

Europe's voting space and the problem of second-order elections: A transnational proposal

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Abstract

This article offers an empirically driven critical consideration of the idea of transnationalising Europe's voting space, which would mean allowing European citizens to vote for a party from any member state at the European Parliament elections. We argue that such a move would reduce the second-order problem in European elections, as it would force political parties to move away from campaigning solely on national issues. We also claim that it would improve the extent to which Europeans are represented in their parliament and would be particularly welcomed by citizens currently dissatisfied with the state of their national democracy. We offer evidence to back up these claims, based on data on the political preferences of almost half a million Europeans and 274 European parties.

Keywords

European Parliament, elections, second-order problem, voting advice applications, democratic deficit

Introduction

The European Parliament's (EP) powers to influence policymaking and government at the EU level have increased considerably since its inception (Schmitt, 2005). However, this increase in importance has not corresponded to increased attention or status at election time: EP elections are plagued by poor turnout,

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lack of public awareness and above all a ‘second-order’ status in member states (Reif and Schmitt, 1980), whereby they become subordinated to current dynamics in national politics rather than played out on Europe-wide issues. Such problems have contributed to a lack of institutional legitimacy for the EP and, indeed, the EU itself, which has been increasingly portrayed as remote and undemocratic during the recent period of financial and economic difficulty.

In this article, we present an empirically guided critical examination of a potential solution to this problem: the partial transnationalisation of Europe’s *voting space*, where a voting space is understood as ‘the totality of procedural devices employed by a democratic community that formally open up the main institutions of political decision-making to the input of individual citizens through the ballot’ (Lacey, 2014). It is, in other words, the explicit legal basis that specifies not only the conditions under which particular votes can and must take place but also the precise sense in which particular institutions are related to voting procedures. Partially transnationalising Europe’s voting space would entail allowing citizens to vote for parties from any of the 28 European member states by opening up a portion of EP seats to transnational party competition. By placing political parties in competition with foreign counterparts for their own domestic constituencies, but also offering them the possibility of winning votes from all over Europe, parties may be incentivised to campaign at least partly on transnational issues, which would go some way towards undermining the second-order nature of European elections.

Our proposal is similar to one put forward by Andrew Duff in 2010 on behalf of the EP’s Committee on Constitutional Affairs. Duff’s proposals generated much interest, yet they were also highly controversial (see Day, 2014), with critics arguing that they would be difficult to implement and that there was little evidence about what their potential impact would be (see e.g. Titley, 2011). Our main aim in this article is to review more thoroughly the challenges and issues involved in such a reshaping of European politics, and also to provide some empirical evidence about the potential consequences, thus addressing some of these critiques.

Transnationalising Europe’s voting space

In an effort to address the second-order status of EP elections and the democratic deficits it engenders, the EU has been incrementally increasing the EP’s powers (Schimmelfennig, 2010) to the point that it is now almost a full co-legislator with the Council. However, evidence that increases in EP powers have had any impact on the status of its elections is thin. Though some have argued that turnout and voter preference in European elections is partly motivated by opinions on European issues (Blondel et al., 1997; Hobolt et al., 2009), and that European electoral results cannot be entirely explained in terms of opposition to the incumbent government (Hix and Marsh, 2011), in general their second-order status remains. This makes it legitimate to focus on other means of enhancing the democratic status of the EP.

Alongside increasing powers for the Parliament, transnationalisation, by which we mean the breaking down of nationally demarcated silos within which Europe's elections take place, has been an important area of development since the formation of the parliament. In practice, most existing literature has focused on transnationalisation in terms of the formation of international coalitions of parties, both in the form of political groups within the EP and especially through loosely integrated Europarties (see Hix and Lord, 1997; Pridham and Pridham, 1981).¹ The development of Europarties has been considerable in terms of increased funding and responsibilities, with major Europarties now agreeing election manifestoes and, since 2014, choosing candidates for the presidency of the European Commission, the so-called *Spitzenkandidaten*. However, such developments do not, we argue, do much to ameliorate the second-order problem in elections, for two main reasons.

First, Europarties are essentially federations of national parties, grouped along largely ideological lines (Bressanelli, 2012). The organisational difficulties implied by these large transnational coalitions mean that their policy platforms are often the vaguely stated results of protracted compromises and lowest common denominator policy positions (Johansson, 2009) making it difficult for even the most attentive citizens to judge how their representatives are likely to act when parliament is in session. They would hence still be vulnerable to the charge of not representing the 'real' political landscape. Second, and most important from our perspective, the major Europarties typically have one major national party as a member in each member state. This means that, when it comes to European election campaigns, in practice major national parties confront each other in the same way as they do in national elections, often without doing much to advertise their connection to a European wide federation of parties (Schmidt-Kessen and Moitinho de Almeida, 2012).

We thus focus instead on an alternative means of partially transnationalising Europe's voting space: by allowing existing national parties to compete for votes over seats allocated to a limited pan-European electoral district in any member state of the EU. This proposal is akin to one already outlined by former British MEP Andrew Duff (2010). However, unlike Duff, who suggested that Europarties could take a lead in campaigning for this district, we argue that this responsibility could be given to existing national parties. Though such a scenario implies significant practical challenges, we believe it is nonetheless better positioned to improve the transnational nature of Europe's voting space and hence go some way towards remedying the problems of second-order European elections. This would occur through two main dynamics.

First, if parties wanted to compete for voters from beyond their own national borders for a portion of the seats in the EP, it stands to reason that they could no longer treat the European elections as solely national campaigns, nor base their appeal entirely on nationally relevant issues. Rather, they would have to seek policies and positions that appeal to a cross-national section of Europe's voters. Second, these same national parties would face international competition for

domestic voters, meaning they would no longer be able to position themselves solely in relationship to other domestic political actors.

There would be two major practical challenges implied in the partial transnationalisation of Europe's voting space in this way. The first is the absence of a common language. Theorists disagree about the extent to which a common language is a fundamental part of any democratic polity (see e.g. Lacey, 2014; Van Parijs, 2011: 28). However, even if we accept that multilingual democracy is a possibility, the practical challenges involved for a political party in communicating its message in the 24 official languages of the European Union would be considerable (something largely confirmed by empirical investigations into the extent to which Europe can be said to have a 'public sphere' – see e.g. Fishkin et al., 2014). The second problem would be the complexity of the political offering made available to them. Over 250 major parties competed in the 2009 EP elections, each of which could conceivably be a candidate for a citizen's vote (Lefkofridi and Katsanidou, 2014). Systematically assessing the appeal of all parties would be an impossible task for any individual voter to undertake.

To address these challenges, we argue a partly transnationalised European voting space could be supported by one or several 'Voting Advice Applications' (VAAs) which simplify the connection between parties and citizens. VAAs are currently proliferating in contemporary European democracies, becoming a normal part of numerous electoral processes (Garzia and Marschall, 2014). For example, in the run-up to the 2012 parliamentary election in the Netherlands, 4.9 million users employed the Dutch VAA *StemWijzer*, while the German VAA *Wahl-O-Mat* launched before the federal elections in 2013 was used by 12.3 million people. While differing in their precise implementation, VAAs typically offer citizens advice about the extent to which their policy preferences overlap with the political parties competing for their votes, based on a list of policy questions to which both political parties and citizens respond. The application can then measure the extent to which any given citizen overlaps with a political party. Hence simply by completing a short questionnaire citizens are able to quickly sort through a large amount of partisan offers.

The mass use of such tools as a way of guiding the voting decisions of individuals would of course have significant consequences for the process of European electoral competition. VAAs emphasise the importance of issue congruence between voters and parties (Wagner and Ruusuvirta, 2012), at the expense of other factors such as competence. Applied to a transnational voting space, they might also de-emphasise the importance of local or national representation, leading to a situation whereby some states might have little representation from MEPs who actually come from within their borders. A VAA-led politics would, in other words, be significantly simplified, focusing on just certain aspects of representative politics which involve politicians making an offer to voters during an election campaign.

This simplification is nevertheless defensible, as it emphasises what is increasingly seen as the core of electoral representation. Fearon (1999) and Mansbridge (2009) persuasively argue that selection of candidates on the basis of ideational or

personal congruence with the voters not only describes how people typically vote but is more effective than the ability to sanction representatives via de-selection at the next election. While there is, of course, no guarantee that selecting representatives on the basis of ideational congruence will lead to voters' desired policy outcomes, it arguably remains the most reliable means for securing good democratic representation.²

Furthermore, we believe that in the particular context of EP elections the simplified nature of a VAA-led politics would be less consequential than it would be at national level. Unlike many national parliaments, members of the executive of the European Union are not drawn from MEPs. Hence a high degree of competence, while clearly still important, is not a crucial factor in terms of choosing a representative. Indeed, past elections have tended to result in an EP where a majority of members have no real experience of EU-level politics (Lord, 2004: 120). Furthermore, in terms of the potential loss of territorial representation, the EP is anyway not a very 'territorial' European institution: research has repeatedly shown that MEPs tend to vote 'according to partisan rather than national affiliation' (Hosli, 1997: 351; see also Hix, 2006; Mair and Thomassen, 2010); while member states would retain fixed national representation on the European Council, Council of Ministers and the European Commission.

The potential consequences of transnationalisation

As highlighted earlier, one of the strongest criticisms of the Duff proposal was the lack of evidence about the potential consequences of his ideas. We now seek to address this deficit, by assembling evidence on the potential consequences of transnationalising a portion of Europe's voting space (though we would note again that our ideas are not analogous to Duff's). We do so on the basis of data drawn from the EU Profiler, a VAA created during the 2009 EP elections (for more details, see Trechsel and Mair, 2011). Over 2.5 million users visited the website during the six weeks prior to the June 2009 elections, with 919,422 complete voting advices generated.³ The preferences entered by these individuals, combined with the information about political parties, give us the chance to explore the potential ways in which electoral politics might change if Europe's voting space were at least partly transnationalised.

In this section, we focus in particular on two aspects. First, we look at how substantive representation in the EP would be improved in a transnational voting space, and thus analyse the extent to which national parties would experience increased competition from foreign counterparts. Second, we examine the extent to which users would actually be willing to vote for a party outside of their own national confines and assemble evidence on what would drive such willingness. Our analyses are necessarily preliminary, as perfect data for addressing these questions does not yet exist. Nevertheless, they offer an important first look at these questions.

Representation and party competition in a transnational voting space

In the context of a limited national political arena, it is inevitable that some citizens will suffer from a 'representative deficit', whereby they are required to compromise over the extent to which the party they vote for truly represents their interests (Alvarez et al., 2014). One of the major advantages of transnationalising Europe's voting space would be the potential to shrink this deficit by offering citizens a greater array of parties to choose from. This is a considerable advantage: the extent to which the interests and values of citizens are made present in government is the forerunning criterion for good democratic representation (e.g. Pitkin, 1967; Urbinati, 2006; Brito Vieira and Runciman, 2008). Rehfeld (2009: 214) even goes so far as to call it the 'central normative problem of democracy'. Clearly, if voters move from a political arena with a few national parties to one with over 250 parties from all over Europe, the extent to which they can pick a party that represents them well will improve. The data from the EU Profiler allow us to estimate the extent of this change, as well as estimating how many other parties would become implicated in national competition for any given user.⁴

Following Alvarez et al. (2014) we first measure the representative deficit for each user, both within her national voting district and in the partially transnationalised European voting district. The deficit is calculated by summing the absolute differences between national parties and the user on all 28 questions used in the EU Profiler. This variable ranges from 0 to 100% and corresponds to the distance between a potential perfect overlap of 100% and the real extent of overlap between the best-matching party 'on offer' in the national district. The smaller the representative deficit, the better the policy congruence between the best-matching party in a given voting space and a VAA user's preferences. The 28 questions were designed in order to reflect issues of Europe-wide importance (rather than reflecting any specific local or territorial concerns).

In Table 1 we present the average value of EU Profiler users' representative deficit broken down by their country of residence. The mean value of the national representative deficit for the whole sample of EU Profiler users is 27.6%. That is to say, on average, the best-matching party that users of the system could find leaves over a quarter of their political preferences unrepresented. This is a value which varies considerably across Europe: with the Benelux countries, Nordic countries and also Spain and France providing above average representation, while at the opposite end of the table we find mostly Eastern European countries. It is also interesting to note that, in terms of the political parties on offer, some of the countries studied had electoral competition that offered relatively little diversity on certain issues: for example, in Malta, every political party running in the elections strongly opposed the idea that euthanasia should be legalised.

When allowing a user to match her preferences with any of the 274 parties included in the EU Profiler, the average representative deficit drops by almost seven percentage points to a value of 20.9%. In other words, almost a quarter of the deficit is eliminated. Furthermore, the distribution of representative deficits

Table 1. Representative deficit by country of residence.

Country	Percentage representative deficit (SD)	Average national party rank	N
Netherlands	22.78 (4.9)	2.68	81,010
Belgium	23.33 (5.5)	4.04	37,374
Denmark	23.78 (6.5)	7.54	1046
Spain	25.06 (8.1)	13.04	13,777
Finland	25.22 (5.7)	8.71	2683
Luxembourg	25.58 (6.1)	7.94	1653
France	25.92 (6.3)	18.11	23,413
Bulgaria	26.31 (5.4)	7.52	4029
Austria	26.69 (6.6)	19.18	7313
Italy	27.09 (5.1)	18.42	30,158
EU27	27.55 (7.2)	17.84	473,045
Greece	27.56 (5.9)	11.67	5635
Cyprus	28.07 (5.2)	14.28	770
UK	28.18 (4.2)	16.54	17,587
Germany	28.54 (5.7)	19.33	53,595
Sweden	28.56 (6.4)	14.49	116,316
Hungary	28.76 (5.3)	11.77	4538
Slovenia	29.03 (6.2)	23.45	887
Czech Rep.	29.07 (5.2)	13.79	2971
Malta	29.14 (6.7)	18.38	218
Estonia	29.50 (5.0)	19.55	893
Portugal	29.59 (5.2)	24.38	41,144
Ireland	31.61 (6.0)	31.12	2445
Romania	33.13 (4.8)	37.07	925
Slovakia	35.38 (5.5)	47.32	416
Lithuania	39.61 (5.8)	86.37	906
Latvia	42.01 (5.2)	103.4	527
Poland	43.88 (5.3)	105.91	20,816

narrows considerably: the standard deviation of representative deficits under the current arrangement of Europe's voting space is 7.2, whereas it is only 4.2 within a transnational European voting district. A transnational European voting district would hence also be more equitable, with far fewer people seriously underrepresented. Figure 1 depicts this state of affairs graphically by showing the density distributions of representative deficits in national contexts and in a partially transnationalised voting space.⁵

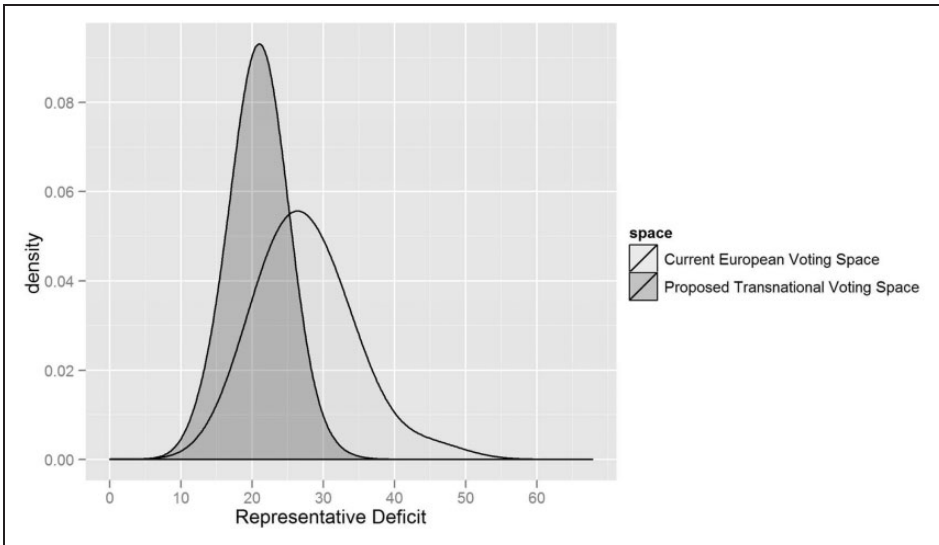


Figure 1. Representative deficit under Europe's current voting space and the proposed transnational voting space.

We also want to consider the amount of competition national parties would now face for their voters in a transnational electoral district. One way of assessing this is to look at the amount of parties voters would now be able to choose from that would represent them better than their best-matching national party. Table 1 also shows the average ranking in which the best-matching party in the national context would appear if one was to choose among the 274 competing throughout Europe in the EP election. These rankings are calculated by identifying a user's best-matching party in their home country and then counting the number of other parties in other countries which would offer that user better representation.

On average, the best-matching party in the national constituency would only appear around position 17, meaning that on average 16 other parties in different countries would fit a given user's preferences better than their best-matching national party. These parties would, on average, be drawn from 7.3 different countries. As would be expected, countries with a lower average representative deficit would face less competition. For instance, in the Netherlands, the average best-matching party has just 1.68 other parties around Europe that match user preferences better. Conversely, in the case of Poland, the best-matching average Polish party would face competition from more than 100 parties able to provide for a better level of representation.

Would voters vote for foreign parties?

In this second empirical section, we want to consider whether voters would actually choose to vote for a party from another country, and if so what factors would

motivate such a choice. It follows from our brief discussion relating to the politics of presence and the politics of ideas that territorial links remain an important facet of representation, and we expect that many voters would prefer a national representative to a transnational one, even if they have to compromise over the extent to which they agree on the issues. However, we also expect that a significant portion of voters would choose to vote transnationally on the basis of the politics of ideas, that is when there is a better matching party on offer in ideational terms.

We address this question using a subset of approximately 20,000 users who willingly completed an extra questionnaire following their participation in the EU Profiler. This extra-questionnaire featured a dichotomous question about respondents' active demand of transnational voting: '*The EU Profiler made me want to vote for a party in another country*' (with either 'Yes' or 'No' being a possible response). Eighteen percent of respondents answered yes to this question.⁶

We begin by estimating a simple logistic regression model (Table 2, column 1) to explain 'active demand' as a function of our main covariate of interest plus a control for a user's opinion of the *EU Profiler's usefulness* (note that detailed variable coding is provided in the online appendix). The inclusion of this statistical control serves to depurate the effect of revealed issue congruence across voting districts from the possibly intervening role of users' trust in VAAs regardless of the actual advice's content. The results of this preliminary model show that improvements of the representative deficit remain statistically significant even after controlling for respondents' opinion about the tool's usefulness. Moreover, the interaction effect of these two variables does not achieve statistical significance, thus indicating that the two predictors bear their effect on the dependent variable independently.

We have also estimated a number of progressively more complex models that take into account socio-demographic characteristics of the users (column 2), measures about their interest in political matters (column 3) and attitudes towards democracy at both national and EU level (column 4). The EU Profiler dataset features a wide array of socio-demographic controls that could be potentially included in the analysis. Based on the results of exploratory bivariate analyses, in Model 2 we decided to estimate a parsimonious model in which only those variables bearing statistically significant relationships with the dependent variable are included, which were age, gender and educational level. Interestingly enough, these variables are those identified by other scholars as predicting VAA usage at the individual level (Marschall, 2014). By controlling for these variables, we can therefore tackle the non-representativeness of the data at hand and more confidently assess the effect of representative deficit improvement regardless of the socio-demographic characteristics of VAA users. Results from Model 2 show that effects go in the expected direction: male, young and highly educated respondents appear significantly more willing to cast a vote for a party outside their country. More importantly, the coefficient of the representative deficit improvement barely changes. In other words, revealed proximity matters regardless of the characteristics of VAA users (also in this case, no interaction effect achieves statistical significance).

Table 2. The individual-level determinants of active demand: Standardised logistic regression estimates.

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Improvement in representative deficit	1.04 (0.01)***	1.03 (0.01)***	1.04 (0.01)***	1.03 (0.00)***
EU Profiler was useful	1.27 (0.08)**	1.26 (0.07)**	1.24 (0.07)**	1.27 (0.07)**
Gender (Female = 1)		0.57 (0.06)***	0.60 (0.07)***	0.61 (0.07)***
Age		0.97 (0.00)***	0.97 (0.00)***	0.97 (0.00)***
Education		1.12 (0.02)***	1.11 (0.02)***	1.11 (0.02)***
Interest in politics			1.09 (0.06)	1.08 (0.07)
Interest in EP campaign			1.15 (0.05)**	1.17 (0.05)**
Satisfaction with democracy (national)				0.75 (0.05)***
Satisfaction with democracy (EU)				1.02 (0.05)
Constant	0.15 (0.10)***	0.32 (0.16)***	0.20 (0.19)***	0.30 (0.22)***
N	18,773	17,136	16,758	16,530
Log-likelihood	-8833.8	-7877.9	-7704.2	-7527.6

Note: Coefficients are exponentiated. Standard errors (in parentheses) are clustered robust at the country level. Cluster-robust standard errors are calculated in R using the function developed by Arai (2011).

***p < .001, **p < .01, *p < .05.

Next to their socio-demographic characteristics, VAA users are also characterised by a disproportionately higher degree of interest in political matters (Marschall, 2014). Based on the aforementioned reasoning, we have thus included two statistical controls tapping users' interest in politics at both national and EU level (column 3). As made clear from an examination of the levels of statistical significance, voters' interest in national politics does not appear enough for generating active demand for transnational voting rights, while having an interest in European politics does play a role. Nonetheless, the coefficient of our key predictor remains virtually unchanged.

We further controlled for users' degree of satisfaction with democracy, again, at both national and EU levels, under the expectation that the willingness to cast a vote outside one's national context might be fostered by both higher degrees of satisfaction with EU democracy and lower degrees of satisfaction with democracy at the national level. The estimated coefficients are in both cases signed as expected. However, only in the case of satisfaction with national democracy do we find a statistically significant effect.

On the basis of this evidence, we can conclude that there is a significant positive correlation between whether an individual would consider voting for a party in another country and the extent to which they might be better represented if they did so. This demonstrates that, were Europe's voting space to be partially transnationalised, those potentially making use of such an opportunity would be those most likely to directly benefit from it. However, this evidence also shows that by no means all Europeans would choose to vote outside of their national district. Territory, in other words, remains a strong motivating force when choosing a representative.

Conclusion

In this article, we have set out the case for the partial transnationalisation of Europe's voting space, by which we mean allowing European citizens to vote for any party competing in a limited European electoral district during EP elections. Such a move would have the positive effect of improving the extent to which citizens can choose a party which reflects their values and interests, would increase party competition and would possibly be welcomed by those citizens who are dissatisfied with the state of their current national democracy and who could find a better party elsewhere. We do not claim that this would resolve the EU's multifaceted democratic deficit, but rather that it may go some way to undermining one of its aspects, namely the second-order nature of EP elections.

From the supply side, parties may have additional incentives to appeal beyond their national districts in an effort to encompass the concerns of a wider European electorate. Meanwhile, on the demand side, citizens who are concerned with improving their representative deficit will seek out parties who are better able to express their preferences. Importantly, popular engagement with one or more VAA(s) could play a significant role in contributing to the formation of more Europeanised national debates in the lead up to elections. That is to say, any European-wide VAA will ensure that its users from across Europe have systematically passed through, and considered their position on, the same set of issues at roughly the same time. In this way, users from different member states may be drawn away from focusing merely on national concerns in the build-up to EP elections, placing more emphasis on how they will be represented at the European level. The extent to which the issues highlighted by the VAA are discussed more widely in the national public spheres will be, in large part, a function of citizens' interest in making use of this device (although the media may also play an initial role in generating this interest).

Deschouwer and Van Parijs, in their distinct but not unrelated proposal for an inter-community electoral district for Belgium (2009: 18), admit that they are not striving for an ideal outcome. Comparing the Belgian case with the EU, they state: '[s]uch institutional engineering . . . is an essential part of the piecemeal shaping of the sort of institutions that the countries and super-countries of today's world will increasingly need'. Echoing this thought, we have not put forward an ideal of

democratic legitimacy for the EU, but a ‘piecemeal’ proposal that is potentially more acceptable and therefore achievable than more radical or far-reaching ideas (at least in the short or medium term). Falling short of ticking all the normative boxes that a neatly packaged ideal may boast, our proposal necessarily involves significant trade-offs. As we have explained, the use of VAAs as a primary means of assisting democratic choice implies a stripped down vision of democracy, focusing solely on the issue-specific overlap between parties and citizens, and ignoring factors such as competence, past record or territorial links. Though these are defects, we argue that in the specific case of the EP they are justifiable, as the parliament does not directly form the EU’s executive and as a variety of other territory specific mechanisms of representation remain in EU institutions. Most of all, we argue that these potential trade-offs may be worth sustaining as a means to improve the current weak nature of representative democracy in the European Union.

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Notes

1. Deliberative polling has also been presented as a potential remedy to the second-order status of European elections (Bernhagen and Schmitt, 2014).
2. Within the European context, we may expect a transnational electoral district run by national parties to produce better voter congruence than if it were managed by Europarties. The key point is that national policy platforms are typically far clearer than Europarty platforms, given the latter’s vague and lowest common denominator compromises in setting out their election manifestoes, such that citizens may be better able to ‘select’ their representatives on ideational grounds when these representatives primarily run as members of national parties.
3. In this article, we focus on a subset of 473,045 unique users. We hence discard repeat users of the site who may have inputted varying party preferences. For simplicity, we also look only at those users who matched exactly one party at the European level, discarding those who matched multiple parties with the same level of representation.
4. Of course, our data are not sampled randomly; rather, users self-selected into the EU Profiler application. As is the case with other VAAs, male, young and highly educated respondents are over-represented in the EU Profiler cohort (Marschall, 2014). Therefore, we cannot draw hard and fast conclusions about the absolute size of the representative deficit in Europe. Nevertheless, by comparing what would happen to the same sample of users in both a national and transnational electoral district, we can still provide an estimation of how much this representative deficit would improve through a degree of transnationalisation.

5. The distribution of representative improvement within our dataset is roughly normal around the mean, though the finite limit of potential improvement leads to a peak around zero. Figure A1 in the online appendix is a histogram of this improvement.
6. Note that the amount of respondents in this sub-sample is unevenly distributed across EU countries. What matters for our purposes, however, is the lack of a strong country variation when it comes to the distribution of the dependent variable. Against a mean value of 18% in the full dataset, we find only four sub-samples where positive answers to the transnationalisation question lie below 10% (i.e. Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Denmark and Estonia). In no case do we witness mean sub-sample values above 30%.

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