

# **TESTING THEORIES OF WHO SUPPORTS REFERENDUMS**

Professor Richard Rose

Centre for the Study of Public Policy & Robert Schuman Centre, EUI

prof\_r\_rose@yahoo.co.uk

## **Referendums & European Democracy Workshop**

European University Institute Florence

25 January 2018

Kenneth Stevenson, CSPP, assisted in data search and analysis

## WHY BOTH THEORIES & DATA NEEDED ON REFERENDUM SUPPORT

26 EU member states make some provision for referendums

Majority of national governments now face demand for referendum on EI policy

Survey data identifies size of popular support and who favours referendums

But asking 'How would you vote in a referendum' presupposes it will be held

Asking 'How did you vote' limited to specific national event, context.

## RECIPE FOR LOGIT STEW: FIRST CATCH YOUR DEPENDENT VARIABLE

### Questions

.International Social Survey Programme. Referendums are a good way to decide important political questions. (17 EU countries + global comparisons. 2014)

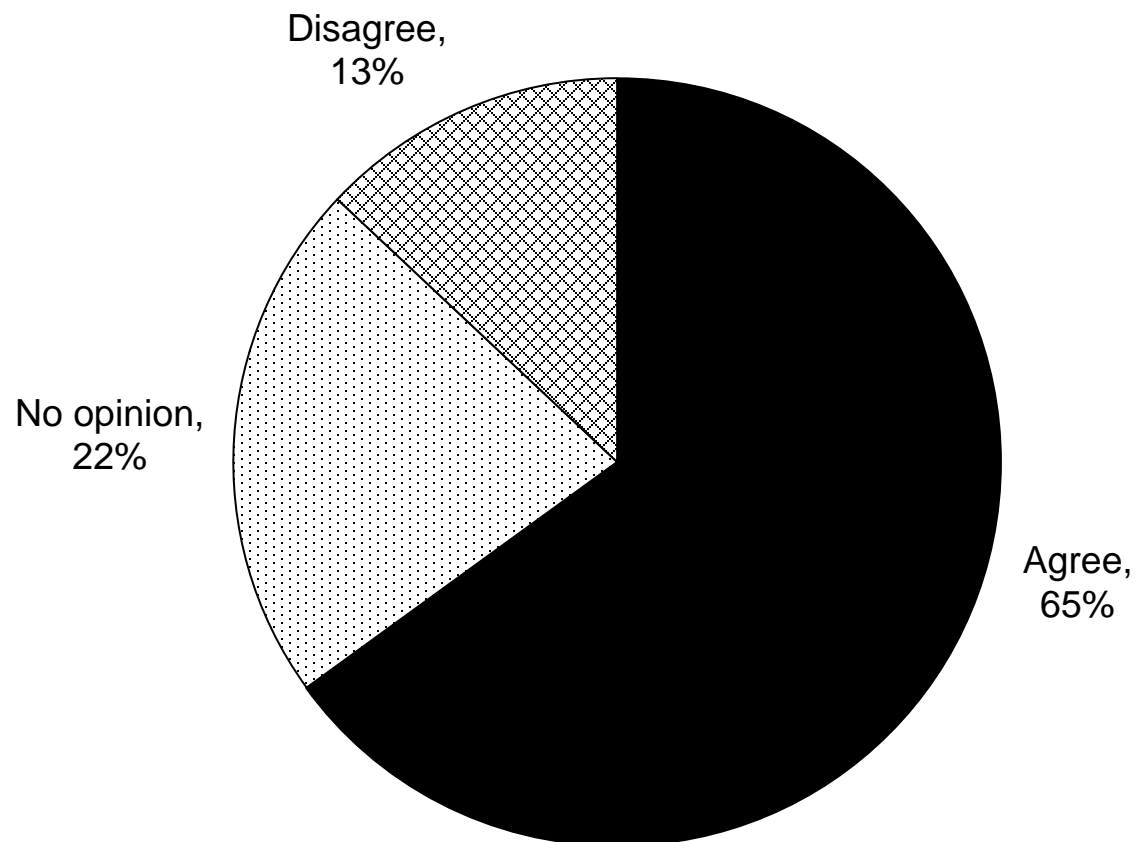
.EU treaty changes should be decided by referendum (EP Election Study, 2009; not asked 2014).

.CEVIPOF France November, 2017. Detailed questions on types of referendums and suitable topics. Empirical issue: Are attitudes diffuse or differentiated?

## SUBSTANTIAL REFERENDUM SUPPORT & WEAK OPPOSITION

---

*Q. Referendums are a good way to decide important political questions*

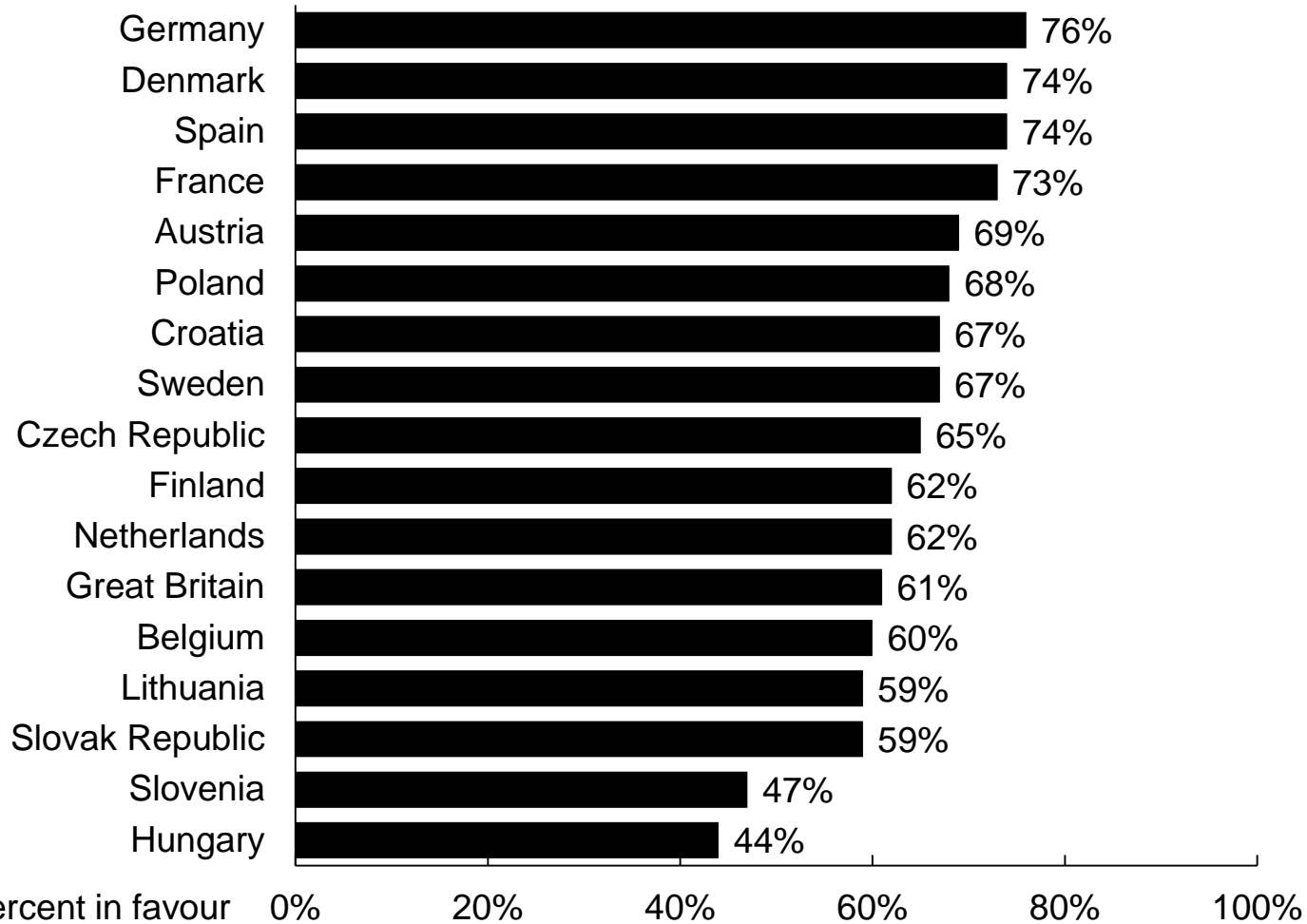


---

Source: International Social Survey Programme, 2014: Pooled data for 17 EU member states included in its global survey. Agree includes 24% who strongly agree and disagree includes 4% who strongly disagree.

## NATIONAL MAJORITIES FAVOUR REFERENDUMS

*Q. Referendums are a good way to decide important political questions*



Source: Multi-level logit analysis of ISSP 2014 survey in 17 countries.

## FAMILIES OF THEORIES EXPLAINING

---

### SUPPORT FOR REFERENDUMS

#### Populist theories

1. Left out of representative democracy
2. More right-wing
3. Left behind by Europeanisation, globalisation

#### Democratic theories

4. Favour participation in politics (Robert Dahl)
5. A broad cross-section of Europeans

### SUPPORT FOR REPRESENTATIVES:

6. Trust MPs, parties to represent people like me
7. Governors, experts know more than I do (Hibbing)

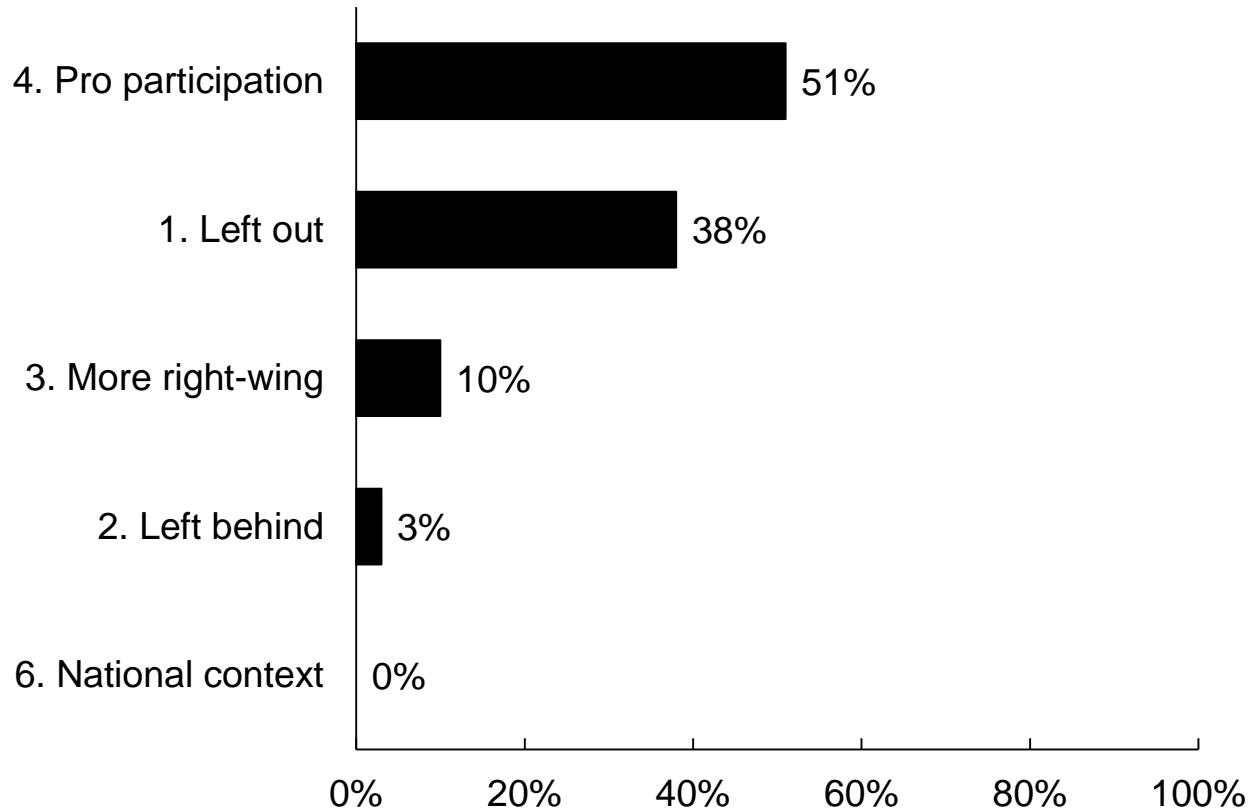
### EVERY SITUATION IS UNIQUE, SPECIFIC TO:

8. Issue
9. National context

# SUPPORT FOR HYPOTHESES IN MULTI-LEVEL LOGIT ANALYSIS

---

(Net sum of predicted probabilities of influence on demand for referendums)



---

Source: Multi-level logit analysis of ISSP 2014 survey in 17 countries; for details see Slide 7.

MULTI-LEVEL LOGIT: SUPPORT FOR REFERENDUMS

|   | Coefficients          | Std error | Predicted probability <sup>1</sup> |
|---|-----------------------|-----------|------------------------------------|
| <b>Favour participation in politics</b>     |                       |           |                                    |
| Q30 Want more chances to participate        | 0.219 <sup>***</sup>  | (0.015)   | 0.308                              |
| Q49 Discusses politics                      | 0.118 <sup>***</sup>  | (0.021)   | 0.121                              |
| Q21 Follows political news                  | 0.008                 | (0.012)   | Not significant                    |
| Q1 Citizens should always vote              | 0.046 <sup>***</sup>  | (0.011)   | 0.085                              |
| <b>Left out by representative democracy</b> |                       |           |                                    |
| Q52 No choice between parties               | 0.149 <sup>***</sup>  | (0.018)   | 0.142                              |
| Q38 Government doesn't care what I think    | 0.087 <sup>***</sup>  | (0.017)   | 0.075                              |
| Q46 Politicians only out for themselves     | -0.098 <sup>***</sup> | (0.019)   | -0.073                             |
| Q58 Dissatisfied with democracy             | -0.062 <sup>***</sup> | (0.008)   | -0.092                             |
| <b>Right-wing views</b>                     |                       |           |                                    |
| Q44 Self-placed extreme right (codes 8-10)  | 0.153 <sup>**</sup>   | (0.049)   | 0.034                              |
| Q44 Self-placed extreme left (codes 0-2)    | 0.048                 | (0.053)   | Not significant                    |
| Q10 Ban extreme religious groups            | 0.098 <sup>***</sup>  | (0.019)   | 0.062                              |
| Q29 No regard for minority rights           | 0.006                 | (0.015)   | Not significant                    |
| Q34 Anti-resident not citizens voting       | 0.009                 | (0.009)   | Not significant                    |
| <b>Left behind</b>                          |                       |           |                                    |
| No higher education                         | 0.186 <sup>***</sup>  | (0.040)   | 0.028                              |
| Below median income                         | 0.052                 | (0.040)   | Not significant                    |
| Older                                       | 0.016                 | (0.011)   | Not significant                    |
| Woman                                       | -0.009                | (0.035)   | Not significant                    |
| <b>National context</b>                     |                       |           |                                    |
| Number of national referendums              | 0.090                 | (0.064)   | Not significant                    |
| Anti-EU vote 2014                           | 0.039                 | (0.062)   | Not significant                    |
| National parties anti-EU                    | 0.000                 | (0.000)   | Not significant                    |
| Constant                                    | -2.981 <sup>***</sup> | (0.201)   | 0.011                              |
| Observations                                | 16775                 |           |                                    |
| Pseudo R <sup>2</sup>                       | 0.287                 |           |                                    |
| Log likelihood                              | -10249.664            |           |                                    |
| LR test (chi2(2))                           | 350.31 <sup>***</sup> |           |                                    |

\*\*\*  $p < 0.001$  \*\*  $< 0.01$

<sup>1</sup> The predicted change on the dependent variable when the independent variable goes from lowest to highest value and all other independent variables held at their mean scores.