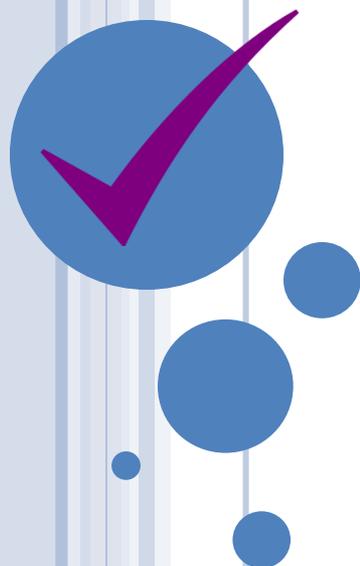


ELECTORAL BEHAVIOUR IN EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT ELECTIONS

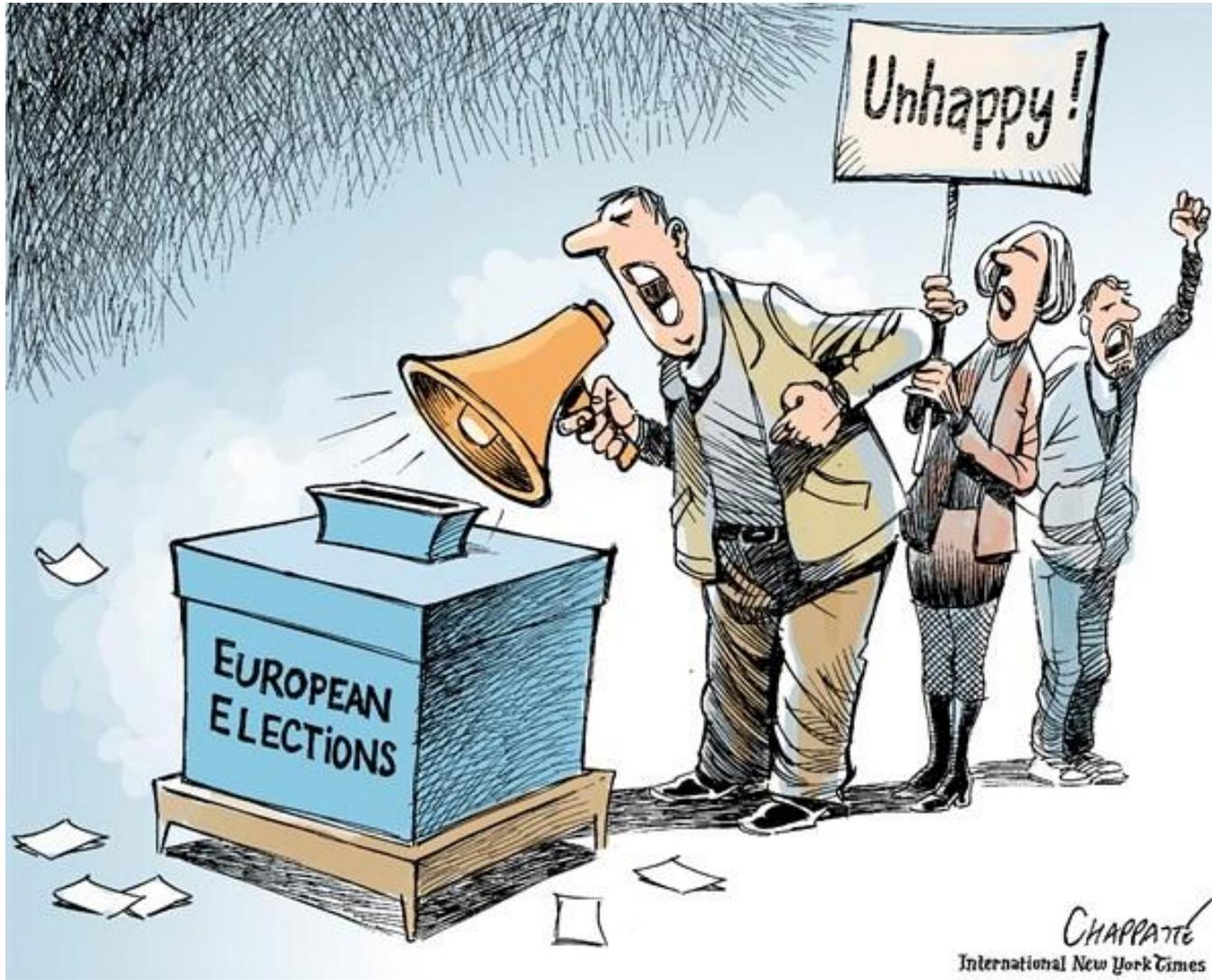


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STUDYING EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT ELECTIONS



RESEARCH & EUROBAROMETER DATA

- 40 years of academic research on European Parliament elections
- Eurobarometer (EB): an invaluable source of cross-national, cross-temporal data
 - EP EB provides high quality representative post-electoral surveys
 - Collaboration in EP 2014 with an additional “European Election Studies” module
 - Allows researchers to study the determinants of public opinion and electoral behaviour

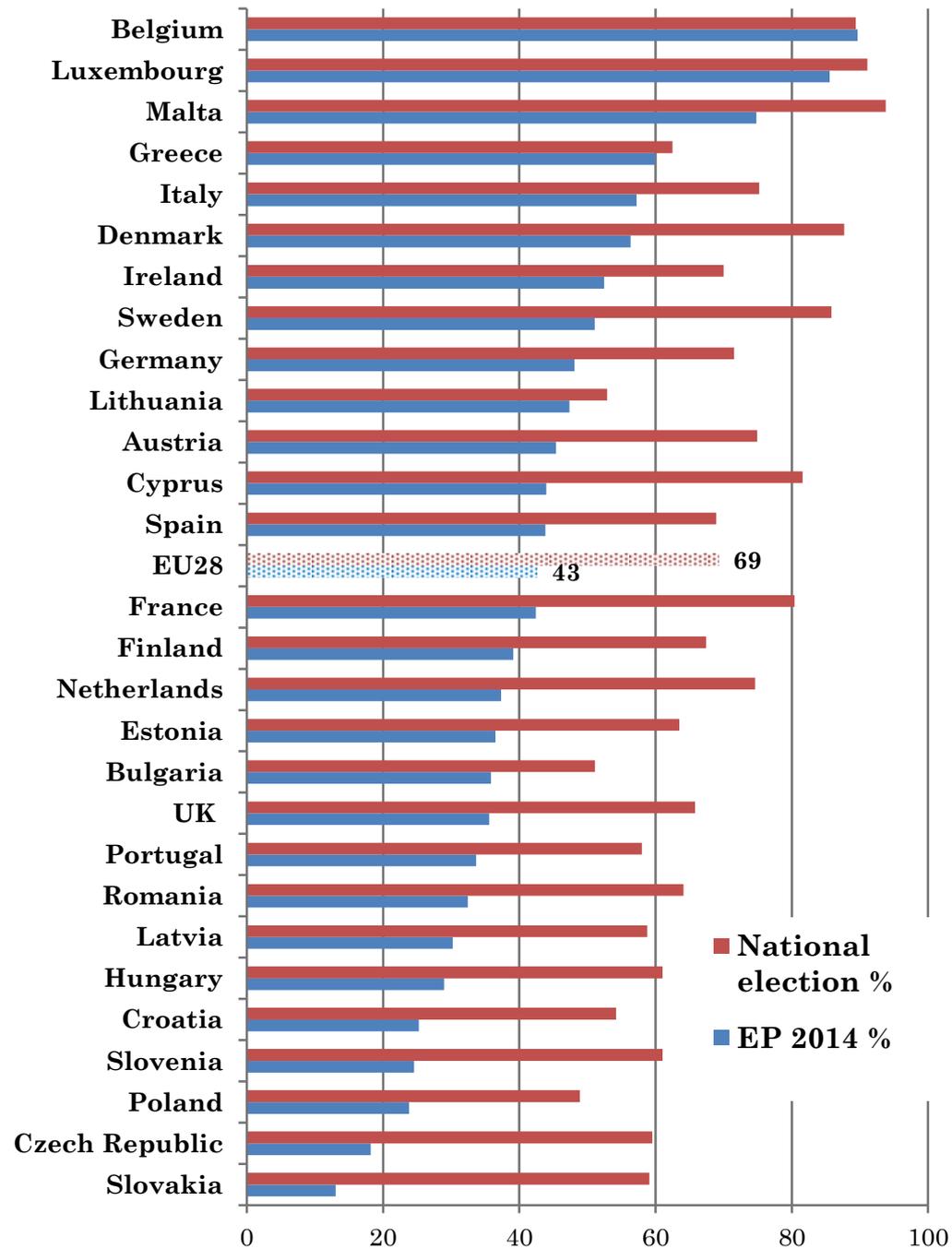


WHAT HAVE WE LEARNED?

- European Parliament elections are ‘second order national elections’
 - Low salience and low turnout
 - Vote choices based on domestic concerns rather than European politics
 - Defection from governing parties
- But things are changing
 - Attitudes towards Europe have become more salient to vote choices



○ Turnout in EP and national elections

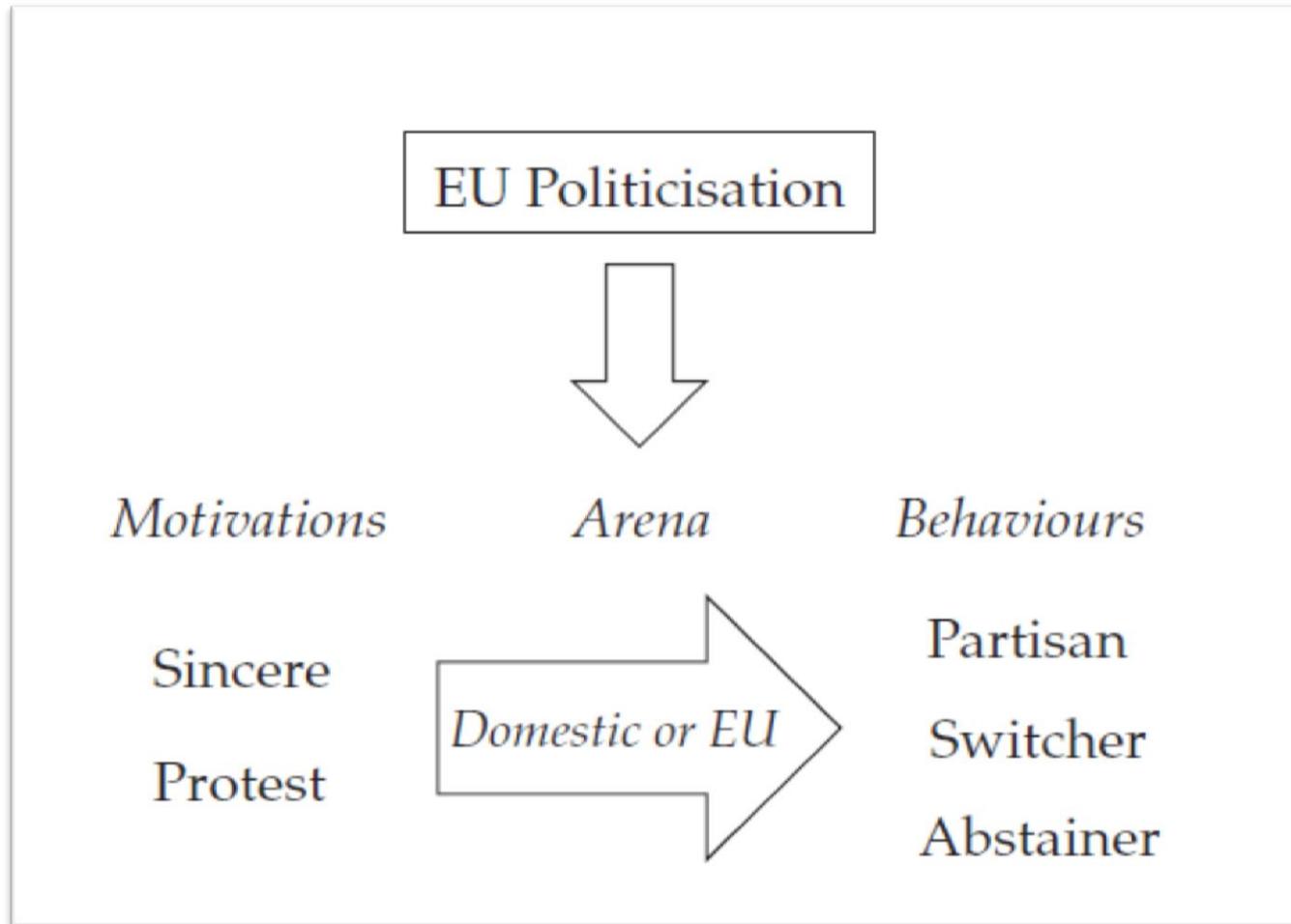


WHO SHOWS UP? WHO STAYS AT HOME?

- Turnout higher among older citizens, better-educated citizens, partisans
 - Similar to national elections
 - But EP election mainly mobilize “habitual voters”
- Euroscepticism/ EU support is not a stable predictor of turnout
- A great deal of national variation
 - Electoral cycle and compulsory voting effects
 - Also some campaign effects e.g. more exposure to Spitzenkandidaten had a small positive effect



WHAT MOTIVATES VOTERS?



WHAT MOTIVATES VOTERS?

○ Policy motivations

- Left-right ideology/ partisanship
- EU attitudes

➔ Voters are generally more Eurosceptic than governments, so Eurosceptic parties benefit in EP elections

○ Protest voting

- Punishing the government for poor performance
- Voting against “The Establishment” (including the EU) in low-salience elections

➔ Opposition parties generally perform better in EP elections, especially those on the fringes

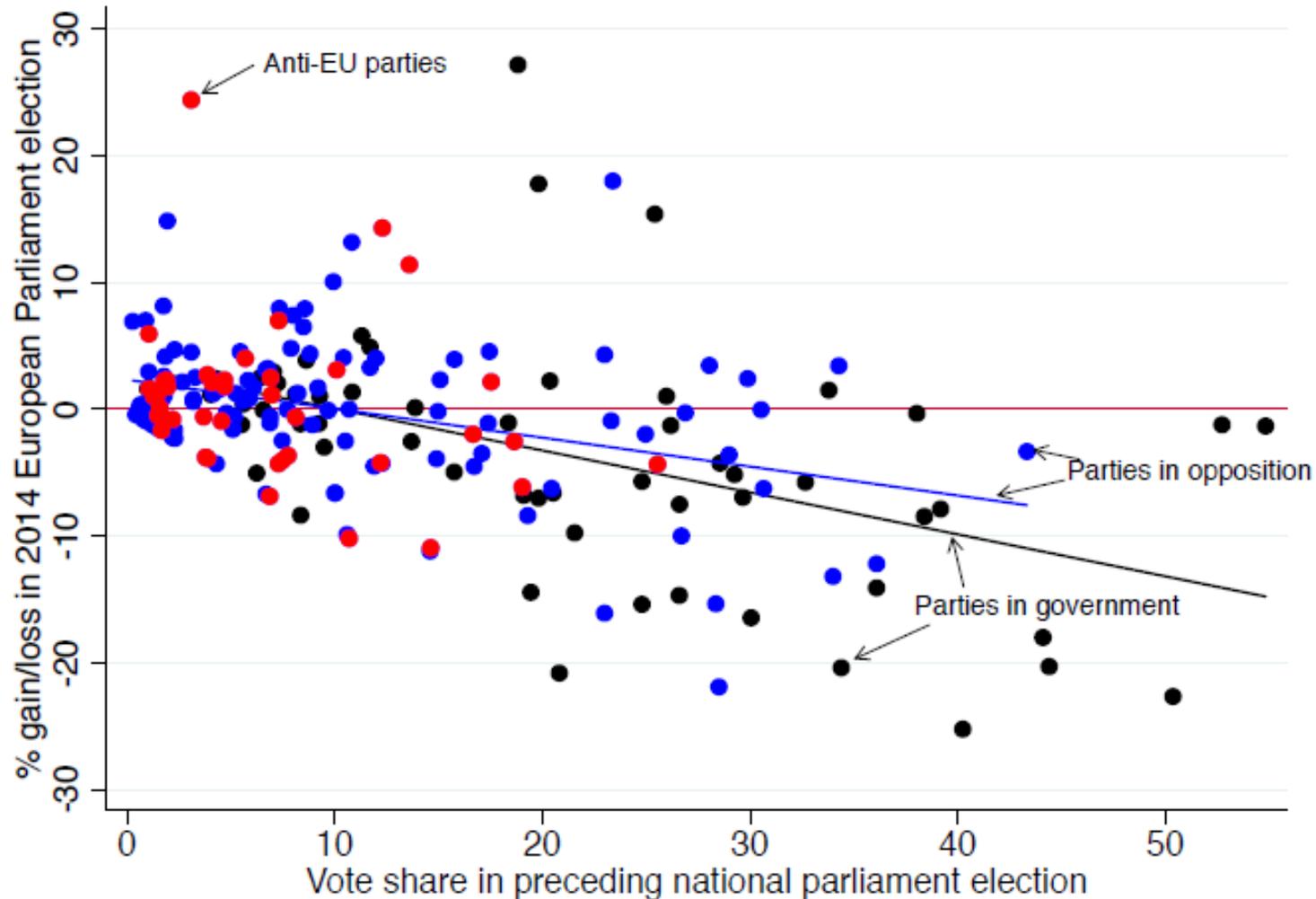


NATIONAL CONTEXT

- EP campaigns are fought nationally – and this shapes vote choices
 - How politicized is the EU nationally?
 - How popular is the government?
 - Are populist Eurosceptic parties the main opposition to the government?
- Feedback loop: EP elections ➡ national politics
 - Voting patterns in EP elections spill over to national elections, and increase the national vote shares of smaller, more Eurosceptic parties



WHO ARE THE WINNERS AND LOSERS?



WILL 2019 BE DIFFERENT?

- European Parliament more powerful/ EU more salient to voters
- Yet, challenges remain
 - Declining turnout
 - Greater EU politicization often benefit Eurosceptic parties
 - Spitzenkandidaten:
 - Limited awareness among voters
 - Low clarity of responsibility / lack of a European “government”
 - Lack of genuine primaries to select candidates/generate interest
 - Engagement of national parties/ media outlets is crucial
 - Competition reflecting real choices on issues people care about



- For more academic research on European Parliament elections see:

<http://europeanelectionstudies.net/>



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- Thank you for your attention!

