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# Open/Closed List and Party Choice: Experimental Evidence from the U.K.

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## ABSTRACT

Which parties benefit from open-list (as opposed to closed-list) PR elections? We show that a move from closed-list to open-list competition is likely to be more favorable to parties with more internal disagreement on salient issues; this is because voters who might have voted for a unified party under closed lists may be drawn to specific candidates within internally divided parties under open lists. We provide experimental evidence of this phenomenon in a hypothetical European Parliament election in the UK, in which using an open-list ballot would shift support from UKIP (the Eurosceptic party) to Eurosceptic candidates of the Conservative Party. Our findings suggest that open-list ballots could restrict support for parties that primarily mobilize on a single issue.

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## I. INTRODUCTION

Within electoral systems using proportional representation (PR), two types of ballots are in wide use: in closed-list systems, voters choose among *parties*, with the order in which candidates take seats being fixed within parties; in open-list systems, by contrast, voters choose among *candidates*, with the order in which candidates take seats determined (at least in part) by individual candidate vote totals. By giving voters influence over not just the number of seats each party wins but also which candidates from a given party win seats, open-list systems introduce a measure of intra-party competition among candidates. Political scientists have argued that this intra-party competition tends to reward candidates who have more local background and experience<sup>1</sup> and increases the incentive for elected politicians to deliver particularistic service to their voters<sup>2</sup> and even engage in corrupt activities.<sup>3</sup>

While the literature helps us understand how different ballot types in PR systems affect legislative behavior, it offers fewer clues about how ballot type affects parties' relative electoral success. This omission is puzzling not just because political scientists have a strong interest in the consequences of electoral systems for party systems, but also because the partisan consequences of ballot type should be of first-order importance to the actors most responsible for choosing electoral systems — partisan politicians. Understanding these consequences may thus help us understand how specific features of electoral systems are chosen.

In this paper we argue that an important determinant of the effect of ballot type on party support is the level of *intraparty disagreement* on salient issues. Disagreement among candidates within a party is typically a liability because it suggests disorganization and incoherence, but we offer two reasons why parties that are characterized by such disagreement may do better in open-list elections than in closed-list elections. The first reason is that

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<sup>1</sup>See Shugart, Valdini and Suominen (2005) and Tavits (2009).

<sup>2</sup>See Ames (1995); Carey and Shugart (1995); Crisp et al. (2004); Hallerberg and Marier (2004); Ashworth and de Mesquita (2006); Grimmer, Messing and Westwood (2012)

<sup>3</sup>See Chang (2005) and Chang and Golden (2007).

some voters might find a particular candidate in a diverse party more attractive than the party itself, such that they would vote for that candidate under open lists but would vote for another party under closed lists. The second reason is that some voters may be drawn to the chance to weigh in on intraparty disagreement in open-list elections, such that under open lists they would vote to help one candidate in a diverse party defeat a co-partisan, whereas under closed lists they would vote for another party altogether. To the extent that these mechanisms operate, parties with intra-party disagreement would be better off in open-list competition while relatively unified parties would be better off in closed-list competition.

We document this effect of ballot type on party vote choice in the context of a survey experiment focused on British elections for the European Parliament. In these elections (as in European Parliament elections elsewhere), the standard left-right dimension continues to organize political debate but there is a particularly salient additional dimension of conflict between pro- and anti-integration views.<sup>4</sup> In Britain, this second dimension is highlighted by the rise in support for the “Eurosceptic” United Kingdom Independence Party (UKIP). The crucial point for our experiment is that UKIP is highly unified in its opposition to European integration while its competitors are more divided on this salient issue, as we document below. According to the theory we develop, a switch from the current closed-list system to an open-list system would tend to hurt UKIP, as voters who might otherwise vote for UKIP take advantage of the chance to vote for Eurosceptics in other parties – particularly the Conservatives, who are closer to UKIP on the economic dimension.<sup>5</sup> Indeed, our experiment shows that UKIP performs considerably worse under open lists than closed lists (19% vs. 25% of respondents in our survey) while the main parties perform better (particularly the Conservatives, who win about 28% vs. 22%). We show that this occurs because Eurosceptic voters abandon UKIP in favor of Eurosceptic candidates from the mainstream parties, particularly the Conservatives.

Understanding the partisan consequences of ballot type within PR systems is of clear

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<sup>4</sup>Hobolt, Spoon and Tilley (2009); Hobolt and Wittrock (2011); Ferrara and Weishaupt (2004)

<sup>5</sup>Ford, Goodwin and Cutts (2012); Lynch, Whitaker and Loomes (2011)

policy relevance in elections to the European Parliament, which take place under closed-list PR in some countries (including Germany, France, Spain and the UK) and open-list PR in many others. Some policymakers have called for the adoption of open lists in all European elections<sup>6</sup>, and our analysis indicates that such a reform would tend to bolster mainstream parties at the expense of Eurosceptic parties. More broadly, ballot type could have partisan consequences in situations where environmental parties rise to prominence (as happened in Europe with the Greens in the 1980s) or when anti-immigration parties attract support and mainstream parties are internally divided on the issue, as has occurred more recently.

Methodologically, our study departs from most previous work on electoral systems by relying on a survey experiment rather than observational data. One could address the same question with a cross-country regression, but in European elections (and other types of elections<sup>7</sup>) the countries that use different electoral systems typically differ in many other respects; this tends to make causal inferences depend heavily on modeling assumptions.<sup>8</sup> In our experiment, by contrast, we observe how similar voters behave when they face the same basic choice but a different type of ballot. Of course, there are important disadvantages to the experimental approach we take, of which we emphasize two: first, the behavior of experimental subjects when faced with a hypothetical ballot may differ in important ways from the behavior of actual voters in a real election; second, while our study sheds new light on how voters respond to changes in ballot type (given a set of parties and candidates), it does not tell us how parties and candidates would respond to a change in ballot type and how those responses would in turn affect electoral outcomes. Despite these limitations (which we discuss further in the conclusion), we argue that our theoretical analysis and experimental results contribute to existing knowledge of how political outcomes depend on features of the electoral system.

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<sup>6</sup>See, for example, Duff (2011)

<sup>7</sup>As discussed in Eggers (2015)

<sup>8</sup>For example, countries that use open lists for EP elections are much smaller on average, were admitted to the EU later, have a higher district magnitude, and a lower level of public trust in the EU. See Commission (2013).

## II. WHICH PARTIES BENEFIT FROM OPEN-LIST BALLOTS?

In this section we consider reasons why a move from closed-list to open-list ballots might help some parties and hurt others. Our focus is on the role of *intra-party disagreement*. Although intra-party disagreement may be a liability for any party under either closed-list or open-list PR elections, we expect parties with more intra-party disagreement to attract more voters under open-list competition than under closed-list competition, particularly when ideologically proximate parties have low levels of intra-party disagreement. The logic behind this explanation applies whether we consider voters to be expressive or strategic.

### A. EXPRESSIVE VOTERS AND INTRA-PARTY DISAGREEMENT

Suppose that voter behavior is described by the following two assumptions:

**E.1** Voters are expressive, meaning simply that they vote for the party or candidate they find most attractive and do not consider how their vote is likely to actually affect policy outcomes.

**E.2** Voters cast their vote in a closed-list system based on attractiveness of the *parties* whereas they cast their vote in an open-list system based on attractiveness of the *candidates*.

Under these two assumptions, it follows that list type affects a voter's party choice when party  $X$  is the most attractive *party* under closed lists while a candidate from party  $Y$  is the most attractive *candidate* under open lists.

An example clarifies how this might happen. Suppose that in a given setting the Green Party is associated with clear positions on both economic and environmental policy; the Socialist Party, by contrast, has a clear left-wing economic position but has substantial intra-party disagreement on environmental policy, with some Socialist candidates strongly pro-environment and others less so. In an election held under closed lists, a left-wing environmentalist voter may find herself torn between the two parties: the Socialist Party may be more attractive on economic grounds, but the Green Party is more attractive on

environmental policy. Suppose that under closed lists she votes Green because she views environmental issues as more important. Now consider her vote choice under open lists. Because there are Socialist candidates who advocate strong pro-environment policies, our voter may choose to support a pro-environment Socialist candidate who shares her left-wing economic preferences. If so, list type would have affected the voter’s party choice because even though the most appealing *party* under closed lists was the Greens, the most appealing *candidate* under open lists was a Socialist.<sup>9</sup> To be clear, the Socialists’ lack of unity on environmental policy is not *per se* an attraction; to the contrary, the party’s internal disagreement may on balance be a liability in both closed-list and open-list competition. Rather, given the party’s internal disagreement we expect it to be more successful under open lists than under closed lists because expressive voters may be drawn to the party by the opportunity to support particularly attractive individual candidates.

Figure 1 illustrates the argument in a simple spatial model. There are two parties,  $X$  and  $Y$ , each identified with its own position in two-dimensional space; within each party, three candidates occupy distinct positions near their party, though party  $Y$ ’s candidates are more distinct from each other. Asked to choose between parties (as in closed-list competition), an expressive voter with an ideal point at  $a$  would choose party  $X$ , whose position is slightly closer to her own ideal point. Asked to choose among candidates, however, the same voter would choose  $y_1$ . The situation corresponds to the example given above, where party  $X$  and  $Y$  are the Greens and the Socialists, respectively, and the horizontal and vertical dimensions are economic policy and environmental policy.

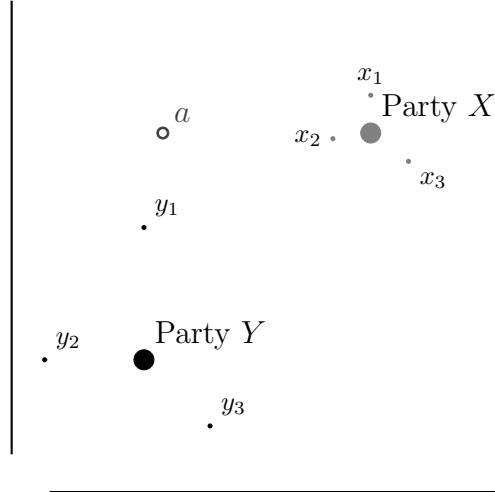
## B. STRATEGIC VOTERS AND INTRA-PARTY DISAGREEMENT

We see the same relationship between intra-party disagreement and list type, although for different reasons, if we assume instead that voters are strategic. Consider the following two

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<sup>9</sup>The same logic applies if voters are attentive to valence characteristics. For example, consider a voter who prefers the Socialists on valence grounds but votes Green under closed lists because she prefers the Green Party’s environmental position; she may switch to the Socialists under open lists if she can support a pro-environment Socialist candidate. More simply, an individual candidate may have much higher valence than her party, in which cases some voters may switch to that candidate under open lists.

Figure 1: Ballot type and party vote choice when intra-party disagreement varies across parties



assumptions about voter behavior:

**S.1** Voters are strategic, meaning that they decide how to vote based on how they think their vote could affect policy outcomes.

**S.2** Voters believe that policy outcomes depend on which candidates are elected.

Under these assumptions, list type affects a voter’s party vote when the voter believes that her best chance for electing a more favorable candidate under closed lists comes from voting for party  $X$  while her best chance for electing a more favorable candidate under open lists comes from voting for a candidate of party  $Y$ .

A strategic voter considers the possible ways in which her vote could affect the outcome and chooses a strategy that maximizes the expected benefit from her vote.<sup>10</sup> In both open-list and closed-list elections, the potential “pivotal events” include all situations in which the marginal seat will go to either a candidate from party  $X$  or a candidate from party  $Y$ , for every pair of distinct parties and candidates within those parties; list type could affect a

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<sup>10</sup>Myatt (2007)



strategic voter's party choice by changing the relative probability of these events.<sup>11</sup> There is also an important set of pivotal events in open-list competition that are not found in closed-list competition: open-list elections offer voters the prospect of determining *which candidate* from a given party gets elected, which may attract voters to parties in which candidates differ in important ways. Suppose, for example, that in a two-seat district party  $Y$  is almost certain to win exactly one seat, while the second seat will be won by either party  $X$  or party  $Z$ . Under closed lists it would make little sense to waste a vote on party  $Y$ , regardless of one's preference ordering over the parties; a strategic voter should then vote for either party  $X$  or party  $Z$ . Under open lists, however, it may be the case (assuming the same distribution of party votes) that there is doubt about *which candidate* will win party  $Y$ 's seat, and the voter may expect a higher policy benefit from using her vote to affect that outcome than influencing which party/candidate wins the second seat. In short, in this example voting for party  $Y$  is more attractive under open lists because the open-list system introduces intra-party competition and allows voters to participate in a 'primary' election for candidates from each party, and thus provides a reason (absent in a closed-list system) to vote for party  $Y$ .<sup>12</sup> As in the expressive case, these benefits will accrue to party  $Y$  only when the candidates of that party hold policy positions that distinguish themselves from their co-partisans. If  $Y$ 's candidates are indistinguishable from one another, a strategic voter has no incentive to participate in this 'primary' election for the first seat in the district, and will instead cast her vote for either  $X$  or  $Z$  in order to maximise her expected benefit from the second seat in the district.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>11</sup>For example, suppose a voter believes that under closed lists the marginal seat will be won by either candidate  $x_1$  or candidate  $y_1$ , whereas under open lists the marginal seat will be won by either candidate  $x_2$  or  $y_2$ . If the voter prefers  $x_1$  to  $y_1$  but prefers  $y_2$  to  $x_2$ , then she may vote for party  $X$  under closed lists but vote for party  $Y$  under open lists. We would see the same effect of list type if the marginal seat under closed lists were between party  $X$  and party  $Z$  (the voter's least favorite party), whereas under open lists it is between party  $Y$  and party  $Z$ .

<sup>12</sup>In our example, strategic voters have an incentive to vote for  $Y$  in order to affect which of a set of candidates gets elected. Primary elections of this sort could have additional implications for the distribution of power within parties after the election. For example, Folke, Persson and Rickne (2014) show that candidates who win more votes than their co-partisans in preferential-list elections are considerably more likely to become party leaders in the future.

<sup>13</sup>Voters may also think they can affect policy by sending a message with their vote. Thus rather than seeing intra-party competition in open-list elections as a kind of primary election within the party, we may

The main implication of the foregoing analysis is that a move from closed-list to open-list elections is likely to be more beneficial to parties with internal disagreement than to parties that are relatively unified. To be clear, we do not mean to imply that internal disagreement itself is electorally beneficial under either closed-list or open-list competition; indeed, a party may suffer in both systems from internal disagreement, as voters see the party as incoherent and confused. Our point is that a party that has a relatively large degree of internal disagreement can expect to do better in open-list competition than in closed-list competition because expressive voters may be attracted to particular candidates in the party and strategic voters may be attracted by the chance to determine which candidates win seats within the party.

### III. WHICH PARTIES HAVE INTRA-PARTY DISAGREEMENT ON SALIENT ISSUES?

The level of internal disagreement may vary across parties in a given system for many reasons. There is in any electoral system a tradeoff between a party's ability to offer a variety of candidates who cater to disparate tastes and goals in the electorate, on the one hand, and a party's ability to present a coherent and unified party brand<sup>14</sup> on the other;<sup>15</sup> there may also be a tension between the interests of party leaders, who value a coherent party brand, and the interests of candidates, who may seek to differentiate themselves from the party in order to cultivate a personal vote.<sup>16</sup> The way parties resolve these tensions is likely to depend in subtle ways on their history, leadership, and internal governance.

It is also important to recognize that the level of internal disagreement often varies within parties *across issues*; thus the effect of ballot type on a party's electoral support may depend on which issues are salient. To use the example from the previous section, the Socialist Party may benefit from a transition to open-list competition if environmental

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see it as a poll among party supporters; in either case, some strategic voters may be drawn to party in order to weigh in on intra-party disagreement.

<sup>14</sup>Cox and McCubbins (1993, 2005)

<sup>15</sup>In single-member district systems, for example, a party may expect rewards from allowing its candidates to adopt disparate messages that appeal to the median voter in each constituency, but it must balance those rewards against the cost of undermining the coherence of the party's policy message.

<sup>16</sup>Samuels (1999)

issues are particularly salient (assuming that the Socialists have more internal disagreement on environmental issues than the Greens), while the Green Party may benefit from the same transition if economic issues are particularly salient (assuming that the Greens have more internal disagreement on economic issues).

One case where there may be particularly clear differences in internal disagreement across parties is when a “niche party” competes on a salient issue against mainstream parties. Niche parties tend to emphasize issues that cut across the main dimension(s) of political competition; typically, they are highly internally unified on these issues, which helps them appeal to their “ideological clienteles”<sup>17</sup> and form a party brand.<sup>18</sup> Mainstream parties, by contrast, sometimes struggle to define a position on the issues emphasized by niche parties, particularly during the period when the issue is rising in salience. For example, Green parties and anti-immigration parties in Europe compete on the basis of a strong and internally unified position on issues on which the mainstream parties are internally divided. We might expect a move from closed-list to open-list competition to be damaging to the niche party when the niche party’s issue is salient to voters.

The idea that “niche” parties might do worse in open-list competition would seem to apply particularly well to the case of European Parliament elections, where Eurosceptic parties have recently captured substantial electoral support. Eurosceptic parties define themselves by their opposition to the current design and operation of the EU. They compete against mainstream parties that originate from and mainly compete in national politics on a variety of other issues; they tend to have positions on Europe that are less salient, more vague, more variable over time, and more diverse within the party. Expert surveys<sup>19</sup> confirm this difference, showing that parties that place high salience on European integration are significantly less likely to be viewed as internally conflicted on the issue.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>17</sup>Adams et al. (2006); Ezrow (2008); Meguid (2005)

<sup>18</sup>Wagner (2012, 70)

<sup>19</sup>Bakker et al. (2012)

<sup>20</sup>See Table S3 in the Appendix for our regression analysis. We define a party as high-salience on European integration when the mean expert survey score for the party is one vote-weighted standard deviation above the vote-weighted mean. This measurement strategy closely resembles the one used by Wagner (Forthcoming) in the definition of ‘niche’ parties. The dependent variable measures expert responses to

In open-list elections focused on the question of European integration, mainstream parties can field candidates representing the range of positions on Europe, which (following the logic outlined in the previous section) seems likely to undermine the support for Eurosceptic parties.

This general pattern fits the specific case of European elections in Britain well. The United Kingdom Independence Party (UKIP) has recently risen to prominence as a strongly Eurosceptic party; the mainstream parties, by contrast, are characterized to various extents by internal disagreement on the question of European integration. The intra-party disagreement is most pronounced within the Conservative party, with Conservative MPs and MEPs openly expressing Eurosceptic views that go well beyond the party line,<sup>21</sup> but elite dissent is also visible in the Labour Party<sup>22</sup> and, to a lesser extent, among the traditionally strongly pro-Europe Liberal Democrats.<sup>23</sup> Supporters of the major parties also express a variety of viewpoints toward European integration. We observe this in our own survey, as documented in Table S4: although respondents supporting Labour, the Greens and the Liberal Democrats show a clear pro-Europe tendency, a substantial minority in each party express opposition to European integration.

In conjunction with the analysis in the previous section, this variation in intra-party disagreement across parties suggests a prediction about the effects of changing MEP elections in Britain from closed-list to open-list format. The salient issue in these elections is (and will likely continue to be) the role of the UK in the European Union. On this issue, UKIP is (and will likely continue to be) highly unified compared to other mainstream parties. As a result, we expect UKIP to suffer from the introduction of open-list competition as Eurosceptic voters take advantage of the opportunity to vote for Eurosceptic candidates

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the question: “[How much] conflict or dissent [was there] within parties over European integration over the course of 2010?”.

<sup>21</sup>Lynch and Whitaker (2013) See also e.g. Nicholas Watt, “David Cameron aims to stare down Eurosceptic rise within Tory ranks”, *The Guardian*, 26 May 2014 (link).

<sup>22</sup>Cowley (2000) See also Peter Dominiczak, “Labour split over EU referendum, Jon Cruddas suggests”, *The Telegraph*, 19 Sept 2013 (link); George Eaton, “Labour divisions over EU emerge as MPs launch pro-referendum group”, *New Statesman* politics blog, 13 May 2013 (link).

<sup>23</sup>See Mary Ann Sieghart, “They are all Eurosceptics now”, 10 October 2011 (link).

from other parties.

HYPOTHESIS 1: *UKIP will receive fewer votes under open lists than under closed lists.*

The direct corollary is that the Conservatives, who are the closest party to UKIP on the left-right dimension of conflict, will gain the votes that are lost by UKIP when open-list competition is introduced.

HYPOTHESIS 2: *The Conservatives will receive more votes under open lists than under closed lists.*

In the next section we introduce the experiment we designed to test this hypothesis.

#### IV. EXPERIMENTAL DESIGN

Our experiment was embedded in a survey conducted by the research firm YouGov and fielded between June 26 and July 5, 2013. The survey was administered to a random sample of  $N = 9096$  panelists who are, according to YouGov, representative of British adults in terms of age, gender, social class and newspaper consumption. For all analyses below, we use probability weights provided by YouGov to weight the survey to the national profile of all adults aged 18 or older.<sup>24</sup>

For the core of the survey experiment, we asked subjects to vote in a hypothetical election for European Parliament. All subjects were shown a ballot listing three candidates from each of five parties (Conservative Party, Green Party, Labour Party, Liberal Democrats and UKIP).<sup>25</sup> Half of the subjects (chosen at random) were shown a closed-list ballot and asked to pick a party; the other half were shown an open-list ballot and asked to pick a

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<sup>24</sup>The analysis below includes all respondents. However, when discarding all respondents who took under two seconds or over 100 seconds to answer any of the pre- or post-ballot questions (over 1000 respondents in total), which addressed attitudes toward Europe, party identification, and ease of using the ballot, the results are almost exactly the same.

<sup>25</sup>We chose a set of fifteen names (five female, ten male) from a web application that allowed us to generate random British-sounding names. The names were randomly permuted on each ballot, such that average party vote shares would not depend on voters' preferences over candidate names; we required, however, that one candidate for each party should be female, such that voters' preferences over candidate genders would not introduce noise in party vote choices.

candidate. As discussed above, our principal interest is in how parties' vote shares depended on ballot type.

As a general matter, ballot type could affect party vote choice only if voters have preferences not just between parties but also among the candidates within parties. Given that the candidates in our experiment are all fictional, any preferences that our survey respondents had among candidates could only come from information we provide. We thus had to think carefully about what information to provide. A first question involved how much information to provide about the candidates. Ideally, we would like to provide candidate information similar to what a British voter might acquire during the several weeks of an election campaign, when (depending on campaign behavior, which may itself depend on ballot type<sup>26</sup>) the voter may receive fliers from various candidates and parties, watch debates, read endorsements, etc.; unfortunately, such a large and nuanced amount of information could not realistically be communicated in the few seconds that survey respondents can spend learning about fictional candidates for our experiment. Ultimately, we decided to provide a subset of respondents with limited but clear information about the candidates's positions on Europe: in addition to a name (and thus gender) and party affiliation, each candidate was endorsed by a (fictional) pro-integration pressure group called "Britain in Europe", a (fictional) anti-integration pressure group called "Britain Out of Europe", or neither. Respondents received this information in two steps: first they were shown a screen explaining the endorsements and listing the endorsed candidates (as shown in Figure 2); on the next screen they were again shown the endorsements alongside the ballot as a kind of "voter guide" (as shown in Figure 3).

A second question involved the nature of the endorsements we would assign to each party's candidates. As discussed above, we argue that intra-party disagreements about European integration are likely in the major UK parties, but not in UKIP. Accordingly, for each of the non-UKIP parties (Green, Labour, Liberal Democrat, Conservative), we had one of the three candidates endorsed by the pro-Europe group, one endorsed by the

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<sup>26</sup>Bowler and Farrell (2011)

Figure 2: Endorsement information provided to respondents before voting

The non-partisan group '**Britain Out of Europe**', which advocates a repatriation of democratic powers to the UK, has endorsed the following Eurosceptic candidates:

- Richard Grey, Conservative Party
- Conor O'Brien, The Green Party
- Rowan Jarrod, The Labour Party
- Andy Kingsley, Liberal Democrats
- Kenny Greene, Jessica Hunter, Harry Stern, United Kingdom Independence Party

The non-partisan group '**Britain In Europe**', which advocates full British involvement in a strong European Union, has endorsed the following pro-European candidates:

- Evelyn Preston, Conservative Party
- Nigel Wyatt, The Green Party
- Dom Courtney, The Labour Party
- Andrew Linden, Liberal Democrats

Continue →

anti-Europe group, and one not endorsed by either. For UKIP, we assigned an anti-Europe endorsement to all three candidates. It is therefore through the provision of endorsement information that we incorporate our theoretical assumption about intra-party disagreement into our empirical design.<sup>27</sup>

In order to disentangle the effect of the ballot type from the effect of the information we provided to respondents, we designed the experiment as a two-by-two factorial design (highlighted in Table 1) in which ballot type (closed- or open-list) and endorsement information (provided or not provided) are independently randomly assigned. Thus roughly one quarter of our respondents were given ballots like the one shown at the top of Figure 3 (treatment group C, in Table 1) and one quarter of our respondents were given ballots like the one shown at the bottom of Figure 3 (treatment group D, in Table 1). Another one-quarter (treatment group A) was given a closed-list ballot with no endorsement in-

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<sup>27</sup>One objection to our design might be that we do not allow for variation in the number of candidates 'endorsed' by pro- or anti-EU pressure groups. For example, it might be more realistic for the Liberal Democrats to have two pro-European candidates, rather than one. We acknowledge this, but feel that the effects of the ideological *balance* of a given list of candidates on party vote share is a nuance that we cannot fully examine in this design. This would, however, be a promising avenue for future work.

Figure 3: Excerpts from closed list and open list ballots, including endorsement information



### Closed list (treatment group C)

**Vote for one of the parties below.**

					Endorsements	
					Britain in Europe	Britain Out of Europe
		Vote Choice				
1	<b>Conservative Party</b> 	1. Evelyn Preston	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
		2. Ken Chase				
		3. Richard Grey				<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
2	<b>United Kingdom Independence Party</b> 	1. Kenny Greene	<input type="radio"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
		2. Jessica Hunter			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
		3. Harry Stern			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	

### Open list (treatment group D)

**Vote for one of the candidates below.**

					Endorsements	
					Britain in Europe	Britain Out of Europe
		Vote Choice				
1	<b>Conservative Party</b> 	1. Conor O'Brien	<input type="radio"/>			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
		2. Christine Kendall	<input type="radio"/>			
		3. Harry Stern	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
2	<b>United Kingdom Independence Party</b> 	1. Rosie Travers	<input type="radio"/>			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
		2. Andrew Linden	<input type="radio"/>			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
		3. Rowan Jarod	<input type="radio"/>			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

NOTE: Actual ballots (shown in Appendix Figures S7 – S10) provide more detailed instructions and include candidates for all five parties.



formation and another quarter (treatment group B) was given an open-list ballot with no endorsement information. This design allows us to address two potential objections to the endorsement information we provided as part of our experiment.

Table 1: Design table

		Ballot type	
		Closed-list	Open-list
Information about candidates' positions on European integration provided?	No	Treatment group A n = 2251	Treatment group B n = 2347
	Yes	Treatment group C n = 2260	Treatment group D n = 2230

NOTE: Weighted sample sizes shown.

The first potential concern is about *internal validity* of the study: if we only showed the endorsement information to respondents who are also given an open-list ballot, then it would be impossible to disentangle the effect of the information we provide from the effect of the ballot itself.<sup>28</sup> The second potential concern relates to the *external validity* of the study: if all respondents are shown this endorsement information, and if this information is too divergent from the way in which voters typically think of the parties, then the effect of ballot type we detect may be very different from the effect that would be seen if the ballot type were actually changed. The factorial design allows us to address both concerns. Clearly, because we can separately test the effects of the endorsement information and the ballot type we can address the internal validity concern. The design also allows us to address the external validity concern by testing whether the provision of information *per se* affects party vote choice among respondents who are given a closed-list ballot. As we

<sup>28</sup>For example, if the Liberal Democrats do better under open lists, and endorsement information is only provided to respondents shown an open-list ballot, the effect could be due to the fact that voters found the party more attractive when they learned that the Liberal Democrats are not uniformly pro-Europe.

show below, it did not, which suggests that our endorsements reflect positions on Europe that are not too dissimilar from what voters might expect to see from each party.<sup>29</sup>

Another external validity objection could be raised, which is that the endorsement information was provided in a particularly heavy-handed way. Granted, such endorsements would never appear on an actual ballot paper; the information that voters receive about candidates would tend to be much more noisy and multi-dimensional. On the other hand, voters in a real election would have weeks to process the information to which they may be exposed, and they would be able to actively seek out the specific information that may be of use to them. (For example, “Which Labour candidate is most pro-integration?”) It is also not unusual for voters facing complex ballots to be given voter guides by candidates and civil society groups. We view our information treatment as a compromise made necessary by the constraints of running a hypothetical election on survey respondents who have limited time to process new information.

Before we proceed to the results, we first check the balance of the respondents’ covariate distributions across the four treatment groups. As expected from a randomized treatment allocation, the tests show no sign of imbalance. More precisely, the  $p$ -values calculated from a joint  $F(3, N - df)$  test of no differences between the 22 covariate means, all measured pre-treatment, across the four treatment conditions follow the expected uniform distribution over the  $[0, 1]$ -interval. Figure S11 in the Appendix plots the empirical distribution of the  $p$ -values from these balance tests against the theoretically expected uniform distribution<sup>30</sup>: since all  $p$ -values are above the 45 degree line, we can safely assume that randomization was successful. Table S5 in the Appendix shows the underlying covariate means and corresponding  $F$ -tests across the four treatment conditions.

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<sup>29</sup>It is of course possible that the endorsement information changes voters’ understandings of parties’ positions but does not change overall party votes shares in the closed-list condition; for example, the information that there are pro- and anti-integration Liberal Democrats might simultaneously make the party more attractive (because more moderate than voters thought) and less attractive (because more incoherent than voters thought), with no net effect.

<sup>30</sup>If randomization is successful and the covariates are independent, then the  $p$ -values for the balance tests follow a uniform distribution.

## V. RESULTS

### A. MAIN RESULTS: ENDORSEMENTS, BALLOT TYPE AND PARTY VOTE SHARES

To evaluate the effect of ballot type on party vote shares, we separately compare the party vote shares for the five main parties under the four treatment conditions indicated in Table 1; in particular, we run a separate OLS regression for each party in which the dependent variable is 1 if the respondent chose this party (otherwise 0) and the regressors are a binary indicator for open-list, a binary indicator if information about the candidates was provided, an interaction of the two indicators, and a constant. Table 2 presents the regression results.

Table 2: Main regression results of parties' vote share by treatment conditions

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
	GRN	LAB	LD	CON	UKIP
Outcome	Vote share	Vote share	Vote share	Vote share	Vote share
Open-list	-0.01 (-1.18)	-0.00 (-0.03)	-0.00 (-0.33)	-0.00 (-0.19)	0.02 (1.23)
With information	-0.00 (-0.26)	0.00 (0.21)	0.00 (0.05)	-0.01 (-0.71)	0.01 (0.62)
Open $\times$ information	-0.00 (-0.09)	0.01 (0.24)	0.02 (1.30)	0.06 (2.70)	-0.09 (-3.84)
Constant	0.12 (14.93)	0.30 (24.83)	0.10 (12.30)	0.24 (20.30)	0.25 (21.55)
Observations	9087.5	9087.5	9087.5	9087.5	9087.5

*Note:* Separate OLS regressions for models (1)–(5). Regression coefficients shown with corresponding  $t$ -statistic in parentheses. All regressions are weighted using YouGov's survey weights.

Note first that the constant term in each regression measures the proportion of respondents in treatment group A (closed-list ballot and no endorsements) who selected a given party (12% for the Greens, 30% for Labour, 10% for the Liberal Democrats, 24% for the Conservatives and 25% for UKIP). These proportions differ somewhat from the results of the 2014 election,<sup>31</sup> but they are quite close to the average of six polls that took place in 2013 (the year we ran our survey).<sup>32</sup> This highlights the representativeness of our sample,

<sup>31</sup>In the final polling, the vote shares were 8% for the Greens, 25% for Labour, 7% for the Liberal Democrats, 24% for the Conservatives and 27.5% for UKIP.

<sup>32</sup>The average of these six polls for each party is as follows: Greens, 5%; Labour, 32%; Liberal Democrats,

suggests that our hypothetical ballot accesses the same preferences as more standard vote intention questions, and reinforces the external validity of our survey experiment.

The regressions indicate that neither the ballot type nor the endorsement information has an independent effect on vote choice: in none of the five regressions does either coefficient approach statistical significance. The insignificant coefficients on “Open-list” indicate that among respondents who were not shown any endorsement information about the candidates (treatment groups A and B), ballot type did not affect party vote choice on average. This makes sense, given that respondents have no reason to prefer individual fictional candidates unless they know something about them. The insignificant coefficients on “With information” similarly indicate that among respondents who were shown closed-list ballots (treatment groups A and C), the provision of endorsement information does not affect party vote choice on average. This is reassuring evidence that the endorsement information we provided roughly comports with voters’ perceptions of the parties and thus that our evidence may be informative about what would happen if open lists were introduced.

We now turn to the interaction term in the regressions in Table 2, which indicates how the effect of ballot type differs between the informed group (treatment groups C and D) and the uninformed group (treatment groups A and B).<sup>33</sup> The interaction term is significant only for the Conservatives (who gain from open lists) and UKIP (who lose). This finding is consistent with HYPOTHESES 1 and 2 above, which predicted that UKIP would lose support because of its unified position on European integration while the mainstream parties would not see much net exchange of votes. The Conservatives appear to benefit at UKIP’s expense because of the parties’ relative proximity on other issues; we will further examine this interpretation below. As can be expected from a randomized experiment, these results do not depend at all on whether we include a large set of respondent characteristics (respondent’s attitude toward Europe, socio-demographic characteristics, and previous vote choice) in the regression.

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11%; Conservatives, 23%; UKIP, 23% (UK Polling Report, 2014). The lower result for the Greens in other 2013 surveys may be due to the fact that other small parties were excluded from our survey.

<sup>33</sup>Given the absence of an effect for the uninformed group, this approximates the effect of changing the ballot type conditional on endorsement information being provided.

Figure 4 presents the same results graphically. Based on the findings above, we focus on the comparison of vote choice in treatment groups C and D (i.e. those who were given the endorsement information).<sup>34</sup> As seen in Figure 4, the Conservative Party gains about 6 percentage points (a 26% increase in vote share, with 95% confidence interval [.12, .40]) from a move to open-list competition. The mirror image of this shift is a corresponding decrease in vote shares for UKIP, which loses about 7 percentage points (a 26% decrease in vote share, with 95% confidence interval [-.38, -.14]). Consistent with HYPOTHESIS 2, we find no sizeable or significant effect for any of the other parties, i.e. Labour, Liberal Democrats, and the Greens. Figure S12 in the appendix depicts party vote shares in all four treatment conditions.

#### B. SUBSAMPLE ANALYSIS: INTERACTIONS WITH RESPONDENTS’ PARTY IDENTIFICATION AND STANCE ON EUROPE

Our theoretical analysis made clear that we do not expect the effect of ballot type to be uniform across all voters. Specifically, we expect voters with preferences close to a mainstream party on one dimension, but close to the niche party on a cross-cutting dimension, to be most likely to change party when moving from closed to open lists (assuming that the candidates of the mainstream party differentiate). This subsection examines which voters in our experiment are most affected by the change in ballot type and, in particular, if these effects interact with respondents’ party identification and stance on European integration.

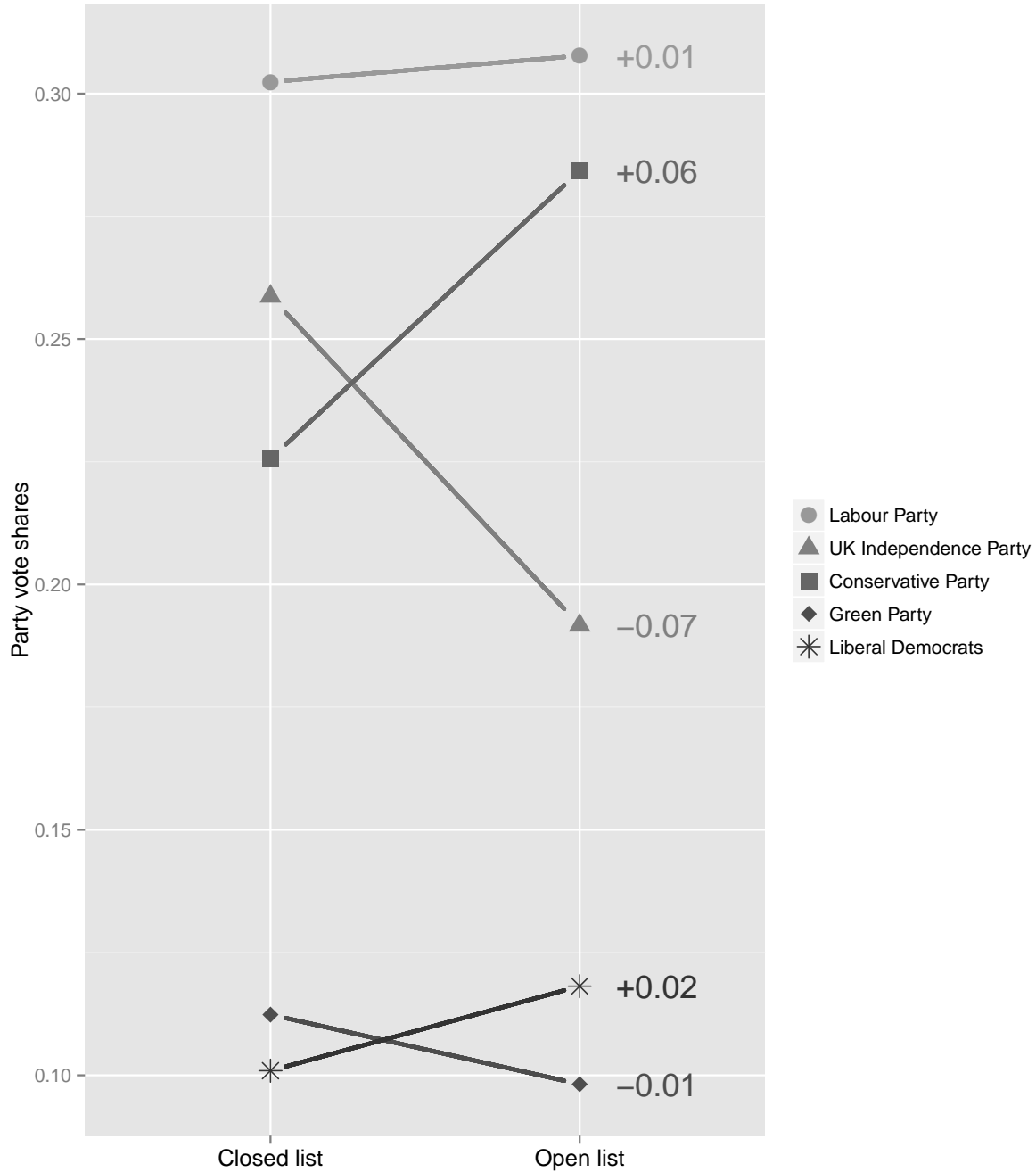
Prior to participating in our experiment, survey respondents were asked, “If there were a general election held tomorrow, which party would you vote for?” To understand which voters are affected by ballot type, we run the same analysis as above (a separate regression for each party, measuring the effects of ballot type, information provision, and interaction) while subsetting the analysis by respondents’ party identification. The resulting 25 estimates are presented in Table S6 in the appendix and compactly visualized in Figure 5.

The results for the different party identifiers give rise to a more detailed picture. Focus-

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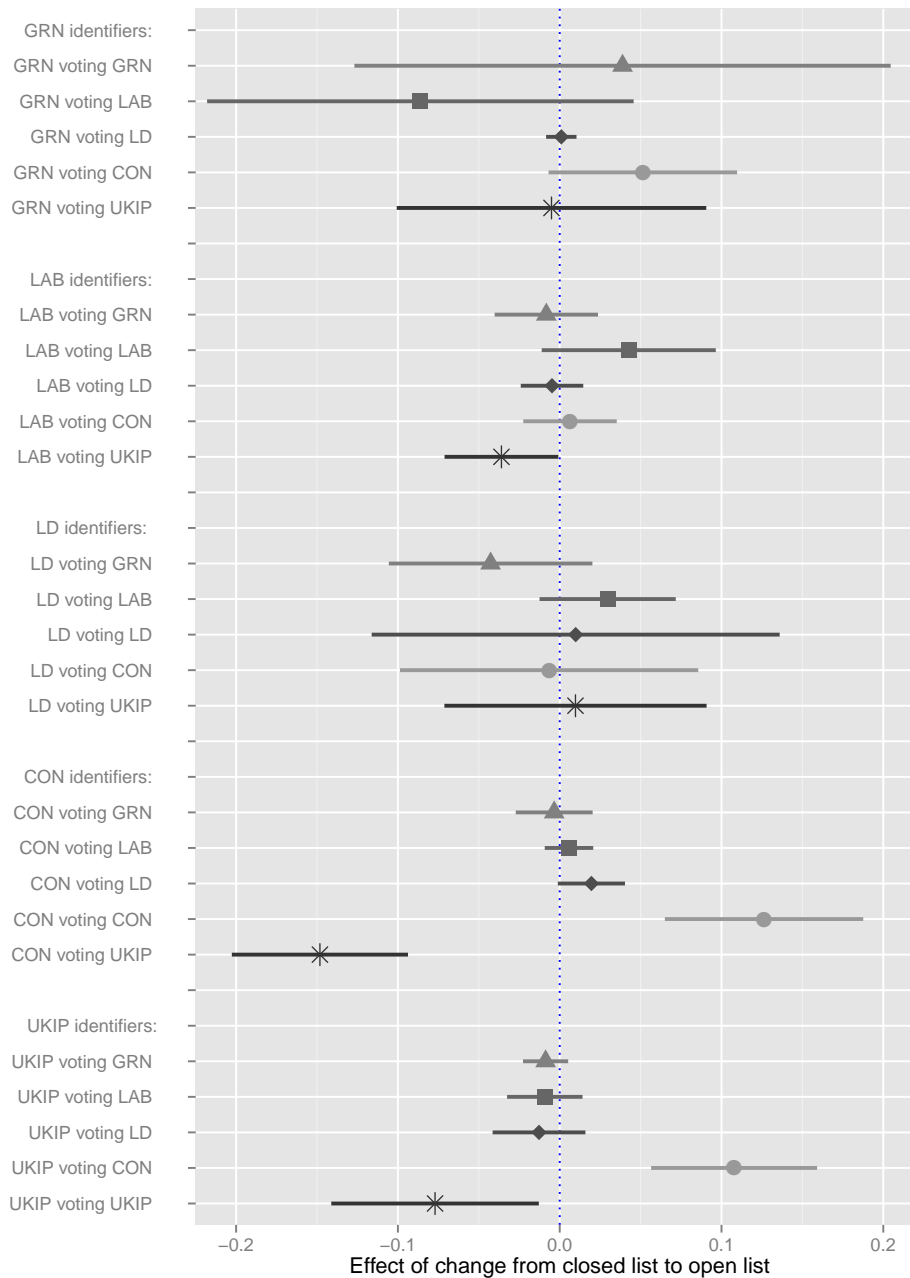
<sup>34</sup>As can be seen from Table 2, the results are almost identical if we compare treatment groups A and D.

Figure 4: Effect of change from closed-list to open-list ballots on party vote shares



NOTE: Changes in party vote shares when moving from closed lists to open lists, given endorsement information. While the increase (decrease) for the Conservative Party (UKIP) is highly significant, the much smaller shifts for Labour, the Liberal Democrats and the Greens are not statistically different from 0. All estimates are weighted using YouGov's survey weights.

Figure 5: Effects of change from closed-list to open-list ballots, by respondents' party identification



NOTE: Changes in party vote shares when moving from closed-list to open-list ballots, given endorsement information. Point estimates and 95 % confidence intervals from 25 separate OLS regressions for each party vote share and each subsample of respondents identifying with one of the five main parties. All estimates are weighted using YouGov's survey weights.

ing on respondents who identify with the Conservatives, we see that they are 13 percentage points *more* likely to vote for the Conservatives in our experimental EU parliamentary election when given an open-list ballot than when given a closed-list ballot, assuming the provision of endorsements ( $p < 0.01$ , two-tailed test). Similarly, the same group of Tory identifiers is 15 percentage points *less* likely to vote for UKIP ( $p < 0.01$ , two-tailed test). Again, we find pretty much a mirror image for respondents who identify with UKIP: they are 11 percentage points *more* likely to vote for the Conservatives under open-list ( $p < 0.01$ , two-tailed test) and, correspondingly, 8 percentage points *less* likely to vote UKIP ( $p < 0.02$ , two-tailed test). Hence, it is worth noting that the increase in support for the Conservatives comes not only from Conservative identifiers who can now vote for Eurosceptic candidates of their preferred party, but also (though to a lesser degree)<sup>35</sup> from UKIP identifiers who would vote for specific Conservative candidates if they had the chance to do so. Almost all other 21 regression estimates are small in substantive terms and not significantly different from 0. The only exception is that Labour identifiers appear to be marginally less likely to support UKIP, which is consistent with the idea that some Eurosceptic Labour voters vote UKIP under closed lists but Labour under open lists.

Having established that most of the action takes place among Conservative and UKIP voters, we now turn our focus on the interaction of ballot type and respondents' position on Europe for these two parties. Respondents' stance on European integration is measured using an 11-point question ranging from "strongly opposed to British membership of the EU" (0) to "strongly support further British integration in the EU" (10).<sup>36</sup> For the analysis, we recode this item in three binary indicators: ANTI EU for values between 0–3, NEUTRAL for values between 4–6, and PRO EU for values between 7–10. Figure 6 displays the results from separate OLS regressions for the three groups ANTI EU, NEUTRAL, and PRO EU for the Conservative party and UKIP, respectively.

The pattern that emerges could not be clearer: Respondents who support a further

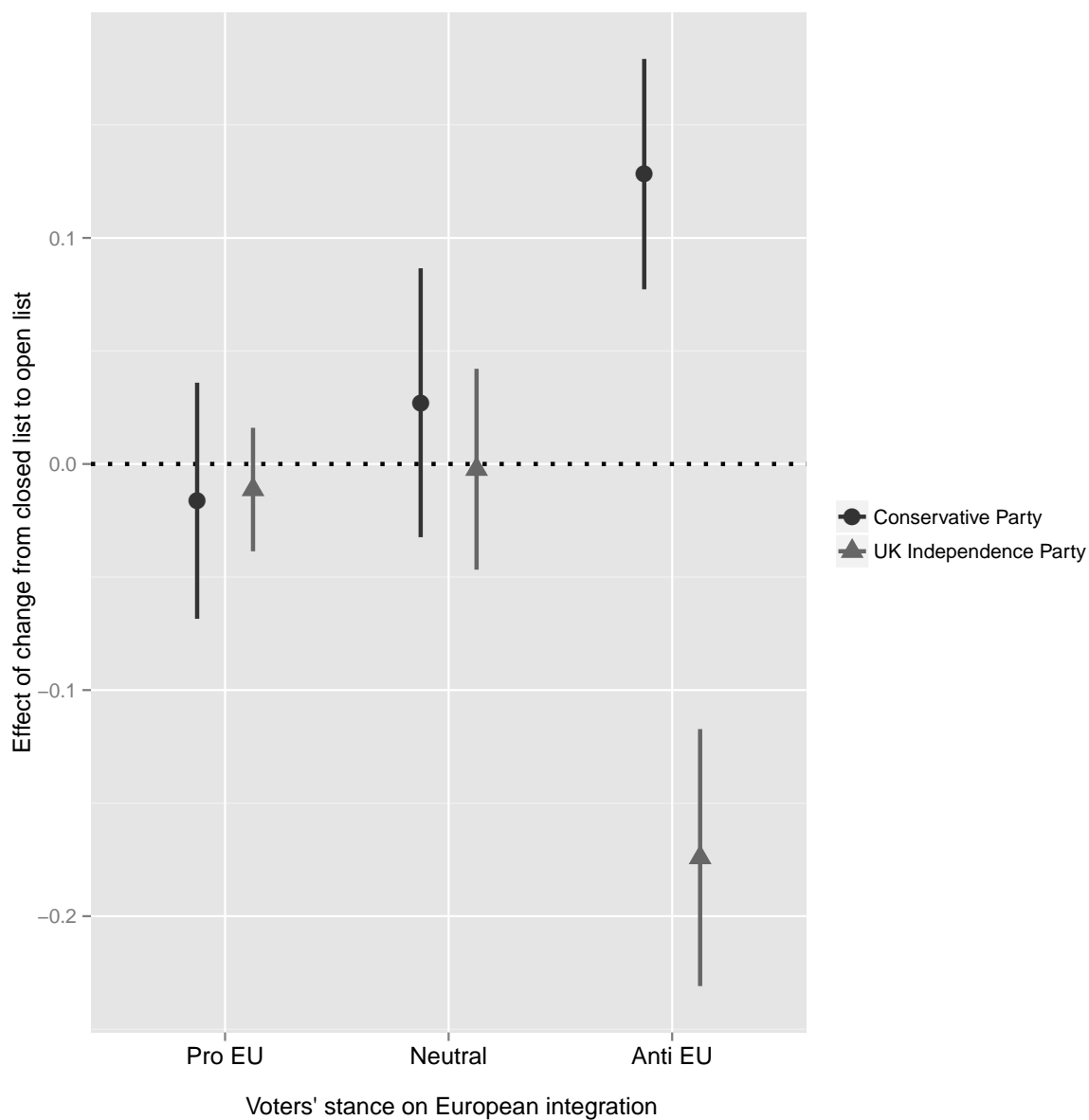
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<sup>35</sup>The magnitude of the effect of ballot type on propensity to vote Conservative is similar for Conservative and UKIP identifiers, but the number of Conservative identifiers is much larger (33% vs. 12%).

<sup>36</sup>This question was administered prior to assigning respondents to the different treatment conditions.



Figure 6: Effects of change from closed-list to open-list ballots, by respondents' stance on Europe



NOTE: Changes in party vote shares when moving from closed-list to open-list ballots, given endorsement information. Point estimates and 95 % confidence intervals from OLS regressions for the Conservative and UKIP vote share, separately estimated for pro-European, neutral, and Eurosceptic respondents. All estimates are weighted using YouGov's survey weights.

integration of Britain in the EU<sup>37</sup> do not change their voting behaviour depending on the ballot type at all, and the effect among respondents who are neutral is small and not significant. However, among Eurosceptic respondents—about 45 % of all Conservative voters and 77 % of all UKIP voters—the shift from closed-list to open-list has major consequences: the vote share for the Conservatives increases by almost 13 percentage points ( $p < 0.01$ , two-tailed test) and the vote share for UKIP decreases by more than 17 percentage points ( $p < 0.01$ , two-tailed test).

To summarize, the subsample analysis confirms that the shift in vote shares from UKIP to the Conservative Party comes from Eurosceptic voters who identify with either the Conservatives or UKIP. This offers further support for our argument about intra-party disagreement and ballot type.

## VI. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Which parties win and lose when a closed-list PR system (such as the one Britain uses to elect its MEPs) is changed to an open-list system? We used a simple framework to assess how such a change would affect parties with different levels of internal disagreement on salient issues; we conclude that whether we think of voters as expressive or strategic, a change from closed lists to open lists is likely to be more beneficial to parties that have relatively high levels of internal disagreement on salient issues. We carried out a survey experiment that assessed this prediction in the case of U.K. elections to the European Parliament, where the solidly Eurosceptic UKIP competes against mainstream parties that are more internally divided on European integration. We suggest that, just as UKIP lost support from the adoption of open lists in our experiment, niche parties (who mobilize on an issue that cuts across the main dimension of party competition) would likely lose support from the adoption of open lists in a broader set of circumstances.

It should be noted that our analysis only addresses the most direct and immediate effect of a move from closed-list to open-list PR. That is, we have shown how the effect

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<sup>37</sup>Naturally, the fraction of respondents who vote UKIP and are pro-European is very small, only 4 % of all UKIP voters in our sample. For more details see next section.

of ballot type depends on existing intra-party disagreement, but we have not addressed the question of how ballot type would affect intra-party disagreement itself, or how parties would respond more broadly to the introduction of intra-party competition. By placing each party's candidates in competition with each other, the open-list system is likely to encourage differentiation among candidates. For the reasons we discussed in Section II, a party whose candidates are more distinct from one another may attract voters from more unified parties in open-list competition; voters may, however, punish such a party for appearing incoherent and disorganized. Thus the implications of reform for parties' electoral success become less clear when we consider that parties' internal disagreement would likely respond to the ballot type, and that this response will vary across parties. In this sense, additional observational studies should be carried out to assess the total effect of ballot type reforms in practice. On the other hand, observational studies of electoral reforms face substantial obstacles not only because reforms are rare and endogenous, but also because it is difficult to explain *how* such a reform affects political outcomes given the many possible channels through which such effects might operate.

As discussed above, one clear challenge to external validity of any experiment like ours is the difficulty of reproducing the relevant aspects of an electoral campaign within the constraints of a survey. In our case, it could be argued that our estimates exaggerate the true likely effects of a change in ballot type (even holding fixed intra-party disagreement) because our respondents are given unrealistically clear and stark information about candidates' policy positions. To be sure, an official ballot would not include endorsement information from two opposing NGOs; in a real open-list campaign, we would expect candidates to blur some policy differences and we would not expect most voters to know most candidates' positions. (We might also expect UKIP to point out that voting for a Eurosceptic Conservative could end up giving a seat to a pro-Europe Conservative.) On the other hand, voters in a real election would have more time to process information and, given the chance to cast an open-list ballot for an individual candidate, they may be drawn into the drama of intra-party disputes, which would tend to increase the effect we measure.

We look forward to future research, including observational studies of electoral reforms, that helps determine whether our estimates provide an upper bound of the actual effect. At any rate, even if the true effect were substantially smaller than our estimate it would still deserve attention: we estimate that with a swing half as large as the one we find in our experiment, the Conservatives would still have gained an additional 4 seats out of 73 UK-wide.

The context on which we focus, where an insurgent anti-integrationist party competes against mainstream parties for seats in the European Parliament, has clear analogues in other European countries. For example, the Alternative for Germany Party, the Front National in France, and JOBBIK in Hungary all promote anti-integrationist policies that differentiate them from the main center-right parties in each country. Elections in these countries also take place under closed lists, but in recent years key figures have called for open lists to be adopted in all European Parliament elections.<sup>38</sup> While we should be cautious about applying the results of our experiment to other party systems, our analysis suggests that such a reform could noticeably boost mainstream parties in European elections and thus cause a substantial shift in the strength of party groups in the European Parliament; the broader effects of introducing open list elections on the policies pursued by the various parties remains for future research.

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<sup>38</sup>Duff (2011)

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APPENDIX  
S7. FIGURES

Figure S7: Print screen from closed-list without candidate information treatment

Parties will be awarded seats on the basis of how many votes they receive. If a party is awarded one seat, the first candidate listed for that party will win a seat; if the party is awarded two seats, the first two candidates listed will win seats, etc.

**Election for the European Parliament**

Vote for one of the parties below.






			Vote Choice
1	<b>Conservative Party</b> 	1. Evelyn Preston	<input type="radio"/>
		2. Dom Courtney	
		3. Ken Chase	
2	<b>The Green Party</b>  Green Party	1. Kimberley Franks	<input type="radio"/>
		2. Andy Kingsley	
		3. Andrew Linden	
3	<b>The Labour Party</b> 	1. Jessica Hunter	<input type="radio"/>
		2. Kenny Greene	
		3. Richard Grey	
4	<b>Liberal Democrats</b> 	1. Nigel Wyatt	<input type="radio"/>
		2. Christine Kendall	
		3. Harry Stern	
5	<b>United Kingdom Independence Party</b> 	1. Rosie Travers	<input type="radio"/>
		2. Rowan Jarod	
		3. Conor O'Brien	



Figure S8: Print screen from closed-list with candidate information treatment

Parties will be awarded seats on the basis of how many votes they receive. If a party is awarded one seat, the first candidate listed for that party will win a seat; if the party is awarded two seats, the first two candidates listed will win seats, etc.

## Election for the European Parliament

Vote for one of the parties below.






			Endorsements		
			Vote Choice	Britain in Europe	Britain Out of Europe
1	<b>Conservative Party</b> 	1. Evelyn Preston	○	✓	
		2. Ken Chase			
		3. Richard Grey			✓
2	<b>The Green Party</b>  Green Party	1. Conor O'Brien	○		✓
		2. Rosie Travers			
		3. Nigel Wyatt		✓	
3	<b>The Labour Party</b> 	1. Dom Courtney	○	✓	
		2. Rowan Jarod			✓
		3. Kimberley Franks			
4	<b>Liberal Democrats</b> 	1. Andy Kingsley	○		✓
		2. Christine Kendall			
		3. Andrew Linden		✓	
5	<b>United Kingdom Independence Party</b> 	1. Kenny Greene	○		✓
		2. Jessica Hunter			✓
		3. Harry Stern			✓

Figure S9: Print screen from open-list without candidate information treatment

Parties will be awarded seats on the basis of how many votes their candidates collectively receive. If a party is awarded one seat, the candidate from that party who receives the most votes will win a seat; if the party is awarded two seats, the two candidates from that party who receive the most votes will win seats, etc.

## Election for the European Parliament

Vote for one of the candidates below.





			Vote Choice
1	<b>Conservative Party</b> 	1. Richard Grey	<input type="radio"/>
		2. Conor O'Brien	<input type="radio"/>
		3. Jessica Hunter	<input type="radio"/>
2	<b>The Green Party</b>  Green Party	1. Dom Courtney	<input type="radio"/>
		2. Andy Kingsley	<input type="radio"/>
		3. Kimberley Franks	<input type="radio"/>
3	<b>The Labour Party</b> 	1. Christine Kendall	<input type="radio"/>
		2. Rowan Jarod	<input type="radio"/>
		3. Andrew Linden	<input type="radio"/>
4	<b>Liberal Democrats</b>  LIBERAL DEMOCRATS	1. Kenny Greene	<input type="radio"/>
		2. Nigel Wyatt	<input type="radio"/>
		3. Rosie Travers	<input type="radio"/>
5	<b>United Kingdom Independence Party</b> 	1. Ken Chase	<input type="radio"/>
		2. Harry Stern	<input type="radio"/>
		3. Evelyn Preston	<input type="radio"/>

Figure S10: Print screen from open-list with candidate information treatment

Parties will be awarded seats on the basis of how many votes their candidates collectively receive. If a party is awarded one seat, the candidate from that party who receives the most votes will win a seat; if the party is awarded two seats, the two candidates from that party who receive the most votes will win seats, etc.

### Election for the European Parliament

Vote for one of the candidates below.






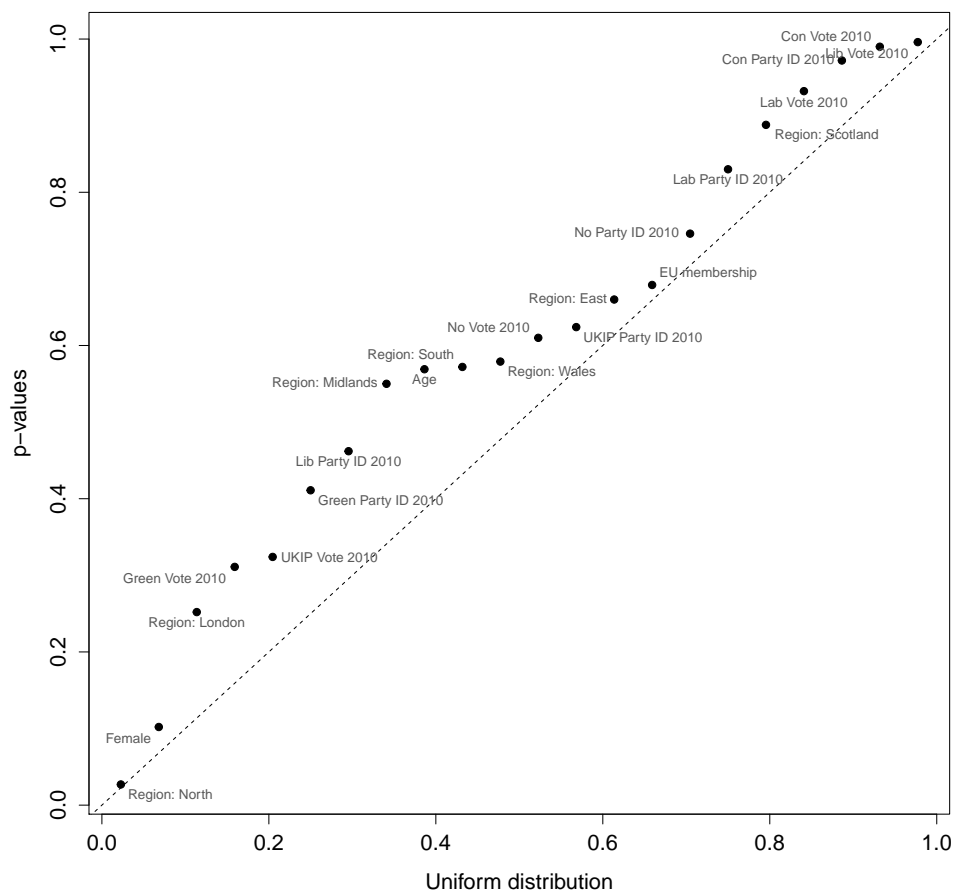
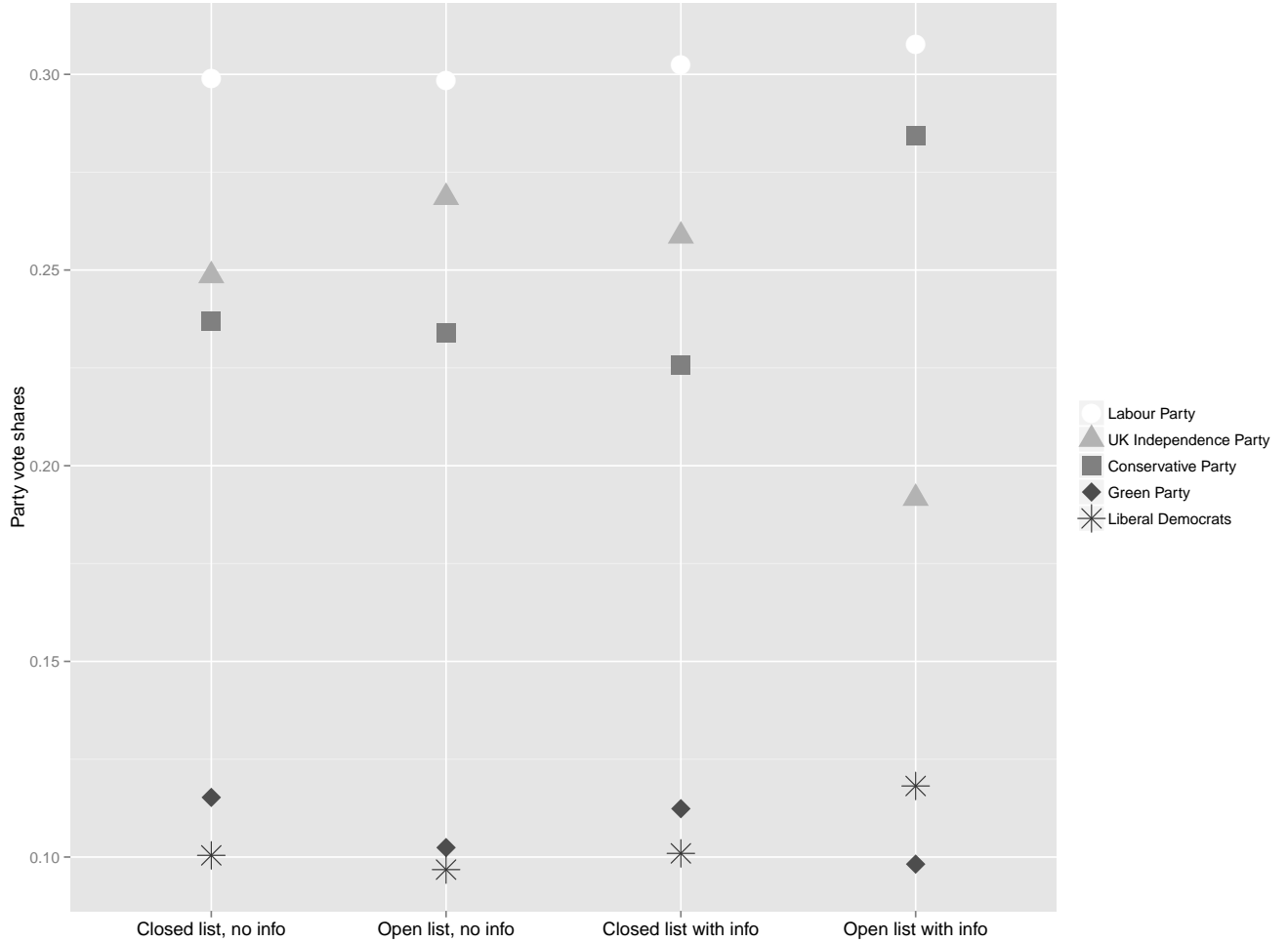
			Endorsements		
			Vote Choice	Britain in Europe	Britain Out of Europe
1	<b>Conservative Party</b> 	1. Conor O'Brien	<input type="radio"/>		✓
		2. Christine Kendall	<input type="radio"/>		
		3. Harry Stern	<input type="radio"/>	✓	
2	<b>The Green Party</b> 	1. Jessica Hunter	<input type="radio"/>	✓	
		2. Richard Grey	<input type="radio"/>		
		3. Dom Courtney	<input type="radio"/>		✓
3	<b>The Labour Party</b> 	1. Kimberley Franks	<input type="radio"/>		
		2. Nigel Wyatt	<input type="radio"/>	✓	
		3. Kenny Greene	<input type="radio"/>		✓
4	<b>Liberal Democrats</b> 	1. Ken Chase	<input type="radio"/>		✓
		2. Evelyn Preston	<input type="radio"/>		
		3. Andy Kingsley	<input type="radio"/>	✓	
5	<b>United Kingdom Independence Party</b> 	1. Rosie Travers	<input type="radio"/>		✓
		2. Andrew Linden	<input type="radio"/>		✓
		3. Rowan Jarod	<input type="radio"/>		✓

Figure S11: Quantile-quantile plot of empirical distribution of  $p$ -values against uniform  
**Empirical distribution of  $p$ -values against uniform distribution**



NOTE: The quantile-quantile plot shows the empirical distribution of the  $p$ -values calculated from a joint  $F$ -test of no differences between the 22 covariate means against the theoretically expected uniform distribution. All  $p$ -values are above the 45 degree line indicating that randomization was successfully implemented. All estimates are weighted using YouGov's survey weights.

Figure S12: Party vote shares in each of the four treatment conditions



NOTE: The only significant differences in party vote share across treatment conditions are for the Conservatives and UKIP between the open-list with information condition, and the other conditions. This indicates that neither the provision of information nor open lists on their own affect party vote choice.

Table S3: Internal party EU dissent/conflict

	(1) EU Dissent
High-Salience	-0.62 (-2.62)
Constant	2.89 (27.45)
Observations	200

*Note:* Regression coefficients shown with corresponding t-statistic in parentheses.

Table S4: Vote shares of candidates and respondents' stance on European integration

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Vote shares of candidates by party					
Party	GRN	LAB	LD	CON	UKIP
Pro EU	0.48	0.48	0.55	0.26	0
Neutral	0.21	0.18	0.21	0.22	0
Anti EU	0.31	0.34	0.24	0.52	1
Observations	219	686	263	634	427
Respondents' self-placement by party					
	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)
Party	GRN	LAB	LD	CON	UKIP
Pro EU	0.40	0.37	0.45	0.14	0.04
Neutral	0.39	0.39	0.40	0.41	0.20
Anti EU	0.21	0.25	0.15	0.45	0.77
Observations	219	686	263	634	427

*Note:* Models 1–5 present the votes shares of pro-European, neutral and Eurosceptic candidates by party under open-list with information. Models 6–10 present the shares of survey respondents that are pro-European, neutral and Eurosceptic that identify with a particular party. All estimates are weighted using YouGov's survey weights.

Table S5: Balance tests over covariate means

Covariates	Closed / No	Closed / With	Open / No	Open / with	<i>p</i> -value
EU membership	4.36	4.48	4.44	4.38	0.68
Female	0.49	0.51	0.52	0.53	0.10
Age	46.49	46.45	47.25	46.77	0.57
Lab Party ID 2010	0.33	0.32	0.32	0.33	0.83
Con Party ID 2010	0.28	0.28	0.29	0.29	0.97
Lib Party ID 2010	0.11	0.13	0.12	0.12	0.46
Green Party ID 2010	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.41
UKIP Party ID 2010	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.62
No Party ID 2010	0.21	0.20	0.20	0.19	0.75
Lab Vote 2010	0.26	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.93
Con Vote 2010	0.29	0.30	0.30	0.29	0.99
Lib Vote 2010	0.21	0.21	0.21	0.22	0.99
Green Vote 2010	0.01	0.01	0.00	0.01	0.31
UKIP Vote 2010	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.02	0.32
No Vote 2010	0.16	0.17	0.16	0.15	0.61
Region: North	0.24	0.24	0.28	0.23	0.03
Region: Midlands	0.17	0.17	0.16	0.15	0.55
Region: East	0.10	0.10	0.09	0.10	0.66
Region: London	0.13	0.14	0.11	0.13	0.25
Region: South	0.23	0.22	0.23	0.24	0.57
Region: Wales	0.05	0.05	0.05	0.05	0.58
Region: Scotland	0.09	0.08	0.08	0.09	0.89
Sample Size	2251.25	2259.53	2346.71	2230.01	

*Note:* Table reports means values in the four experimental treatments (“Closed / No” denotes closed list and no information provided on candidates’ positions on Europe; “Open / with” denotes open-list and information provided on candidates’ positions on Europe) along with *p*-values corresponding to the test of the null hypothesis that the four means are the same. All estimates, including the effective sample size, are weighted using YouGov’s survey weights.

Table S6: Party vote shares by treatment, subset by voters' party identification

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)	(11)	(12)	(13)
Voters' party ID	CON	CON	CON	CON	CON	GRN	GRN	GRN	GRN	GRN	LAB	LAB	LAB
Party vote share	CON	GRN	LAB	LD	UKIP	CON	GRN	LAB	LD	UKIP	CON	GRN	LAB
Open-list	-0.01 (-0.29)	-0.00 (-0.22)	0.00 (1.70)	-0.02 (-2.07)	0.03 (1.00)	-0.02 (-0.45)	0.10 (1.58)	-0.02 (-1.40)	-0.07 (-1.62)	0.01 (0.48)	0.00 (0.70)	-0.02 (-1.13)	-0.00 (-0.04)
With information	-0.06 (-1.72)	0.01 (0.93)	0.00 (1.33)	-0.01 (-1.23)	0.06 (1.82)	-0.03 (-1.02)	-0.01 (-0.14)	0.10 (1.58)	-0.08 (-1.99)	0.03 (0.96)	0.02 (2.03)	0.00 (0.03)	-0.04 (-1.31)
Open × information	0.14 (3.00)	-0.00 (-0.11)	0.00 (0.32)	0.04 (2.78)	-0.18 (-4.30)	0.07 (1.48)	-0.06 (-0.58)	-0.06 (-0.89)	0.07 (1.63)	-0.02 (-0.32)	0.00 (0.09)	0.01 (0.41)	0.04 (1.17)
Constant	0.75 (31.10)	0.02 (3.35)	0.00 (0.00)	0.03 (2.80)	0.20 (9.14)	0.03 (1.02)	0.85 (15.68)	0.02 (1.40)	0.09 (2.06)	0.01 (1.15)	0.01 (2.09)	0.08 (7.10)	0.80 (43.82)
Observations	2251	2251	2251	2251	2251	170	170	170	170	170	2751	2751	2751

	(14)	(15)	(16)	(17)	(18)	(19)	(20)	(21)	(22)	(23)	(24)	(25)
Voters' party ID	LAB	LAB	LD	LD	LD	LD	LD	UKIP	UKIP	UKIP	UKIP	UKIP
Party vote share	LD	UKIP	CON	GRN	LAB	LD	UKIP	CON	GRN	LAB	LD	UKIP
Open-list	-0.00 (-0.06)	0.01 (0.74)	0.03 (1.16)	-0.03 (-0.58)	0.02 (0.77)	-0.04 (-0.66)	0.01 (0.39)	0.00 (0.26)	0.00 (0.84)	-0.02 (-1.29)	0.00 (0.16)	0.01 (0.32)
With information	0.00 (0.30)	0.01 (0.50)	0.05 (1.33)	-0.03 (-0.83)	-0.02 (-1.00)	-0.03 (-0.56)	0.03 (0.90)	-0.00 (-0.70)	0.01 (1.65)	-0.00 (-0.26)	0.01 (0.55)	-0.01 (-0.54)
Open × information	-0.00 (-0.30)	-0.05 (-1.92)	-0.04 (-0.72)	-0.02 (-0.26)	0.01 (0.13)	0.05 (0.56)	-0.00 (-0.01)	0.11 (3.94)	-0.01 (-1.49)	0.01 (0.41)	-0.02 (-0.67)	-0.08 (-2.10)
Constant	0.02 (3.00)	0.08 (6.21)	0.03 (1.88)	0.13 (4.64)	0.03 (2.10)	0.76 (20.13)	0.04 (2.30)	0.01 (1.41)	0.00 (1.00)	0.02 (1.65)	0.01 (1.01)	0.96 (53.29)
Observations	2751	2751	717	717	717	717	717	833	833	833	833	833

Note: Separate OLS regressions for models 1–25. Regression coefficients shown with corresponding  $t$ -statistic in parentheses. All regressions are weighted using YouGov's survey weights.



## S9. ASSESSING STRATEGIC VOTING IN THE EXPERIMENT

Our analysis considered the effect of ballot type under the assumption that voters are either expressive or strategic. To the extent that our survey respondents acted like strategic voters, we might expect to see an effect of ballot order in the closed list component of our experiment. In particular, under closed lists we might expect Eurosceptic voters to be more likely to vote Conservative when a Eurosceptic candidate is nearer to the top of the Conservative party list. That is, a right-leaning Eurosceptic voter might focus on two pivotal events: the one in which she casts the decisive vote between a UKIP candidate and a non-Eurosceptic candidate from another party, and the one in which she casts the decisive vote between a Eurosceptic Conservative candidate and a non-Eurosceptic candidate from another major party. Note that the probability of the second pivotal event depends crucially on the order in which the Conservative candidates are listed. A sophisticated voter would recognize that the Conservatives are likely to win either 0 or 1 seat in this (hypothetical) election, very unlikely to win 2 seats, and extremely unlikely to win all 3 seats. Thus the pivotal event of electing a Eurosceptic Conservative is most likely when the Eurosceptic Conservative candidate is at the top of the party list, less likely when that candidate is in the middle of the list, and vanishingly unlikely if the candidate is at the bottom of the list. It follows that such a voter would be more likely to vote Conservative under closed lists when the Eurosceptic Conservative is higher on the party list.

Table S7 indicates that we do not see this pattern in the aggregate: support for the Conservatives and UKIP among Eurosceptic voters under closed lists does not depend significantly on whether the Eurosceptic Conservative is near the top of the party list. We find similar null effects for all other parties.

Table S7: Position of Eurosceptic candidate on Conservative list

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Party	CON	CON	CON	UKIP	UKIP	UKIP
Outcome	Vote Shares					
Eurosceptic 1st	0.01 (0.29)			-0.01 (-0.15)		
Eurosceptic 2nd		0.04 (1.02)			0.06 (1.27)	
Eurosceptic 1st or 2nd			0.05 (1.41)			0.05 (1.13)
Constant	0.20 (9.94)	0.19 (9.62)	0.17 (6.46)	0.55 (21.50)	0.53 (21.52)	0.52 (14.80)
Observations	906	906	906	906	906	906

*Note:* Separate OLS regressions for models (1)–(6). Regression coefficients shown with corresponding  $t$ -statistic in parentheses. All regressions are weighted using YouGov’s survey weights. The subsample used for this analysis focuses on Eurosceptic voters under the closed-list with information treatment condition. EUROSEPTIC 1ST = 1 indicates that the first candidate on the Conservative party list is endorsed by “Britain Out of Europe”, EUROSEPTIC 2ND = 1 that the second candidate on the party list is a Eurosceptic, and EUROSEPTIC 1ST OR 2ND = 1 that either of the first two candidates is Eurosceptic.

The simplest explanation for this non-finding is that voters in our experiment tended to act in an expressive way rather than carefully considering likely election outcomes. It is also possible that they do consider election outcomes but their expectations about the likely outcomes are so diffuse that we fail to see effects in the aggregate, whether because they tend not to agree about likely voting outcomes or they do not understand how voting outcomes maps to electoral outcomes. Perhaps there would be more strategic behavior in a real election in which voters are exposed to messages by strategic activists and campaign officials.