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Björn Kauder, Niklas Potrafke

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Poschingerstr. 5, 81679 Munich, Germany

Telephone +49 (0)89 2180-2740, Telefax +49 (0)89 2180-17845, email office@cesifo.de

Editors: Clemens Fuest, Oliver Falck, Jasmin Gröschl

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Abstract

We examine whether conservative politicians are less likely to support same-sex marriage when they run for office in safe districts using new data based on a roll-call vote in the national German parliament. The results show that the margin of the majority for the incumbent in the previous election was a strong predictor for supporting same-sex marriage. When the majority increased by one percentage point, the likelihood of voting in favour of same-sex marriage decreased by around 1.3 percentage points. We conjecture that politicians are election-motivated – even when submitting roll-call votes on a matter of conscience.

JEL-Codes: D720, D780, P160.

Keywords: same-sex marriage, gay rights, safe districts, vote margins, supermajorities, roll-call votes.

Björn Kauder
Ifo Institute – Leibniz Institute for
Economic Research
at the University of Munich
Center for Public Finance & Political
Economy
Poschingerstrasse 5
Germany – 81679 Munich
kauder@ifo.de

Niklas Potrafke
Ifo Institute – Leibniz Institute for
Economic Research
at the University of Munich
Center for Public Finance & Political
Economy
Poschingerstrasse 5
Germany – 81679 Munich
potrafke@ifo.de

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1. Introduction

Politicians require majorities for election but can benefit from supermajorities. With supermajorities of, for example, 20 percentage points more votes than the runner-up in an electoral district, politicians are more assured of re-election and can extract rents through policy flexibility.¹ When supermajorities are absent, election-motivated politicians are constrained by the political preferences of the median voter.² We propose that voting in favour of same-sex marriage is an example of conservative politicians advocating the views of the constituencies in their electoral districts. Conservative politicians with close vote margins in contested electoral districts support same-sex marriage because they require the support of liberal voters (who advocate the same-sex marriage) in order to be elected.

Granting homosexuals the same rights as heterosexuals has been a major issue in many industrialized countries. Important rights include (same-sex) marriage and the adoption of children. In particular, leftwing politicians and voters of leftwing parties have been active in promoting gay rights. Conservative politicians and voters of conservative parties, by contrast, have been hesitant in promoting gay rights for a long time (e. g., Lupia et al. 2010). Since the 2000s, however, many conservative politicians and voters of conservative parties have exhibited increased tolerance of gay rights and same-sex marriage (e. g., Kollman 2007, McVeigh and Diaz 2009, Sherkat et al. 2011, Ayoub and Garretson 2017).³ In countries like Sweden, conservative governments have promoted gay rights, and government ideology does not predict (the lack of) gay rights or gender equality issues in Western European countries (Annesley et al. 2015).

¹ An example of political rent extraction with supermajorities is hiring spouses as assistants to be paid by taxpayers' money (Kauder and Potrafke 2016). On rent seeking see, for example, Hillman (2015).

² Scholars examine how electoral competition influences politicians' activities in parliament and outside earnings (Becker et al. 2009, Bernecker 2014, Gavaille and Vershelde 2017). On politicians' activities and attendance in parliament, see Arnold et al. (2014) and Gehring et al. (2015). On how compensation influences the decision to run for office, see Poutvaara and Takalo (2007).

³ On correlates of tolerance regarding homosexuals such as life satisfaction across countries and in the US states see, for example, Berggren and Nilsson (2016) and Berggren et al. (2017).

Both political ideologies and electoral motives influence whether individual politicians advocate gay rights. Firstly, conservative politicians are still more likely to hold conservative views like traditional family values than leftwing politicians because they personally believe in conservative views. Secondly, election-motivated conservative politicians are likely to advance traditional family values, especially when they run for office in conservative constituencies (safe districts); and are likely to not advance traditional family values when they run for office in highly contested electoral districts.⁴

The conservative parties in Germany, the Christian Democratic Union (CDU) and her Bavarian sister party Christian Social Union (CSU), have traditionally held different views on same-sex marriage than those of the other established German parties. On 24 September 2017, national elections took place in Germany. The leftwing Social Democratic Party (SPD), the market-oriented and socially liberal Free Democratic Party (FDP) and the Green Party (Greens) declared in June 2017 that introducing same-sex marriage in the next legislative period would be a precondition for any coalition government. The conservative CDU/CSU was holding the wolf by the ears: on the one hand, the majorities within the CDU/CSU – party members and elected officials – have not advocated same-sex marriage (a majority of CDU/CSU voters has been described, however, as advocating same-sex marriage).⁵ On the other hand, the CDU/CSU was unlikely to form a single-party government after the elections in September 2017 and was relying on the SPD, FDP or the Greens as coalition partner. On 25 June 2017, the leaders of the CDU/CSU decided to declare same-sex marriage as a matter of conscience when the German federal parliament (Bundestag) needed to pass a law on same-sex marriage. This decision by the leaders of the CDU/CSU was intended to be kept secret for a while, but the chancellor Angela Merkel gave away this secret just one day after the leaders of the CDU/CSU decided on how to deal with the issue of same-sex marriage.

⁴ Politicians consider the electoral implications of their roll-call votes (Bütikofer and Hug 2015). On the extent to which voters take into account politicians' roll-call voting behaviour, see Ansolabehere and Jones (2010).

⁵ <http://www.faz.net/aktuell/politik/inland/klare-mehrheit-der-unionswaehler-wollen-ehe-fuer-alle-15082434.html>.

Some commentators have conjectured that she just prattled away and did not give away the secret on purpose. Others believe that Angela Merkel wanted to get the matter of same-sex marriage settled. The SPD – still forming a coalition with the CDU/CSU in June 2017 – went the whole hog and initiated a roll-call vote in the German federal parliament.⁶

On 30 June 2017, the Bundestag passed a law to introduce same-sex marriage (“Ehe für alle”). Same-sex couples already had the opportunity to marry, but their relationship was classified as a civil union, not a marriage. 393 members of parliament (MPs) voted in favour and 226 MPs voted against same-sex marriage (four abstained and seven did not attend). The MPs of the SPD, Greens, and the leftwing party DIE LINKE voted near-completely in favour of same-sex marriage. 225 of the CDU/CSU MPs voted against and 75 in favour of same-sex marriage (four abstained and five did not attend).

Scholars have investigated roll-call voting on same-sex marriage. In Canada, parliament approved same-sex marriage by roll-call voting in the summer 2005 (Civil Marriage Act). 158 MPs were in favour and 133 MPs were against same-sex marriage. Overby et al. (2011) examine MPs’ characteristics predicting voting behaviour on same-sex marriage. MPs’ party affiliation was an important predictor, indicating that leftwing politicians were more likely to approve same-sex marriage than rightwing politicians. The authors also show that the vote share in the last elections was negatively associated with approving same-sex marriage, but do not consider the margin of the majority as we do in our study.

We examine whether conservative politicians are less likely to support same-sex marriage when they run for office in safe districts. The data is based on the June 2017 roll-call vote in the national German parliament. We focus on the voting decisions of the 223 attending conservative (CDU/CSU) MPs that were elected in electoral districts in the previous election in 2013. 47 out of the 223 directly elected conservative MPs voted in favour of same-sex

⁶ On roll-call voting in the German Bundestag see, for example, Stratmann (2006) and Kauder et al. (2017).

marriage. The results show that the margin of the majority for the incumbent in the previous election was a strong predictor for supporting same-sex marriage. When the majority increased by one percentage point, the likelihood of voting in favour of same-sex marriage decreased by around 1.3 percentage points. We conjecture that politicians were election-motivated – even when submitting roll-call votes on a matter of conscience.

2. Empirical analysis

2.1 Electoral system

In federal elections, German voters cast two votes in a personalised proportional representation system. The first vote determines which candidate is to obtain the direct mandate in one of the 299 electoral districts with a simple majority. The second vote determines how many seats the individual parties receive in parliament. Each party that received at least 5 percent of the second votes obtains a number of the 598 seats in the parliament that corresponds to the party's second vote share.⁷ Candidates elected to the parliament with the first vote (direct mandate) obtain their seats first. Candidates from state-specific party lists obtain the remaining seats. When the number of direct mandates exceeds the party's vote share, the party obtains excess mandates.

2.2 Data and descriptive statistics

The dataset includes 223 CSU/CSU MPs that were directly elected into the German Bundestag in 2013. The 223 MPs won their electoral districts with quite large majorities compared to the runner-ups who were often members of the leftwing SPD: the margin of the majority was on average 20 percentage points.⁸ 47 out of the attending 223 MPs voted in

⁷ Candidates obtain a direct mandate even if their party fails to reach the 5 percent clause. If a party obtains less than 5 percent of the second votes, but at least three direct mandates, the party obtains a number of seats in the parliament according to the party's second vote share.

⁸ We use data on the personal characteristics of MPs compiled by Peichl et al. (2016).

favour of and 173 against same-sex marriage, while three abstained.⁹ The average vote margin drastically differs between the 47 MPs who voted in favour (12 percentage points) and the 176 MPs who voted against same-sex marriage or abstained (23 percentage points). The difference is statistically significant at the 1 percent level (Figure 1).¹⁰

There are many other variables that are likely to (a) predict MPs' voting behaviour on same-sex marriage and (b) be correlated with the vote margin: the issue of whether the candidate runs for office again in 2017 is important. If the candidate does not run for office again, she/he did not need to consider the preferences of the constituency in the electoral district when voting on same-sex marriage. Candidates may not run for office again because the vote margin in the 2013 election was tight and the local party did not wish to nominate the candidate again in 2017. We consider population density because candidates in large cities are more likely to vote in favour of same-sex marriage; and the vote margins of conservative MPs in places with high population densities are small. The second vote share of the CDU/CSU is included: the higher the second vote share of the CDU/CSU, the more conservative the constituency is and the less likely the candidate is to support same-sex marriage (in the United States, for example, increases in the Democratic vote share in electoral districts gave rise to more leftwing roll call voting of MPs, see Jones and Walsh 2017); conservative candidates in electoral districts with high second vote shares of the CDU/CSU usually have comfortable vote margins. We consider the predominant religions. Electoral districts with many Catholics seem to have conservative constituencies. Election-motivated MPs are unlikely to vote in favour of same-sex marriage when the share of Catholics in their electoral district is pronounced¹¹; in these districts citizens also tend to vote for conservative politicians who

⁹ In our baseline model, we count the three abstentions as opposing the same-sex marriage. As a robustness test, we exclude the MPs that abstained.

¹⁰ MPs who *won* their district with a margin of up to 2.5 or 5 percentage points less often supported same-sex marriage than MPs who *lost* their district with the same margin and entered the parliament via a party list. The differences do however not turn out to be statistically significant.

¹¹ In the United States, conservative Protestants have been described to be less liberal regarding gay rights than Catholics (e.g. Haider-Markel and Meier 1996). Voters in counties with a large share of Catholics were less likely to ban same-sex marriage than voters in counties with a large share of Evangelical Protestants (McVeigh

enjoy large vote margins. We use data on the share of Catholics from the 2011 EU census. In our sample, the share of Catholics was 32.6 and the share of Protestants was 26.9 percent (compared to 28.9 and 27.1 percent in Germany). Table 1 shows descriptive statistics of the individual variables and data sources.

The share of candidates who are running for office again in 2017 and voted in favour of same-sex marriage was 83.0 percent and 78.6 percent for those who voted against the same-sex marriage. The population density in electoral districts of candidates who supported same-sex marriage was 1,056.1 inhabitants per square km and 487.5 in electoral districts that did not support same-sex marriage. The second vote share of the CDU/CSU (45.1 percent versus 40.3) and the share of Catholics (34.1 percent versus 27.7) was higher in electoral districts in which the conservative candidates voted against same-sex marriage compared to electoral districts in which they did not.

2.3 Empirical strategy

The probit model has the following form:

$$\text{Supporting same-sex marriage}_i = \alpha + \beta \text{Vote margin}_i + \sum_j \varepsilon_j X_{ij} + u_i,$$

$$\text{with } i=1, \dots, 223; j=1, \dots, 13.$$

The dependent variable *Supporting same-sex marriage* takes on the value one when the candidate voted in favour of same-sex marriage and zero when the candidate voted against same-sex marriage or abstained. *Vote margin* is the margin of victory in the electoral districts. The vote margin variable is not prone to reverse causality: the roll-call vote in the German Bundestag on 30 June 2017 cannot have predicted any vote margin for the federal elections on 22 September 2013. The estimated marginal effect of the vote margin may, however, suffer from omitted variable bias that occurs when a third (unobserved) variable is correlated

and Diaz 2009). In Germany, conservative MPs were more likely to vote against the third Greek bailout programme on 19 August 2015, the larger the share of Protestants in their electoral district was (Chadi and Krapf 2017).

with both individual voting behaviour on same-sex marriage on 30 June 2017 and the vote margin on 22 September 2013. We deal with potential omitted variable bias by including many explanatory variables (described by the vector X) that are likely to be correlated with voting behaviour on same-sex marriage and the vote margin (see section 2.2). We also include the share of citizens in the electoral districts who are aged below 18 and aged above 60. It is conceivable that the higher the share of young (old) citizens, the more (less) likely an election-motivated MP is to vote in favour of same-sex marriage. The vote margin of conservative MPs is expected to be larger, the smaller (higher) the share of young (old) citizens in the electoral district is. The shares of citizens with low and high educational degrees in the electoral districts are included. We expect MPs running in electoral districts with many (few) highly-educated citizens to vote more (less) often for same-sex marriage than MPs running in electoral districts with few (many) highly-educated citizens. The correlation between the shares of citizens with low and high educational degrees and the vote margins of conservative MPs is, however, theoretically ambiguous. Tax revenue and the unemployment rate in the electoral districts are included. It is conceivable that the economic situation is correlated with voting in favour of same-sex marriage and the vote margin of conservative MPs. We also include age and the sex of the individual candidate to consider some personal characteristics, and whether she/he competes in East or West Germany. We estimate a probit model with standard errors robust to heteroskedasticity (Huber/White/sandwich standard errors – see Huber 1967 and White 1980).

An important and yet unobserved variable predicting both voting behaviour on same-sex marriage and the vote margin is being personally concerned about same-sex marriage. MPs being personally concerned may either be homosexual themselves, or may have homosexual children and are, of course, more likely to have advocated same-sex marriage on 30 June 2017 than MPs being not personally concerned. Homosexual CDU/CSU MPs may well receive smaller vote margins than heterosexual CDU/CSU MPs. Firstly, when

conservative constituencies know that the CDU/CSU candidate is homosexual they will be less inclined to vote for this candidate than for an otherwise identical heterosexual candidate. Secondly, homosexual CDU/CSU politicians are likely to run for office in quite liberal electoral districts, e. g. in big cities such as Berlin, Hamburg or Munich in which the vote margins are always small and elections are quite contested. Homosexual politicians may have moved to the big cities or joined the parties' associations on purpose because they know that the constituencies are more likely to support gay rights than constituencies in rural regions.¹²

In the baseline model, we focus on the effect of the vote margin on voting in favour of same-sex marriage conditioned on several control variables. In section 2.5 we also consider interactions between the vote margin and the issue of whether the candidate runs for office again in 2017, the second vote share of the CDU/CSU and the share of Catholics. It is conceivable that the effect of the vote margin on voting in favour of same-sex marriage is larger when the candidates run for office again in 2017 and have conservative constituencies.

2.4 Regression results of the baseline model

Table 3 shows the regression results of the baseline model (marginal effects). The results show that when the margin of victory increased by one percentage point, the probability of voting in favour of same-sex marriage decreased by around 1.3 percentage points – an effect that is numerically large and statistically significant at the 1 percent level in columns (1) to (4) and at the 5 percent level in column (5). In other words, when the vote margin increased by one standard deviation (around 11.8 percentage points), the probability of voting in favour of same-sex marriage decreased by around 0.41 standard deviations (15.3 percentage points). Including/excluding individual control variables does not change the inferences regarding the effect of the vote margin.

¹² Politicians and parties strategically choose candidates and electoral districts. See, for example, Poutvaara (2003).

The marginal effect of the age variable is negative and statistically significant at the 1 percent level, indicating that young politicians were more likely to vote in favour of same-sex marriage than old politicians. When the age of the MP increased by one year, the probability of voting in favour of same-sex marriage decreased by around one percentage point. The marginal effect of the female dummy variable is positive, but lacks statistical significance. The marginal effect of the East Germany variable is negative and statistically significant at the 10 percent level, indicating that the probability of voting in favour of same-sex marriage was around 15 percentage points higher for an East than a West German MP. The marginal effect of the population density variable is positive and statistically significant at the 5 and 10 percent level, indicating that the probability of voting in favour of same-sex marriage increased by around six percentage points when population density increased by one standard deviation. The model does not suggest that the share of citizens aged below 18 and 60, the share of citizens with high and low educational degrees, tax revenues, the unemployment rate, the share of Catholics and the second vote share of the CDU/CSU predict voting on same-sex marriage (conditional on considering the other variables such as the vote margin).

2.5 Interaction effects

Table 4 shows the point estimates for when we include an interaction term between the vote margin and the dummy variable for whether the candidate is running for office again in 2017. The interaction term is positive and statistically significant in columns (1) and (2), but lacks statistical significance in columns (3) and (4). Table 5 shows the marginal effects of the vote margin (evaluated at the mean of the covariates) when the candidate runs for office again in 2017 and when she/he does not. Columns (1) to (4) in Tables 4 and 5 are based on including/excluding individual control variables, as shown in columns (2) to (5) in Table 3. When a candidate does not run for office again in 2017, an increase in the margin of victory by one percentage point gave rise to a decrease in the probability of voting in favour of same-

sex marriage by around 1.3 percentage points. When a candidate runs for office again in 2017, an increase in the margin of victory by one percentage point gave rise to a decrease in the probability of voting in favour of same-sex marriage by around 0.8 to 1.3 percentage points.

Tables 6 and 7 show the results of point estimates when we include the interaction term between the vote margin and the share of Catholics (Table 6) and the second vote share (Table 7). The interaction terms between the vote margin and the share of Catholics is positive, but lacks statistical significance. The interaction term between the vote margin and the second vote share is negative and also lacks statistical significance.

Figure 2 shows the marginal effects of the vote margin on voting in favour of same-sex marriage conditioned on the share of Catholics. The marginal effects of the vote margin are statistically significant for low and intermediate levels of the share of Catholics. The effect of the vote margin on voting in favour of same-sex marriage gets somewhat larger, the larger the share of Catholics. For example, when the share of Catholics was 5 percent in an electoral district (the minimum of the share of Catholics in the sample is 1.7 percent), increasing the vote margin by one percentage point gave rise to a decrease in voting in favour of same-sex marriage by around 1.2 percentage points. When the share of Catholics was 80 percent in an electoral district (the maximum of the share of Catholics in the sample is 82.2 percent), increasing the vote margin by one percentage point gave rise to a decrease in voting in favour of same-sex marriage by around 1.6 percentage points.

The marginal effects of the vote margin on voting in favour of same-sex marriage are negative for the entire range of second vote shares of the CDU/CSU (Figure 3). The marginal effects of the vote margins lack, however, statistical significance for low and high values of the second vote share of the CDU/CSU (the minimum is 31.7 percent, the maximum is 63.2 percent).

We have also computed average marginal effects (not evaluated at the means of the covariates). The average marginal effects of the vote margin for candidates who run for office

again in 2017 and in districts with large share of Catholics are somewhat larger than the marginal effects evaluated at the means of the covariates.

2.6 Robustness tests and extensions

We submitted our results to several robustness tests using different samples. Table 8 shows the results.

Incentives differ for MPs who do not stand for re-election. As a first robustness test, we excluded the 46 directly elected CDU/CSU MPs who do not run again for office. Inferences do not change (column 1).

We have included CDU/CSU politicians that unsuccessfully ran in an electoral district in 2013, but entered the parliament via the party list. 52 of these MPs competed against other direct candidates in the electoral districts and none of these MPs only ran for office via the party lists. We have included the 52 MPs for which we observe vote margins that are always negative (just because candidates from other parties like the leftwing SPD won the electoral districts). Column (2) shows that including these 52 MPs renders the negative effect of the vote margin on voting in favour of same-sex marriage to lack statistical significance.

MPs from the Bavarian CSU run in electoral districts with especially high shares of Catholics and are likely to be more conservative than their peer MPs from the CDU. We have therefore excluded the MPs from the CSU; inferences do not change (column 4).

In our baseline model, we counted abstentions as opposing same-sex marriage. Inferences do not change when we exclude abstainers from our regressions (column 4).

We have excluded outliers as measured by small vote margins (below one, two and five percentage points) and large vote margins (above 40, 45, and 50 percentage points). Inferences do not change.

3. Conclusion

Politicians are often election-motivated. Based on the roll-call vote on same-sex marriage in the German parliament on 30 June 2017, we show that the margin of victory of directly elected conservative politicians was a strong predictor for voting on same-sex marriage. When the majority increased by one percentage point, the likelihood of voting in favour of same-sex marriage decreased by around 1.3 percentage points.

We acknowledge that we cannot clearly disentangle the extent to which the individual votes on same-sex marriage were election-motivated, or whether voting behaviour was a matter of conscience. It is possible that in some electoral districts the preferences of the MP and the constituency perfectly matched. But we cannot measure the true preferences of the MP and the constituency. In this case, there was no issue of election-motivated voting behaviour. When the preferences of the MP and the constituency do not perfectly match (for example, there are some electoral districts with well-known conservative constituencies in which the MPs voted in favour of same-sex marriage because they were personally concerned about same-sex marriage), the MP has to deal with a trade-off: he needs to consider his own beliefs and the desires of the constituency in order to become re-elected. Our results show that conservative MPs with large vote margins were less likely to vote in favour of same-sex marriage than MPs with small vote margins, conditioned on the share of Catholics and the second vote share – variables that are intended to measure the preferences of the constituency.

We would have liked to use some survey data portraying MPs' views on same-sex marriage. For example, when a candidate has revealed his preference against same-sex marriage, but voted in favour of same-sex marriage because he was running in a highly contested district, we would have been more confident that our results really indicate electoral motivation. Unfortunately, we lack such survey evidence. In any event, the effects of the vote margin on voting on same-sex marriage are numerically important and we have controlled for quite some variables that are likely to measure the constituencies' preferences. We therefore

believe that our results indicate that voting on same-sex marriage was a matter of electoral motivation rather than a matter of conscience.

Advocates of the bright side of political representation may well maintain that conservative MPs were just reflective of the preferences of their constituencies. If this was true, conservatives celebrated the vote on same-sex marriage as a masterpiece of indirect democracy.¹³

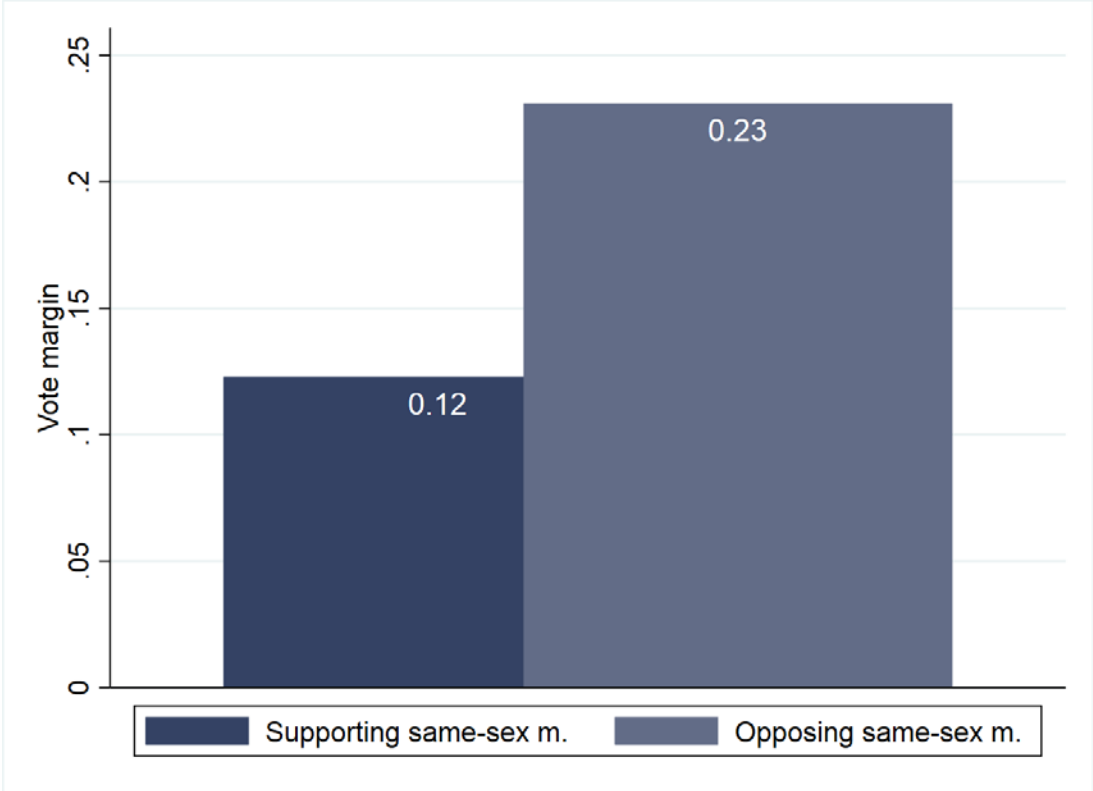
¹³ Scholars examine the extent to which politicians gratify the needs of their constituencies and the extent to which politicians' preferences are decoupled from voters' preferences in closely knit jurisdictions (e. g. Stadelmann et al. 2016 and Potrafke 2013).

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Figure 1: Vote margin was larger for MPs who were opposing same-sex marriage



47 MPs were supporting and 176 MPs were opposing same-sex marriage (difference is statistically significant at the 1 percent level)

Figure 2: Marginal effects (at the means of covariates) of the vote margin on Supporting same-sex marriage conditioned on the share of Catholics

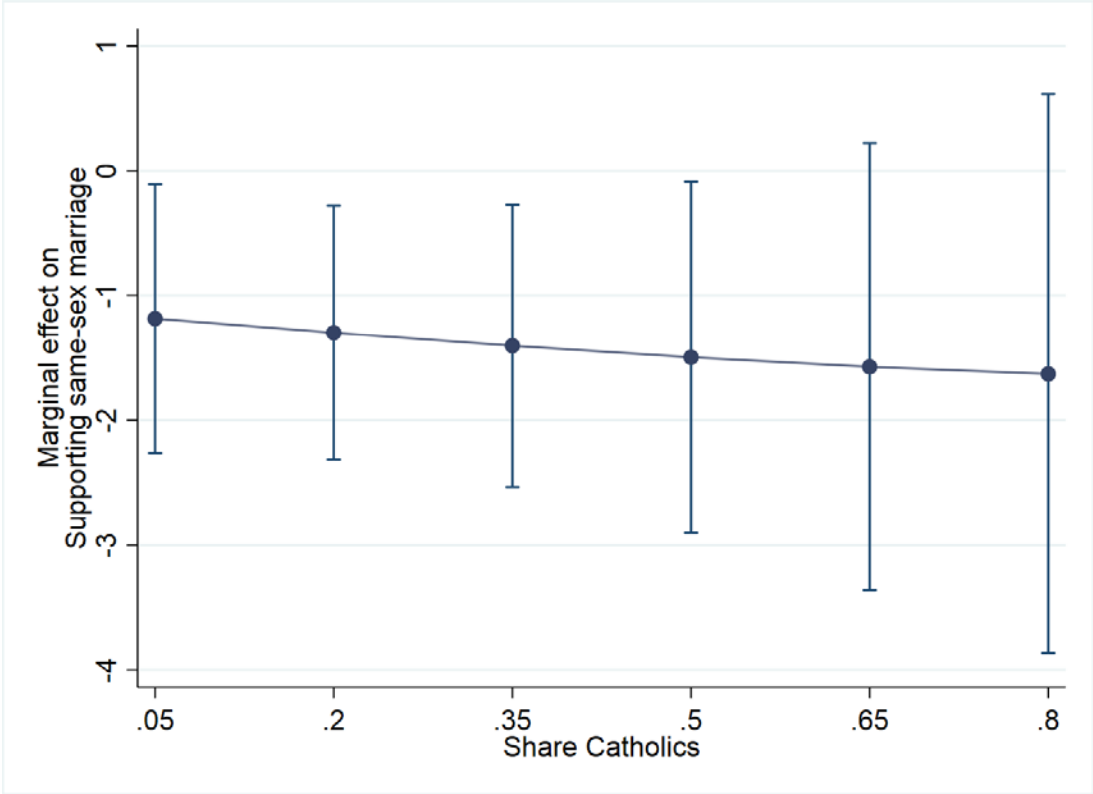


Figure 3: Marginal effects (at the means of covariates) of the vote margin on Supporting same-sex marriage conditioned on the second vote share

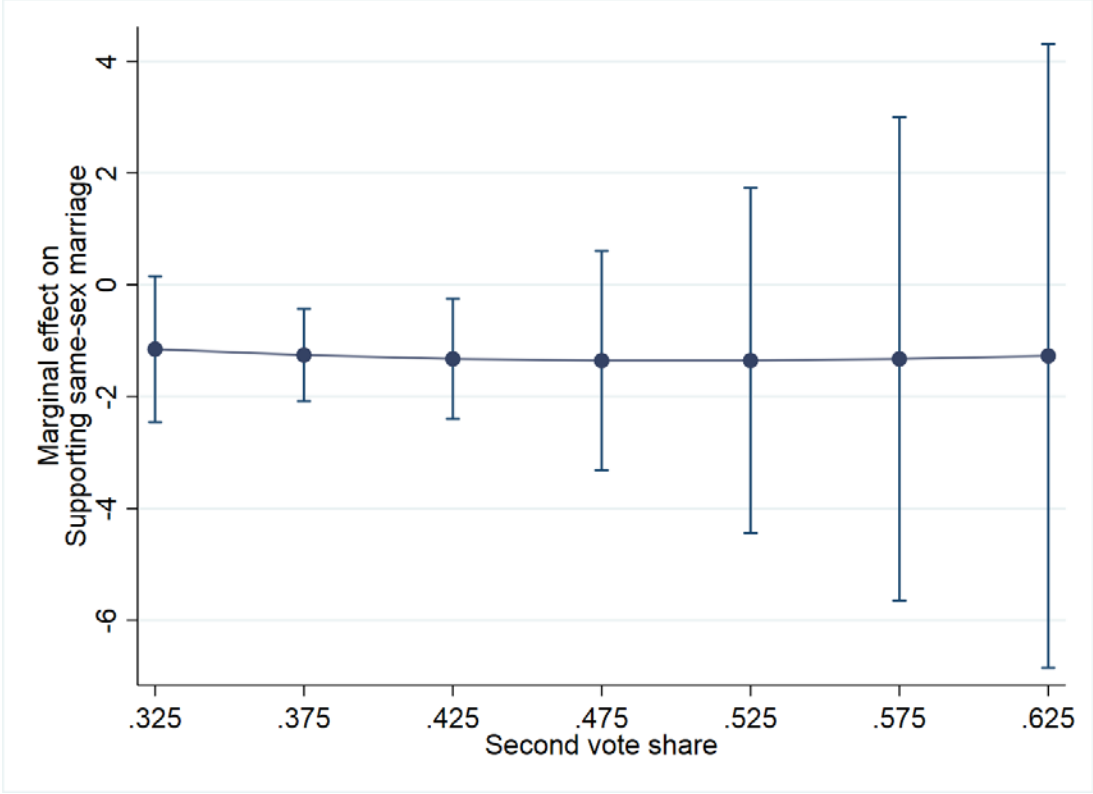


Table 1: Descriptive statistics

	Obs.	Mean	St. dev.	Min	Max	Mean: supporting same-sex m.	Mean: opposing same-sex m.	Difference
Supporting same-sex marriage	223	0.211	0.409	0	1	1	0	
Vote margin	223	0.208	0.118	0.001	0.514	0.123	0.231	-0.108***
Candidate in 2017	223	0.794	0.406	0	1	0.830	0.784	0.046
Age	223	49.924	9.912	26	78	46.021	50.966	-4.945***
Female	223	0.233	0.424	0	1	0.319	0.210	0.109
East Germany	223	0.238	0.427	0	1	0.234	0.239	-0.005
Population density	223	0.605	0.974	0.038	6.335	1.056	0.484	0.572***
Share age below 18	223	0.162	0.020	0.120	0.213	0.158	0.163	-0.005
Share age above 60	223	0.269	0.027	0.203	0.343	0.267	0.269	-0.002
Share school low	223	0.062	0.028	0.022	0.158	0.067	0.061	0.006
Share school high	223	0.353	0.071	0.217	0.597	0.361	0.351	0.009
Share Catholics	223	0.326	0.233	0.017	0.822	0.277	0.339	-0.061
Tax revenue	223	0.461	0.266	0.149	1.803	0.489	0.454	0.035
Unemployment rate	223	0.062	0.029	0.020	0.149	0.072	0.060	0.012**
Second vote share	223	0.440	0.060	0.317	0.632	0.403	0.450	-0.048***

Population density measured in 1000 inhabitants per square km; tax revenue measured in 1000 Euro per capita.

*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05

Table 2: Sources of variables

	Source	Year
Supporting same-sex marriage	German Bundestag	2017
Vote margin	Federal elections administrator	2013
Candidate in 2017	Federal elections administrator	2017
Age	Federal elections administrator	2013
Female	Own calculation	2013
East Germany	Own calculation	2013
Population density	Federal elections administrator	2011
Share age below 18	Federal elections administrator	2011
Share age above 60	Federal elections administrator	2011
Share school low	Federal elections administrator	2011
Share school high	Federal elections administrator	2011
Share Catholics	Census	2011
Tax revenue	Federal elections administrator	2011
Unemployment rate	Federal elections administrator	2012
Second vote share	Federal elections administrator	2013

Table 3: Regressions results. Baseline model. Marginal effects at means of the covariates

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Vote margin	-1.417*** (-5.965)	-1.429*** (-5.995)	-1.427*** (-6.082)	-1.317*** (-4.137)	-1.224** (-2.001)
Candidate in 2017		0.068 (1.351)	-0.018 (-0.266)	0.019 (0.313)	0.021 (0.337)
Age			-0.010*** (-3.735)	-0.010*** (-3.605)	-0.010*** (-3.593)
Female			0.092 (1.367)	0.112 (1.601)	0.112 (1.603)
East Germany				-0.151* (-1.915)	-0.151* (-1.922)
Population density				0.064** (1.970)	0.061* (1.819)
Share age below 18				-0.826 (-0.313)	-0.503 (-0.163)
Share age above 60				-0.213 (-0.135)	-0.080 (-0.050)
Share school low				1.416 (0.859)	1.499 (0.891)
Share school high				-0.619 (-1.295)	-0.599 (-1.308)
Share Catholics				0.150 (0.883)	0.166 (0.856)
Tax revenue				-0.093 (-0.661)	-0.090 (-0.642)
Unemployment rate				1.273 (0.661)	1.255 (0.656)
Second vote share					-0.283 (-0.188)
Observations	223	223	223	223	223
Pseudo R-squared	0.1579	0.1637	0.2297	0.2754	0.2756

Dependent variable: Supporting same-sex marriage. z-statistics in parentheses. *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

Table 4: Regressions results. Point estimates. Including interaction term between the vote margin and candidate in 2017

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Vote margin	-13.963*** (-3.227)	-13.607*** (-2.904)	-12.657** (-2.483)	-12.772** (-2.159)
Candidate in 2017	-0.758 (-1.156)	-1.039 (-1.440)	-0.713 (-0.941)	-0.719 (-0.946)
Age		-0.044*** (-3.343)	-0.044*** (-3.145)	-0.044*** (-3.116)
Female		0.402 (1.622)	0.491* (1.863)	0.491* (1.869)
East Germany			-0.741 (-1.118)	-0.739 (-1.113)
Population density			0.306** (1.982)	0.308* (1.934)
Share age below 18			-1.961 (-0.157)	-2.228 (-0.152)
Share age above 60			-0.884 (-0.119)	-0.998 (-0.132)
Share school low			5.231 (0.645)	5.155 (0.622)
Share school high			-2.927 (-1.291)	-2.944 (-1.358)
Share Catholics			0.640 (0.777)	0.626 (0.666)
Tax revenue			-0.415 (-0.614)	-0.417 (-0.618)
Unemployment rate			6.243 (0.676)	6.256 (0.681)
Second vote share				0.242 (0.033)
Vote margin * Candidate in 2017	8.810** (1.977)	7.978* (1.669)	6.970 (1.430)	7.007 (1.431)
Observations	223	223	223	223
Pseudo R-squared	0.1808	0.2435	0.2833	0.2833

Dependent variable: Supporting same-sex marriage. z-statistics in parentheses. *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

Table 5: Regressions results. Marginal effects at means of the covariates. Including interaction term between the vote margin and candidate in 2017

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Vote margin (candidate in 2017)	-1.372*** (-5.034)	-1.293*** (-5.124)	-1.271*** (-3.615)	-1.288** (-1.962)
Vote margin (no candidate in 2017)	-0.791* (-1.668)	-1.338** (-2.000)	-0.974* (-1.775)	-0.978* (-1.688)
Observations	223	223	223	223

Dependent variable: Supporting same-sex marriage. Control variables as in columns 2-5 in Table 2. z-statistics in parentheses. *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

Table 6: Regressions results. Point estimates. Including interaction term between the vote margin and the share of Catholics

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Vote margin	-7.456*** (-3.960)	-7.588*** (-3.636)	-7.501*** (-3.243)	-6.980** (-2.377)
Candidate in 2017	0.278 (1.103)	-0.112 (-0.376)	0.086 (0.276)	0.094 (0.302)
Age		-0.046*** (-3.509)	-0.045*** (-3.269)	-0.045*** (-3.244)
Female		0.389 (1.553)	0.472* (1.785)	0.472* (1.784)
East Germany			-0.964 (-1.477)	-0.967 (-1.483)
Population density			0.294* (1.937)	0.281* (1.768)
Share age below 18			-5.080 (-0.407)	-3.129 (-0.217)
Share age above 60			-1.054 (-0.140)	-0.236 (-0.031)
Share school low			6.120 (0.764)	6.619 (0.811)
Share school high			-3.166 (-1.335)	-3.055 (-1.352)
Share Catholics	0.209 (0.226)	0.515 (0.523)	0.133 (0.107)	0.205 (0.165)
Tax revenue			-0.382 (-0.566)	-0.361 (-0.535)
Unemployment rate			6.772 (0.725)	6.694 (0.719)
Second vote share				-1.766 (-0.241)
Vote margin * Share Catholics	2.603 (0.682)	1.430 (0.336)	3.469 (0.773)	3.649 (0.774)
Observations	223	223	223	223
Pseudo R-squared	0.1713	0.2379	0.2769	0.2772

Dependent variable: Supporting same-sex marriage. z-statistics in parentheses. *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

Table 7: Regressions results. Point estimates. Including interaction term between the vote margin and the second vote share

	(1)	(2)	(3)
Vote margin	-4.686 (-0.650)	-3.332 (-0.416)	0.987 (0.107)
Candidate in 2017	0.314 (1.276)	-0.072 (-0.258)	0.086 (0.278)
Age		-0.046*** (-3.558)	-0.047*** (-3.313)
Female		0.367 (1.484)	0.460* (1.760)
East Germany			-0.909 (-1.421)
Population density			0.290* (1.852)
Share age below 18			-2.916 (-0.198)
Share age above 60			-1.068 (-0.138)
Share school low			6.639 (0.831)
Share school high			-2.921 (-1.351)
Share Catholics			0.883 (0.960)
Tax revenue			-0.439 (-0.654)
Unemployment rate			6.038 (0.670)
Second vote share	-0.413 (-0.084)	0.179 (0.035)	1.325 (0.162)
Vote margin * Second vote share	-1.989 (-0.128)	-6.047 (-0.346)	-15.724 (-0.771)
Observations	223	223	223
Pseudo R-squared	0.1639	0.2302	0.2774

Dependent variable: Supporting same-sex marriage. z-statistics in parentheses. *** p<0.01, * p<0.1

Table 8: Regressions results. Marginal effects at means of the covariates. Alternative samples

	(1) Excluding not standing again	(2) Including losers in electoral districts	(3) Excluding CSU	(4) Excluding abstainers
Vote margin	-1.529** (-2.125)	-0.783 (-1.299)	-1.160* (-1.726)	-1.214* (-1.958)
Observations	177	275	180	220

Dependent variable: Supporting same-sex marriage. Control variables as in column 5 in Table 2. z-statistics in parentheses. ** p<0.05, * p<0.1