

# Does Politics Drive Cultural Preferences?

## Voting Behavior in the Eurovision Song Contest

### Appendix

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# 1 Online Survey Details and Representativeness

We administered an online survey via Qualtrics to 500 respondents in each of four European countries: Spain, the Netherlands, Poland, and Sweden. The survey ran from May 7–16, 2025, just prior to the final of the Eurovision Song Contest on May 17. Questionnaires were in each country’s national language. Respondents were recruited by Cint, which is commonly used for survey research on Europe (e.g., Bordeleau et al., 2025; Borwein et al., 2024). We used gender and region quotas to ensure diverse national samples. For the region quotas, we used the European Union’s NUTS-1 regions for the Netherlands and Sweden and merged some NUTS-1 regions for Poland and Spain to end up with 3 or 4 geographically contiguous regions per country. Table A1 summarizes the first-level administrative subdivisions (autonomous communities, counties, provinces, or voivodeships), the percentage of the population, and the quota for each region. For gender quotas, we sought a 50-50 male-female split per country (respondents could report a non-binary gender identity, but only 1 out of 2000 did so). All quotas were met to within 1 respondent.

Table A2 summarizes how the table compares to census figures or national probability samples on additional variables. Online surveys commonly oversample cosmopolitans and younger age cohorts (Boas, Christenson and Glick, 2020). Respondents from Spain and Poland skew younger and more highly educated, but the same is not true of the Netherlands and Sweden; in the latter, we actually underrepresent bachelor’s degree holders. On balance, education and age look quite good for an online panel. Consistent with the cosmopolitan bias, we somewhat underrepresent those who have strong emotional attachments to their country, but the sample is quite representative in terms of attitudes toward Europe as well as ideological self-placement. Respondents in each country are more interested in politics and more likely to have voted in a prior Eurovision Song Contest than those from nationally representative samples, likely due to self-selection. Our consent form described the survey as a “study on how musical taste, political views, and attitudes toward different nationalities influence voting behavior in the Eurovision Song Contest,” and those who enjoy answering questions on such topics were probably more likely to participate. At the same

**Table A1: Region Quotas for Survey**

| Country     | First-Level Administrative Subdivisions                                                              | Percent | Quota |
|-------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------|-------|
| Spain       | Galicia, Principado de Asturias, Cantabria, País Vasco, Comunidad Foral de Navarra, La Rioja, Aragón | 18.6    | 93    |
|             | Comunidad de Madrid, Castilla y León, Castilla-La Mancha, Extremadura                                | 25.9    | 130   |
|             | Cataluña, Comunitat Valenciana, Illes Balears                                                        | 29.8    | 149   |
|             | Andalucía, Región de Murcia, Ciudad de Ceuta, Ciudad de Melilla, Canarias                            | 25.7    | 128   |
|             |                                                                                                      |         |       |
| Netherlands | Groningen, Friesland, Drenthe                                                                        | 10      | 50    |
|             | Overijssel, Gelderland, Flevoland                                                                    | 20.9    | 105   |
|             | Noord-Holland, Zeeland, Utrecht, Zuid-Holland                                                        | 47.7    | 238   |
|             | Noord-Brabant, Limburg                                                                               | 21.4    | 107   |
| Poland      | Małopolskie, Śląskie, Dolnośląskie, Opolskie                                                         | 30.8    | 154   |
|             | Wielkopolskie, Zachodniopomorskie, Lubuskie, Kujawsko-pomorskie, Warmińsko-mazurskie, Pomorskie      | 31.2    | 156   |
|             | Łódzkie, Świętokrzyskie, Lubelskie, Podkarpackie, Podlaskie, Mazowiecki                              | 37.9    | 190   |
|             |                                                                                                      |         |       |
| Sweden      | Stockholm, Uppsala, Södermanland, Östergötland, Örebro, Västmanland                                  | 39.9    | 199   |
|             | Jönköping, Kronoberg, Kalmar, Gotland, Blekinge, Skåne, Halland, Västtra Götaland                    | 43.2    | 216   |
|             | Värmland, Dalarna, Gävleborg, Västernorrland, Jämtland, Västerbotten, Norrbotten                     | 16.9    | 85    |

time, ours is less of an ESC-enthusiast sample than that of Stockemer et al. (2018), who at least partially sought out Eurovision fans. While they report (footnote 11) that 77 percent of respondents are very or rather interested in the ESC, only 60 percent of our respondents are.

## 2 Model Specification and Measuring Song Quality

We estimate the predictors of Eurovision song preference in our survey using a linear probability model, in which  $i$  indexes respondents,  $r$  indexes their countries of residence,  $j$  indexes songs, and  $c$  indexes the songs' countries:

$$\begin{aligned}
 Vote_{irjc} = & \beta_0 + \beta_1 FavorCulture_{irc} + \beta_2 FavorGovt_{irc} + \beta_3 SongQuality_{rjc} + \\
 & \beta_{4-7} SongControls_{jc} + \epsilon_{irjc}
 \end{aligned} \tag{1}$$

**Table A2: Survey Respondents versus Population Figures**

|                              | Spain  |            | Netherlands |            | Poland |            | Sweden |            |
|------------------------------|--------|------------|-------------|------------|--------|------------|--------|------------|
|                              | Survey | Population | Survey      | Population | Survey | Population | Survey | Population |
| <b>Age</b>                   |        |            |             |            |        |            |        |            |
| 18–34                        | 31.7   | 22.5       | 28.1        | 27.3       | 33.4   | 23.3       | 30.0   | 26.9       |
| 35–49                        | 30.3   | 26.6       | 24.8        | 22.3       | 28.0   | 29.0       | 24.2   | 24.1       |
| 50–64                        | 22.4   | 26.5       | 21.4        | 25.4       | 20.8   | 22.7       | 22.8   | 23.1       |
| 65+                          | 15.6   | 24.4       | 25.7        | 25.1       | 17.8   | 25.0       | 23.0   | 25.9       |
| <b>Other Demographics</b>    |        |            |             |            |        |            |        |            |
| Male                         | 50.1   | 48.5       | 49.9        | 49.4       | 50.0   | 49.4       | 50.0   | 50.1       |
| Bachelor’s degree            | 41.1   | 26.3       | 37.5        | 38.2       | 44.8   | 30.4       | 27.6   | 36.7       |
| <b>Familiarity with ESC</b>  |        |            |             |            |        |            |        |            |
| Never heard                  | 2.4    | 3.0        | 1.8         | 2.0        | 2.4    | 1.0        | 5.0    | 4.0        |
| Heard, never watched         | 11.4   | 17.0       | 9.8         | 25.0       | 11.2   | 26.0       | 6.6    | 10.0       |
| Watched, never voted         | 61.9   | 70.0       | 62.1        | 62.0       | 56.0   | 58.0       | 46.4   | 63.0       |
| Watched and voted            | 24.4   | 10.0       | 26.3        | 11.0       | 30.4   | 15.0       | 42.0   | 23.0       |
| <b>Interest in Politics</b>  |        |            |             |            |        |            |        |            |
| Very interested              | 26.3   | 14.2       | 25.5        | 15.5       | 30.2   | 9.7        | 23.8   | 24.5       |
| Fairly interested            | 38.7   | 22.2       | 49.3        | 51.1       | 46.0   | 36.9       | 47.0   | 48.4       |
| Not very interested          | 26.7   | 38.0       | 15.6        | 24.4       | 18.0   | 39.1       | 22.6   | 22.5       |
| Not at all interested        | 8.2    | 25.6       | 9.6         | 9.1        | 5.8    | 14.3       | 6.6    | 4.6        |
| <b>Ideology</b>              |        |            |             |            |        |            |        |            |
| Left (0–3)                   | 31.7   | 31.5       | 21.0        | 22.7       | 22.4   | 22.1       | 30.8   | 30.1       |
| Center (4–6)                 | 39.3   | 48.0       | 47.9        | 52.0       | 43.2   | 43.8       | 39.0   | 43.0       |
| Right (7–10)                 | 28.9   | 20.6       | 31.1        | 25.3       | 34.4   | 34.2       | 30.2   | 26.9       |
| <b>Attachment to Country</b> |        |            |             |            |        |            |        |            |
| Not much (0–3)               | 10.4   | 6.0        | 13.0        | 8.4        | 5.4    | 3.6        | 10.6   | 4.5        |
| Some (4–6)                   | 18.4   | 18.0       | 27.9        | 23.1       | 20.4   | 11.2       | 22.4   | 14.3       |
| A lot (7–10)                 | 71.3   | 76.0       | 59.1        | 68.5       | 74.2   | 85.2       | 67.0   | 81.2       |
| <b>Attachment to Europe</b>  |        |            |             |            |        |            |        |            |
| Not much (0–3)               | 10.0   | 10.2       | 20.8        | 15.9       | 14.4   | 11.0       | 12.8   | 8.5        |
| Some (4–6)                   | 30.5   | 33.3       | 40.7        | 41.0       | 31.4   | 31.0       | 35.6   | 35.1       |
| A lot (7–10)                 | 59.5   | 56.5       | 38.5        | 43.2       | 54.2   | 58.0       | 51.6   | 56.4       |

Figures are percentages. Source for “Population” column: Age and Male: Eurostat, excluding those under 18. Bachelor’s Degree, Interest in Politics, Ideology, Attachment to Country, and Attachment to Europe: European Social Survey, Round 11 (2023–24). Familiarity with ESC: Ipsos (N.d.).

$Vote_{irjc}$  equals 1 if respondent  $i$  votes for song  $j$ , and zero otherwise.  $FavorCulture_{irc}$  and  $FavorGovt_{irc}$  are the respondent’s Likert scale evaluations of the culture from and the government of country  $c$ , reversed so that higher is more favorable.  $SongControls_{jc}$  is a vector of song-level controls that have been shown to influence performance in the ESC: whether the song is wholly or primarily in English, and the gender and type of performer (male soloist, female soloist, duet, or group).

$SongQuality_{rjc}$  is a measure of a song’s aesthetic quality for the people of a given country that is standard in the Eurovision voting literature (Charron, 2013; Ginsburgh and Noury, 2008; Spierdijk and Vellekoop, 2009). The quality of song  $j$  from country  $c$  for the people of country  $r$  is given by the average jury points awarded to that song from all  $N_p$  participant countries  $p$ , except  $c$  (since countries don’t vote for themselves) and  $r$  (since the same national biases might influence respondents and juries of a given country):

$$SongQuality_{rjc} = \frac{1}{N_p - 2} \sum_{p \neq r, c} Points_{jp}$$

The resulting measure ranges from 0 to 7.3. This measure is undefined for 7 of the songs in our survey, which did not make it to the final round. We assume that, if these songs had qualified, they would have scored lower than the worst-performing qualifier. We thus substitute a score between zero and the lowest average final round point total among countries that competed in the semi-final (i.e., excluding France, Germany, Italy, Spain, and the United Kingdom, which automatically qualify), scaled linearly according to each song’s televote points among non-qualifying countries in their semi-final. (We use televote points for the semi-final rounds because jury votes were discontinued starting in 2023.) Points awarded from each country to each song are taken from Eurovision Song Contest Dataset on GitHub (<https://github.com/Spijkervet/eurovision-dataset>) for results through 2023 and EurovisionWorld (<https://eurovisionworld.com/eurovision/2024>) for 2024.

The songs in our study and corresponding quality scores are summarized in Table A3.

**Table A3: Songs and Quality Scores**

| Year | Country       | Artist                     | Song                    | Quality for: |      |      |      |
|------|---------------|----------------------------|-------------------------|--------------|------|------|------|
|      |               |                            |                         | PL           | SE   | ES   | NL   |
| 2019 | Belgium       | Eliot                      | Wake Up                 | 0.00         | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 |
| 2021 | Belgium       | Hooverphonic               | The Wrong Place         | 1.84         | 1.89 | 1.92 | 1.76 |
| 2022 | Belgium       | Jeremie Makiese            | Miss You                | 1.55         | 1.53 | 1.42 | 1.39 |
| 2023 | Belgium       | Gustaph                    | Because of You          | 3.49         | 3.63 | 3.51 | 3.51 |
| 2024 | Belgium       | Mustii                     | Before the Party's Over | 0.02         | 0.02 | 0.02 | 0.02 |
| 2019 | Czechia       | Lake Malawi                | Friend of a Friend      | 3.85         | 3.82 | 3.69 | 3.74 |
| 2021 | Czechia       | Benny Cristo               | Omaga                   | 0.00         | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 |
| 2022 | Czechia       | We Are Domi                | Lights Off              | 0.87         | 0.74 | 0.87 | 0.87 |
| 2023 | Czechia       | Vesna                      | My Sister's Crown       | 2.69         | 2.60 | 2.69 | 2.46 |
| 2024 | Czechia       | Aiko                       | Pedestal                | 0.11         | 0.11 | 0.11 | 0.11 |
| 2019 | Finland       | Darude/Sebastian Rejman    | Look Away               | 0.00         | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 |
| 2021 | Finland       | Blind Channel              | Dark Side               | 2.19         | 2.24 | 2.24 | 2.24 |
| 2022 | Finland       | The Rasmus                 | Jezebel                 | 0.32         | 0.32 | 0.32 | 0.32 |
| 2023 | Finland       | Käärijä                    | Cha Cha Cha             | 4.29         | 3.94 | 4.26 | 4.00 |
| 2024 | Finland       | Windows95man               | No Rules!               | 0.21         | 0.21 | 0.21 | 0.21 |
| 2019 | France        | Bilal Hassani              | Roi                     | 1.56         | 1.72 | 1.72 | 1.72 |
| 2021 | France        | Barbara Pravi              | Voila                   | 6.70         | 6.54 | 6.38 | 6.38 |
| 2022 | France        | Alvan and Ahez             | Fulenn                  | 0.24         | 0.24 | 0.24 | 0.24 |
| 2023 | France        | La Zarra                   | Évidemment              | 1.54         | 1.26 | 1.40 | 1.46 |
| 2024 | France        | Slimane                    | Mon Amour               | 6.32         | 6.26 | 6.21 | 6.12 |
| 2019 | Germany       | S!sters                    | Sister                  | 0.62         | 0.62 | 0.62 | 0.62 |
| 2021 | Germany       | Jendrik                    | I Don't Feel Hate       | 0.08         | 0.08 | 0.08 | 0.08 |
| 2022 | Germany       | Malik Harris               | Rockstars               | 0.00         | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 |
| 2023 | Germany       | Lord of the Lost           | Blood & Glitter         | 0.09         | 0.09 | 0.09 | 0.09 |
| 2024 | Germany       | ISAAK                      | Always On The Run       | 2.79         | 2.91 | 2.76 | 2.76 |
| 2019 | Great Britain | Michael Rice               | Bigger than Us          | 0.21         | 0.21 | 0.21 | 0.21 |
| 2021 | Great Britain | James Newman               | Embers                  | 0.00         | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 |
| 2022 | Great Britain | Sam Ryder                  | Space Man               | 7.24         | 7.24 | 7.37 | 7.34 |
| 2023 | Great Britain | Mae Muller                 | I Wrote a Song          | 0.43         | 0.31 | 0.43 | 0.43 |
| 2024 | Great Britain | Olly Alexander             | Dizzy                   | 1.35         | 1.12 | 1.29 | 1.35 |
| 2019 | Israel        | Kobi Marimi                | Home                    | 0.00         | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 |
| 2021 | Israel        | Eden Alene                 | Set Me Free             | 1.81         | 1.86 | 1.89 | 1.86 |
| 2022 | Israel        | Michael Ben David          | I.M                     | 0.10         | 0.10 | 0.08 | 0.10 |
| 2023 | Israel        | Noa Kirel                  | Unicorn                 | 4.71         | 4.91 | 4.83 | 5.00 |
| 2024 | Israel        | Hurricane                  | Eden Golan              | 1.53         | 1.53 | 1.53 | 1.53 |
| 2019 | Norway        | KEiiNO                     | Spirit in the Sky       | 1.00         | 0.92 | 1.03 | 1.03 |
| 2021 | Norway        | Tix                        | Fallen Angel            | 0.41         | 0.35 | 0.41 | 0.41 |
| 2022 | Norway        | Subwoolfer                 | Give That Wolf a Banana | 0.95         | 0.87 | 0.95 | 0.87 |
| 2023 | Norway        | Alessandra                 | Queen of Kings          | 1.49         | 1.26 | 1.43 | 1.49 |
| 2024 | Norway        | Gåte                       | Ulveham                 | 0.35         | 0.35 | 0.35 | 0.35 |
| 2019 | Portugal      | Conan Osiris               | TelemOveis              | 0.00         | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 |
| 2021 | Portugal      | The Black Mamba            | Love Is on My Side      | 3.19         | 3.41 | 3.27 | 3.41 |
| 2022 | Portugal      | Maro                       | Saudade, saudade        | 4.32         | 4.50 | 4.50 | 4.29 |
| 2023 | Portugal      | Mimicat                    | Ai coração              | 1.23         | 1.23 | 1.06 | 1.09 |
| 2024 | Portugal      | iolanda                    | Grito                   | 3.91         | 3.97 | 4.00 | 3.85 |
| 2017 | Ukraine       | O.Torvald                  | Time                    | 0.30         | 0.30 | 0.30 | 0.30 |
| 2018 | Ukraine       | Melovin                    | Under the Ladder        | 0.27         | 0.27 | 0.27 | 0.27 |
| 2021 | Ukraine       | Go_A                       | Shum                    | 2.62         | 2.41 | 2.62 | 2.54 |
| 2023 | Ukraine       | Tvorchi                    | Heart of Steel          | 1.54         | 1.54 | 1.54 | 1.54 |
| 2024 | Ukraine       | alyona alyona & Jerry Heil | Teresa & Maria          | 3.97         | 4.18 | 4.26 | 4.21 |

### 3 Deviations from the Pre-Analysis Plan

Our Pre-Analysis Plan (PAP) was registered with Open Science Framework on May 14, 2025, prior to the completion of data collection and before any correlational analysis of the partially-collected data. Our final analysis departs from the PAP in several respects, due to some small, non-consequential errors as well as different choices about how best to present our results. All pre-specified analysis not reported in the main text is included in this Appendix.

#### 3.1 “People” versus “Culture” in $H_1$

In the PAP, we erroneously listed  $H_1$  as “More positive attitudes toward the people from a performer’s country are associated with a vote for that song.” In the main text, “culture of” replaces “people from.” We made a last-minute change of wording prior to launching the survey and neglected to update all instances of the old language in the PAP. The rendering of the corresponding survey question in the PAP also erroneously mentions “British people, French people, etc.” The version of this question in the questionnaire attached to the PAP is correct.

#### 3.2 Dropping Individual Controls and Fixed Effects

In our PAP, we specified a model that also included  $IndivControls_{ir}$ , a vector of individual-level controls (age, gender, education, interest in the ESC and in politics, ideology, and emotional attachment to Europe and to one’s country of residence), and  $\gamma_r$ , a fixed effect for the respondent’s country of residence:<sup>1</sup>

$$\begin{aligned} Vote_{irjc} = & \beta_0 + \beta_1 FavorCulture_{irc} + \beta_2 FavorGovt_{irc} + \beta_3 SongQuality_{rjc} + \\ & \beta_{4-11} IndivControls_{ir} + \beta_{12-15} SongControls_{jc} + \gamma_r + \epsilon_{irjc} \end{aligned} \quad (2)$$

However, given the respondent-song-level analysis and forced-choice design, individual char-

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<sup>1</sup>  $FavorCulture_{irc}$  in Equation 2 was  $FavorPeople_{irc}$  in the PAP, per the logic outlined in Section 3.1.

acteristics are orthogonal to the dependent variable  $Vote_{irjc}$ , since everyone votes for one song and against four. Table A4 shows the exact correlation reported by R between each of these respondent-level variables and our vote indicator in the respondent-song-level database used for model estimation. Clearly, the correlations are computer zero in each case. As such, they do not serve as confounders, and including them in the model cannot improve its explanatory power; doing so would only reduce the precision of our other estimates. Hence, we have opted to omit them from the main analysis. The logic is the same as in forced-choice conjoint analysis, where only attributes of the choice options, not characteristics of the respondent, are included as predictors when estimating the AMCE (Hainmueller, Hopkins and Yamamoto, 2014).

**Table A4:** Correlation Between Respondent-Level Variables and Dependent Variable

|                       | Correlation with Vote       |
|-----------------------|-----------------------------|
| Age                   | $-7.422739 \times 10^{-17}$ |
| Male                  | $-2.622902 \times 10^{-18}$ |
| Bachelor's Degree     | $-2.259327 \times 10^{-16}$ |
| Interest in ESC       | $-1.098714 \times 10^{-16}$ |
| Interest in Politics  | $-3.212357 \times 10^{-16}$ |
| Ideology              | $-6.944891 \times 10^{-17}$ |
| Attachment to Europe  | $7.897804 \times 10^{-17}$  |
| Attachment to Country | $-7.306228 \times 10^{-17}$ |
| Country: Spain        | $7.036403 \times 10^{-16}$  |
| Country: Sweden       | $-2.504979 \times 10^{-15}$ |
| Country: Netherlands  | $1.277492 \times 10^{-15}$  |
| Country: Poland       | $7.976289 \times 10^{-17}$  |

Entries are exact correlations reported by R between all respondent-level variables included in pre-specified hypotheses, including country fixed effects, and the respondent-song-level Vote indicator variable.

### 3.3 Country Pair vs. Respondent and Song Country Fixed Effects

In the PAP, we outlined a more demanding specification than our baseline model, which, in addition to respondent country fixed effects,  $\gamma_r$ , also included song country fixed effects,  $\gamma_c$ . We intended for this more demanding specification to leverage “only idiosyncratic variation in how different individuals” *from the same country* “evaluate the people and government of a given country  $c$ .” However, we subsequently realized that only country pair fixed effects—the interaction of  $\gamma_r$  and  $\gamma_c$ —achieve this restriction. Hence, our more demanding specification in the main text uses country pair fixed effects. This also deals with the above-noted issue that separate respondent country fixed effects are orthogonal to the dependent variable and do not add to the model’s explanatory power.

### 3.4 Additional Interactions for Ukraine and Israel

Our PAP hypothesized that the effect of favoring a country’s government would be greater for Ukraine and Israel, and it specified testing this hypothesis with a model that interacted indicators for these countries only with our Favor Government variable. In the main text, for the purpose of comparison, we estimate a version of this model that also interacts indicators for Ukraine and Israel with the Favor Culture and Song Quality variables.

### 3.5 Originally Pre-Specified Results

All originally pre-specified results support similar conclusions as those that we present in the main text. Table A5 reports estimates for our originally-specified additive models, with individual controls, respondent country fixed effects, and separate song country fixed effects in the more demanding specification. Table A6 reports estimates for our originally-specified models of heterogeneous effects for Ukraine and Israel, interacting these indicators only with the Favor Government variable. Model 1 omits individual controls and respondent country fixed effects; Model 2 includes them.

|                            | All Respondents    |                    | Prior ESC Voters   |                    |
|----------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
|                            | Model 1            | Model 2            | Model 3            | Model 4            |
| <b>Main Variables</b>      |                    |                    |                    |                    |
| Favor Culture              | 0.03***<br>(0.00)  | 0.03***<br>(0.00)  | 0.03***<br>(0.01)  | 0.02***<br>(0.01)  |
| Favor Government           | 0.02***<br>(0.00)  | 0.02***<br>(0.00)  | 0.02**<br>(0.01)   | 0.01*<br>(0.01)    |
| Song Quality               | 0.02***<br>(0.00)  | 0.03***<br>(0.00)  | 0.03***<br>(0.01)  | 0.04***<br>(0.01)  |
| <b>Individual Controls</b> |                    |                    |                    |                    |
| Age                        | −0.00***<br>(0.00) | −0.00***<br>(0.00) | −0.00***<br>(0.00) | −0.00**<br>(0.00)  |
| Male                       | −0.00<br>(0.00)    | −0.00<br>(0.00)    | −0.00<br>(0.00)    | −0.00<br>(0.00)    |
| Bachelor's Degree          | −0.00<br>(0.00)    | −0.00<br>(0.00)    | −0.00<br>(0.00)    | −0.00<br>(0.00)    |
| Interest in ESC            | −0.00***<br>(0.00) | −0.00***<br>(0.00) | −0.00**<br>(0.00)  | −0.00<br>(0.00)    |
| Interest in Politics       | −0.00***<br>(0.00) | −0.00***<br>(0.00) | −0.01***<br>(0.00) | −0.00*<br>(0.00)   |
| Ideology                   | 0.00<br>(0.00)     | 0.00<br>(0.00)     | −0.00<br>(0.00)    | −0.00<br>(0.00)    |
| Attachment to Europe       | −0.00***<br>(0.00) | −0.00***<br>(0.00) | −0.00***<br>(0.00) | −0.00***<br>(0.00) |
| Attachment to Country      | 0.00<br>(0.00)     | 0.00<br>(0.00)     | 0.00<br>(0.00)     | −0.00<br>(0.00)    |
| <b>Song Controls</b>       |                    |                    |                    |                    |
| Non-English                | −0.01<br>(0.01)    | −0.03*<br>(0.02)   | −0.01<br>(0.02)    | −0.04<br>(0.03)    |
| Female Soloist             | 0.01<br>(0.01)     | 0.02*<br>(0.01)    | 0.02<br>(0.02)     | 0.04*<br>(0.02)    |
| Duet                       | 0.03*<br>(0.01)    | 0.01<br>(0.02)     | 0.01<br>(0.03)     | −0.03<br>(0.03)    |
| Group                      | 0.02<br>(0.02)     | 0.02<br>(0.02)     | 0.02<br>(0.03)     | 0.04<br>(0.03)     |
| Respondent Country FE      | Yes                | Yes                | Yes                | Yes                |
| Song Country FE            | No                 | Yes                | No                 | Yes                |
| R <sup>2</sup>             | 0.01               | 0.02               | 0.02               | 0.03               |
| Adj. R <sup>2</sup>        | 0.01               | 0.02               | 0.01               | 0.03               |
| Num. obs.                  | 10000              | 10000              | 3075               | 3075               |
| RMSE                       | 0.40               | 0.40               | 0.40               | 0.39               |
| N Clusters                 | 2000               | 2000               | 615                | 615                |

\*\*\* $p < 0.01$ ; \*\* $p < 0.05$ ; \* $p < 0.1$

**Table A5:** Predictors of Eurovision Voting (Prespecified Models)

|                                  | Model 1        | Model 2         |
|----------------------------------|----------------|-----------------|
| <b>Main Variables</b>            |                |                 |
| Favor Culture                    | 0.02 (0.00)*** | 0.03 (0.00)***  |
| Favor Government                 | 0.01 (0.01)    | 0.01 (0.01)     |
| Song Quality                     | 0.02 (0.00)*** | 0.02 (0.00)***  |
| <b>Individual Controls</b>       |                |                 |
| Age                              |                | −0.00 (0.00)*** |
| Male                             |                | −0.00 (0.00)    |
| Bachelor's Degree                |                | −0.00 (0.00)    |
| Interest in ESC                  |                | −0.00 (0.00)*** |
| Interest in Politics             |                | −0.00 (0.00)*** |
| Ideology                         |                | 0.00 (0.00)     |
| Attachment to Europe             |                | −0.00 (0.00)*** |
| Attachment to Country            |                | 0.00 (0.00)     |
| <b>Song Controls</b>             |                |                 |
| Non-English                      | −0.01 (0.01)   | −0.01 (0.01)    |
| Female Soloist                   | 0.01 (0.01)    | 0.01 (0.01)     |
| Duet                             | 0.03 (0.01)*   | 0.03 (0.01)*    |
| Group                            | 0.02 (0.02)    | 0.02 (0.02)     |
| <b>Song Country Interactions</b> |                |                 |
| Ukraine                          | −0.03 (0.01)** | −0.03 (0.01)**  |
| Israel                           | −0.01 (0.02)   | −0.01 (0.02)    |
| Ukraine × Favor Government       | 0.04 (0.01)*** | 0.03 (0.01)***  |
| Israel × Favor Government        | 0.03 (0.01)**  | 0.03 (0.01)**   |
| Respondent Country FE            | No             | Yes             |
| R <sup>2</sup>                   | 0.02           | 0.02            |
| Adj. R <sup>2</sup>              | 0.01           | 0.01            |
| Num. obs.                        | 10000          | 10000           |
| RMSE                             | 0.40           | 0.40            |
| N Clusters                       | 2000           | 2000            |

\*\*\* $p < 0.01$ ; \*\* $p < 0.05$ ; \* $p < 0.1$

**Table A6:** Predictors of Eurovision Voting: Heterogeneous Country Effects (Prespecified Models)

## 4 Our Approach versus an Experimental Study

It is worth considering how our research design compares to a conjoint experiment, with which it bears some similarities but also important differences. If we were seeking to test our hypotheses using conjoint analysis, we might administer a question like the following:

Imagine you were voting in the final of the Eurovision Song Contest and choosing among a series of songs with the following characteristics. Which song would you vote for?

| Song A                                                       | Song B                                                       | Song C                                                    |
|--------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------|
| You <b>like</b> the culture of the performer's country       | You <b>dislike</b> the culture of the performer's country    | You <b>like</b> the culture of the performer's country    |
| You <b>dislike</b> the government of the performer's country | You <b>dislike</b> the government of the performer's country | You <b>like</b> the government of the performer's country |
| The song is of <b>high aesthetic quality</b>                 | The song is of <b>low aesthetic quality</b>                  | The song is of <b>low aesthetic quality</b>               |
| [Other characteristics ...]                                  | [Other characteristics ...]                                  | [Other characteristics ...]                               |

The main advantage of a conjoint experiment is that it would allow for independently randomizing the values of each characteristic, so a respondent's attitudes toward people from and the government of a performer's country would be orthogonal to one another. Using real songs, we cannot randomize these characteristics independently of one another. The fact that a performer is Israeli, for example, simultaneously sets the values for the respondent's attitude toward the people and the government of that country. By choosing randomly among a country's last five entries in the ESC, we do achieve some independent randomization of aesthetic quality, but only within limits; some countries consistently have stronger entries than others.

However, a conjoint experiment of this sort has obvious disadvantages in terms of external validity. Choosing a favorite song based on a textual description is a far cry from viewing and

voting in the actual Eurovision. Hypothetical songs are stripped of all real-world relevance; for a critic of the war in Gaza, being told generically that you “dislike the government of the performer’s country” should be a much weaker treatment than being told the artist is from Israel. Watching and listening to an impressive performance is immeasurably more vivid than being told that a song is of “high aesthetic quality.” And putting aesthetic quality in the table—which is what voters are clearly supposed to consider in a song contest—is likely to generate social desirability bias.

An alternative experimental approach might involve generating fake Eurovision videos using artificial intelligence and randomly attributing them to different countries, which would allow song quality to be orthogonal to the nationality of the performer. We investigated the feasibility of this approach. However, AI-generated videos were much less believable than those from the real ESC. Moreover, a video that is going to be randomly attributed to different countries cannot have any national flags, colors, or imagery in it, which is unrealistic. Most importantly, randomly assigning a performer’s nationality would not change the fact that a given nationality simultaneously sets the values for attitudes toward the people and the government of that country—our main variables of interest—which will inevitably be correlated.

In the end, after considering these alternatives, we concluded that the external validity gains of an observational study far outweigh the internal validity advantages of an experimental design.

## **5 Testing Country Favoritism**

In the main text, we report that our survey replicates traditional patterns of country favoritism in the ESC: Swedish respondents tend to prefer songs from Norway, and Dutch respondents tend to prefer songs from Belgium. Estimates are reported in Table A7. Model 1 shows results when we add dummy variables for these two country pairings to our baseline model as reported in the main text. Model 2 shows results for our originally-specified model, which also includes individual controls and separate respondent country and song country fixed effects.

|                                    | Model 1        | Model 2         |
|------------------------------------|----------------|-----------------|
| <b>Main Variables</b>              |                |                 |
| Favor Culture                      | 0.03 (0.00)*** | 0.03 (0.00)***  |
| Favor Government                   | 0.01 (0.00)*** | 0.01 (0.00)***  |
| Song Quality                       | 0.03 (0.00)*** | 0.03 (0.00)***  |
| <b>Individual Controls</b>         |                |                 |
| Age                                |                | −0.00 (0.00)*** |
| Male                               |                | −0.00 (0.00)    |
| Bachelor's Degree                  |                | −0.00 (0.00)    |
| Interest in ESC                    |                | −0.00 (0.00)*** |
| Interest in Politics               |                | −0.00 (0.00)*** |
| Ideology                           |                | −0.00 (0.00)    |
| Attachment to Europe               |                | −0.00 (0.00)*** |
| Attachment to Country              |                | 0.00 (0.00)     |
| <b>Song Controls</b>               |                |                 |
| Non-English                        | −0.00 (0.01)   | −0.03 (0.02)**  |
| Female Soloist                     | 0.01 (0.01)    | 0.02 (0.01)*    |
| Duet                               | 0.02 (0.01)    | 0.00 (0.02)     |
| Group                              | 0.02 (0.02)    | 0.02 (0.02)     |
| <b>Country Pairs</b>               |                |                 |
| Swedish Respondent, Norwegian Song | 0.17 (0.03)*** | 0.14 (0.04)***  |
| Dutch Respondent, Belgian Song     | 0.07 (0.03)*** | 0.15 (0.03)***  |
| Respondent Country FE              | No             | Yes             |
| Song Country FE                    | No             | Yes             |
| R <sup>2</sup>                     | 0.02           | 0.03            |
| Adj. R <sup>2</sup>                | 0.02           | 0.02            |
| Num. obs.                          | 10000          | 10000           |
| RMSE                               | 0.40           | 0.40            |
| N Clusters                         | 2000           | 2000            |

\*\*\* $p < 0.01$ ; \*\* $p < 0.05$ ; \* $p < 0.1$

**Table A7:** Predictors of Eurovision Voting: Testing Country Favoritism

## 6 Distribution of Attitudes toward Cultures and Governments

Figures A1 and A2 show the distribution of respondents’ attitudes toward the cultures and governments of the 10 countries whose ESC videos were included in our study. A plurality of respondents hold “somewhat favorable” attitudes toward both the culture and government of nearly every country. However, Israel and Ukraine stand out as exceptions, where attitudes are more polarized. The modal opinion of Israeli culture is “somewhat unfavorable,” and of its government, “very unfavorable.” For Ukraine, a plurality are still somewhat favorable toward its culture and government, but this plurality is smaller than for other countries. Figure A3 shows the variance of these attitudinal measures for each country, underscoring that opinions are substantially more polarized for Ukraine and Israel, especially regarding their governments.

## 7 Coding Song Data for 2024

Since the song data we used from the Eurovision Song Contest Data on Kaggle (<https://www.kaggle.com/datasets/diamondsnake/eurovision-song-contest-data>) only ran until 2023, we coded the year 2024 ourselves. Variables include the language(s) of the song and type of performer (male soloist, female soloist, duet, or group) for our  $SongControls_{jc}$  vector, as well as the song’s genre (ballad, dance/pop, rock, or traditional) for our attention check screeners (see Section 8). We followed a two-step cross validation process. The first author watched all ten videos from the 2024 live ESC on YouTube and hand-coded the variables. We then provided ChatGPT with the Kaggle dataset and asked it to code the 10 songs from 2024 in a manner that was consistent with the dataset. We cross-checked coding from the first author and from ChatGPT and found that they matched.

**Figure A1:** Attitudes Toward National Cultures

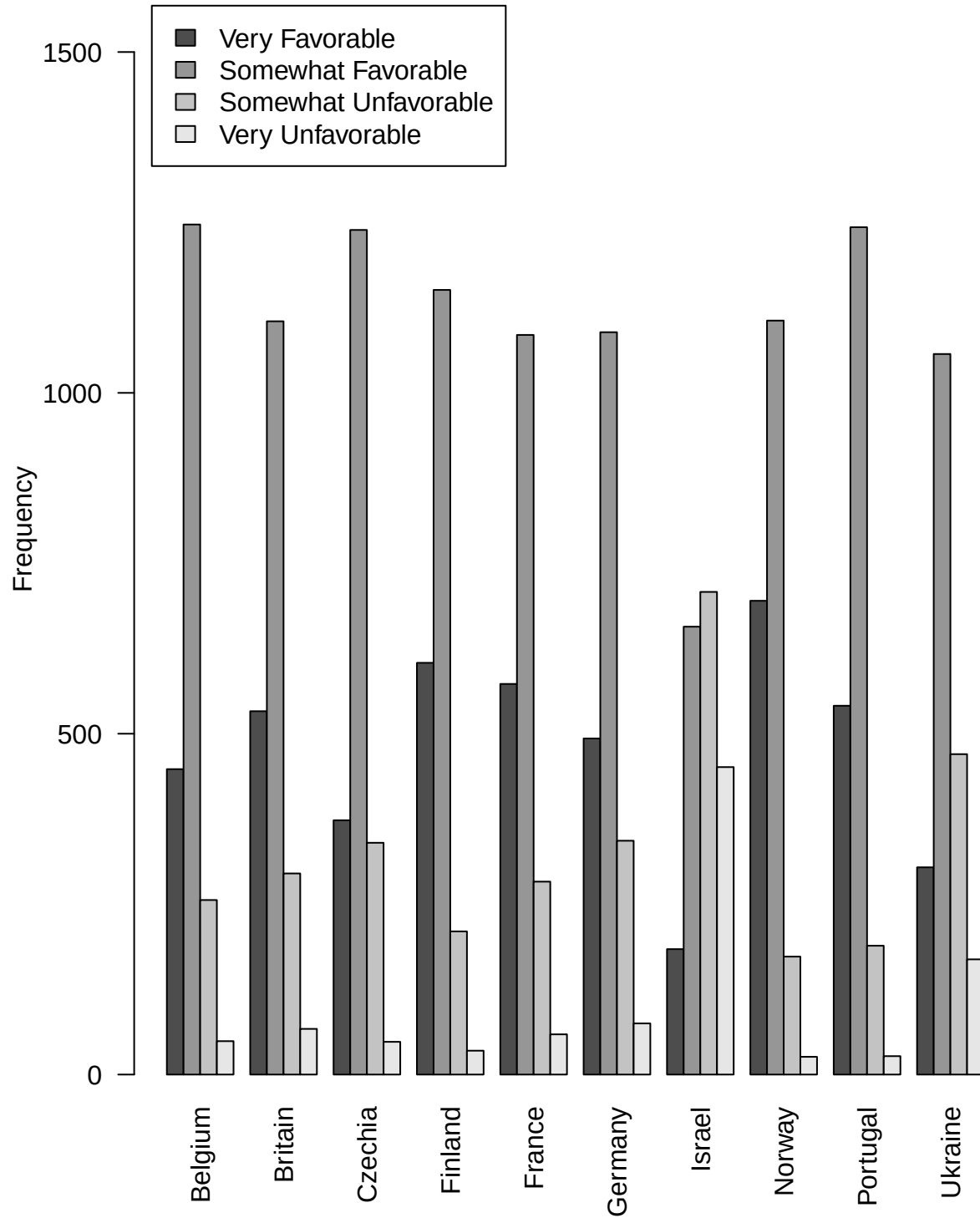


**Figure A2:** Attitudes Toward National Governments

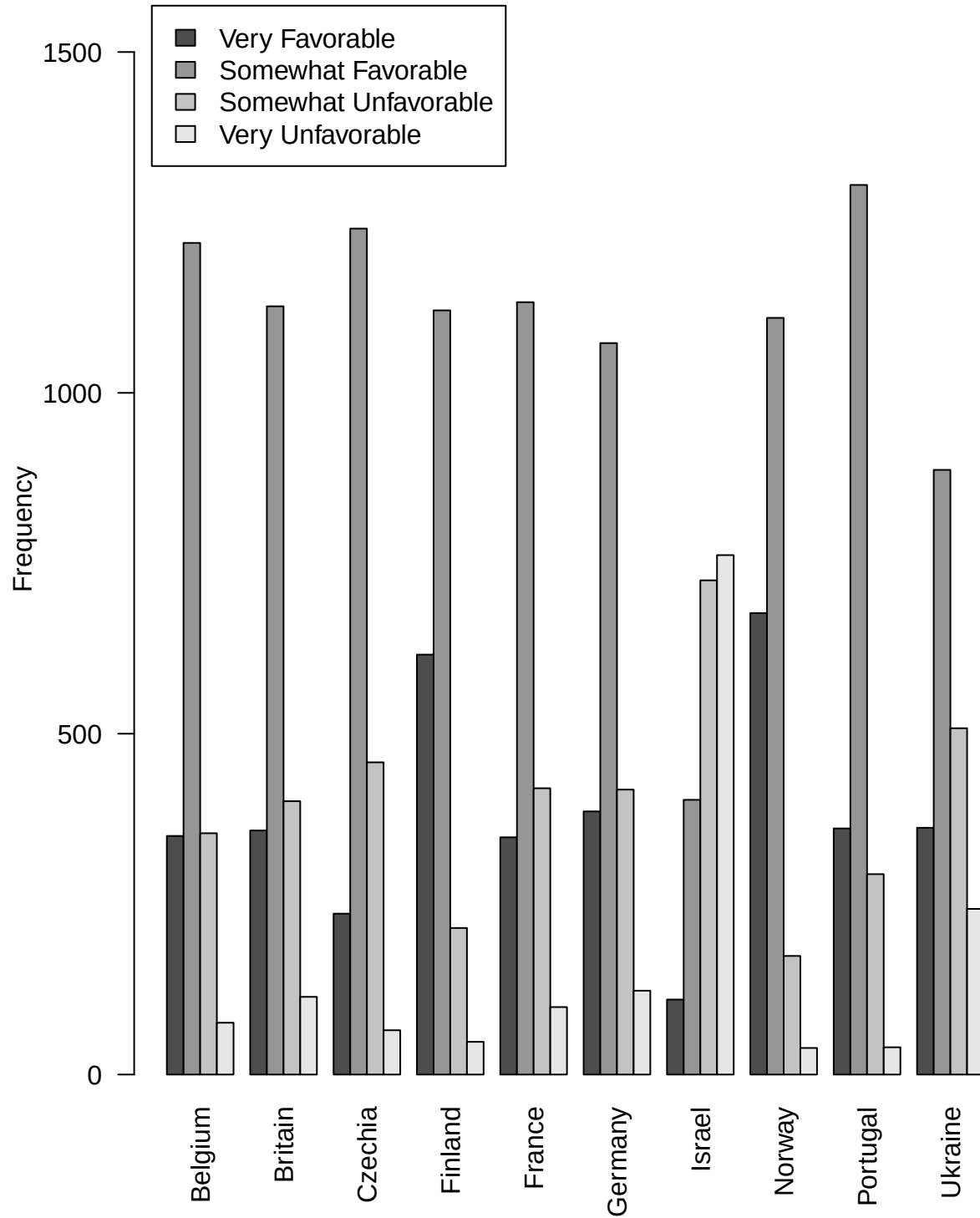
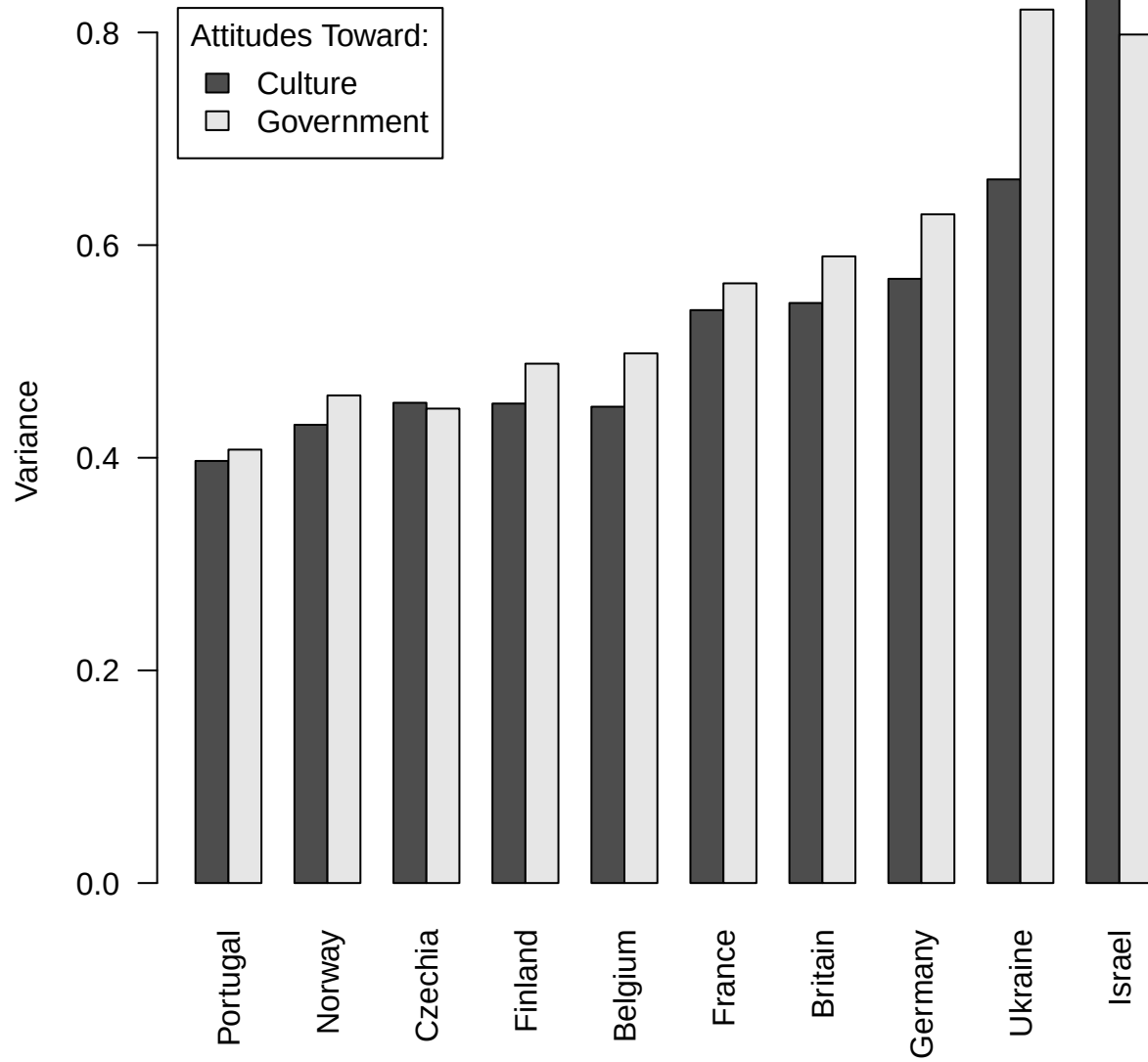


**Figure A3:** Variance in Attitudes Toward Cultures and Governments



## 8 Attention Check Screeners

We included two types of attention check or screener question in our survey. On the same screen where each video was shown, we asked respondents to classify the genre of each song: ballad, dance/pop, rock, or traditional. This serves as a check on whether respondents had their sound on and were listening to the music. We allow respondents to choose multiple categories for each song, and we compare their answers to the classification of genre in the Kaggle dataset, coding data for 2024 ourselves, as described in Section 7. For each song, the respondent’s score is calculated as:

$$N_{Correct} - \frac{N_{Incorrect}}{3}$$

This yields a measure ranging from  $-1$  (when the respondent chooses the three incorrect genres) to  $1$  (when they choose the single correct genre). For an overall measure of attention, we take the average across all five songs.

As a second attention check, immediately after respondents were shown the final video, they were given a list of all ten countries eligible for inclusion and asked to select the five whose videos they just saw. Since country names are listed textually on the same screen as each video, and since other visual cues like flags and dress inform as to nationality, this question primarily checks whether respondents were watching rather than listening. We use the number of countries correctly identified (0–5) as our summary measure of attention in this check.

Tables A8 reports heterogeneous results by screener passage.<sup>2</sup> There is no significant interaction between either screener and our *FavorGovt* or *FavorCulture* measures. These results are good news for the external validity of our main findings. In real life, people vary in how much attention they pay to a television program, just as they vary in their attentiveness to an online survey.

We also tested each screener’s interaction with *SongQuality* (not prespecified). There, we find that song quality matters more for vote choice among respondents who can better identify the

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<sup>2</sup>Coefficients for the “main effect” screener terms Song Genre Score and Country ID Score are not estimated because, as respondent-level variables, they are orthogonal to the dependent variable, per the logic outlined in Section 3.2.

countries of the videos they were shown, suggesting that they paid closer attention.

## 9 Additional Heterogeneous Results

Table A9 reports results for additional interactions suggested during the review process. One might expect that attitudes toward a country’s government or culture matter more for voting behavior when songs are low quality. However, in Model 1, we show that neither attitudinal variable has a significant interaction with Song Quality. Additional, one might hypothesize that being a neighboring country moderates the effect of Song Quality. In Model 2, we show that this is the case: song quality matters significantly *more* when the performer’s country and the respondent’s country share a border. We suspect that this is because geographical proximity correlates with cultural proximity, making respondents more astute critics of neighboring countries’ songs.

|                                            | Model 1           | Model 2           | Model 3           | Model 4           |
|--------------------------------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| <b>Main Variables</b>                      |                   |                   |                   |                   |
| Favor Culture                              | 0.03***<br>(0.01) | 0.03***<br>(0.01) | 0.02<br>(0.02)    | 0.02<br>(0.02)    |
| Favor Government                           | 0.02**<br>(0.01)  | 0.01<br>(0.01)    | 0.04**<br>(0.02)  | 0.03**<br>(0.02)  |
| Song Quality                               | 0.02***<br>(0.01) | 0.03***<br>(0.01) | -0.03*<br>(0.02)  | -0.02<br>(0.02)   |
| <b>Song Controls</b>                       |                   |                   |                   |                   |
| Non-English                                | -0.00<br>(0.01)   | -0.03**<br>(0.02) | -0.00<br>(0.01)   | -0.03**<br>(0.02) |
| Female Soloist                             | 0.01<br>(0.01)    | 0.02*<br>(0.01)   | 0.01<br>(0.01)    | 0.02*<br>(0.01)   |
| Duet                                       | 0.03*<br>(0.01)   | 0.00<br>(0.02)    | 0.03*<br>(0.01)   | 0.00<br>(0.02)    |
| Group                                      | 0.03<br>(0.02)    | 0.02<br>(0.02)    | 0.02<br>(0.02)    | 0.02<br>(0.02)    |
| <b>Screeners</b>                           |                   |                   |                   |                   |
| Favor Culture $\times$ Song Genre Score    | -0.01<br>(0.01)   | -0.01<br>(0.01)   |                   |                   |
| Favor Government $\times$ Song Genre Score | 0.00<br>(0.01)    | 0.00<br>(0.01)    |                   |                   |
| Song Quality $\times$ Song Genre Score     | 0.01<br>(0.01)    | 0.00<br>(0.01)    |                   |                   |
| Favor Culture $\times$ Country ID Score    |                   |                   | 0.00<br>(0.00)    | 0.00<br>(0.00)    |
| Favor Government $\times$ Country ID Score |                   |                   | -0.01<br>(0.00)   | -0.01<br>(0.00)   |
| Song Quality $\times$ Country ID Score     |                   |                   | 0.01***<br>(0.00) | 0.01***<br>(0.00) |
| Country Pair FE                            | No                | Yes               | No                | Yes               |
| R <sup>2</sup>                             | 0.01              | 0.03              | 0.02              | 0.03              |
| Adj. R <sup>2</sup>                        | 0.01              | 0.03              | 0.01              | 0.03              |
| Num. obs.                                  | 10000             | 10000             | 10000             | 10000             |
| RMSE                                       | 0.40              | 0.39              | 0.40              | 0.39              |
| N Clusters                                 | 2000              | 2000              | 2000              | 2000              |

\*\*\* $p < 0.01$ ; \*\* $p < 0.05$ ; \* $p < 0.1$

**Table A8:** Predictors of Eurovision Song Contest Voting by Screener Score

|                                    | Model 1           | Model 2           |
|------------------------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| <b>Main Variables</b>              |                   |                   |
| Favor Culture                      | 0.03***<br>(0.00) | 0.03***<br>(0.00) |
| Favor Government                   | 0.02***<br>(0.00) | 0.02***<br>(0.00) |
| Song Quality                       | 0.02***<br>(0.00) | 0.02***<br>(0.00) |
| <b>Song Controls</b>               |                   |                   |
| Non-English                        | −0.00<br>(0.01)   | −0.01<br>(0.01)   |
| Female Soloist                     | 0.01<br>(0.01)    | 0.01<br>(0.01)    |
| Duet                               | 0.03*<br>(0.01)   | 0.02<br>(0.01)    |
| Group                              | 0.03<br>(0.02)    | 0.02<br>(0.02)    |
| <b>Interactions</b>                |                   |                   |
| Favor Culture × Song Quality       | 0.01<br>(0.01)    |                   |
| Favor Government × Song Quality    | −0.01<br>(0.01)   |                   |
| Neighboring Country                |                   | 0.06***<br>(0.01) |
| Song Quality × Neighboring Country |                   | 0.02*<br>(0.01)   |
| Country Pair FE                    | No                | No                |
| R <sup>2</sup>                     | 0.01              | 0.02              |
| Adj. R <sup>2</sup>                | 0.01              | 0.02              |
| Num. obs.                          | 10000             | 10000             |
| RMSE                               | 0.40              | 0.40              |
| N Clusters                         | 2000              | 2000              |

\*\*\* $p < 0.01$ ; \*\* $p < 0.05$ ; \* $p < 0.1$

**Table A9:** Predictors of Eurovision Song Contest Voting: Additional Interactions

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