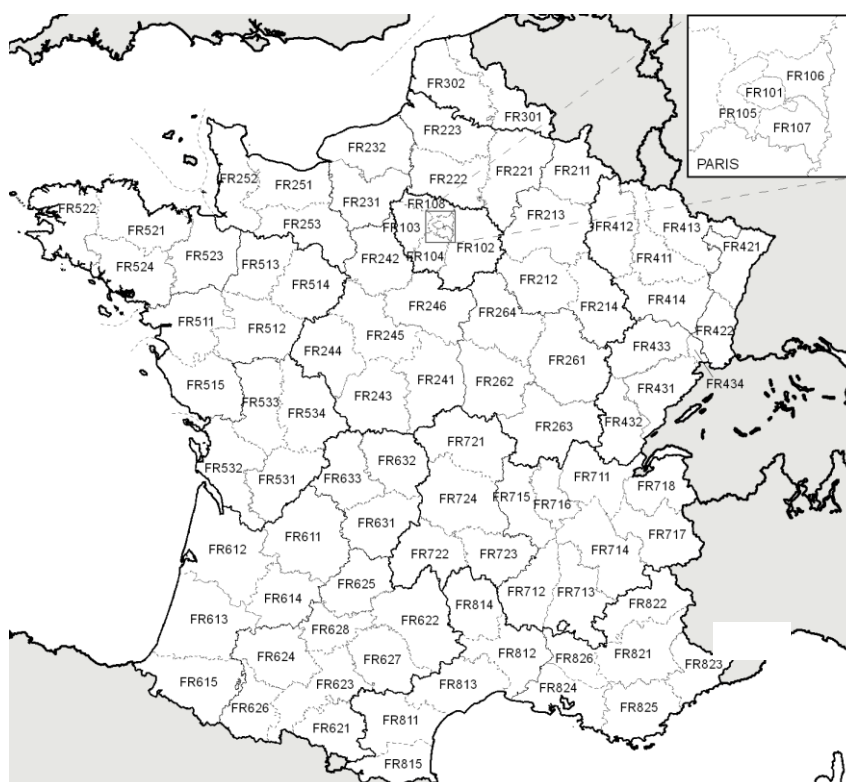
Turnout data and NUTS units

For all countries, turnout data are drawn from official sources; such as the websites maintained by the country's Ministry of the Interior, or the Electoral Commission (full details of sources are provided in the Appendix). However, it should be noted here that such resources were not designed with the needs of psephologists in mind; rather, they made it easier for the interested citizen to look up recent or historical election results in their own electoral district or voting area. Thus, data were not generally available in a form whereby turnout measured at the NUTS2 or NUTS3 level could be downloaded in a form ready for analysis[37]. More usually, data had to be collected, district by district, or ward by ward, and then aggregated to the chosen unit of analysis. For our dataset to be of use in investigating the role of various determinants of voting, we need a common unit of measurement for both turnout and our independent variables. Socio-demographic data are drawn from the *Eurostat* database, and correspond to the NUTS units described in the previous section. For many of the countries under consideration here, there is a certain convergence between the NUTS units and the organisation of elections and reporting of election results. Staying for a moment with our example of France, results for Regional Council and European Parliament elections are available at the level of the *département*, that is, the NUTS3 level. Where this is the case, the creation of a common dataset of socio-demographic statistics (Eurostat data) and election turnout can proceed with little technical difficulty.

---

[37] Since the data gathering phase of this thesis, part of the European Sixth Framework Research Programme has resulted in the construction of a European Elections Database (EED http://www.nsd.uib.no/european_election_database/about/). This database provides election results for all European countries, aggregated according to the NUTS definitions. This would have considerably shortened the data gathering and manipulation which the current project required. However, the EED is limited to first-order (parliamentary or presidential) and EP elections. It is noteworthy that no data have been compiled for the second-order (municipal, provincial, regional) elections in European countries. Thus, the focus on EP and first-order elections looks set to continue.

However, for other elections in France, and indeed, many elections in the other countries, this neat correspondence between NUTS units and the boundaries of official election reporting units does not exist; instead, election results are reported for geographical units below the NUTS3 level. This situation requires a deal of data manipulation. For example, turnout data for elections to the French lower house are reported at the level of the *commune*, of which there are over 35,000. In order to arrive at a useable turnout figure, individual communes were assigned to their respective *département,* and then commune level numbers for registered voters and votes cast were used to calculate a turnout figure for each *département*. Similarly, in the case of Belgian municipal elections, results are reported for each of around 600 individual communes. Because *Eurostat* data for Belgium are typically available for the NUTS2 level, communes first have to be assigned to their respective NUTS2 geographical unit. Figures for those registered and those voting in each commune are then totalled in order to calculate a per cent turnout figure for each NUTS2 unit; this NUTS2 turnout figure is then matched to the corresponding *Eurostat* socio-demographic data[38]. Thus, although somewhat time consuming, in most cases, it was technically relatively straightforward to arrive at turnout data aggregated to a level which corresponded with NUTS units. However, the vagaries of English local elections necessitated a slightly more involved process.

English local election results are reported at the constituency level (or below) and thus, as in the cases of France and Belgium described above, these data required aggregation

---

[38] In the case of Ireland, although turnout results were matched to NUTS units for local elections and national (lower house) elections, there were insurmountable difficulties in matching NUTS units to turnout data for (perhaps ironically) elections to the European Parliament.

to the relevant NUTS3 geographical units. However, in contrast to most of the cases included in this analysis, in which any particular election takes place at more or less the same time across the whole country, the arrangements for English local elections vary from place to place in a rather complex manner [39, 40] : although all local councillors in England are elected for a four year period, both the frequency and timing of elections vary from council to council. For some councils, all members are elected at an election held every four years, but these elections do not all follow the same four year cycle; that is, different councils of this type can hold their full elections in different years[41]. For the remaining councils, elections are held such that only a third of the members are elected at any one time, with elections being held in three out of every four years; the fourth year being a 'fallow' year in which no election is held. Again, these cycles are not uniform across the country.

One approach to this problem is to compute an average turnout for each local government unit for any and all local elections held there in a given four year period, and then to aggregate these results to the relevant NUTS3 units. However, we are then faced with two further difficulties. Firstly, local elections may be held simultaneously with other elections, be they national or European. In the period under study, three elections for the national parliament were held: in 1997, 2001 and 2005. For those local councils due to hold full or partial elections that year, their elections took place on the same day

---

[39] By-elections are not included in our data.
[40] English local councils take different forms (discussed in more detail in Chapter 3), with differing functions, populations, and geographical extents. In the process of aggregation to NUTS3 level, there is an unavoidable loss of information as councils of different types are grouped together to achieve a single turnout figure for a geographical area - which may well contain local councils of different types.
[41] Although the London boroughs *do* all hold their elections in the same year

as the parliamentary election, and thus turnout in the local elections was boosted[42]. A smaller, though still noticeable effect, was noted in 2004 and 2009 when the local elections were held on the same day as elections for the European Parliament[43].

There is no entirely satisfactory solution to this problem. The approach used here is to calculate the average turnout in local elections across the three year periods 1998-2000 and 2006-2008 for each council. Thus, councils which elect by thirds will have results for at least two years (and possibly all three). *Most* of the councils which hold full elections every four years are also included. However, we are forced to omit results from those councils which held *full* elections in 1997, 2001, 2005, or 2009. We then proceed to aggregate these turnout figures for each council to generate a turnout figure for the relevant NUTS3 units. In terms of the NUTS3 units 'lost' in this process, their number is not great; eight for the period 1998-2000, and five for the period 2006-2008, leaving 85 and 88 NUTS3 units, respectively (the number of NUTS3 units lost from the dataset is fewer than the number of councils affected, as in some cases more than one council may be missing from a single NUTS3 unit).

For English elections to the Lower House, individual Westminster constituencies were matched to the relevant NUTS3 unit, and turnout was calculated from constituency level registered voters and votes cast. A similar process was used for calculating NUTS3 turnout figures in elections for the European Parliament. In a few cases, for instance

---

[42] Note that voters in London have, since 2000, been able to vote for a London mayor. These mayoral elections are not included in the present dataset; but it can be noted that the mayoral elections *do not* coincide with London's local elections.

[43] A further complication is that since 2000, local councils have been encouraged to experiment with changes to the electoral arrangements to encourage higher turnout. These modifications included the use of all postal voting, which resulted in large and significant increases in turnout (Rallings and Thrasher 2007). However, such experiments have been used only by some councils, and thus present a further problem when considering the aggregation of these results with others in a NUTS3 region.

where polling area or district boundaries had been re-drawn, or where there was a serious lack of correspondence between these and the NUTS3 boundaries, cases (NUTS3 units) were discarded.

Although somewhat laborious, the result of our efforts is that we have a dataset for all ten countries, for which turnout is matched to the NUTS units for which *Eurostat* data is available for a range of socio-demographic variables. These *Eurostat* statistics have the advantage of being compiled at similar times, and on the basis of similar geographical units. However, these statistics are generally available only from 1990 onwards. Although some information is available for non-member countries, the inclusion of Finland and Sweden means that information on all variables of interest is not available until their accession in 1995 (nor, obviously, are the results of EP elections). The beginning of the period under study, then, is defined as 1995, and the most recent elections included were those conducted in 2008 (when data were compiled). The thirteen-year period means that all countries would have held a minimum of one election of each type[44]. In some cases, more than two elections of a particular type were held; and where data are available, these have been included. There are, however, some unavoidable gaps, as can be seen in Table 4.3.

Note that in a few cases, *Eurostat* data for a particular country lacked sub-national figures for one or two of our variables. For example, occupation and educational attainment were not available for NUTS regions below the country level in Sweden. In this case, recourse to the Swedish national statistics database (Statistika Centralbyrån 2010) provided raw data for all occupational categories in each sub-national territorial

---

[44] The relatively short period also has the advantage of minimising the effects of any long term decline in turnout which has been suggested as occurring in many established democracies.

unit. These, along with population data, were then used to calculate the percentages of the population in each occupational category for each Swedish NUTS region.

Having described the compilation of the core dataset, we now turn to descriptions of the dependent and independent variables, and the related hypotheses. These hypotheses are divided into three groups: firstly, those which relate to institutional characteristics (1 a, 1b, etc.); secondly those which refer to the core socio-demographic variables '2a, 2b, etc.); and, thirdly, those which relate to the supplementary variables which will provide the main focus of Chapter 6 (3a, 3b, etc.).

Variables

Dependent Variable - Turnout

Turnout for all countries and elections is taken to be the percentage of the registered voters who cast a vote in a given election, as reported in official documents or databases of each country's responsible Ministry or statistical bureau (details of all sources are provided in the Appendix). Other measures do exist, notably that based on the total eligible population rather than the number of registered voters; however, there are difficulties in estimating just what that eligible population is. Such an approach has been necessary in some previous research which has attempted to take account of the unusual registration procedures in the United States, but is not considered necessary for the countries under consideration here. In the case of two-round elections, such as in France, standard practice is followed, such that the turnout in the first round is used. For each country, a single, sub-national level of aggregation (i.e. NUTS unit) is used for *all* turnout data (for example, provinces in the Netherlands, French departments, etc.). In this way, comparisons of turnout can be made across all of the different types of

elections in a country, whilst maintaining the same basis for the selected demographic and socio-economic measures.

Independent variables - Institutional

The institutional characteristics (that is, compulsory voting, weekend voting, and electoral system) for each individual election are drawn from the tables presented in Chapter 3. Based on the literature review in Chapter 2, we derive the following hypotheses which relate to the costs and benefits of voting:

Compulsory voting has been shown in previous research to be associated with turnout between 10 and 20 percentage points higher than where compulsory voting is not used (for example, Crewe 1981; Jackman 1987; Colomer 1991; Jackman and Miller 1995; Blais and Dobrzynska 1998; Blais 2000; Perez-Linan 2001; Siaroff and Merer 2002). The measure we use here is a three point ordinal scale whereby strictly enforced compulsory voting is coded 2, weakly enforced compulsory voting is coded 1, and an absence of compulsory voting is coded zero.

Hypothesis 1a : Turnout will be higher where voting is compulsory

Although the effects are generally less marked than for compulsory voting, weekend voting has been associated with turnout up to ten per cent higher than in countries where elections are held on weekdays (Oppenhuis 1995; Mattila 2003). The measure for weekend voting is dichotomous, whereby weekday voting is coded 0, and voting on a weekend day is coded 1.

Hypothesis 1b: Turnout will be higher where voting takes place on the weekend

Proportional Representation tends to provide more choice and leads to fewer wasted votes, and is usually associated with higher levels of turnout (Franklin 1996; Blais and Dobrzynska 1998; Brockington 2004). We use a dichotomous variable, whereby non-PR systems are coded 0, and PR systems (included those designated 'fusion' systems, but which have a substantial proportional component) are coded 1.

Hypothesis 1c: Turnout will be higher where Proportional Representation

is used

The occurrence of simultaneous elections is calculated from the election calendar for each country (full election calendar provided in the Appendix). When two (or more) elections are held at the same time, the costs of voting (at least in terms of turning up at the polling booth) in two or more elections are no different than voting in one election. Previous research has confirmed that turnout in lower-order elections tends to be higher when these elections are held simultaneously with national, first-order elections, turnout (Franklin 1996; Blondel, Sinnott et al. 1997; Mattila 2003). We take account of this effect by means of a dichotomous variable, whereby lower-order elections are coded 0 when they are not held simultaneously with another election, and 1 when they are held simultaneously with any other election.

Hypothesis 1d: Turnout will be higher when elections are held

simultaneously

Our final institutional variable takes account of the salience of different types of election. As we saw in Chapter 2, since Reif and Schmitt (1980) made the distinction between (first-order) elections to the national legislature and (second-order) elections for sub-national levels of government or the European Parliament. However, the very low turnout in many elections to the European Parliament supports the idea that these elections be considered as third-order (Marsh 1998; Heath, McLean et al. 1999; Rallings and Thrasher 2005). We use the first-, second-, third-order categories to construct a variable for the salience of an election, whereby: national elections (Lower House, Upper House, President) are considered the most salient (coded 2); elections for the European Parliament are considered the least salient (coded 0); and the other elections within a country (municipal, lower intermediate, upper intermediate) occupy the middle ground between these two extremes (coded 1).

Hypothesis 1e : Turnout will be higher in elections of higher salience

Independent Variables - Socio-demographic

The data for the socio-demographic variables are predominantly drawn from the *Eurostat* database (details of data series consulted are provided in the Appendix). For each variable, we present below a brief description and associated hypotheses based on the literature review conducted in Chapter 2.

Population Density: As we saw in Chapter 2, there are competing views as to the effect of population density on turnout in elections. Some expect people living in areas of higher population density to feel closer to their fellow citizens, and to be more exposed to group pressures and the mobilising activities of political parties, and there is some empirical evidence to support this (for example, Blais and Dobrzynska 1998; Blais 2000;

Siaroff and Merer 2002). Others suggest, on the contrary, that interpersonal bonds and social structures are weaker when population density is higher, and that turnout would thus be lower. This view is also supported by previous research, particularly in the case of European countries (for example, Morlan 1984; Oppenhuis 1995). The measure used here is the population density of the NUTS unit, being the ratio between the total population and surface (land) area in square kilometres. Note, in all analyses, we use a logarithmically transformed population density figure in order to improve the normality of the distribution of this variable.

Hypothesis 2a : Turnout will be lower in areas of higher population density

Percentage of young people: For potential first-time voters, the costs of voting are relatively high (Plutzer 2002; Franklin 2004); but as people get older, they not only acquire the skills necessary to make an informed choice, but also feel more directly the effects of government policy decisions (Rose 2007). Not surprisingly, then, young people have consistently be shown to be less likely to vote than older age groups (Wolfinger and Rosenstone 1980; Powell 1986; Blais 2000; Norris 2004). Here, we measure the percentage of the total population in each NUTS unit which is between 15 and 29 years old. This figure is calculated from the Eurostat data provided for standard age categories 15-19, 20-24, 25-29, and for the total population.

*Hypothesis 2b : Turnout will be lower in areas with a greater percentage
of young people*

Death Rate: Although a higher death rate in a region may in part reflect a more elderly population (and thus higher turnout), it is known that higher death rates are often associated with the poorer and more marginalised groups in society who are less likely

to have the resources and interest necessary to vote in elections, (Kennedy, Kawachi et al. 1996; Hwang, Wilkins et al. 2009). On balance, then, we would expect that regions with a higher death rate would be associated with lower turnout in elections. The measure we use here is the Crude Death Rate (deaths per year per 1000 inhabitants) for each NUTS unit.

Hypothesis 2c: Turnout will be lower in areas with a higher death rate.

Immigration: High population turnover can undermine the sense of community (Ashworth, Heyndels et al. 2002); and empirical research has shown that turnout is higher when the population is more stable (for example, Hoffmann-Martinot, Rallings et al. 1996; Geys 2006a). More specifically, the longer someone has lived in a particular community, the more likely they are to vote (Sharp 1955). Here, we measure the percentage of the total population coming from outside of that NUTS unit; comprising both 'external' and 'internal' migration. External migrants are defined as those living outside the parent country one year prior to the census. Internal migrants are defined as those living in a different NUTS region of the same parent country one year prior to the census.

Hypothesis 2d: Turnout will be lower in areas of higher immigration

GDP: As we saw in Chapter 2, there are competing views as to whether we should expect higher GDP to be associated with increased, or decreased turnout (Crewe 1981; Bengtsson 2004). On balance, though, most empirical evidence suggests that higher GDP is associated with increased turnout; and that, conversely, that lower GDP is associated with lower turnout because, when times are tough, the day to day struggle to make ends meet takes precedence over voting in elections. The association between GDP and

turnout has been reported in studies which have focused on single countries (Rosenstone 1982), as well as comparative studies of developed countries (Siaroff and Merer 2002), or which have included both developed and less developed countries (Powell 1980; Blais and Dobrzynska 1998). Here we use the Gross Domestic Product for the NUTS region at current market prices, reported on a Purchasing Power Parity (PPP) basis per inhabitant, as a percentage of the EU average. It has also been suggested that it may not only be the economic situation at the time of the election that has an effect on turnout, but also whether that situation has worsened or improved over previous years (Blais 2000). In order to investigate the possible effects of the changing economic situation, we also include the variable, **GDP 10 year change,** which is calculated from annual GDP data for each NUTS region for the ten year period centred on 2000.

Hypothesis 2e : Turnout will be higher in those areas which have higher GDP

Hypothesis 2f: Turnout will be higher in areas which have enjoyed higher GDP growth

Occupation: It has long been known that people with higher socio-economic status are more likely to participate in politics, and to vote in elections (Verba and Nie 1972). Socio-economic status is often linked to the occupation of the voter (Evans 1999); with some types of occupation being seen, not only as providing opportunities for social interactions and exposure to behavioural norms, but also as encouraging the development of skills and likely to expose individuals to particular political issues, policies, and actors (Wolfinger and Rosenstone 1980). Here, we measure, for each NUTS unit, the percentage of people in each of the ISCO88 Standard Occupational Categories. These categories group various occupations according to the tasks and duties undertaken (ILO nd). The highest category (Category 1) comprises Legislators, Senior

officials and Managers, who often determine and direct major policies within the governmental or private sector. Category 2 includes various Professionals, who, for example, contribute to or apply existing scientific or artistic knowledge. At the other end of the scale, Category 8 includes Plant and Machine Operators and Assemblers, occupations, whose work is usually controlled by strict specifications or procedures, and who do not generally require a wider understanding of the work organisation, nor of the final uses of the products which they provide. The lowest category, Category 9, includes simple and routine tasks which often require the use of hand tools and physical effort.

Hypothesis 2g: Turnout will be higher in areas which have a greater percentage of people in the higher occupational categories

Unemployment: Unemployment has been associated with reduced turnout in elections, not only because the unemployed have fewer resources, but also because they have less desire to participate in politics (Rosenstone 1982; Brady, Verba et al. 1995). The measure used here is the number of unemployed persons as a percentage of the active population (that is, the total of all employed and unemployed persons) in each NUTS unit. This is predominantly based on registered unemployed people, but Eurostat supplements these data by reference to regular labour force surveys.

Hypothesis 2h: Turnout will be lower in areas with higher unemployment

Educational attainment: People with a higher level of education are more likely to vote in elections, because they are more likely to have the required resources, a higher level of interest, and to have been socialised into the norms of electoral participation (Wolfinger and Rosenstone 1980; Lijphart 1997; Franklin 2004; Johnston and Pattie 2006). Here, we measure, for each NUTS unit, the percentage of the population with

qualifications at ISCED97 Standard educational attainment levels (UNESCO 1997). These levels broadly categorise educational attainment according to the knowledge, skills, and capabilities required to achieve a given qualification. The lowest level (Level 0) is that of pre-primary education; Levels 1 and 2 represent the first and second stages of basic education, which are usually compulsory. Level 3 represents upper-secondary education, and typically represents about 9 years of full time schooling. Level 4 comprises education that, although post-secondary, cannot be considered as tertiary. Levels 5 and 6 include all tertiary-level (that is, degree or higher) qualifications, with Level 6 (the highest level on the ISCED scale) being reserved for qualifications gained through advanced research.

Hypothesis 2i: Turnout will be higher in areas where a greater percentage of people have a higher educational attainment

The institutional and socio-demographic variables discussed above will provide the core set of variables that will be examined in the following chapters. However, in Chapter 6, we will supplement our analyses with the additional variables described below.

Regionality: as noted in Chapter 3, we have constructed a Regionality Index, based largely on Keating's (1998) work. The index is a composite of scores ranging from zero to a maximum of 20 (full list of Regionality scores for individual regions is provided in the Appendix), and is based on individual measures of Culture, Identity, Government Institutions, Civil Society, and Economic Regionalism. It has been previously suggested (Blais and Dobrzynska 1998; Siaroff and Merer 2002) that the national legislature enjoys a reduced monopoly of power where it competes with other elected bodies, such as a strong regional government. Although this might not be exactly a zero-sum game, it is considered likely that those regions with a high Regionality index will not only exhibit

higher turnout in their regional elections, but will also display different patterns of turnout in other types of elections.

Hypothesis 3a: Regions with a higher Regionality Index will have higher turnout in regional elections.

EU Office: As was noted in Chapter 3, the member states of the European Union have been exposed to similar external influences known collectively as 'Europeanisation'. As was also noted, different countries have reacted to these influences in different ways. However, even where the powers of central government remain strong, they do not enjoy a monopoly over all EU communications and decision making processes. Many sub-national regions maintain representative offices in Brussels, which actively engage in lobbying for regional interests, and maintain direct contact between the regions and various EU officials and decision makers (Nugent 1999). The existence of regional representative office in Brussels may be expected to thus reflect, or enhance, the visibility of the European Union within the region itself. If this were the case, we may further expect that interest in elections for the European Parliament would be higher in those regions having such an office – and that turnout in EP elections would thus be higher. We use the *Regional Offices Contact Directory* (Committee of the Regions 2008) to identify these regions (which are coded 1; regions without such an office are coded 0).

Hypothesis 3b: Regions with Representative Offices in Brussels will exhibit higher turnout in elections to the European Parliament.

Union and Party Membership: Whether because it is the cause or the result of increased political interest, the membership either of a political party or a trade union has also been associated with increased levels of turnout (Blais 2000; Siaroff and Merer 2002).

There are difficulties with the availability of reliable data for party membership, even at a national level; and insufficient data are available for party membership at sub-national levels. What is clear, though, is that although party membership has been declining, and is below ten percent for all countries under consideration here, the levels do still differ from country to country (Mair and Biezen 2001). Trade union membership data are also only available at national level, but, again, vary considerably between countries. Data for political party and trade union membership[45] at a national level are provided in Table 4.4.

Table 4.3 : Political Party and Trade Union Membership

Country	Membership of a Political Party (% of electorate)	Membership of a Trade Union (% of all employees)
Belgium	6.6	39.7
England (1)	1.9	26.6
Finland	9.7	68.9
France	1.6	15.6
Greece	6.8	12.4
Ireland	3.1	37.6
Italy	4.1	18.2
Netherlands	2.5	28.6
Spain	3.4	11.3
Sweden	5.5	76.8

Note (1) figures for UK.

Sources: Mair and Biezen (2001; Schnabel and Wagner (2005)

Hypothesis 3c: Turnout will be higher in countries with higher membership of a political party.

---

[45] Note that those countries with particularly high union membership (Finland and Sweden) have unemployment benefit systems which are administered by the unions (Schnabel and Wagner 2005).

Hypothesis 3d: Turnout will be higher in countries with a higher membership of trade unions.

The territorial coverage of political parties : Caramani (2005) used historical data to trace the changes in territorial coverage by political parties contesting national, first-order elections in Western European countries. Nineteenth century processes of industrialisation and urbanisation, state formation and nation building, and the development of communications technologies led to the de-territorialisation of cleavages and party systems. Caramani suggested that de-territorialisation was in large part due to the homogenising effects of class politics. The associated strengthening of the left-right functional cleavage often served to suppress pre-existing territorially based cleavages. Often, this process was contemporaneous with increased territorial coverage by political parties as they sought to identify and mobilise wider bases of support.

However, these processes were not uniform throughout all Western European countries. Caramani calculated the territorial coverage of parties[46] in lower house elections by expressing the actual constituencies contested as a percentage of the total constituencies in a country. Table 4.4 provides the average territorial coverage of political parties in the 1990s. As can be seen, there are substantial differences between countries, with, for example, political parties in Spain contesting, on average, only 27 per cent of all constituencies; whereas in Sweden, political parties contest all of the constituencies in the country. We propose that, in countries where political parties contest a higher percentage of all constituencies, mobilisation of the electorate will be

---

[46] In Caramani's calculations, only those parties gaining at least five per cent of the vote were included. Caramani's study was confined to parties contesting elections to the national legislature.

correspondingly higher and this will be reflected in increased turnout in lower house elections.

Hypothesis 3f: Turnout in lower house elections will be higher in countries where political parties contest a greater percentage of constituencies.

Table 4.4 : Territorial Coverage by Political Parties

Country	Average Territorial Coverage by Parties (% Constituencies)
Belgium	51.1
England (1)	65.3
Finland	85.3
France	98.0
Greece	98.9
Ireland	65.2
Italy	77.0
Netherlands	99.4
Spain	27.4
Sweden	100.0

Note (1) UK Figures   Source: Caramani (2005)

Government employment and taxation: In Chapter 3 we presented selected characteristics of national and sub-national levels of government, including public employment by level of government, and the taxation arrangements for sub-national government. Public employees may feel there is more at stake in the outcome of an election because the nature, conditions, or indeed the very existence of their jobs may hinge on the result (and see Wolfinger and Rosenstone 1980). Further, although the politicisation effects of the workplace have tended to decline, in part because of

116

processes of de-industrialisation, and the increase in the numbers of people employed in part-time or non-permanent jobs, this decline has been more marked in the private, than in the public sector (Braconnier and Dormagen 2007). Consequently, we consider that an election may appear more salient to people employed in the public sector than to other members of the electorate. We measure the total public sector employment as a percentage of all employment in a country.

Hypothesis 3g: Turnout will be higher in countries where a higher proportion of workers is employed in the public sector.

Because it is often difficult to assign the number of public employees to each government level, we also investigate the association that taxation has on turnout. For this we concentrate on the municipal level. Local taxes are directly and obviously felt by the residents of a municipality, and because they are also spent locally, the results of that expenditure may be quite visible. Where local taxes contribute a higher share of local revenue, then, municipal elections should appear as more important to the voter. We will test for this using two tax variables. The first measures the proportion that local taxes contribute to the total revenue of the municipality. However, because taxes may be raised locally, but set centrally, our second measure is the share of total local government revenue contributed by *autonomous* local taxes.

Hypothesis 3h: Turnout in municipal elections will be higher in countries where municipal government local taxation contributes a greater share of municipal government revenue

Hypothesis 3i: Turnout in municipal elections will be higher in countries where autonomous taxation contributes a greater share to municipal government revenue

Mayoral Strength: Finally, we also presented in Chapter 3 a composite measure of Mayoral strength, measured on a scale from 0 to 14, based on the work of Heinelt and Hlepas (2006). Where mayors enjoy greater powers, the differential benefits at stake in the election are increased; thus, would expect greater mayoral strength to be associated with higher turnout in local elections:

Hypothesis 3j: Turnout in municipal elections will be higher in countries with a higher Mayoral Strength Index.

In this section, we have discussed the dependent and independent variables, and stated our hypotheses. In the following section, we present descriptive statistics for turnout in different types of elections, and for the socio-demographic variables.

Descriptive Statistics

Table 4.5 presents turnout by election type and country, aggregated to the national level.

It is of course tempting to make some preliminary observations on the election results presented in Table 4.5: it appears that strictly enforced compulsory voting has a marked effect on turnout, with turnout in Belgium being above 90% for all election types, including those for the European Parliament. The less stringent form of compulsory voting (Greece and Italy) does not result in turnout as high as in Belgium. However, turnout in all election types is still generally high when compared to countries with no compulsion to vote. This is especially the case for elections other than for the Lower House. Similarly, there is evidence that the holding of elections simultaneously results in higher turnout, notably of the less important election. For example, in Sweden the municipal, county and lower house elections are all held on the same day, and the

turnout for in all these types of elections is very similar, at around 80%. The effects of, for example, proportional representation and weekend voting are perhaps less obvious, and indeed the nature of the data is that we cannot, by simple observation, determine the independent effects of these or other variables. This is an analysis we focus on in Chapters 5 to 7.

Country	Election Type	National Turnout %	Regional Turnout Range
Belgium	EP*	91.0	7.8
Belgium	Municipal	91.3	12.4
Belgium	Provincial	92.1	5.8
Belgium	Regional	90.7	11.4
Belgium	LH	91.6	7.3
Belgium	UH	91.6	6.8
England	EP*	30.4	19.9
England	Municipal*	34.5	23.2
England	LH*	63.8	28.8
Finland	EP	39.4	12.6
Finland	Municipal	58.3	10.3
Finland	LH	68.1	7.8
Finland	Presidential	76.9	5.7
France	EP	42.8	24.2
France	Municipal	57.3	25.9
France	Cantonal	56.1	32.1
France	Regional	58.0	20.0
France	LH	59.3	18.8
France	Presidential	83.8	13.6
Greece	EP*	66.9	31.4
Greece	Municipal*	70.6	39.1
Greece	LH*	74.9	30.1
Ireland	EP*	54.6	-
Ireland	Municipal*	51.9	17.2
Ireland	LH*	64.3	12.7
Italy	EP	71.7	26.0
Italy	Regional	71.8	22.0
Italy	LH	83.6	21.9
Netherlands	EP*	34.8	7.6
Netherlands	Municipal	58.0	9.3
Netherlands	Provincial*	46.6	14.3
Netherlands	LH*	78.2	8.0
Spain	EP*	54.1	26.9
Spain	Municipal*	66.2	24.5
Spain	LH*	71.6	18.7
Spain	UH	75.8	24.2
Sweden	EP*	38.5	9.1
Sweden	Municipal*	78.6	4.3
Sweden	County*	78.1	4.3
Sweden	LH*	81.2	5.1

* Average figures for multiple elections of this type. Sources: See Appendix

However, one observation which can be made at this stage is particularly relevant to the current study: as can be seen from the final column of Table 4.5, individual regions

within a country exhibit substantial variations in turnout. This variation is even apparent in Belgium, with its strictly enforced compulsory voting. Indeed, in all countries, the range in turnout across the regions in a country is of a similar size to the variation in turnout between the different types of elections. Whatever the combination of institutional arrangements which are in place for a particular election in a particular country, these arrangements are generally consistent across all of the regions in that country. Clearly, then, not all voters respond in the same way to the electoral rules of the game.

As previously discussed, several socio-demographic variables have been suggested as explaining, at least in part, the differences in turnout which remain once we have taken into account the effects of the institutional determinants of voting. As also previously noted, comparative studies of turnout which have relied on aggregate data have usually been confined to the country level of measurement. Table 4.6(a) provides values of these variables when measured at the country level (corresponding tables for each individual country are provided in the Appendix). In contrast to the Human Development Indices presented earlier in this chapter, there is substantial variation *between countries* for most of these measures.

Although the country-to-country variation is of interest in itself, our dataset allow us to go further, and to examine the variation among individual NUTS units within countries. Table 4.6(b), in addition to summarising the mean, minimum and maximum values for each variable when measured at the country level, also provides the corresponding values when we use the individual NUTS regions as our unit of analysis. As can be seen, in all cases the range of values for each variable increases substantially, when compared to data measured at the country level.

Table 4.6 : Characteristics of Socio-demographic variables

(a) - measured at the national level

	Belgium	England	Finland	France	Greece	Ireland	Italy	Netherlands	Spain	Sweden
Population density	338.0	241.0	17.0	96.0	83.5	55.4	193.0	470.2	81.6	21.6
Population 10 yr % change	4.4	3.2	2.9	6.3	3.9	17.5	4.4	4.9	11.7	3.5
Total migration	1.2	4.2	2.3	1.7	2.6	3.8	1.6	2.8	1.2	2.5
GDP PPP per capita of EU average	126.0	119.0	117.2	115.3	84.1	131.0	117.8	134.3	97.3	126.7
GDP Ten year change	-7.2	4.9	5.3	-5.3	10.4	44.7	-16.8	3.9	12.0	3.5
Unemployment %	7.0	5.6	9.8	10.2	11.4	4.3	10.6	2.9	13.9	5.4
Age: 15-29 %	18.9	18.8	18.6	20.3	22.0	24.3	18.7	18.8	22.5	18.2
Death rate (per 1000)	10.2	10.2	9.5	9.0	9.6	8.2	9.7	8.8	8.9	10.5
Occupation ISCO 1 & 2 %	NA	26.9	18.2	18.1	21.8	29.6	20.7	28.8	19.5	21.5
Educational Degree Plus %	20.6	25.9	33.7	25.3	22.7	33.4	13.4	23.9	11.2	13.3

(b) - measured at country level and NUTS unit level

	10 Countries				432 Regions		
	Mean	Min	Max	Range	Min	Max	Range
Population density	159.7	17.0	470.2	453.2	2.1	20246	20244
Population 10 yr % change	6.3	2.9	17.5	14.6	-7.6	37.7	45.3
Total migration	2.4	1.2	4.2	3.1	.47	11.2	10.8
GDP PPP per capita of EU average	116.9	84.1	134.3	50.2	47.9	602	554
GDP Ten year change	5.5	-16.8	44.7	61.5	-42.1	77.1	119.2
Unemployment %	8.1	2.9	13.9	11.0	1.7	30.5	28.8
Age: 15-29 %	20.1	18.2	24.3	6.1	13.9	28.0	14.1
Death rate (per 1000)	9.5	8.2	10.5	2.3	5.4	16.4	11
Occupation ISCO 1 & 2 %	22.8	18.1	29.6	11.5	10.8	47.5	36.7
Educational Degree Plus %	22.3	11.2	33.7	22.5	6.3	58.9	52.6

That the range of values for any of our socio-demographic variables should increase when we take our measurements from smaller geographical units should not, of course, come as a surprise. However, this sub-national variation cannot be taken into account in

studies which only use data aggregated to the national level. It is usual for such studies to conclude that certain variables are, or are not, to be considered as 'determinants of voting'. In subsequent chapters, we will see how reliable these determinants of voting are when we use sub-national units; and whether their effects are consistent from country to country. In this chapter, we conclude with a brief discussion of the methods will we use in those analyses.

Methods

We are interested here in assessing the effects that each of our independent variables has on turnout in elections, and in how different models compare in terms of the amount of variance that each explains. In order to analyse the respective impact of each of the independent variables on turnout, we will rely predominantly on the technique of multiple regression analysis. This technique will also allow us to assess the statistical significance of each of the variables, and to ascertain how much of the total variance is explained in each of the models (Powell 1980).

The use of regression analysis has become widespread across the social sciences, and has found particular use in investigating electoral behaviour (Schroeder, Sjoquist et al. 1986), as a glance at the relevant journals would quickly show. However, there are various important conditions which should, ideally, be satisfied if linear regression is to be used (see Saint-Germain 2002). Among these is that each variable should be normally distributed. On checking the characteristics of the data, it was found that the population density measure, in particular, was far from normally distributed. The distribution was markedly improved by applying a logarithmic transformation. In all of the regression analyses presented in Chapters 5 to 7, we use logarithmically transformed population

density. All other variables remain in their natural state, making the interpretation of their effects as straightforward as possible.

Cases (that is, NUTS regions) are only included when we have complete information for all variables. The only exception to this is for Belgium, where data for occupational category were not available for NUTS2 (or indeed, for NUTS3) units. Because Belgium is the only country in our dataset which uses strictly enforced compulsory voting, we decided to keep Belgium in the set, at least until we had investigated the effects of compulsory voting.

For most of the regression models, we use the highest categories of the education and occupation variables; that is, ISCED categories 5 and 6, and ISCO categories 1 and 2, respectively. This was largely determined by simple data availability considerations – with the exception of occupational information for Belgium, these categories were the only ones where data were complete and comparable across all countries in the dataset. However, data on other educational attainment and occupational categories are available for a slightly reduced set of countries: these countries are investigated collectively and individually in Chapter 7 .

Conclusions

In this chapter, we have described the compilation of an original dataset based on sub-national territorial units, which will enable us to investigate the associations between turnout and our socio-demographic variables. By including several different types of elections, whilst maintaining the same set of variables and territorial basis, we will be able to investigate whether these associations are consistent, or whether the effects change according to the type of election. Such analyses will be the focus of Chapter 5. We have also described supplementary variables, which are unfortunately only available

at the country-level. We investigate the effects of these variables separately in Chapter

6. In Chapter 7, we look in more detail at five of the countries in our dataset (England,

France, Greece, Italy, and Spain) and see whether our variables behave in a similar way

within each of these countries, or whether there are differences which are not apparent

at the country level of analysis.

Chapter 5 – Institutional and Socio-Demographic Variables

Introduction

This chapter will present a series of multiple regression models which use the dataset described in Chapter 4. We begin with the institutional variables, and firstly show that the results obtained using country-level and regional-level aggregate data are comparable. We then note that all of the institutional variables are statistically significant, and have effects broadly in line with previous research. We then add selected socio-demographic variables to the model for all elections and examine their effects on turnout. All of the socio-demographic variables are strongly significant when tested on a model which includes all countries and all election types. The coefficients for the institutional variables are generally larger than those for the socio-demographic variables. However, when we take into account the continuous nature of the socio-demographic variables, and the range of possible values that they may take, we note that the sizes of the potential effects are substantial.

Because elections to the European Parliament are often considered to be quite different, even from other lower-order elections in a country, we then test the model with results from European Parliament elections excluded. Although the effects of a number of variables remain relatively unchanged when EP elections are excluded, several differences do become apparent, which prompts a closer look at how these variables behave when we consider European Parliament elections, Municipal elections, and national Lower House elections individually. Although most variables seem to behave in line with the balance of opinion of previous research, the results for educational

attainment appear problematic, being consistently, and significantly, associated with lower turnout.

Institutional Variables

It will be recalled that certain characteristics of an election can be viewed, from a rational choice perspective, as influencing the costs and benefits of voting, and thus the level of turnout in an election. In this section we examine five such variables. Compulsory voting and weekend voting would be expected to increase turnout; the first because it increases the costs of not voting, the second because for many people, it may be easier to vote on the weekend than on a weekday. The use of a proportional representation system is expected to increase turnout because the voter is likely to have a greater choice of candidates to choose from, and there is less chance that their vote will be wasted. Sometimes, more than one election is held at the same time; so, the transaction costs - of going to the polling station and casting a vote - are the same as for a single election. We would expect, then, that turnout would be higher when elections are held simultaneously. Finally, not all elections are of equal importance in the eyes of the electorate. Because we are including several different types of elections here, we introduce a variable for election salience. Elections to the European Parliament are classed as the least salient (or third-order), elections for the national parliament or president are the most salient (first-order), and elections for sub-national levels of government lie between these two extremes (second order).

The analysis includes results of up to 71 elections across the ten countries. For all of the countries except Ireland, our data include examples from all three election order categories. For Ireland, we have examples of first- and second-order elections, but were not able to include EP elections. We take the opportunity here to compare the effects of

each variable using both country-level and regional-level data. There are two reasons for this: as seen in Chapter 1, changing the spatial units used in an analysis can also lead to changes in the results we obtain. Secondly, we have seen that, even under the same set of electoral rules, there are often considerable regional turnout differences within countries. Thus, we will be able to see whether the results for each variable remain consistent when this increased variance is introduced.

The results of four regression models which examine the effects of our institutional variables are presented in Table 5.1. There are two pairs of models: Models 1A and 1B use data aggregated to the country-level, as has been used in much previous comparative research into turnout in elections. Model 1A includes all ten countries in the analysis, whereas in Model 1B we exclude Belgium (the only country with strictly enforced compulsory voting). Models 2A and 2B use data aggregated to our smaller regional units. Model 2A includes regional level data from all ten countries, and Model 2B includes all countries except Belgium. We will firstly consider the results from Models 1A and 1B.

Compulsory Voting

Model 1A includes all election types in all ten countries, and uses turnout aggregated to the country level. In line with previous research, compulsory voting is associated with significantly higher turnout. The measure used here includes two types of compulsory voting: strictly enforced compulsory voting (Belgium) is coded '2'; whereas those countries where voting has been officially compulsory, but where the penalties have been somewhat vaguely defined (Italy and Greece) are coded '1'. Although the official rules have been relaxed in both Italy and Greece, it is thought that most voters would have been habituated to vote under the previously prevailing conditions. Thus, there

could be vestigial effects of the former rules on compulsory voting. All other countries, that is those with no current or recent compulsory voting, are coded '0'.

Table 5.1 : Results of Regression Analyses : Institutional Variables

Model	1A	1B	2A	2B
Variable	10 Countries	9 Countries	423 Regions	412 Regions
Compulsory Voting (0,1,2)	11.181***	11.085***	11.045***	10.623***
	(1.723)	(3.315)	(.392)	(.516)
Weekend Voting (0,1)	9.841***	9.847***	13.640***	13.743***
	(2.392)	(2.445)	(.465)	(.477)
Proportional Representation (0,1)	5.506***	5.887***	3.345***	3.446***
	(1.572)	(1.609)	(.249)	(.251)
Simultaneous Election (0,1)	8.817***	7.890**	8.196***	7.766***
	(2.481)	(2.816)	(.216)	(.482)
Salience (0,1,2)	14.838***	15.869***	14.701***	14.965***
	(1.504)	(1.586)	(.272)	(.278)
Constant	27.002***	25.451***	27.763***	27.423***
	(3.697)	(4.148}	(.593)	(.603)
Adj R-square	.734	.678	.690	.673
N	71	64	2752	2676

* significant at the .05 level; ** significant at the .01 level; *** significant at the .001 level

The results in *Model 1A* suggest that, even when the effects of the variables are taken into account, each unit change in the compulsory voting variable is associated with around 11 per cent higher turnout. In other words, for strictly enforced compulsory voting (as in Belgium) we would predict about 22 per cent higher turnout, and for the 'civic duty' encouragement to vote (Greece and Italy) around 11 per cent higher turnout, all other things being equal. Previous research has typically found compulsory voting to be associated with between ten and fourteen per cent higher turnout, depending on the countries included in the analysis (Jackman 1987; Blais and Carty 1990; Jackman and Miller 1995; Blais and Dobrzynska 1998; Perea 2002; Siaroff and Merer 2002), so our

results appear to be on the high side. However, that research was conducted using turnout in first-order (that is Lower House or Presidential) elections. We are including lower-order elections in our analysis, and it has previously been shown that compulsory voting can have a much larger effect on EP elections, for example, than on first-order elections (Mattila 2003). We return to this point later in this Chapter when we examine individual election types.

Of course, in a model including all countries, it is possible that the inclusion of Belgium - the only country which has strictly enforced compulsory voting - is actually 'doing all the work'. Thus, there may be no real effect associated with the weaker form of compulsory voting employed in Italy and Greece. In order to check this, *Model 1B* excludes Belgium from the analysis. As reference to *Model 1B* shows, compulsory voting is still significant, and still has an effect of around 11 per cent. We can conclude from the results that strict enforcement of compulsory voting does indeed have substantially larger effects than where voting is not strictly enforced.

However, even in the absence of strict enforcement backed with monetary sanctions, the legal expectation that one should vote does appear to have a substantial effect. Further, this appears to be the case even after legislation is amended to reflect the removal of previous sanctions for the failure to vote; at least in Italy and Greece where such amendments were fairly recent. So, contrary to the expectations of pure rational choice approaches, where the removal of sanctions would lead us to expect an immediate drop in participation rates, it appears that participation remains quite high.

The results here would seem to confirm (or at least do not contradict) Franklin's (2004) investigation into the rather slow changes in participation rates when we consider the electorate as a whole. Thus, in instances where compulsory voting had been in force for

many years, most of the electorate would have been habituated to vote in at least a few elections prior to the legislation being revoked. For these voters, voting has become the norm, and they continue to participate even when the formal rules are relaxed. However, we should note that our time-frame is relatively short, and as such we are not able to detect any longer term decline in turnout which may take place after the legal compulsion to vote is removed.

Hypothesis 1a: Turnout will be higher where voting is compulsory - Confirmed

Weekend voting

As can be seen in *Models 1A* and *1B*, weekend voting is associated with significantly higher turnout. Moreover, at around ten per cent, this increase is quite substantial when compared to some previous research, which has suggested weekend voting to be associated with about six per cent higher turnout (Franklin 1996), or even to have no measurable effect at all (Siaroff and Merer 2002). It is possible that we are seeing a particularly large effect for weekend voting for two reasons. Firstly, we are only considering a rather small set of countries, with weekday voting only being the norm in England, Ireland and the Netherlands. Secondly, the models here include *all types* of elections – and, as for compulsory voting, weekend voting has been shown to have larger effects on EP elections than on first-order elections; for instance, Matilla reported weekend voting to be associated with around 12 per cent higher turnout in EP elections (Mattila 2003).

Hypothesis 1b: Turnout will be higher where voting takes place on the weekend - Confirmed

Proportional Representation

Here we are comparing all PR systems to all non-PR systems. We include 'fusion' systems in the PR category because, although there is a built-in winner's bonus, there is still a substantial PR component, and hence the expectation on the part of the voter that a vote for a minor party may not necessarily be a wasted vote. As we can see in *Models 1A* and *1B,* the use of Proportional Representation is statistically significant, and is associated with around six per cent higher turnout compared to non-PR systems, even when the effects of the other variables are taken into account. This finding is broadly in line with previous research, which has suggested that turnout is between three and twelve per cent higher under a proportional system (Blais and Carty 1990; Franklin 1996; Blais and Dobrzynska 1998; Blais 2000).

> *Hypothesis 1c: Turnout will be higher where proportional representation is used - Confirmed*

Simultaneous Elections[47]

If, once the voter is at the polling station, there is the chance to vote in more than one election, we would expect most of them to make use of this opportunity (Cox and Munger 1989). So, simultaneous elections would be associated with higher turnout. But, we would expect this to be more noticeable for the less important election out of the two (or more) elections held at the same time. Accordingly, the results in Table 5.1 reflect the effect of simultaneous elections on second- and third-order election turnout. As can be seen, this variable is statistically significant, and associated with turnout around eight per cent higher than when elections are not held at the same time. When we ran a similar model (not reported here) which measured the effects of simultaneous

---

[47] We should note that, in overcoming the peculiarities of the electoral calendar in England (see Chapter 4), we have specifically excluded the effects of simultaneous elections in that country.

elections on *all* types of elections (that is, including first-order elections), the size of the coefficient drops from around eight per cent to about five per cent. This finding is in line with the seven to 12 per cent higher turnout in simultaneous elections reported by Mattila (2003).

Hypothesis 1d: Turnout will be higher when elections are held simultaneously - Confirmed

Salience

Finally, we include a variable which accounts for the relative importance of the different types of elections in the analysis. We code national elections (Lower House; directly elected upper house; directly elected president) as 2, sub-national elections (Municipal, Lower-Intermediate, Upper-Intermediate) as 1, and the elections for the European Parliament as 0. Although there is a somewhat arbitrary element to such a classification, the results do provide some support for this approach; with more salient elections being associated with significantly higher turnout than less salient elections. Indeed, the coefficients for the salience variable are substantial, with each step up in the order of election being associated with around fifteen per cent higher turnout. The coefficients for the salience variable are, in fact, larger than for any of the other institutional variables except for strictly enforced compulsory voting. In more important elections, more people do indeed vote, and there are correspondingly fewer reluctant voters who remain to be potentially influenced by the various institutional arrangements which may be in place.

Hypothesis 1e: Turnout will be higher in elections of higher salience - Confirmed

As we have seen in this section, the results of regression analyses which have examined the independent effects of each of the institutional variables would provide initial support for the hypotheses. However, these analyses used data aggregated to the national level. Next, we consider the results of regression analyses which measure turnout at the regional level, and compare these results to those obtained in *Models 1A* and *1B*.

Table 5.1 presents the results of two further regression analyses, *Models 2A* and *2B*, which correspond with *Models 1A and 1B*, but use data aggregated to the sub-national regional level. Belgium is included in the first model in each pair, and excluded in the second. All of the variables are statistically significant, and in terms of the sign on the coefficients, there are no differences between the models. When we examine the size of the coefficients, we see that the effects of compulsory voting, simultaneous elections, and the salience of elections are very similar, whether we use country-level or regional-level data.

The coefficients for weekend voting and for the type of electoral system do differ in magnitude between those models based on country-level data and regional level data. However, for both variables, the effects remain statistically significant in both models, and certainly are not trivial. It is possible that these changes are due to the differing number of regions in each country; with larger countries effectively being given more weight in the analysis. For example, France, with 96 regions, uses weekend voting for all elections; but does not use PR for its first-order elections.

The R-square value for all models is quite high, with the five variables accounting for at least two-thirds of the variation in turnout. The R-square values for the models based on regions rather than countries are slightly lower than those based on country level data,

which is perhaps to be expected given that there is substantially greater variance when the measures are taken at the regional rather than the country level. All variables are consistently significant at the .001 level in all models, with the sole exception of simultaneous elections in *Model 1B*, where it is significant at the .01 level.

We have confirmed that the effects of institutional variables used with country level data do not seriously contradict either the expectations of rational choice approaches to voting behaviour, or to most previous research into institutional determinants of voting. The effects associated with the institutional variables are in some cases larger than those reported in previous research, but it should be noted that we are dealing with up to seven different types of elections, broadly categorised into three levels of salience. As was noted in Chapter 2, it has previously been found that the effects of some institutional variables are much greater for European Parliament elections than for Lower House elections (Mattila 2003); thus, we would reasonably expect that we would detect larger effects for these variables when we include lower-order elections in our analysis.

We return to the effects of these institutional variables on different types of election later in this chapter; but, having noted the broad consistencies in the effects of institutional variables when using either country-level or regional level data, we can conclude that we are not encountering any serious effects associated with the *Modifiable Areal Unit Problem* discussed in Chapter 1. We can now introduce our selected socio-demographic variables to the regional level turnout model.

Socio-demographic variables

As we have previously seen, there are often substantial differences in turnout among the regions within countries. The institutional variables that we discussed in the

previous section tend to remain constant across the whole country in any given election, so are unable to account for these differences. A number of socio-demographic variables have been suggested as accounting for differences in turnout, and we now add these variables to the model[48].

Belgium is excluded from the analyses which include socio-demographic variables because we unfortunately lack sub-national data for the occupational categories. However, having investigated the effects of different types of compulsory voting, the loss of Belgium should not seriously undermine our subsequent analyses: Belgium does not represent a very large proportion of our total dataset; furthermore, the inter-regional variations in turnout under a system of strictly enforced compulsory voting are relatively small.

Table 5.2 presents the results of regression models which include the selected socio-demographic variables. To aid comparison, we include the results of *Model 2B* in the first column. *Model 3A Int* is identical to *Model 3A* except for the addition of a term for the interaction between the percentage of young people and the proportion of the population educated to degree level. Our main focus in the next section will be *Model 3A*.

We will first consider Model 3A, and examine whether the introduction of the socio-demographic variables has altered the effects for the institutional variables. The results for compulsory voting, weekend voting, simultaneous elections, and the salience of election type are very similar to the results obtained in *Model 2B*, which included *only* the institutional variables. All of these variables remain highly significant, and retain the

---

[48] We were unable to add all of the socio-demographic variables to the regression models using country-level data because of multicollinearity problems.

same sign on their coefficients as before. For Proportional Representation, while the coefficient is still positive, it is markedly smaller than in *Model 2B*, and now significant only at the .05 level. In other words, the inclusion of the socio-demographic variables is reducing the positive effect of proportional representation on turnout; whereas the effects of the other institutional determinants remain relatively unchanged. We will now consider each of those socio-demographic variables in turn.

Table 5.2 : Results of Regression Analyses : Institutional and Socio-demographic Variables

Model	2B	3A	3A Int
	412 Regions	All election types	All elections
Compulsory Voting (0,1,2)	10.623*** (.516)	12.004*** (.549)	11.886*** (.563)
Weekend Voting (0,1)	13.743*** (.477)	12.552*** (.897)	12.563*** (.897)
Proportional Representation (0,1)	3.446*** (.251)	.540* (.302)	.533 (.302)
Simultaneous Election (0,1)	7.766*** (.482)	8.154*** (.455)	8.110*** (.458)
Salience (0,1,2)	14.965*** (.278)	13.678*** (.274)	13.669*** (.274)
Population Density (ln)		-1.866*** (.274)	-1.850*** (.180)
Migration %		-1.182*** (.206)	-1.188*** (.180)
GDP (PPP)		.031*** (.007)	.027*** (.008)
Unemployment		-.187*** (.044)	-.185*** (.044)
Young %		-.332*** (.103)	-.517** (.222)
Death Rate %		-.622*** (.151)	-.670*** (.159)
Occupation (ISCO1&2 %)		.566*** (.058)	.557*** (.058)
Education (% Degree)		-.352*** (.034)	-.537** (.199)
Young*Education			.009 (.010)
Constant	27.423*** (.603)	51.415*** (3.405)	56.007*** (5.961)
Adj R-square	.673	.716	.716
N	2676	2676	2676

* significant at the .05 level; ** significant at the .01 level; *** significant at the .001 level

In *Model 3A*, the addition of the eight socio-demographic variables has led to a modest increase in the adjusted R-square value (0.716 compared to 0.673 for *Model 2B*, which included only the institutional variables). All of the socio-demographic variables in *Model 3A* are highly significant (that is, significant at the .001 level).

Population Density

Increased population density is associated with a statistically significant decrease in turnout; that is, more densely populated regions (for example, those with large cities or towns) are associated with lower turnout, even when we control for the effects of the other variables. This finding appears to contradict some previous comparative research, albeit based on country level data, which has suggested that more densely populated *countries* have, on average, higher turnout than those which are less densely populated. Further, it has also been suggested that people who live in urban, rather than rural areas would be more likely to vote because there would be less distance to travel to the polling booth. Indeed, the evidence here seems to support the hypothesis that people in large towns and cities are less likely to vote, perhaps because they have a weaker sense of community, and are not enmeshed in social structures as strongly as those living in less densely populated, more rural areas.

Hypothesis 2a: Turnout will be lower in areas of higher population density - Confirmed

Migration

The coefficient for migration into a region is negative and statistically significant. The explanation seems rather straightforward: as was discussed in Chapter 2, new arrivals to a region will be less likely to participate in elections. A one per cent higher migration to a region is associated with just over one per cent decrease in turnout. Before we run away with the conclusion that *all* new arrivals lack the motivation to vote in elections, we need

to recall that the measure of migration here is based on the previous year. Thus, for elections which take place every four or five years, a one per cent annual migration rate could represent a total of 4 or 5 per cent new arrivals in that period. So, all other things being equal, many new arrivals do vote, though at a lower rate than the established residents.

Hypothesis 2d: Turnout will be higher in areas of higher immigration - Confirmed

Regional GDP

It was noted in Chapter 2 that measures of GDP have often been used in previous research which included both developed and lesser developed countries. In these studies, countries with higher GDP tended to have higher turnout in elections (Blais and Dobrzynska 1998). As we see in Model 3A, the coefficient for GDP is statistically significant (.001 level); and each one unit increase in GDP is associated with around one thirtieth of a percentage point increase in turnout. For the countries in our dataset, our measure of GDP (see Table 4.6, Chapter 4) ranges from a minimum of 84.1 (Greece) to a maximum of 134.3 (Netherlands); suggesting a turnout difference of around one and a half per cent. Within our group of Western European countries, then, the result for GDP supports previous research which has noted that the effect is rather modest when the analysis is restricted to include only developed countries (Blais 2000).

Hypothesis 2e: Turnout will be higher in those areas which have higher GDP - Confirmed

Unemployment

In line with previous research (Wolfinger and Rosenstone 1980), our model shows that higher unemployment is associated with significantly lower turnout: a one per cent

increase in unemployment being associated with a decrease in turnout of just less than a fifth of a per cent.

Hypothesis 2h: Turnout will be lower in areas with higher unemployment – Confirmed.

Young People

The percentage of the population in the 15 to 29 years age group is associated with significantly lower turnout. Again, this result serves to confirm previous findings that younger age groups are, on average, less motivated to vote in elections (Wolfinger and Rosenstone 1980; Nevitte, Blais et al. 2009). A one percent increase in the proportion of young people is associated with around a third of a percentage point reduction in turnout.

Hypothesis 2b: Turnout will be lower in areas with a greater percentage of young people – Confirmed

Death Rate

It is known that the gap between the incomes of the poorest and wealthiest in a society is related to mortality; and that the death rate is higher among the poorer and more marginalised groups (Kennedy, Kawachi et al. 1996; Hwang, Wilkins et al. 2009). These groups are among those less likely to have the resources necessary to vote in elections. We expect then that regions with a higher death rate would be associated with lower turnout in elections. This expectation is confirmed by the results from Model 2A, where the death rate is statistically significant when the effects of the remaining variables are taken into account: a one unit rise in the number of deaths per thousand people being associated with a decrease in turnout of .622 per cent.

Hypothesis 2c: Turnout will be lower in areas with a high death rate – Confirmed.

Occupational Category

Previous research has suggested that people in the higher categories of occupations will be more likely to vote, because they have had more opportunity to acquire social norms, because they have a higher level of skills necessary to participate in elections, or because they have a greater stake in the result (Wolfinger and Rosenstone 1980). This is confirmed in Model 2A, where a higher percentage of the population in the highest employment categories (ISCO categories I and II) is associated with significantly higher turnout. Each one per cent increase in the population in those employment categories is associated with over a half a per cent increase in turnout.

Hypothesis 2g: Turnout will be higher in areas which have a greater percentage of people in the higher occupational categories – Confirmed.

Education

The link between education and voting has been suggested by much previous research: more educated people are more likely to vote (Wolfinger and Rosenstone 1980; Nevitte, Blais et al. 2009). Our measure here is the percentage of people educated to degree level or beyond. As we can see from the results for Model 2A, education is statistically significant. However, contrary to our expectations and a wealth of previous research, the coefficient is *negative*: a one per cent increase in the proportion of the population educated to degree level or higher is associated with a *reduction* in turnout of around a third of one per cent. Larger effects for education are often found in the USA, with the link being less pronounced in some European countries (Milligan, Moretti et al. 2004), but what we have here is not a weak positive effect, but a strong negative one.

For the moment, we note that, in most European countries, the past few decades have seen an enormous increase in the numbers of people going to university: thus, it is predominantly the younger age cohorts within a particular country which have achieved

a degree level of education. However, previous research (confirmed in *Model 3A*), has found that, other things being equal, young people themselves are usually considered to be *less* likely to vote.

In order to explore the possible interaction between young people and educational attainment, *Model 3A-Int* includes an interaction term, Young*Degree. However, as can be seen from the results of this regression model in Table 5.2, this interaction term is not significant. Further, when the interactive term is included, the coefficients for both of the uninteracted variables remain negative, and significant. At this point, the results suggest that the most highly educated groups are less likely to vote. For some of our group of countries, we have data on a lower category of education (post-primary) which may be a more appropriate measure of the skills necessary to vote in elections; in that Chapter we will also be able to examine individual countries and see if the apparent association between degree education and lower turnout is confirmed.

> *Hypothesis 2i: Turnout will be higher in areas where a greater percentage of people have a higher educational attainment – Not Confirmed.*

Our main focus in this section has been Model 3A, which included all election types in all countries except Belgium. We have found that, while statistically significant, the coefficients for the socio-demographic variables are rather modest when compared to most of the institutional variables. However, whereas the institutional variables are categorical (and can only take two or three values) the continuous socio-demographic variables can take values over a much wider range. This being the case, it is worth calculating a potential size of effect for each variable by combining the coefficient for each variable with the range of values it may take. The results are shown in Table 5.3.

Table 5.3 : Socio-demographic variables: range of values and potential size of effect

Variable	Unit	Coefficient	Range (Country)	Effect (Country)	Range (Regions)	Effect (Regions)
Population Density	Ln	-1.866	6.1	11.4	9.9	18.5
Migration	%	-1.182	3.1	3.7	10.8	12.8
GDP	% EU average	.031	50	1.6	554	17.2
Unemployment	%	-.187	11	2.1	28.8	5.4
Young	%	-.332	6.1	2.0	14.1	4.7
Death Rate	Per 1000 per year	-.622	2.3	1.4	11.0	6.8
Occupation (ISCO 1& 2)	%	.566	11.5	6.5	36.7	20.7
Education (ISCED 5 & 6)	%	-.352	22.5	7.9	52.6	18.5

As can be seen, the difference in turnout predicted by using the minimum and maximum values for each variable is usually quite substantial. Of course, no one region actually scores the extreme value for all of the variables. However, we can select a couple of examples from our data set – one of very low turnout and one of very high turnout - which differ markedly in terms of several of the variables.

Nottingham (England) has above average values for: population density (3606 inhabitants per square kilometre), immigration (8.03 per cent of the population coming from outside the region), unemployment (9.6 per cent), death rate (10.5 deaths per 1000 inhabitant per year), and the percentage of the population educated to at least degree level (23.1). All of these variables are associated with decreased turnout in *Model 3A*. Thus, despite having about average numbers of people in the ISCO I and II occupational categories (23.1%) and above average GDP (161.4), Nottingham records an expectedly low turnout. For example, in the very low salience European Parliament

elections of 1999, actual turnout in Nottingham was only 19.5%; compared to 19.7% turnout as predicted by *Model 3A*.

At the other extreme, Modena (Italy), whilst having a similar Death Rate (10.2) and GDP (160), and only slightly lower percentage of people in higher occupational categories (19.4), has much lower values than Nottingham on Population Density (239 inhabitants per square kilometre), immigration (1.2 per cent coming from outside the region), unemployment (1.7%), young people (16.9 per cent of the population), and the percentage of people with qualifications at degree level or higher (11.0%). In the high salience legislative elections of 2006, Modena recorded actual turnout of 90.0%; compared to 91.5% predicted by *Model 3A*.

However, as reflected in the R-square value of 0.716, *Model 3A* is not predicting all results with as much success as the two examples given above. Indeed, even for the same regions, *Model 3A* performs less well when we consider different types of elections. For example, in the case of the Nottingham and the 2001 legislative election, actual turnout was 51.1%, whereas the predicted turnout is 46.0%. The difference is much more substantial when we consider Modena and the 2004 European Parliament election, where actual turnout was 81.2% and the predicted turnout is only 64%.

Clearly, the models are doing better at predicting turnout in some cases than in others. In Figure 5.1 Predicted Turnout is plotted against Actual Turnout for all cases. Where the predicted turnout is exactly the same as the actual turnout, the case would lie on the diagonal; and the further from the diagonal, the less well the model is doing. As can be seen from Figure 5.1, although many cases do lie close to the diagonal, there are also plenty of cases where the turnout as predicted by *Model 3A* falls markedly above or below the actual turnout.

Figure 5.1 : Predicted v Actual Turnout (all election types, all countries except Belgium)
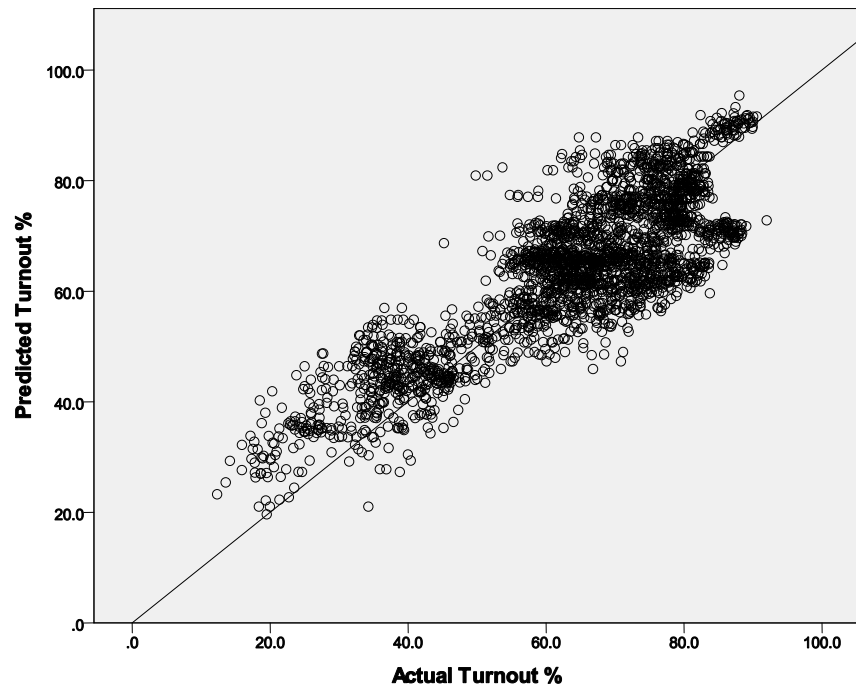
Figure 5.2 presents similar information as Figure 5.1, but identifies the different types of election. For the sake of clarity we have included only European Parliament, municipal, and legislative elections.

Figure 5.2 : Predicted v Actual Turnout – Municipal, Legislative and EP Elections
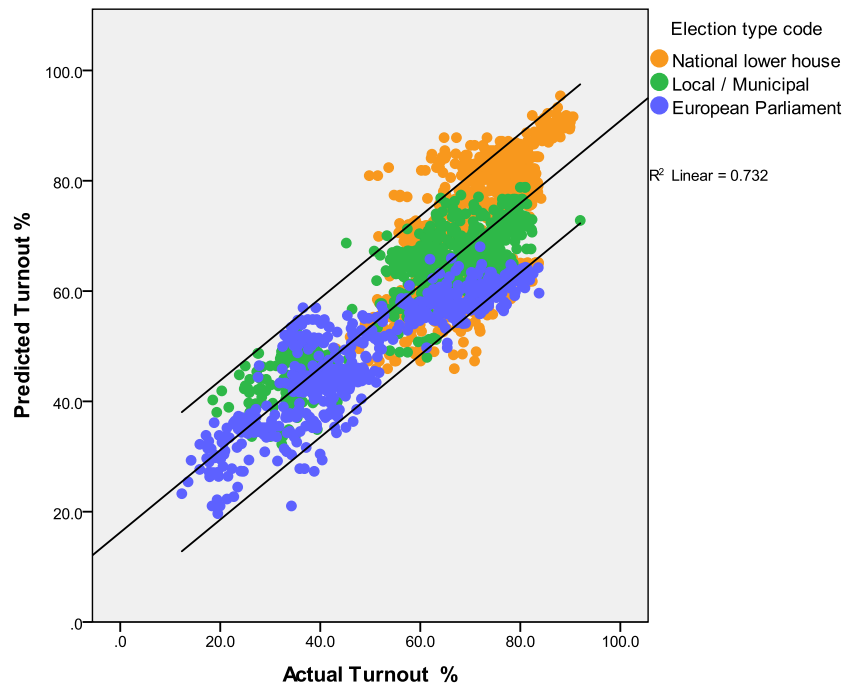
As the Figure 5.2 shows, the distribution of individual cases in each election type is not random about the diagonal; for example, for EP elections, many cases fall below the diagonal (that is, the model is predicting turnout lower than was actually the case); whereas for elections to the Lower House, the opposite is true, with many cases falling above the diagonal (that is, the model is predicting higher turnout than was actually the case) . Clearly, *Model 3A* is being stretched by the inclusion of all election types, and in the following section, we examine how well the same model performs when we consider different types of elections.

Different Election Types

In this section, we conduct regression analyses on different types of elections. Firstly, we compare the effects of excluding European Parliament elections. Table 5.4 includes results for *Model 3A* (all election types) and *Model 3B* (which excludes elections for the European Parliament). The adjusted R-square value is slightly lower for *Model 3B*; which, although having a smaller sample size does not contain the extremely low turnout figures which are common for EP elections in some of the countries in our data set.

When we consider the effects of the institutional variables, the effects of weekend voting, simultaneous elections, and the salience of elections remain substantially unchanged. However, we see marked changes in the coefficients for compulsory voting and for proportional representation.

For compulsory voting, the coefficient is around 12 per cent in *Model 3A*, but this effect is much more modest when EP elections are excluded, being reduced to just under five per cent. This suggests that compulsory voting has a greater effect on the very low order elections for the European Parliament than on higher-order elections. This makes sense: as an election becomes more important in the eyes of the voters, more people are likely to vote anyway, and there is simply less room for compulsory voting to have an effect.

Table 5.4 : Results of Regression Analyses (with and without EP elections)

Model	3A	3B
	All elections	All except EP
Compulsory Voting (0,1,2)	12.004***	4.909***
	(.549)	(.603)
Weekend Voting (0,1)	12.552***	11.964***
	(.897)	(.941)
Proportional Representation (0,1)	.540*	2.250***
	(.302)	(.341)
Simultaneous Election (0,1)	8.154***	7.052***
	(.455)	(.613)
Salience (0,1,2)	13.678***	15.553***
	(.274)	(.449)
Population Density (ln)	-1.866***	-1.805***
	(.274)	(.190)
Migration	-1.182***	-.454*
	(.206)	(.221)
GDP (PPP)	.031***	.021**
	(.007)	(.007)
Unemployment	-.187***	-.180***
	(.044)	(.046)
Young %	-.332***	-.626***
	(.103)	(.108)
Death Rate %	-.622***	-.602***
	(.151)	(.157)
Occupation (ISCO1&2 %)	.566***	.384***
	(.058)	(.085)
Education (% Degree)	-.352***	-.228***
	(.034)	(.039)
Constant	51.415***	54.048***
	(3.405)	(3.614)
Adj R-square	.716	.639
N	2676	2071

* significant at the .05 level
** significant at the .01 level
*** significant at the .001 level

The second change between *Models 3A* and *3B* is the effect of using proportional representation: in *Model 3A* this is only weakly significant, and rather modest at around half a per cent turnout. However, when we exclude European Parliament elections (*Model 3B*), the effect of proportional representation is highly significant and over four

times the size compared to *Model 3A*. We can note here that *all* elections for the European Parliament which are included in the data set were held under Proportional Representation electoral systems. What appears to be happening is that European Parliament elections are giving PR a 'bad name': because turnout for European Parliament elections in several countries is substantially lower than for all other election types, when we include EP elections with all other types of elections, the low turnout for EP elections reduces the effect that Proportional Representation has on turnout.

When we turn our attention to the socio-demographic variables, we can firstly note that all are significant in both models. Secondly, the sign of the coefficient for each variable is the same in both models. Thus, initial perceptions are that the socio-demographic variables are quite consistent in their effects, whether or not we include elections to the European Parliament. For many of the variables, the sizes of the coefficients are broadly similar in both models. However, for both the Migration and Young variables there are marked differences. Migration has a much smaller coefficient in Model 3B; whereas Young, alone among the socio-demographic variables, has a larger (negative) coefficient in Model 3B – almost double the size of that in Model 3A.

There do appear to be differences in the effects that some of the variables are having, depending on whether or not EP elections are included in the analysis. We consider the differences between election types in the following section, where we look at EP, Municipal, and Lower House elections in turn[49].

---

[49] These election types are examined here because Presidential and Intermediate level (provincial, regional) elections are held only in *some* of the countries in the data set.

European Parliament, Municipal, and Lower House Elections

As we saw in the previous section, although the effects of some variables seem fairly consistent, whether or not we include EP elections in the analysis, there are also some differences in the size of the coefficients, and occasionally in the level of statistical significance. In this section, we examine EP, Municipal, and Lower House elections separately. The results of these three different regression analyses are presented in Table 5.5. We will first consider the institutional variables, then the socio-demographic variables.

Table 5.5 : Results of Regression Analyses – EP, Municipal and Lower House Elections

Model	4A	4B	4C
	EP	Municipal	LH
Compulsory Voting (0,1,2)	27.276***	11.988***	6.142***
	(.755)	(1.004)	(.540)
Weekend Voting (0,1)	17.574***	15.979***	1.939*
	(1.399)	(1.193)	(.922)
Proportional Representation (0,1)		8.491***	4.952***
		(.589)	(.335)
Simultaneous Election (0,1)	17.122***	3.596***	
	(.721)	(.599)	
Population Density (ln)	-.660*	-1.720***	-.727***
	(.276)	(.243)	(.195)
Migration	-2.098***	.590*	.056
	(.301)	(.273)	(.210)
GDP (PPP)	.031***	.008	.014*
	(.009)	(.009)	(.007)
Unemployment	-.255***	-.063	-.198***
	(.064)	(.058)	(.046)
Young %	-.058	-.550***	-.914***
	(.159)	(.144)	(.109)
Death Rate %	-.757***	-.249	-.947***
	(.225)	(.190)	(.162)
Occupation (ISCO1&2 %)	.418***	.294***	.474***
	(.082)	(.072)	(.067)
Education (% Degree)	-.160***	-.192***	-.370***
	(.050)	(.042)	(.041)
Constant	36.170***	52.734***	91.054***
	(4.983)	(4.283)	(3.531)
Adj R-square	.881	.880	.678
N	604	698	876

* significant at the .05 level; ** significant at the .01 level; *** significant at the .001 level

Institutional Variables

We first consider the effects of our institutional variables in the three different models. Note that, because we are now dealing with each type of election separately, the Salience variable is no longer included in the analyses. In addition, because all elections for the European Parliament were held under proportional representation, this variable is not included in Model 4A; and, because we do not measure the effect of simultaneous elections on first-order elections, this variable drops from Model 4C.

As can be seen in Table 5.5, where included, all of the institutional variables are statistically significant in all three models, and have coefficients agreeing in sign with the results in *Models 3A* and *3B*, above. However, we see further evidence of a phenomenon noted previously: that the effects of institutional variables generally decrease with increasing salience of election; that is, EP -> Municipal -> Lower House.

Compulsory voting for EP elections is associated with an enormous 27 per cent increase in turnout; an effect which is more than halved in the case of Municipal elections; and roughly halved again for Lower House elections; where compulsory voting is associated with an increase in turnout of 'only' six percent. Clearly, compulsion to vote, even if it is only the weak form of compulsion in Italy and Greece, has a substantial effect on lower-order elections; but the effect is much reduced for more important elections where more people would presumably vote in the absence of any kind of legally backed, normative expectation.

We see a similar pattern when we examine the coefficients for Weekend Voting. Although here there is a much smaller difference between EP and Municipal elections (16.6% and 16% respectively) we see a substantial drop in the effects of weekend voting when we consider Lower House elections, where the coefficient for weekend voting is

rather modest at just under two per cent. Indeed, the coefficient for weekend voting in Lower House elections is only weakly significant, and thus rather more in line with previous research based on first-order elections, which has occasionally questioned whether weekend voting has any independent effect whatsoever (Siaroff and Merer 2002).

For Proportional Representation, we are limited to a comparison of the effects in Municipal and Lower House elections because all EP elections in this dataset were held under Proportional Representation. However, we see again a reduction in the coefficients, from over eight per cent in Municipal elections to less than five per cent in Lower House elections. We should note, further, that in both cases the coefficients are highly significant, and larger than when we included EP elections in the analysis (*Model 3A*).

The effect of holding elections simultaneously is also substantially reduced for Municipal elections compared to EP elections (3.6% and 17% respectively). The results here suggest that the effects are much greater on the very low salience EP elections than on Municipal elections. We should note that in overcoming the vagaries of the election calendar in England, we were forced to exclude instances of simultaneous elections in England. However, it is likely that a similar pattern does exist in England, and, indeed, previous research has shown that holding local elections simultaneously with EP elections can lead to measurable increases in turnout for the latter (Rallings and Thrasher 2005).

To summarise the findings for our institutional variables, the effects are consistent, in that they have the same sign on the coefficient, and are statistically significant across the

three different types of elections. However, in all cases, the effects are markedly reduced in elections of higher salience.

Socio-demographic Variables

Turning our attention to the socio-demographic variables, we can also examine the differences in their effects in different types of elections. Firstly, we consider those variables which have effects consistent with *Model 3A*, at least in terms of the sign of their coefficients, across each of the individual election types: population density, GDP, unemployment, young people, death rate, occupation, and education.

Increasing population density is associated with significantly decreased turnout in *Models 4A*, *4B*, and *4C*. The effect is only weakly significant for EP elections; and is most marked for Municipal elections. It has been suggested that mobilisation of voters by political parties, or by media coverage, is greater in national elections than in Municipal elections (and that it is lower still in EP elections), and that this can overcome to some extent the otherwise lower inclination to vote found in large cities (Blais 2000). It is possible that we are seeing some effects of this here. However, if this were the case, we would expect the effect in EP elections to be at least as high as in Municipal elections: mobilisation to vote and media coverage is often even lower in EP elections than in Municipal elections.

The percentage of the population in the highest occupational categories (ISCO I & II) is associated with statistically significantly higher turnout in all three election types, although the effect is lower in Municipal elections than in EP and Lower House elections. On the other hand, an increasing percentage of people with educational qualifications of degree level or higher is (as in *Model 3A* and *3B*) associated with statistically significantly

lower turnout; and the effects are larger in Lower House elections than in EP or Municipal elections.

The coefficients for GDP are positive in all three election types, though modest. GDP is only strongly significant for elections to the European Parliament. In the other two types of elections the effects are smaller than in EP elections, and in the case of Municipal elections, GDP is not statistically significant. Unemployment is associated with decreased participation in all three types of elections, although not significantly so in Municipal elections. A one per cent increase in unemployment is associated with a quarter and a fifth of a per cent decrease in turnout, respectively, for European Parliament and Lower House elections. The percentage of young people is associated with decreased participation in elections, although not significantly so in EP elections. In Municipal elections, a one per cent increase in young people is associated with about a half of one percent decrease in turnout. For Lower House elections, this effect is around double the size: almost a one per cent decrease in turnout for each per cent increase in the proportion of young people in the population. A higher death rate is associated with decreased turnout in all three election types, although this is not significant for Municipal elections. However, in elections for the European Parliament and the national Lower House, the death rate is strongly significant, and associated with a decrease in turnout of about three-quarters and one per cent, respectively.

As we have seen, although the socio-demographic variables vary in their statistical significance, most are consistent in the sign of their effects across all three election types (and consistent with the results obtained when all election types are considered together (*Model 3A*). However, the results for Migration are not consistent across all three types of election: for European Parliament elections, migration is associated with *decreased* turnout in elections, and is strongly significant; whereas for Municipal

elections and Lower House elections, the coefficient for Migration is *positive* – albeit not significantly so for Lower House elections.

That the effects of Migration should be in different directions, depending on the type of election, is rather puzzling. We suggested in Chapter 2 that migration could be taken as a general measure of population instability, with higher migration to a region indicating that the local population was somewhat less settled, and thus marginally less likely to vote in elections. However, we need to recall here that our dependent variable, turnout, is itself calculated on the basis of *registered* voters, not on the basis of the total voting age population. Thus, for migration to a region to have a negative impact on turnout, we would have to imagine a situation where a newly arrived migrant would bother to register on the electoral roll, but not subsequently bother to exercise their vote in an election.

Thus, the registration arrangements for individual countries could be at play here: where registration is automatic or at least state-initiated, the chances that a newly arrived migrant could be registered, yet chose not to vote, may be marginally higher than in a country where registration is initiated by the individual. For example, registration is compulsory in France (where it has also become automatic for those reaching the age of 18) and in Spain; or state initiated (with regular door-to-door inquiries to update the voting registers) in Ireland and England. In Chapter 7, where we examine selected countries in more detail, we may find evidence of different effects of migration on turnout, depending on the country under investigation.

In the case of Lower House elections, issues are usually more national than local in character, and newly arrived citizens from another region *of the same country* who have previously voted in elections will likely be aware of the national-level issues and choices

involved, even when they have moved to another location in the same country. It is perhaps understandable, then, that migration does not appear to be significantly associated with turnout in national elections.

We should also note that the 'migration' variable used here encompasses all migration to a region, not just that from another region of the same country. Those citizens who have migrated from another member state of the EU have certain rights of electoral participation under EU legislation (European Commission 2010) in that they can register for, and vote in, elections for the European Parliament *and* in the Municipal elections of their adopted country (but not, absent becoming a citizen, in national elections). Because of this, we can make a proposition (which unfortunately cannot be tested with the existing data), that some new arrivals from other EU member states do go to the effort of registering, but with the over-riding intention of voting in the *Municipal* elections, not in the European Parliament elections. However, in registering for local elections, they are also automatically registered, and entitled to vote in European elections. Their abstention in the latter could go some way to explaining the difference between the effects of migration in the two election types.

In fact, there is some evidence from France that immigrants from other EU member-states are between two and four times more likely to vote in the municipal elections than they are to vote in elections for the European Parliament (Collard 2008). However, even if this were the case, it would be surprising if such an explanation could account for the absolute difference between the coefficients for migration in EP and Municipal elections: over two-and-a-half per cent difference in turnout for a one percent change in total inward migration. A second factor may also be at play: migration, in a way that is different to the other variables included here, can also be an election *issue* in its own right. Indeed, 'immigration' has often appeared high on those lists of 'most important

issues' compiled by opinion pollsters (for example, Van Der Valk 2003; Wells 2006; Dahlström and Esaiasson 2009; Muñoz de Bustillo and Antón 2009). It is possible that we are seeing the results of a rather complex interaction of different factors; as well as high net migration being a (real) measure of local population instability, and hence reduced turnout, 'high immigration' as a campaign issue results in higher mobilisation and tends to increase turnout. Further, it is possible that responding to 'immigration' (as an issue) is seen as mainly a *national* responsibility. This could also contribute to the different effects of the migration variable across the different election types. In Chapter 7, we will further investigate the effects of migration when we consider individual countries.

In summary, the institutional variables maintain the same direction of effect whether we analyse all election types together, or examine European Parliament, Municipal, and Lower House elections separately. In all cases, the magnitude of the coefficient for each variable decreases as the salience of the election increases. Thus, the electoral system and rules appear to matter to a greater extent for lower salience elections than for higher salience elections. When we examine the additional effects of our selected socio-demographic variables, the findings are a little less clear-cut. However, with only one exception, the sign of the coefficient for each variable is consistent across all three types of election, and the coefficients are usually statistically significant. For these variables, the results on individual election types confirm, or at least fail to contradict, the results from earlier models. The one exception is that of migration, which is significant in both EP and Municipal elections, but negative in the former and positive in the latter.

Discussion

This chapter began by testing models using data measured at the country-level and at the regional-level in order to check that results were consistent. We established that, in terms of our set of institutional variables, the results using the two levels of measurement were broadly comparable. Although there were some differences in the size of the coefficients for weekend voting and for the electoral system, in both models these coefficients were positive and strongly significant. Indeed, all of the institutional variables were strongly significant in both models, and the directions of their effects were in line with expectations founded on previous research.

We then showed that compulsory voting has substantial and statistically significant effects even when we excluded the only country in our dataset which has strongly enforced compulsory voting (Belgium). This provided evidence that even the weaker forms of compulsion in Italy and Greece appear to have substantive effects on voter behaviour even where recent legal changes had officially removed the requirement to vote; probably because most voters would have acquired the habit of voting prior to those legislative changes.

We then added a number of socio-demographic variables to the regression model, and when including all types of elections, noted that all of these socio-demographic variables were highly significant in their effects. Moreover, with the exception of Proportional Representation, all of the institutional variables retained their statistical significance and size of effect. In this model, the effects of population density, migration, GDP, unemployment, the proportion of young people, death rate and occupation confirmed our hypotheses stated in Chapter 4.

The effect of education presented us with a puzzle, in that a higher percentage of degree educated people was significantly associated with lower levels of turnout. Our suspicion that this was related to the higher numbers of degree holders within the younger age group (a group itself associated with lower turnout) was not confirmed by the introduction of a term which sought to take account of this interaction. Thus, based on our model which included all election types, we would be led to the conclusion that a higher level of education is associated with lower turnout. However, at this stage we regard this finding as provisional. In Chapter 7 we will shed more light on the actual effects of education when we examine individual countries.

We then excluded from our model the elections to the European Parliament and noted that the size of the coefficient, and the statistical significance, for Proportional Representation increased over that obtained in the model which included EP elections. Thus, despite controlling for the importance of elections by including a term for salience, the very low turnout elections for the European Parliament (all held under Proportional Representation) were giving PR a bad name.

When we focused in turn on each of three election types, we found further evidence that the effects of compulsory voting, weekend voting, the electoral system, and simultaneous elections are systematically reduced as the salience of the election increases. In terms of RCT and the calculus of voting, this is clear evidence that voters are indeed aware of, and take into account, the fact that the potential benefits of voting are more substantial in higher order elections. Moreover, as the salience of the election increases, the effects of those arrangements which directly influence the costs of voting have been shown to have reduced effects. Indeed, this finding may explain why some previous research has failed to confirm the effects of PR and of Weekend Voting; much

of this research has considered turnout in first-order elections where the effects are smaller than in lower-order elections.

Presidential elections are only held in two of the countries in our dataset, so we have not considered this type of election here. But we note in passing that previous research has sometimes used presidential, rather than lower house election turnout. Although it is understandable that researchers would seek to use turnout in the highest order election in each country, this could tend to reduce the observed effects of proportional representation: by definition, the presidential election results are used because the turnout is higher than for a country's Lower House election. Yet presidential elections can only be won by a single candidate and cannot be conducted using a system of proportional representation.

For our socio-demographic variables, in all but one instance the sign on the coefficient is consistent, whether we treat all elections together in the same model, or examine each election type individually. The exception is that of migration; and our post hoc explanations for this inconsistency are two-fold: one concerns the peculiar rights of EU citizens from other countries to participate in elections for the European Parliament and in the local elections of their adopted country. The second hinges on the possibility that, as well as being a measure of the stability of the population, 'immigration' can also be a political issue which may serve to increase the mobilisation of voters, particularly in the case of elections to the national Lower House.

We also noted that examining election types separately does not help us to shed any light on the unexpectedly negative effect of education on turnout. In Chapter 7, we return to this question when we consider turnout variations within countries, and find

that there are clear country-to-country differences in how this, and other variables behave.

Before we focus on individual countries, we will examine some variables for which data are available only at the country-level. In the next chapter, we investigate the effects of these variables when they are added to the core set of institutional and socio-demographic variables.

Chapter 6 – Adding to the core variables

Introduction

In this chapter, we begin by examining how well our core set of variables predicts turnout for the individual countries. We find that there are substantial country-to-country differences, and seek to improve the model by testing further variables, most of which are measured at the country-level. Each of these additional variables can be considered as potentially affecting the salience of one or more types of election; and where appropriate, we explore the different effects of each variable on different election types.

We firstly consider three variables which could be expected to increase turnout because of their mobilisation effects: the geographical coverage of political parties; political party membership; and trade union membership. Next, we examine the level of public employment, local taxation arrangements, and the strength of the mayor; each of which may influence the voter's perception of 'what's at stake' in the election. We then see whether those regions with representative offices in Brussels have a higher turnout in European elections. Finally, we consider how turnout varies across different election types according to a measure of 'regionality'.

Country-to-Country Differences

In the previous chapter, we presented graphs of predicted turnout versus actual turnout, and found that there were differences, not only in the overall levels of turnout in different elections, but also that our model 'worked' better for some elections than for

others. In Figures 6.1 (a) to (c) we present similar plots of predicted versus actual turnout for three individual election types: European Parliament, Municipal, and Lower House. Here, we add further information by identifying the country for each data point. The first of each pair of graphs presents predicted versus actual turnout at the country-level; that is, as an average for all elections of that type in each country. The second graph in each pair shows predicted versus actual turnout for the individual regions.

In Figure 6.1 (a) we see that in the first of the graphs, our model appears to work reasonably well for European Parliament elections, with most countries lying quite close to the diagonal. However, both Italy and Sweden are more distant from the line; with predicted turnout for Sweden being substantially higher than the actual turnout, and predicted turnout for Italy being somewhat lower than the actual turnout. Turning to the second of the graphs, we see that for several of the countries, individual cases are dispersed around the diagonal. However, all of the individual NUTS level results for Sweden lie above the diagonal, and most of the results for Italy lie below it. For Municipal elections, Figure 6.2 (a), most countries again lie quite close to the diagonal, with the exception of England and the Netherlands. Reference to the second of the graphs shows that for England, almost all cases lie above the diagonal, and for the Netherlands, all lie below. For Lower House elections, Figure 6.3, we again see some countries more distant from the diagonal than others; and again the second of the two graphs shows that this also applies to the individual cases for each country. This time, it is France and Greece where predicted turnout is markedly higher than actual turnout; and the Netherlands which lies some way below the diagonal.

Figure 6.1 (a) : Predicted v Actual Turnout : European Parliament Elections

(i) Country Level

(ii) NUTS Level
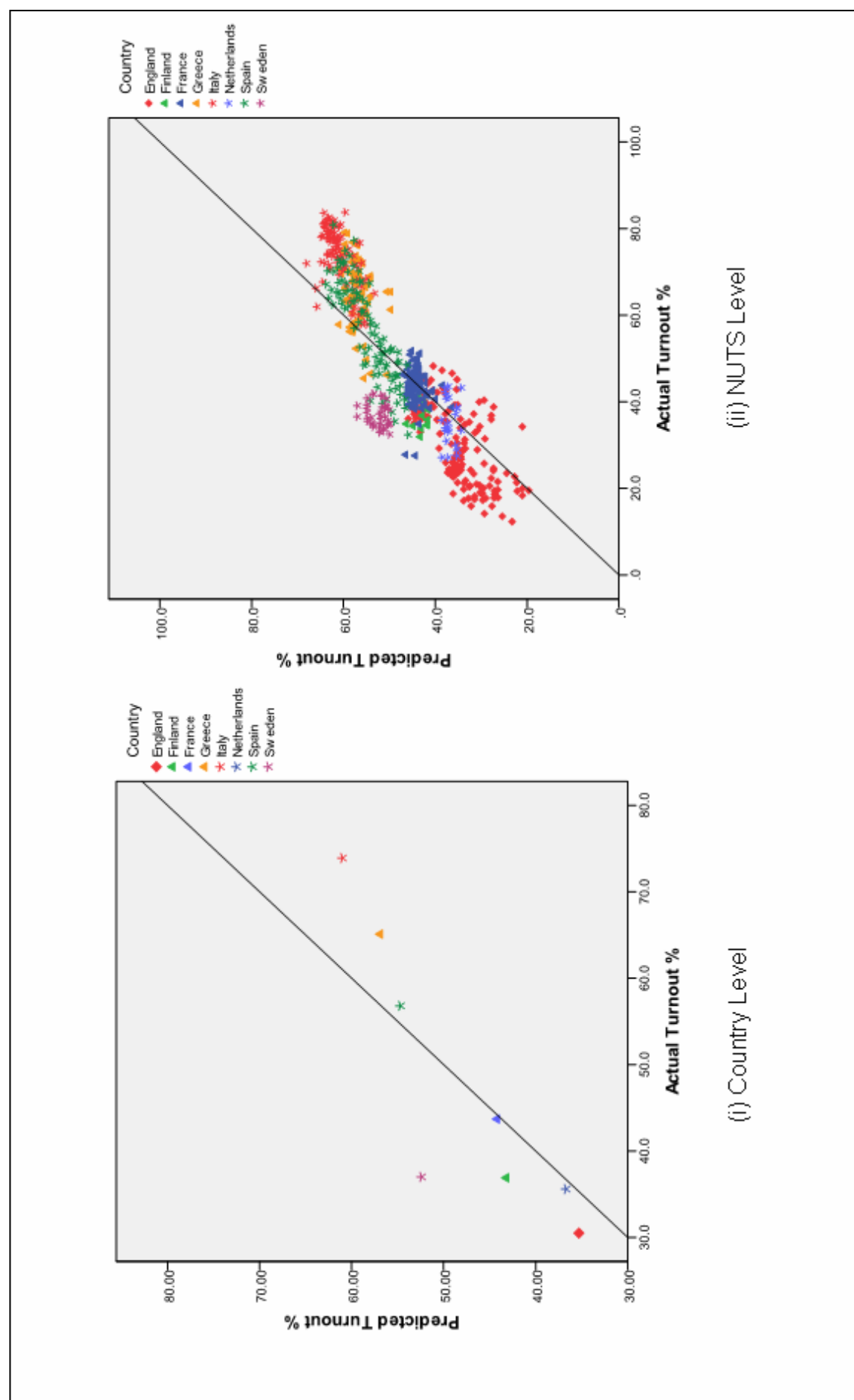
Figure 6.1 (b) : Predicted v Actual Turnout : Municipal Elections

(i) Country Level

(ii) NUTS Level
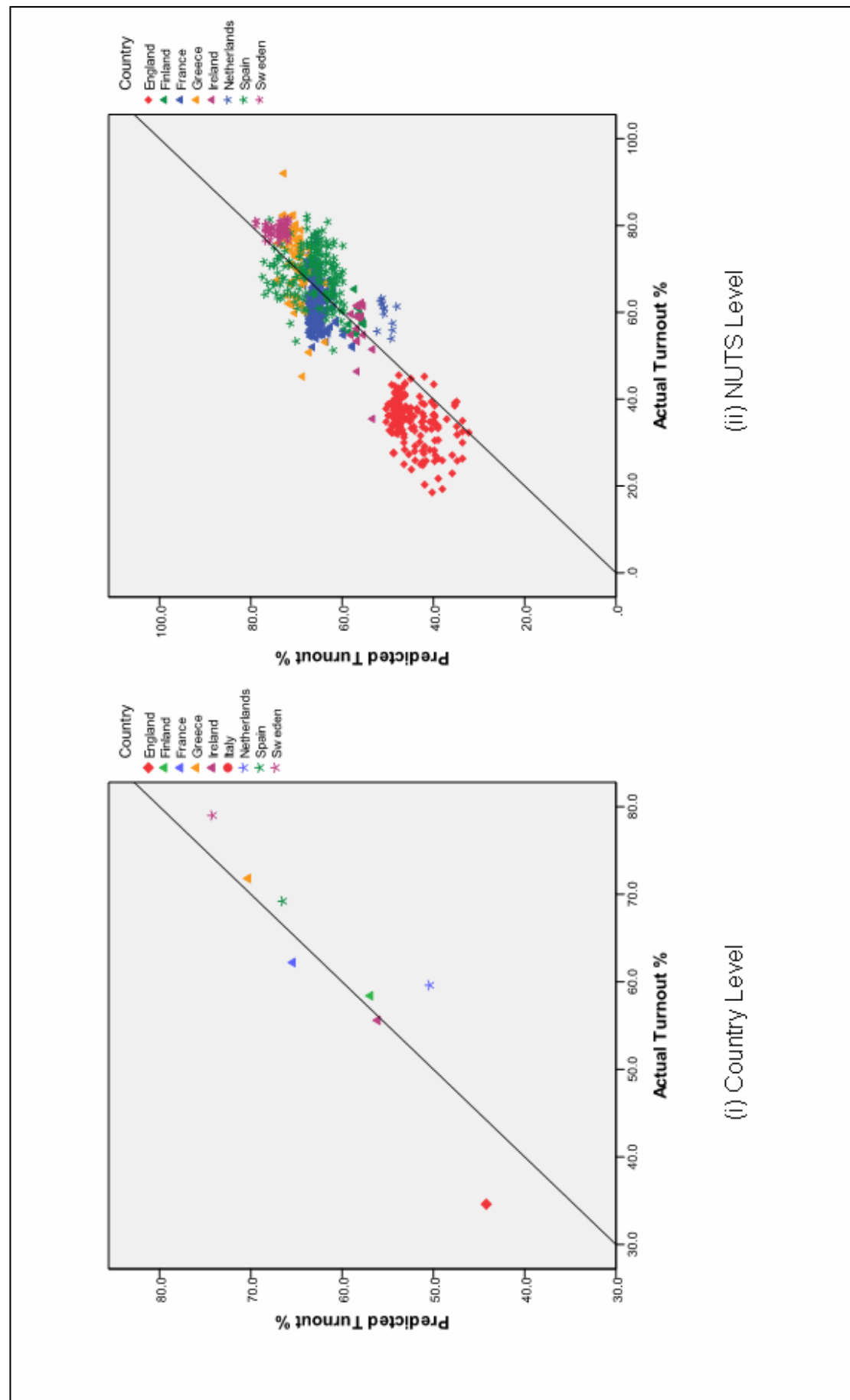
Figure 6.1 (c) : Predicted v Actual Turnout : Lower House Elections

(i) Country Level

(ii) NUTS Level
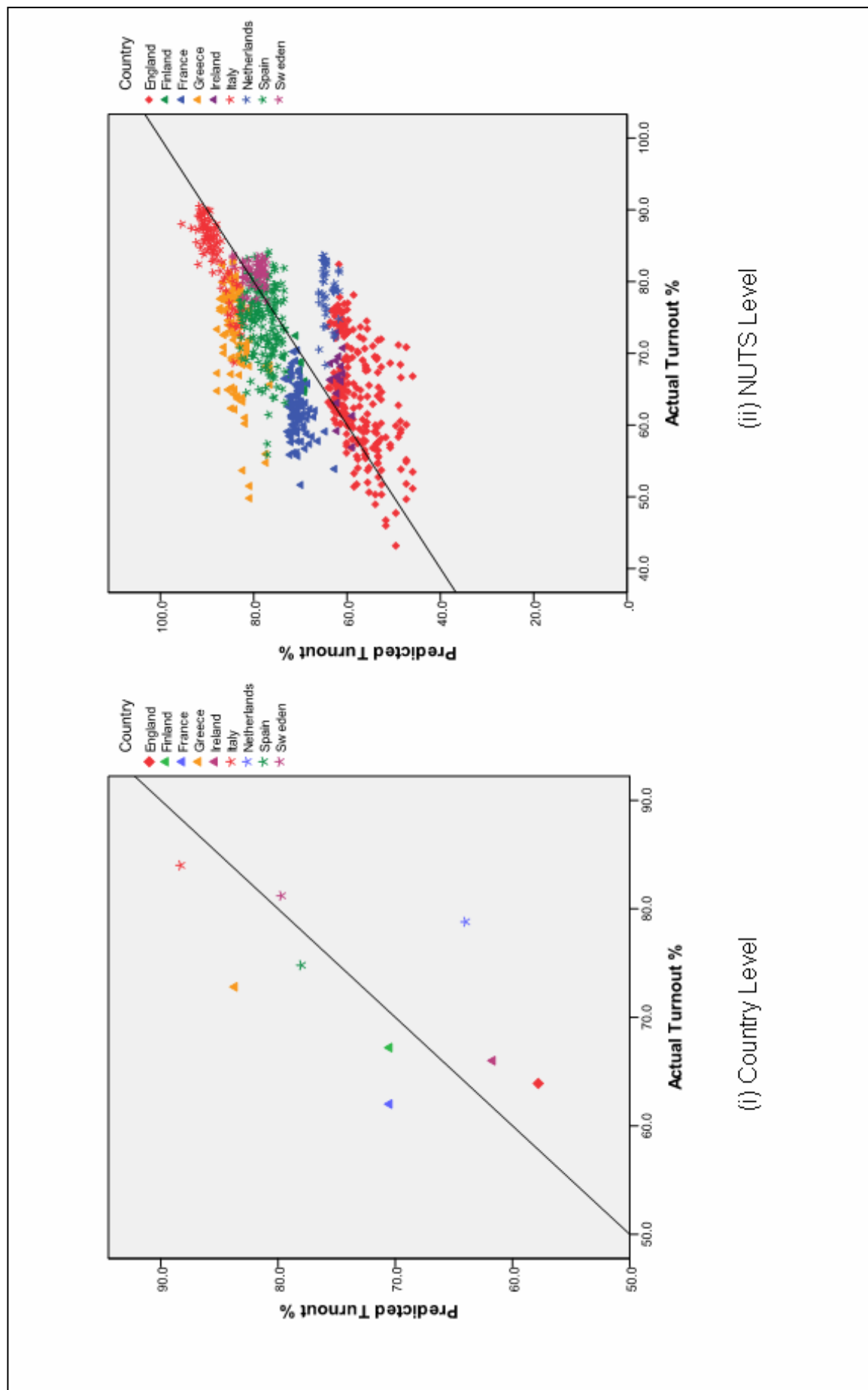
Although our models in Chapter 5 were explaining a reasonable amount of the variance, the evidence from the graphs in Figure 6.1 suggests that there are some substantial differences in how well we are predicting turnout for different countries. In particular, the graphs show that there are some clear country-to-country differences. Clearly, our institutional and regional level variables are not able to fully account for these country-to-country differences. However, that these differences exist means we have an opportunity to test further variables, for which only country-level data are available.

Additional variables

In this section, we will investigate the effects of several additional variables. Because most of these variables are measured at the country level, we quickly run into collinearity problems when we try to include more than one of these in a single model. For this reason, we will present results of a series of regression analyses, in which the effects of each variable are tested individually. Some of these variables only relate to a particular type of election; so, only that election type is investigated in the model. For example, we investigate the possible effects of local government taxation only on turnout in municipal elections. Other variables, such as the level of union membership, may be expected to have a more general effect, and so more than one election type is considered.

The first group of variables we examine can be seen as potentially affecting the mobilisation of voters.

Party Coverage

In Chapter 4, we noted that, historically, political parties sought to increase their territorial coverage in order to mobilise wider bases of support (Caramani 2005); and

suggested that countries where major political parties compete in more constituencies would show a higher level of turnout, at least in elections to the Lower House. Table 6.1 shows the results of a series of regression models which include the party coverage variable, along with our core set of institutional and socio-demographic variables.

When we examine all election types together (*Model 5A*), the coefficient for the party coverage variable is indeed significant (.05 level) and positive, although rather modest (.023). However, we should recall here that Caramani's calculations for party coverage were based on the number of constituencies contested by political parties in *Lower House* elections, and we should not necessarily expect the party coverage variable to behave in the same way for other types of elections.

Table 6.1 : Party territorial coverage

Model	Model 5A	Model 5B	Model 5C	Model 5D	Model 5E
	All elections	All except EP	EP	Municipal	Lower House
Compulsory Voting (0,1,2)	11.438*** (.603)	2.553*** (.668)	29.173*** (.796)	6.069*** (1.243)	4.694*** (.598)
Weekend Voting (0,1)	12.450*** (.897)	11.980*** (.927)	17.412*** (1.358)	16.534*** (1.149)	1.966* (.912)
Proportional Representation (0,1)	.518 (.302)	2.155*** (.337)		7.937*** (.571)	4.807*** (.333)
Simultaneous Election (0,1)	7.961*** (.463)	5.428*** (.640)	15.612*** (.741)	.705 (.691)	
Salience (0,1,2)	13.653*** (.274)	15.102*** (.446)			
Population Density (ln)	-1.853*** (.179)	-1.784*** (.187)	-.794** (.269)	-2.091*** (.239)	-.705*** (.193)
Migration %	-1.265*** (.209)	-.758*** (.222)	-1.858*** (.295	.069 (.271)	-.092 (.210)
GDP (PPP)	.031*** (.007)	.022** (.007)	.028** (.009)	.003 (.008)	.015* (.007)
Unemployment %	-.176*** (.045)	-.117* (.047)	-.335*** (.064)	-.029 (.055)	-.159*** (.046)
Young %	-.258* (.109)	-.353** (.112)	-.262 (.158)	.008 (.156)	-.756*** (.114)
Death Rate %	-.582*** (.152)	-.465** (.155)	-.891*** (.220)	-.068 (.184)	-.853*** (.161)
Occupation (ISCO1&2 %)	.621*** (.065)	.607*** (.070)	.171 (.089)	.599*** (.080)	.624*** (.074)
Education (% Degree)	-.408*** (.042)	-.412*** (.045)	.050 (.059)	-.389*** (.048)	-.494*** (.050)
Party Geographical Coverage	.023* (.010)	.085*** (.011)	-.100*** (.016)	.115*** (.015)	.047*** (.011)
Constant	47.679*** (3.783)	41.349*** (3.923)	51.395*** (5.439)	34.374*** (4.781)	82.865*** (3.958)
Adj R-square	.717	.649	.888	.889	.685
N	2676	2072	604	698	876

* significant at the .05 level; ** significant at the .01 level; *** significant at the .001 level

When we examine Lower House elections (*Model 5E*), we see that the Party Coverage variable is, indeed, significant (.001 level) and positive.

Hypothesis 3f : Turnout in Lower House elections will be higher in countries where political parties contest a greater percentage of constituencies - Confirmed

169

Further, the Party Coverage variable is also significant and positive for Municipal election (Model 5D). In seeking to identify the factors which account for the absolute differences in turnout between national and local elections, Blais (2000:36-39) considered that, not only are national governments perceived as having a greater impact on the day-to-day life of the population, and attract commensurately higher media coverage, but also that local elections are often less nationally politicised than national elections. On the other hand, Morlan has suggested that, in general, local elections in Western European countries 'are partisan, generally involving the same parties as in national elections' (1984:463), and that those parties are usually active in mobilising the electorate. Morlan's view would seem to be borne out by the results here; all things being equal, countries with a higher territorial coverage by political parties in Lower House elections do also show higher turnout in Municipal elections. Interestingly, although this is the case for Municipal elections, a *negative* effect is found for European Parliament elections - perhaps because more nationalised parties make markedly less effort to mobilise the electorate compared to either Municipal or Lower House elections. Whatever the reasons, it is clear that Party Coverage has a different effect on European Parliament elections than on either Municipal or Lower House elections.

Membership of a Political Party or Trade Union

Crewe (1981) suggested that a possible source for the differences in turnout between countries lay with the efforts made by political parties and other organisations to mobilise the electorate; and that a crude indicator of these efforts would be the linkage between a country's political parties and its social cleavages, including class and religion. Using measures of partisan allegiance and Alford indices of class voting, drawn from

previous work by Rose (1974) and Powell (1977), Crewe found strong, positive associations between either of these measures and the country's turnout rate. The correlations were stronger when overall post-war turnout was considered, being lower when considering only turnout in the 1970s. Powell's (1980) own work from around the same time also showed that strong linkages between cleavage groups and parties were powerful predictors of turnout across the 24 countries in his analysis.

More recently, some researchers have investigated the direct effects of party or union membership, rather than seeking to measure the degree of partisanship. Gray and Caul (2000) examined the role of party and union membership on turnout in first-order elections in 18 countries since 1950. They found that, although the links between unions and labour parties have become much weaker, and there has been a corresponding decline in the ability of those institutions' abilities to mobilise their memberships to go to the polls, both political parties and trade unions do remain influential in getting their members to the polls. These findings attract support from subsequent work by Norris, and by Siaroff and Merer, who also considered only first-order elections. Norris (2004) used survey data from 37 legislative and presidential elections, and found that membership of a trade union was a significant predictor of turnout. Siaroff and Merer (2002) used aggregate data, and found both party and union membership to be associated with significantly higher turnout, whether examined by bivariate or multivariate methods.

As was shown in Chapter 4 (Table 4.3), differences remain within our group of countries in terms of the membership levels of political parties and, more markedly, trade unions. In order to investigate the effects of these two variables on turnout we add each to our core-set of variables. In contrast to the previous research discussed above, we do not restrict ourselves to first-order elections, but also investigate Municipal and European

Parliament elections. The results of these regression analyses are provided in Tables 6.2

and 6.3.

<u>Table 6.2 : Membership of a political party</u>

	Model 6A	Model 6B	Model 6C	Model 6D	Model 6E
	All elections	EP only	All except EP	Municipal	Lower House
Compulsory Voting (0,1,2)	12.537*** (.609)	30.785*** (.827)	5.117*** (.650)	16.992*** (1.302)	6.619*** (.627)
Weekend Voting (0,1)	12.800*** (.905)	18.256*** (1.326)	12.096*** (.953)	15.926*** (1.165)	2.123** (.929)
Proportional Representation (0,1)	.724* (.316)		2.369*** (.369)	11.173*** (.736)	5.209*** (.377)
Simultaneous Election (0,1)	8.015*** (.460)	17.053*** (.681)	6.926*** (.630)	2.383*** (.621)	
Salience (0,1,2)	13.749*** (.276)		15.544*** (.449)		
Population Density (ln)	-1.990*** (.189)	-1.645*** (.286)	-1.849*** (.196)	-1.660*** (.238)	-.793*** (.200)
Migration	-1.107*** (.209)	-2.034*** (.285)	-.403 (.229)	1.150*** (.283)	.134 (.216)
GDP (PPP)	.029*** (.007)	.026** (.009)	.021** (.007)	.009 (.008)	.011 (.007)
Unemployment	-.193*** (.044)	-.308*** (.061)	-.182*** (.047)	-.046 (.056)	-.202*** (.046)
Young %	-.301** (.015)	.265 (.155)	-.618*** (.109)	-.777*** (.145)	-.898*** (.110)
Death Rate %	-.558*** (.152)	-.526* (.215)	-.586*** (.159)	-.214 (.186)	-.910*** (.163)
Occupation (ISCO1&2 %)	.563*** (.058)	.476*** (.078)	.383*** (.065)	.221** (.071)	.457*** (.068)
Education (% Degree)	-.345*** (.034)	-.107* (.047)	-.221*** (.040)	-.149*** (.041)	-.347*** (.044)
Party Membership %	-.278* (.138)	-1.576*** (.187)	-.127 (.149)	-1.262*** (.216)	-.264 (.177)
Constant	51.115*** (3.406)	35.252*** (4.713)	54.012*** (3.614)	56.639*** (4.236)	91.115*** (3.528)
Adj R-square	.717	.893	.639	.886	.679
N	2676	604	2072	698	876

* significant at the .05 level; ** significant at the .01 level; *** significant at the .001 level

Table 6.3 : Membership of a trade union

	Model 7A	Model 7B	Model 7C	Model 7D	Model 7E
	All elections	All except EP	EP Only	Municipal	Lower House
Compulsory Voting (0,1,2)	12.121*** (.572)	5.580*** (.627)	24.599*** (.738)	11.966*** (1.005)	6.852*** (.591)
Weekend Voting (0,1)	12.505*** (.899)	11.841*** (.938)	18.721*** (1.289)	16.106*** (1.210)	1.858* (.918)
Proportional Representation (0,1)	.477 (.315)	1.761*** (.364)		8.297*** (.665)	4.425*** (.380)
Simultaneous Election (0,1)	8.139*** (.456)	6.871*** (.613)	15.858*** (.672)	3.516*** (.613)	
Salience (0,1,2)	13.649*** (.277)	15.409*** (.449)			
Population Density (ln)	-1.851*** (.181)	-1.756*** (.189)	-.974*** (.255)	-1.736*** (.245)	-.752*** (.194)
Migration	-1.232*** (.217)	-.781*** (.237)	-1.326*** (.286)	.516 (.298)	-.207 (.228)
GDP (PPP)	.030*** (.007)	.020** (.007)	.040*** (.009)	.008 (.009)	.013* (.007)
Unemployment	-.184*** (.044)	-.166*** (.046)	-.274*** (.059)	-.062 (.058)	-.192*** (.046)
Young %	-.315** (.106)	-.522*** (.111)	-.386** (.149)	-.518*** (.152)	-.794*** (.116)
Death Rate %	-.624*** (.151)	-.621*** (.156)	-.758*** (.207)	-.252 (.190)	-.960*** (.161)
Occupation (ISCO1&2 %)	.557*** (.058)	.408*** (.065)	.435*** (.075)	.300*** (.073)	.531*** (.070)
Education (% Degree)	-.354*** (.034)	-.239*** (.039)	-.218*** (.046)	-.192*** (.042)	-.405*** (.043)
Union Membership %	.009 (.012)	.047*** (.012)	-.176*** (.017)	.010 (.015)	.042** (.015)
Constant	51.044*** (3.443)	52.173*** (3.637)	46.358*** (4.675)	52.239*** (4.356)	88.454*** (3.628)
Adj R-square	.716	.642	.900	.880	.681
N	2676	2072	604	698	878

* significant at the .05 level; ** significant at the .01 level; *** significant at the .001 level

Because the previous research referred to above concentrated on the effects of union or party membership on turnout in first-order elections, we first consider the results of

those regression analyses. As can be seen in Table 6.2, membership of a political party is not significant for Lower House elections (Model 6E), although we should note that the coefficient does have an unexpectedly negative sign. In Table 6.3, union membership is statistically significant for Lower House elections (Model 7E), although the coefficient is rather modest (0.042). This result is, however, broadly in line with the results obtained by Siaroff and Merer, given that membership in their models was categorised into five per cent bands: they reported coefficients of between .051 and .114 in their multivariate models (2002:924-925).

Union membership is not statistically significant when we treat all types of elections together (Model 7A), nor when we consider only Municipal elections (Model 7D); although in both cases the coefficients are positive. However, when we exclude EP elections from our model (Model 8B), union membership becomes significant at the .001 level. Correspondingly, in Model 7C, where we consider only elections for the European Parliament, union membership is significant and *negative*. Although party membership was not significant for Lower House elections (Model 6E), as we can see in Table 6.2, party membership is statistically significant when we consider all elections together, all elections apart from those for the EP, and for Municipal elections (Models 6A, 6B, and 6D, respectively). In all three of these models, party membership has a negative coefficient[50].

Hypothesis 3c : Turnout will be higher in countries with higher membership of a political party – Not Confirmed

---

[50] Note – not shown here, in a model for Lower House elections only, the inclusion of party membership, union membership, and territorial coverage in the same model showed union membership and territorial coverage to be significant and positive; whereas party membership was again significant and negative.

Hypothesis 3d : Turnout will be higher in countries with higher membership of a trade union – Confirmed for Lower House elections. Not confirmed for Municipal or EP elections.

The significant and negative coefficients for party and union membership are rather puzzling, as it is initially difficult to see why the membership of a political party or of a trade union could have the effect of demobilising voters from voting. We could of course dismiss the results as spurious, having occurred simply by chance. However, there are two possible avenues we can explore in an attempt to make sense of our findings. Firstly, we must consider the limitations of our dataset: although we have regional level data for turnout and for our core set of socio-demographic variables, figures for union and party membership are unfortunately only available at the country-level. Thus, we have had to apply the country level values for these two variables to every regional unit within each country. This, of course, does not take account of any real differences in union or party membership which actually occur within the individual countries, nor their possible effects on turnout when measured at a sub-national level. It is possible that the relationships within particular countries between membership of a political party or trade union and turnout are, indeed, positive. However, we have no way of investigating this with the present dataset.

Secondly, previous research does not always show consistent and robust effects for either of these measures. Although Siaroff and Merer reported union and party membership as being positively associated with higher turnout, their results were often weakly significant at best. Further, some research has shown that there is indeed some variation between countries, even when considering only first-order elections. For example, using individual-level (CSES) data, Nevitte, Blais et al. (2009) found that union membership was only significantly associated with increased turnout in six of the

175

countries in their dataset; in the other 17 countries, union membership was either not significant, or, in the case of one Spanish election, it was associated with *decreased* turnout.

The picture becomes somewhat more clouded when we consider the effects of union or party membership on turnout in lower-order elections. We briefly consider here three comparative studies into European Parliament or municipal elections which have investigated the effects of union and party membership. Firstly, Oppenhuis (1995) examined the effects of both party and union membership on turnout in the 1989 European Parliament elections. The correlations between union membership and turnout were very weak in all countries (below .12). A similar pattern was found for party membership, although in some countries, there was evidence of party membership having a weak *negative* effect on turnout. Secondly, in a study of municipal elections in Norway, Aars and Ringkjøb (2005) found that, since the end of the 1980s, the presence of non-partisan lists is linked to significantly *higher* turnout, perhaps because the candidates campaign on a single interest, and/or specifically local issues that are ignored by the major political parties. Thirdly, although they did not consider union or party membership directly, Hoffmann-Martinot, Rallings, et al. (1996), in an investigation into various determinants of voting in municipal elections in France and England, did include data on the percentage of manual workers in the population. Interestingly, they found that the effects differed between the two countries – with higher levels of manual workers being associated with increased turnout in France, whereas in England the relationship was negative. The explanation for the difference invoked possible differences in the way that parties and trade unions mobilised their memberships. These three studies do provide some evidence that the association

between union or party membership and turnout may not apply equally, nor indeed operate in the same direction, across different types of election.

In summary, the three variables which we examined in this section gave rather mixed results. Party coverage and union membership were associated with increased turnout for Lower House and Municipal elections, providing some support for the idea that both serve to increase the mobilisation of the electorate. But, both variables were associated with decreased turnout in elections for the European Parliament. Party membership was associated with *lower* turnout in all of the regression models, a finding which is difficult to make sense of. It is possible that there is substantial sub-national variation in levels of party membership, and that, had we been able to use sub-national data, a positive association between turnout and party membership would have been apparent. Alternatively, national levels of party membership may be correlated with a variable which has not been included in our analysis, and which itself has a negative association with turnout.

The next group of variables that we consider can be seen as relating to what is at stake in elections. We consider levels of public employment, local taxation arrangements, and mayoral strength.

Public employment

According to the calculus of voting, in deciding whether or not to vote, the potential voter takes into account the differential benefits represented by the parties contesting the election. It has been suggested that higher public expenditure serves to increase the differential benefits between one party and another; thus encouraging higher turnout in elections (Colomer 1991). In other words, political choices are more important in countries with higher public expenditures, and the salience of the election is increased.

Indeed, Colomer (1991) found clear differences in first-order electoral turnout between countries with high and low levels of public expenditure.

Rather than using a measure of public expenditure, we focus in this section on the levels of public employment and tax raising powers. In part, our choice is influenced by the fact we are examining different levels of government, and to separate out public expenditure for each of these levels is fraught with difficulty, not least because *expenditure* at the sub-national level often relies heavily on funding from central government, accompanied by strict control of how that funding is spent. Although similar difficulties often apply, we consider that investigating the role of public employment on turnout is of interest, as public employees can be considered as being more likely to vote in an election for two reasons. Firstly, people employed in the public sector could be expected to have a higher level of awareness and information regarding the competing policies on offer. Secondly, public employees may feel they have more at stake in the outcome of an election, since the nature, conditions, or indeed the very existence of a voter's job may hinge on the result. In short, an election may appear more salient to public employees than to other members of the electorate.

In Table 6.4, we present the results of a series of regression analyses. Here, we are measuring the effects of *total* public employment for each country; that is, we do not seek to take into account the proportion of public employment for each level of government in each country. In *Model 8A*, when we consider all elections together and control for the effects of the other variables, increased public employment is actually associated with significantly *lower* turnout. However, when we exclude elections to the European Parliament, *Model 8B*, public employment is associated with statistically higher turnout. Examining the different election types in turn (*Models 8C, 8D,* and *8E*) sheds further light on this finding: higher public employment is significant and positive

for both Municipal and Lower House elections, but significant and negative for European

Parliament elections.

Hypothesis 3g : Turnout will be higher in countries where a higher proportion of workers is employed in the public sector. Confirmed for Lower House and Municipal elections. Not confirmed for European Parliament elections.

Table 6.4 : Total Public Employment

	Model 8A	Model 8B	Model 8C	Model 8D	Model 8E
	All elections	All except EP	EP only	Municipal only	LH only
Compulsory Voting (0,1,2)	11.568***	5.278***	24.105***	12.144***	6.818***
	(.568)	(.609)	(.737)	(.990)	(.553)
Weekend Voting (0,1)	14.007***	10.137***	24.295***	13.274***	-.476
	(1.020)	(1.064)	(1.394)	(1.313)	(1.047)
Proportional Representation (0,1)	.402	2.564***		9.106***	5.309***
	(.305)	(.351)		(.595)	(.340)
Simultaneous Election (0,1)	8.425***	6.201***	15.531***	2.151***	
	(.464)	(.655)	(.666)	(.668)	
Salience (0,1,2)	13.622***	15.371***			
	(.274)	(.450)			
Population Density (ln)	-1.780***	-1.892***	-.140	-1.910***	-.853***
	(.181)	(.190)	(.254)	(.243)	(.194)
Migration	-.924***	-.761***	-.786**	.124	-.319
	(.224)	(.237)	(.296)	(.287)	(.222)
GDP (PPP)	.031***	.020**	.028***	.005	.012
	(.007)	(.007)	(.008)	(.009)	(.007)
Unemployment	-.198***	-.166***	-.289***	-.045	-.185***
	(.044)	(.047)	(.058)	(.057)	(.046)
Young %	-.501***	-.420***	-.948***	-.213	-.621***
	(.118)	(.122)	(.163)	(.159)	(.125)
Death Rate %	-.663***	-.552***	-1.009***	-.187	-.868***
	(.151)	(.157)	(.205)	(.188)	(.161)
Occupation (ISCO1&2 %)	.459***	.468***	-.151	.455***	.632***
	(.067)	(.070)	(.089)	(.079)	(.074)
Education (% Degree)	-.289***	-.294***	.219***	-.290***	-.474***
	(.040)	(.043)	(.056)	(.046)	(.047)
Public Employment %	-.198**	.260***	-1.084***	.399***	.335***
	(.066)	(.072)	(.094)	(.086)	(.072)
Constant	57.824***	46.366***	72.043***	40.541***	79.828***
	(4.025)	(4.179)	(5.483)	(4.977)	(4.234)
Adj R-square	.717	.642	.902	.884	.686
N	2676	2072	604	698	876

* significant at the .05 level; ** significant at the .01 level; *** significant at the .001 level

How are we to account for the aberrant case of EP elections? One line of reasoning is that the European Union is not a public service employer on the same scale as national or sub-national governments. In the countries in our dataset, public employment represents around 20 per cent of all employment (see Table 3.2, Chapter 3), whereas the European Union, with a total of less than 40 000 direct employees (Folketinget 2008), actually has very few employees when compared to the total public employment in each of the member states. Thus, for most public employees, their employer is one of the levels of government within their own country; the EP elections themselves are largely irrelevant.

However, it is difficult to see how higher public employment should have a significant *negative* effect on turnout in EP elections. It is possible that higher public employment co-varies with another variable which is not included in our analysis; but were that the case, that variable would have to have a different effect on European Parliament elections than on other types of elections. We have only been able to find one such example in previous research: Abiral, Cautrès et al. (2003) conducted factor analysis of a range of socio-demographic variables, then ran regression analyses on the derived factors with electoral turnout as the dependent variable. The factor relating to social exclusion was found to have a positive effect on turnout in national elections, but a negative effect on turnout in European elections. It is possible that social exclusion and public employment is related - that is, areas of higher social exclusion also have higher than average levels of public employment - but our data does not allow this avenue to be pursued.

Local Taxation Arrangements

Local taxation is something that is directly and obviously felt by residents of a municipality, and we suggest that the level of taxation directly affects the relative importance of an election, because it clearly relates to what is at stake: higher taxation increases the differential benefits that the rational voter takes into account. Where local taxes represent a larger proportion of total taxation, we would therefore expect that local elections would have higher salience.

Table 6.6 presents two regression models which measure different aspects of taxation on turnout in local elections. In *Model 9A*, we measure local taxation as a percentage of the total taxation within a country. As can be seen, the coefficient, although only weakly significant, is positive: thus, in countries where local taxes represent a higher proportion of total taxation, turnout in Municipal elections is, on average, higher. In *Model 9B*, we measure the contribution that local taxes make to total local government expenditure (the balance coming from various grants from central or other levels of government). The coefficient for this variable is also positive and significant. The results suggest that a ten per cent increase in either the proportion of local taxes of total taxes or of the proportion that autonomous taxes represent of local government revenue, is associated with an increase in turnout of only about one percentage point. However, both coefficients are statistically significant (at the .05 level) even when the effects of the other variables are taken into account, and hence support our hypotheses:

Hypothesis 3h : Turnout in municipal elections will be higher in countries where local government taxation represents a higher proportion of total taxation – Confirmed

Hypothesis 3i : Turnout in municipal elections will be higher in countries where autonomous taxes represent a higher proportion of total local government revenues - Confirmed

Table 6.6 : Local Government Taxation

	Model 9A	Model 9B
	Municipal only	Municipal only
Compulsory Voting (0,1,2)	12.662*** (1.058)	15.012*** (1.606)
Weekend Voting (0,1)	15.229*** (1.249)	13.011*** (1.712)
Proportional Representation (0,1)	8.034*** (.632)	7.776*** (.658)
Simultaneous Election (0,1)	3.300*** (.616)	2.936*** (.657)
Salience (0,1,2)		
Population Density (ln)	-1.787*** (.245)	-1.755*** (.243)
Migration	.351 (.298)	.323 (.294)
GDP (PPP)	.006 (.009)	.007 (.009)
Unemployment	-.059 (.057)	-.053 (.057)
Young %	-.448** (.152)	-.457** (.148)
Death Rate %	-.261 (.190)	-.275 (.190)
Occupation (ISCO1&2 %)	.298*** (.072)	.306*** (.072)
Education (% Degree)	-.176*** (.042)	-.185*** (.042)
Local government tax as % of all tax	.088* (.045)	
Local autonomous tax as % of local government income		.094* (.039)
Constant	51.804*** (4.300)	51.100*** (4.322)
Adj R-square	.881	.881
N	698	698

* significant at the .05 level; ** significant at the .01 level; *** significant at the .001 level

Mayoral Strength

Here, we investigate whether the strength of the mayor is associated with differences in turnout. The measure we use is taken from Heinelt and Hlepas (2006), who calculated their mayoral strength index based on the responses from a survey of mayors in European countries. The composite index for each country[51] forms the *Mayoral Strength* variable, which is added to our core set of institutional and socio-demographic variables. The results of the regression analysis, using only the results from Municipal elections, are presented in Table 6.7.

As can be seen, the coefficient for Mayoral Strength is negative and significant: thus, countries with a higher Mayoral Strength score have significantly lower turnout in Municipal elections. This is the opposite to our hypothesised effect, which was that higher mayoral strength would be associated with higher turnout in municipal elections, as we expected that increased mayoral strength would increase the salience of the election for the electorate.

Hypothesis 3j : Turnout in Municipal elections will be higher in countries with a higher Mayoral strength index - Not Confirmed

This result is, to say the least, puzzling; and prompts a closer look at how the Mayoral Strength Index was calculated. The index is a composite measure, with a maximum score of 14, based on the scores for nine separate characteristics related to mayors; whether or not they: are directly elected by citizens; have a different term of office to council election term; usually have control of the council majority; can be recalled by the council

---

[51] Note that *some* mayors in England are now directly elected, whereas others are selected by their fellow councillors. These different arrangements are reflected in our dataset, where directly elected mayors have a higher Mayoral index score.

or by referendum; preside over the council; have control over the council agenda; select

the CEO and administrative heads of the council.

Table 6.7 : Mayoral strength

	Municipal only
Compulsory Voting (0,1,2)	7.716*** (.978)
Weekend Voting (0,1)	20.040*** (1.269)
Proportional Representation (0,1)	10.785*** (.624)
Population Density (ln)	-1.935*** (.224)
Migration	.474 (.271)
GDP (PPP)	-.001 (.008)
Unemployment	.049 (.053)
Young %	-.803*** (.138)
Death Rate %	-.458** (.173)
Occupation (ISCO1&2 %)	-.264*** (.078)
Education (% Degree)	.382*** (.059)
Mayoral strength	-.817*** (.122)
Constant	67.263*** (4.048)
Adj R-square	.904
N	685

* significant at the .05 level; ** significant at the .01 level;
*** significant at the .001 level

As can be seen, these individual measures relate to the independence and power enjoyed by the mayor *vis a vis* the local councillors. Further, the first of the measures specifically takes account of the existence of separate mayoral elections. This being the case, it perhaps is understandable that a higher score on the Mayoral Strength Index is associated with significantly lower turnout in Municipal elections. Indeed, this may be somewhat analogous to the findings of some previous research which has reported lower turnout in legislative elections in countries which have an elected president with substantive powers (for example, see Blais 2000; Siaroff and Merer 2002; Norris 2004). One explanation for this phenomenon is that, because the elections for the legislature may have little or no effect on executive policy, the salience of those legislative elections is effectively reduced. Further, the division of powers between different branches of government can lead a reduction in executive responsiveness – 'the extent to which the political complexion of the executive is responsive to the choices made at the time of an election' (Franklin 2004:96). Variations in executive responsiveness have previously been invoked to explain differences in turnout for national (first-order) elections; the results here suggest that notions of executive responsiveness may also be applicable at the municipal level.

To summarise the effects of the variables we have examined in this section, both measures of local taxation were positively associated with turnout. Mayoral Strength, though, was associated with lower turnout, perhaps because the variable is actually reflecting the relationships between the mayor and other councillors, rather than those with the electorate. Higher levels of public employment were associated with higher turnout in Municipal and Lower House elections. But, as we found in the earlier section which examined mobilisation effects, we have evidence that EP elections are in some

ways very different to both Municipal or Lower House elections; here we saw that higher levels of public employment are associated with lower turnout in EP elections.

EU office

We have seen previously in this chapter that some variables have an opposite effect in EP elections than in Municipal and Lower House elections. Here we focus only on EP elections, and see whether those regions with a representative office in Brussels have higher turnout in EP elections. The decision to invest money and other resources in such an office may be driven by the desire to more directly influence European level policy making, or to support an application for EU funds, or indeed, a combination of factors. Whatever the motivation, it is possible that, in those regions which maintain a representative office in Brussels, the profile of the European Union would be somewhat higher than in those regions without such an office. Were this the case, we would expect that elections to the European Parliament would have a higher salience, and thus attract a higher turnout. To measure this, we introduce a simple dichotomous variable: those regions having a representative office in Brussels by 2008 are coded 1, those with no such office are coded 0. The results of the regression analysis are shown in Table 6.9. As can be seen, the coefficient for EU Office is, indeed, positive; however, it is not statistically significant.

Hypothesis 3b : Regions with Representative Offices in Brussels will exhibit higher turnout in elections to the European Parliament – Not Confirmed

Table 6.9 : Regional Representation in Brussels

	EP Only
Compulsory Voting (0,1,2)	27.498*** (.786)
Weekend Voting (0,1)	17.534*** (1.400)
Simultaneous Election (0,1)	17.087*** (.721)
Population Density (ln)	-.706* (.280)
Migration	-2.094*** (.301)
GDP (PPP)	.031*** (.009)
Unemployment	-.255*** (.064)
Young %	-.023 (.162)
Death Rate %	-.734*** (.226)
Occupation (ISCO1&2 %)	.412*** (.082)
Education (% Degree)	-.145** (.051)
EU office (0,1)	.790 (.771)
Constant	34.714*** (5.181)
Adj R-square	.881
N	604

*significant at the .05 level; ** significant at the .01 level;
*** significant at the .001 level

Regionality

As was noted in Chapter 3, a number of European countries engaged in significant changes to the organisation of territorial government in the 1960s and 1970s. Although by the late 1970s this process had slowed, and in some cases reversed, the 1980s saw further rounds of territorial reorganisation in many countries. These were prompted, not only by changes at both the international and European levels, but also by growing

pressures from below the level of the state, with regions in many countries demanding greater autonomy.

Keating (1998) sought to quantify what he described as this 'new regionalism' by going beyond the purely territorial definition and taking account of functional, social, and political aspects of the sub-national regions in European countries. Keating characterised these regions in terms of culture, identity, government institutions, civil society, and economic regionalism. We have converted his qualitative descriptors – none, weak, moderate, fairly strong, strong – for each region into numerical scores (0, 1, 2, 3, 4), then combined the individual scores to calculate a composite index of regionalism for each of the sub-national units in our dataset. This variable, with a maximum value of 20, is added to our core set of institutional and socio-demographic variables; and the results of the regression analyses for different types of elections are presented in Table 6.8.

As can be seen, when we include all election types, *Model 10A*, the Keating index is positive and significant, albeit only weakly so; suggesting that regions with a higher regionality score are associated with higher turnout in elections. However, when we examine each election type separately, some clear differences emerge. Regionality is also associated with higher turnout in elections to the European Parliament (*Model 10B*); with a coefficient and statistical significance similar to the model for all election types. In *Model 10E*, we examine only the Upper Intermediate (that is, regional) elections; and note that the coefficient has more than doubled in size and increased in significance compared to *Models 10A* and *10B*. Thus, for regional elections, we would predict around a half of one per cent increase in turnout for each unit increase in the Keating index.

Hypothesis 3a : Regions with a higher Regionality index will have higher turnout in regional elections – Confirmed

Table 6.8 : Keating regional index

	Model 10A	Model 10B	Model 10C	Model 10D	Model 10E
	All elections	EP only	Municipal only	LH Only	UI only (1)
Compulsory Voting (0,1,2)	12.695*** (.634)	28.025*** (.848)	10.869*** (1.219)	5.084*** (.647)	9.448** (3.565)
Weekend Voting (0,1)	12.038*** (.936)	16.777*** (1.462)	16.802*** (1.226)	2.920** (.986)	11.176** (3.822)
Proportional Representation (0,1)	.439 (.306)		8.594*** (.588)	5.208*** (.347)	
Simultaneous Election (0,1)	8.225*** (.457)	17.098*** (.720)	3.393*** (.614)		
Salience (0,1,2)	13.651*** (.275)				
Population Density (ln)	-1.924*** (.275)	-.735** (.279)	-1.625*** (.245)	-.543** (.202)	-1.424** (.482)
Migration	-1.057*** (.211)	-1.966*** (.305)	.557* (.274)	.009 (.209)	-.525 (.587)
GDP (PPP)	.029*** (.007)	.027** (.009)	.008 (.009)	.015* (.007)	.045* (.018)
Unemployment	-.226*** (.046)	-.302*** (.066)	-.062 (.059)	-.178*** (.048)	.063 (.088)
Young %	-.299** (.104)	-.014 (.159)	-.502*** (.144)	-.921*** (.109)	-.585* (.263)
Death Rate %	-.592*** (.151)	-.712** (.225)	-.215 (.189)	-.960*** (.161)	-.168 (.305)
Occupation (ISCO1&2 %)	.531*** (.059)	.377*** (.084)	.311*** (.073)	.496*** (.067)	-.106 (.321)
Education (% Degree)	-.333*** (.036)	-.121* (.054)	-.217*** (.043)	-.406*** (.042)	.092 (.238)
Keating Index	.172* (.067)	.209* (.096)	-.129 (.087)	-.186** (.072)	.497** (.162)
Constant	50.678*** (3.410)	35.240*** (4.976)	51.394*** (4.282)	90.624*** (3.512)	63.865*** (9.292)
Adj R-square	.718	.882	.882	.684	.774
N	2665	602	694	872	199

*significant at the .05 level; ** significant at the .01 level; *** significant at the .001 level
(1): due to Collinearity problems, simultaneous elections and PR variables excluded.

However, we examine *Models 10C* and *10D* – Municipal and Lower House elections respectively – we note that a higher Keating index is associated with *lower* turnout, a finding which is statistically significant for lower house elections. Although the index we use here is a composite of several different measures, this finding is in line with

previous research which has suggested that the existence of strong regional government implies a reduction in the monopoly of power enjoyed by the national legislature; which is reflected in lower turnout for elections to the latter (Blais 2000; Siaroff and Merer 2002).

Conclusions

In this chapter, we firstly showed that the predictive power of our core-set of variables differed, not only with different types of elections, but also with the individual countries in the dataset. We then introduced additional variables, several of which were measured at the country level, and tested their effects by means of regression analysis.

In several cases, our hypotheses were confirmed, at least on the type of elections to which we supposed they might apply. The geographical coverage by political parties was statistically significant for Lower House elections, as was membership of a trade union, and the level of public employment. Our two variables related to local taxes were statistically significant predictors of turnout in municipal elections; and the regionality index was significantly associated with higher turnout in regional elections.

Other hypotheses failed to find support: party membership was not significant for Lower House elections (and was, indeed, associated with significantly lower turnout in EP and Municipal elections); our measure of mayoral strength was associated with lower turnout in Municipal elections; and the presence of a representative office in Brussels was not significant. In the instances where we were faced with significant results which contradicted our expectations, we have revisited the original hypotheses, reviewed the findings in the light of previous research, and in some cases speculated on possible explanations for otherwise perplexing results.

In several models we investigated the effect of a variable on three election types: EP, Municipal, and Lower House. For each of four variables - party territorial coverage, union membership, public employment, and regionality - it is noteworthy that the coefficients for Municipal elections and Lower House elections were the same; and in each case the opposite to the corresponding coefficients for EP elections. On this evidence, then, European Parliament elections do appear to be quite different, not just to first-order elections, but also to second-order elections.

If variables are found to have different effects from one election type to another, this raises the question of whether they may also vary in their effects from country to country. Indeed, this may be a reason that the results for two of the variables investigated in this chapter – party membership and mayoral strength – contradicted our hypotheses. We recall, from Chapter 1, that it is possible for regions within a country to have the opposite relationship with a variable to that found when comparing countries. Unfortunately, we cannot investigate this possibility using the country level variables we have considered here.

However, this raises an important question: in Chapter 5 we found statistically significant effects for all of the core socio-demographic variables. That these effects were generally very consistent across different types of elections added to our confidence that these findings were reliable. But, do these variables have these same associations with turnout in individual countries? For five of the countries in our dataset, we have a sufficient number of cases in order to answer this question. These five countries will form the main focus of Chapter 7.

Chapter 7 : Individual Countries

Introduction

In Chapter 5, we considered how our core-set of institutional and socio-demographic variables performed across different types of elections in nine countries (ten countries in the case of the institutional variables). We noted that although the direction of effect is consistent, the institutional variables tend to have smaller effect on turnout in higher order elections than in lower-order elections. Further, we found that most of our socio-demographic variables are consistent in their direction of effect, whether we consider all election types together, or whether we examine EP, Municipal, and Lower House elections individually.

However, in Chapter 6, when we supplemented our core-set with a selection of variables measured at the country-level, we were often confronted with results which failed to support our hypotheses; or, indeed, contradicted them. In seeking to make sense of these results, we speculated that the problems may lay with the nature of our data: those variables measured at the country-level could not, of course, take account of variations *within* each of our countries. We were unable, for example, to investigate sub-national variations in party membership or public employment.

Nonetheless, in an effort to understand some of the troublesome results, we occasionally referred to previous research which had suggested that there were, in fact, real country-to-country differences in the effects of some variables. We recall, for example, that membership of a political party has been reported as having a weak, *negative* effect on turnout in some countries (Oppenhuis 1995); or that the percentage

of manual workers is associated with higher turnout in French municipal elections, but with lower turnout in English local elections (Hoffmann-Martinot, Rallings et al. 1996).

Invoking such country-to-country differences to explain otherwise puzzling results raises an important question: do our core variables really behave in the same way *within* each of the individual countries? This is a question seldom explored in comparative research into turnout which has used aggregate data: for the rather obvious reason that the data were often aggregated to the country-level. Faced with such limitations, a common response is to create dummy variables for one or more countries, and to interpret the resulting coefficients as evidence that such and such a country is 'different' to the rest of those included in the analysis (see, for example, Blais and Carty 1990; Blais 2000 ; Siaroff and Merer 2002). More detailed investigation into the determinants of voting within countries, then, has usually been left to other researchers, using different data, different sets of variables, and different methodological approaches.

However, because we have compiled a dataset in which our dependent and independent variables are measured at the *sub-national level*, we can use these data to investigate the effects of the core socio-demographic variables *within* some of our countries. It is important to stress here that, when investigating the effects of our variables in individual countries, we are drawing from *exactly the same dataset* as was used in Chapter 5: turnout and each of the independent variables are measured for identical sub-national geographical units as before. Because the NUTS classification is broadly based on population size, it follows that less populous countries have fewer NUTS units. In the cases of Finland, Ireland, the Netherlands, and Sweden, there are too few NUTS units to support meaningful regression analyses. Thus, the focus in this chapter is on the remaining countries: England, France, Greece, Italy, and Spain.

Because we will consider separately the individual election types within individual countries, we will necessarily be dealing with far fewer cases than were available for our regression models in the previous chapters. In some cases, we have more than one instance of a particular type of election in a country, and combining these results would lead to a useful increase in sample size. Of course, there are often changes in overall turnout between elections of the same type which could be due to factors which are not included in our model.

In order to combine results from elections of the same type within each country, we first calculate the average turnout (that is, for all NUTS units) for each instance of that election type. We then subtract this average from the raw turnout figure for each individual NUTS unit: the resultant turnout figure for each NUTS unit is thus centred on the group mean. These centred turnout figures are then used as the dependent variable in the regression analyses for each election type. This arithmetical transformation only involves changing the zero point of the distribution, and does not alter the distribution of values themselves: relative differences among the regions in a particular election are maintained[52], and the interpretation of the resultant regression coefficients remains relatively straightforward.

The values of two of our institutional variables tend to be constant for all elections in a particular country. For instance, in England, all elections are held on a weekday, and in France all are held on the weekend; and in Greece and Italy the weak form of compulsory voting supposedly applied to all election types. The other institutional variables, though, can differ from one election type to another. For example: all

---

[52] An alternative approach would be to use a z-standardisation, which *would* change the shape of the distribution. In fact, a series of regression models using z-standardised turnout were run, and the results were generally comparable to the models reported in this chapter. Because z-standardisation did not lead to any new information, we stay with results using centred turnout as the interpretation of the regression coefficients is slightly more transparent.

countries use a form of Proportional Representation for elections to the European Parliament; but England and France, for example, use plurality or majoritarian systems for their Lower House elections. In addition, elections may sometimes be held simultaneously, sometimes individually. Each of the institutional variables are often associated with marked changes in the overall level of turnout in elections. However, because we have centred our turnout variable, the average turnout in each election is, by definition, zero; thus, in the models for each country we only include the socio-demographic variables.

Concentrating on the socio-demographic variables also serves to reduce the total number of variables in each regression model. This is useful because, as previously noted, we are often dealing with a small number of observations. There exist various recommendations for the minimum number of observations to be used in regression analysis; such as ten times the number of variables; 104 + the number of variables; or 50 + 8 x the number of variables (see Hox 2010; StatSoft 2011). For some models which examine turnout in individual election types, we will be falling short of these guidelines. Further, because we are working with smaller numbers of observations, it follows that variables may not attain the same level of statistical significance as we saw in Chapter 5.

In the first half of this chapter, we examine the results of regression analyses for each of the five countries in turn. For each country, we compare a model which includes all elections to individual models for each type of election in our dataset, and consider the findings in the light of our original hypotheses and of the results reported Chapter 5. In terms of the usefulness of the socio-demographic variables in differentiating between regions of low and high turnout, we will see that there are often differences from one type of election to another. These differences often support our initial suspicion that not all second-order elections are the same; even when, as is the case in Greece and Italy,

the levels of turnout for these various lower-order elections are comparable; and, indeed, often approach those of national, first-order elections.

We then summarise the findings for all five countries, and show that, four of the variables behave quite consistently, and provide support for our hypotheses. The remaining variables, though, differ in their effects from country to country; sometimes supporting our hypotheses, but at other times contradicting them. In seeking to make sense of these differences, we offer some initial reflection on the measures we have used, but we also venture beyond purely methodological concerns, and consider factors related to the countries' social and political structures.

In the second section, in an attempt to further explore how aspects of these social and political structures may affect turnout in elections, we examine different measures of Migration, GDP, Occupation, and Education. For the five countries which we consider in this chapter, we have regional-level data which will allow us to consider the effects of: *external* migration to a region (rather than total migration); the change in GDP for each region over a ten year period; the proportion of workers engaged in plant and elementary industries; and the proportion of the population educated to post-primary school level. As with the original versions of these variables, the effects of each differs from country to country.

Individual Country Analyses

In this section, we first present the results of a series of regression analyses for each country in turn. For each country, we focus mainly on those variables which attain statistical significance, and discuss the results in relation to the original hypotheses, and to the findings of Chapter 5. We then summarise the results for all five countries, and find that four variables are consistent in their effects across countries, and support our

original hypotheses. For the remaining variables, the effects differ from country to country, and we suggest that the reasons for these inconsistencies may be related to more general political and social differences between the countries.

England

For England, we have results for EP, Municipal, and Lower House elections. The results for a series of regression analyses are provided in Table 7.1.

<div align="center">Table 7.1 : England</div>

ENGLAND	Model ENG1 All Elections	Model ENG2 All except EP	Model ENG3 EP Only	Model ENG4 Municipal Only	Model ENG5 LH Only
Population Density (ln)	-1.051*** (.214)	-1.151*** (.237)	-.803 (.422)	-1.227** (.420)	-1.138*** (.257)
Migration %	1.007*** (.185)	1.336*** (.205)	.209 (.363)	1.763*** (.369)	1.097*** (.220)
GDP (PPP)	-.016*** (.004)	-.019*** (.004)	-.006 (.007)	-.027*** (.007)	-.015*** (.005)
Unemployment %	-.106 (.093)	-.042 (.104)	-.244 (.181)	.341 (.194)	-.252* (.110)
Young %	-.699*** (.142)	-.777*** (.158)	-.510 (.280)	-.918*** (.281)	-.672*** (.170)
Death Rate %	-.175 (.166)	-.358 (.184)	.276 (.327)	-.250 (.326)	-.386 (.199)
Occupation (ISCO1&2 %)	.095 (.106)	.206 (.118)	-.172 (.208)	-.007 (.211)	.373** (.127)
Education (% Degree)	.116 (.078)	.017 (.087)	.354* (.154)	.289 (.155)	-.183 (.094)
Constant	14.522*** (3.996)	16.651*** (4.442)	9.205 (7.864)	14.782 (7.936)	16.783*** (4.780)
Adj R-square	.519	.612	.315	.542	.718
N	562	400	162	157	243

<div align="center">* significant at the .05 level; ** significant at the .01 level; *** significant at the .001 level</div>

Referring to the results in the first column of Table 7.1 (*Model ENG1*), where elections of all types are included in the regression analysis, we note that four of the eight variables are statistically significant (all at the .001 level): Population Density, Migration, GDP, and the percentage of Young people. Further, each of these variables is also statistically significant when we consider Municipal and Lower House elections separately (*Model*

197

ENG4 and *Model ENG5*, respectively). Population Density and the percentage of Young people are both associated with lower turnout; supporting our original hypotheses and agreeing with the results presented in Chapter 5. The results for Unemployment, Occupation, and Education, when statistically significant, are also in line with expectations. However, in both Municipal and Lower House elections, the statistically significant coefficients for Migration and GDP contradict both our original hypotheses and our earlier analyses (Table 3A, Chapter 5). We will discuss these findings later in this chapter, once we have considered and summarised the results for the remaining countries.

The foregoing discussion has focused on Municipal and Lower House elections in England; not least because, in these elections, several of the variables were statistically significant. However, for elections to the European Parliament (*Model ENG3*), only one variable - Education (being the percentage of people with a degree level qualification or higher) - is significant (at the .05 level). Although the number of cases is fewer for EP elections than for Lower House elections, it is very similar to that for the Municipal elections, for which four variables *did* attain statistical significance. For the very low salience EP elections, then, the only variable which is useful in distinguishing between low and high turnout regions is that of the proportion of degree holders in the population. It is also noteworthy that this variable was not statistically significant in any of the other models. It is, we think, unlikely that it is necessary to have degree level education in order to be equipped with skills required to get to the polling station and cast a vote. However, it is probable that more educated people will have a higher level of interest in, and understanding of, the European Union and hence be marginally more likely to be motivated to cast a vote in the low salience elections for the European

Parliament – especially where the mobilisation of the electorate by political parties and the media is also quite weak.

In terms of the associations between turnout and the socio-demographic characteristics of the sub-national units, then, EP elections in England do appear to be different, not just to Lower House elections, but also to the (also low turnout) Municipal elections. We also note that the amount of variance explained by the regression models is highest for Lower House elections (.718), moderate for Municipal elections (.542), and lowest for EP elections – where over two thirds of the variance remains unexplained. As we noted in the introduction, both EP and Municipal elections have often been considered as 'second-order' elections. For England, at least, it would seem that there are enough differences between these elections to justify second- third-order distinction.

We also note that, in contrast to both Municipal and Lower House elections in England, elections for the EP use a proportional electoral system. For the voter, this presents a very different environment in which to cast a vote; not least because of the marked difference in the district size: rather than casting a vote for an election in one of around 300 local authorities (Wilson 2005) or in one of the five hundred-odd parliamentary constituencies, voters in EP are divided into one of nine English regions; and the prospect of voting for a list, rather than an individual, probably serves to reduce even further the average voter's interest in these elections. In such an environment, it is possible that other, rather random factors, affect the chances that an individual casts a vote (Matsusaka and Palda 1999).

France

For France, we have results from six different types of elections: EP, Municipal, Lower Intermediate (départemental), Upper Intermediate (regional), Lower House, and Presidential. The results for a series of regression analyses are provided in Table 7.2.

Table 7.2 : France

France	Model FRA1	Model FRA2	Model FRA3	Model FRA4	Model FRA5	Model FRA6	Model FRA7	Model FRA8
	All elections	All except EP	EP Only	Municipal Only	LI Only	UI Only	LH Only	Presidential Only
Population Density (ln)	-1.470***	-1.750***	.216	-2.118***	-3.514***	-1.866***	-.963*	.090
	(.210)	(.222)	(.456)	(.378)	(.520)	(.449)	(.397)	(.272)
Migration %	1.579***	1.345**	3.003**	.941	1.121	1.782	1.916*	1.613*
	(.486)	(.514)	(1.053)	(.874)	(1.203)	(1.037)	(.918)	(.629)
GDP (PPP)	.002	.000	.014	-.005	-.003	-.006	-.004	-.008
	(.009)	(.009)	(.019)	(.016)	(.023)	(.019)	(.918)	(.011)
Unemployment %	-.039	.043	-.528***	.248**	.067	.241*	-.157	-.371***
	(.049)	(.052)	(.107)	(.089)	(.122)	(.105)	(.093)	(.064)
Young %	-.219	-.320*	.369	-.700**	-.523	-.185	.006	-.041
	(.134)	(.142)	(.290)	(.240)	(.336)	(.285)	(.253)	(.173)
Death Rate %	.864***	.730***	1.643***	.613*	.682	.478	1.194***	.394*
	(.143)	(.152)	(.310)	(.257)	(.368)	(.305)	(.270)	(.185)
Occupation (ISCO1&2 %)	-.403*	-.319	-.940*	-.321	-.622	-.078	-.358	-.683**
	(.177)	(.187)	(.383)	(.317)	(.453)	(.377)	(.334)	(.229)
Education (% Degree)	.529***	.491***	.779**	.607**	.503	.386	.495*	.619***
	(.122)	(.129)	(.264)	(.219)	(.309)	(.260)	(.231)	(.158)
Constant	-5.514	-1.630	-27.948***	5.092	15.488	-4.715	-14.122	-4.620
	(3.815)	(4.039)	(8.245)	(6.839)	(9.896)	(8.117)	(7.188)	(4.927)
Adj R-square	.372	.418	.474	.547	.735	.432	.494	.445
N	664	569	95	190	94	95	95	95

* significant at the .05 level; ** significant at the .01 level; *** significant at the .001 level

Referring to the results for *Model FRA1*, where all election types are included, we note that five of the eight variables are statistically significant: Population Density, Migration, Death Rate, Occupation, and Education. Further, despite the markedly lower number of cases, in several instances these variables also attain significance in models for the individual election types; when this is the case, the respective direction of effect always agrees with that found in *Model FRA1*. Population Density is associated with lower turnout, and Education is associated with higher turnout; and, thus, both provide

200

support for our earlier hypotheses. Further, both of the statistically significant results (*Models FRA2* and *FRA4*) for the percentage of Young people are negative, and thus also in line with expectations.

For Unemployment, although some results provide support for our hypothesis (being statistically significant and negative for EP and Presidential elections), there are also instances of statistically significant contradictory results: for Municipal and Upper Intermediate elections, Unemployment is associated with *higher* turnout. It is difficult to see why this variable should have opposite effects from one election type to another. It is possible that political parties on the far-left or the far-right are particularly adept at mobilising support among the unemployed in these types of elections; where, it should be noted, such parties often enjoy more electoral success than in first-order elections, perhaps in part because of the continuing importance of the left-right dimension in French sub-national elections, and the more proportional nature of the electoral systems used in municipal and regional elections.

Compared to Unemployment, the effects of Migration, Death Rate, and Occupation, when statistically significant, are at least consistent across the different models. However, the results for all three of the variables contradict the hypothesised effects: as can be seen from Table 7.2, Migration and Death Rate are associated with higher turnout; and Occupation is associated with lower turnout. We discuss these findings further at the end of this section.

When we examine how our variables behave across the different election types in France, we first note that there are no cases where a variable is statistically significant for all elections treated together, and then contradicted by a significant coefficient with the opposite sign in any of the election types examined individually. In contrast to the

results for England, where only one variable was significant for predicting turnout in EP elections, in France, five variables are significant; as is also the case for Municipal and Presidential elections. Rather, in France, it is the Lower- and Upper-Intermediate level elections that have fewest significant associations between turnout and the socio-demographic variables. However, as was the case in England, the coefficient for Education is largest for EP elections.

Greece

For Greece, we have results from EP, Municipal, and Lower House elections. The results for a series of regression analyses are shown in Table 7.3.

Table 7.3 : Greece

Greece	Model GRE1 All Elections	Model GRE2 All except EP	Model GRE3 EP Only	Model GRE4 Municipal Only	Model GRE5 LH Only
Population Density (ln)	-1.943 (1.009)	-2.034 (1.197)	-1.850 (1.922)	-3.359 (2.165)	-1.333 (1.441)
Migration %	-1.660*** (.443)	-2.245*** (.537)	-.443 (.808)	-3.413** (1.156)	-1.907** (.606)
GDP (PPP)	.082** (.027)	.088** (.032)	.070 (.051)	.142* (.057)	.051 (.038)
Unemployment %	-.323** (.106)	-.374** (.126)	-.187 (.203)	-.231 (.226)	-.430** (.153)
Young %	-.845* (.352)	-.654 (.419)	-1.271 (.667)	-.079 (.783)	-.818 (.500)
Death Rate %	-2.540*** (.398)	-2.230*** (.472)	-3.254*** (.762)	-2.135* (.851)	-2.156*** (.571)
Occupation (ISCO1&2 %)	-1.207*** (.301)	-1.194*** (.357)	-1.248* (.576)	-1.634* (.649)	-1.014* (.432)
Education (% Degree)	1.058*** (.265)	1.103*** (.313)	.954 (.512)	1.088* (.544)	1.124** (.384)
Constant	60.460*** (11.132)	54.410*** (13.198)	74.780*** (21.282)	52.634* (23.714)	52.840*** (15.956)
Adj R-square	.375	.394	.298	.412	.369
N	263	185	77	68	117

* significant at the .05 level; ** significant at the .01 level; *** significant at the .001 level

Referring to the results in the first column of Table 7.3 (*Model GRE1*), where all types of elections are included in the model, we note that seven of the eight variables attain statistical significance: Migration, GDP, Unemployment, Young, Death Rate, Occupation, and Education. Further, with the exception of the percentage of Young people, all of these variables are also significant in at least one of the models for individual election types. Migration, Unemployment, Young, and Death Rate are all associated with lower turnout; and the results here support the original hypotheses for each of these variables. GDP and Education are both associated with higher turnout; and these results are also in line with expectations. In none of the models does Population Density attain statistical significance, suggesting that, in contrast to England and France, this variable is of little use in differentiating between high and low turnout regions in Greece, once the effects of the other variables are taken into account.

The Occupation (the percentage of people in the highest two occupational categories) variable is negative, and statistically significant, in all of the models for Greece; and thus, as was the case for France contradicts the hypothesised result.

When we examine how the variables behave across different types of elections in Greece, the results are very consistent. For all variables, the signs on the coefficients are the same across all of the models, irrespective of whether we examine all election types together, or whether we examine individual election types. For Lower House and Municipal elections, five variables attain statistical significance; however, for elections to the European Parliament, only two of the eight variables are significant. The model for EP elections also has the lowest R-square value.

We recall from earlier discussions about individual election types in England that the number of variables achieving statistical significance varied across different types of elections; and it was the very low salience EP elections in England which had the fewest significant variables, even when compared to the model for Municipal elections, which had a similar number of cases. We noted that most of the variables, then, were of little use in differentiating between regions of high and low turnout in the very low salience, European Parliament elections. We have made a similar observation for EP elections in Greece. However, as we discussed in previous chapters, Greece has had a recent history of compulsory voting, which, as was shown in Chapter 5, tends to have a more marked effect on turnout for lower-order elections. Indeed, the average turnout for EP, Municipal, and Lower House elections in Greece is 67, 71, and 75 per cent, respectively; in terms of turnout, then, the gap between EP and Lower House elections is rather modest compared to that observed in England, where the average turnout figures for these election types were 30 and 64 per cent, respectively. It is interesting to note, then, that even where compulsion to vote results in quite high turnout in all types of elections, fewer variables have statistically significant effects in EP elections than in Municipal and Lower House elections. We return to this point in the following section, where we consider elections in Italy, which has also had a recent history of compulsory voting.

Italy

For Italy, we have results from EP, regional and Lower House elections. The results of the regression analyses are provided in Table 7.4.

When we examine how the variables behave for elections in Italy, we note that three variables are statistically significant for all elections treated together (*Model ITA1*): Unemployment, Young, and the Death Rate. In addition, each of these variables attains

significance in at least one of the individual election models. Each of these variables, as hypothesised, is associated with lower turnout. Further, when statistically significant in the individual models, the results for Migration and Education are also in line with expectations, having, respectively, a negative and positive effect on turnout. Neither Population Density nor GDP are statistically significant in any of the models. Finally, Occupation is significant (.05 level) in *Model GRE4* (Regional elections), and, as was the case for France and Greece, is associated with *lower* turnout.

Table 7.4 : Italy

ITALY	Model ITA1 All Elections	Model ITA2 All except EP	Model ITA3 EP Only	Model ITA4 Regional Only	Model ITA5 LH Only
Population Density (ln)	-.220 (.452)	-.471 (.482)	.111 (.864)	-.788 (.949)	-.565 (.424)
Migration	-.148 (.639)	-1.321* (.665)	1.763 (1.267)	-2.514* (1.245)	-.937 (.600)
GDP (PPP)	.010 (.021)	.026 (.021)	-.022 (.042)	.021 (.036)	.030 (.020)
Unemployment	-.311*** (.087)	-.196* (.091)	-.490** (.172)	-.019 (.172)	-.248** (.082)
Young %	-1.048* (.454)	-1.148* (.468)	-.974 (.912)	-1.496 (.845)	-.994* (.432)
Death Rate %	-1.045* (.430)	-1.174** (.447)	-.919 (.858)	-1.657* (.833)	-.875* (.407)
Occupation (ISCO1&2 %)	-.324 (.360)	-.683 (.366)	.402 (.743)	-1.630* (.622)	.149 (.351)
Education (% Degree)	.066 (.287)	.364 (.292)	-.550 (.592)	1.045* (.497)	-.275 (.280)
Constant	38.213* (15.196)	45.139** (15.743)	29.335 (30.465)	70.485* (28.800)	29.786* (14.450)
Adj R-square	.450	.509	.439	.277	.769
N	275	177	98	80	97

* significant at the .05 level; ** significant at the .01 level; *** significant at the .001 level

We also note that for four variables – Population Density, Migration, GDP, and Occupation – the coefficients for the European Parliament elections contradict the respective coefficients when all elections are treated together. As measured by the R-

square values, the model is explaining substantially more variance for Lower House elections than for EP or Municipal elections.

Italy, like Greece, has had a recent history of weakly enforced compulsory voting; and also exhibits relatively high turnout in lower-order elections: 72 per cent, on average, for both the EP and Regional elections in our dataset. Despite these very similar levels of turnout in these two types of elections (which, absent a 'third-order' category, would both be considered 'second-order' elections), there are clear differences in terms of the applicability of the socio-demographic variables in distinguishing between regions of high and low turnout: for Italian Regional elections, Migration, Death Rate, Occupation, and Education are statistically significant; whereas for EP elections, the only statistically significant variable is that of Unemployment. This, we suggest, is further evidence that elections to the EP can differ in important ways from other lower-order elections, and thus supports the approach adopted in this and earlier chapters of examining individual election types in more detail.

Taken together, the findings for Greece and Italy also suggest that the weak form of compulsory voting does not have the same effect as simply increasing the salience of the election or of enhancing the sense of civic duty; at least, not equally so for all voters. Were this the case, the same, otherwise reluctant, voters would be encouraged to actually vote in, for example, *both* the Italian EP and Regional elections. Although it could have been tempting to make this assumption based on the effectively identical average turnout in these two types of elections, the results for the socio-demographic variables in these two types of election suggest that, in different types of elections, *different* voters respond to the weak form of compulsory voting.

Spain

For Spain, we have results from EP, Municipal, Lower House, and Upper House elections. The results for the regression analyses are provided in Table 7.5.

In *Model SPA1* (all election types), six variables are statistically significant: Population Density, GDP, Unemployment, Young, Death Rate, and Occupation. Further, and despite the smaller number of cases, each of these variables is also significant in at least two of the models which examine individual elections. Population Density, Unemployment, Young and Death Rate are all associated with lower turnout; and Education is associated with higher turnout (and as was the case in England and France, the coefficient for Education is largest for EP elections). The results for all five of these variables, then, support our original hypotheses.

Table 7.5 : Spain

SPAIN	Model SPA1 All Elections	Model SPA2 All except EP	Model SPA3 EP only	Model SPA4 Municipal Only	Model SPA5 LH Only	Model SPA6 UH Only
Population Density (ln)	-2.277*** (.246)	-2.334*** (.265)	-2.020** (.625)	-2.592*** (.385)	-2.076*** (.375)	-2.414** (.877)
Migration %	-.258 (.412)	-.116 (.445)	-.890 (1.048)	-.938 (.647)	.447 (.630)	.513 (1.496)
GDP (PPP)	-.180*** (.017)	-.175*** (.018)	-.201*** (.043)	-.169*** (.026)	-.163*** (.026)	-.249*** (.059)
Unemployment %	-.450*** (.067)	-.450*** (.072)	-.451** (.171)	-.447*** (.186)	-.404*** (.103)	-.678** (.237)
Young %	-.555** (.197)	-.384 (.212)	-1.327** (.502)	-.793* (.309)	-.143 (.302)	.347 (.698)
Death Rate %	-2.168*** (.261)	-2.140*** (.282)	-2.308*** (.662)	-2.059*** (.409)	-2.269*** (.399)	-1.851 (.960)
Occupation (ISCO1&2 %)	-.444 (.227)	-.303 (.245)	-1.069 (.577)	-.879* (.357)	.151 (.347)	.052 (.795)
Education (% Degree)	.709*** (.187)	.590** (.202)	1.237* (.475)	.837** (.294)	.394 (.286)	.355 (.671)
Constant	67.349*** (6.099)	61.425*** (6.580)	94.127*** (15.508)	79.443*** (9.554)	47.312*** (9.308)	47.613** (22.297)
Adj R-square	.489	.488	.509	.587	.433	.486
N	514	418	96	185	190	43

* significant at the .05 level; ** significant at the .01 level; *** significant at the .001 level

Migration is not significant in any of the models, and thus the evidence from Spain does not lend support to our hypothesis that Migration, being a measure of population instability, would be associated with lower turnout. The Occupation variable is statistically significant in only one model (*SPA4*, Municipal elections); where a larger proportion of people in the highest occupational categories is associated with lower turnout, which is opposite to the hypothesised effect, and similar to the results for France, Greece, and Italy. We discuss the results for GDP, along with the other results that contradicted our hypotheses, in the next part of this section.

Summary& Discussion

The foregoing regression analyses have shown that, *within* each of our five countries, some of the socio-demographic variables behave consistently across different election types. However, these variables do not always have the same direction of effect in all five countries. Table 7.6 summarises our findings for each country, and, to aid comparison, includes a summary of the results of *Models 4A, 4B*, and *4C,* which included all countries and examined European Parliament, Municipal, and Lower House elections, respectively *(see Chapter 5)*.

As can be seen from Table 7.6; three of the eight variables have entirely consistent effects across all five of the countries which have been examined in detail here: Population Density, and the percentage of Young people are each associated with lower turnout; and Education is associated with higher turnout. In addition, aside from the somewhat ambiguous results for France, Unemployment was found to have a consistently negative effect on turnout. The results for Population Density[53], the

---

[53] Although we have applied a logarithmic transformation to the raw population density data, in each country there are one or a handful of regions which have extremely high population densities – notably the regions of the capital city. In order to check whether these regions were having an undue effect on the

percentage of Young people, and Unemployment agree with the results in *Models 4A, 4B*, and *4C*, which included regional level data for a total of nine countries.

Table 7.6 : Effects of Variables in Five Countries

Variable	England	France	Greece	Italy	Spain	Models 4A, 4B, 4C
Population Density	--	--	--	-	--	--
Migration	++	++	--	--	-	~
GDP	--	~	++	+	--	++
Unemployment	-	~	--	--	--	--
Young	--	-	--	--	--	--
Death Rate	-	++	--	--	--	--
Occupation	+	--	--	-	-	++
Education	+	++	++	+	++	--

++ consistently positive effect; + generally positive effect;
~ inconsistent; - generally negative effect; --consistently negative effect

The findings for Education (the proportion of the population educated to at least degree level), whilst consistent across the individual countries, differ from those obtained In *Models 4A, 4B*, and *4C*, where this variable was associated with *lower* turnout – a finding which was somewhat puzzling given the weight of previous research which had found education to have a positive effect on turnout in elections. However, *within* the individual countries considered in this chapter, a higher percentage of degree educated people *is* associated with higher turnout. Thus, whilst the individual country analyses contradict our initial findings in Chapter 5, the results do better reflect previous research

---

results, we ran a series of regression models for each country with the extremely high population density regions removed. The results were broadly similar; in countries where Population Density had attained statistical significance, the effects were still significant when extremely high population density regions were excluded from the analysis.

into the effects of education on turnout in elections, and also support our original hypothesis.

Thus, the results from analyses on individual countries means that we can be reasonably confident that these four variables are, in fact, good predictors of turnout in elections in these countries. However, when we consider the remaining variables – Migration, GDP, Death Rate, and Occupation - there are often substantial differences in the results, depending on the country or the type of election under consideration. We now consider these variables in more detail.

Migration: In Greece, Italy, and Spain, higher levels of migration are generally associated with decreased turnout, thus lending support to our initial hypothesis that higher levels of migration into a region was a useful indicator of population instability, less integration into society, and a resultant reduced propensity to vote. However, in both England and France, higher levels of migration are consistently associated with *increased* turnout. In *Models 4A, 4B*, and *4C*, the effects of Migration were also somewhat inconsistent, and in seeking to make sense of the different effects of migration from one type of election to another, we previously speculated (Chapter 5) that these may be linked either to the potential for 'immigration' to be a political issue which could be used to mobilise the electorate, to aspects of registration procedures, or to different sub-groups of migrants.

It is possible that political parties in England and France do indeed invoke immigration as a campaign issue, and successfully mobilise the electorate to a greater extent than in the other countries included in our analyses; but we are unable to directly test this proposition with the current dataset. However, the *Eurobarometer* series of opinion polls has sometimes included a question which asks respondents to choose the 'most important problems' facing their country. In Eurobarometer 60 (European Commission

210

2004), 32 per cent of UK respondents selected immigration as one of the two most important problems; and this was certainly higher than the EU average of 14 per cent. However, France only scored nine per cent on the same question, which was not substantially different to Italy, scoring 14. Further, 22 per cent of Spanish respondents rated immigration as one of the most important issues; yet in Spain, migration into a region was not significant in any of the regression models. Thus, support for explaining the varying effects of Migration by calling on the different mobilising strategies of political parties remains patchy, at best[54]. The idea that 'immigration' could be a political issue rests largely on a distinction between *internal* and *external* migration – that is, those new arrivals hailing from within the same country, or those coming from abroad. Later in this chapter, we examine the effects of external migration on turnout, but mention here that we do not find compelling evidence to support this proposition.

A second possibility is that there is something about the voter registration procedures in France and England, in particular, which make it more likely that a new arrival to a region would vote. We suggested in Chapter 5 that citizens from other EU countries are entitled to register and vote in both EP and Municipal elections when they move to another member state, and that this was perhaps a contributory factor in the different turnout rates in these two types of elections. However, such people are not entitled to vote (short of becoming a citizen) in the other elections within a country. Differential voting rates among this group of migrants, then, cannot be invoked as a factor which would explain the apparent positive effects of migration in, for example, the first-order elections in England and France.

---

[54] It should also be noted that the 'most important issue' question can be interpreted in different ways by the respondent; and, more generally, there are doubts as to whether the question is an accurate measure of salience effects in elections (see Johns 2010).

As we have seen, it is difficult to explain the association between migration and turnout by reference to external migrants; is there, then, something about the voter registration procedures for internal migrants which may be at play?

Registration of voters in England is state initiated, and with local lists regularly updated by means of household surveys (Massicotte, Blais et al. 2004). There would appear to be rather little effort required on the part of a new arrival (assuming they were eligible) to become a registered voter, and thus entitled to vote in all elections. However, this effort is not any less for a new arrival than for an existing resident, and it is difficult to see how the registration procedures in England could make it more likely, on average, that a new arrival would actually vote. In France, registration is compulsory (Massicotte, Blais et al. 2004), at least in theory, and, as was the case for England, it is difficult to imagine that there is something connected with the registration requirements which would somehow encourage new arrivals to vote to a greater extent than established inhabitants.

However, although national registration levels in both France and England are relatively high, at around 90 and 95 per cent, respectively, these average figures hide a good deal of variation within each country. In England, electoral non-registration varies regionally, ranging from a high of 18 per cent in Inner London to a low of four per cent in the West Midlands (Electoral Commission 2005). In France, research which focused on a single polling station, has uncovered non-registration levels of around 25 per cent[55], and, (Braconnier and Dormagen 2007). Further, the very factors which have been linked to non-voting have also been shown to affect registration in both England and France (Pak Ké Shon 2004; Electoral Commission 2005); so, for example, less educated, younger, and

---

[55] A reminder that 'the legal prescription as to how things should operate should not always be taken as describing how things actually do operate' (Dearlove 1973:15).

more mobile people are markedly less likely to register when compared to other groups in society. In effect, then, since these groups would be less likely to vote, even if registered, by *not* registering they effectively increase the (percentage) turnout actually exhibited.

It is also known that, at least in England, population movements within England are far from random (Champion 2005): those under the age of 25, and who are single, are likely to be drawn to the larger cities; whereas people over 30, including those with young families, or those approaching retirement age and who are often able to 'cash-in' on relative differences in property prices, are more likely to move in the opposite direction, that is, *out* of the larger cities. Further, people over the age of 45 are also more likely, on average, to move out of the larger cities towards less densely populated areas. Thus, substantial numbers of those voters who are less likely to vote, migrate to areas of high population density, areas which are also shown to be associated with lower turnout. Whereas older, more affluent people who are, on average, more likely to vote, tend to move towards less densely populated areas, areas which themselves usually exhibit higher turnout.

Further, in England and France, there are substantial numbers of people who live at a different address to that under which they appear on the electoral register. Indeed, in England, provision is made with the registration rules (Electoral Commission 2007) for university students to be registered at, for example, their parents' address rather than where they attend university. Even before the recent increase in the numbers of school-leavers going to university, these numbers were substantial, being around two million university students in 2000 (HESA 2011); being around five per cent of the total eligible electorate in England. However, within University towns, the student population can represent between ten and fifteen percent of the eligible voters. In France, it has been

shown in one study (which focused on a single polling station) that over a quarter of voters on the local voting list were no longer actually living within the area (Braconnier and Dormagen 2007). Further, these *malinscrits* were much less likely to vote than were those who actually did live in the area. In both France and England, then, there exist substantial numbers of people, who may contribute to higher migration figures in one part of the country, yet whose (less than average) tendency to vote is actually reflected in turnout levels for an entirely different place.

However, although this explanation may have some appeal to it, we should note that, if people are registered in one location, but are recorded as new arrivals in another, they are probably more likely to return home to vote in more important elections. And, it follows that the marginal effects on turnout would thus be more noticeable in more important elections. This expectation is not borne out in the results for different elections in either England or France; where the largest effects of migration are found in Municipal and EP elections, respectively. Further, although explanations resting on differential levels of voter registration and/or particular patterns of internal migration may explain the otherwise puzzling results for England and France, we have not been able to uncover any evidence to explain why these effects are so different to those in Greece or Italy - both of which also have compulsory registration (ACE 2006; Electoral Commission 2006).

Death Rate: We originally hypothesised that the Death Rate could be used as a proxy for social disadvantage, as previous research has shown that the socially disadvantaged do exhibit a higher death rate. However, this line of reasoning would lead us to the conclusion that, in France, the socially disadvantaged (at least those who are on the electoral register) are more likely to vote than is the average citizen. Tempting though it would be to invoke this as evidence that the French Revolutionary spirit lives on to this

day, we will give some thought to two rather more prosaic explanations. It is possible that, in France, the Death Rate is related more to the age of the population than to measures of social exclusion; and, as older people are, on average, more likely to vote, regions with a higher death rate have a higher proportion of older people and thus higher turnout. Indeed, when we consider the individual NUTS units of France, we find that there is a very strong correlation (.936) between Death Rate and the percentage of the population aged over 50. This is certainly higher than is the case for England (.772), but actually quite similar to that for Italy (.916) and Spain (.905); and, as we saw, in both of those countries, a higher Death Rate *is* associated with lower turnout. In order to explain the apparently aberrant case of France, we would thus still have to show why this variable should behave differently in different countries.

Fortunately, Radcliff (1992) offers us a potential solution to this challenge. Radcliff showed that, when considering both developed and less-developed countries, the relationship between income and turnout is not linear. In less-developed countries, income is *negatively* associated with turnout; the explanation being that the potential benefits are greater because the individual is more sensitive to economic performance. In less developed countries, then, poverty is a mobilising factor which serves to increase turnout in elections.

Compared to the less-developed countries, the generally much higher levels of social security provision in developed countries serve to lessen the suffering which would otherwise be associated with financial hardship, and consequently dulls the mobilising effects of poverty. However, Radcliff suggests that the relationship between income and turnout is actually curvilinear; and that at *very high levels* of welfare spending, the opportunity costs of voting are lowered to the extent that the relationship between income and turnout again becomes negative. Further, because the welfare programmes

215

tend to be more universal in their reach they have a more socially integrative effect, rather than being associated with the stigmatisation and resentment that can occur when programmes are targeted at particular groups. Indeed, Radcliff presents some evidence to support this proposition, finding that income and turnout *are* negatively associated in those developed countries which he considers as having extremely high levels of welfare spending. It is noteworthy that, in a dataset which includes the Western European democracies, he considers that only France, the Netherlands, and Sweden warrant inclusion in this category.

GDP: When we examine the effects of GDP in each of our five countries, the results offer rather less compelling evidence to support our hypothesis. In France and Italy, GDP is not significant in any of the regression models; and in England and Spain, higher GDP is actually associated with *lower* turnout. Only in Greece do we find evidence to support our hypothesis that higher GDP would be associated with higher turnout.

Possibly, it is not the actual level of GDP which is important, but rather whether the economic situation is improving, or getting worse. In order to investigate this, we examine the effects of change in GDP in the second half of this chapter. It is possible that the negative association between GDP and turnout is also linked in some way to socio-demographic patterns which are not discernable with our data. Indeed, those movements of people with different individual level characteristics described above may be relevant here too.

However, we should also note that the aggregate measure of GDP does not tell us anything about the distribution of wealth among the population, nor their individual level of income. Indeed, the wealthiest regions are often those with the highest levels of income equality and poverty; for example, Inner London, with a per capita GDP of some

600 per cent of the EU average, has the highest income equality (as measured by the numbers of people in the top and bottom quintile) of any region in England, as well as the highest proportion of people on low incomes (The Poverty Site nd); the very group which is least likely to vote (Wolfinger and Rosenstone 1980). As already noted, we do not have the necessary data on income equality and poverty to investigate this proposition. However, we suggest that, since income is closely related to the type of occupation, higher levels of workers in the lowest occupational categories would be associated with lower levels of turnout. As will be seen later in this chapter, this is indeed the case for England.

Occupation: In Chapter 5, we saw that, when including all countries in the regression analyses, higher GDP was associated with higher turnout; but, among the five countries which we have considered in more detail, only in England did we find a similar and statistically significant effect (and then, in fact, only for elections to the Lower House). In the remaining countries, the Occupation variable was associated with *reduced* turnout. It is, at first sight, difficult to make sense of this in light of previous research which has often suggested that people in the higher occupational categories are more likely to vote.

However, people in these categories are often well educated and enjoy high incomes – factors which themselves have been shown in studies using individual level data to have independent positive effects on turnout. Once the effects of education and income are controlled for, there is some evidence to suggest that people in higher status occupations are in fact *less* likely to vote than are those in some other occupational categories. It has also been suggested that some lower status occupations may serve to provide substitutes for a lack of formal qualifications, thus resulting in higher levels of electoral participation than would be suggested by the measure of education alone

(Wolfinger and Rosenstone 1980:28, 60). But this strikes us as only a partial explanation, as it is difficult to see how this mechanism alone could result in those employees being *even more likely*, on average, to vote than those in higher status occupations. We suggest two further factors which may result in turnout differences across the various occupational categories.

Firstly, within any particular occupational category, workers may find themselves employed in either the private or the public sector; and, as we saw in Chapter 6, there is evidence that the proportion of employees in the public sector is significantly associated with the level of turnout. It is possible that the differences in the levels of public sector employment within our broad occupational category is having an effect; but unfortunately we lack the regional level data for public sector employment which would be necessary in order to test for this.

Secondly, different political parties vary in how well they are able to mobilise their potential supporters. Although class voting in general has declined in many European countries, not least because of the increasingly centrist strategies adopted by the major political parties (Evans 1999; Knutsen 2007), the vast majority of people are still able and willing to locate both themselves (and the political parties) on a left-right scale of political preference (Mair 2007). Further, occupational type continues to be linked to the left-right position of political parties, at least in some studies, with manual workers being more likely, on average, to identify with parties of the left, and with professionals and managers being more likely to identify with parties of the right (Norris 2004). It is possible that, for example, left-wing parties may be more successful than right wing parties in mobilising their respective potential supporters; and thus, it would be the areas with higher concentrations of *lower* status jobs which would, on average, exhibit higher overall turnout. In the second half of this chapter, we investigate this possibility

by measuring the effects on turnout of the proportion of workers in the lower occupational categories.

In this section, we have examined how each of our variables behaves when we examine individual countries, and the individual election types within them. Whereas most of our variables had proven to be quite consistent in their effects when we included all countries in models which examined different types of elections (see Chapter 5), the individual country analyses have uncovered some substantial differences. Indeed, only three of our variables can be considered to have consistent effects among all five countries *and* with the findings of the models in Chapter 5: Population Density, Unemployment, and the percentage of Young people.

One further variable, Education, has been shown to have consistent effects for each of the individual countries, being associated with higher turnout. This effect is in line with previous research, and with our original hypothesis. The results for Education in our individual country analyses are interesting when compared to our earlier findings. The models in Chapter 5 consistently suggested that Education was associated with significantly lower turnout in elections – a finding that flew in the face of most previous research in this area (and, indeed, was not explainable when we introduced a term which interacted Education with the percentage of Young people). However, when we examined the individual countries, we found *no* evidence of a statistically significant, negative effect for Education. Indeed, we find that, *within* countries, those *regions* with higher levels of degree holders do tend to exhibit higher turnout in elections. That the

effects of Education differ in this way suggests that, in the absence of the individual country analyses, we could have fallen foul of the ecological fallacy[56].

However, for each of the remaining variables, there is at least one country from our group of five where the effects are different to that found in other countries. Thus, Migration was found to be associated with higher turnout in England and France; GDP was associated with lower turnout in England and Italy; Death Rate was found to be associated with higher turnout in France; and Occupation was found to be associated with lower turnout in France, Greece, Italy, and Spain.

In considering the possible reasons for the puzzling effects of some of the variables, we have suggested various explanations, some of which lie beyond the reach of our data. However, for four variables, we can make use of alternative measures which may shed further light on country-to-country differences. These alternative variables will be the focus of the following section.

Alternative Variables

For the five countries which have been the focus of this chapter, we have regional level data which allow us to investigate different aspects of Migration, GDP, Occupation, and Education. As the previous section showed, each of these variables was rather inconsistent in its effects, either among the five countries, or as compared to the models we developed in Chapter 5.

In this section, these four variables are replaced, respectively, with: External Migration, the 10 Year Change in GDP (between 1995 and 2005); the percentage of the workforce

---

[56] Of course, we have only examined five of our original set of countries in this chapter; so it could be justly argued that these countries may differ from those which have not been analysed individually. However, we have also run regression models which replicate Models 3A and 3B, but which include only the five countries considered in the present chapter. The results of these models also show that Education is statistically significant, and associated with lower turnout in elections.

employed in Plant and Elementary occupations; and the percentage of the population educated to at least the Post-Primary school level. As we saw previously, apart from the ambiguous results for Unemployment in French elections, there were no cases where a variable was statistically significant for all elections treated together, and then contradicted by a significant result in the models for individual election types. So, in Table 7.7, we present the results of a single regression model for each country in which we include all election types; and for the reasons discussed earlier in this chapter, the turnout data for each election event in each country are centred on the mean.

Table 7.7 : Results of Regression Analyses : Individual countries with alternative variables

	Model ALT1	Model ALT2	Model ALT3	Model ALT4	Model ALT5
	England	France	Greece	Italy	Spain
Population Density (ln)	-1.663*** (.220)	-.980*** (.214)	-.604 (.943)	-1.094** (.393)	-2.141*** (.272)
External Migration %	.846 (.580)	-.125 (.255)	-4.402* (2.190)	-1.094*** (.198)	-.788 (.813)
GDP 10 Yr Change	-.035* (.015)	.073* (.033)	-.062 (.037)	.107** (.040)	-.055 (.041)
Unemployment %	-.169* (.084)	-.117* (.051)	-.378*** (.100)	-.243*** (.069)	-.048 (.057)
Young %	-.261* (.122)	-.132 (.122)	-.855*** (.249)	-2.289*** (.433)	-.848*** (.225)
Death Rate	-.186 (.149)	.641*** (.144)	-2.846*** (.3éé)	-2.072*** (.391)	-1.601*** (.244)
Occupation (% Plant & Elementary)	-.342*** (.089)	-.193** (.065)	.402** (.140)	.488** (.159)	.115 (.068)
Education (% Post-Primary)	-.043 (.088)	.137* (.065)	.130* (.066)	.078 (.142)	-.130** (.047)
Constant	27.991*** (8.447)	4.492 (6.398)	44.259*** (9.865)	60.005** (19.484)	51.720*** (7.402)
Adj R-square	.486	.361	.354	.530	.375
N	562	664	263	275	514

* significant at the .05 level; ** significant at the .01 level; *** significant at the .001 level

We first note that, for the variables which remain unchanged, the results are very similar to those reported in the previous section. In England, Population Density and the

percentage of Young people are again significant. In addition, Unemployment has now attained weak statistical significance while retaining the negative coefficient. For France, Population Density and Death Rate are again statistically significant, and as for England, Unemployment has become significant and associated with lower turnout. For Greece, Unemployment, the percentage of Young people, and the Death Rate remain statistically significant. For Italy, Unemployment, the percentage of Young people, and the Death Rate remain statistically significant; in addition, Population Density has attained statistical significance, whilst retaining its negative coefficient. For Spain, Population Density, the percentage of Young people, and the Death Rate are again statistically significant; although unemployment, whilst retaining a negative coefficient, has slipped into statistical non-significance.

Thus, although we have changed four of the variables, the effects of the remaining variables remain substantively unchanged. On this evidence, the models appear reasonably robust, and lend further credence to the findings reported in the previous section.

External Migration

We now turn to our new variables, beginning with External Migration, where we only count new arrivals to a region if they have come from *outside* of the country in question. In England and France, total migration to a region was associated with higher turnout; when we consider only external migration, the coefficients become non-significant for both countries. That external migration has been found to have a non-significant effect in England and France tends to undermine our previous proposition that 'immigration' could be a political issue which is used to mobilise the electorate; were this the case, we would have expected that external migration would have been positive and statistically

significant[57]. This suggests that for these countries, it is the relative level of *internal* migration which is actually associated with higher turnout, and, as discussed in the previous section, it may be the different patterns of migration displayed by various socio-demographic groups, perhaps combined with registration procedures, which is at play in these two countries.

Change in GDP

We previously found that the GDP of a region had rather inconsistent effects on turnout, being associated with lower turnout in England and Spain, but with higher turnout in Greece and Italy. When we substitute GDP with GDP change, we also find inconsistent effects. In England, an increase in GDP is associated with lower turnout; and in Italy it is associated with higher turnout. In France, GDP was not statistically in any of the models; but GDP Change is associated with higher turnout (.05 level). In Greece and Spain, GDP Change is not statistically significant. On the evidence presented in this chapter, then, it appears that neither GDP, nor the change in GDP can be considered a reliable predictor of turnout in elections across our set of five countries.

Occupation – Plant and Elementary Workers

In previous chapters, the 'Occupation' variable measured the percentage of people in the ISCO categories 1 and 2 (that is, legislators, senior officials, and professionals). A higher proportion of people within these categories was consistently associated with higher turnout in those analyses which included all countries. However, when our analyses focused on individual countries, only in England did we find further evidence to support this finding. Indeed, in France and Greece there was strong evidence of the

---

[57] We should note that we are unable to disaggregate external migrants in terms of the specific countries from which they came; nor whether they come from inside or outside of the European Union member-states.

reverse association: that is of higher occupational status being associated with lower turnout. Previous research has shown that the levels of manual workers within constituencies can be associated with different turnout patterns in different countries; and is perhaps due to the different campaign mobilisation strategies used by a country's political parties (Hoffmann-Martinot, Rallings et al. 1996). Here, instead of using a measure of people in the very highest occupation categories, we use a variable which measures the total numbers in ISCO categories 8 and 9 (Plant, machine operators and assemblers; and Elementary occupations, respectively).

As we can see from Table 7.7, the proportion of Plant and Elementary workers in a region is statistically significant in four of our five countries. In England and France, this variable is associated with lower turnout. The result for England is in line with that found in previous research which found that English constituencies with a higher level of manual workers were associated with lower turnout (Hoffmann-Martinot, Rallings et al. 1996). However, the authors of that research found that, in France, higher levels of manual workers were associated with *higher* turnout[58]. In Greece and Italy, though, a higher proportion of Plant and Elementary workers *is* associated with significantly higher turnout in elections, which may well be due to parties of the left being more successful in mobilising their supporters than are parties of the right.

Post-Primary Education

The last variable that we consider in this section is that of Post Primary Education. It will be recalled that, in Chapter 5, we were confronted by the apparently puzzling finding that a higher proportion of people educated to degree level was associated with lower

---

[58] Hoffmann-Martinot et al. noted that their data for France was from the early 1980s, whereas for England it was from the early 1990s, and suggested that, had they used more recent French data, they may also have found a negative effect in France; a view supported by the results presented herein.

turnout in elections. In the previous section of this chapter, we saw that *within* countries, this relationship was reversed, and indeed was in line with most previous research.

However, although we allayed our initial concerns on the contradictory behaviour of this variable, we should also note that, in fact, voting is not a particularly demanding activity, and only a fairly minimal educational attainment should be required in order for an individual to be equipped with the necessary skills. Is there, then, a difference between the effects of a high or a low level of education?

As we can see in Table 7.7, for England and Italy, the coefficients for Post Primary education are statistically non-significant – as was the case for both countries when we examined the effect of Degree level education on the model which included all types of elections. In France and Greece, Post Primary education is associated with higher turnout – as was degree level education in both of these countries. Only in Spain do we find that the effects of the two measures of education differ: a higher proportion of people with Post Primary education is associated with lower turnout; whereas a higher proportion of degree holders was associated with higher turnout. However, the effects of degree-level education in Spain were greater in the lower-order elections than in those for the national legislature, whereas the costs of actually turning up at a polling station and casting a vote are effectively the same for any type of election. We consider the likely explanation to be that more educated people also have a higher level of political interest, and hence are more likely to vote.

In this section, we have investigated the effects of alternative measures of four socio-demographic variables. The results of the regression analyses showed that the effects of

the unchanged variables were generally as before, lending support to our previous findings. For External Migration, we found no support for our earlier suggestion that higher external migration could be used as a political issue in order to mobilise the electorate. Rather, it seems more likely that the association between migration and turnout in France and England has to do with the different patterns of internal migration for different groups within society. GDP Change was as inconsistent in its effect as was the simple measure of GDP. Measures of plant and elementary workers lent support to the notion that, at least in the cases of Greece and Italy, political parties differ in the success in mobilising their potential supporters. Finally, for four of the countries, our alternative measure of education, (the proportion of people being educated to only the post-primary level) had effects which were comparable to the results when measuring the proportion of degree holders. Only in Spain did we find that the effects differed; which, together with the finding that degree level education had a larger, positive, effect in lower-order elections, we considered evidence of political interest, rather than of any enhanced ability to find the polling station, or of actually casting a ballot.

Conclusions

In this chapter, we have taken advantage of the sub-national character of our data, and examined how each of the variables behave within five countries. In the first section, we saw that four of the variables have consistent effects within and between these particular countries: Population Density, Unemployment, Young People, and Education. For the other four socio-demographic variables, we have seen that, in each case, there is at least one country in which a variable has an effect in the opposite direction to that found in Chapter 5.

Further, when we considered the effects of Occupation (ISCO categories 1 & 2) and Education (ISCED 5 & 6), we saw that in several cases, the results contradicted our earlier findings. In passing we noted that, absent our ability to investigate these variables within individual countries, it could have been tempting to infer from the initial models that Occupation and Education would be associated with higher turnout and lower turnout, respectively, in each of the individual countries. As the analyses in the first section of this chapter have shown, such an inference would have been fallacious.

We also saw, when comparing the results of individual election types in each country, that the effects of the variables differed, even among the lower-order elections; which lent further support to the proposition that not all second-order elections are the same.

In the second section, we examined different categories of Occupation and Education; in both cases shifting from the top categories to the lower categories for each variable. In addition, we looked at different aspects of Migration and GDP. We noted that, in most models, the unchanged variables retained their significance and direction of effect, lending further credence to our findings in the first section. However, none of our four new variables displayed consistent effects. As with the previous findings, when the results proved contrary to our expectations, we have proposed alternative explanations, and these have often been linked to the wider social and political structures in each country. Indeed, it would seem that there are often as many differences as there are similarities. In the concluding chapter of this thesis, we place these findings in a wider context, and consider the implications for past and future comparative research into turnout in elections.

Chapter 8 – Conclusions

We began this thesis with the aim of investigating how patterns of turnout differ between types of elections, and from place to place. Drawing on official sources for the period from 1995 to 2008, we compiled turnout data for 66 elections in ten Western European countries: Belgium, England, Finland, France, Greece, Ireland, Italy, the Netherlands, Spain, and Sweden. We included instances of sub-national, as well as national and supra-national elections. For all of the elections in each country, data were aggregated to the same geographical units, enabling a direct comparison of the effects on turnout of the selected institutional and socio-demographic variables.

In Chapter 1, we distinguished between the different types of elections in terms of their importance, or salience, in the eyes of the electorate. Those elections which result in the selection of a national government or president are the most important elections in a country, and as such are often termed 'first-order' elections. In addition to these first-order elections, all of the countries in our dataset also hold elections for one or more tiers of sub-national government, as well as elections to the European Parliament. These other types of elections have often been grouped together in the 'second-order' category. However, we suggested that elections to the EP often appear to be even less important than other second order elections, and should thus be considered as 'third order' elections. Because most comparative research into second-order elections has actually concerned itself with EP elections, we know relatively little about the effects of various determinants of voting on, say, municipal elections. One of our aims, then, was to contribute to our understanding of the differences in turnout by incorporating more types of elections than has been the case with previous comparative studies.

We also noted in Chapter 1 that almost all comparative research into turnout which used aggregate data had been done using country-level data. Such research has suggested a number of institutional and socio-demographic variables as being associated with differences in turnout. However, the obvious limitation of using country-level data is that it is not possible to investigate whether the variables have the same associations with turnout *within* countries. Indeed, according to Franklin (2004), there are reasons to expect that variables will have different associations with turnout in different countries, because these associations are themselves conditioned by different historical levels of turnout. Our second aim, then, was to go further than most previous comparative research which has used aggregate data, by using data aggregated to the regional level *within* countries.

In Chapter 2 we considered in detail the literature pertaining to voting in elections, and saw that, as suggested by rational choice theory, people take into account the costs and benefits involved when deciding whether or not to vote. This was particularly the case with the institutional variables related to characteristics of the election, such as compulsory voting. Further, people do appear to vote in greater numbers when there is more at stake in the election: more people vote in a national election for the parliament or president than, for example, in a sub-national election to choose municipal councillors, or in a supranational election for members of the European Parliament.

However, we also saw that the rational choice approach to voting appears to offer but a partial explanation – not least because, in imagining voters as taking into account the fact that the chances of their vote making a difference to the outcome of an election are often vanishingly small, the rational response would be to not bother. Clearly though,

people do vote, and various attempts have been made to address this paradox, for example by invoking notions of citizen duty, which itself appears to rest on the process of socialisation, whereby individuals acquire various attitudes and beliefs regarding the political system, and their expected participation within it. Although aspects of socialisation theory are disputed, previous research has shown that different groups within society do tend to exhibit different levels of turnout in a given election. Drawing on the relevant literature, we identified a number of individual- and aggregate-level socio-demographic characteristics which have been suggested as being associated with different levels of turnout.

In Chapter 3, we considered each of the countries in more detail and placed the contemporary characteristics of their territorial governments in historical context. Although all of the countries in our study have been subject to similar international and European influences, their responses have differed. For instance: some countries have introduced or strengthened a regional tier of government; whereas in others this level remains weak, or non-existent. Further, these levels of government differ - within and between countries - not just in terms of, for example, the number of people they employ, or the powers they enjoy in raising taxes, but also in terms of the institutional variables we identified in Chapter 2.

In Chapter 4, we described the construction of an original dataset in which we matched official election turnout figures and details of the electoral systems to the same geographical units used for the socio-demographic data. We were able to include not only national, first-order elections, and third-order elections to the European Parliament, but for every country in our dataset, at least one type of second-order, sub-national

election. This would enable us to examine the associations between turnout and the explanatory variables in first-, second-, and third-order elections. Data were aggregated to the same NUTS units for every set of election results within a country, thus allowing us to examine how the same set of explanatory variables, measured in the same way, behaved across different election types. In addition, because the geographical units were below the country-level, we would be able to go further than most previous comparative research which had used aggregate data, and see whether the associations between turnout and the socio-demographic variables remained the same when we examined different elections *within* individual countries.

Main Findings

Institutional Variables

In Chapter 5, we presented results for the institutional variables using both country level and regional level data, and found the results to be broadly comparable. We included all types of elections in the analysis, and considered four variables related to the electoral 'rules of the game'. Three of these - compulsory voting, weekend voting, and the holding of simultaneous elections - can be viewed from the rational choice perspective as affecting the costs of voting. We also considered the use of proportional representation, which can be seen as affecting the benefits of voting. The findings for each of these variables were broadly in line with previous research.

In addition, we included a salience variable to take account of the differing importance of first, second-, and third-order elections. Our expectation, also informed by rational choice theory, was that the potential benefits to the voter were greater in higher order

elections and that turnout would be higher. The results were also in line with expectations. Thus, our preliminary analyses confirmed that the institutional variables have substantial and statistically significant effects on turnout. It is noteworthy that these five variables were able to explain around seventy per cent of the variance in those models which included all types of elections in all countries.

In subsequent analyses, where we examined EP, Municipal, and Lower House elections in turn, we found that the effects of the institutional variables are systematically reduced with increasing order of election. Thus, compulsory voting, weekend voting, and the holding of simultaneous elections had much larger effects on turnout in third-order (EP) elections than on first-order (Lower House) elections (and see Mattila 2003). However, we also found that the effects of these institutional factors were larger for EP elections than for Municipal elections. This finding supports the idea that EP elections deserve the third-order label, and are different in important ways from second-order elections. This has important implications for comparative research into electoral turnout, which has, as noted in the introduction, often focused on comparisons of national and European Parliament elections. Such research has identified important differences in the effects of institutional variables on turnout in these two types of elections; but, it was only by also including municipal elections in our dataset that we able to show that these effects vary systematically with the order of the election.

In general, the results of analyses which included the institutional variables lend support to the rational choice perspective on voting, and the interpretation of these variables as affecting the costs and benefits of voting. However, there is a caveat: we also recall from Chapter 5 that the weak form of compulsory voting in Greece and Italy appeared to have

substantial effects (around ten per cent higher turnout), even when the legal compulsion to vote had been rescinded. Jackman and Miller had reported that voters react to such changes in the electoral rules in 'remarkably short order' (1995:484); but the evidence here is that the rules in place prior to such changes being made can continue to have vestigial effects. Because the elections in our dataset have been drawn from a relatively short time-frame, we cannot predict how long such effects may last (nor, indeed, have we investigated the possible relevance of how long a country has held democratic elections); but at face value this finding would seem to support Franklin's (2004) notion that there is a substantial habitual component to voting in elections.

Socio-demographic variables

Our findings for the socio-demographic variables present a much more complex picture than was the case with the institutional variables. In Chapter 5, the addition of eight socio-demographic variables to the institutional variables led to an increase in the amount of variance explained, but this increase was rather modest, at just over four per cent. In fact, this is very similar to the results from Franklin (1996), who reported that, when included with a number of institutional variables, individual level characteristics only explained about five per cent of the total variance. In the preliminary model, which included all election types, all of the core set of socio-demographic variables were highly significant; and, with the exception of education, behaved as hypothesised. However, with the socio-demographic variables, it seemed that the closer we looked, the more differences appeared.

When we considered EP, Municipal, and Lower House elections separately, most of the socio-demographic variables (Population density, GDP, Unemployment, Young, Death

rate, Occupation, and Education) maintained the same sign on the coefficient across all three election types, but the sizes of the coefficients, and the levels of statistical significance, did differ. Further, and in contrast to the effects of the institutional variables, the coefficients did not vary in a systematic way with the salience of the election. Some variables maintained the same sign, and their coefficients increased in size with the order of election (Young, Education), but other variables had larger coefficients in EP elections (GDP, Unemployment) or in Municipal elections (Population Density). Further, the direction of effect of one variable - Migration – changed from one election type to another. That the effects of the socio-demographic variables do not vary systematically with the salience of the election type means that we cannot assume that findings based on one (or two) types of election will necessary be valid for other types of elections. We have previously noted that municipal elections have seldom been the focus of systematic comparative research into the factors which affect turnout; our findings suggest that, notwithstanding the difficulties in gathering suitable data, municipal (and other sub-national) elections should be included along with national and supranational elections when studying the effects of socio-demographic variables on turnout.

In Chapter 6, we saw that the core socio-demographic and institutional variables were not predicting turnout equally well in all countries. We took the opportunity to examine a number of country-level variables which could be expected to affect turnout; either because of increased mobilising effects on the electorate, or by increasing what was at stake in the election. The results of these investigations were rather mixed. Party coverage, trade union membership, and the level of public employment each had the expected, positive effect on turnout, at least in Lower House elections. The proportion of

all taxes represented by local taxes was associated with higher turnout in municipal elections, as was the degree of local autonomy in setting those taxes. Both of these results provide further evidence that, as according to Rational Choice Theory, people do respond to 'what is at stake' when deciding whether or not to vote.

Different types of elections

As we have noted, the salience variable highlighted the substantial differences in the effects of the institutional variables on the different types of elections; with the effects being systematically reduced as the salience of the election increased. Although no such systematic trend with the salience of election was seen with the core socio-demographic variables, we can draw several pieces of evidence together to support the idea that EP elections often appear quite different, not just to national, first-order elections, but also when compared to second-order, subnational elections. Aside from the lower turnout, often substantially so, that the EP elections tend to attract, there appear to be differences in how various groups of the electorate respond to the opportunity of voting in EP elections. It will be recalled from Chapter 6 that Party Coverage, Trade Union membership, and Public employment each had positive effects on turnout in both Municipal and Lower House elections. However, for elections to the EP, each of these variables had a negative, and statistically significant, effect.

We think it likely that at least some of these differences are due to the low interest such elections hold, not just for voters, but also for political parties, other voluntary associations, and the media, each of which has the potential to mobilise sections of the electorate. We should note though, that what we see for EP elections is not simply the absence of a relationship, but that increases in each of the variables is actually

associated with a decrease in turnout for EP elections. This implies that some voters do respond to mobilising factors for municipal and LH elections, but are, when these mobilising factors are weaker (or absent), actually less likely to vote than the average voter. Although at first blush this may seem a little odd, it actually does make sense – there would be little reason to invest time and effort into encouraging people to vote if they were already likely to do so.

We also saw in Chapter 6 that those areas with a high 'regionality' score tended to display significantly higher turnout in regional elections. This suggests that one or more regional-level factors related to the formal degree of autonomy, or the strength of political institutions, economic independence, or identity, is having a positive effect on turnout in regional elections. Two further observations are of interest: firstly, that those same regions tend to record significantly lower turnout in Lower House elections, implying that, whilst this may not be a strictly zero-sum game, the increased salience of elections associated with a particular level of government is not necessarily without cost to other levels of government within a country. Secondly, those regions tending to show higher turnout in regional elections also display higher turnout in EP elections. Indeed, of the variables in Chapter 6 which we investigated across different types of elections, the measure of regionality was the only one to have had a significant and positive effect on turnout for EP elections. As we noted in Chapter 3, the EU has itself sought to promote a Europe of the Regions, and an associated strengthening of the role of the regional level of government. It is possible that this has led to an increased profile for the EP elections in those same regions.

We also saw in Chapter 7 that, in some countries, the socio-demographic factors are of limited use in distinguishing between regions of high and low turnout for EP elections. Thus, for both England and Italy, only one of the socio-demographic variables attained significance for EP elections. On the other hand, in France and Spain, at least five variables were statistically significant for EP elections. This lack of consistency in the effects of these variables was also apparent when we examined other types of elections. Clearly, then, even within a single election type, there are country-to-country differences in the relationships that the socio-demographic variables have with turnout.

This would seem to provide at least circumstantial support for Franklin's suggestion that the relationships between turnout and the explanatory variables will differ from country to country, depending on the historical patterns of turnout in each. Franklin's study considered national (first-order) elections. How are we to relate his findings to other types of elections? Given the differences in turnout, and the differing effects of our independent socio- demographic variables, it does not seem that people learn the habit of voting (or of not voting) in their first election experience, and then behave consistently according to this habit for all types of elections. Indeed, as we saw in Chapter 8, in Greece and Italy, although the levels of turnout are similar across different types of elections, the results of our regression analyses suggested that different sections of the electorate participated in each type of election. Clearly, the extent to which voting is habitual, and how this relates to lower-order elections is a topic which requires further study.

Different countries

In Chapter 7, we investigated the effects of the independent variables in five individual countries: England, France, Greece, Italy, and Spain. For four of these variables - Population Density, Unemployment, Young, and Education - the results were reasonably consistent across all five countries, and in line with expectations. Interestingly, then, for these four variables, there were no obvious differences between countries with longer (England, France, Italy) or shorter (Greece, Spain) unbroken runs of democratic elections – turnout in the latter being expected by Franklin to be subject to more random factors, which may reflect the country's idiosyncratic history (Franklin 2004:199). To be sure, the results for the other socio-demographic variables – Migration, GDP, Death Rate, and Occupation - were less consistent, but no more so than among those countries which have had longer continuous histories of democratic elections.

In our attempts to explain the inconsistencies, we considered both the suitability of the measures we had used, and the wider social and political factors which may be at play. Thus, when considering why the level of migration to a region may exhibit a positive effect in England and France, we considered the possibility that 'immigration', as well as measuring the amount of new arrivals in a region, may also be a political issue in its own right: thus having the potential to be used by political parties to mobilise support, and serving to increase turnout.

However, reference to opinion polls in which respondents were asked to rank the importance of immigration among other issues of concern offered but patchy evidence to support this idea – and when we examined the effects of external migration (in the second part of Chapter 7), the results were no less ambiguous. A more promising

explanation hinged on the characteristics of the migrants themselves; and rather than being a homogenous group, we saw that, in England at least, single, young migrants (with a below average propensity to vote) tend to move towards the larger population centres – travelling in the opposite direction to older, more affluent migrants (who are more likely to vote).

We also saw that, in England and France, although levels of voter registration are high (above 90 per cent) when measured nationally, substantial regional variation exists in both countries. Further, substantial numbers of people who are actually registered may, in fact, spend all or most of their time at a different address. Thus, their below average propensity to vote may be reflected in a different part of the country to that where they are registered (and where their socio-demographic characteristics are captured in official statistics). Whatever the explanation for the otherwise contradictory effects of migration, it would seem that there are difficulties in using 'migration' as a simple measure of population instability.

Likewise, when we sought reasons for the contradictory results for GDP in England and Spain, we considered the limitations of the regional GDP measure, and speculated that the apparent negative association between GDP and turnout may be linked to other socio-demographic factors that are not discernible with our existing data. In particular, we noted that regional level GDP figures do not provide us with the opportunity to explore the effects on turnout of income inequality within regions. As with the migration measure discussed above, it is possible that the use of alternative and additional measures related to the regional economic performance and the distribution of wealth would lead to a better understanding of the effects of such factors on turnout.

This need to seek explanations beyond our existing data was even more marked when we considered the inconsistent associations between turnout and the occupational categories. We suggested that the partisan attachments that voters have for particular political parties, and the degree to which parties may be able to (or, indeed, make the effort to) mobilise their potential supporters to actually cast a vote, may vary between parties, elections, and countries.

More generally, the politicisation of voters appears to have declined in some countries, at least in part because of changes in the workplace. Processes of de-industrialisation, increases in the number of those in non-permanent, or part-time work, or those employed in small and medium enterprises, have reduced the opportunities for the workplace to play an important role in the socialisation and politicisation of large sections of the electorate, and, more specifically, have contributed to a reduction in the influence of trade unions (Braconnier and Dormagen 2007). Indeed, such changes in France may well be a contributing factor to the significant and negative association between turnout and the proportion of plant and elementary workers in the population that we found in Chapter 7 – and could explain why other researchers, using earlier data for France, found a positive association between turnout and the proportion of manual workers (Hoffmann-Martinot, Rallings et al. 1996). Clearly, given the relatively short time period from which we have drawn our turnout data, and the particular set of variables which we have selected, the explanations we have proposed to account for the differences between countries remain speculative.

We can be rather more confident, though, in the main findings of our research. The effects on turnout of the institutional variables decrease systematically as the salience of

the election increases. This is the case even when we compare elections for the European Parliament to the second-order elections for sub-national governments. Although there appears to be no systematic relationship between the salience of the election and the effects of the socio-demographic variables, a number of these variables were found to have the opposite effect on turnout in EP elections than is the case for municipal or lower house elections. On this evidence, then, investigations into the determinants of voting in second-order elections should not rely on data relating to elections for the European Parliament.

We have also shown that, although the findings concerning the effects of the socio-demographic determinants of voting may appear robust when a number of countries are included in the analysis, inconsistencies appear when we shift the focus to individual countries. Thus, for four of these variables, there is at least one country where the effect on turnout is the opposite to that found elsewhere; and, indeed, to that which previous comparative research had led us to expect. This has important implications for past and future research into turnout in elections, and especially to that which aims to investigate the role of socio-demographic characteristics in explaining patterns of electoral participation. The lack of consensus on the influence that such characteristics have on turnout may well have something to do with the variety of approaches that previous researchers have used. But, as we have shown, it may also be because their effects *do* actually differ from country to country. As Blais (2000: 25) noted, continental differences in aspects of political culture may be responsible for the differing levels of turnout seen in multinational studies. However, it strikes us that countries within a single continent can also differ markedly from their neighbours on measures of political culture, which may in part explain the differing levels of turnout.

We have certainly uncovered important country-to-country and election-to-election differences in the effects of the institutional and socio-demographic determinants of voting. This has been possible because we sought to improve on previous comparative research in two ways: Firstly, we included instances of first-, second-, and third-order elections in the investigation. Secondly, we constructed a dataset based on sub-national geographical units. Although the results would appear to justify both of these innovations, our approach has taken us only so far. Important limitations remain; these, and suggestions for further research, are discussed in the following section.

Methodological limitations and further research

We noted in the previous section that a long-term decline in the socialising and politicising effects of the workplace may account, at least partially, for changes in the levels of turnout. Clearly, an investigation of such long-term changes in turnout is beyond the reach of our data, drawn from little more than a single decade. Further, we have focused only on turnout; not on the performance of individual political parties. It would be possible, drawing on the same sources we have used for our own investigation, to gather data for the vote share of individual parties for each election. This would enable consideration of two factors identified by previous research, which are both related to the party system: the number of political parties, and the closeness of the election.

Despite the attention these factors have received, their effects on turnout are not entirely clear (Blais 2007): perhaps due, for the former, to an attendant increase in information costs as the voter is confronted by a greater number of parties from which

to choose, or the increased tendency for the outcome of an election in a multi-party system to be the formation of coalition government, the negotiations for which are at one remove from the expressed preferences of the electorate (Jackman 1987; though, see Brockington 2009). Further, the number of parties is itself related, as famously shown by Duverger, to the type of electoral system – a factor which we have already taken into account. However, it would certainly be of interest to test such a variable by incorporating it into the models we have presented.

Although the evidence is stronger that people are more likely to vote in a closely fought election because their vote is more likely to make a difference, the effect is often only marginal (Blais 2007). Further, we should note that the bulk of research into effects of election closeness on turnout has been conducted on first-order elections; and even then it is open to some debate as to whether it is the closeness of the contest at the national, or at the constituency level which should be taken into account. Indeed, political parties in UK parliamentary elections often concentrate their campaign resources on 'marginal constituencies' - defined in terms of the small difference in vote shares obtained by the first and second placed candidate. Such constituencies can be critical in a competition for power which rests on achieving a majority of seats, and highlights the importance of closely fought local contests in a plurality system. Under a PR system, with multiple seats at stake, a measure of closeness based on winning margins is perhaps less applicable and rather more complex calculations have been proposed (Blais and Lago 2009). This represents a difficulty when comparing countries using different electoral systems, as at least two different methods of measuring closeness would be necessary. When also including different types of elections, the picture becomes potentially more complex, as the number of arenas for which closeness

can be calculated also increases. Such concerns, though, are not insurmountable, and, indeed, testing propositions about closeness across a wider range of election types may well add to our understanding of how, and when, closeness matters.

However, we should note that for both multi-partyism and the closeness of the electoral contest, information would unavoidably be lost when data are aggregated to the sub-national units we have used. Although this loss is not as great as when aggregating to the national level, it is still potentially problematic – and especially so when we consider municipal elections. The geographical area at stake in municipal elections is smaller, often markedly so, than the NUTS units we have used in the present study. Thus, particular municipalities may have very large or very small numbers of parties; and the result may have been a landslide or decided by only a handful of votes. Such extreme cases would be averaged-out when aggregated along with the neighbouring municipalities in the NUTS unit.

Of course, such concerns over the loss of information when data are aggregated also apply to those very variables that we *have* been able to include; a limitation which brings us to a consideration of how generalisable our results may be. Although we have been able to use sub-national geographical units, these units are quite large and the aggregate values for each variable may still hide substantial, local variation. It is possible, then, that further differences in the effects of these variables would emerge, were we to consider yet smaller geographical units. We leave such an investigation to future researchers, to whom suitable data may become available.

In our own research, we have employed an explicitly comparative approach, and have studied different countries and different types of elections. In classifying various types of elections as first-, second-, or third-order, we have assumed that, not only is each class different to the others, but that within each class there is a certain degree of 'sameness'. However, Sartori (1991) has indicated a number of potential problems with systems of classification, and we need to consider a possible shortcoming of our present approach: do we have too many categories, or, indeed, too few?

We have justified our choice of three categories, both in terms of previous research and in terms of our own results. Elections to the European Parliament have long been seen as qualitatively and quantitatively different to national first-order elections. However, although other scholars have suggested that EP elections may be less salient that other second-order elections (such as municipal elections), we believe the results presented herein are the first to show a systematic decrease in the effects of institutional variables as we move from third- to second- to first order elections. This, then, is evidence of the quantitative difference between elections in these three categories. But, we have also seen evidence (in terms of the different associations between turnout and some variables) of qualitative differences.

Have we, then, fallen foul of what Sartori terms 'misclassification', whereby we have wrongly collapsed municipal elections, lower-intermediate elections, and upper-intermediate elections into the single category of second-order elections? We consider this a serious enough possibility to suggest that future researchers pay more attention to elections within this second-order category. As noted in the introductory chapter, few studies have considered these second-order elections in a comparative setting, and,

although we consider our own research has contributed to a better understanding of their nature (both when treated as a class, and, in Chapter 8, when examined individually), we do not consider these findings to be other than preliminary. Further, it is quite possible that subsequent investigations, using a larger dataset, would support the idea that the second-order category is itself too broad, and that a fourth-, or even fifth-order category may be justified.

On the other hand, by introducing the third-order category, we are perhaps already guilty of what Sartori termed 'degreeism', whereby we have assumed that all of the election types that we have included in our analysis differ only by degrees (that is, quantitatively), rather than in kind (that is, qualitatively). Were this the case, the inclusion of first-, second- and third-order elections in the same regression model would clearly be erroneous.

This, too, we consider a possibility which cannot be discounted. Our categories are based on the hierarchical and geographical relationships of different types of elections – but is it correct to assume that elections higher in this hierarchy are inherently more salient than those lower down? As we saw in Chapter 6, a composite measure of regionality was shown to be associated with higher turnout in regional (upper-intermediate) elections, but with lower turnout in lower house elections. It is possible, then, that to some voters – perhaps those who view the regional government as more powerful than the national government, or who have strong feelings of regional identity – elections for the regional government hold more importance than those for the national government.

We have insufficient data to be able to pursue this line of investigation, but regional elections, which have seldom been the subject of research into electoral participation, are clearly worthy of further study. Such research would also reveal whether regional elections in different countries (such as Belgium, France, Italy and Spain) are comparable enough to be included in the same category.

The results of our own analyses have shown that, although the results obtained when including all countries in the analysis are both statistically significant and in line with the hypothesised effects, even across three different types of elections (Chapter 5), the associations between turnout and some of these variables actually differ from country to country (Chapter 7). This point deserves to be stressed: we would have been wrong to have assumed that the results of our early analyses applied *even to those countries that we had included in our own analysis*. Understandably, then, we are reluctant to make claims as to the effects that the socio-demographic variables may have in other countries - particularly so for those variables relating to migration, GDP, death rate, or occupational class.

Further, in trying to understand the reasons for the country-to-country differences that we have uncovered, we have sometimes made reference to wider social or political factors – such as the politicising effects of the workplace, or to the levels of welfare assistance provided by the state. Clearly, these and other factors are subject to change, and it would be useful to test these propositions by drawing data from a longer time-period than has been possible here.

The results presented herein, although confirming a number of hypotheses, have also raised a number of questions. These questions arise because we have been able to consider variations in turnout within countries, and across different types of elections. This has been possible because of the nature of the dataset we used for our investigation. We chose to invest the time necessary in order to gather data for sub-national units and for different types of elections.

Our approach, then, has been rather different from most previous comparative studies of electoral turnout that used aggregate data: as we saw in Chapter 2, in such studies, 'aggregate' has often been synonymous with 'country-level'. Further, as the number of democracies has increased, so too has breadth of multi-national studies which analysts have conducted in their efforts to uncover regularities and patterns in human behaviour.

This search for regularities is reasonable enough, but what we have shown is that the relationships between turnout and the explanatory variables that are detected when analysing a set of countries do not necessarily apply to each of the individual countries. Indeed, in some instances, the direction of effect may differ. This is obviously problematic, not only for psephologists, but also to policy-makers who wish to better understand the reasons for variations in turnout in order that electoral participation and democratic legitimacy may be enhanced.

By using the same dataset to examine countries both collectively and individually, we have seen that there are, indeed, several country-to-country similarities, but we have also uncovered some important differences. Further, we have shown that the factors

which may affect turnout in one type of election do not necessarily apply to other types of elections. In particular, elections to the European Parliament are qualitatively and quantitatively different to municipal elections; thus justifying the 'third-order' classification. Much previous research has considered both EP and municipal elections as being 'second-order'; with the former receiving much more attention in comparative studies of turnout. In part, the lack of comparative research into municipal elections (and indeed, into other sub-national elections) has likely been due to the difficulties in obtaining suitable data. Similarly, a lack of data for sub-national units has meant that much comparative research using aggregate data into turnout has been limited to the national level.

We have shown that the difficulties in obtaining appropriate data are not insurmountable. Indeed, with the recent advent of the European Electoral Database, national (first-order) and European Parliament (third-order) turnout data, complied according to the NUTS classification, are now readily available. Obtaining data for second-order (municipal, lower intermediate, and upper intermediate) elections is a little more involved. However, increasingly, countries are making such data available, and often these data are also compiled according to the NUTS classification. There would seem little reason, then, for researchers to continue to ignore these types of elections.

We hope that, by compiling an original dataset to investigate how turnout varies between different types of elections, and how it varies from place to place, we have made a useful contribution to research into electoral participation – not least by identifying the differences, as well as the similarities, that exist.

Appendix

Data Sources

Country	Election Turnout Data
Belgium	Belgische verkiezingsuitslagen
	http://www.ibzdgip.fgov.be/result/nl/main.html
England	LGC Elections Centre University of Plymouth and
	http://psephos.adam-carr.net/countries/b/britain/
Finland	Tilastokeskus - Statistics Finland
	http://www.stat.fi/til/vaa.html
France	Ministère de l'Intérieur
	http://www.interieur.gouv.fr/sections/a_votre_service/elections/resultats
Greece	Ministry of the Interior
	http://www.ypes.gr
Ireland	Elections Ireland
	http://www.electionsireland.org/
Italy	Ministero dell'Interno
	http://elezionistorico.interno.it/index.php
Netherlands	Nederlandse verkiezingsuitslagen
	http://www.nlverkiezingen.com/index.html
Spain	Ministerio del Interior
	http://www.infoelectoral.mir.es/
Sweden	Statistiska Centralbyrån
	http://www.scb.se/Pages/SubjectArea____12262.aspx

National and sub-national governments - All countries

- Inter-parliamentary Union database: http://www.ipu.org/english/home.htm

- Council of Europe series: 'Structure and operation of local and regional democracy' (Spain CoE 1997; Belgium CoE 1998a; France CoE 1998b; Ireland CoE 1998c; UK CoE 2000b; Italy CoE 2000a; Greece CoE 2001; Sweden CoE 2007; Netherlands CoE 2008; Finland CoE 2009)

Socio-demographic data: main Eurostat data files consulted:

- **Population** *demo_r_r3dens*

- **Population Change** *demo_r_pjanaggr3*

- **Percentage of young people** *demo_r_pjanaggr3*

- **Death Rate** *reg_hlth_cdeath* series

- **Immigration** *cens_ramigr*

- **GDP** *nama_r_e3gdp*

- **Unemployment** *lfst_r_lfu3rt*

- **Occupation** Eurostat *cens_reisco*

- **Educational** Eurostat *cens_reisco*

NUTS Regions

BELGIQUE - BELGIË / LUXEMBOURG - NUTS level 2

BE21

BE25

BE23

BE22

BE10

BE24

BE31

BE32

BE33

BE35

BE34

LU00

LEGEND

National level
NUTS level 1
NUTS level 2

© EuroGeographics Association for the administrative boundaries
Cartography: Eurostat - GISCO, 2007

0   50 km

eurostat

SUOMI - FINLAND - NUTS level 3

FI1A3

FI1A2

FI134

FI1A1

FI132

FI133

FI195

FI194

FI193

FI131

FI197

FI187

FI196

FI185

FI186

FI184

FI182

FI183

FI181

FI200

LEGEND

———	National level
———	NUTS level 1
———	NUTS level 2
-------	NUTS level 3

© EuroGeographics Association for the administrative boundaries
Cartography: Eurostat - GISCO, 2007

0   125 km

eurostat

FRANCE - NUTS level 3

FR302
FR301
FR232
FR223
FR221 FR211
FR252
FR251
FR222
FR231
FR108
FR213
FR522
FR253
FR103
FR102
FR412
FR413
FR421
FR521
FR523
FR513
FR242
FR104
FR411
FR524
FR514
FR246
FR212
FR264
FR214
FR414
FR511
FR512
FR245
FR422
FR244
FR241
FR262
FR261
FR433
FR515
FR533
FR243
FR263
FR431
FR434
FR534
FR432
FR721
FR532
FR531
FR633
FR632
FR711
FR718
FR724
FR715 FR716
FR631
FR717
FR611
FR722 FR723
FR714
FR612
FR625
FR814
FR712 FR713
FR822
FR614
FR622
FR613
FR628
FR812
FR826
FR821
FR624
FR627
FR823
FR615
FR623
FR813
FR824
FR626
FR811
FR825
FR621
FR815

PARIS

FR106
FR101
FR105
FR107

Guadeloupe

FR910

0 20 km

Martinique

FR920

0 20 km

Guyane

FR930

0 100 km

Réunion

FR940

0 20 km

FR832
FR831

LEGEND

——	National level
——	NUTS level 1
——	NUTS level 2
-----	NUTS level 3

0   200 km

eurostat

ΕΛΛΑΔΑ - NUTS level 3

GR114 GR112 GR113 GR111
GR126 GR115
GR123
GR124 GR122
GR134 GR121 GR127
GR132 GR133 GR125
GR131
GR142 GR411
GR213 GR144 GR143
GR212 GR141
GR222 GR214 GR211
GR243 GR244 GR242 GR413
GR224 GR231 GR245 GR241 GR412
GR300
GR223 GR232 GR253
GR221 GR233 GR251
GR252 GR422
GR255
GR254 GR421

GR434 GR433 GR432
GR431

LEGEND

―――― National level
―――― NUTS level 1
―――― NUTS level 2
--------- NUTS level 3

Cartography: Eurostat - GISCO, 2007

0   150 km

eurostat

ÉIRE/IRELAND - NUTS level 3

IE011

IE013

IE012

IE022
IE021

IE023

IE024

IE025

LEGEND

National level
NUTS level 1
NUTS level 2
NUTS level 3

© EuroGeographics Association for the administrative boundaries
Cartography: Eurostat - GISCO, 2007

0   50 km

eurostat

ITALIA - NUTS level 3

LEGEND

————	National level
————	NUTS level 1
———	NUTS level 2
- - - -	NUTS level 3

© EuroGeographics Association for the administrative boundaries
Cartography: Eurostat - GISCO, 2007

0   125 km

NEDERLAND - NUTS level 2

NL11

NL12

NL13

NL32

NL23

NL21

NL31

NL22

NL33

NL34

NL41

NL42

ESPAÑA - NUTS level 3

LEGEND

———	National level
———	NUTS level 1
———	NUTS level 2
- - -	NUTS level 3

© EuroGeographics Association for the administrative boundaries
Cartography: Eurostat - GISCO, 2007

SVERIGE - NUTS level 3

SE332

SE331

SE322

SE321

SE313

SE312

SE311

SE121

SE125

SE110

SE124

SE122

SE123

SE214

SE232

SE211

SE213

SE231

SE212

SE221

SE224

LEGEND

———	National level
———	NUTS level 1
———	NUTS level 2
- - -	NUTS level 3

Cartography: Eurostat - GISCO, 2007

0   150 km

eurostat

UKN04

UKN03

UKN05

UKN01

UKN02

UKC21

UKC22

UKC23

UKD11

UKD12

UKC14

UKC11

UKC13

UKC12

UKD42

UKD43

UKD53

UKD41

UKD54

UKD32

UKD5

UKD31

UKD52

UKD21

UKD22

LEGEND

National level

NUTS level 1

NUTS level 2

NUTS level 3

0   100 km

UNITED KINGDOM (CENTER - SOUTH) - NUTS level 3

UKE22

UKE41 UKE42 UKE21
UKE43 UKE12
UKE31 UKE11
UKL11 UKE13
UKE32
UKL13 UKF13
UKL23 UKF12 UKF15
UKL12 UKG23 UKF14
UKG24 UKF11 UKF30
UKG21 UKF16
UKG22 UKG35
UKF22
UKL24 UKG34 UKG32
UKG31 UKF21
UKL14 UKG12 UKG33
UKG11 UKF23
UKG13
UKL18 UKL15 UKL21
UKL17 UKL16
UKL22

LEGEND

▬▬▬	National level
───	NUTS level 1
───	NUTS level 2
- - -	NUTS level 3

0   100 km

eurostat

UNITED KINGDOM (SOUTH) - NUTS level 3

UKH11
UKH13
UKH12
UKH14
UKJ12
UKH22
UKK13
UKH21
UKJ14
UKJ13
UKH23
UKH33
UKK11
UKK14
UKI23
UKI12
UKH32
UKK12
UKJ11
UKI11 UKI21
UKH31
UKK15
UKI22
UKJ41
UKK23
UKJ33
UKJ23
UKJ42
UKK43
UKJ32
UKK30 UKK41
UKJ31
UKJ24
UKJ22
UKK42
UKK22
UKK21
UKJ34
UKJ21

LEGEND

— National level
— NUTS level 1
— NUTS level 2
---- NUTS level 3

0   100 km

eurostat

Election Turnout and Regional Variations by Country and Election Type

Country	Election Type	Year	National Turnout %	Regional Minimum	Regional Maximum	Regional Range	Regional Mean	Regions No of
Belgium	EP	1999	91.1	86.6	94.4	7.9	91.3	11
Belgium	EP	2004	90.8	86.5	94.3	7.7	90.9	11
Belgium	Municipal	2000	91.3	82.9	95.3	12.4	91.4	11
Belgium	Provincial	2000	92.1	89.5	95.3	5.8	92.2	10
Belgium	Regional	1999	90.7	82.5	93.9	11.4	90.7	11
Belgium	LH	2003	91.6	87.5	94.8	7.3	91.7	11
Belgium	UH	2003	91.6	88.1	94.9	6.8	91.9	11
England	EP	1999	23.1	12.3	31.3	19.0	22.4	81
England	EP	2004	37.6	27.4	48.2	20.8	38.5	81
England	Municipal[1]	1998	32.0	18.5	45.5	27.0	32.2	77
England	Municipal[1]	2008	37.0	25.9	36.8	19.3	37.0	80
England	LH	1997	71.2	58.3	82.4	24.1	71.6	81
England	LH	2001	59.0	43.2	68.1	28.9	59.2	81
England	LH	2005	61.3	46.7	71.0	24.3	61.1	81
Finland	EP	2004	39.4	31.9	44.5	12.6	36.9	13
Finland	Municipal	2004	58.3	55.0	65.3	10.3	58.4	13
Finland	LH	2003	68.1	64.6	72.5	7.8	67.2	13
Finland	Presidential	2000	76.9	73.4	79.1	5.7	76.3	13
France	EP	2004	42.8	27.6	51.7	24.2	43.7	95
France	Municipal	2001	57.3	51.9	77.9	25.9	62.2	95
France	Cantonal	2001	56.1	50.2	82.3	32.1	68.4	95
France	Regional	2004	58.0	53.7	73.7	20.0	63.3	95
France	LH	2007	59.3	51.7	70.4	18.8	61.9	95
France	Presidential	2007	83.8	75.4	89.0	13.6	85.3	95
Greece	EP	1999	70.3	45.4	79.0	33.6	67.7	39
Greece	EP	2004	63.4	46.2	75.3	29.1	62.6	39
Greece	Municipal	1998	70.6	45.2	82.2	37.0	71.3	34
Greece	Municipal	2002	70.6	50.8	92.0	41.2	72.4	34
Greece	LH	2000	75.0	53.7	80.0	26.3	72.5	39
Greece	LH	2004	75.6	49.8	82.9	33.1	72.8	39
Greece	LH	2007	74.1	51.5	82.5	31.0	73.0	39
Ireland	EP[2]	1999	50.2	NA	NA	NA	NA	-
Ireland	EP[2]	2004	59.0	NA	NA	NA	NA	-
Ireland	Municipal	1999	48.0	35.5	59.1	23.6	52.3	8
Ireland	Municipal	2004	55.8	51.5	62.2	10.7	58.7	8
Ireland	LH	1997	65.9	61.3	70.7	9.4	67.1	8
Ireland	LH	2002	62.6	56.9	72.8	16.0	64.9	8
Italy	EP	2004	71.7	57.8	83.8	26.0	73.9	98
Italy	Regional	2005	71.8	57.9	79.9	22.0	71.1	80
Italy	LH	2006	83.6	68.7	90.6	21.9	84.0	97

Country	Election Type	Year	National Turnout %	Regional Minimum	Regional Maximum	Regional Range	Regional Mean	Regions No of
Netherlands	EP	1999	30.2	27.2	33.9	6.8	31.1	12
Netherlands	EP	2004	39.3	35.1	43.5	8.4	40.1	12
Netherlands	Municipal	2006	58.0	53.9	63.2	9.3	59.6	12
Netherlands	Provincial	1999	45.6	41.6	54.1	12.5	47.5	12
Netherlands	Provincial	2003	47.6	41.8	57.8	16.1	49.7	12
Netherlands	LH	1998	73.4	68.3	78.3	9.9	74.2	12
Netherlands	LH	2002	79.1	73.7	82.4	8.7	79.4	12
Netherlands	LH	2003	80.0	75.3	83.7	8.3	80.7	12
Netherlands	LH	2006	80.4	77.9	83.1	5.2	80.9	12
Spain	EP	1999	63.1	52.6	80.9	28.3	66.3	48
Spain	EP	2004	45.1	32.4	57.9	25.5	47.3	48
Spain	Municipal	1995	69.9	61.7	82.2	20.4	71.9	42
Spain	Municipal	1999	64.0	53.3	81.3	28.0	67.4	48
Spain	Municipal	2003	67.7	59.5	81.3	21.7	70.4	48
Spain	Municipal	2007	63.3	51.3	79.2	28.0	67.1	47
Spain	LH	1996	77.4	69.6	84.2	14.6	77.9	47
Spain	LH	2000	68.7	55.9	78.7	22.8	70.2	47
Spain	LH	2004	75.7	68.0	81.5	13.4	76.3	48
Spain	LH	2008	64.6	57.4	81.5	24.1	74.7	48
Spain	UH	2004	75.8	58.8	83.0	24.2	75.0	43
Sweden	EP	1999	38.8	32.9	41.8	8.9	37.3	19
Sweden	EP	2004	38.2	32.5	41.7	9.3	36.6	19
Sweden	Municipal	1998	78.6	77.3	80.9	3.6	79.2	19
Sweden	Municipal	2002	77.9	76.0	81.1	5.1	78.3	19
Sweden	Municipal	2006	79.4	77.3	81.5	4.2	79.6	19
Sweden	County	1998	78.1	76.9	80.5	3.6	78.8	18
Sweden	County	2002	77.5	75.8	80.7	4.9	77.9	18
Sweden	County	2006	78.8	76.7	81.1	4.4	79.1	18
Sweden	LH	1998	81.4	77.3	83.7	6.4	81.4	19
Sweden	LH	2002	80.1	77.6	82.3	4.7	80.2	19
Sweden	LH	2006	82.0	79.3	83.6	4.3	82.0	19

Notes: EP = European Parliament; LH = Lower House; UH = Upper House

1: Results for English municipal elections averaged over three years; see text.

2: Irish EP constituencies do not correspond to NUTS standardisation.

Socio-demographic descriptive statistics

Belgium (11 regions)	Mean	Minimum	Maximum	Range	Country
Population density	846	55.8	5974.3	5918.5	338
Ln Population density		4.02	8.70	4.67	5.82
Population percentage change in ten years	5.1	1.1	9.2	8.1	4.4
Total migration corrected	1.51	.58	3.40	2.82	1.24
PPP per capita of EU average	121.8	83.4	255.5	172.1	126.0
Ten year change in PPP	-7.0	-24.3	7.3	31.6	-7.2
Unemployment pc	7.4	3.60	13.90	10.30	7.0
Age: Percent 15-29	19.1	17.92	20.90	2.98	18.9
Death rate	10.1	7.8	12.0	4.2	10.2
Occupation	.	.	.	.	.
agriculture and fishery workers pc	.	.	.	.	.
plant and elementary workers pc	.	.	.	.	.
Educational Degree Plus %	21.1	16.6	29.9	13.3	20.6
Post primary education %	.	.	.	.	.

Finland (13 regions)	Mean	Minimum	Maximum	Range	Country
Population density	31.1	2.1	152.2	150.1	17.0
Ln Population density		.74	5.03	4.28	2.83
Population percentage change in ten years	-.2	-7.6	10.4	18.0	2.9
Total migration corrected	2.23	1.57	3.66	2.09	2.3
PPP per capita of EU average	103.5	80.1	162.9	82.8	117.2
Ten year change in PPP	5.6	-3.9	14.2	18.1	5.3
Unemployment pc	11.29	6.27	17.70	11.43	9.8
Age: Percent 15-29	18.09	16.10	20.30	4.20	18.6
Death rate	10.2	7.8	11.9	4.1	9.5
Occupation	15.7	12.5	24.6	12.1	18.2
agriculture and fishery workers pc	5.7	1.0	9.4	8.4	4.5
plant and elementary workers pc	21.2	16.3	24.6	8.3	19.8
Educational Degree Plus %	31.6	29.0	39.2	10.2	33.7
Post primary education %	76.93	74.30	79.20	4.90	76.8

France (95 regions)	Mean	Minimum	Maximum	Range	Country
Population density	528.0	14.0	20246.0	20232.0	96.0
Ln Population density	4.57	2.64	9.92	7.28	4.56
Population percentage change in ten years	5.8	-5.6	18.3	23.9	6.3
Total migration corrected	1.66	.77	3.07	2.30	1.72
PPP per capita of EU average	102.5	75.4	330.0	254.6	115.3
Ten year change in PPP	-5.4	-18.3	18.3	36.6	-5.3
Unemployment pc	10.1	5.20	23.10	17.90	10.2
Age: Percent 15-29	19.1	14.80	24.40	9.60	20.3
Death rate	10.0	6.1	16.4	10.3	9.0
Occupation	15.6	10.8	43.5	32.7	18.1
agriculture and fishery workers pc	6.6	.2	49.5	49.3	4.2
plant and elementary workers pc	20.0	10.6	28.3	17.7	19.1
Educational Degree Plus %	21.9	15.8	54.3	38.5	25.3
Post primary education %	78.35	71.60	86.50	14.90	79.3

Greece (39 regions)	Mean	Minimum	Maximum	Range	Country
Population density	58.9	20.8	175.0	154.2	83.5
Ln Population density		3.03	5.16	2.13	4.92
Population percentage change in ten years	1.8	-5.5	15.2	20.6	3.9
Total migration corrected	2.84	1.61	8.43	6.82	2.62
PPP per capita of EU average	69.7	47.9	113.0	65.1	84.1
Ten year change in PPP	-4.1	-18.3	26.2	44.5	10.4
Unemployment pc	11.31	4.60	24.40	19.80	11.4
Age: Percent 15-29	21.0	17.80	25.20	7.40	22.0
Death rate	10.5	7.0	14.5	7.5	9.6
Occupation	18.0	11.5	24.2	12.7	21.8
agriculture and fishery workers pc	25.0	7.0	50.0	43.0	13.6
plant and elementary workers pc	16.1	9.7	23.3	13.6	16.6
Educational Degree Plus %	16.9	12.0	24.9	13.0	22.7
Post primary education %	60.5	37.70	71.60	33.90	71.8

Ireland (8 regions)	Mean	Minimum	Maximum	Range	Country
Population density	187.4	27.5	1209.4	1181.9	55.4
Ln Population density		3.31	7.10	3.78	4.01
Population percentage change in ten years	19.3	12.6	37.7	25.1	17.5
Total migration corrected	3.82	2.75	5.04	2.29	3.76
PPP per capita of EU average	115.9	81.6	179.3	97.7	131.0
Ten year change in PPP	36.6	15.0	77.1	62.1	44.7
Unemployment pc	4.66	3.50	6.20	2.70	4.3
Age: Percent 15-29	23.53	22.30	27.60	5.30	24.3
Death rate	8.4	6.2	9.7	3.5	8.2
Occupation	27.6	23.7	36.2	12.5	29.6
agriculture and fishery workers pc	6.8	.6	9.1	8.5	5.4
plant and elementary workers pc	17.1	11.9	19.7	7.8	15.9
Educational Degree Plus %	31.0	25.5	40.9	15.4	33.4
Post primary education %	85.9	82.80	87.80	5.00	86.2

Italy (98 regions)	Mean	Minimum	Maximum	Range	Country
Population density	254.8	36.7	2638.6	2601.9	193.0
Ln Population density		3.60	7.88	4.28	5.26
Population percentage change in ten years	4.1	-5.0	16.9	21.9	4.4
Total migration corrected	1.89	.79	3.86	3.08	1.63
PPP per capita of EU average	112.7	60.0	186.6	126.6	117.8
Ten year change in PPP	-18.7	-42.1	3.8	45.9	-16.8
Unemployment pc	9.72	1.70	30.50	28.80	10.6
Age: Percent 15-29	18.1	13.90	23.30	9.40	18.7
Death rate	10.4	7.6	15.2	7.6	9.7
Occupation	19.9	16.4	24.6	8.3	20.7
agriculture and fishery workers pc	2.9	.4	8.1	7.7	2.3
plant and elementary workers pc	21.8	15.6	26.9	11.3	21.4
Educational Degree Plus %	12.4	8.1	20.2	12.2	13.4
Post primary education %	87.24	80.70	95.00	14.30	

Netherlands (12 regions)	Mean	Minimum	Maximum	Range	Country
Population density	476.3	178.2	1189.1	1010.9	470.2
Ln Population density	5.96	5.18	7.08	1.90	6.15
Population percentage change in ten years	6.6	-1.0	31.0	32.0	4.9
Total migration corrected	3.07	1.96	5.58	3.62	2.82
PPP per capita of EU average	127.8	97.1	168.3	71.2	134.3
Ten year change in PPP	4.0	-5.9	15.9	21.8	3.9
Unemployment pc	3.15	2.40	4.50	2.10	2.9
Age: Percent 15-29	19.20	17.00	21.70	4.70	18.8
Death rate	8.8	5.4	9.9	4.5	8.8
Occupation	27.6	24.0	34.4	10.4	28.8
agriculture and fishery workers pc	.	.	.	.	1.3
plant and elementary workers pc	.	.	.	.	13.1
Educational Degree Plus %	22.2	17.2	31.7	14.5	23.9
Post primary education %	91.41	90.40	92.20	1.80	

Spain (48 regions)	Mean	Minimum	Maximum	Range	Country
Population density	109.1	8.8	685.1	676.3	81.6
Ln Population density		2.17	6.53	4.35	4.4
Population percentage change in ten years	8.6	-5.8	34.2	40.0	11.7
Total migration corrected	1.11	.47	2.77	2.30	1.16
PPP per capita of EU average	90.9	61.6	134.4	72.8	97.3
Ten year change in PPP	10.4	-1.6	26.6	28.2	12.0
Unemployment pc	13.80	5.30	29.70	24.40	13.9
Age: Percent 15-29	21.45	17.80	25.20	7.40	22.5
Death rate	9.6	7.4	13.3	5.9	8.9
Occupation	19.3	14.9	25.1	10.2	19.5
agriculture and fishery workers pc	6.4	.6	21.0	20.4	3.7
plant and elementary workers pc	23.8	17.7	34.2	16.5	23.0
Educational Degree Plus %	9.5	6.3	18.5	12.2	11.2
Post primary education %	75.7	63.50	86.90	23.40	77.4

Sweden (19 regions)	Mean	Minimum	Maximum	Range	Country
Population density	43.0	2.6	278.1	275.5	21.6
Ln Population density		.96	5.63	4.67	3.07
Population percentage change in ten years	.0	-6.0	11.5	17.5	3.5
Total migration corrected	2.52	2.04	3.19	1.15	2.51
PPP per capita of EU average	114.3	98.9	176.0	77.1	126.7
Ten year change in PPP	-8.4	-20.0	4.8	24.8	3.5
Unemployment pc	6.22	3.20	11.40	8.20	5.4
Age: Percent 15-29	17.64	16.40	19.90	3.50	18.2
Death rate	11.3	8.7	12.7	4.0	10.5
Occupation	19.1	15.4	29.0	13.6	21.5
agriculture and fishery workers pc	.	.	.	.	.
plant and elementary workers pc	.	.	.	.	.
Educational Degree Plus %	11.0	8.5	19.5	11.0	13.3
Post primary education %	84.36	81.60	90.40	8.80	

England (81 regions)	Mean	Minimum	Maximum	Range	Country
Population density	1465.6	61.2	8660.0	8598.8	241.0
Ln Population density		4.11	9.07	4.96	.48
Population percentage change in ten years	3.0	-7.2	13.0	20.2	3.2
Total migration corrected	4.23	1.96	11.22	9.26	4.23
PPP per capita of EU average	115.6	70.2	601.6	531.4	119.0
Ten year change in PPP	2.8	-19.7	70.1	89.8	4.9
Unemployment pc	5.77	2.40	12.20	9.80	5.6
Age: Percent 15-29	18.69	14.00	28.00	14.00	18.8
Death rate	10.3	7.1	13.9	6.8	10.2
Occupation	25.8	15.7	47.5	31.8	26.9
agriculture and fishery workers pc	1.2	.2	4.4	4.2	
plant and elementary workers pc	20.2	7.5	30.3	22.8	
Educational Degree Plus %	22.5	12.9	58.9	46.0	25.9
Post primary education %	73.91	63.00	88.00	25.00	

10 Countries	Mean		Minimum	Maximum	Range	
Population density	160.8		17.0	470.2	453.2	
Ln Population density	4.57		2.83	6.15	3.32	
Population 10 yr % change	6.5		2.9	17.5	14.6	
Total migration corrected	2.39		1.16	4.23	3.07	
PPP per capita of EU average	116.7		84.1	134.3	50.2	
Ten year change in PPP	6.6		-16.8	44.7	61.5	
Unemployment pc	7.90		2.90	13.90	11.00	
Age: Percent 15-29	20.19		18.20	24.30	6.10	
Death rate	9.5		8.2	10.5	2.3	
Occupation ISCO 1 & 2 %	23.0		18.1	29.6	11.5	
agriculture & fishery workers %	5.0		1.3	13.6	12.3	
plant & elementary workers %	18.2		13.1	23.0	9.9	
Educational Degree Plus %	21.1		11.2	33.7	22.6	
Post primary education %	78.12		71.80	86.20	14.40	

432 Regions	Mean		Minimum	Maximum	Range	
Population density	517.2		2.1	20246.0	20243.9	
Ln Population density	4.83		.74	9.92	9.17	
Population 10 year % change	4.8		-7.6	37.7	45.3	
Total migration corrected	2.37		.47	11.22	10.75	
PPP per capita of EU average	103.5		47.9	601.6	553.7	
Ten year change in PPP	-1.2		-42.1	77.1	119.2	
Unemployment %	9.28		1.70	30.50	28.80	
Age: Percent 15-29 %	19.46		13.90	28.00	14.10	
Death rate	10.1		5.4	16.4	11.0	
Occupation ISCO 1& 2 %	20.0		10.8	47.5	36.7	
agriculture & fishery workers%	6.8		.2	50.0	49.8	
plant & elementary workers %	20.6		7.5	34.2	26.7	
Educational Degree Plus %	17.7		6.3	58.9	52.6	
Post primary education %	77.11		37.70	95.00	57.30	

Bibliography

Aars, J. and H.-E. Ringkjøb (2005). "Party Politicisation Reversed? Non-partisan Alternatives in Norwegian Local Politics." Scandinavian Political Studies **28**(2): 161-181.

Abrial, S., B. Cautrès and N. Mandran. (2003, March 2003). "Turnout and abstention at multi-level elections in France." Retrieved 14 January 2009, from http://www.ucd.ie/dempart/brusselsconference/presentations/grenobletext.pdf.

ACE. (2006). "Considerations for a new voter registration system for Ukraine." Retrieved 14 Jul 2011, from http://aceproject.org/ero-en/regions/europe/IT/italy-voter-registration-case-study.pdf.

Achen, C. and W. P. Shively (1995). Cross-level inference. Chicago & London, University of Chicago Press.

Aja, E. (2001). Spain: nation, nationalities, and regions. Subnational democracy in the European Union. J. Loughlin. Oxford, Oxford University Press.

Alba, C. and C. Navarro (2003). Twenty-five years of democratic local government in Spain. Reforming local government in Europe. N. Kersting and A. Vetter. Germany, Leske + Budrich.

Arrow, K. J. (1951). Social choice and individual values. New York London, Wiley ; Chapman & Hall.

Arter, D. (2008). Scandinavian politics today, Manchester University Press.

Ashworth, J., B. Heyndels and C. Smolders (2002). "Redistribution as a local public good: an empirical test for Flemish municipalities." Kyklos **55**(1): 27-56.

Assmann, A. (2006). Memory, individual and collective. The Oxford handbook of contextual political analysis. R. E. Goodin and C. Tilly. Oxford, Oxford University Press**:** xii, 869.

Bache, I. and S. George (2006). Politics in the European Union 2nd edition. Oxford, OUP.

Bäck, H., H. Heinelt and A. Magnier, Eds. (2006). The European Mayor: political leaders in the changing context of local democracy. Wiesbaden, VS Verlag.

Baldersheim, H. and K. Ståhlberg (2002). "From guided democracy to multi-level governance: Trends in central-local relations in the Nordic countries." Local Government Studies **28**(3): 74-+.

Ball, A. and B. Peters (2000). Modern politics and government 6th edition. Basingstoke, Palgrave.

Barrington, T. J. (1991). Local government in Ireland. Local government in Europe: trends and developments. R. Batley and G. Stoker. Basingstoke, Macmillan Education.

BBC. (2004). "North East votes 'no' to assembly."   Retrieved 12 May 2010, 2010, from http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_news/politics/3984387.stm.

Bekke, H. (1991). Experiences and experiments in Dutch local government. Local government in Europe: trends and developments. R. Batley and G. Stoker. Basingstoke, Macmillan Education.

Bengtsson, A. (2004). "Economic voting: the effect of political context, volatility and turnout on voters' assignment of responsibility." European Journal of Political Research 43: 749-767.

Benoit, K. (2001). "District magnitude, electoral formula, and the number of parties." European Journal of Political Research 39: 203-224.

Bernstein, R., A. Chadha and R. Montjoy (2001). "Overreporting Voting: Why It Happens and Why It Matters." Public Opinion Quarterly 65(1): 22-44.

Blair, P. (1991). Trends in local government and democracy: reflections from a European perspective. Local government in Europe: trends and developments. R. Batley and G. Stoker. Basingstoke, Macmillan Education.

Blais, A. (2000). To vote or not to vote? : the merits and limits of rational choice theory. Pittsburgh, Pa., University of Pittsburgh Press.

Blais, A. (2007). Turnout in elections. The Oxford Handbook of Political Behavior. R. Dalton and H.-D. Klingemann. Oxford, Oxford University Press.

Blais, A., Ed. (2008). To keep or to change first past the post? : the politics of electoral reform. Oxford ; New York, Oxford University Press.

Blais, A. and R. K. Carty (1990). "Does proportional representation foster voter turnout?" European Journal of Political Research 18(2): 167-181.

Blais, A. and A. Dobrzynska (1998). "Turnout in electoral democracies." European Journal of Political Research 33(2): 239-261.

Blais, A. and I. Lago (2009). "A general measure of district competitiveness." Electoral Studies 28: 94-100.

Blondel, J., R. Sinnott and P. Svensson (1997). "Special issue: Political representation in the European Parliament - Representation and voter participation." European Journal of Political Research 32(2): 243-272.

Bobbio, L. (2005). Italy: after the storm. Comparing local governance: trends and transformations. B. Denters and L. Rose. Basingstoke, Palgrave.

Borges, J. L. (2000). The lottery in Babylon. Labyrinths: selected stories and other writings. D. Yates and J. Irby. London, Penguin Classics.

Borraz, O. and P. Le Galès (2005). France: the intermunicipal revolution. Comparing local governance: trends and transformations. B. Denters and L. Rose. Basingstoke, Palgrave.

Bowler, S. (2006). Electoral systems. The Oxford handbook of political institutions. R. A. W. Rhodes, S. A. Binder and B. A. Rockman. Oxford ; New York, Oxford University Press**:** xvii, 816.

Braconnier, C. and J.-Y. Dormagen (2007). La démocratie de l'abstention. France, Editions Gallimard.

Brady, H. E., S. Verba and K. L. Schlozman (1995). "Beyond SES: A Resource Model of Political Participation." The American Political Science Review **89**(2): 271-294.

Brockington, D. (2004). "The paradox of proportional representation: The effect of party systems and coalitions on individuals' electoral participation." Political Studies **52**(3): 469-490.

Brockington, D. (2009). "It's About The Benefits: Choice Environments, Ideological Proximity and Individual Participation in 28 Democracies." Party Politics **15**(4): 435-454.

Budge, I. and K. Newton (1997). The politics of the new Europe: Atlantic to Urals. London, Longman.

Burden, B. (2000). "Voter turnout and the national election studies." Political Analysis **8**(4): 389-398.

Burns, N., K. L. Schlozman and S. Verba (2001). The private roots of public action : gender, equality, and political participation. Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University Press.

Caramani, D. (2005). "The Formation of National Party Systems in Europe: A Comparative-Historical Analysis." Scandinavian Political Studies **28**(4): 295-322.

CDLR and D. Nohlen (1998). Electoral systems and voting procedures at the local level. Strasbourg, Council of Europe Publishing.

Champion, T. (2005). Population movement within the UK. Focus on people and migration. ONS. Basingstoke, Office for National Statistics/Macmillan.

Chisolm, M. (2000). Structural reform of British local government: rhetoric and reality. Manchester, Manchester University Press.

CoE (1997). Structure and operation of local and regional democracy: Spain. Strasbourg, Council of Europe Publishing.

CoE (1998a). Structure and operation of local and regional democracy: Belgium. Strasbourg, Council of Europe Publishing.

CoE (1998b). Structure and operation of local and regional democracy: France. Strasbourg, Council of Europe Publishing.

CoE (1998c). Structure and operation of local and regional democracy: Ireland. Strasbourg, Council of Europe Publishing.

CoE (2000a). Structure and operation of local and regional democracy: Italy. Strasbourg, Council of Europe Publishing.

CoE (2000b). Structure and operation of local and regional democracy: United Kingdom. Strasbourg, Council of Europe Publishing.

CoE (2001). Structure and operation of local and regional democracy: Greece. Strasbourg, Council of Europe Publishing.

CoE (2007). Structure and operation of local and regional democracy: Sweden. Strasbourg, Council of Europe Publishing.

CoE (2008). Structure and operation of local and regional democracy: Netherlands. Strasbourg, Council of Europe Publishing.

CoE (2009). Structure and operation of local and regional democracy: Finland. Strasbourg, Council of Europe Publishing.

Collard, S. (2008). The French municipal elections: cradle of European citizenship? Annual Conference of the Political Studies Association. University of Swansea.

Colomer, J. (1991). "Benefits and costs of voting." Electoral Studies **10**(4): 313-325.

Colomer, J. M. (2005). "It's Parties That Choose Electoral Systems (or, Duverger's Laws Upside Down)." Political Studies **53**(1): 1-21.

Committee of the Regions (2008). Regional offices contact directory. Belgium, EU Publications Office.

Cox, G. W. and M. C. Munger (1989). "Closeness, Expenditures, and Turnout in the 1982 U.S. House Elections." The American Political Science Review **83**(1): 217-231.

Crewe, I. (1981). Electoral Participation. Democracy at the polls: a comparative study of competitive national elections. D. Butler, H. Penniman and A. Ranney. Washington and London, American Enterprise Institute for Public Policy Research.

Curtice, J. (2007). Comparative opinion surveys. The Oxford Handbook of Political Behavior. R. Dalton and H.-D. Klingemann. Oxford, Oxford University Press.

Curtice, J. and b. Seyd (2004). Is there a crisis of political participation. British social attitudes 2003-2004. A. Park, J. Curtice, K. Thomson, L. Jarvis and C. Bromley, Sage.

Dahlström, C. and P. Esaiasson. (2009). "The Immigration Issue and Anti-Immigrant Party Success: Is Sweden the Odd Case Out?" Retrieved 6 Apr 2011, from http://www.qog.pol.gu.se/working_papers/2009_30_dahlstrom_esaiasson.pdf.

Dalton, R. and H.-D. Klingemann (2007). Citizens and political behavior. The Oxford Handbook of Political Behavior. R. Dalton and H.-D. Klingemann. Oxford, Oxford University Press.

Davies, N. (1997). Europe: a history. London, Pimlico.

de Michelis, A. and A. Chantraine (2003). Memoirs of Eurostat: fifty years serving Europe. Luxembourg, Office for Official Publications of the European Communities.

Dearlove, J. (1973). <u>The politics of policy in local government: the making and maintenance of public policy in the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea</u>. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.

DEMPART. (nd). "Democratic Participation and Political Communication in Systems of Multi-level Governance."   Retrieved 21 May 2011, from http://www.ucd.ie/dempart/.

Dente, B. (1991). Italian local services: the difficult road to privatisation. <u>Local government in Europe: trends and developments</u>. R. Batley and G. Stoker. Basingstoke, Macmillan Education.

Denters, B. and O.-J. Klok (2005). The Netherlands: in search of responsiveness. <u>Comparing local governance: trends and transformations</u>. B. Denters and L. Rose. Basingstoke, Palgrave.

Denters, B. and L. Rose, Eds. (2005a). <u>Comparing local governance: trends and transformations</u>. Basingstoke, Palgrave.

Denters, B. and L. Rose (2005b). Towards local governance? <u>Comparing local governance: trends and transformations</u>. B. Denters and L. Rose. Basingstoke, Palgrave.

Downs, A. (1957). <u>An economic theory of democracy</u>. New York,, Harper.

Electoral Commission (2005). Understanding electoral registration: The extent and nature of non-registration in Britain.

Electoral Commission. (2006). "Compulsory voting around the world."   Retrieved 10 Jul 2011, from http://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/__data/assets/electoral_commission_pdf_file/0020/16157/ECCompVotingfinal_22225-16484__E__N__S__W__.pdf.

Electoral Commission. (2007). "Electoral registration in Great Britain."   Retrieved 14 Jul 2011, from http://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/__data/assets/electoral_commission_pdf_file/0015/13263/Electoral-Registration-GB-2007-06_26425-6132__E__N__S__W__.pdfElectoral.

ESPON (2006). The Modifiable Areas Unit Problem. Luxembourg, ESPON Monitoring Committee.

European Commission. (2004, 2004). "Eurobarometer 60 - Public opinion in the European Union."   Retrieved 28 Oct 2009, from http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/archives/eb/eb60/eb60_rapport_standard_en.pdf.

European Commission. (2010). "Electoral rights for EU citizens living in another Member State."   Retrieved 6 Apr 2011, from http://ec.europa.eu/justice/policies/citizenship/political/policies_citizenship_vote_en.htm.

European Parliament. (2002, 12 sep 2002). "The European Parliament: fact sheets 1999-2002." Retrieved 24 Oct 2009, from http://www.europarl.europa.eu/factsheets/default_en.htm.

European Parliament. (2004, 22 Sep 2004). "The European Parliament: electoral procedures." Retrieved 24 Oct 2009, from http://www.europarl.europa.eu/facts_2004/1_3_4_en.htm.

EUROSTAT (2009a). Regions of the European Union - A statistical portrait. Luxembourg, European Commission.

EUROSTAT. (2009b). "Statistics by theme." from http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/portal/page/portal/statistics/themes.

Evans, G. (1999). The end of class politics? : class voting in comparative context. Oxford, Oxford University Press.

Evans, J. (2004). Voters and voting: an introduction. London, Sage.

Farrell, D. and Scully, R. (2005). "Electing the European Parliament; How uniform are 'Uniform Electoral Systems?" Journal of Common Market Studies **43** : 969-984

Folketinget. (2008). "How many people are employed in the EU institutions?"   Retrieved 14 Apr 2011, from http://www.eu-oplysningen.dk/euo_en/spsv/all/48/.

Franklin, M. (1996). Electoral participation. Comparing democracies : elections and voting in global perspectives. L. LeDuc, R. G. Niemi and P. Norris. Thousand Oaks, Calif., Sage Publications**:** xii, 428 p.

Franklin, M. (2004). Voter turnout and the dynamics of electoral competition in established democracies since 1945. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.

Freedom House. (2009, 2009). "Freedom in the world: Country ratings."   Retrieved 16 Sept 2010, from http://www.freedomhouse.org/.

Freeman, G. (2006). Politics and mass migrations. The Oxford handbook of contextual political analysis. R. E. Goodin and C. Tilly. Oxford, Oxford University Press**:** xii, 869.

Gallagher, M. (2009, 19 Jun 2009). "Election indices."   Retrieved 20 Oct 2009, from http://www.tcd.ie/Political_Science/staff/michael_gallagher/ElSystems/Docts/ElectionIndices.pdf.

Gallagher, M., M. Laver and P. Mair (2006). Representative government in modern Europe 4th edition. NY, McGraw-Hill.

Garside, P. and M. Hebbert, Eds. (1989). British regionalism 1900-2000. London, Mansell.

Geys, B. (2006a). "Explaining voter turnout: a review of aggegate-level research." Electoral Studies **25**: 637-663.

Geys, B. (2006b). "'Rational' theories of voter turnout: a review." Political Studies Review **4**: 16-35.

Goerres, A. (2007). "Why are older people more likely to vote? The impact of ageing on electoral turnout in Europe." British Journal of Politics and International Relations **9**: 90-121.

Gosnell, H., F. (1930). Why Europe Votes Chicago, Chicago University Press.

Gray, M. and M. Caul (2000). "Declining voter turnout in advanced industrial democracies, 1950 to 1997 - The effects of declining group mobilization." Comparative Political Studies **33**(9): 1091-1122.

Green, D. P. and I. Shapiro (1994). Pathologies of rational choice theory : a critique of applications in political science. New Haven, Yale University Press.

Gustafsson, A. (1991). The changing local government and politics of Sweden. Local government in Europe: trends and developments. R. Batley and G. Stoker. Basingstoke, Macmillan Education.

Hague, R. and M. Harrop (2004). Comparative government and politics : an introduction. Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan.

Halvarsson, B. (nd). "Report on local democracy in Belgium". Brussels, Council of Europe

Hasen, R. (1996). "Voting without law?" University of Pennsylvania Law Review **144**(May): 2135-79.

Heath, A., I. McLean, B. Taylor and J. Curtice (1999). "Between first and second order: a comparison of voting behaviour in European and local elections in Britain." European Journal of Political Research(35): 389-414.

Heinelt, H. and N. Hlepas (2006). Typologies of local government systems. The European mayor. H. Bäck, H. Heinelt and A. Magnier. Wiesbaden, VS Verlag.

Hendriks, F. (2001a). Belgium: federalism and subnational democracy in a divided country. Subnational democracy in the European Union. J. Loughlin. Oxford, Oxford University Press.

Hendriks, F. (2001b). The Netherlands: reinventing tradition in local and regional democracy. Subnational democracy in the European Union. J. Loughlin. Oxford, Oxford University Press.

HESA. (2011). "Statistics - students and qualifiers at UK HE institutions."   Retrieved 13 Jul 2011, from http://www.hesa.ac.uk/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=1897&Itemid=239.

Hesse, J. and L. Sharpe (1991). Local government in international perspective - some comparative observations. Local government and urban affairs in international perspective: analyses of 20 Western industrialized countries. J. Hesse. Baden-Baden, Nomos Verlagsgesellschaft.

Heywood, A. (2002). politics (2nd edition). Basingstoke, UK, Palgrave.

Heywood, P., E. Jones and M. Rhodes, Eds. (2002). Developments in West European politics 2. Basingstoke, Palgrave.

Hoffmann-Martinot, V., C. Rallings and M. Thrasher (1996). "Comparing local electoral turnout in Great Britain and France: More similarities than differences?" European Journal of Political Research **30**: 241-257.

Hooghe, L. and Marks, G. (1996). "Europe *with* the regions". Publius **26** : 73-91

Howell, D. R. and K. Jusko (2009). Methodological challenges: research opportunities and questions for the future. The comparative study of electoral systems. H.-D. Klingemann. Oxford, Oxford University Press.

Hox, J. (2010). Multilevel analysis: techniques and applications. New York and Hove, Routledge.

Hwang, S., R. Wilkins, M. Tjepkema, P. O'Campo and J. Dunn (2009). "Mortality among residents of shelters, rooming houses, and hotels in Canada: 11 year follow-up study." British Medical Journal **339**(b4036).

IDEA. (2004). "Voter turnout in Western Europe since 1945: a regional report. Compulsory voting in Western Europe."   Retrieved 2 Jun 2010, from http://www.idea.int/publications/voter_turnout_weurope/.

IDEA. (2009, 3 Nov 2009). "Compulsory Voting."   Retrieved 2 Jun 2010, from http://www.idea.int/vt/compulsory_voting.cfm.

ILO. (2009). "Laboursta Internet." 2009, from http://laborsta.ilo.org/.

ILO. (nd, 24 Sept 2004). "ISCO-08 Structure and preliminary correspondence with ISCO-88." Retrieved 14 Jun 2011, from http://www.ilo.org/public/english/bureau/stat/isco/isco08/index.htm.

Inter-Parliamentary Union. (2009a). "Parliaments at a glance: electoral systems."   Retrieved 4 Nov 2009, from http://www.ipu.org/parline/ElectoralSystem.asp?REGION=All&typesearch=1&LANG=ENG.

Inter-Parliamentary Union. (2009b). "Parline database on national parliaments."   Retrieved 4 Nov 2009, from http://www.ipu.org/parline/ElectoralSystem.asp?REGION=All&typesearch=1&LANG=ENG.

Jackman, R. (1987). "Political institutions and voter turnout in the industrial democracies." American Political Science Review **81**(2): 405-423.

Jackman, R. and R. Miller (1995). "Voter turnout in the industrial democracies during the 1980s." Comparative Political Studies **27**(4): 467-492.

Jackson, R. (1993). "Voter mobilization in the 1986 midterm election." The Journal of Politics **55**(4): 1081-1099.

Jessop, B. (2006). The state and state-building. The Oxford handbook of political institutions. R. A. W. Rhodes, S. A. Binder and B. A. Rockman. Oxford ; New York, Oxford University Press**:** xvii, 816.

John, P. (2001). Local governance in Western Europe. London, Sage.

Johns, J. and D. Brockington (2011). Salience and turnout in second order elections: the role of EU regional funding. Meetings of the Midwest Political Science Association. Chicago, Illinois.

Johns, R. (2010). "Measuring issue salience in British elections." Political Research Quarterly **63**(1): 143-158.

Johnston, R. and C. Pattie (2006). Putting voters in their place: geography and elections in Great Britain. Oxford, OUP.

Karp, J. A. and D. Brockington (2005). "Social desirability and response validity: A comparative analysis of overreporting voter turnout in five countries." Journal of Politics **67**(3): 825-840.

Kavanagh, A., G. Mills and R. Sinnott (2004). "The geography of Irish voter turnout: a case study of the 2002 general election." Irish Geography **37**(2): 177-186.

Keating, M. (1998). The new regionalism in Western Europe: territorial restructuring and political change. Cheltenham, Edward Elgar.

Kennedy, B. P., I. Kawachi and D. Prothrow-Stith (1996). "Income distribution and mortality: cross sectional ecological study of the Robin Hood index in the United States." BMJ **312**(7037): 1004-1007.

Kestelman, P. (1999). "Quantifying representativity." Voting Matters Retrieved 29 Oct 2009, from http://www.mcdougall.org.uk/VM/ISSUE10/P6.HTM.

Kettl, D. (2006). Public bureaucracies. The Oxford handbook of political institutions. R. A. W. Rhodes, S. A. Binder and B. A. Rockman. Oxford ; New York, Oxford University Press.

Knutsen, O. (2007). The decline of social class? The Oxford Handbook of Political Behavior. R. Dalton and H.-D. Klingemann. Oxford, Oxford University Press.

Kostadinova, T. (2003). "Voter turnout dynamics in post-communist Europe." European Journal of Political Research **42**: 741-759.

Larsson, T., K. Nomden and F. Petiteville, Eds. (1999). Le niveau intermédiaire d'administration dans les pays européens: La démocratie au défi de la complexité? Maastricht, Institut Europen d'administration publique.

Le Galès, P. (2008). Territorial politics in France. Developments in French politics 4. A. Cole, P. Le Galès and J. D. Levy. Basingstoke & New York, Palgrave Macmillan.

LeDuc, L., R. G. Niemi and P. Norris (2002). Comparing democracies 2 : new challenges in the study of elections and voting. London ; Thousand Oaks, Calif., Sage Publications.

Lidström, A. (2001a). Finland: geo-political changes and Europeanization. Subnational democracy in the European Union. J. Loughlin. Oxford, Oxford University Press.

Lidström, A. (2001b). Sweden: the end of the 'Swedish Model'? Subnational democracy in the European Union. J. Loughlin. Oxford, Oxford University Press.

Lijphart, A. (1994). Electoral systems and party systems: a study of twenty-seven democracies, 1945-1990. Oxford, OUP.

Lijphart, A. (1997). "Unequal participation: Democracy's unresolved dilemma - Presidential Address, American Political Science Association, 1996." American Political Science Review **91**(1): 1-14.

LOREG-CoE. (Various). "National Reports: Structure and operation of local and regional democracy."   Retrieved 10 Nov 2009, from http://www.loreg.coe.int/Browse.aspx.

Lorrain, D. (1991). Public goods and private operators in France. Local government in Europe: trends and developments. R. Batley and G. Stoker. Basingstoke, Macmillan Education.

Loughlin, J. (2001a). Greece: between 'Henosis' and decentralization. Subnational democracy in the European Union. J. Loughlin. Oxford, Oxford University Press.

Loughlin, J. (2001b). Italy: the crisis of the Second Republic. Subnational democracy in the European Union. J. Loughlin. Oxford, Oxford University Press.

Loughlin, J. (2001c). Subnational democracy in the European Union. Oxford, Oxford University Press.

Loughlin, J. and D.-L. Seiler (2001). France: between centralization and fragmentation. Subnational democracy in the European Union. J. Loughlin. Oxford, Oxford University Press.

Louth, J. and L. Hill (2005). "Compulsory voting in Australia: Turnout with and without it." Australian Review of Public Affairs **6**(1): 25-37.

Lyons, P. and R. Sinnott. (2003a). "The study of voter turnout: state of the art."   Retrieved 22 May 2011, from http://www.ucd.ie/dempart/workingpapers/stateoftheart.pdf.

Lyons, P. and R. Sinnott. (2003b). "Voter turnout in the Republic of Ireland."   Retrieved 21 May 2011, from http://www.ucd.ie/dempart/workingpapers/ireland.pdf.

Mair, P. (2007). Left-Right Orientations. The Oxford Handbook of Political Behavior. R. Dalton and H.-D. Klingemann. Oxford, Oxford University Press.

Mair, P. and I. v. Biezen (2001). "Party membership in twenty European democracies, 1980-2000." PARTY POLITICS **7**(1): 5-21.

Malkopoulou, A. (July 2009). "Compulsory voting in Greece: a history of concepts in motion." Retrieved 2 Jun 2010, from http://www.essex.ac.uk/ecpr/events/jointsessions/paperarchive/helsinki/ws7/malkopoulou.pdf.

Marsh, M. (1998). "Testing the second-order election model after four European elections." British Journal of Political Science **28**: 591-607.

Massicotte, L. and A. Blais (1999). "Mixed electoral systems: a conceptual and empirical survey." Electoral Studies **18**(3): 341-366.

Massicotte, L., A. Blais and A. Yoshinaka (2004). Establishing the rules of the game : election laws in democracies. Toronto ; Buffalo, University of Toronto Press.

Mateo, J. F. (1991). Improving access to administration in Spain. Local government in Europe: trends and developments. R. Batley and G. Stoker. Basingstoke, Macmillan Education.

Matsusaka, J. and F. Palda (1999). "Voter turnout: how much can we explain?" Public Choice **98**: 431-446.

Mattila, M. (2003). "Why bother? Determinants of turnout in the European elections." Electoral Studies **22**(3): 449-468.

Mény, Y. (2008). Le système politique français 6th edition. Paris, Broché.

Miller, W. (1988). Irrelevant elections?:the quality of local democracy in britain. Oxford, Clarendon Press.

Milligan, K., E. Moretti and P. Oreopoulos (2004). "Does education improve citizenship? Evidence from the United States and the United Kingdom." Journal of Public Economics: 1667-1695.

Ministère de l'Intérieur. (2006, 14 Apr 2006). "Ministère de l'Intérieur: Résultats électoraux en France."   Retrieved 12 Dec 2006, from http://www.interieur.gouv.fr/sections/a_votre_service/elections/resultats/.

Ministère de l'Intérieur. (nd). "Découvrir l'Outre-Mer."   Retrieved 6 Jan 2011, from http://www.interieur.gouv.fr/sections/a_votre_service/elections/resultats/.

Ministry of Justice. (2008). "The governance of Britain - election day - weekend voting." Retrieved 26 July 2010.

Morlan, R. L. (1984). "Municipal vs. National Election Voter Turnout: Europe and the United States." Political Science Quarterly **99**(3): 457-470.

Mouritzen, P. and J. Svara (2002). Leadership at the apex: politicians and administratorsin Western local governments. Pittsburgh, University of Pittsburgh Press.

Muñoz de Bustillo, R. and J.-I. Antón. (2009, 1 Mar 2009). "Health Care Utilization and Immigration in Spain."   Retrieved 7 Apr 2011, from http://mpra.ub.uni-muenchen.de/12382/1/MPRA_paper_12382.pdf.

Nevitte, N., A. Blais, E. Gidengil and R. Nadeau (2009). Socioeconomic status and nonvoting: a cross-national comparative analysis. The comparative study of electoral systems. H.-D. Klingemann. Oxford, Oxford University Press.

Norris, P. (2004). Electoral engineering: voting rules and political behaviour. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.

Norton, A. (1991). Western European local government in comparative perspective. Local government in Europe: trends and developments. R. Batley and G. Stoker. Basingstoke, Macmillan Education.

Nugent, N. (1999). The government and politics of the European Union. Basingstoke, Macmillan.

OECD. (1997). "Managing across levels of government." 24 Oct 2009, from http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/10/14/1902308.pdf.

OECD (2007). ""Towards Better Measurement of Government", *OECD Working Papers on Public Governance*, 2007/1, OECD Publishing. doi:10.1787/301575636734."

Oppenhuis, E. (1995). Voting behavior in Europe. Amsterdam, Het Spinhuis.

Page, E. C. and M. Goldsmith, Eds. (1987). Central and local government relations - a comparative study of West European states. London, Sage.

Pak Ké Shon, J.-L. (2004). "Determinants of electoral non-registration and sensitive neighbourhoods in France." Population 59(1): 143-156.

Perea, E. A. (2002). "Individual charactersitics, institutional incentives and electoral abstention in Western Europe." European Journal of Political Research 41: 643-673.

Perez-Linan, A. (2001). "Neoinstitutional accounts of voter turnout: moving beyond industrial democracies." Electoral Studies 20: 281-297.

Plees, Y. (2005). Belgium: the changing world of Belgian municipalities. Comparing local governance: trends and transformations. B. Denters and L. Rose. Basingstoke, Palgrave.

Plutzer, E. (2002). "Becoming a habitual voter: inertia, resources, and growth in young adulthood." The American Political Science Review 96(1): 41-56.

Powell, G. B. (1977). Voting turnout in thirty-one democracies: effects of the socio-economic, legal and partisan environments, University of Rochester.

Powell, G. B. (1980). Voting turnout in thirty democracies: partisan, legal, and socio-economic differences. Electoral participation: A comparative analysis. R. Rose. Beverly Hills, London, Sage.

Powell, G. B. (1986). "American voter turnout in comparative perspective." American Political Science Review 80(1): 17-43.

Powell, G. B. (2000). Elections as instruments of democracy: majoritarian and proportional models. New Haven & London, Yale University Press.

Préfet de La Réunion. (2009, 12 Jan 2010). "Structure territoriale."   Retrieved 6 Jan 2011, from http://www.reunion.pref.gouv.fr/pse/d/index.php?m=presentationreunion.htm-structureterritoriale.htm.

Prodi, R. (2002, 15 July 2002). "The role of the regions in building the Europe of tomorrow - Governance and the Convention."   Retrieved 17 Feb 2009, from http://europa.eu/

Radcliff, B. (1992). "The Welfare State, Turnout, and the Economy: A Comparative Analysis." The American Political Science Review 86(2): 444-454.

Rae, D. (1967). The political consequences of electoral laws. New haven, Yale University Press.

Rallings, C. and M. Thrasher (1997). Local elections in Britain. London, Routledge.

Rallings, C. and M. Thrasher. (2003). "Turnout and abstention at multi-level elections in Great Britain."   Retrieved 21 May 2011, from http://www.ucd.ie/dempart/workingpapers/britain.pdf.

Rallings, C. and M. Thrasher (2005). "Not all 'second-order' contests are the same: electoral turnout and party choice at the concurrent 2004 local and European Parliament elections in England." British Journal of Politics and International Relations **7**: 584-597.

Rallings, C. and M. Thrasher (2007). "The turnout 'gap' and the costs of voting - a comparison of participation at the 2001 general and 2002 local elections in England." Public Choice **131**(3-4): 333-344.

Rattinger, H. and S. Wagner. (2003). "Germany: supplementing sense of duty by cognitive mobilisation." Retrieved 21 May 2011, from http://www.ucd.ie/dempart/workingpapers/germany.pdf.

Reif, K. (1984). "National election cycles and European elections 1979 and 1984." Electoral Studies **3**(3): 244-255.

Reif, K., Ed. (1985). Ten European elections. Aldershot, Gower.

Reif, K. and H. Schmitt (1980). "Nine 2nd-Order National Elections - a Conceptual-Framework for the Analysis of European Election Results." European Journal of Political Research **8**(1): 3-44.

Riker, W. and P. Ordeshook (1968). "A theory of the calculus of voting." American Political Science Review **62**(1): 25-42.

Robinson, W. (1950, 2009). "Ecological Correlations and the Behavior of Individuals." International Journal of Epidemiology **38**(2): 337-341.

Rose, L. and K. Ståhlberg (2005). The Nordic countries: still the promised land? Comparing local governance: trends and transformations. B. Denters and L. Rose. Basingstoke, Palgrave.

Rose, R. (1974). Electoral behavior: a comparative handbook. New York, Free Press.

Rose, R. (2007). Perspectives on political behavior in time and space. The Oxford Handbook of Political Behavior. R. Dalton and H.-D. Klingemann. Oxford, Oxford University Press.

Rosenstone, S. J. (1982). "Economic Adversity and Voter Turnout." American Journal of Political Science **26**(1): 25-46.

Rueschemeyer, D. (2006). Why and how ideas matter. The Oxford handbook of contextual political analysis. R. E. Goodin and C. Tilly. Oxford, Oxford University Press**:** xii, 869.

Saint-Germain, M. (2002, 7 Aug 2002). "PPA696 Research Methods - Simple Regression." Retrieved 11 Feb 2008, from http://www.csulb.edu/~msaintg/.

Sartori, G. (1991). "Comparing and miscomparing". Journal of Theoretical Politics. 3 : 243-257

Saward, M. (2006). Democracy and citizenship: expanding domains. The Oxford Handbook of Political Theory. J. Dryzek, B. Honig and A. Phillips. Oxford, Oxford University Press.

Scarrow, S. (2007). Political activism and party members. The Oxford Handbook of Political Behavior. R. Dalton and H.-D. Klingemann. Oxford, Oxford University Press.

Schmitt, H. and M. Loveless. (2004). "European Election Study 2004: Design, data description and documentation."   Retrieved 6 Apr 2011, from http://campus.murraystate.edu/academic/faculty/mark.wattier/EES2004Codebook.pdf.

Schnabel, C. and J. Wagner. (2005, Jan 2005). "Determinants of Union Membership in 18 EU Countries: Evidence from Micro Data, 2002/03."   Retrieved 1 Nov 2009, from http://ideas.repec.org/p/iza/izadps/dp1464.html

Schroeder, L. D., D. L. Sjoquist and P. E. Stephan (1986). Understanding regression analysis : an introductory guide. Newbury Park, CA ; London, Sage.

Sharp, H. (1955). "Migration and voting behavior in a metropolitan community." Public Opinion Quarterly **19**(2): 206-209.

Siaroff, A. and J. W. A. Merer (2002). "Parliamentary election turnout in Europe since 1990." Political Studies **50**(5): 916-927.

Statistika Centralbyrån. (2010, 2008). "Regionala indelningar."   Retrieved 12 Mar 2010, from http://www.scb.se/.

StatSoft. (2011). "Electronic Statistics Textbook."   Retrieved 11 Apr 2011, from http://www.statsoft.com/textbook/multiple-regression/.

Staveley, E. (1972). Greek and Roman voting and elections. London, Thames and Hudson.

Subramanian, S. V., K. Jones, A. Kaddour and N. Krieger (2009). "Revisiting Robinson: The perils of individualistic and ecologic fallacy." International Journal of Epidemiology **38**(2): 342-360.

Svensson, P. and S. R. Thomsen. (2003). "Denmark: Uniting local and European perspectives." Retrieved 21 May 2011, from http://www.ucd.ie/dempart/workingpapers/denmark.pdf.

Taagepera, R. (2009). Electoral systems. The Oxford handbook of comparative politics. C. Boix and S. Stokes. Oxford, Oxford University Press.

The Electoral Commission. (2006). "Compulsory voting around the world."   Retrieved 27 July 2010, from http://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/__data/assets/electoral_commission_pdf_file/0020/16157/ECCompVotingfinal_22225-16484__E__N__S__W__.pdf.

The Poverty Site. (nd). "Income inequalities."   Retrieved 15 July 2011, from http://www.poverty.org.uk/index.htm.

Thoenig, J.-C. (2006). Territorial institutions. The Oxford handbook of political institutions. R. A. W. Rhodes, S. A. Binder and B. A. Rockman. Oxford ; New York, Oxford University Press**:** xvii, 816.

Tilly, C. (2006). Why and how history matters. The Oxford handbook of contextual political analysis. R. E. Goodin and C. Tilly. Oxford, Oxford University Press**:** xii, 869.

Tilly, C. and R. E. Goodin (2006). It depends. The Oxford handbook of contextual political analysis. R. E. Goodin and C. Tilly. Oxford, Oxford University Press.

Topf, R. (1995). Electoral participation. <u>Citizens and the state</u>. H.-D. Klingemann and D. Fuchs. Oxford, Oxford University Press.

UNDP. (2011, various). "Human Development Reports."   Retrieved 6 Jan 2011, from <u>http://hdr.undp.org/en/</u>.

UNESCO. (1997, Nov 1997). "International Standard Classification of Education."   Retrieved 28 Oct 2009, from
<u>http://www.unesco.org/education/information/nfsunesco/doc/isced_1997.htm</u>.

van der Eijk, C., M. Franklin and M. Marsh (1996). "What voters teach us about Europe-wide elections: what Europe-wide elections teach us about voters." <u>Electoral Studies</u> **15**(2): 149-166.

van der Kolk, H. (2007). "Local election systems in Western Europe." <u>Local Government Studies</u> **33**(2): 159-180.

Van Der Valk, I. (2003). "Right-Wing Parliamentary Discourse on Immigration in France." <u>Discourse & Society</u> **14**(3): 309-348.

Verba, S. and N. Nie (1972). <u>Participation in America: political democracy and social equality</u>. Chicago, University of Chicago Press.

Waring, M. (1999). <u>Counting for nothing: what men value and what women are worth 2nd edition</u>. Toronto, University of Toronto Press.

Wells, A. (2006, 24 May 2006). "UK Polling Report."   Retrieved 7 Apr 2011, from <u>http://ukpollingreport.co.uk/blog/archives/225</u>.

Wilson, D. (2005). The United Kingdom: an increasingly differentiated polity? <u>Comparing local governance: trends and transformations</u>. B. Denters and L. Rose. Basingstoke, Palgrave.

Wolfinger, R. E. and S. J. Rosenstone (1980). <u>Who votes?</u> New Haven, Yale University Press.