Ballot structure, list flexibility and policy representation

Ballot Structure, List Flexibility and Policy Representation

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Abstract

There is a growing body of research on the impact of the electoral system "ballot structure" on the behaviour of politicians. We offer a clear, ordinal, and rules-based three-way coding (closed, flexible, open) of the electoral systems used in European Parliament elections, taking into account both the ballot type and the intra-party seat-allocation rules. For the notoriously difficult group of flexible list-systems, we show how these operated in the 2004, 2009 and 2014 elections, and introduce an additional behavioural distinction between "weakly flexible" and "strongly flexible" subtypes at the party-list-level. We then illustrate how the type of ballot used in an election can influence individual policy representation by looking at the vote-splits between MEPs in the European People's Party in a vote on tackling homophobia.

Keywords: ballot structure, electoral systems, European Parliament election, parliamentary voting, personal vote, representation

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While the EU treaty demands that European Parliament elections shall be held "in accordance with a uniform procedure in all Member States" (Art. 223), in practice the only main commonality is the use of some form of proportional representation (PR) electoral system. While PR is now used in all EU member states, a wide variety of ballot structures and intra-party seat allocation methods are used. In addition to "closed" list PR and "fully open" list systems – the latter allocate seats within parties entirely on the basis of candidate votes (cp. Shugart 2005: 41-44) – we also find several of the notoriously hard to classify "flexible" list systems (André et al. 2015; Bräuninger et al. 2012). In order to arrive at a simple dichotomy, scholars often subsume flexible list systems under either the open or closed list type (e.g. Carey and Shugart 1995; Chang and Golden 2007; Hix 2004). A more nuanced classification of the electoral systems used in EP elections on the intra-party dimension was introduced by Farrell and Scully (2007, see also Bowler and Farrell 2011; Farrell and Scully 2010). With better information now available, some of Farrell and Scully's coding decisions can be updated and revised.

We hence complement existing work in three ways. First, we offer a country-level, ordinal, and input-based three-way classification (closed, flexible, open) of electoral systems used in European Parliament elections, based on clear criteria for coding the institutional rules regarding ballot type and intra-party seat-allocation.

Second, we add to the literature on the, not well understood, flexible list systems (André et al. 2015; Crisp et al. 2013; Renwick and Pilet 2016). We discuss how detailed seat-allocation rules influence the extent of the "flexibility" of a ballot. Using actual personal vote results, we show how flexible list systems operated in the three most recent European Parliament elections, and introduce an outcome-based distinction between *weakly* flexible (more like closed lists) and *strongly* flexible (more like open lists) subtypes at the party-list-level.

Third, we illustrate how the different ballot types can influence individual policy representation. Previous research has shown that ballot structure affects incentives for politicians to compete within parties on the basis of personalized campaigning, constituency work and particularistic spending (e.g. Bowler and Farrell 2011; Carey and Shugart 1995; Crisp et al. 2004; Franchino and Mainenti 2013). Hix (2004), in contrast, has examined the role of electoral systems in shaping the loyalty of Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) to national delegations as opposed to European party groups in parliamentary votes (see also Meserve et al. 2009). What neither of these approaches address, though, is whether giving voters more say in intra-party seat allocation leads to better representation of voters' policy preferences.

We introduce a theoretical argument suggesting that representatives try to avoid offending large groups of potential voters if they have to take a position on issues where the party (and its electorate) is internally divided. The empirical analysis hence considers a salient policy issue that is not linked to the main axes of the policy space in European politics: a vote in the European Parliament on EU policies tackling homophobia. We focus, in particular, on the centre-right European People's Party (EPP), whose MEPs not only form the largest political group but also faced a dilemma on gay rights; an issue where traditional morality and norms of equality were in conflict. The empirical results confirm our theoretical argument: open ballots facilitate individual policy representation, plus weakly and strongly flexible list systems influence the relationship between voters and MEPs differently.

Preferential list systems in European Parliament elections

Table 1 describes the features of all preferential list systems (list systems allowing for or requiring a candidate vote) used in the European Parliament elections in 2004, 2009 and 2014. Nineteen member states used a preferential list system in 2014, and most also did so in

Table 1: Preferential List-PR Systems used in the European Elections 2004, 2009 and 2014

Country	N_MEPs 2009; 2014	List length regulations (as for 2009)	Ranked list?	Number of pref. votes	Procedure for casting a list vote (as for 2009)	Procedure for casting a pref. vote (as for 2009)	Threshold; Further criteria for intra-party seat allocation	List type (system-level)
Cyprus	6; 6	<= N_MEPs	No	2	Incidental	Marking	(None); Tie: lot	Open
Denmark[1]	13; 13	<=20	No	1	Marking	Marking	(None); Tie: lot	Open
Finland	13; 13	<=20	No	1	Incidental	Writing number	(None); Tie: lot	Open
Greece (2014)	22; 21	<= 2*N_MEPs	No[3]	4	Selecting ballot	Marking	None; Tie: lot	Open
Luxembourg	6; 6	<= 2*N_MEPs	No	<= no of MEPs	Marking	Marking[5]	(None); Tie: lot	Open
Estonia (2004 and 2014)	6; 6	<=12	Yes	1	Incidental	Writing number	None; Tie: list rank	Open
Italy	72; 73	>=3, <= M	Yes	3[4]	Marking	Writing name	None; Tie: List rank	Open
Latvia	8; 8	<=2*N_MEPs	Yes	<= list length	Selecting ballot	Adding '+', striking name(s) out	None; + signs minus number of cancellations; Tie: List rank	Open
Lithuania[2]	12; 11	>=5, <= 2*N_MEPs	Yes	5	Marking	Writing number	None; Tie: List rank	Open
Poland	50; 51	>=5, <=10	Yes	1	Incidental	Marking	None; Tie: List rank	Open
Austria	17; 18	<= 42	Yes	1	Marking	Writing name	7% [2014: 5%]; List rank	Flexible
Belgium	22; 21	<= M	Yes	<= list length	Marking	Marking	100% /no of party seats plus one; Sum of preference votes and distributed list votes	Flexible
Bulgaria	17; 17	None	Yes	1	Selecting ballot	Writing number	15% [2014: 5%]; List rank	Flexible
Croatia	(12); 11	== N_MEPs	Yes	1	Marking	Marking	10%; List rank	Flexible
Czech Republic	22; 21	<=1.33*N_MEPs	Yes	2	Selecting ballot	Marking	5%; List rank	Flexible
Netherlands	25; 26	None	Yes	1	Incidental	Marking	10% of cross-party Hare quota; List rank	Flexible
Slovakia	13; 13	<= N_MEPs	Yes	2 [2004: 1]	Selecting ballot	Marking	10%; List rank	Flexible
Slovenia	7; 8	<= N_MEPs	Yes	1	Marking	Marking	100%/(2*N_candidates); list rank	Flexible
Sweden	18; 20	None	Yes	1	Selecting ballot	Marking	5%; List rank	Flexible

Notes:
Other systems used: Closed lists: Estonia (2009 only), France, Germany, Great Britain, Greece (2004 and 2009), Hungary, Portugal, Romania (EU member since 2007), Spain; Single transferable vote: Ireland, Malta, Northern Ireland.
[1] Parties can choose between the described system and a flexible list system (similar to the Belgian one). All parties that obtained a seat in any of the three elections used the described system.
[2] Parties can choose between the described system and a closed list system. All parties that obtained a seat in any of the three elections used the described system.

[3] Party leaders (if they run) are ranked at the top of the list, otherwise the order is alphabetical. Nb. As we understand the rules, the preferential treatment for party leaders only concerns the pre-electoral list ranking (Article 3 Paragraph 7 of law No 4255, State Gazette from 11 April 2014, states that the respective rules from national elections hold), not the seat allocation stage (Article 7 Paragraph 1), which is different from the rules applied to national elections in Greece. None of the parties winning seats in 2014 had included the party leader in their lists.
[4] A new rule introduced for the 2014 election states that the third preference vote is not valid if given to a candidate of the same gender as the candidates who receive the other two preference votes.
[5] Panachage (preferences to candidates of different lists) is possible.

Sources: Own coding of legislation provided in Gerbig (2010) and personal communication with election authorities, cross-checked with Stöver and Wüst 2006, Farrell and Scully 2007.

2004 and 2009. Changes between the elections occurred in Estonia (which had a closed list system in 2009, but moved back to the previous open list system in 2014) and Greece (which switched to an open list system in 2014). Not included in the table, but listed in the note below, are the 7 member states (in 2004 and 2014) and 9 (in 2009) that had closed lists, and the 2 member states and 1 region (Northern Ireland) that used a non-list single-transferable-vote system in all three elections. The table provides information on the number of MEPs elected in each member state, whether or not the party lists were pre-ordered by the parties (as opposed to the candidates being listed in alphabetical or random order), the legal regulations concerning the party list length, the number of preference votes that were allowed to be cast by a voter, the procedures for casting a party list or a preference vote, and how the seats were allocated to candidates within parties. The furthest right column in the table presents our basic rules-based classification of list type *at the system level*. This coding depends on whether the post-electoral ranking for intra-party seat allocation depends only on pre-electoral list rank (closed list), only on preference votes (open list), or a mixture of both (flexible list).[2] The first five entries of the table are "fully" open list systems, where parties present unranked lists of candidates and the post-electoral ranking of candidates is determined purely on the basis of the number of individual votes each candidate receives relative to the votes of the other candidates from the same list. Two of these cases (Cyprus and Finland) require a voter to vote for a candidate, whereas the other three (Denmark, Luxembourg, and Greece as for 2014) give voters the option to vote either for a candidate or a party list, thus delegating candidate choice to other voters.

The next five systems are, as we argue, similar to the first four systems in terms of intra-party seat allocation. In these systems, while party lists are pre-ordered, the pre-electoral

[2] Appendix A1 provides a comparison of our coding and that by Farrell and Scully (2007).

list ranking becomes relevant for the post-electoral order only in the (fairly unlikely) event of a tie in the number of preference votes. Therefore, we classify these systems as open.

We classify the remaining cases as “flexible lists”. In these cases, party lists are ranked and voters may either cast a vote for the party, or may indicate preferences for an individual candidate or several candidates, depending on the system. Any candidates whose number of preference votes surpasses a certain threshold are moved to the top of the post-electoral ranking (in the order of preference votes if there are several fulfilling the criterion), other candidates follow in the pre-electoral list order. The threshold is defined *relative to the number of citizens who vote for a party* (either by casting the ballot for the party or by casting a preference vote). Most member states employ a fixed threshold, as a per cent of the party vote: 5 per cent in the Czech Republic, Sweden, Austria (in 2014) and Bulgaria (in 2014); 7 per cent in Austria before 2014; 10 per cent in Croatia and Slovakia, and 15 per cent in Bulgaria before 2014. In Slovenia, the threshold depends on the length of the list (100 per cent of the party vote divided by twice the number of candidates on the list).

The case of the Netherlands differs slightly from the other flexible list systems, as there is no possibility to cast a party list vote. Here, the threshold is not defined relative to all votes of the candidate’s party, but relative to all votes cast across parties (10 per cent of the Hare quota – that is 10 per cent of all Dutch votes divided by the number of Dutch MEPs).

Finally, the prize for the most complicated system of assigning seats to candidates goes to Belgium! In this case of a “transfer type flexible list system” (Renwick and Pilet 2016: 26-28), candidates also need to clear a threshold for being moved to the top of the post-electoral ranking, but this threshold depends on the number of seats a party list obtains (the Droop quota – 100 per cent divided by the number of seats plus one). The post-electoral ranking of the remaining candidates is obtained after assigning some of the list votes to candidates with the best pre-electoral ranks who failed to make the threshold.

The tricky questions is: just how “flexible” are these flexible lists? The important point to note here is that the size of the threshold provides only part of the answer, since additional factors – some institutional, others behavioural/contextual – influence how difficult it is to reach the threshold in practice. On the institutional side, as Table 1 shows, the flexible list systems vary along dimensions such as the number of preference votes allowed (2 in the Czech Republic; 2 in Slovakia since 2009; several in Belgium; otherwise 1) and the regulations concerning the number of candidates on the list. On the behavioural side, a key variable is how many citizens make use of the preference vote option rather than “endorse” the ranked list as proposed by the party (except in the Netherlands, where the latter option does not exist).

The additional factors matter because the preference vote threshold is typically defined *relative to the number of ballots cast for the party*; that is the sum of ballots with and without preference votes. Consider, for example, a system with just one preference vote and a fixed threshold of 10 per cent of the number of party ballots. When 40 per cent of the list’s voters express a preference for a candidate, the support from one fourth of these 40 per cent of voters is required to clear the threshold. If 80 per cent of the list’s voters make use of the preference vote option, a candidate would only have to convince every eighth person of this group to vote for her. Similarly, it is easier to reach the threshold where voters are allowed to vote for multiple candidates and use this option, since the threshold is defined relative to the number of ballots rather than the total of preference votes. What is more, one and the same relative threshold can be easier or harder to reach depending on the corresponding absolute number of votes. 10 per cent of the party vote can mean very different things in terms of the absolute number of preference votes required, depending on whether the party wins a large or small part of the vote share, and influenced by the total number of voters in the electoral district. Finally, it is also clear that the difficulty of being elected on the basis of preferential

Table 2: Empirical Flexibility of Lists

Country	Number of preference votes and threshold	Share of lists with all candidates below threshold			Share of MEPs clearing threshold (%)			Share of lists with a non top-ranked candidate above threshold			Share of MEPs elected not from the top of the list (%)		
		2004	2009	2014	2004	2009	2014	2004	2009	2014	2004	2009	2014
Austria	1; 7% [2014: 5%]	3/5	4/5	1/5	11	6	28	1/5	1/5	1/5	6	0	0
Belgium: French	Several; Droop quota	1/4	3/4	2/4	33	13	25	0/4	0/4	0/4	11	13	0
Belgium: Flemish		1/5	3/7	3/6	29	31	25	0/5	0/7	0/6	14	15	8
Bulgaria	1; 15% [2014: 5%]	5/5	4/6	1/5	0	7	35	0/5	0/6	3/5	0	0	12
Croatia	1; 10%	NA	0/3	0/3	NA	42	45	NA	1/3	1/3	NA	0	9
Czech Republic	2; 5%	0/6	0/4	0/7	50	36	67	6/6	4/4	5/7	4	0	10
Netherlands	1; 1/10 of Hare quota	0/8	0/8	0/9	78	80	88	5/8	5/8	8/9	11	12	19
Slovakia	1 [from 2009: 2]; 10%	0/5	0/6	0/8	50	85	100	2/5	6/6	8/8	7	23	38
Slovenia	1; 1/(2*list length)	0/4	0/5	0/5	57	86	88	1/4	3/5	3/5	14	0	25
Sweden	1; 5%	0/8	0/8	0/9	74	72	70	7/8	5/8	6/9	16	11	5

Notes: Table is based on lists returning at least one MEP and refers to originally elected candidates (some of whom may not take up their mandate). For Bulgaria (Croatia), the 2004 (2009) column refers to the by-election following accession, held in 2007 (2013).

votes is affected by the number of (quality) candidates, which is a consequence of both institutional rules and party decisions.

Since behavioural and contextual factors influence list flexibility, looking merely at the institutional rules has limitations. Table 2 consequently provides information on the actual empirical flexibility of the 9 cases of flexible list systems in 2004, 2009 and 2014.

First, there are only a few lists from which not a single candidate reached the threshold. Only in 3 countries – Austria (2004 and 2009), Bulgaria (2004 and 2009) and the French-speaking part of Belgium (in 2004) – did no candidate reach this threshold on a majority of the lists, hence making them "closed" in empirical reality. Similarly, there is considerable variation in the share of elected candidates who cleared the hurdle. At one end are Bulgaria (no candidate in the 2007 by-election and only 7 per cent of candidates in 2009) and Austria (11 per cent in 2004 and 6 per cent in 2009), whereas in the Netherlands and Sweden at least 70 per cent reached the threshold in any of the three elections. Also note the case of Slovakia, where the strong rise in the number of MEPs above the threshold makes intuitive sense, since starting in 2009 citizens were granted two preference votes rather than one. An apparent consequence of personalizing the institutional rules by reducing the preference vote threshold can be detected in Austria and Bulgaria, where the number of MEPs clearing the threshold rose from 6 to 28 per cent, from 7 to 35 per cent, respectively. The institution-based strengthening of the personal component in intra-party seat allocation rules in these elections thus parallels the trend in national-level systems (Renwick and Pilet 2016).

Both the "share of lists with all candidates below the threshold" and the "proportion of MEPs clearing the threshold" measures have a drawback, as they depend on the distribution of party size (in terms of number of MEPs returned) in a country. This issue is a concern because where more MEPs are elected in a district, the candidate on the first list rank will usually find it easier to reach a certain threshold (either because of her qualities or simply a position effect),

even if the bar is set quite high. Comparing these measures across countries can hence be misleading, as in member states that elected fewer MEPs many parties receive only one seat, which typically goes to the list leader.

We therefore suggest an alternative criterion for assessing the degree of flexibility that characterizes a party list: whether any candidate other than the a priori top-ranked "list leader" has reached the threshold for getting elected. If this is the case, we consider the list to be "strongly flexible", otherwise "weakly flexible". This measure considers all candidates rather than merely the elected ones, and by ignoring the prominent list leader, it provides a better yardstick for assessing empirical list flexibility. In addition, as we argue in more detail in the next section, this indicator should in practice also signal to the MEPs whether it can become electorally relevant to take into account citizens' preferences when voting in the European Parliament. Note that this criterion refers to the level of a list, i.e. a party-in-a-constituency, which means that flexibility can vary within countries. In practice, we therefore extend the system-level three-way classification of preferential list systems from Table 1 into a four-way scheme: distinguishing weakly and strongly flexible lists *at the party-level* within countries, and between open and closed systems, where *country-level and list-level* variations coincide.

As Table 2 further shows, there is variation in whether any non-top-ranked candidate has reached the threshold both across and within countries. For example, there were no such instances in Belgium in any of the years, or in Bulgaria before the 2014 threshold reduction. On the other hand, all parties had "strongly flexible" lists in Slovakia (in 2009 and 2014) and the Czech Republic (in 2004 and 2009, but not 2014). In the other member states, we observe a good deal of variation across parties and election years.

Finally, we can count how many MEPs were elected who would not have been if the same list had been fully closed (because they had a pre-electoral list rank lower than the number of party seats). This is not necessarily as good an indicator of the electoral incentives of MEPs

as the previous one, but it provides a tough test for the argument that flexible lists deserve their name. As the rightmost column in Table 2 shows, at least one MEP jumped the queue of the selectors' favourites in 21 out of 29 country-elections. Who is eventually elected in flexible list systems can therefore clearly depend on preference votes, although to a varying extent.

Ballot structure and policy representation in the European Parliament

Existing work on legislative behaviour in the European Parliament has identified that MEPs are influenced by two main principals: their European party groups, and their national parties (e.g. Hix 2004; Hug forthcoming; Klüver and Spoon 2015; Meserve et al. 2009; Rasmussen 2008; Yordanova and Mühlböck 2015). Hix (2004), for example, shows that MEPs vote more often with their national party (and less often with their European party group) if electoral rules grant national parties more influence on MEPs' re-election prospects. Candidate-centred electoral systems, such as open lists, weaken the national party, since they grant voters more influence on intra-party seat allocation.

Building on this existing work, we argue that an MEP takes into account that a vote in line with her party's position may offend those in the group of potential voters who hold the opposite view.[3] We posit that this motivation works in addition to spatial voting considerations and possible party-level influence. Under electoral systems that give voters more influence on intra-party seat allocation, politicians run a higher risk of damaging their re-election prospects if they "put off" a large number of potential voters. This reasoning is formalized in Appendix A2.

We argue that an offence avoidance situation is more likely to occur in the context of policy issues from secondary dimensions of politics (cf. Blumenau et al., 2016). On questions that are closely linked to the main axis of political competition – typically characterized by

[3] "Party" in this context could refer to the national party or the European party group or both.

economic policy trade-off between taxation and the provision of public services – almost by definition few potential voters should disagree with the party line. In addition, in key votes on these issues, the party leadership is likely to strongly sanction any dissent in order to preserve the value of the party label. Also, individual politicians could not gain electorally from personal popularity if the party list loses too many seats due to internal dissent on the main dimension. Therefore, our empirical example considers a morality issue, which frequently divides parties internally (e.g. Baumann et al. 2015; Studlar et al. 2013).

The offence avoidance logic should be more important for MEPs elected under more open electoral systems, for at least three reasons. First, if voters can express preferences for individual candidates, the votes an individual politician collects can serve as an indicator of popularity and reputation (André et al. 2015; Crisp et al. 2013; Folke et al. 2016). This mechanism can work regardless of the actual impact of the preference votes on re-election chances.

Second, if preferential votes do have an impact on who from among the candidates will obtain a seat, national parties lose some of their sanctioning potential. The pre-electoral list rank becomes less relevant, and a demotion to a position further down the list loses some of its threat. This makes it less risky for MEPs to consider any factors other than national party position or pressure when casting their vote.

Third, if preference votes matter for intra-party seat allocation, politicians have a stronger incentive to distinguish themselves from competitors (Carey and Shugart 1995, Crisp et al. 2004) to secure re-election. Voting against significant parts of the electorate can lead to electoral disadvantages when your party colleagues avoid that mistake, and possibly even campaign on the basis of their views on the secondary dimension.

The first mechanism implies that closed list systems differ from any systems granting voters intra-party choice, since MEPs cannot achieve any electoral reputation from

representing diverging views in the former. Since we assume that the first mechanism is not at work alone and rather weak in itself, we expect an additional difference that results from variation in sanctioning potential and intra-party competition across different ballot structures. In this regard, there is a separation between closed (high sanctioning potential, no intra-party competition for votes) and open list types (low sanctioning potential, strong intra-party competition for votes). The more difficult question is how the incentive structure looks for MEPs from flexible list systems, where re-election can be sought by means of a good list position, or preference votes, or both (André et al. 2015; Crisp et al. 2013).

To start with, it makes sense to assume that – in order to make predictions about the relative impact of list ranking and preference votes at the upcoming elections – MEPs turn to past experience and the previous election result, especially that of their own list.

As already mentioned, we suggest a distinction within the flexible list group, of whether any candidate other than the first-ranked reached the preference vote threshold in the previous election. The list leader is typically a prominent politician, and one who follows the party line. The fact that another candidate has been elected on the basis of preference votes shows that the initial ranking is not set in stone, and the sanctioning potential of the national party is diminished. The "direct" election of a competitor also suggests to MEPs that there is a potential pay-off from expressing alternative views. Missing the opportunity to represent the view of a significant minority could be even worse if intra-party competitors grab it – so strategic considerations can be expected to reinforce the effect.

The sanctioning potential of the party and intra-party competition may in practice vary on a continuous scale among different flexible list systems. While we consider the development of a more fine-grained measure as an important task for future work, in this paper we opt for a binary variant. The dichotomous measure we propose can be considered as an approximation of MEPs' underlying beliefs about the relative electoral merits of list position and preference

votes at the upcoming elections. As we show and discuss in more detail in Appendix A5, this measure takes on the same value within parties across adjacent elections in more than four out of five cases.

Flexible list systems that do not fulfil our criterion – weakly flexible lists – should be similar to closed-list systems, but smaller differences are possible since MEPs elected under these can gain from preference votes for intra-party reputation. In contrast, strongly flexible list systems (where our criterion applies) should come close to open systems regarding the representation mechanism of interest, but may in practice still fall short of these. Some of the candidates may prioritize the route to re-election through a good list position over the personal vote strategy (and there may also be systematic individual-level variation that our party-level measure does not capture).

Taken together, our expectation concerning the strength of the offence avoidance mechanism is as follows:

Open lists [and STV] > strongly flexible lists > weakly flexible lists > closed lists.

Empirical analysis

For an empirical illustration and an initial test of our argument we consider parliamentary voting in a recorded (roll-call) vote from the seventh (2009-14) session of the European Parliament. Our argument refers to issues that voters strongly care or feel about, and that at the same time divide parties and their potential electorate internally. In addition, we require data on party positions and public opinion referring to the same topic as the vote. Therefore we analyse the voting behaviour of MEPs from the largest political group, the European Peoples Party, in the final vote on a legislative resolution on EU measures to tackle homophobia (on 24 May 2012). One indication of the significance of this vote is that it was chosen as one of 20 “important votes” in the 2009-14 session by the Electio2014.eu vote advice application ahead

of the May 2014 elections. Although this was a non-legislative issue, these resolutions are significant, as they set out the positions of the MEPs and political groups on likely upcoming legislative issues and are often reported in the media.

The resolution called for the Commission, the member states and the External Action Services of the EU to take account of how EU member states as well as third countries treat homosexuals when developing policies, including international trade policies.[4] For MEPs from parties with conservative positions on societal questions, in particular the Christian Democratic parties in the EPP, this resolution created a tension between norms of traditional morality on the one hand and those of equality and individual liberty on the other.

Overall, the vote passed by 430 yes votes to 105 no votes, with 59 abstentions. In groups with more liberal positions on social issues, support was unanimous (Liberals, Greens, New Green Left) or near unanimous (Socialists and Democrats, with only five abstentions out of 155 votes cast). The political groups on the right were divided: European Conservatives and Reformists (16 yes, 11 no, 10 abstentions), Europe of Freedom and Democracy (4 yes, 14 no, 3 abstentions), and the EPP (114 yes, 65 no, 37 abstentions). However, an observed split within a European party group may simply be a consequence of heterogeneity in the national member parties' positions on the underlying dimension, which is not our key interest. In our empirical analysis we focus on the MEPs in the EPP group, since we expect the issue related to gay rights to be particularly controversial in the EPP *electorate*, because broad-appeal and Christian Democratic parties contribute a large share to the EPP's MEPs. In addition, the EPP is the largest European party group and includes several large national delegations.

Since the relationship between an MEP and her national party takes a prominent position in our argument (and we use party positions for the empirical analysis), we do not

[4] http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?type=MOTION&reference=P7-RC-2012-0234&language=EN.

consider those MEPs who were not a member of any national party at the time of a vote. In our empirical analysis each observation is the vote choice of an MEP; either Yes, No, or Abstain. The European Parliament also records when MEPs "did not vote", were "absent", or had "documented [their] absence". We excluded the EPP MEPs who "did not vote" (14 of those MEPs for whom we have available public opinion data) or were absent (27).[5]

Table 3: Measurement of the explanatory variables

Variable name	Scale	Rationale	Source
Size of the group opposing the no (yes) alternative	0-100	% respondents who think homosexuality (not) justified	European Values Survey 2008
Only national party MEP	0/1		EP website
High church attendance	0/1	More than one third of population attend religious services at least once a month	European Values Survey 2008
Pressure on the domestic status quo	0/1	No same-sex partnership recognition, or state mentioned in resolution	Ayoub (2015)
Position	standardized	GAL-TAN dimension	CHES (Bakker et al. 2015)
Salience	>=0	As ratio relative to the sample mean	
Female	0/1		EP website
Age	decades		

Table 3 briefly describes the measurement of the explanatory variables (see Appendix A4 for details and summary statistics). The dependent variable is an MEP's voting decision – Yes, No, or Abstain – which is analysed using a mixed logit model, in this case a multinomial logit model with varying intercepts at the party-level. The statistical model directly follows from the theoretical reasoning; the derivation of which is shown in the second part of Appendix A2.

[5] Some of the absences could be due to MEPs being cross-pressured, which would bias our results downwards. Appendix A6 presents a robustness check based on the sample with "did not vote" coded as abstentions. The key results do not change.

Results

We focus here on the results from the model that uses the four-way ordinal coding of ballot types (Table 4). We report posterior means of logit coefficients and 95 per cent Bayesian credible intervals (which are comparable to frequentist confidence intervals). The table is vertically split in two halves: the top part reports coefficients of alternative-specific variables, in this case the size of the group holding the opposite view in the electorate (which equals the share of opponents for the Yes-alternative, the share of supporters for the No-alternative, and zero by definition for the Abstain-alternative), and interactions of that variable.

The "main" effect of the size variable in the first line on the right-hand side refers to the case where the interacted variables are zero (the baseline): where an MEP is elected under a closed list, she is not the only MEP, where there is low church attendance amongst her voters and no general pressure on the domestic policy status quo. The differences in the offence avoidance parameter relative to this baseline case are shown on the left-hand side of the top half; for the different ballot types the levels (sums of baseline and respective differences) are also shown on the right. The bottom part of the table shows the results for case-specific variables, for which the coefficients represent the change in log-odds (relative to the reference category *abstention*) of voting Yes (left side of table) and No (right side) in this roll-call vote.

Table 4: Mixed logit model with four-way classification of ballot structure

	2.5%	Mean	97.5%	2.5%	Mean	97.5%
	Alt.-spec. variables: differences			Alt.-spec. variables: levels (| not only MEP, low church att., no SQ press.)		
Size of opposing group				-0.51	-0.18	0.12
Weakly flex. * size	-0.36	0.34	1.09	-0.49	0.16	0.81
Strongly flex. * size	-1.34	-0.45	0.16	-1.54	-0.63	-0.04
Open * size	-0.38	-0.15	0.03	-0.70	-0.33	-0.02
Only MEP * size	-0.52	-0.16	0.12			
High church attend. * size	-0.51	-0.23	0.05			
Pressure on SQ * size	0.07	0.51	1.01			
	Case-spec. variables: Yes vs. Abstain			Case-spec. variables: No vs. Abstain		
Sal.-weighted position | no SQ pressure	-4.98	-1.57	1.03	0.06	2.76	6.16
Sal.-weighted position | SQ pressure	-2.58	-0.20	1.89	0.07	2.24	4.91
Salience | no SQ pressure	-12.12	-4.79	2.69	-9.54	-3.07	3.33
Salience | SQ pressure	-16.67	-10.07	-3.62	-9.93	-3.58	2.49
List type (vs. closed list)						
Weakly flexible	1.28	9.74	20.16	-10.47	-0.67	9.89
Strongly flexible	-12.31	-4.11	2.88	-2.35	1.75	5.85
Open	-2.56	1.71	6.40	-1.31	3.01	7.28
Only MEP of party	-10.87	-4.24	1.87	-9.30	-3.43	1.68
High church attendance	-0.95	4.39	9.84	-5.80	-1.12	3.71
Female	-0.57	0.46	1.55	-1.33	-0.20	1.02
Age (in decades)	-0.75	-0.27	0.18	-0.67	-0.15	0.35
Constant	0.32	6.69	13.36	-2.28	4.17	10.71
σ_η	0.96	2.45	5.19			
N of EPP MEPs		191				

Note: Entries are logit coefficients.

The key finding is that the offence avoidance mechanism varies with ballot structure in line with our expectations. While the negative group size coefficient representing offence avoidance in closed list systems (-0.18) implies negative utility from offending potential voters with the opposite opinion, we cannot say with high certainty that the parameter reflects disutility (since the credible interval stretches over to the positive side). In contrast, on the other side of the ballot structure spectrum, the level coefficient of offence avoidance for open systems lies at -.33,, which is smaller than zero with more than 95% certainty. This coefficient implies that for a one percentage point increase in voters disapproving of a Yes (No) vote rather than having a neutral attitude, the odds of an MEP voting Yes (No) decrease by 28% (odds ratio: $\exp(-.33) \approx .72$).

Importantly, the distinction between weakly and strongly flexible list also reveals clear differences in the way MEPs elected under these two ballot types react to public opinion. MEPs elected from weakly flexible lists seem not to be affected by the public's attitude towards homosexuals (the mean coefficient is +.16), whereas MEPs from strongly flexible lists appear to avoid putting off potential voters. A mean level coefficient of -.63 (and 95% of the distribution on the negative side) suggests that for a one percentage point increase in voters disapproving of a Yes (No) vote rather than having a neutral attitude, the odds of voting Yes (No) decrease by 47% (odds ratio: $\exp(-.63) \approx .53$). These patterns support our argument that not all flexible list systems create the same type of incentives.[6]

Note that the level coefficients for offence avoidance refer to the case of an MEP who is not the only representative of her national party, and comes from a country not characterized by high church attendance levels or pressure on the domestic status quo. We can see from the difference coefficients of these variables that status quo pressure seems to work against MEPs

[6] This is also clear from comparing the results to a regression model that uses the rules-based three-way classification (Appendix A7). Findings for the category comprising all flexible-list systems are inconclusive in this model, and the error variance at the party-level is considerably higher than in the model with the four-way measure.

following public opinion (with more than 95% certainty). It might be the case that in member states which give homosexuals few rights, MEPs take on a leadership role against a rather sceptic public. When we look at the coefficients of the spatial variables, unsurprisingly, MEPs whose national parties have more conservative positions on the "GAL-TAN" scale are more likely to vote against tackling homophobia rather than abstaining. It is less clear that party positions explain the choice of voting in favour of the resolution rather than abstaining. Finally, we cannot detect any clear association between gender or age and MEP vote choice.

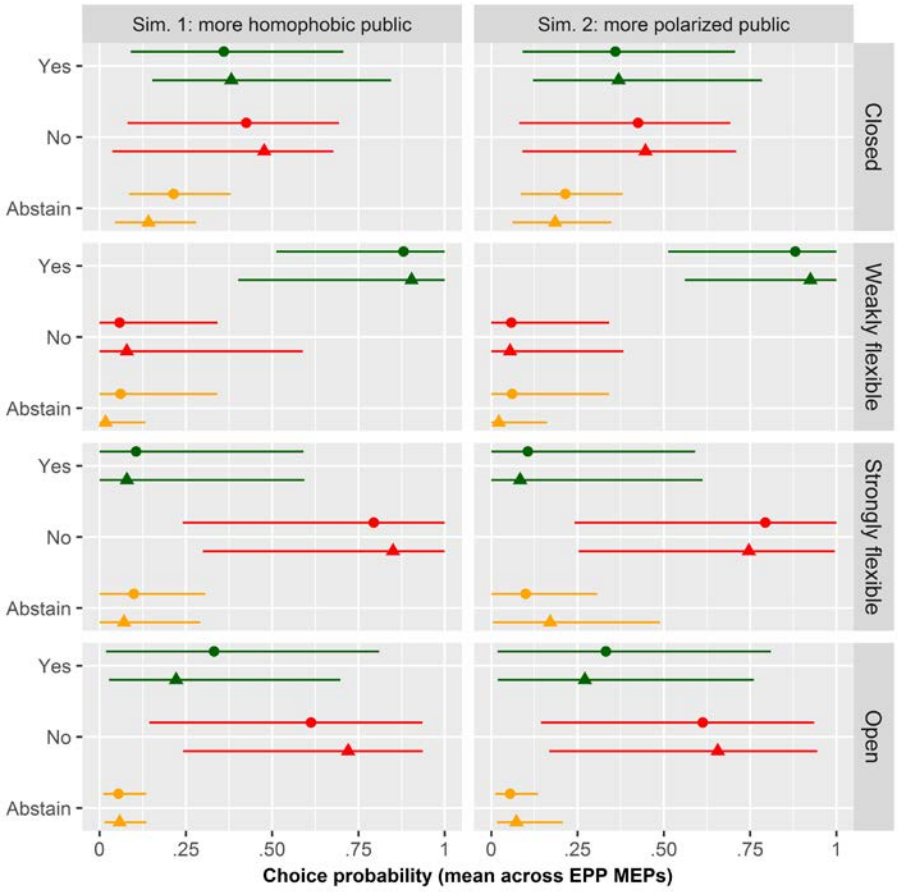
Figure 1 illustrates the substantive size of the associations, by comparing the change in the posterior expected probability of choosing Yes, No, or Abstain when moving from a baseline scenario to one of two different alternative scenarios.[7] As a baseline scenario we choose public opinion figures resembling those of an actual "middle of the road" case (resembling Malta, where there is 17 per cent positive and 42 per cent negative public attitudes towards homosexuality). We compare these to the expected probabilities we obtain when moving to a scenario where public opinion is more homophobic (Simulation 1, on the left-hand side, similar to Hungary, where there is 11 per cent positive and 61 per cent negative public views), and a scenario where attitudes are more polarized (Simulation 2, on the right-hand side, like Slovenia, where there is 22 per cent positive and 55 per cent negative public attitudes). The point refers to the mean expected probability in the baseline scenario (same on the left and the right side), the triangle to the respective value in the alternative scenario.

Figure 1 illustrates graphically that the results are in line with our theory. EPP MEPs are particularly responsive to the views of the electorate when voting on the resolution on tackling homophobia if ballot structures give voters considerable influence on intra-party seat allocation. In open systems there is a considerable drop in the probability of voting Yes (from

[7] We alter the public opinion figures, their interactions where indicated by the observed values of the multipliers, and the case-specific electoral systems group variables, while leaving other variables as observed. The party-level intercept is assumed to be zero. Shown are means and 2.5/97.5% quantiles across draws from the mean expected probability across MEPs in each draw.

.33 to .22) and an increase in the probability of voting No (from .61 to .72) if citizens are about as sceptical about homosexuality as in Hungary (which is actually not the least sceptical according to our data, see Appendix A3).

Figure 1: Expected voting behaviour under different electoral rules



Note: Posterior expected values (see text for further details on simulation). Points = Baseline scenario (17% in favour, 42% against homosexuality). Triangles = Alternative scenario (Simulation 1: 11% in favour, 61% against; Simulation 2: 22% in favour, 55% against).

For strongly flexible lists, the changes for the yes and no alternative are muted by the baseline probabilities being closer to zero respectively one. However, we observe an increasing tendency to Abstain (probability rises from .10 to .17) in the more polarized scenario (right panel) in strongly flexible systems, since there are both more people potentially disapproving

of a Yes vote and more citizens who may dislike a vote against. A similar pattern is visible for open systems, but less pronounced (probability to Abstain rises from .05 to .07). Overall, for the closed lists (given the moderate baseline probabilities) and in particular for the weakly flexible lists, all changes are quite small. We note that it is hard to tell if the generally large intercept differences we find between the ballot structures reflect effects that are due to electoral institutions as such or may reflect unobserved heterogeneity.

This points to a more general issue in electoral systems research. If we use cross-national variation in electoral rules for studying institutional effects, results are only valid if we control for all relevant third variables. Future work on ballot structure effects should therefore also make use of other research designs, such as studying the consequences of changes in rules over time. Turning to electoral reforms may also help to overcome another potential problem. While we have shown that a purely institution-based three-way classification of ballot structures produces inconclusive results for the heterogenous group of flexible list systems, using an outcome-based distinction between weakly and strongly flexible lists creates another concern: whether or not any non-list-leader has reached the preference vote threshold in the previous election could be caused by (endogenous) earlier internal party division over second-dimension policy issues. A way forward to tackle this may lie in isolating the variation in outcome-based measures caused by institutional change.

Conclusion

In this paper, we add descriptively to the understanding of electoral systems, by outlining the various types of ballot structures and intra-party seat allocation rules used in European Parliament elections, and by proposing an ordinal three-way classification (closed, flexible, open) of these systems. We also contribute to resolving "[a] paradox in the comparative literature on electoral systems [is] that one of the most common systems in Europe may be the

least understood" (André et al. 2015: 1). For the complex type of flexible list systems, we show how they have operated in the three most recent European Parliament elections, and introduce an outcome-based distinction between "weakly flexible" and "strongly flexible" subtypes at the party-list-level. This approach takes into account that in flexible list systems, the actual flexibility of the party lists depends on institutional rules as well as the behaviour of parties and voters. As a criterion for distinguishing among weakly and strongly flexible lists, we suggest to check if any candidates other than the list leader previously reached the preference vote threshold. However, we emphasize that we consider our categorisation of the different preferential list systems, and that of parties within the flexible list systems, not as a "one size fits all" prescription. Any classification should correspond to the particular research question and theoretical argument. An important area for further research is also the question of variation in *individual* electoral incentives *within* different list types.

To illustrate our approach, and how different ballot types can affect the electoral incentives of representatives, our third contribution is an application to parliamentary voting behaviour. We develop a model of citizens' policy representation, where re-election-oriented politicians try to avoid offending large groups of potential voters who disapprove of a certain policy measure. The empirical analysis demonstrates the analytical leverage of the four-way classification of ballot types by applying the model to a high-profile vote on a moral policy issue in the European Parliament.

We find that in closed list systems voters' preferences did not have a clear impact on MEPs' vote decisions, beyond what is captured by party positions. However, voter preferences did influence the behaviour of MEPs elected from open ballots. For flexible list systems in their entirety, there is also no clear effect, but we do find a difference between weakly and strongly flexible lists. When we distinguish between these subtypes, behaviour of MEPs from weakly flexible lists is similar to that of MEPs from closed list systems, while MEPs elected under

strongly flexible lists take into account public opinion as do their colleagues from member states with open ballots.

Existing work on ballot type effects, including studies related to the European Parliament, has mainly focused on various forms of non-policy representation or parliamentary voting cohesion per se. Our findings show that electoral systems also matter for personal policy representation – a novel theme that will hopefully be a fruitful subject for future research.

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Online Appendix

Ballot Structure, List Flexibility and Policy Representation

Thomas Däubler and Simon Hix

Appendix A1: Comparison of our coding to the Farrell/Scully scheme

Our coding of the European Parliament electoral systems differs somewhat from the classification by Farrell and Scully (2007, see also Farrell and Scully 2010, Bowler and Farrell 2011). These authors distinguish three groups of systems: open, ordered, and closed. In their final classification, these terms have lost their literal meaning, since some of the systems that use a (party-) ordered list are subsumed under the "open" category if "the candidate vote matters" (Farrell and Scully 2007: 77), although their precise definition of this is unclear. Our distinction between open and flexible lists, in contrast, depends on whether intra-party seat allocation relies only on the number of preference votes.

While our classification of Denmark, Estonia, Italy, Lithuania and Luxembourg as "open" is similar to Farrell and Scully's coding of these cases, as having an "ordered list where the candidate vote matters", we differ in our assessment of Cyprus, Latvia and Poland. Farrell and Scully suggest that lists in Poland are closed, and that in Cyprus and Latvia the "candidate vote does not matter" (Farrell and Scully 2007: 78). Based on understanding of these cases and our criteria, these three countries qualify as open systems. We suspect that our different coding of this systems stems from the fact that we have been able to obtain detailed information about the precise operation of the electoral systems, which may not have been available earlier. The remaining cases in their "open" group (Finland, Ireland, Malta, Northern Ireland) and "closed" group (Britain, France, Germany, Greece before 2014, Hungary, Portugal, Spain) are uncontroversial. More complicated are the other systems in their "ordered systems where the candidate vote does not matter" group, which we rate as flexible.

Table 2 (in the main text) allows us to re-assess these cases. When we look at the 2004 results from a country-level perspective, one could find reasons for including Austria, the Czech Republic, Slovakia and possibly Belgium in this category. The inclusion of the Netherlands, Slovenia, and Sweden, though, is questionable. Also, we think that for flexible list systems it is better to make a more fine-grained distinction at the party-list-level.

Appendix A2: Formal theoretical model and derivation of statistical model

Suppose that MEP *i* from country *c*, who is a member of national party *p*, and elected under ballot type *l*, has the following utility *U* from choosing alternative *a* (where -1 represents no, 1 represents yes, and 0 represents abstain) in vote *v*:[1]

$$U_{i,v,a} = -s_{p[i]}s_{c[i]}\left(x_{p[i]} - \zeta_{v,a}\right)^2 + \eta_{p[i],v,a} + \lambda_{l,v}\, o_{p[i],v,a} + \epsilon_{i,v,a}$$

The utility function thus includes:

--- the salience-weighted quadratic spatial distance from the location of the alternative $\zeta_{v,a}$, where $x_{p[i]}$ is the ideal point of the national party *p*, and the salience results from multiplying the salience of the issue to the national party *p*, given by $s_{p[i]}$, and the salience of the policy issue in the home country *c* of the MEP, given by $s_{c[i]}$;[2]

--- a national party-level term $\eta_{p[i],v,a}$ that represents any utility from voting with the national party not captured by the other elements in the function; it will include any "carrots and sticks" the party leadership may apply to influence their MEP's choice which are not related to the party's policy position;[3]

--- a product term with $o_{p[i],v,a}$ representing the share of potential party voters who prefer the opposite of the alternative (no in the case of yes, or yes in the case of no), implying that $\lambda_{l,v} < 0$ represents the disutility from potentially offending these people; note the subscript, which allows the strength of the offence avoidance mechanism to vary with list type *l*; and

--- an error term $\epsilon_{i,v,a}$.

[1] Since our empirical case studies only members of one political group, the utility function does not consider political group membership. The model can easily be extended allowing for additive influences at that level.

[2] Note that the Abstain alternative has a position in the policy space just like the Yes or No choices (cp. Lo 2013). An abstention is not position-free in that sense, and it need not lie right in the middle between the yes and no alternatives. One motivation for this setup is that the spatial utility derived from abstaining depends on the expected overall outcome of the respective vote.

[3] In the empirical implementation, this term will model any observed national party-level clustering in vote choice. Put differently, it is not possible to distinguish whether national party-level unity results from ex ante cohesion in the ideal points of a party's individual MEPs or from exerted party pressure.

Our central argument is thus represented by the parameter $\lambda_{l,v}$, which takes on different values depending on the type of party list the MEP is elected from. *Ceteris paribus* MEPs seek to avoid "putting off" potential voters with differing views on a cross-cutting dimension of politics, but their incentives to do so are expected to increase if they are elected under a system with more open lists (i.e. more open lists should have lower $\lambda_{l,v} < 0$, implying stronger disutility from offending).

Note that the term $o_{p[i],v,a}$ is always zero for the 'abstain' alternative, as abstaining guarantees not to offend either the yes or no camp in the electorate. Voters with a neutral opinion do not mind any of the choices MEPs can take. The offence avoidance logic suggests that *ceteris paribus* an alternative is preferred over another inasmuch as it promises to offend fewer people. A key implication of the model is that abstentions should become more likely with an electorate that is more strongly split into supporters of the yes and no side.[4]

It is worth pointing out that the utility function incorporates a trade-off between the offence avoidance motivation and party-level spatial proximity, with the latter being weighted by the salience to the national party (and the salience of the policy question in the member state). If moral policy is more salient to the party (and in the country, due to the policy status quo), the party's spatial distance to the alternatives becomes more, and offence avoidance less, relevant to the individual vote choice. MEPs also weigh any utility gains from offence avoidance against any additional pressure they receive from their party, which is subsumed in the $\eta_{p[i],v,a}$ term.[5]

[4] Of course, one could also model the positive utility from siding either with the voter group in favour or the group in opposition to the proposal. This would also take account of voters who are not satisfied with an abstention, but who are only pleased if their preferred alternative is explicitly supported. To keep the model simple (and since the correlation of the group size variables in the data we use does not allow to separate these effects), we consider just the "not offending", not the "embracing" aspect. We argue that when having to opt for one of these, focusing on the offence avoidance mechanism is preferable, since it provides a more plausible mechanism for abstentions. With a "seeking support of one side" mechanism only, abstentions would be expected to occur more frequently when there are fewer non-neutral voters.

[5] This is also the main reason why our model is consistent with the argument that parties are electorally punished if they shift their positions on a "principled issue domain" that includes morality questions (Tavits 2007). In addition, the utility-maximizing choice in our model takes into account how potential party voters' views are distributed across the yes and no camps, which should also affect electoral fortunes of the party as a whole. And

Statistical model

Following established practice (cp. Clinton et al. 2004: 356), the spatial component can be simplified as follows:

$$-s_{p[i]}s_{c[i]}\left(x_{p[i]}-\zeta_{v,a}\right)^2 = -s_{p[i]}s_{c[i]}\left(x_{p[i]}^2-2\zeta_{v,a}x_{p[i]}+\zeta_{v,a}^2\right)$$

$$= 2\zeta_{v,a}\, s_{p[i]}s_{c[i]}x_{p[i]} - s_{p[i]}s_{c[i]}\zeta_{v,a}^2 - s_{p[i]}s_{c[i]}x_{p[i]}^2$$

Dropping the last term, which is constant across alternatives, one obtains a linear model of salience-weighted position and salience (with salience defined as the product of country-level salience related to the policy status quo and party-level salience of the issue):

$\beta_{v,a}\, s_{p[i]}s_{c[i]}x_{p[i]} + \alpha_{v,a}s_{p[i]}\, s_{c[i]}$, with $\beta_{v,a}$=$2\zeta_{v,a}$ and $\alpha_{v,a} = -\zeta_{v,a}^2$

The utility function in the model then looks as follows (not showing control variables):

$$U_{i,v,a} = \beta_{v,a}\, s_{p[i]}s_{c[i]}x_{p[i]} + \alpha_{v,a}\, s_{p[i]}s_{c[i]} + \lambda_v\, o_{p[i],v,a} + \sum_{l}^{3}\gamma_{l,v}\; listtype_{i,l}\; o_{p[i],v,a}$$

$$+ \sum_{l}^{3}\tau_{l,v,a}\; listtype_{i,l,a} + \eta_{p[i],v,a} + \kappa_{v,a} + \epsilon_{i,v,a}$$

The offence avoidance effect is represented by λ_v for closed list systems (the baseline category), and by by $\lambda_v + \gamma_{l,v}$ for the other list types. We additionally include case-specific electoral system type constants to allow for differences between the groups of countries unrelated to public opinion. For the national parties, due to their small size in most cases, there is little information in the data to infer how the utility of the three alternatives varies. Also, from a theoretical point of view, a national party will either push its MEPs towards supporting a bill or voting against it, which implies that $\eta_{p[i],v,yes}$ and $\eta_{p[i],v,no}$ should be negatively correlated. For the sake of simplicity, we assume that $\eta_{p[i],v,yes} = -\eta_{p[i],v,no}$ (perfect negative correlation) and $\eta_{p[i],v,abs} = 0$. Put differently, the absolute size of the sanction for not voting with a

in a context of cross-pressure, abstaining can be regarded as a more moderate policy shift compared to choosing the opposite alternative.

national party is the same as the reward for joining the national party, and an abstention implies avoiding the punishment while also missing the reward. Finally, using an alternative-specific constant $\kappa_{v,a}$ is merely a different way of representing the individual-level errors (Train 2003: 24-25). Since we are looking at one European party group only, the intercepts also include any group-level influences to choose one alternative over another.

Normalizing the coefficients of case-specific variables for one alternative to zero and assuming that $\epsilon_{i,v,a}$ follows a type-I-extreme value distribution allows us to infer two utility differentials in the familiar mixed logit model (Train 2003: Ch. 6).[6] The model can be considered mixed in two ways: it uses both alternative-specific and case-specific variables, which follows from the utility function, and it includes varying intercepts at the party level. In addition to capturing differences in ex-ante cohesiveness and party pressure, these intercepts also pick up other unobserved factors at the party-level. We obtain inferences with the help of a Bayesian model, using weakly informative priors, implemented in Stan (Stan Development Team 2016, for code see next page). The models were run for 4,000 iterations, following a warmup period of 2,000 iterations.

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[6] Note that using an ordinal logit model would mean to apply certain equality constraints linked to its proportional odds assumption, which are not justified based on the generic spatial reasoning above.

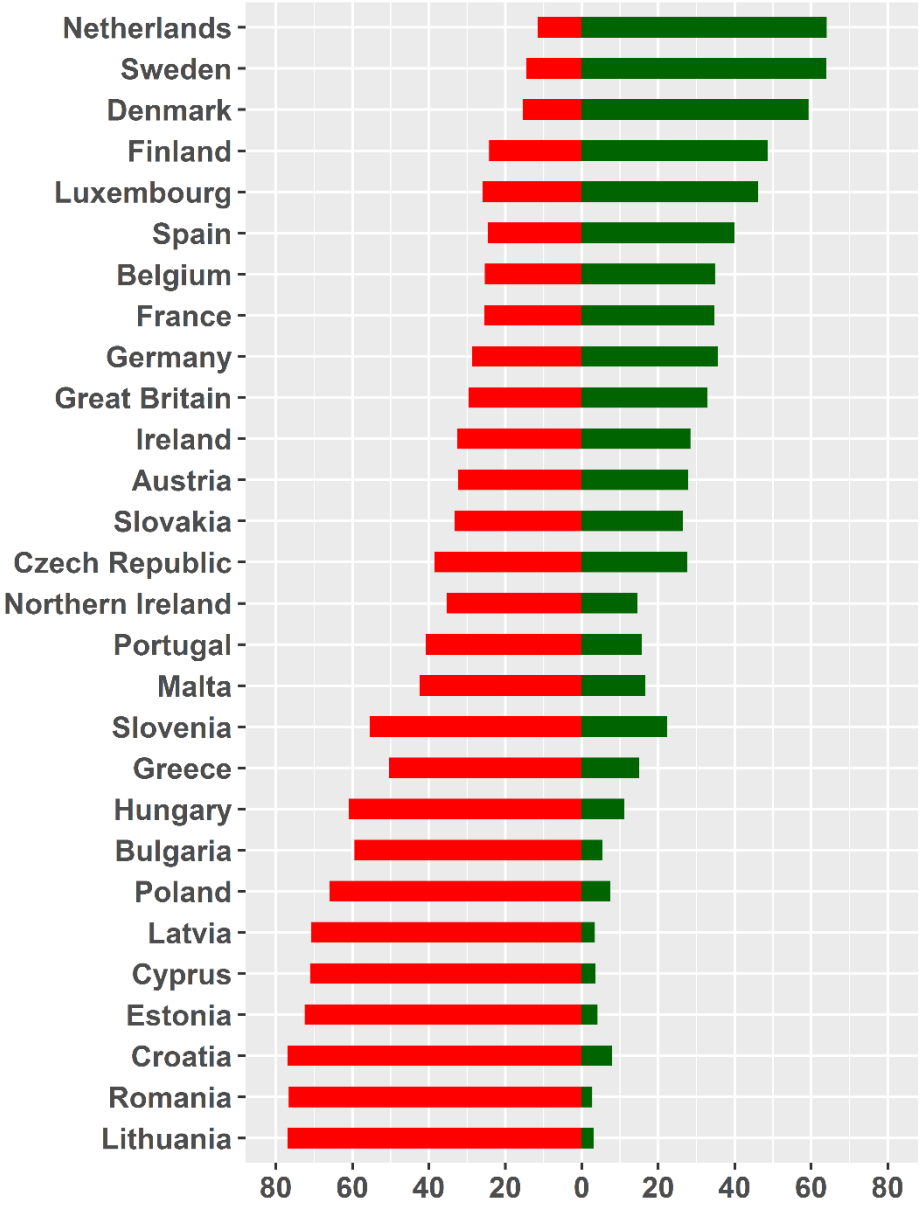
Implementation of the mixed logit model in STAN

```
data {
  int<lower=3> C; //  # categories of y
  int<lower=0> N; //  # observations/MEPs
  int<lower=1> K;  // # case-specific variables
  int<lower=1> P;  // # parties
  int<lower=1> A;  // # alternative-specific variables
  int<lower=1,upper=C> y[N]; // dep var
  vector[K+1] xmat1[N]; // case-specific x
  matrix[3,A] xpub[N]; // alternative-specific x
  int<lower=1> pid[N]; // party identifier
}

parameters {
  matrix[C,K] betafull; // coef case-specific, for all categories (unidentified)
  vector[A] betapub; // coef alt-specific
  real<lower=0> sigma_pre; // sd of party intercepts
  vector[P] pre; // party intercepts
 }
 model {
 matrix[C,K+1] betawithre; // temp. variable (for adding party pressure below)
 vector[3] tmp;
 to_vector(betafull) ~ normal(0,5); // symmetric prior on case-specific coef
                                                (reason for not having a reference category)
 betapub ~ normal(0,5);
 sigma_pre ~ cauchy(0,5); // implies half-Cauchy since constrained above
 pre ~ normal(0,sigma_pre); // (prior implements soft constraint that mean is zero)
  for (n in 1:N){ // loop over obs
    tmp[1] = pre[pid[n]];
    tmp[2] = -pre[pid[n]];
    tmp[3] = 0;
    betawithre = append_col(betafull,tmp);
    y[n] ~ categorical_logit(betawithre * xmat[n] + xpub[n] * betapub );
    }
}

generated quantities { // create reference category for case-specific coef
  matrix[C-1,K] beta;
  beta[1] = betafull[1]-betafull[3];
  beta[2] = betafull[2]-betafull[3];
}
```

Appendix A3: Citizens' views on homosexuality in the EU member states



Percentage of respondents with positive (right-hand side, in green) and negative (left-hand side, in red) views on homosexuality, sorted by share of positive views. See Appendix A4 for details of coding.

Appendix A4: Explanatory variables and descriptive statistics for EPP MEPs included in model sample

Here, we outline the measurement of explanatory variables. Italics indicate (as closely as possible) the corresponding variable names in the regression table. To identify the policy preferences of potential EPP votes we use data from the European Values Survey (EVS) 2008. For homosexuality (and some other issues), participants were asked to "Please tell me for each of the following whether you think it can always be justified, never be justified, or something in between", with respondents placing themselves on a 1-10 scale.[7] Since our interest lies in identifying voters who have strong negative feelings about the opposite view, we coded responses 1 to 3 as supportive, 8 to 10 as opposing, and 4 to 7 plus the "don't knows" as neutral.[8] In the models, we use the *size of the group opposing the specific alternative* in percentage points (0-100 scale, mean-centred).[9]

Because the impact of public opinion may also be affected by additional variables that are correlated with the list types, we include the following indicator variables in the model: whether a representative is the *only national party MEP*, whether the share of EVS respondents who report to *attend religious services at least once a month is larger than one third*, and whether the resolution implies *pressure on the domestic status quo*. The latter equals one if the country did not provide any partnership recognition in 2010 (cohabitation rights, registered partnership, or marriage equality), as coded by Ayoub (2015), or events in the country are mentioned in the resolution (Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania).

To capture effects from the position and salience of the main underlying ideological dimension we use data from the Chapel Hill expert survey (Bakker et al. 2015); more

[7] Unfortunately this question was not asked in the Italian survey, which is why we exclude Italian EPP MEPs from the analysis (*N*=35, including 12 absentees). Since it is not covered by the survey, we also do not consider one French EPP MEP from the overseas region.

[8] We are interested in a direct (if imperfect) measure of public opinion on the same issue as the vote, rather than in trying to locate MEPs and citizens in a common policy space (cf. Broockman 2016).

[9] Our main specification uses national public opinion data also for MEPs elected from subnational districts (Belgium, France, Ireland, Italy, Poland, the UK, and CDU/CSU MEPs from Germany). See Appendix A8 for a robustness check with subnational public opinion data. The main conclusions stay the same.

specifically the *mean of available values for the GAL-TAN position for 2010 and 2014* (which we standardize), *and the respective salience score* (expressed as a ratio relative to the mean).[10] *National party membership* data was obtained from the European Parliament website, as was *gender* and *age* (recoded to decades).

References

Ayoub, Phillip M. 2015. "Contested norms in new-adopter states: International determinants of LGBT rights legislation." *European Journal of International Relations* 21 (2):293-322.

Bakker, Ryan, Erica Edwards, Liesbet Hooghe, Seth Jolly, Jelle Koedam, Filip Kostelka, Gary Marks, Jonathan Polk, Jan Rovny, Gijs Schumacher, Marco Steenbergen, Milada Vachudova, and Marko Zilovic. 2015. "1999-2014 Chapel Hill Expert Survey Trend File. Version 1.1. Available on chesdata.eu. Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill.

Broockman, David E. 2016. "Approaches to Studying Policy Representation." *Legislative Studies Quarterly* 41(1): 181-215.

[10] For 3 parties where no direct information on positions was available, we used plausible values (e.g. from the constituting parties after a merger) instead. Salience scores were imputed with the help of a regression model. Details are available on request.

Table A4-1: Descriptive statistics for explanatory variables

	Mean	SD	Min	Median	Max	N
Alternative-specific variables						
Yes alternative						
Size of opposing group	0	19.54	-30.63	-9.94	34.68	191
Size | Weakly flex	9.93	13.37	-16.86	17.25	17.25	11
Size | Strongly flex	-14.88	11.76	-30.63	-9.94	13.16	20
Size | Open	14.91	18.41	-26.80	23.80	34.68	50
Size | Only MEP	-9.35	19.37	-27.65	-16.86	30.25	9
Size | High church attend.	16.18	14.99	-9.64	23.80	34.38	61
Size | Pressure on SQ	20.70	11.27	-8.98	23.80	34.68	78
No alternative						
Size of opposing group	0	16.12	-22.56	3.07	38.72	191
Size | Weakly flex	-10.01	12.26	-19.99	-19.99	9.50	11
Size | Strongly flex	14.50	18.25	-3.06	2.46	38.72	20
Size | Open	-10.02	16.26	-22.28	-17.92	33.98	50
Size | Only MEP	11.93	18.60	-21.21	9.50	38.65	9
Size | High church attend.	-14.01	7.96	-22.56	-17.92	3.07	61
Size | Pressure on SQ	-16.48	6.02	-22.56	-17.92	1.07	78
Case-specific variables						
Sal.-weighted position | no SQ pressure	0.40	0.87	-1.12	0.30	2.88	113
Sal.-weighted position | SQ pressure	-0.27	1.20	-2.02	-0.80	3.00	78
Salience | no SQ pressure	1.01	0.22	0.52	0.92	1.61	113
Salience | SQ pressure	0.99	0.20	0.39	0.94	1.60	78
List type/ballot structure						
Weakly flexible	0.06	0.23	0	0	1	191
Strongly flexible	0.10	0.31	0	0	1	191
Open	0.26	0.44	0	0	1	191
Only MEP of party	0.05	0.21	0	0	1	191
High church attendance	0.32	0.47	0	0	1	191
Female	0.36	0.48	0	0	1	191
Age (in decades)	5.08	1.08	2.55	5.12	8.01	191

Appendix A5: List-level coding of parties over time

Within countries that use flexible-list systems (as classified in Table 2) we distinguish between weakly and strongly flexible lists at the party/list-level, depending on whether any candidate other than the list leader has reached the preference vote threshold. Party-level data for the European elections in 2004, 2009 and 2014 are provided in Table A3-2 at the end of this section.

Table A5-1: Stability of the party-list-level measure over time

	Criterion not fulfilled at t1	Criterion fulfilled at t1	Criterion not fulfilled at t1	Criterion fulfilled at t1
Criterion not fulfilled at t0, row % (*N* in parentheses)	85 (17)	15 (3)	71 (12)	29 (5)
Criterion fulfilled at t0 , row % (*N in parentheses*)	18 (3)	82 (14)	5 (1)	95 (18)
Same at t0 and t1, % of total (*N in parenth.*)	84 (31)		83 (30)	
	t0 = 2004, t1 = 2009, *N* = 37		t0= 2009, t1 = 2014, *N* = 36	

The fulfilment of the criterion we suggest can vary for the same party/list from one election to another. Table A5-1 shows-1 variation over time, for observation pairs from adjacent elections. We only consider cases where the basic rules regarding the intra-party dimension stayed the same (i.e. we exclude Slovakia between 2004 and 2009, plus Austria and Bulgaria between 2009 and 2014), and if the party won seats in both elections (since the threshold becomes very small in absolute terms if the party vote becomes very small; and we are mainly interested in parties that gain seats).

First and foremost, there is high stability in the measure over time. In more than four out of five election pairs, lists either experience that a non-top-ranked candidate reaches the threshold in both elections, or that there is no such candidate in either period. When looking at the patterns in more detail, there is an interesting difference in the dynamics when comparing the 2004 to 2009 with the 2009 to 2014 changes. In the former period, changes occurred with similar relative frequency in both directions. Between 2009 and 2014, however, changes were predominantly from instances without a non-top-ranked candidate clearing the hurdle towards contests where that happened. This could be interpreted as a "personalization" tendency, in particular since we are looking only at systems where the main rules remained the same.

This pattern raises an interesting issue, since it may be interpreted in two ways. From a first perspective, one can think of list type (at the party-list level) as a feature that is purely institutional and time-constant. In strongly flexible lists it is easier for a non-top-ranked candidate to pass the threshold than in weakly flexible lists. Since this is a probabilistic relationship, inferring list type from observing just one election can be erroneous. Sometimes

no lower-ranked candidate makes the threshold, although the "true" type of the list is strongly flexible, and occasionally a very popular candidate could clear the hurdle in a system that is "actually" only weakly flexible. The measure probably will more often underestimate than overestimate flexibility, since the first type of error is more likely, in particular if a candidate has barely missed the number of necessary votes. A change over time in whether or not the criterion is fulfilled helps the analyst to learn about the true institutional type of the list, which we may assume to be known by politicians.

From another perspective, one could understand list type rather as a time-varying *perception* of the flexibility of a list. There are behavioural factors, like the number of candidates, their communication strategies, voters' information environment etc. which influence the relative electoral value of pre-electoral list position on the one hand and preference votes on the other. A change over time in whether or not the criterion is fulfilled may be less problematic from this perspective, since the change may not necessarily have been anticipated by politicians. A measure of current perceptions based on the previous election will be erroneous to the extent that politicians form their expectations based on other information.

We leave debate about these issues for future work. The important point is that in any case, a misclassification of list-type would make it harder to find the hypothesized differences between weakly and strongly flexible systems. One may of course code list-level flexibility on the basis of more than one past election (if data are available), and consider a list strongly flexible if the relevant criterion (in our case, non list-leader above threshold) was fulfilled at least once across all these elections. We note that taking into account two previous elections rather than one would not imply any changes to the coding of list type for the EPP MEPs we analyse in this paper.

References

Döring, Holger and Philip Manow. 2016. Parliaments and governments database (ParlGov): Information on parties, elections and cabinets in modern democracies. Development version. Available on http://www.parlgov.org/

Table A5-2: Coding at the party-list-level

Country	Parlgov party id	Party name	Criterion fulfilled 2004	Criterion fulfilled 2009	Criterion fulfilled 2014
Austria	1536	BZÖ		0	
Austria	50	FPÖ	1	0	0
Austria	1429	GRÜNE	0	0	0
Austria	669	MARTIN	0	0	
Austria	2255	NEOS			0
Austria	973	SPÖ	0	0	0
Austria	1013	ÖVP	0	1	1
Belgium	723	CD&V		0	0
Belgium	972	CD&V/N-VA	0		
Belgium	119	CSP	0	0	0
Belgium	1192	CdH	0	0	0
Belgium	161	ECOLO	0	0	0
Belgium	1594	Groen	0	0	0
Belgium	221	LDD		0	
Belgium	915	MR	0	0	0
Belgium	501	N-VA		0	0
Belgium	1110	openVLD		0	0
Belgium	1378	PS	0	0	0
Belgium	1029	SPA		0	0
Belgium	(1029)	sp.a-spirit	0		
Belgium	993	VB	0	0	0
Belgium	(1110)	VLD-Vivant	0		
Bulgaria	535	Ataka	0	0	(0)
Bulgaria	2362	BBZ			1
Bulgaria	(982)	BSP-led alliance	0		
Bulgaria	1254	Blue Coalition		0	
Bulgaria	1286	DPS	0	0	0
Bulgaria	1541	GERB	0	0	0
Bulgaria	1160	KzB		0	1
Bulgaria	544	NDSV	0	0	
Bulgaria	2363	RB			1
Croatia	(276)	HDZ HSP BUZ		1	
Croatia	(276)	HDZ-led alliance			1
Croatia	2182	HL		0	(0)
Croatia	2382	ORAH			0
Croatia	(1493)	SPH HNS HSU		0	
Croatia	(1493)	SPH-led alliance			0

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Czech Republic	2263	ANO			0
Czech Republic	789	CSSD	1	1	1
Czech Republic	1245	KDU-CSL	1	1	1
Czech Republic	1173	KSCM	1	1	1
Czech Republic	653	NEZ	1	(1)	
Czech Republic	829	ODS	1	1	1
Czech Republic	1532	SNK-ED	1	(1)	(1)
Czech Republic	363	SSO		(1)	0
Czech Republic	(2)	TOP 09 a Starostove			1
Netherlands	235	CDA	1	1	1
Netherlands	(1206)	CU-SGP	1	1	1
Netherlands	345	D66	0	1	1
Netherlands	339	Europa Transparant	0		
Netherlands	756	GROENLINKS	0	0	1
Netherlands	1501	PVV		0	1
Netherlands	742	PvdA	1	1	1
Netherlands	990	PvdD	(0)	(1)	0
Netherlands	357	SP	1	1	1
Netherlands	1409	VVD	1	1	1
Slovakia	1432	KDH	1	1	1
Slovakia	1142	LS-HZDS	0	1	
Slovakia	1620	MOST			1
Slovakia	(no id)	NOVA-led alliance			1
Slovakia	1759	OBYČAJNÍ ĽUDIA			1
Slovakia	131	SDKU-DS	0	1	1
Slovakia	220	SMER	0	1	1
Slovakia	559	SMK-MKP	1	1	1
Slovakia	1072	SNS	(1)	1	(1)
Slovakia	1460	SaS		(0)	1
Slovenia	1587	DeSUS		(0)	0
Slovenia	1252	LDS		0	
Slovenia	(1252)	LDS in DeSUS	0		
Slovenia	1047	NSI	0	1	
Slovenia	(1047)	NSi in SLS			1
Slovenia	706	SD	1	1	1
Slovenia	179	SDS	0	0	1
Slovenia	2384	VERJAMEM!			0
Slovenia	326	ZARES		1	(1)

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Sweden	1461	Centerpartiet	1	0	1
Sweden	1521	Feministiskt Initiativ		(0)	0
Sweden	892	Folkpartiet liberalerna	1	0	1
Sweden	404	Junilistan	1	(0)	(1)
Sweden	282	Kristdemokraterna	1	1	1
Sweden	1154	Miljöpartiet de gröna	1	1	1
Sweden	657	Moderata Samlingspartiet	1	1	1
Sweden	721	Piratpartiet		1	(1)
Sweden	904	Socialdemokraterna	1	1	0
Sweden	1546	Sverigedemokraterna	(0)	(0)	1
Sweden	882	Vänsterpartiet	0	0	0

For the criterion variables, empty cells imply that the party did not run in the EP elections, and parentheses indicate that the party ran but did not win any seats.
The party id is from Döring and Manow (2016); values in parentheses indicate that the code refers to the first-mentioned party in an alliance.

Appendix A6: Robustness check for model from Table 4 with alternative dependent variable ("did not vote" coded as abstain)

	2.5%	Mean	97.5%	2.5%	Mean	97.5%
	Alt.-spec. variables: differences			Alt.-spec. variables: levels (| not only MEP, low church att., no SQ press.)		
Size of opposing group				-0.39	-0.16	0.07
Weakly flex * size	-0.26	0.30	0.92	-0.39	0.15	0.74
Strongly flex * size	-1.39	-0.51	0.10	-1.58	-0.66	-0.09
Open * size	-0.27	-0.10	0.03	-0.52	-0.26	-0.02
Only MEP * size	-0.40	-0.10	0.12			
High church attend. * size	-0.30	-0.10	0.11			
Pressure on SQ * size	-0.04	0.29	0.64			
	Case-spec. variables: Yes vs. Abstain			Case-spec. variables: No vs. Abstain		
Sal.-weighted position | no SQ pressure	-3.69	-0.92	1.15	-0.02	2.15	5.00
Sal.-weighted position | SQ pressure	-2.10	-0.46	1.06	-0.86	0.59	2.10
Salience | no SQ pressure	-10.95	-4.80	1.48	-7.75	-2.03	3.47
Salience | SQ pressure	-11.26	-6.16	-1.33	-7.43	-2.28	2.68
List type (vs. closed list)						
Weakly flexible	2.18	9.95	19.89	-10.74	-0.51	9.60
Strongly flexible	-12.33	-4.13	2.64	-0.83	2.53	6.17
Open	-1.69	1.75	5.64	-2.02	1.57	5.07
Only MEP of party	-8.91	-3.20	1.81	-8.46	-3.24	1.46
High church attendance	-3.16	1.04	5.39	-6.08	-2.13	1.90
Female	-0.24	0.67	1.60	-1.11	-0.09	0.91
Age (in decades)	-0.63	-0.20	0.21	-0.54	-0.09	0.35
Constant	-0.25	5.47	11.51	-3.04	2.33	7.69
σ_η	0.79	1.79	3.60			
N of EPP MEPs		205				

Note: Entries are logit coefficients.

Appendix A7: Mixed logit model with three-way classification of ballot structure

	2.5%	Mean	97.5%	2.5%	Mean	97.5%
	Alt.-spec. variables: differences			Alt.-spec. variables: levels (| not only MEP, low church att., no SQ press.)		
Size of opposing group				-0.56	-0.19	0.13
Flexible * size	-0.25	0.13	0.51	-0.40	-0.06	0.20
Open * size	-0.51	-0.19	0.04	-0.83	-0.38	-0.05
Only MEP * size	-0.62	-0.21	0.11			
High church attend. * size	-0.54	-0.21	0.13			
Pressure on SQ * size	0.15	0.60	1.16			
	Case-spec. variables: Yes vs. Abstain			Case-spec. variables: No vs. Abstain		
Sal.-weighted position | no SQ pressure	-6.06	-2.31	0.62	0.48	3.48	7.35
Sal.-weighted position | SQ pressure	-3.31	-0.49	1.97	-0.08	2.54	5.74
Salience | no SQ pressure	-10.61	-3.36	3.80	-10.91	-3.94	2.99
Salience | SQ pressure	-17.05	-10.12	-3.66	-9.93	-3.37	3.21
List type (vs. closed list)						
Flexible	-0.77	4.04	9.30	-5.10	-0.59	3.83
Open	-3.03	1.86	7.11	-1.57	2.94	7.56
Only MEP of party	-12.43	-5.09	1.25	-9.50	-3.01	2.59
High church attendance	-2.24	3.54	9.28	-5.27	-0.30	4.88
Female	-0.59	0.47	1.50	-1.35	-0.23	0.95
Age (in decades)	-0.78	-0.28	0.18	-0.66	-0.15	0.35
Constant	-0.55	6.06	12.76	-2.87	4.15	11.07
σ_η	1.51	3.60	7.44			
N of EPP MEPs		191				

Note: Entries are logit coefficients.

Appendix A8: Robustness check for model from Table 4 with district-level public opinion data

There are (only) six member states that used subnational districts in the EP elections of 2009. From the 191 EPP MEPs whose vote choice is analyzed, 90 came from these countries (2 from Belgium, 23 from France, 35 from Germany, 4 from Ireland, 26 from Poland, none from the UK). To check if our results change if we account for potential within-country differences in public opinion, we derived a district-level public opinion measure using multi-level regression post-stratification (MRP, introduced by Gelman and Little 1997). We use a simplified version of the procedure for polytomous data introduced by Kastellec et al. (2015).

The basic idea of MRP, as applied to our case, is to estimate a multi-level model with individual data using all cases from the respective national European Values Survey. We include individual-level explanatory variables whose marginal distribution in the electoral districts is known from census data. We can then calculate expected values for citizen types (e.g. a woman in a certain age group in a middle-sized town), and estimate district-level public opinion by calculating a mean over citizen types as weighted by their share of the population in the district.

We faced two limitations when using MRP. First, one can use only individual-level predictors in the regression model for which cross-classified district-level census data are available, and what is available is limited and varies across countries. We obtained data from Eurostat's CensusHub website.[11]. The second issue is that the survey data do not contain direct information about the EP electoral district a respondent lives in, but rather the respective NUTS geographical unit. We assigned respondents to electoral districts as best as we could, but sometimes electoral districts even cut across the quite fine-grained NUTS3-codes that are included in the survey. In the Polish case we obtained data from the Central Statistical Office of Poland to arrive at marginal distributions for the Warsaw district and the Masovian district.[12]

For Belgium, France, Germany and Poland we used interactions of gender and age, as well as interactions of community size and age as predictors. For Ireland, only gender and age information was available. We estimated random-intercept models following the "nested binomial approach" suggested by Kastellec et al. (2015), using lme4 in R. The results are summarized in Table A8-1.

[11] https://ec.europa.eu/CensusHub2/query.do?step=selectHyperCube&qhc=false

[12] http://demografia.stat.gov.pl/bazademografia/CustomSelectData.aspx?s=lud&y=2010wgNSP2011&t=00/14/05

Table A8-1: District-level public opinion on homosexuality (MRP estimates)

Country	District	% positive view	% negative view
Belgium	Flemish-speaking	44.4	21.6
Belgium	French-speaking	24.4	26.7
France	Est	33.1	28.5
France	Ile-de-France	39.6	21.8
France	Massif-Central Centre	32.6	27.1
France	Nord-Ouest	33.0	27.9
France	Ouest	35.2	25.5
France	Sud-Est	32.7	24.0
France	Sud-Ouest	34.7	27.2
Germany	Baden-Württemberg	38.3	27.2
Germany	Bayern	15.7	39.2
Germany	Berlin	48.4	22.6
Germany	Brandenburg	25.2	26.4
Germany	Bremen	45.2	17.2
Germany	Hamburg	21.2	21.4
Germany	Hessen	46.5	14.3
Germany	Mecklenburg-Vorpommern	29.2	22.1
Germany	Niedersachsen	51.4	21.0
Germany	Nordrhein-Westfalen	36.2	27.0
Germany	Rheinland-Pfalz	47.4	24.8
Germany	Saarland	15.3	29.7
Germany	Sachsen	24.0	40.2
Germany	Sachsen-Anhalt	37.7	19.5
Germany	Schleswig-Holstein	27.2	37.9
Germany	Thüringen	31.9	21.6
Ireland	Dublin	40.8	22.5
Ireland	East	22.1	41.6
Ireland	North-West	14.3	34.6
Ireland	South	31.9	32.4
Poland	Dolnoslaskie/Opolskie	9.6	61.8
Poland	Kujawsko-Pomorskie	4.1	71.7
Poland	Lódzkie	11.7	55.2
Poland	Lubelskie	8.4	70.8
Poland	Malopolskie/Swietokrzyskie	6.3	64.0
Poland	Mazowieckie	8.8	67.8
Poland	Podkarpackie	4.1	79.7
Poland	Podlaskie/Warminsko-Mazurskie	4.9	71.2
Poland	Pomorskie	3.7	75.1
Poland	Slaskie	7.6	64.3
Poland	Warszawa	6.0	56.6
Poland	Wielkopolskie	10.9	65.1
Poland	Zachodniopomorskie/Lubuskie	6.4	67.8

While these figures appear to have reasonable to good face validity (e.g. conservative public in Bayern/Bavaria and liberal citizens in Berlin; but with some variation across countries), there is likely substantial noise in these estimates. We refrain from making any attempts to account

for uncertainty in these figures, noting that random noise in explanatory variables should make it harder to find the hypothesized substantive effects.

Table A8-2: Mixed logit model using MRP measure (and four-way classification)

	2.5%	Mean	97.5%	2.5%	Mean	97.5%
	Alt.-spec. variables: differences			Alt.-spec. variables: levels (| not only MEP, low church att., no SQ press.)		
Size of opposing group				-0.07	-0.01	0.05
Weakly flex * size	0.33	4.70	11.85	0.31	4.69	11.85
Strongly flex * size	-1.95	-0.77	-0.04	-1.95	-0.78	-0.06
Open * size	-0.24	-0.09	0.05	-0.25	-0.10	0.04
Only MEP * size	-0.58	-0.21	0.08			
High church attend. * size	-0.27	-0.07	0.14			
Pressure on SQ * size	-0.06	0.16	0.39			
	Case-spec. variables: Yes vs. Abstain			Case-spec. variables: No vs. Abstain		
Sal.-weighted position | no SQ pressure	-4.84	-1.69	0.82	0.04	2.67	5.85
Sal.-weighted position | SQ pressure	-2.02	0.11	2.11	-0.06	2.09	4.63
Salience | no SQ pressure	-17.61	-10.27	-3.32	-10.59	-4.66	1.35
Salience | SQ pressure	-8.87	-2.64	3.80	-10.10	-3.64	2.79
List type (vs. closed list)						
Weakly flexible	-10.68	1.79	14.96	-12.91	0.28	13.42
Strongly flexible	-1.10	5.23	14.58	-0.41	4.11	9.52
Open	-1.17	3.43	8.70	-0.57	2.97	6.78
Only MEP of party	-7.35	-2.08	3.64	-9.19	-3.40	1.72
High church attendance	-3.64	3.01	9.36	-3.53	0.49	4.74
Female	-0.60	0.45	1.49	-1.38	-0.23	0.94
Age (in decades)	-0.76	-0.27	0.21	-0.69	-0.16	0.35
Constant	0.68	7.11	13.72	-3.08	3.24	9.77
σ_η	0.98	2.35	4.50			
N of EPP MEPs		191				

Note: Entries are logit coefficients.

Table A8-2 displays results from running the main model using the MRP-based measures for the cases with subnational districts. This robustness check does not challenge our main conclusions. When we look at the level coefficients, the offence avoidance parameter is close to zero for closed lists, positive for weakly flexible lists (the large posterior mean results from

a separation issue in the data), and negative in case of strongly flexible lists and open ballot structures. While we cannot be more than 95% certain that the coefficient is smaller than zero for open systems, this is acceptable, as we introduced noisy measures for Ireland and Poland (countries that account for 30 of 50 open system MEPs in the sample), and a large part of the posterior distribution of the coefficient falls to the left of zero.

References

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