

**The Second-Order Election Model in an Enlarged Europe**

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## **The Second-Order Election Model in an Enlarged Europe**

On 1 May 2004, the European Union (EU) welcomed its new member states from Central and Eastern Europe. This paper considers to what extent one of the most widely tested and supported theories of voting behavior in Western Europe, the second-order election model, applies in the enlarged EU. We test the model using election data from the new member states and find that voters do not cast protest votes against their incumbent national governments in second-order elections, that is, elections where voters believe little to be at stake. This finding contradicts one of the model's basic propositions and runs counter to the empirical reality in the old member states, with potentially significant implications for inter- and intra-institutional politics in the EU.

Key words: Elections, enlargement, European Parliament, institutional relations, voting behavior.