



European University Institute

Robert Schuman Centre for Advanced Studies



Internet voting in Europe – some new insights

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My talk

- Background to internet voting in Europe
- Recent results from Estonia
- New issues
- Relevance for Canada

Background to internet voting in Europe

- Pro-internet-voting policies since the end of the 90s -> large wave of interest
- Two major cases of „early movers“: Switzerland and the UK, later joined by Estonia (leap-frogging)
- Many cases of „aborted internet voting“, either before or after trials: Ireland (window dressing), the Netherlands (technological distrust), France (legal complications), Lithuania (political hurdles)

Currently, two major cases left: Switzerland and Estonia

Very different preconditions:

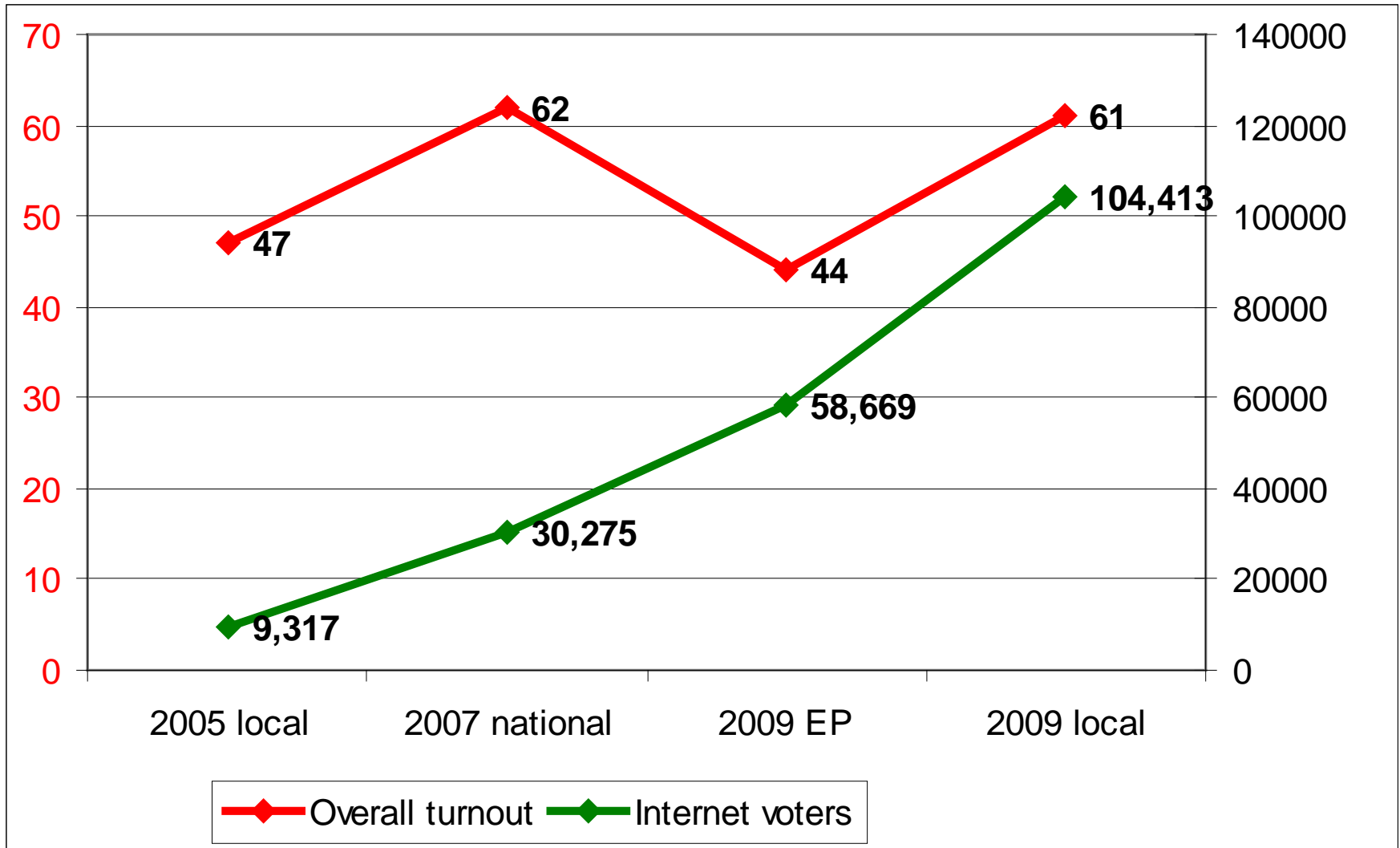
- Old vs. New democracy
- Federal vs. Unitary system
- Non EU membership vs. EU membership
- Traditional ID vs. Digital ID
- Civil society anti vs. Civil society pro
- Direct vs. Representative democracy
- Standard vs. exceptional remote voting

Commonalities

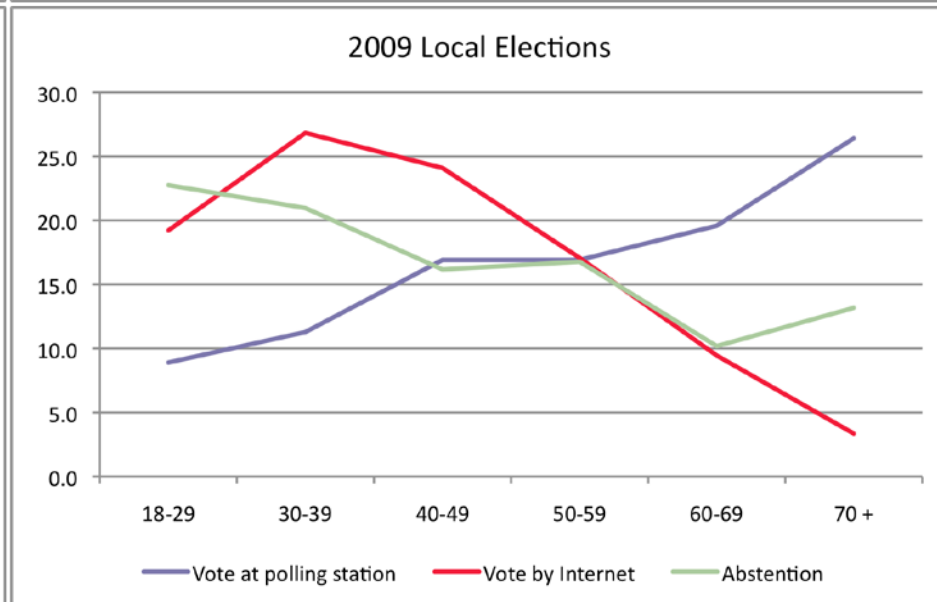
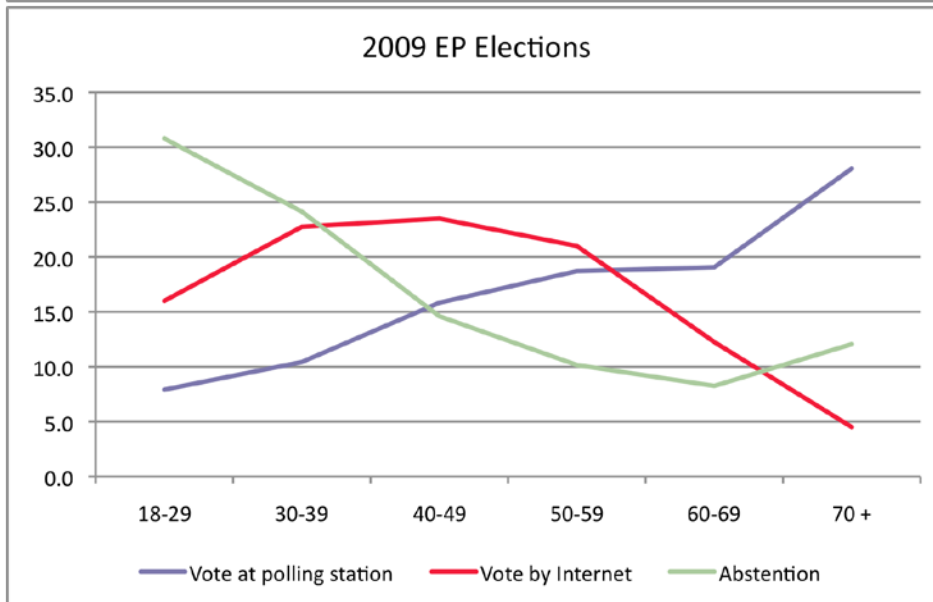
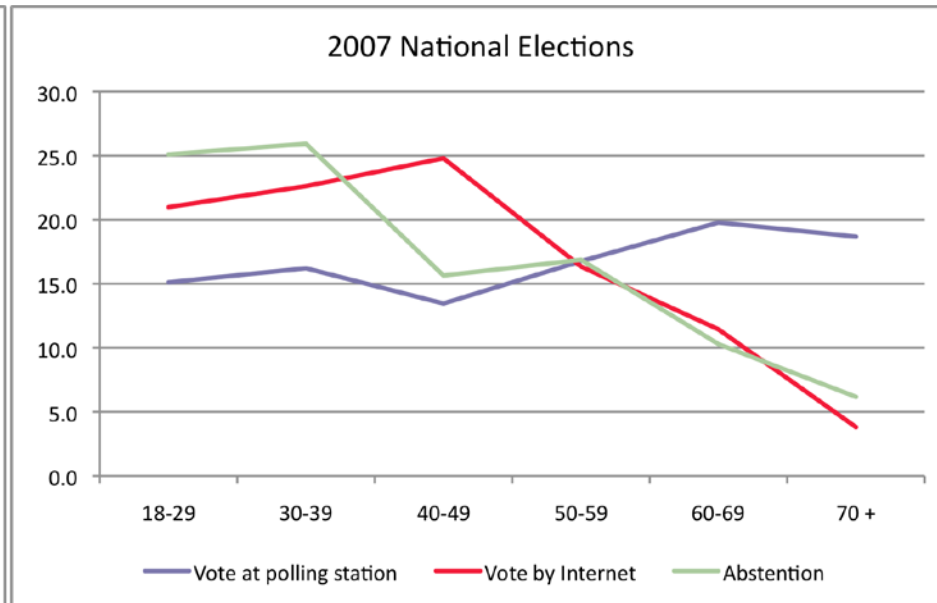
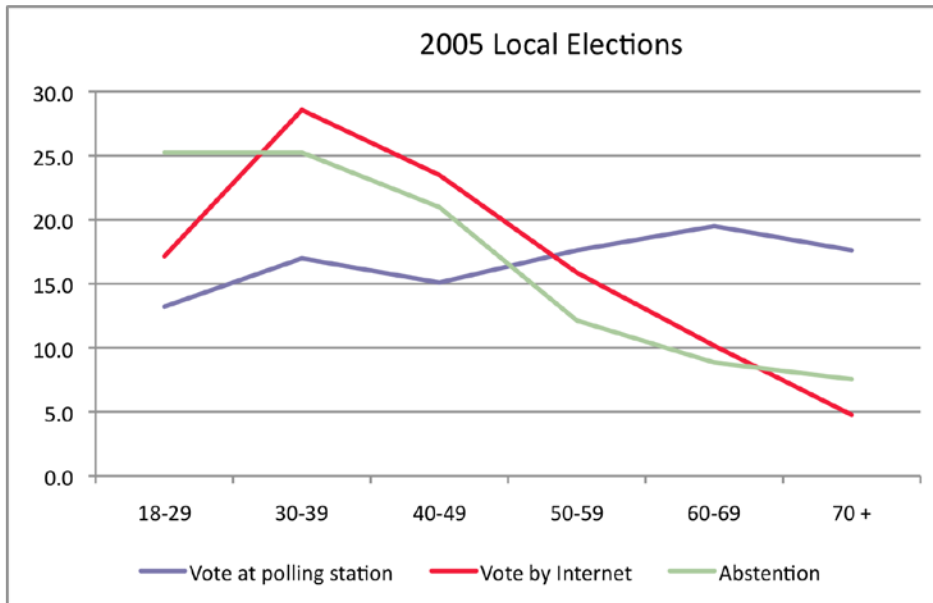
Particular common preconditions present in both cases

- small entities
- low levels of turnout
- modern electoral administration
- high levels of internet penetration
- favorable public opinion
- political will and strategy
- willingness to involve social scientists
- Council of Europe

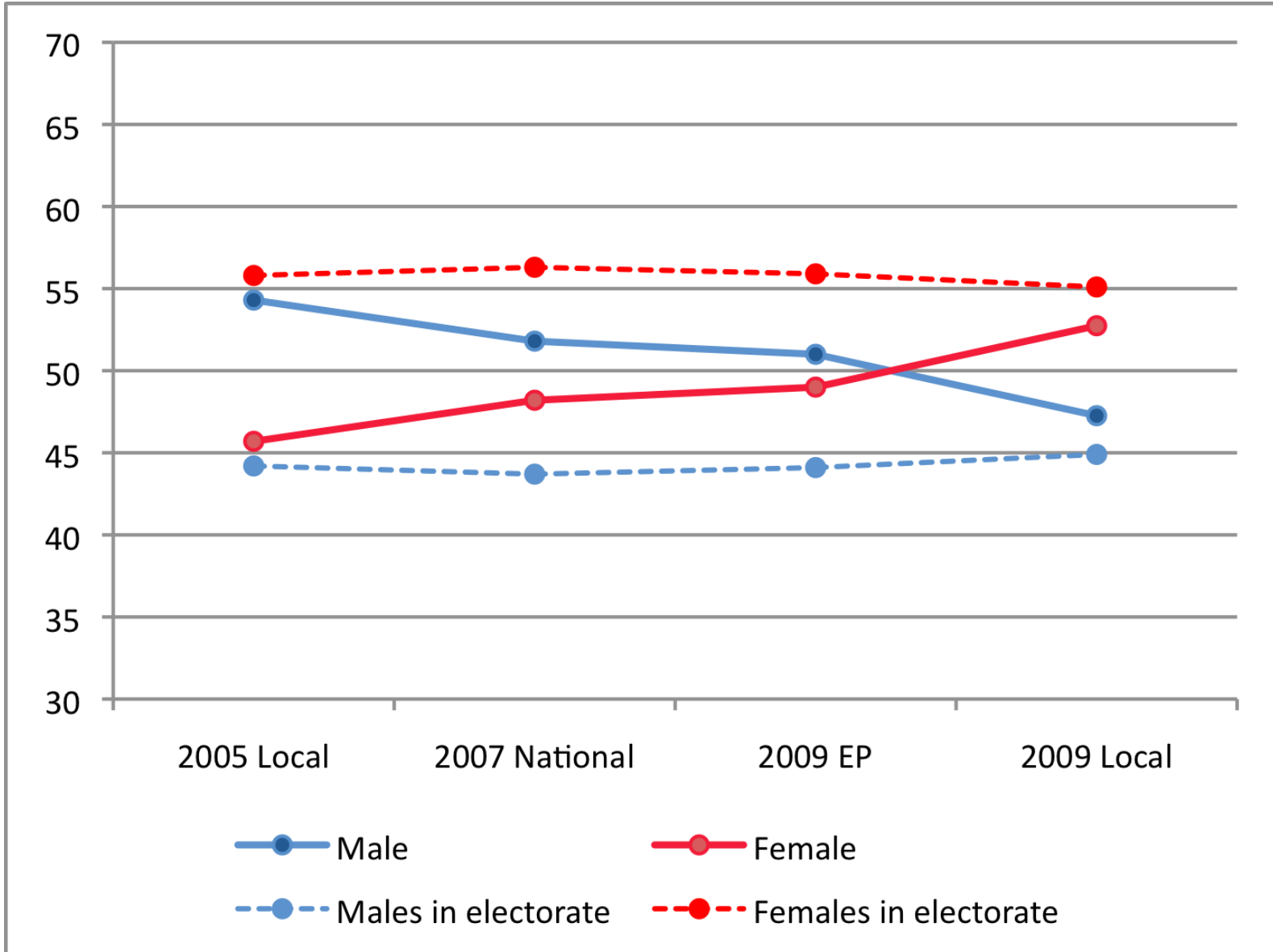
Recent results from Estonia: the spread of internet voting



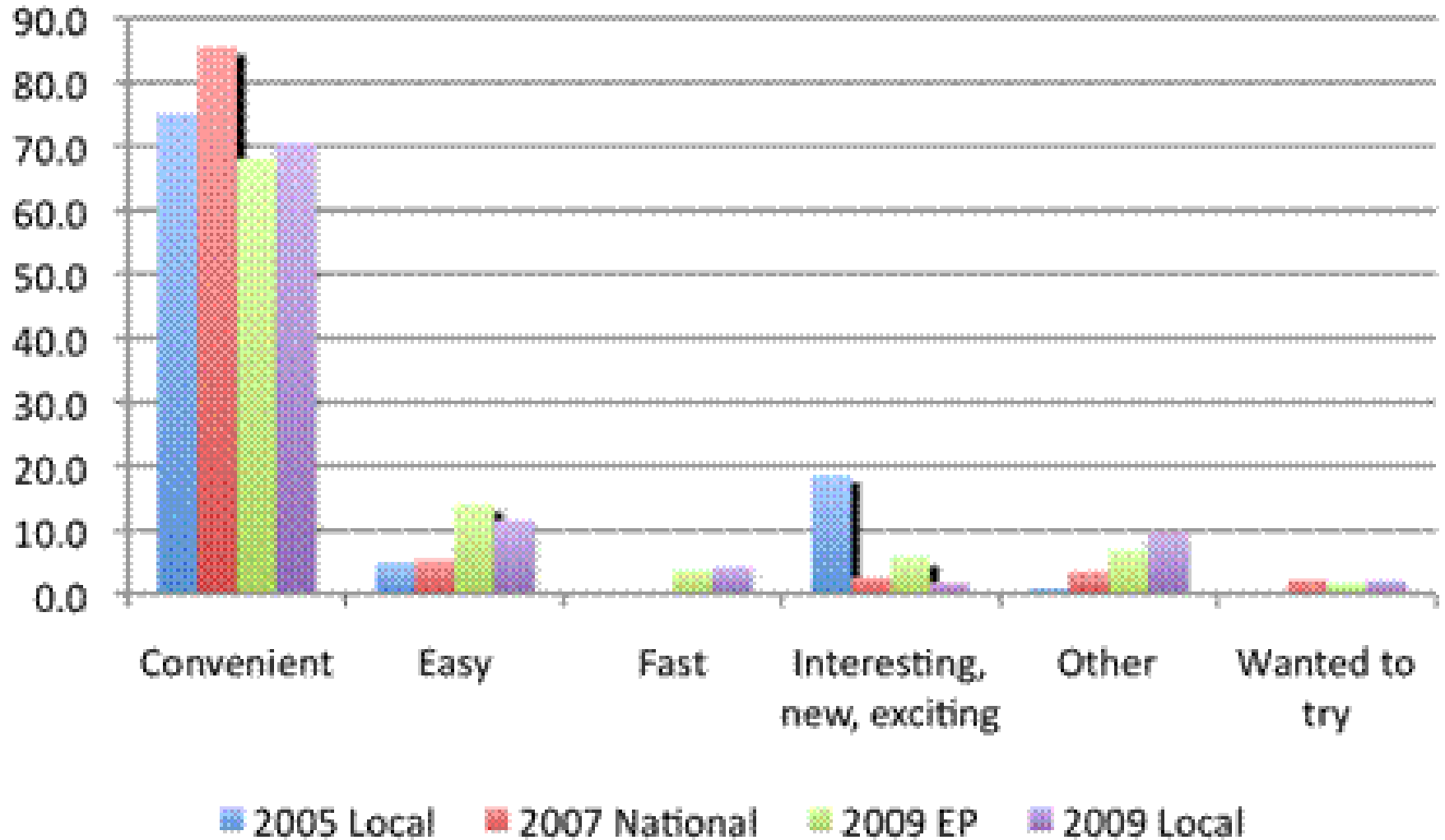
Age and mode of participation



Gendered internet voting?



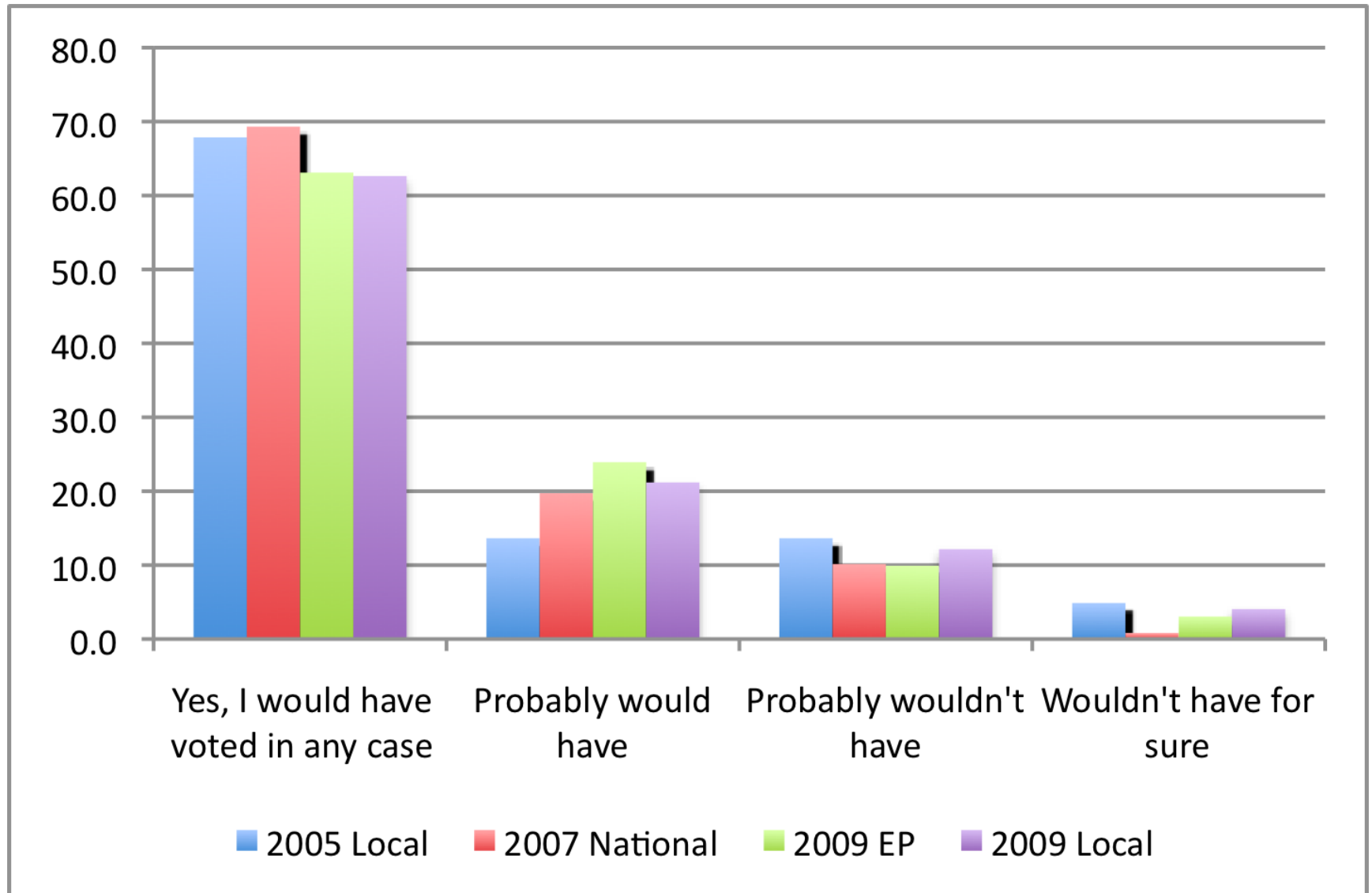
Subjective reasons for choosing e-voting



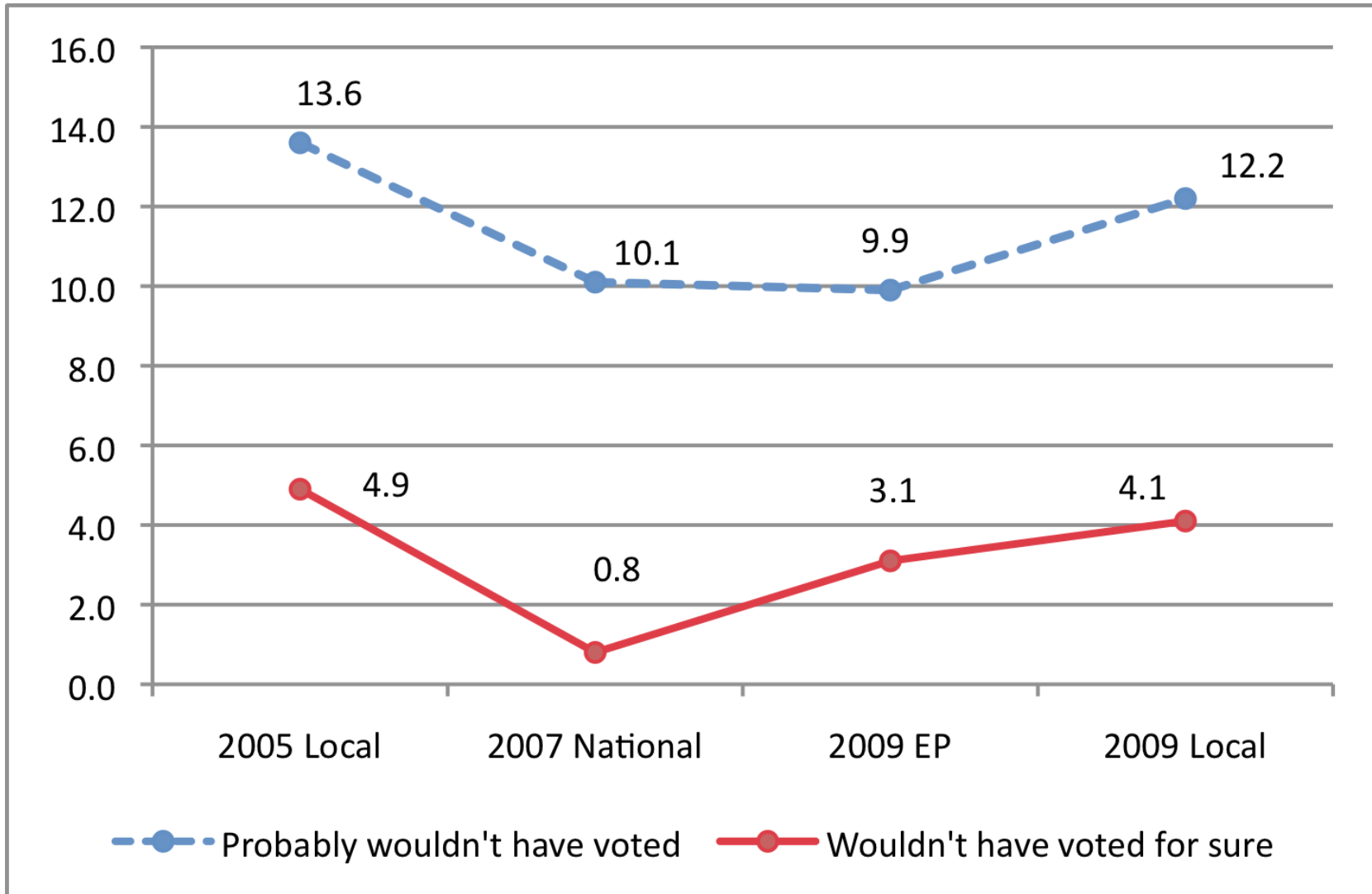
Frequency of usual political participation and mode of vote

		In all elections	In some elections	From time to time
2005 Local elections	Vote at polling station	77.6	18.0	3.5
	Vote by Internet	70.2	24.4	4.8
2007 National elections	Vote at polling station	78.8	20.1	0.8
	Vote by Internet	67.9	29.4	2.5
2009 EP elections	Vote at polling station	77.7	18.0	4.3
	Vote by Internet	70.3	27.6	2.1
2009 Local elections	Vote at polling station	66.5	30.9	2.7
	Vote by Internet	59.9	35.2	4.9

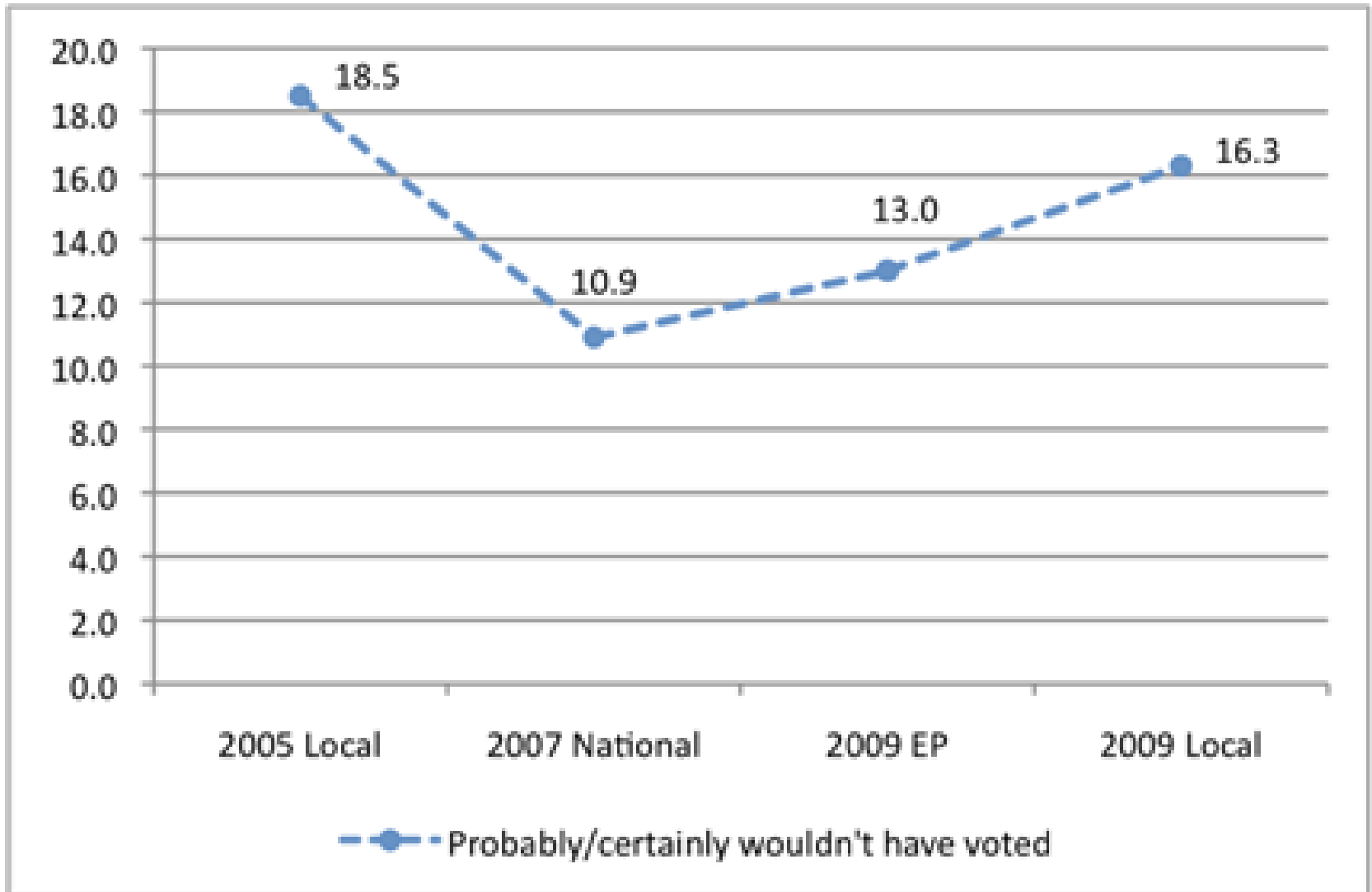
Subjective estimation of participation in the absence of e-voting



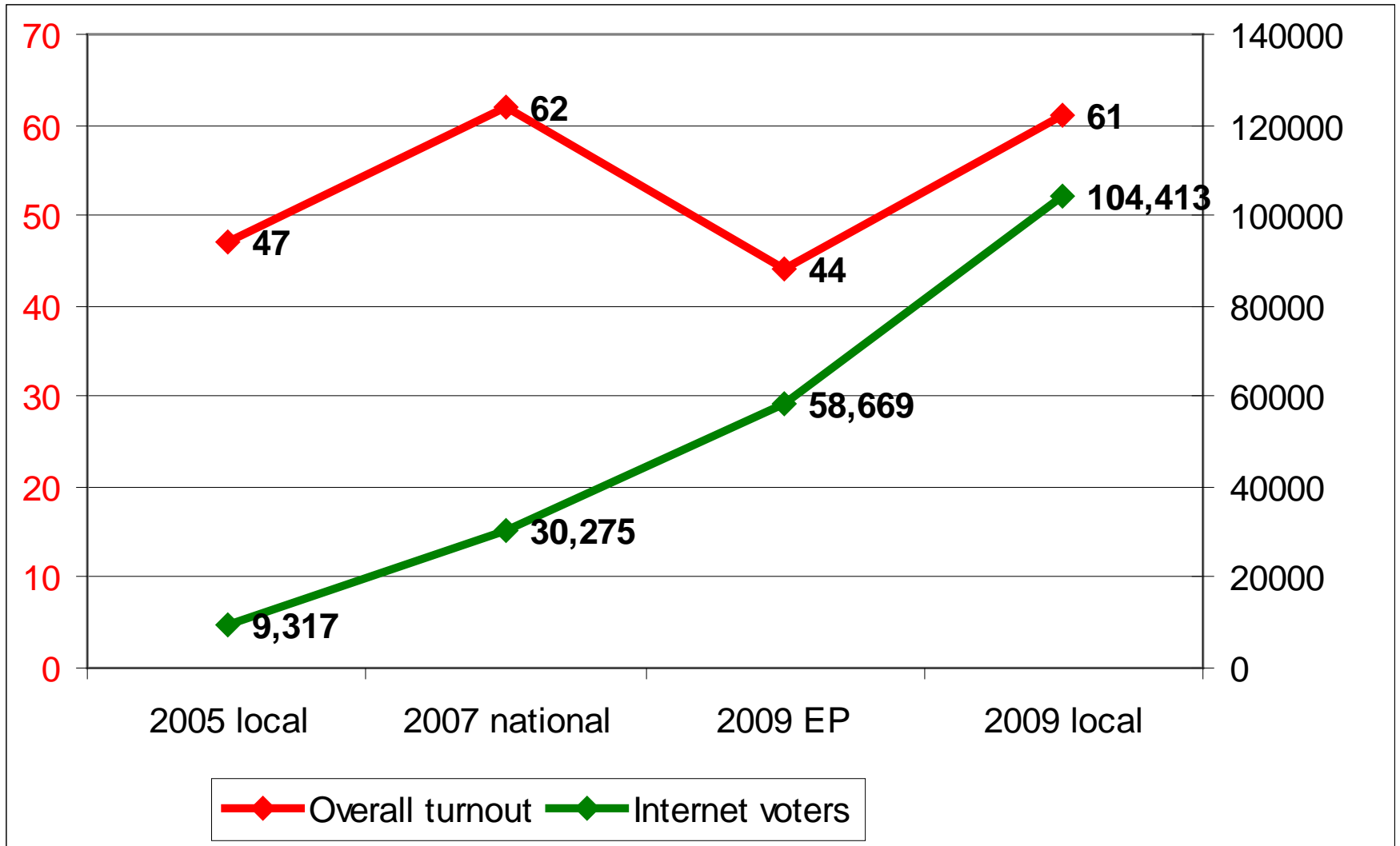
Impact on turnout?



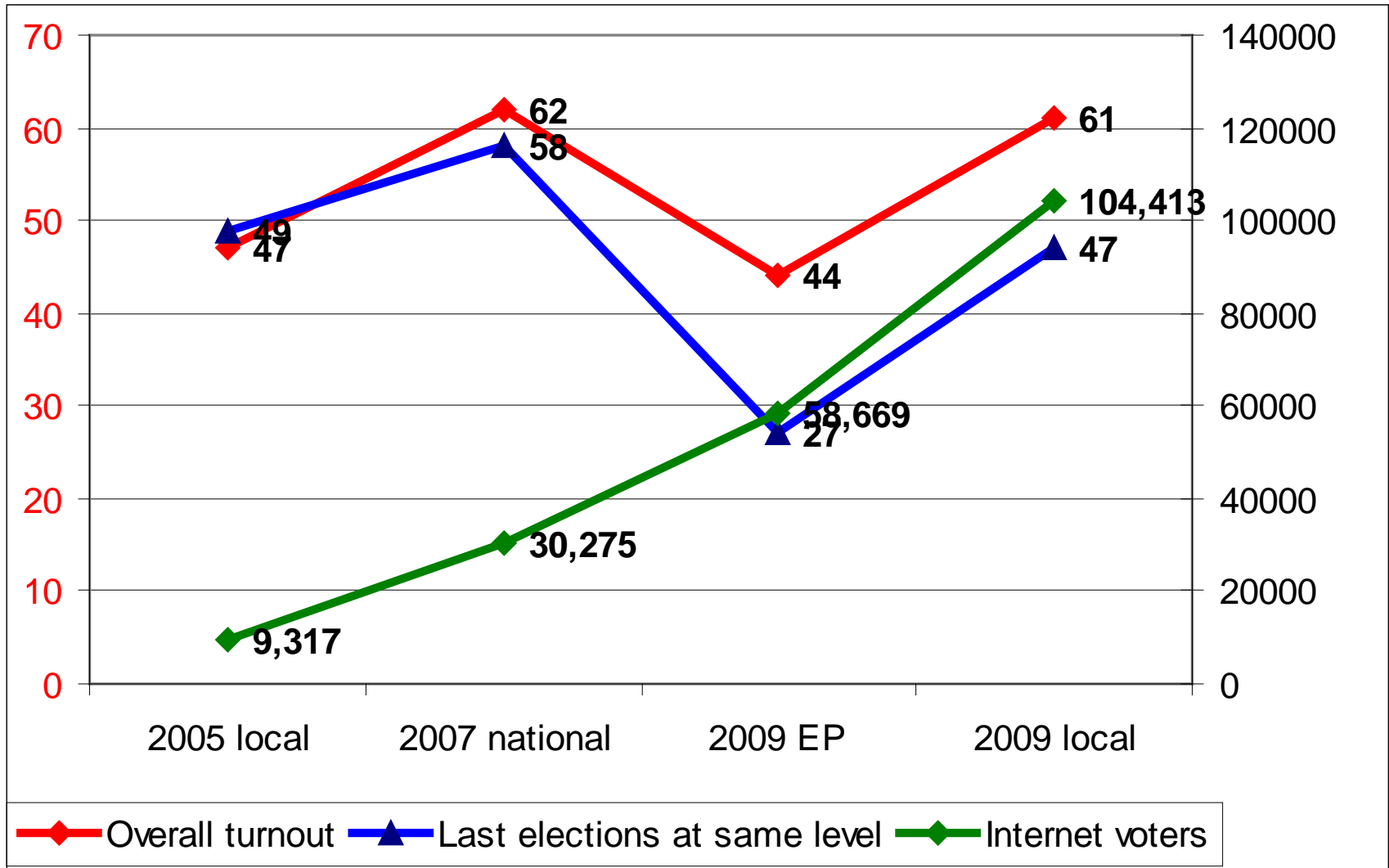
Combined



Turnout and internet voting

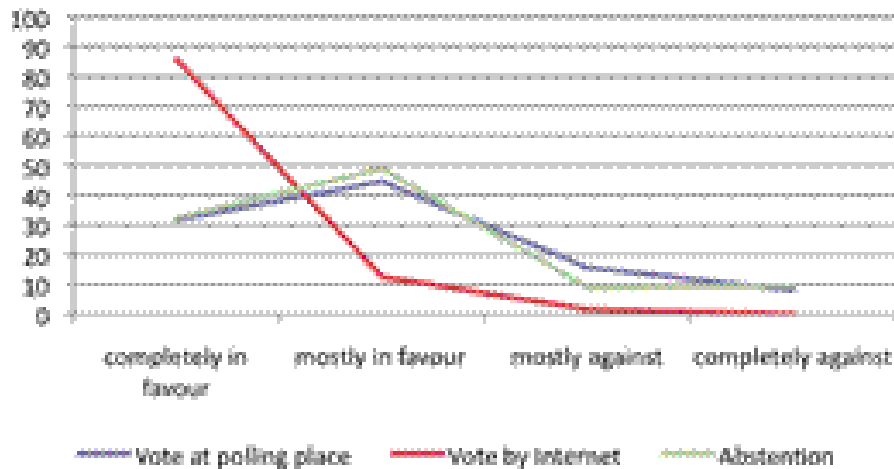


Turnout and internet voting

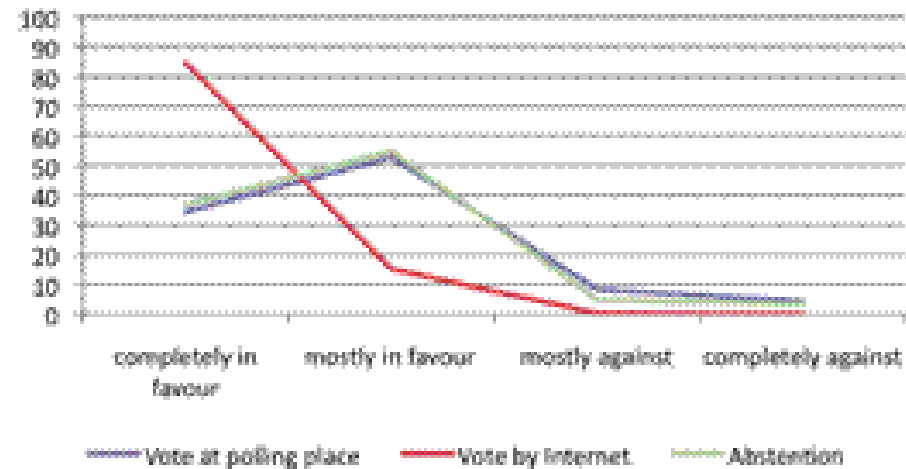


Attitudes towards internet voting

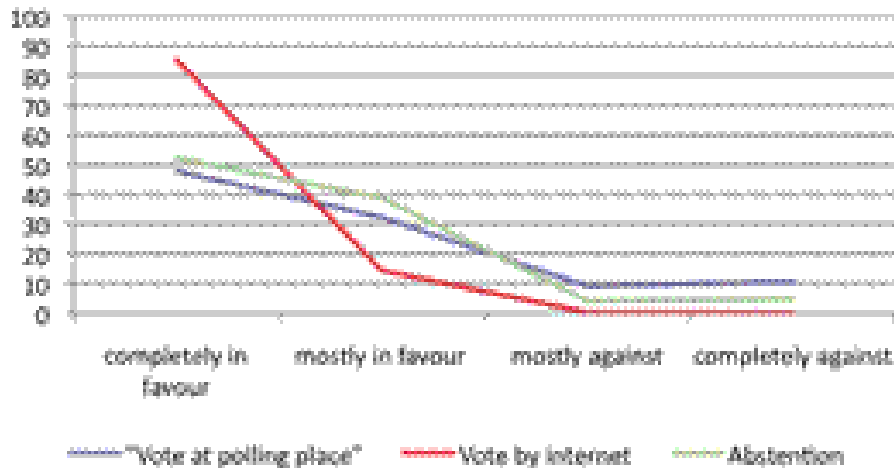
2005 Local



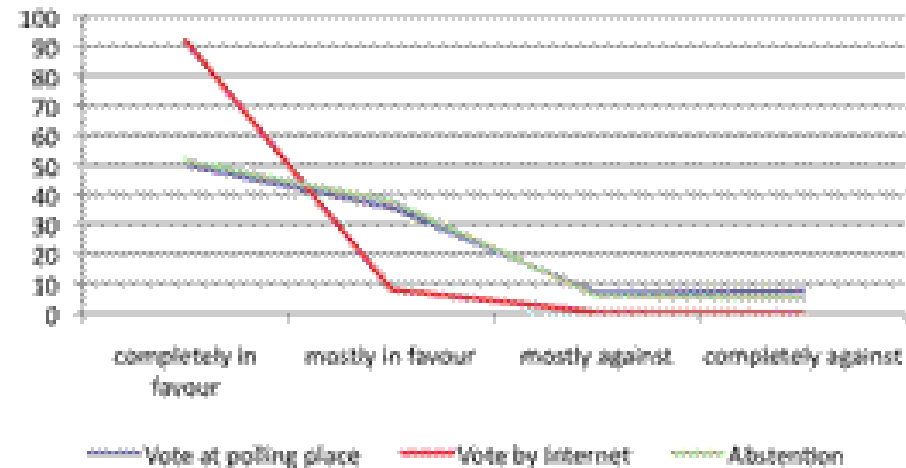
2007 National



2009 EP



2009 Local



Choosing internet voting:

- When taking into account all factors, the age (and other socio-economic) factor(s) becomes less relevant -> people “grow into internet voting”
- Language remains a problem
- ICT-related dimensions remain important
- Politically rather neutral
- Trust in the procedure of Internet voting is of structural importance

New issues

- Auditing and Certification?
- Cyberterrorism?
- Diffusion?
- Inversion of security issue?



Relevance for Canada

- More commonalities with CH and EE than discrepancies
- Higher legitimacy of the voting process than in the US
- Successful trials at the local level (from below)
- Federal level readiness to „try it out“
- Legal basis
- Research efforts going beyond North America

Thank you for your attention!

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