Just because they are "second order" doesn't mean you can put your feet up: Campaign activity in European Parliament elections

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Abstract

The “second-order” nature of European Parliament (EP) elections means that any study of election campaigning for the EP may seem pointless. Recent data from the 2006 MEP Survey provide an opportunity for a rethink. For, while it may well be the case that voters, media and parties are for the most part uninterested in EP elections, there is a fourth set of actors who, by definition, do have a vested interest in their outcomes – namely, the candidates themselves. This paper examines campaign activity and effort in EP elections to ask: what drives campaign effort on the part of candidates. The paper develops and tests a number of competing expectations about what drives MEP campaign activity, before concluding with a discussion about an important distinction to be made between campaign effort and campaign process and how institutional factors have a more significant role over the latter.

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The second-order nature of European Parliament elections (Reif and Schmitt 1980; Marsh 1998; Percival et al. 2007) means that any study of election campaigning for the European Parliament (EP) may seem pointless. If voters and the media do not take EP elections terribly seriously why should the parties themselves? The record of voter disengagement from EP elections was documented from the start of the period of direct election in 1979 by the ambitious study of the 1979 EP campaign (Blumler 1983; 1984; Blumler and Fox 1982). The dwindling rates of turnout in EP elections alongside a series of voter studies have underscored just how “second-order” these elections are. Indeed, low voter engagement underpins long running concerns about the very legitimacy of the European project (Blondel et al. 1998; Schmitt and Thomassen 1999). Given these patterns, it is no surprise that there has been little appetite to repeat the efforts of Blumler and his colleagues: apart from what are largely descriptive overviews (most recently, see Lodge 2005; Maier and Tenscher 2007), political science has tended to steer clear of this terrain.

Some recent data, however, provide an opportunity for a slight rethink. For, while it may well be the case that voters, media and parties are for the most part uninterested in EP elections, there is a fourth set of actors who, by definition, do have a vested interest in their outcomes – namely, the candidates themselves. For them, successful election to the

EP can mean many things. It may be an important step in a rising political career or a comfortable “winding down” to an already distinguished career. Membership of the European Parliament can also mean the opportunity to shape public policy for over 500 million citizens and the world’s largest economic bloc. For candidates, then, election to the EP may well be of far more than second order importance and, hence, they are likely to exert genuine effort in their efforts to win election. Candidates for the EP are thus caught between their own ambition and the yawning indifference of voters to their best efforts. In this paper we examine campaign activity and effort in EP elections to ask: what drives campaign effort on the part of candidates.

The paper proceeds in four main sections. In the first section we present some simple descriptive data of campaign effort from the most recent survey of Members of the European Parliament (MEPs). In the second section we develop some competing expectations about what drives MEP campaign activity that, in the third section, we test using the survey data. In the fourth section we argue that there is an important distinction to be made between campaign effort and campaign process. What we find is that overall levels of campaign effort are not clearly tied to the kinds of electoral system we see used, but that the process – and even the goals – of campaigning are tied to institutional effects. Looking at level of effort alone is a somewhat misleading indicator of the kinds of campaigns we see in the EP insofar as a behavioural understanding of electioneering is concerned. Thus, even though the EP may be a relatively unique institution (though, see Hix et al. 2007), a study of campaigning in EP elections does provide food for wider thought on the topic of campaigning and electioneering. While the terms electioneering and campaigning are typically used synonymously (e.g. Butler and Ranney 1992), this study suggests that we might want to make more finely grained conceptual distinctions, reserving the term “electioneering” for the kinds of acts that get people out to vote (speeches and so on) and using the term “campaigning” to refer to the strategy and purposes of parties at election time in setting the goals of a campaign.

1. Descriptive patterns

EP elections are widely regarded by analysts and voters as second order elections (Reif and Schmitt 1980; Marsh 1998; Percival et al. 2007). But for MEPs themselves the elections seem to be taken very seriously. In the 2006 MEP survey[1] over three-quarters (78%) responded that they had worked more than 30 hours a week on campaigning during the final weeks. MEPs – at least by self-report – worked very hard on their campaigns. Furthermore, there is also a fair amount of consensus on what the purpose of the campaign was: over half (56%) say that the main purpose of the campaign was to maximize the vote share for the party.

In what kinds of campaign activities did they engage? The survey asked MEPs about their engagement in 11 different campaign activities ranging from such events as door-to-door canvassing through to engaging in direct mail or telephone calling to web pages and web blogs. There are a number of ways of presenting the data. One way is simply to show the campaign activities that were, on average, ranked higher than others: i.e. on average, which campaign activities did MEPs engage in a lot as opposed to very little? With each act ranked from 1 (“a lot”) to 4 (“none”) it is possible to see which acts were the ones engaged in more fully by MEPs: the closer the average ranking is to 1 the more effort was spent on that act, the closer the average is to 4 the less effort. Table 1 presents the results.

[Table 1 about here]

Another way of looking at the amount of effort is to ask how many of these 11 acts candidates engaged in either “a lot” or “some”. As Table 2 shows on average MEPs engaged in between three and four campaign activities “a lot”, a few more (more than six) if we relax the standard of being engaged to include “some” as well as “a lot”.

[Table 2 about here]

In very general terms, these measures are all positively correlated: i.e. they trend together. In other words, the MEPs that did (not) engage in telephone canvassing also did (not) engage in door to door canvassing, did (not) engage in party meetings, and so on. Perhaps a more interesting relationship is one in which doing more of one activity is associated with doing less of another (an inverse relationship). There are some of these inverse relationships, but not many and they are not terribly informative. Those who engaged in one-on-one canvassing (via a telephone or door-to-door) were less likely to pay much attention to public meetings and press conferences. Similarly public meetings and press conferences were inversely related to fundraising.

By and large, campaign activities seemed to go hand in hand with each other: even in these second-order elections, campaigns are “all out” efforts in which MEPs spend a great deal of time on a range of campaign activities. A central question of interest, then, is whether we can understand variation in the campaign activities that did take place. We turn to answer this question in the next section.

2. Understanding why MEPs do the (campaign) things they do

Broadly speaking, we see the possibility for two sets of factors that may help explain how and why MEPs campaigned as they did. One set of factors is individual-level. That is, we expect MEP engagement in a campaign to be shaped largely by his or her individual tastes and ambitions. A second set of factors is institutional and associated particularly with electoral system and/or party incentives. We elaborate more specific hypotheses below, but for the moment it is worth locating these two sets of factors against the wider background of EP elections.

We know that EP elections are “second order” for voters and the media. Given that the political stakes are, at least relatively speaking, quite low in EP elections we might expect the motives and ambitions of the individual MEP to dominate explanations of campaign effort. After all, if the elections are relatively inconsequential – even after twenty five years of expansion of powers of the EP since the original Reif and Schmitt argument – then it would seem reasonable to expect that MEP campaign effort will be idiosyncratic rather than systematic. For example, if it is the case that, on the whole, the EP elections do not matter much to party leaderships (particularly of the major, established parties), then there is little reason for them to exert party discipline or expend a great deal of effort at the national level in trying to campaign. The parties will be better off preserving their energy for the other, more serious, contest – namely, the national election campaign.

Another reason why we might expect individual-level factors to be more prominent is because of the apparent shift towards greater institutional uniformity in the electoral arrangements surrounding a European Parliament election. In 2002, after a debate lasting just under half a century, the EU finally managed to pass legislation adopting uniform electoral procedures for EP elections.[2] The consequence of these discussions was that that EP elections had to be conducted according to proportional representation rules. In 2004 all of the (then) 25 member states operated PR elections for the European Parliament race.[3] There would therefore seem to be very little scope for the kinds of variation seen in earlier years where differences in campaign effort could be traced to differences in electoral system ranging between the two extremes of districted systems (such as single member plurality) and proportional representation.

So while some MEPs may very well work hard, and treat campaigns as of the highest priority, the reasons for doing so may be well grounded in idiosyncratic interests and ambitions rather than systematic political explanations. In short, variations in campaign activity and effort may well be tied to individual MEP tastes rather than anything else.

But we should not be too quick to dismiss institutional arguments. Elections – especially second-order ones – may not matter to voters but they surely matter to candidates. An election is the mechanism that sorts winners from losers; it decides whether an MEP stays in office or has to seek employment elsewhere. Given how important an EP election is to MEPs we should see them respond to the incentives presented to them by the electoral and party systems in which they work. Furthermore, previous work has shown how institutional features can shape the representative behaviour of MEPs (Bowler and Farrell 1993; Farrell and Scully 2007), so we might well expect similar influences over MEPs' campaign behaviour.[4]

We can advance more concrete hypotheses concerning patterns in campaign activity. Since we expect individual level factors to predominate we begin by elaborating on the kinds of factors we may see. One starting point is to suggest that newcomers to the EP will be more active than others. It may be stretching things a little far to think of a generational or "life cycle" pattern of political campaigning at work, but newcomers may have yet to learn that the elections are second-order, and/or feel they have something to prove.

In a similarly sociological vein we may expect that the personal career ambitions of MEPs will shape how much effort they are willing to make. Those MEPs who expect to retire or exit from politics in the near future may be inclined to devote less attention to campaigning than others, especially those who wish to remain in the EP. Career background may also influence how much effort one is willing to make. Those who come from non-elected backgrounds (such as those who were officials and civil servants in a previous career) may not be so familiar with – nor see the advantage to – campaigning effort and so make less effort than those who were involved in politics. An exception to this may be those MEPs who were prominent within their own national polities: ex-Ministers might reasonably believe that they have "served their time" and so deserve to take it easy for a while. The second-order elections, coupled with political ambition, can sap campaigning energy. An *Economist* article in the run up to the 2004 elections noted that the EP was the graveyard of political ambitions and that the ambitious often left the EP to pursue careers elsewhere.[5]

Within the broad category of institutional factors we can consider two sorts of effects: those that relate to the electoral system and those that relate to the party. It may well be the case that variations in electoral procedures across the EU have declined in recent years and that electoral system effects have attenuated; nevertheless, considerable variation still exists (Farrell and Scully 2007: ch. 4). The rules regarding uniform electoral procedures for European Parliament elections may dictate a PR system, but member states are still free to choose between list and single transferable vote (STV) elections, and in the former case between national and regional lists and over the degree to which voters can express preferences for individual candidates on the list. In short, and in terms of the two electoral system features that matter to the campaign process, there continues to be a lot of variation in both district magnitude and ballot structure design – as shown in Table 3 and Figure 1.

[Table 3 and Figure 1 about here]

We know from prior work that ballot structure and district magnitude can influence the behaviour of politicians   Figure 1 presents a typology of ballot structure design that distinguishes between open systems – such as STV, and the open list systems – closed list systems, and an interim category of ordered systems. Using this categorization we can speculate over which systems provide greater scope than others for a "personal vote" for election candidates. Following previous work on electoral system effects (Carey and Shugart 1995; Bowler Farrell 1993) we would expect the more open systems to have a stronger tie between campaign effort and vote share and, hence, promote more active campaigning.

The main differences should be seen between the open systems and the closed systems with the ordered systems looking more like the closed systems in actual practice, either in terms of the number of activities engaged in or the effort spent (or both). We may also see differences in the goals of the campaign: in more closed systems we should expect to see MEPs giving greater priority to maximizing party vote share, while in open systems we should see MEPs care more about maximizing their own vote share. Over and above the amount of effort involved, what MEPs see the campaign being about will vary by electoral system.

Relations within the party may also impact on campaign activity. If an MEP is somewhat at odds with his or her party group they are more likely to strike a lone figure: candidates may be more likely to work harder for a party with which they agree than one they are in disagreement with.

We may also see a number of relationships that occupy a somewhat uneasy middle ground between individual level and institutional level factors. For instance, government parties – that is, parties in government in their own country – may realise that EP elections often operate as something of a referendum on their record and try to work hard to minimize the damage. Finally, we may note the likelihood of a number of country-specific factors. In the 2004 elections a number of countries were participating for the first time as new member states of the EU. With only one or two exceptions – notably Malta – these were also countries with very recent democratic experience. It may be the case that these recent entrants were keener to campaign than the more established members of the EU. Similarly, nations vary in their take up of and access to the web.

One set of figures report the percentage penetration (i.e. the percentage of population who use the web) ranging from a high of 75% in Sweden to a low of 30% in Hungary.[6]

Finally we note that some nations do insist that their citizens vote. A growing body of work is considering the importance of compulsory voting especially in relation to voters themselves (see especially Birch forthcoming).[7] In this context we have competing expectations. On the one hand, since all voters will be voting, candidates will know they have to appeal to more than a group of loyalists and so work much harder. On the other hand, since all voters will turnout anyway then there is no need for Get Out the Vote (GOTV) efforts and hence candidates are free to concentrate on other matters.

3. Some results

Table 4 reports two models that take as their dependent variable the responses displayed in Tables 1 and 2. In the first column we present a Poisson count model of the number of activities MEPs responded that they engaged in “a lot” or “some”. In the second column we present a standard regression model of the average intensity of campaign effort. This measure is taken from Table 1 – for ease of interpretation the scale has been reversed so that here high values on the dependent variable represent more effort paid to the campaign and so the signs of the coefficients in both columns should run in the same direction (the factors that are associated with more intense campaigns should also help predict how many different kinds of campaign efforts are made). As independent variables of systemic effects we include two measures of the ballot structure categorization set out in Figure 1 (the omitted category is the “open” systems), as well as a measure of district magnitude. We also include a number of measures of personal ambition and experience to assess individual level factors that may shape campaign effort. In addition, we include a series of measures that occupy a middle ground between individual and systemic factors. These are a measure of the gap between the MEP and where s/he sees the EP party group on the left/right scale (those MEPS “on the outs” presumably being less willing to make much of an effort[8]) and a measure of whether the MEP’s national party was in the national government at the time (government parties being mindful of the referendum nature of EP elections prod their MEP to work hard). We also include length of time in the chamber and whether the MEP was from a country holding its first EP election – in both instances we expect the “newcomers” to be keener on working hard at the election. Finally we include a measure of size of member state delegation: smaller delegations either being more competitive and/or being associated with small nations where more campaign effort would be appropriate.

[Table 4 about here]

Generally speaking the models are somewhat disappointing and show a large range of “non-effects”. While some of the predicted effects are seen – for instance, we find that newer MEPs are more likely to engage in campaign effort, while MEPs at odds with their party group are less likely to engage in campaign effort – the system level effects are not present. Thus, the differences across this set of electoral systems in terms of overall effort of campaign seem to be unimportant and statistically insignificant.

There are a number of possible responses to this “non” finding. One is that the lack of results simply reflects the diminished variety in the range of electoral systems at work in the EP. Farrell and Scully (2007) show that variation persists, but once we take out single member plurality (SMP) systems then the major source of variation in electoral system effects has gone. It could well be the case that out understanding of electoral systems ultimately is anchored by comparisons between SMP and list PR. By consistently comparing two such different systems the literature on electoral systems may give a misleading picture of how thoroughgoing and robust electoral system differences are in actual practice. The lack of results may therefore simply reflect an absence of the main source of electoral system variation that more usually exists.

That said, recent work on campaigning by Karp and Banducci (2007; also Karp, Banducci and Bowler 2007) shows that, in general, levels of campaign effort in PR systems are generally higher than the previous “conventional wisdom” on the topic supposes. Voters report quite high levels of party contact even in PR systems. Furthermore, while it is the case that in marginal seats in districted systems like SMP we see very high levels of campaign effort, this is offset by very low levels of effort in safe seats. This recent work, then, is consistent with our findings in Table 4 in suggesting there are only minor differences in levels of campaign effort across electoral systems, in which case the patterns – or, more accurately, the lack of patterns – shown in Table 4 do not simply reflect the absence of SMP systems from the set of electoral systems in use for EP elections. Nevertheless Table 4 does suggest one effect: compulsory voting does seem to result in overall lower campaign effort. For both columns of Table 4 the parameter is negatively signed and is statistically significant for the case of campaign activities (i.e. compulsory voting is associated with fewer kinds of campaign effort) and borderline significant for the case of intensity.

4. Campaign efforts and campaign goals

The focus on campaign effort is entirely consistent with the emphasis within political science upon campaigns as a mobilizing effort. It is usual, for example, to see campaign effort proxied by spending (more spending = more effort) and, further, that mobilization efforts are tied to electoral incentives such as marginality. Thus there exists an extensive literature that ties electoral incentives to campaign effort (cf. Farrell and Schmitt-Beck 2002). Our findings at this juncture are somewhat consistent with that general literature. We should find minimal effects for institutional factors when institutional variation is low which implies, perhaps, that EP elections are a valid example of a “negative finding”: in short, we should not expect to see effects and, sure enough, we do not find any.

But campaign “effort” measures only one facet of campaigning. There are good theoretical and practical reasons to focus upon campaign effort in studies of elections and electioneering. Campaign effort is a valid and useful construct. Nevertheless, it does cast campaigns and campaigning as something of a “black box” – at least insofar as the behavioural as opposed to the conceptual study of campaigning is concerned – in which the central defining feature of a campaign is the measure of effort. But the campaign itself also has a number of other features – notably the goals of the campaign and its organization. Even as we find narrowing differences in terms of overall levels of campaign effort we may well find increasing differences in campaign process and in campaign goals. Furthermore, unlike differences in effort there is reason to think that these kinds of differences should be much more subject to systematic (as opposed to individual level) factors. Some electoral systems will focus on national level performance. In which case we are likely to see more attention paid to the campaign by national level authorities and, also, that the goal of the campaign will be to maximise the vote share of the national party rather than the individual candidate. By contrast, in systems that allow voters more choice over candidates we are likely to see candidates express more concern about the goals of the campaign being to produce vote shares for themselves (i.e. an incentive to cultivate a personal vote) and to be less attuned to national party level campaign guidance.

We should expect to see few, if any differences, in campaign goals (that is, whether the goal is to cultivate votes for the party or vote for the individual) that are due to individual level factors. Furthermore, while we may expect to see compulsory voting have an impact on campaign effort it should have no impact on campaign goals. That is, if we were to estimate roughly similar models to the ones presented in Table 4 in terms of independent variables but in which the dependent variables assess the process of campaigning (and not simply the effort) we would find quite different results. More to the point, we would find stronger evidence of institutional and electoral system effects.

[Tables 5 and 6 about here]

The evidence suggests that – in particular contrast to "open" systems – we do in fact see these trends. Tables 5 and 6 report the simple descriptive bivariate patterns that show these effects. The inference that may plainly be drawn on the basis of Tables 5 and 6 is that there is a strong association between the electoral system and the process of campaigning. These effects hold up in multivariate models that have the same structure as Table 4 (the multinomial logit models that show this are displayed in the appendix), but the simple bivariate patterns are strong and striking enough to warrant display here.

5. Conclusion

Our findings help us to draw several conclusions relating to the study of electioneering. Our first conclusion is that there are limits to the impact of electoral systems on campaign effort. One reading of the literature on electoral systems is that it gives the impression that everything and anything at election time is directly and causally attributable to the electoral system itself. A lot of attention has therefore been paid to differences across electoral systems. One of the conclusions we draw from this analysis is that it would seem that there is an underlying similarity to campaigning regardless of electoral system: winning any election takes effort. A straightforward conjecture would be that MEPs should work harder if the campaign is about their personal vote maximization rather than maximizing votes for the party. But when, for example, we included measures of the goals of campaigning into the models of campaign effort we found no statistically significant effect (although the parameter was correctly signed).

Second, and despite growing similarities in the European Parliament electoral systems of member states, there are, nevertheless, effects on electioneering that are due to the electoral system. If the previous point suggested we should not make too much of electoral system effects our second point is that we should not make too little of them either. But a demonstration of electoral system effects does depend upon making a distinction between campaign effort and campaign goals. The patterns in Tables 5 and 6 suggest that what is meant by “the campaign” does differ across systems, at least so far as the candidates themselves are concerned. It is important to note that the differences are revealed more in the way in which campaigns are conducted and the goals of the campaign rather than in levels and type of campaign effort *per se*.

Thirdly, and most generally, this study helps to tease open some of the black box of electioneering, at least with regard to the behavioural approach to electioneering. High levels of campaign effort are consistent with a range of different goals and so looking at levels of campaign effort does not allow us to discriminate among the purposes of effort. There is room for a conceptual distinction between campaign effort and campaign goals. Thus an emphasis on the difference between “high” and “low” effort when it comes to electioneering may be an important conceptual difference but may also have some limitations in a behavioural sense because generally speaking campaigning effort is quite high. On the other hand, there is room for other distinctions to be more consequential. Most notably those concerning the purpose of the campaign effort appear important. While the terms electioneering and campaigning are typically used synonymously, this study suggests that we might want to make a more fine grained conceptual distinction, reserving the term “electioneering” for the kinds of acts that get people out to vote (speeches and so on) and using the term “campaigning” to refer to the strategy and purposes of parties at election time with regard to campaign goals (e.g. maximizing party as opposed to individual vote share) and who decides them. One of the values, then, of the EP and, indeed, of the growing similarity in institutional design across the EU’s member states is that it allows us to focus more sharply on the limits and scope of the behavioural consequences of institutions. Even if EP elections are second order for voters and pundits they are definitely not for MEPs themselves. Perhaps, too, EP elections may not entirely be second order for the study of electioneering, either.

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Table 1: Average rank of Campaign Activities by Effort

	N	*Mean Rank*	*Std. Dev.*
Public meetings	196	1.32	0.62
Media relations	195	1.46	0.67
Party meetings	190	1.51	0.75
Press conferences	190	1.81	0.80
Maintaining a campaign website	191	2.02	1.07
Organising direct mailing	191	2.13	0.98
Door-to-door canvassing	190	2.56	1.13
Direct email	183	2.64	1.08
Fundraising	176	2.94	1.00
Telephone canvassing	188	2.97	1.03
Weblogs (“blogs”)	173	3.48	0.94

1=a lot, 2=some, 3=very little, 4=none

Source: 2006 MEP Survey

Table 2: Number of campaign activities engaged in by MEPs

Number of campaign activities	*"A lot"*		*"A lot" or "some"*	
	N	*%*	*N*	*%*
0	12	6.0	1	0.5
1	15	7.5	1	0.5
2	34	17.0	4	2.0
3	34	17.0	7	3.5
4	43	21.6	19	9.5
5	27	13.5	32	16.0
6	16	8.0	41	20.6
7	10	5.0	32	16.0
8	5	2.5	27	13.5
9	2	1.0	18	9.0
10	1	0.5	13	6.5
11	0	0.0	4	2.0
Average	3.64		6.47	

Source: 2006 MEP Survey

Table 3: The European Parliament's Electoral Systems, 2004

	No. MEPs	Electoral formula	Ballot structure	No. of districts	Mean M
Austria	18	d'Hondt	Ordered[a]; single vote	1	18
Belgium	24	d'Hondt	Ordered; multi-vote[b]	3	8.0
Britain	75	d'Hondt	Closed; single vote	11	6.8
Cyprus	6	Hare	Ordered; multi-vote	1	6
Czech Rep.	24	d'Hondt	Ordered; multi-vote	1	24
Denmark	14	d'Hondt	Open; single vote	1	14
Estonia	6	d'Hondt	Open; single vote	1	6
Finland	14	d'Hondt	Open; single vote	1	14
France	78	Hare/d'Hondt	Closed; single vote	8	9.8
Germany	99	Hare-Niemeyer	Closed; single vote	1 [c]	99
Greece	24	Largest remainder-Droop	Closed; single vote	1	24
Hungary	24	d'Hondt	Closed; single vote	1	24
Ireland	13	STV-Droop	Open; multi-vote	4	3.3
Italy	78	Hare	Open; multi-vote	1 [d]	78
Latvia	9	St. Laguë	Ordered; multi-vote	1	9
Lithuania	13	Hare	Open; multi-vote[e]	1	13
Luxembourg	6	d'Hondt	Open; multi vote	1	6
Malta	5	STV-Droop	Open; multi vote	1	5
Netherlands	27	Hare/d'Hondt	Ordered; single vote	1	27
N. Ireland	3	STV-Droop	Open; multi vote	1	3
Poland	54	d'Hondt[f]	Closed; single vote	1 [f]	54
Portugal	24	d'Hondt	Closed; single vote	1	24
Slovak Rep.	14	Largest remainder-Droop	Ordered; single vote	1	14
Slovenia	7	d'Hondt	Ordered; single vote	1	7
Spain	54	d'Hondt	Closed; single vote	1	54
Sweden	19	Modified St. Laguë	Ordered; single vote	1	19

Notes:

a In ordered list systems, the rules vary regarding the proportion of “personal votes” a candidate requires in order to win a seat regardless of where s/he is ranked. Information is patchy, but the rules we are aware of are as follows: Austria, 7%; Belgium, d’Hondt quota of the party vote; Czech Republic 5%; Netherlands, 10%; Sweden 5%.

b Multi-vote implies that voters can express a vote/preference for more than one candidate.

c Parties can balance lists to ensure a fair regional representation. This option tends to be used by CDU and CSU.

d In this table, Italy is treated as having one national constituency (mean M = 78) reflecting the fact that the seat allocation is based on national votes. However, for the purpose of examining MEPs’ representative roles, it should be noted that Italy is divided into five regions (mean M = 15.6).

e Parties can opt to have closed lists, an option used by the Labour Party. All other parties operated open lists.

f Available sources are unclear, but it seems that the seats are allocated nationally using d’Hondt and are then filled within each of the 13 regions (using Hare-Niemeyer).

Source: Farrell and Scully (2007).

Table 4: Modelling the responses of Table 1 and 2

	(1) *Number of activities (Poisson model)*	*(2)* *Intensity of campaign (OLS)*
Systemic factors		
Ordered electoral system	-0.025	-0.123
	(0.26)	(1.04)
Closed electoral system	0.063	-0.041
	(0.67)	(0.35)
District Magnitude	-0.002	-0.001
	(1.28)	(0.69)
Individual level factors		
Ex official	-0.032	-0.091
	(0.41)	(0.93)
Will retire in next 10 years	-0.047	0.071
	(0.74)	(0.90)
Ex-government member	0.013	-0.040
	(0.13)	(0.34)
When first become an MEP	0.006	0.023**
	(1.03)	(3.04)
Mixed factors		
Policy gap	-0.037	-0.084*
	(1.32)	(2.42)
Size	-0.001	-0.000
	(0.41)	(0.15)
Government party	0.095	0.181*
	(1.33)	(2.00)
New state	-0.177*	-0.290**
	(2.05)	(2.69)
“Extreme” party	-0.004	0.017
	(0.15)	(0.47)
Compulsory voting	-0.326*	-0.256
	(2.32)	(1.61)
Constant	1.877**	1.444**
	(9.73)	(6.12)
Observations	188	188
R-squared		0.14
Pseudo-R2	0.01	

Coding

Government party: 1= if national party in national government, 0= not
Size = Number of MEPs in national delegation
New State = Member state holding first EP elections
Policy gap = gap between self-reported Left right position and that of EP group
“Extreme” party = placement of national party on Left-right scale – folded (ie. Far left and far right have same code)
ex-official, will retire within 10 years, ex minister in national government all are dummy measures
Joining EP is date of entry into EP
Compulsory voting (enforced) =1 if MEP from Belgium, Cyprus, Greece or Luxembourg

Table 5: Most important goal of the campaign

In which order of importance would you place these campaign objectives?

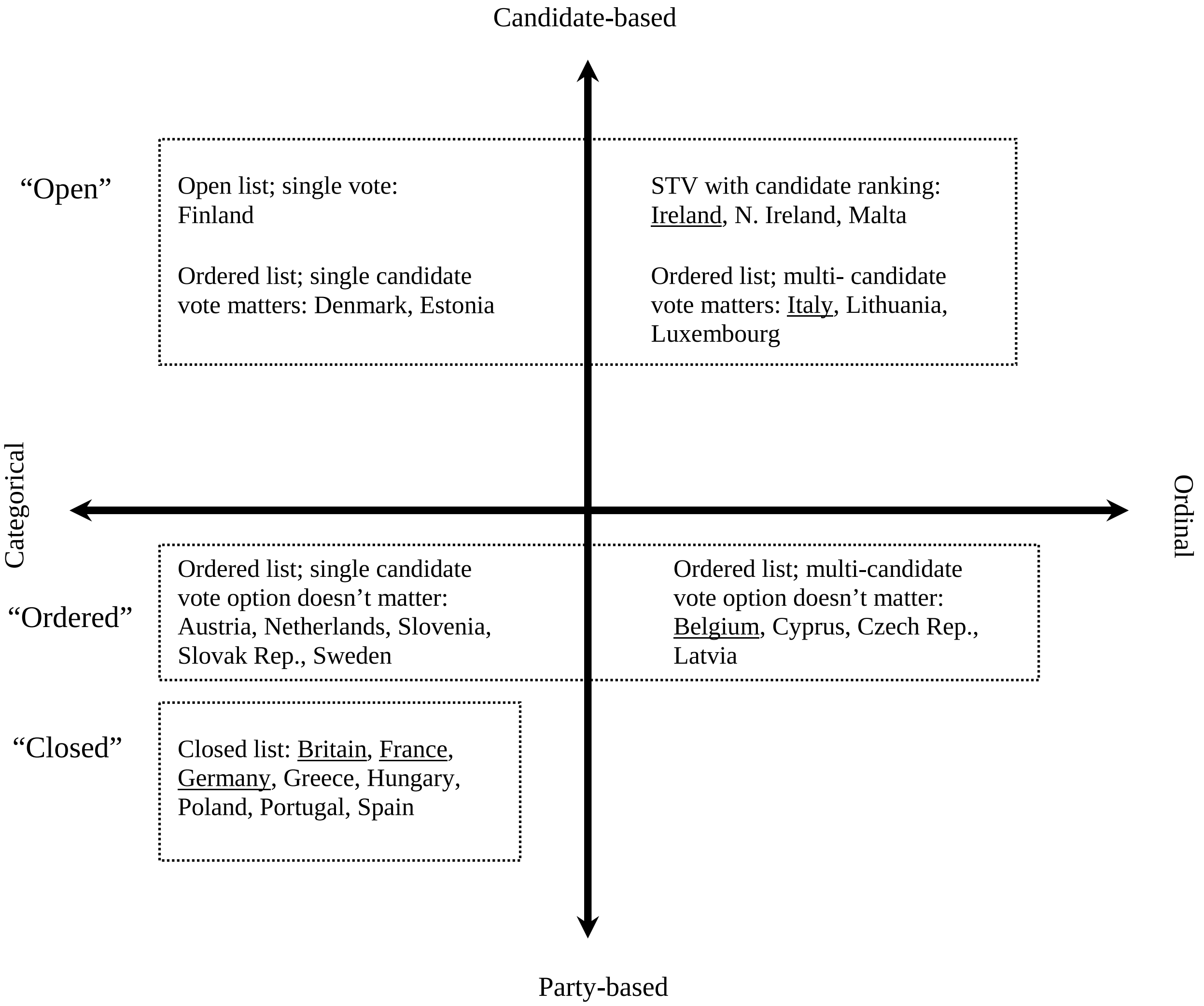
	Open	*Ordered*	*Closed*	*Total*
Maximising voter turnout	13 31.71	10 22.22	32 29.63	55 28.35
Maximising the vote for your party	15 36.59	26 57.78	68 62.96	109 56.19
Maximising your personally	12 29.27	9 20.00	8 7.41	29 14.95
Preventing another party from getting votes	1 2.44	0 0.00	0 0.00	1 0.52
Total	41 100.00	45 100.00	108 100.00	194

Table 6: Role of the Party headquarters

How much contact did you have with your party's campaign headquarters?

	Open	*Ordered*	*Closed*	*Total*
Daily contact	20 46.51	33 71.74	84 77.06	137 69.19
Weekly contact	15 34.88	11 23.91	19 17.43	45 22.73
Little or no contact	3 6.98	2 4.35	5 4.59	10 5.05
No party campaign headquarters	5 11.63	0 0.00	1 0.92	6 3.03
Total	43 100.00	46 100.00	109 100.00	198 100.00

Figure 1: Variations in the Ballot Structures used for European Parliament Elections in 2004


Candidate-based
Party-based
Categorical
Ordinal
"Open"
"Ordered"
"Closed"
Open list; single vote: Finland
Ordered list; single candidate vote matters: Denmark, Estonia
STV with candidate ranking: Ireland, N. Ireland, Malta
Ordered list; multi- candidate vote matters: Italy, Lithuania, Luxembourg
Ordered list; single candidate vote option doesn't matter: Austria, Netherlands, Slovenia, Slovak Rep., Sweden
Ordered list; multi-candidate vote option doesn't matter: Belgium, Cyprus, Czech Rep., Latvia
Closed list: Britain, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Poland, Portugal, Spain

Note: Regional list cases are underlined, including Italy and Germany whose MEPs are regionally-anchored.

Source: Farrell and Scully (2007)

Appendix 1: Frequency of member states by type of electoral system

member state	*open*	*ordered*	*closed*	*Total*
Austria	0	5	0	5
Belgium	0	7	0	7
Cyprus	0	1	0	1
Czech Republic	0	8	0	8
Denmark	5	0	0	5
Estonia	0	0	3	3
Finland	5	0	0	5
France	0	0	17	17
Germany	0	0	26	26
Greece	0	0	2	2
Hungary	0	0	3	3
Ireland	5	0	0	5
Italy	17	0	0	17
Latvia	0	4	0	4
Lithuania	0	5	0	5
Luxembourg	2	0	0	2
Malta	1	0	0	1
Netherlands	0	6	0	6
Poland	0	0	18	18
Portugal	0	0	7	7
Slovakia	0	2	0	2
Slovenia	0	4	0	4
Spain	0	0	8	8
Sweden	0	9	0	9
UK	0	0	29	29
Total	35	51	113	199

Note: Electoral system categorization based on Figure 1.

Appendix 2: Purpose of the Campaign: MNL estimates Base category "OPEN" Systems

	(1) *Maximising voter turnout general*	*(2)* *Maximising your personal vote*
Systemic factors		
Ordered electoral system	-1.038+	-1.713*
	(1.66)	(2.39)
Closed electoral system	-0.128	-1.887*
	(0.21)	(2.49)
District Magnitude	-0.150	0.436
	(0.30)	(0.65)
Individual level factors		
Ex official	0.006	0.048
	(0.77)	(1.43)
Will retire in next 10 years	0.542	-0.021
	(1.37)	(0.04)
Ex-government member	-1.162+	-2.123*
	(1.83)	(2.46)
When first become an MEP	-0.040	0.114
	(1.11)	(1.51)
Mixed factors		
Policy gap	-0.123	0.130
	(0.65)	(0.57)
Size	-0.025*	-0.053
	(2.02)	(1.51)
Government party	0.462	0.901
	(1.05)	(1.42)
New Member state	0.441	1.122+
	(0.81)	(1.67)
"Extreme" party	0.144	-0.706*
	(0.80)	(2.54)
Compulsory voting	-0.888	0.552
	(1.01)	(0.54)
Constant	1.280	-1.656
	(1.10)	(0.80)
Observations	185	185

Absolute value of z statistics in parentheses
+ significant at 10%; * significant at 5%; ** significant at 1%

Coding (same as for Table 4)

Endnotes

[1] The 2006 MEP survey was administered via the Internet in spring 2006. The overall response rate was 37.2%, with a good spread across member states and party groups. For details, see Farrell and Scully (2007: 210-11); http://www.lse.ac.uk/collections/EPRG/survey.htm.

[2] One event more than any other that probably helped to break the log-jam was the decision to shift from single member plurality to regional list for electing British MEPs in 1999.

[3] Of course, given that Northern Ireland continues to use a different electoral system (STV) for EP elections from the rest of the UK (which now uses regional list), this means that we actually have 26 different "member state" cases to contend with in the analysis.

[4] Before moving on to advance some more specific hypotheses we should note one common reaction to survey results which show that – by self-report – MEPs work extremely hard at election time. The cynic might argue that they would say that wouldn't they? In second-order elections where little is at stake, claims of working over 30 hours a week on a range of campaign activities might have to be taken with a very large pinch of salt. However, if MEPs simply misrepresented how much effort they made we would expect them all to put the maximum value on each survey response. But they do not. There is variation in the responses, and so we are still left with trying to explain that variation. Furthermore, to the extent that there are systematic patterns in those responses (whether due to individual or institutional factors) we can say that the responses do not represent simple exaggeration by MEPs in response to a survey.

[5] "Free the Strasbourg 626; Why ambitious young politicians are leaving the EP", *The Economist*, February 5 2004.

[6] See http://www.internetworldstats.com/stats9.htm#eu.

[7] This measure includes Belgium, Cyprus, Greece and Luxembourg but excludes Italy on the grounds that compulsory voting there is not enforced.

[8] This measure is the absolute difference of the gap between where the MEP places him/herself on the left/right scale and where they place the party group.