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What can explain a Member of the European Parliament's aye or nay to an EU abolitionist approach

Voting behavior in the European Parliament on the issue of prostitution

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Abstract

Members of the European Parliament cast votes on a great range of issues. The approach to prostitution on the European Union level is a sensitive and dividing issue, with two main approaches: the abolitionist approach and the sex work approach. Policies on this moral issue is expected to create untraditional lines of conflict. The aim of this study is to see what can explain whether a member of the European Parliament votes for policies on prostitution with an abolitionist approach, and whether there are other significant factors than those primarily highlighted in literature on general voting behavior. With the use of previous research on voting behavior in general and literature on prostitution, possible factors are identified. These factors relate to euroscepticism, gender, gender equality, national legislation, national parties and European party groups. Studying three roll call votes with an abolitionist dynamic, carried out between 2014-2021, the effects of the independent variables are studied with a binary logistic regression analysis. The findings are partly consistent with previous literature. When controlling for European party group cohesion, gender is not able to explain the voting behavior while the view of EU competence, related to national affiliation and national party affiliation, is. National legislation and attitude towards gender equality show disparate results.

Key words: *European Parliament, Members of the European Parliament, Voting behavior, Prostitution, The abolitionist approach.*

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1 Introduction

The approach to prostitution on the European Union (EU) level is a sensitive and dividing issue. The polarization is expressed not least by the diverse legal approaches to prostitution among the member states. The positions range from regarding prostitution as a practice of gender oppression that needs to be abolished, to regarding prostitution as an occupation like any other and an instance of personal autonomy that needs to be respected and regulated. The abolitionist approach deems prostitution as a form of violence against women and propose client criminalization, while the sex work approach argues for regulations and better workers' rights. Having fundamentally different understandings of the nature of prostitution, both approaches claim to work in the interest of feminism and women's rights. In addition, there are questions about the EU competence on prostitution, with those who see it fit for the EU to take decisions on this issue and those who believe that it should be managed on the national level.

The debate on prostitution and the question about the EU approach is present in the European Parliament (EP). Increased attention to questions regarding prostitution resulted in an "abolitionist turn" in the EP in 2014, illustrated by the ground-breaking adoption of the Honeyball resolution (European Parliament 2014), which expressed an abolitionist approach on prostitution. The issues have been discussed to a greater extent since then, but not yet resulting in any binding decisions. Prostitution, remaining an issue for non-binding policies, continues to be a controversial issue creating great debates in the whole of the EP as well as within European party groups (Outshoorn 2018).

The votes casted by individual members of the European Parliament (MEPs) are generally thought to be connected to political ideology and the affiliation with a certain European party group. According to many scholars, these are by far the most important predictors for voting behavior in the EP (Blomgren 2003; Cencaig & Sabani 2017; Hix et al. 2007). In addition to this, scholars argue that nationality have next to no influence (Hix et al. 2005). However, this does not always seem to be the case. MEPs, from what is normally perceived as very similar European party groups, seem to vote in a partly different way on the issue of prostitution, and some party groups seem to have a more cohesive position than others. Moreover, some member state's MEPs seem to vote in a similar way, though belonging to different European Party Groups. According to Outshoorn (2018), the voting on the Honeyball resolution did not follow the left-right dimension and that there was a great

internal division in most of the European party groups. Moreover, Outshoorn states that there was a new and interesting voting pattern concerning MEPs from the different member states, even if Outshoorn does not investigate this further.

Literature suggest that moral issues might create unexpected cooperations and divide those who in general are allies (Giric 2016), while also suggesting that prostitution is such a morality issue (Forget & Grundell 2020). Prostitution, being a moral issue, could make MEPs bring individual moral and values to the votes on this issue. The question of EU competence is also consistently brought up in the debate on prostitution (Allwood 2018), and an individual's attitude towards prostitution is thought to be connected to gender (Hansen & Johansson 2022) and gender equality (Jakobsson & Kotsadam 2011). At the same time, the MEPs have multiple, co-existing and possibly competing loyalties including national politics, party group politics and party politics (Cencaig & Sabani 2017). This makes the voting behavior on prostitution issues particularly interesting. What factors could potentially be used to explain the voting pattern on the abolitionist approach?

There are researchers who suggest that when studying voting behavior in the EP, it might be of value to disaggregate votes by issue areas and not only study general voting behavior (McElroy 2007, 439). Even scholars that have drawn strong conclusions on the importance of EPG affiliation on voting behavior, open up for and welcome more research on whether voting behavior differ across issues (Hix et al. 2007, 232). At the same time, some scholars suggest that an MEPs voting behavior, and the reasons behind it, could be expected to be more exposed during critical situations as these could "trigger the MEPs preferred allegiance" (Blomgren 2003, 274). Such a critical situation could include a controversial issue with a moral dimension, like prostitution.

The European Parliament is an arena where negotiations and coalition building is part of everyday work. In this context it appears important to understand and acknowledge the different mechanisms at play regarding the voting behavior, not the least when looking for potential allies in driving policy processes in desired direction. It could be beneficial to investigate, and maybe even challenge, the traditional and well-established belief about the European party groups' great domination for explaining the voting behavior in the European Parliament. The general understandings and explanations might not be possible to apply to all specific issue areas, where certain particular dynamics are at play.

1.1 Aim

This study aims to investigate EP voting patterns for policies connected to the issue on prostitution; more specifically policies with an abolitionist approach. Could there be other factors than European group affiliation that also are significant for the MEP's voting behavior on the issue of prostitution and the abolitionist approach? The focus is on finding other potentially significant variables. The aim of this study is not to attempt to invalidate the effect of EPG affiliation, but rather to see what other factors are significant in affecting the probability of an MEP voting for an abolitionist approach.

There is a great amount of research on general voting behavior in the EP, and in addition there is much research on the issue of prostitution. However, research on voting behavior when it comes to policies on prostitution, and the abolitionist approach specifically, is sparse. This study will address this gap by taking departure in the literature on voting behavior in the EP in general, in combination with literature on the issue of prostitution.

1.2 Research question

With the aim as a point of departure, the research question is: *What can explain whether Members of the European parliament vote in favor of the abolitionist approach when it comes to policies on prostitution?*

The research question will be answered by reviewing European Parliament Roll call votes (RVCs) with an abolitionist dynamic. The study will be carried out using a binary logistic regression analysis, where multiple independent variables will simultaneously be tested and controlled for. The result will show the variables' effect on the voting choice of the MEPs, i.e., whether they voted for or not. The effect of each independent variable, while controlling for the other independent variables, will be measured, alongside a measure to see whether the variables' effects are significant.

1.3 Limitations

A quantitative method is used to find patterns of voting behavior. Thus, the focus is not on the exceptions. The aim is to study how the MEPs voted and what factors seems to determine this voting behavior, with different independent variables and theories grounded in previous literature.

Thus, the individual MEPs own explanations will not be captured. With a statistical analysis, based on theories about why a certain factor could be expected to affect voting behavior, an attempt is made to explain voting behavior on a group level.

The study focuses on the policies expressing the abolitionist approach and factors that could explain why a MEP voted in favor or not. The study does not claim to be able to draw conclusions on the voting behavior for the approach opposed to the abolitionist approach, the so-called sex work approach. There is no comparison made between if voting for the abolitionist approach corresponds to a vote against the sex work approach. Since the abolitionist turn in the EP, the explicit sex work approach is perceived as very controversial, with a poor impact on the policies going to plenary voting level in the EP (Outshoorn 2018). This means that there are simply no cases to study the opposite approach from Roll call votes. It would be misleading to draw the conclusion that not voting for an abolitionist approach would mean a vote for a sex work approach. For example, as suggested in the literature (Allwood 2018), one position could be that there should never be a policy on prostitution on the EU level, regardless of it being a policy with an an abolitionist approach or the sex work approach.

Conclusions will be based on voting behavior for "soft" policies, as the RCVs studied concerns votes on non-binding resolutions. These votes constitute the available materials, as there are simply no binding policies on the issue of interest. Still, even if the votes do not deal with binding measures, the "soft" policies are part of the European Parliament's assignments, and express normative stance and initiatives in relation to the other EU institutions and the public. The votes are limited to Roll call votes, as these are the only votes possible to study on an individual level. Important to have in mind is that the are other kind of votes and expressions of opinion in the European Parliament. The time period covered in this study is from 2014, when the first selected Roll call vote of interest took place, until present (May 2023), and the number of RCVs included in the study is three.

The literature on prostitution is often linked to the issue of trafficking. However, the voting behavior concerning policies on trafficking specifically will not be in focus in this study, unless the policies on trafficking also handles the more general aspect of prostitution and actualize the debate on an abolitionist approach.

2 The different approaches to prostitution

This study assumes Outshoorn's definition of prostitution: "Prostitution usually refers to the exchange of sex or sexual services for money or other material benefits." (Outshoorn 2005, 141). In line with this, "we might identify prostitution as the provisions of services inherent to the sexual sphere, in exchange for money or other benefits" (Rigotti 2021, 2). Still, many scholars are aware that even such a primary definition of prostitution could be an object of debate, as it is is connected to cultural and moral constructions leading to its limits being defined somewhat differently by both researchers and legislatures (Rigotti 2021; Green 2016).

There are different approaches on prostitution, dealing with the understanding of problems with prostitution, the reasons behind the fact that prostitution exists, as well as solutions to related problems. A presentation of these approaches is given as a point of departure, as the understanding of the differences between them is essential for understanding the debate on the EU level.

Most people engaged in the debate on prostitution agree that there are problems with prostitution. However, they do not agree about which measures should be taken to solve them. Some say that prostitution should be abolished, while some argue that it should be regulated but perceived as an occupation just like any other (Outshoorn 2005). Interestingly, the issue of prostitution is object for a great disagreement amongst feminists. One side of the feminist debate promote the abolition of prostitution while the other promote the perception of prostitution as a choice of work (Beran 2012, 34-36).

There exist two major discourses, or approaches, on the matter of prostitution. One is in line with what can be called the traditional abolitionist ideas, coming from a radical feminist perspective, and the other comes from a liberal feminist thought and frames prostitution as sex work (Outshoorn 2005, 145). Scholars use many different names for the two approaches. The first is called "abolitionist" (Outshoorn 2005; Kilvington et al. 2001; Farley 2017), "neo-abolitionist" (Forget & Rubino Grundell 2020), "the sexual domination discourse" (Outshoorn 2005), and "the radical feminist approach" (Beran 2012; Rigotti 2021). The other is most often called the "sex work approach" (Rubio Grundell 2022; Outshoorn 2005) or "the liberal feminist approach" (Beran 2012), but in some cases also the "regulation approach" (Kilvington et al. 2001).

The two different approaches will be called the "abolitionist approach" and the "sex work approach" in this study. In conclusion, it is common to call the radical feminist as having an abolitionist agenda (Outshoorn 2018) and to see debate as being pro-abolition or anti-abolition (Kilvington et al. 2001). The use of "work" in the sex work approach clearly speaks to the big differences between the two approaches, as one sees prostitution as work while the other reject this idea.

2.1 The sex work approach

The sex work approach argue that prostitution is a type of work. The goal is to legalize (even if in some aspects regulate) prostitution. Supporters of this approach make a distinction between forced and voluntary prostitution. Voluntary prostitution is seen as a case of self-determination, and should therefore be seen as sex work and be regulated as a form of employment (Agustín 2007; Jaggar 1994). Based on the idea of the difference between the forced and voluntary prostitution, this approach promotes a decriminalization of the voluntary prostitution (Rubio Grundell 2022, 1038). With this approach there is an agreement that there are problems with trafficking, the so-called forced prostitution, but that that one can separate forced and voluntary prostitution (Outshoorn 2005, 145-146).

The sex work approach sees prostitution as a model of sex equality and an expression of individual agency. Because clients pay the people in prostitution, it is considered consensual (MacKinnon 2011, 273). The approach is based on a certain idea of choice and consent. Prostitution is a choice women can make, and that should be respected (Bell 1994; Pheterson 1989). In other words, it is perceived as an example of personal autonomy. The argument is that the right to work in prostitution is a right to sexual self-determination. It is not the prostitution in itself that is the problem, but the stigmatization that it leads to, as well as the context with for example bad working conditions in which it takes place (Outshoorn 2005, 145-146). The aim is to destigmatize people in prostitution by taking away the criminal sanctions from the people involved (both clients and the "workers") and making prostitution a legitimate form of employment (MacKinnon 2011). The interrelated legal approach for the sex work approach promotes different types of legalization; most commonly with some regulation from the state.

2.2 The abolitionist approach

The objective of the abolitionist approach is to abolish prostitution. The means to reach this goal is a legal approach that criminalize the client and decriminalize the person in prostitution. Prostitution is seen as part of the greater institutionalized sex inequality (MacKinnon 2011, 273). It is argued that it is an illustration and a practice of the oppression of women and that people in prostitution are victims (Rigotti 2021, 3). The abolitionist approach opposes the distinction between forced and voluntary prostitution, and argue that prostitution by definition is forced. It is characterized by coercion, coming from the idea that no woman would work with prostitution by free will (Outshoorn 2005, 145), and that the exchange of sex for money revoke any such thing as free choice. Restricted options and denied possibilities are thought to be what lead women into prostitution, and is therefore a result of lack of choice (MacKinnon 2011, 274). It is a deeply rooted idea that people in prostitution are forced by economic necessity to engage in the transaction of sex for money (Pateman 1999, 58).

Prostitution is regarded as a form of violence against women, and the supporters of this approach connect prostitution to rape and domestic violence. It is seen as a form of sexual exploitation, even if paid for. Women have a right to a life without this form of sexual exploitation, and therefore such violence must be criminalized (Kilvington et al. 2001, 79). This side of the debate perceive prostitution as a severe expression of the sexual violence against women, and therefore needed to be abolished. With the abolitionist approach comes a certain view on the relationship between prostitution and trafficking, connected to the rejection of a distinction between forced and voluntary prostitution. Many having an abolitionist approach see trafficking (for sexual exploitation purposes) as the result of prostitution, and thus that prostitution must be abolished to eliminate trafficking (Outshoorn 2005, 145-153). Prostitution is seen as a practice that overlaps with trafficking. In this approach, it highlighted how it has been shown how trafficking, or the illegal prostitution, increases when prostitution is legalized because of the facilitation of operating for traffickers and a higher demand for people working in prostitution (MacKinnon 2011, 304).

This approach aims to abolish prostitution. The interrelated legal approach seeks to criminalize the ones buying sex (the so-called clients) and the ones selling the person in prostitution (the so-called pimps and traffickers). At the same time, the criminalization of the people in prostitution is rejected. Moreover, the focus in the abolitionist approach is on the demand, that is argued to be the reason

why the industry of prostitution exist to begin with (MacKinnon 2011, 273-275). The legal approach is based on an understanding of prostitution as including risks for those in prostitution. When prostitution is understood as a form of violence against women, the legal approach criminalizing the clients and decriminalizing the people in prostitution clearly becomes appropriate (Farley 2017). The choice of promoting client criminalization is based on the expected decease of the demand for prostitution this would lead to (Wagenaar 2018, 8).

2.3 The pillars of the abolitionist approach

To summarize, scholars seem to agree on certain "pillars" building up the abolitionist approach. These can be used to identify the abolitionist approach in legislation and policies. These pillars will guide the choice of Roll call votes in this study, in assessing which votes include an abolitionist dynamics. They will also guide the categorization of national legislations as abolitionist or not. According to the literature, these are the following pillars:

• An objective to abolish prostitution.

• An aim to reduce demand for prostitution, as this is thought to lead to the abolishment.

• A perception of prostitution as a part of gender oppression and expression of gender inequality.

• A perception of prostitution as a form of violence and sexual exploitation.

• A perception of a non-existing distinction between forced and voluntary prostitution, and of the people in prostitution as victims.

• A favoring of criminalization of the client and a favoring of decriminalizing the person in prostitution.

• A claim for a clear link between prostitution and trafficking, suggesting that prostitution fuels trafficking and is connected to demand for prostitution.

3 Background

3.1 Diverging national approaches in the EU member states

In lack of a harmonized legislation on the EU level, there are different approaches to prostitution and different legal frameworks among the EU member states, taking different sides in the polarized debate between the abolitionist and the sex work approach (Rigotti 2021, 3). The area of prostitution policy has been marked by a distinct polarization and disagreeing ideas about what prostitution is and what its relation to gender equality looks like (Scaramuzzino & Scaramuzzino 2019, 137). Since the end of the 1990s, countries in Europe have gone in very different directions when it comes to national legislation on prostitution. Some have gone towards a more "tolerant" relation to both the people in prostitution and the people buying sex, while others have gone in the complete opposite way with a more restrictive approach to prostitution, with for example criminalizing the client (Euchner & Kill 2015, 155).

Forget & Rubino Grundell (2020) argue that there is a growing polarization of the different positions, exemplified with Sweden and its client criminalization on the one hand, and the Netherlands with its legalization of sex work on the other. Sweden was the first EU member state, and the first country in the world, to adopt a legislation that criminalize the clients, but not the persons in prostitution. This type of legislation, that is in line with the abolitionist approach, is commonly called "the Nordic model". This model was later (in 2016/2017) adopted by France and Ireland. This model was contradictory to the decriminalization and regulation of prostitution in other EU member states. For example, the Netherlands adopted legislation with an opposing approach (Langford & Skilbrei 2022). However, many member states have a similar legislation when it comes to third party involvement (for example pimping) and a similar position when it comes to the issue of trafficking of human beings (Policy Department for Citizens' Rights and Constitutional Affairs Directorate-General for Internal Policies 2021).

3.2 The debate in the EU and the EP's abolitionist turn

According to MacKinnon (2011, 272), the debate on prostitution is remarkably polarized, with sides clearly opposing each other in the fundamental understanding of prostitution. At the same time, Allwood (2018, 132), who gives an overview of the prostitution issue on the EU arena, expresses how the European Parliament is the only EU institution that discusses prostitution on a regular

basis. However, for a long time, prostitution was only discussed in relation to trafficking, and the point of departure was that there was a distinction between forced prostitution and voluntary prostitution (Outshoorn 2018).

For a long time, reports with an abolitionist approach in the EP, with the possibility to become an object of voting in the plenary in the form of a motion for resolution, never made it to that stage. They never even made it through the precedent steps in the policy process (committee votes etc.). However, as of the last ten years starting with a resolution in 2014, there has been what scholars have come to call an "abolitionist turn", in the EP (Rubio Grundell, 2021, 427). The Honeyball resolution (European Parliament 2014) was the first policy with the abolitionist approach that had any success in the EP as a report making it to a resolution. The resolution expresses an abolitionist approach and condemns all prostitution as a form of violence, and in turn also expresses no distinction between forced and voluntary prostitution (Outshoorn, 2018, 363-372). The approach was approved in the EP, but with a narrow margin and with an intense debate leading up to the voting (Outshoorn 2005). Still, a turn from the EP towards taking a stance in the debate on prostitution and also a settlement on the abolitionist approach, seeing prostitution as a form of violence and a promotion of client criminalization, had been made. In line with this, Wagenaar (2018) argue that during the last two decades, the abolitionist position in the debate on prostitution has seized the moral high ground in the EP.

Yet, prostitution is a very controversial issue, showed by the unwillingness to agree on binding policies. The Honeyball resolution were agreed upon only as a non-binding resolution, and was then shelved in the EP. There have also been no comprehensive proposals or Roll call votes on the issue of prostitution since 2014, even though the debate is still present (Outshoorn 2018, 363). Even if the abolitionist approach has a relatively high support in the Committee of Women's rights in the EP, a considerable number of other MEPs still agree with the idea of a possible voluntary prostitution and the idea about a distinction between trafficking and prostitution (Outshoorn 2005, 152).

4 Previous literature and factors of interest: What has been said, and what could it mean for this study?

There are a vast body of previous research on MEPs voting behavior in the EP in general, but not when it comes to the issue of prostitution specifically. However, some scholars have studied prostitution as a political issue and what can shape attitudes towards prostitution. This section gives an overview of this previous research, and will in combination be applied to the research question. By answering "What could this mean for voting behavior on the issue of prostitution and the abolitionist approach?", the previous literatures' implications will be discussed, leading to conclusions about factors of interest, as well as hypotheses.

4.1 What has been said about voting behavior in the European Parliament?

4.1.1 The role of the Member of the European Parliament

Many scholars have discussed and analyzed the complex role of the MEP as an actor in the EP. Cencaig and Sabani (2017) describes MEPs as agents with multiple principals. They are elected by the voters and members of a national party, but also affiliate with a European party group. They have multiple affiliations and multiple sources of pressure and accountability, which in turn can lead to conflicts. Klueger Rasmussen (2008) adds that the MEP in some sense also represent their member state, as they are elected by national electorates and sit on a "chair" in the EP reserved for their member state. The MEPs can at the same time have different understandings of their roles as representatives, with some seeing themselves as representing their voters, while other primarily think about themselves as representing their party organizations (Blomgren 2003, 215-218).

What could this mean for voting behavior on the issue of prostitution and the abolitionist approach? When the MEP cast a vote in the EP they do so in a complex context, where they have many different principals. There could possibly be a conflict between these, and there are also different levels that the MEPs could be oriented towards. With this as point of departure, the variables in the analysis of this study will include variables with connection to different principals.

4.1.2 European party group affiliation

In general, previous literature have found that the MEP's European party group affiliation is the by far most important denominator for the MEPs voting behavior in the EP. This is said to relate to both the issue of ideology and organization. Starting with what is the characteristics of an EPG, Ahrens et al. (2022, 6) refer to the rules of procedure of the EP which require a political group to share political affinity, which could be defined as a shared political ideology. In line with this, Blomgren (2003) argue that it most commonly is the case that the EPG attract MEPs who belong to the same ideological family. Moreover, some scholars argue that it is the attitudes towards socio-economic issues that distinguish European party groups from each other (McElroy & Benoit 2007; Hix et al. 2005). Related to this, findings clearly indicated that the classical left-right divide is the primary dimension of conflict in the European Parliament, and that votes in the EP mainly fall along this cleavage (Hix et al. 2006; Hix 2001; Kreppel 2001).

The European party groups are "organizational vehicles" in the EP, and have a central role in the everyday work in the EP. An MEP is often specialized in a certain area of politics. In other areas, the MEP most often vote in line with the other MEP in the group responsible for that area. The EPGs organize hierarchal systems, and aim for reciprocity and a cohesive behavior (Blomgren 2003). There is a will from the EPGs to perform as a united front, to in turn be influential in the negotiations on policies. In this way, the EPGs are a source of influence in the EP, which creates incentives for the MEPs to act according to the EPGs position (Kluger Rasmussen 2008, 15). Most of the time, the MEPs in an EPG can follow the the EPG line without any objections, as the members in the EPG share a broad ideological affinity (Scully 2005, 127). But even if it the most common situation, it is sometimes the case that the MEP make the choice to not follow the EPG (Blomgren 2003, 218). To maintain a cohesion is in this way a constant struggle for the EPGs. The possible different positions of its members, originated from the members coming from different domestic political arenas, can lead to different policy positions within the group (Sata 2016,157).

Even if there are obstacles to maintaining cohesion for the EPGs, much research has found a great cohesion for EPGs in votes. Many scholars agree on the conclusion that it is the ideological "leaning", in the shape of the European party group affiliation, that primarily determine the vote choice of MEPs (Cencaig & Sabani 2017, 968; Hix et al. 2007; Hix & Noury 2009). The cohesiveness within the EPGs has been found to be relatively high, and it is possible to talk about the EPGs as unitary and cohesive actors, at least during roll call votes (Blomgren 2003, 257). Group

cohesion in the EP has been explained with the persuasion and coordination within the groups (Ringe 2010, 213). The EPGs have limited power on the MEPs electoral fate, but power over the MEPs fate within the EP. Even if there is no formal enforcement mechanism in the EPGs, it is informally more or less impossible to oppose the group in a majority of issues and at the same time expect important assignments (Blomgren 2003, 204-205). One way of enforcing party group discipline over MEPs is by regulating the assignment of attractive parliamentary positions like rapporteurships or committee leadership (Hix 2002). If many MEPs from the same party group vote similarly, one could explain that it is the party group organization that created this cohesion. At the same time, it might as well be that the MEPs in the group had the same preference, independent of the party group organization, connected to their political ideology and their own political beliefs. It is difficult to decide the effect of these independently (Hix et al. 2005, 213).

Studies on roll call voting has found that MEPs vote along with the party groups, to a greater extent than for example according to national affiliation. Party groups are in total more cohesive than groups of MEPs from the same member state (Hix et al. 2005, 210-219). It is very rare for an MEP to leave the line of the European party group (Hix 2004; Hix & Bartolini 2006; Hix & Noury 2009; Ringe 2010).

What could this mean for voting behavior on the issue of prostitution and the abolitionist approach? An MEP's EPG affiliation is claimed to be by far the most important predictor for how the MEPs vote. It is illustrated by a very high EPG cohesion. For the question of voting on policies on prostitution and the abolitionist approach, this suggest that MEPs will vote in line with their EPG's position. The MEP might vote with their EPG because this is in line with political (ideological) beliefs. It could also be in the MEP's interest, organizational-wise, to avoid disadvantage if going against the group. Thus, the factor of EPG affiliation seems to be a beneficial factor to include in the analysis, to control for when analyzing the effect of other factors. A hypothesis could be that an MEP is likely to vote according to the EPG line on the issue of prostitution. In this study, the effect of the EPG affiliation will be assumed to have an effect on the MEPs voting behavior when it comes to the issue of prostitution. The factor of the EPG affiliation will be included in this analysis, using the variable *EPG Cohesion For*.

4.1.3 National party affiliation

The literature also ascribes a great role to the national parties in shaping the MEPs voting choices. Blomgren (2003) draw, from the interviews he carried out with MEPs, the conclusion that the national party is the most important principle for the MEPs in determining their positions and voting. While stating that the MEP's national party and their EPG often have the same position due to ideological closeness, Cicchi (2013) argue that the national party as a principal is the one that the MEPs are essentially loyal to. Other findings support the argument that the primary principal for the MEPs is their national party and not their EPG (Willmusen 2022). Hix et al. (2007) have in accordance with this found that the MEPs are more likely to side with the national party if there is a conflict between the EPG and the national party. Klueger Rasmussen (2008) argue that the reason behind such a pattern, at least partly, could have to to with the fact that it is the national party that in the end is in control of selecting candidates to the European Parliament and controls the career path on the national level.

What could this mean for voting behavior on the issue of prostitution and the abolitionist approach? Literature suggest that the MEPs national party affiliation play a great role for their voting behavior. Even if a conflict between the EPG and the national party is uncommon, it could mean that the MEPs tend to vote in line with the national party's position on the approach to prostitution. The national party could be expected to be the political organization that the MEP is ideologically closest to. It could also be in the MEP's interest to not be punished by the national party for not following the party line. With this in mind, it appears that the factor of national party affiliation is of interest for this study. The hypothesis is that an MEP is likely to vote according to the position of their national party on the issue of prostitution. The factor of national party affiliation will be included in the study thought the variable *National Party Euroscepticism*, combining the factor of national party and the factor of view on EU competence (discussed below).

4.1.4 National affiliation

There is a clear trend of agreeing that the EPG affiliation is the most important denominator for the MEPs voting behavior and that national affiliation is not relevant. At the same time there is critique against this mainstream literature. The objection is that pooling big amounts of data to measure a general cohesion, can hide interesting variances across issue areas (Kluger Rasmussen 2008).

Studies on certain issues, using different methods, have led to findings that partially show a different picture of the role of national affiliation.

For example, Cencaig & Sabani (2017) carried out a quantitative study on voting behavior, but focused on votes on certain issues that were thought to be connected to national identity. Their finding was that national interest, in this study indicated by country-level economic variables, can be strong predictors of how MEPs vote. They still found support for the traditional result suggesting that the MEP's party group affiliation is the primary factor. However, the result undermines the general perception of the domination of EPG's cohesion to some extent, not least when it comes to salient and controversial issues. The findings about the role of the MEP' member state origin showed that national factors are relevant, even when EPG affiliation is controlled for. In addition, a study by Buzogányn& Ćetković (2021), dealing with voting behavior on climate policy, led to interesting findings. The conclusions support the expectations from previous literature, but they also found that national concerns had influenced how the MEP voted, and that national contextual factors could explain some aspects of the voting behavior.

Using another method than the mainstream literature on voting behavior, Kluger Rasmussen (2008) carried out a qualitative study about how Danish MEPs express the role of their national affiliation in relation to different issues. The findings confirmed a great extent of cohesion in the EPGs, but in addition showed that national affiliation play a stronger role than previously suggested in some areas. These areas were for example employment and environmental policy, which are seen as of special importance to the member states. In these areas MEPs appeared to suggest that they follow the national interest. Only addressing Danish MEPs means that it is problematic to generalize these findings on all MEPs. However, the findings say something different in relation to the general traditional conclusions on the seemingly minor role of national affiliation. Kluger Rasmussen moreover suggests that some issues are characterized more by national divisions than by the left-right division. Another example is an interview-based study, carried out by Blomgren (2003), suggesting that on specific occasions MEPs cooperate and act coherent according to national lines. The conclusion is that MEPs can have different position on votes due to national values and traditions.

What could this mean for voting behavior on the issue of prostitution and the abolitionist approach? The literature suggests that if a specific issue has a connection to national identity or national values

and traditions, national affiliation can play a role for voting behavior. The same is suggested if an issue is perceived as of special importance to the member states or if there is a national interest. If prostitution is such an issue, it could be possible that the voting behavior is affected by national affiliation, or maybe more specifically that national contextual factors could play a role. National contextual factors can be thought of as factors that constitute a common context for the MEPs from the same member state, which might result in the same voting behavior. National affiliation will be included in the analysis of this study using different variables connected to national contextual factors: *National Legislation*, *National Euroscepticism* and *National Gender Equality*. These are discussed below, as well as in the method section. Proceeding the main analysis, a primary study briefly looked at the voting decisions of the MEPs on the Roll call votes selected for this study, divided by national affiliation (see Appendix 1). It shows that MEPs from some of the member states vote in a similar way to a great extent. This might suggest that national affiliation, or more specifically national contextual factors, could play a role.

4.2 What has been said about the issue of prostitution?

4.2.1 Prostitution as a morality issue

Many scholars conclude that prostitution is a certain kind of political issue, categorized as a morality politics issue. It is essentially about values and morality, which has effect on the line of conflicts and possibly the voting behavior. Forget and Rubino Grundell (2020, 1810) study prostitution as a case of European morality politics. They conclude that prostitution is a relatively standard case of morality politics, with no consensus among the European states, even if there has been some evolution of common (soft) policies. Morality politics is defined as connected to religious and/or moral values, creating hard-lined conflicts between values within the society as well as within the political arena (Euchner & Knill 2016). Morality politics addresses issues that are based on ideas about right and wrong, for example connected to gender and sexuality and individual freedom; issues such as prostitution (Euchner 2019). In line with this Beran (2012, 19) highlights how prostitution brings up moral questions about autonomy, power and oppression.

Moreover, prostitution is somewhat different to other types of morality politics, even if the discussion comes down to a debate on European values. According to Forget & Rubino Grundell (2020) the economic dimension of the issue of prostitution is stronger than in most other morality

issues, and at the same time the connection to religious ideas is looser than for other morality issues. They describe how the debate is divided with one side relating prostitution to gender equality and human dignity, and the other side relating it to freedom of movement and labor. This debate is also present amongst feminists. Values like freedom and equality is institutionalized in EU law, but there are different interpretations of what they mean in practice. It is also a case about which values to prioritize (Forget & Rubino Grundell 2020, 1803-1806).

A morality issue is suggested to create certain lines of conflicts within the political sphere, somewhat different from the common lines. The previously mentioned hard-lined conflict of value that the morality politics contain, potentially creates new types of arrangements in the political competition. This type of politics intersects traditional political divisions, such as post/materialist and left/right. Even if politics in general is about conflicts between values, it has been suggested that the conflicts of morality politics are of a special kind. Positions that are normally consistent along the traditional political lines can be changed when it comes to morality politics, which can lead to internal disagreement. The result can be "strange bedfellows" in the political arena (Giric 2016; Goode 1998; Weitzer 2006). In line with, this Wagenaar & Altink (2012) state that alliances are likely to cut across parties when it comes to positions on morality issues, and Forget and Rubio Grundell (2020) argue that disagreement can appear within current ideological factions.

As an example, Pateman (1999, 57) concludes that the opinion that prostitution is to be equalized with all other type of work, is present both on the left and right side of the political spectrum. Even if some ideologies are briefly mentioned in the literature on attitudes towards prostitution, for example that conservatism could be connected to a negative attitude (Hansen & Johansson 2021), the literature does not specifically link the two approaches to prostitution to the traditional ideologies and the left-right dimension. The impression is that it is difficult to pin down each traditional ideology's stance. Due to the fact that one of the approaches to prostitution is sometimes called "liberalist feminist", there is an implicit link to liberalism in the literature. However, with a perspective broader than the feminist liberal ideology, it seems difficult to determine the stance on prostitution of the broader ideology of liberalism. An example is the discussion in *Liberalism and Prostitution* (de Marneffe 2010). The conclusion is that liberals can support different forms of government restrictions and regulations of prostitution, despite the fundamental importance of freedom. The reasoning is that prostitution harms the people in prostitution to an extent, and that rules aiming to reduce opportunity to take part of it could be preferred over complete liberty. De

Marneffe argue that abolitionist and regulatory models, which reduce rather than completely prohibit the possibility to sell sex, do not violate the rights of people in prostitution. Moreover, Rubio Grundell (2022, 1053) expresses how the abolitionist model can be present in "neoliberal" states, as it can be seen as protecting the freedom of vulnerable subjects.

Scholars also mention that there are possible national values and cultural moral standpoints present in the debate. Wagenaar (2018, 3) suggests that the national policy is both reflecting, and constrained by, the cultural attitudes towards prostitution. Wagenaar argues that the inherent moral nature of prostitution policy is a challenge for policy-making internationally, because of the conflict that it brings to the fore about different core societal values and the cultural attitudes. Outshoorn (2018, 373) argues that the issue of prostitution is connected to national identity, and Forget & Rubino Grundell (2020) mean that the polarization of the debate on prostitution has become a debate about national values.

What could this mean for voting behavior on the issue of prostitution and the abolitionist approach? Prostitution is described as a morality issue, which entails a conflict of values. For such an issue, traditional ideological lines and the traditional left-right conflict might not be of the same significance. The conclusion that can be drawn is that other factors than those traditionally mentioned as important for voting behavior may play a role, when it comes to the voting behavior on the issue of prostitution. If the general political conflict lines are assumed to be illustrated by the EPGs, this could mean that other factors can play a role. At the same time, the literature argues that there are national values when it comes to the issue, and that national identity can play a role. Applying ideas from the literature on the role of national affiliation, prostitution might be an issue where this affiliation has an effect. An additional primary study, prior to this study, briefly looked at the voting decisions of the MEPs in the RCVs included, divided by EPG (see Appendix 2). The apparent division in some EPG's can strengthen the idea about other factors being relevant. The inclusion of different factors apart from EPG affiliation, found to possibly affect the voting choice, will be included in the analysis. Such factors, informed by the literature, are described and discussed below.

4.2.2 The competence argument

In the European debate on harmonizing prostitution policy, the argument relating to the issue if EU competence is very much present. It deals with EU's jurisdiction and what the EU can decide on in relation to the member states. The argument can be seen in the light of the national polarization on the issue of prostitution. Outshoorn (2018) notes that there appears to be a great uncertainty about how the EP will vote on the issue of prostitution in the future, and connect this to the debate on EU competence. The lack of binding policies on prostitution, is by Allwood (2018) partly explained by the use of the argument that the issue is not within the EU's competences. This is the most common argument in the debate about having common policies on prostitution on the EU agenda. However, the author clarifies that this argument, and how successful it has been, is connected to the framing of the issue. The boundaries of the EU competences are contested (Allwood 2018).

Many agree that trafficking is within the EU's competences, because of the relation to migration and common boarders policy, while prostitution is not. They refer to the EU treaties, and argue that it is still a matter for the member states (Outshoorn 2005, 152). Although many are successful with spreading this interpretation, some try to challenge it. They claim that prostitution is connected to gender equality and violence against women, and that it therefore should be seen as part of the EU competences. Even if the framing of prostitution as a gender equality issue has had some success, the weakness of this framing and the strength of the opposition becomes evident when taking into account that the policies has not turned into more than soft policies with a small chance of turning into binding policy (Allwood 2018, 126-132).

The debate on taking decisions regarding prostitution on the EU level, whether it is promoting the abolitionist approach or the sex work approach, sparks a debate about national sovereignty and the role of national identity (Rubio Grundell 2022, 1039). Outshoorn (2018, 364) describes how the EU competence has never been extended to the area of prostitution, and refer to Lavenex (2010) who explains that close connected to the political and judicial systems in each member state is a reason for this. This line of thought, as well as the connection to the national identity, is part of the arguments against a harmonization and can explain why states are likely to be reluctant towards "supranational" regulation of issues of a moral nature (Outshoorn 2018, 365-373). Kurzer (2001) describes that EU lacks explicit competence when it comes to the area of prostitution, and that the EU in general has a tendency not to intervene in issues with such an evident moral dimension.

What could this mean for voting behavior on the issue of prostitution and the abolitionist approach? The question of the EU competences seems dominant in the debate on the issue of prostitution on the EU level. The concern appears to be that common policies on prostitution, would mean that the EU broaden its competences and take decisions on issues that are traditionally seen as exclusively national business. The concern could be even stronger regarding a sensitive issue connected to national values and identity. Even if some argue that prostitution is in fact already connected to the previously established competences, and even if some steps towards the broadening has been taken with resolutions, a vote for policies with an abolitionist approach could still be seen as an approval of a broadening. There appears to be an interest of safeguarding the national sovereignty in this aspect. Applied to the question about voting on the abolitionist approach, this could mean that MEPs are hesitant towards voting "For" on policies with an abolitionist approach towards prostitution if they want to keep this policy area for the member state to decide on. This might even be more likely when it comes to morality issues with diverging approaches between the member states. Even if the policies this far (May 2023) have been non-binding, which is a lesser "threat" to the national sovereignty, they could be seen as an indication that EU competences is up for discussion. Non-binding policies might pave the way for future binding legislation. For example, according to Rule 143 in the rules of procedure of the European Parliament "Any member may table a motion for a resolution on a matter falling within the spheres of activity of the European Union." (European Parliament 2023).

The factor of the MEP's view on EU competence appears interesting to include in the analysis. Following hypothesis is made: An MEP with a more restrictive view on EU competences, or a more negative view on a broadening of issues relevant to the EU level, is more likely to not vote for a policy with an abolitionist approach. This factor will be included in the analysis with the use of two variables: *National Euroscepticism* and *National Party Euroscepticism*.

4.2.3 Gender and attitude towards prostitution

There is not a great deal of research on the link between gender and attitudes towards prostitution. However, some patterns have been found in the research. A study, done by Hansen & Johansson (2022), looked at which factors could explain individual attitudes to prostitution in Denmark. They found that an individual's gender was the strongest socio-demographic predictor, and that women generally found prostitution less acceptable than men. They conclude that this may be because women are more likely to link prostitution to negative societal meanings, which could have greater

effect on women than men. Discussing the reasons behind women finding prostitution less acceptable, they refer to Basow & Campanile (1990) and Valor-Segura (2011). They have drawn the conclusion that prostitution can have a negative effect on people's attitude towards women in general as well as towards women's position in the society, because it could uphold the uneven power relations between the genders. The reason why men have a less negative view might be because there are far fewer negative associations referring prostitution to the position of men in society. In addition, studies have found that women are more likely to be supportive than men of more restrictive measures and sanctions against the sex industry (Basow & Campanile 1990; Jakobsson & Kotsadam 2011; Lo & Wei 2005; May 1999).

What could this mean for voting behavior on the issue of prostitution and the abolitionist approach? The literature suggests that women find prostitution less acceptable than men, and see the phenomenon as problematic in itself and as negative for their gender's position in society. Women have also been found to be more supportive of restrictive measures against prostitution. Applied to this study, this could mean that MEPs who are women are more likely to vote in favor of the abolitionist approach, as it is connected to gender oppression in the broader societal sense and aims to abolish prostitution. The approach does not want prostitution to be legal, suggesting restrictive measures against it. It appears that gender could entail a certain view on the interest of women, possibly leading to voting to favor the approach. Even though scholars do not talk about a female interest in this sense specifically, this can voting-behavior-wise be connected to ideas about women as representatives being more likely to favor the interest of women (for example Phillips 1995).

Gender appears to be a factor of interest, and the hypothesis is that MEPs who are women are more likely to vote for policies with an abolitionist approach. Hence, a variable for an MEPs gender will be included in the analysis.

4.2.4 Attitude towards Gender equality and attitudes towards prostitution

Although there is only a small number of studies on individual level attitudes towards prostitution, a theme in the literature is the importance of attitude towards gender equality and towards women in general. In a study on explanations for variance in the attitude to prostitution, Hansen and Johansson (2021) control for the attitude towards, and support for, gender equality as they claim that this is an important factor. Even if not discussed in depth, they argue that a negative attitude towards prostitution is incompatible with policies that legalize prostitution. Jakobsson and

Kotsadam (2011) found that support for gender equality was linked to negative attitudes towards prostitution in Sweden and Norway. Moreover, they found that different feminist traditions and ideas of gender equality could explain how negative the population in a country is towards prostitution. They, however, also concluded that more research on the relationship between individual level attitudes towards gender equality and prostitution is needed (Jakobsson and Kotsadam 2011).

What could this mean for voting behavior on the issue of prostitution and the abolitionist approach? Literature suggests that more support of gender equality means a more negative view towards prostitution. This view is argued not to be compatible with an approach that legalize prostitution. Applied to this study, this idea suggests that more support of gender equality leads to a support for the abolitionist approach, which do not want to legalize prostitution. An MEP could be expected to vote for an abolitionist approach if they support gender equality and believe that the abolitionist approach is compatible with this principle. The factor of the MEPs attitude towards gender equality appears to be beneficial to include in the analysis. A hypothesis is that if an MEP has a greater support for gender equality, they are more likely to vote for policies with the abolitionist approach. The variable *National Gender Equality* will be included in the analysis, to roughly indicate this factor.

4.2.5 Tendency to promote the national approach

In a review of the literature on the issue of prostitution, a tendency to promote and favor the national approach in one's member state is revealed. Some actors seem to have an intention to export the national legislation to other countries and arenas. This become evident for example in the literature focusing on the Swedish legislation and its part in the abolitionist turn in the EP. Rubio Grundell (2021, 432-436) argue that Swedish "femocrats" in the EP were the main operators for the EP's adoption of an abolitionist approach. They are described as having been eager to export their home country's approach to the EU. An example is mentioned by referring to several Swedish MEPs who drafted and were responsible for EP reports where prostitution was defined as a form of violence (Forget & Rubio Grundell 2020). In addition to this, Outshoorn (2018, 367) describes how MEPs from member states with the opposing sex work approach were also active. MEPs from for example Netherlands and Belgium, which are member states with a legislation in line with the sex work approach, defended a sex work approach in the EP.

It is stated that the promotion of the Swedish legislation internationally was an explicit aim of the policy (Rubio Grundell 2021, 428). An aim with the legislation was that it would be an object for policy mobility, meaning that it would circulate outside the Swedish territory to be used by both legislators and actors from the civil society in other countries. The great objective was that a similar legislation would be adopted in more countries (Langford & Skilbrei 2022, 166-179).

What could this mean for voting behavior on the issue of prostitution and the abolitionist approach? Literature describes how some MEPs seems to have a tendency to favor one's own member state's approach when working in the parliament. Even if these tendencies are based on few individuals, this pattern is apparent. In the case of voting on policies on prostitution and the abolitionist approach, it seems that the type of legislation in an MEP's member state could possibly influence their view of the abolitionist approach, in turn possibly affecting their voting choice. As discussed previously, prostitution is claimed to be a highly moral issue, dealing with values connected to the national dimension. The debate between member states with different legislation is very polarized, and there are member states trying to export its own legislation and moral standpoint on the issue, indicating that there is a national interest to promote the national approach.

Applied to this study, it could be that an MEP favors the approach of legislation that they have in their member state and therefore vote in line with this when voting on policies with an abolitionist approach. However, it appears likely that the MEP's favoring of the national approach presume a belief that the legislation is right and in line with their preferred approach. Connected to one's national identity, there could be a national discourse entailing values about what is right when it comes to deciding on the issue of prostitution. Different laws are institutionalized in the different member states, communicating to its population what is appropriate behavior. A point of departure is that laws are closely connected to national values and norms. As Drobak writes: ""Norms and law also have an impact on each other. Sometimes the law can be a strong influence on a change in norms, by forcing a change in conduct that gradually becomes accepted throughout society or by inducing a change in the perceptions about the propriety of certain conduct […] The influence in the other direction, however, is much stronger because much of the law reflects society's values and norms." (Drobak 2006, 1).

The factor of the national legislations seems useful to include in this study. A hypothesis regarding this factor is that an MEP from a member state with an abolitionist legislation is more likely to vote

in line with abolitionist policies on prostitution. The variable *National legislation* will be included in the analysis in this study, also overlapping with a national contextual factor.

4.2.6 Summary of the factors of interest

The literature suggests that EPG affiliation is expected to be the strongest predictor of MEPs' voting behavior, and that national party affiliation also play a role. This literature also suggests that other factors, such as national affiliation, play a very minor role. However, literature on the prostitution issue specifically mentions how the moral dimension may make the issue of prostitution different from issues in general. This means that other factors possibly could affect the voting behavior as well. When discussing values, which play a big role when it comes to morality issues, the literature often refers to societal or national values, and seldom to moral positions in connection to the traditional ideologies and the left-right dimension. In addition to this, literature suggest that national affiliation can play a role on certain issues, and that the question about competence is very present in the debate on prostitution policies. It is also suggested that an individual's gender affects the attitude towards prostitution. Moreover, the attitude towards gender equality could influence one's approach to prostitution and there seems to be an interest to favor the national approach. Therefore, a variety of variables, working as indicators of these factors, will be included in the analysis investigating what can explain the MEPs' voting behavior when it comes to policies on prostitution with an abolitionist approach.

5 Methodology

To study what factors can explain if an MEP vote in favor of an abolitionist approach on prostitution, the research design is a statistical analysis; a binary logistic regression analysis. This is adequate as this study finds itself seeking to find which variables have an effect on an outcome (the voting choice) (Field 2018). This study will look at Roll call votes in the European Parliament on policies on prostitution that have an abolitionist dynamic, and the statistical analysis will include a variance of different independent variables, as indicators of the factors discussed in previous sections.

5.1 Binary logistic regression analysis

The independent variables included in this study are either continuous (scales) or categorical (nominal), making a logistic regression analysis suitable. A binary regression analysis is appropriate as there are two values on the dependent variable and as these are categorical (voting "For" or "Against"/ "Abstain)". The binary logistic regression analysis measures the effect of an independent variable on the probability of a case having a certain outcome (voting choice) and if this effect is statistically significant, when controlling for all other independent variables (Field 2018).

The result of the regression analysis will be presented as the variables' effect on the probability, or the odds, for a MEPs falling into the target group, i.e., casting a vote "For". The reference group, where the value of the dependent variable is 0, is the group of MEPs voting "Against"/ "Abstain". The target group, where the value of the dependent variable is 1, is the group of MEPs voting "For". Each odds ratio indicates the multiplicative change in the odds of an MEP voting "For" per unit increase on a given predictor, while controlling for the other variables in the model. If an odds ratio is more than 1, this indicates that the odds of an MEP voting "For" are increasing with an increase on the predictor variable. Logically, it follows that the probability of an MEP falling into the category of voting "For" is greater at higher levels of the predictor variable. If an odds ratio is less than 1, this indicates that the odds of an MEP casting a vote "For" are decreasing with an increase on the predictor variable. Logically, one can reason that the probability of a MEP voting "For" is lower at higher levels on the predictor variable. An increase in the binary categorical variables means a shift from one category to the other, as these are not continuous (Field 2018). For example an "increase" of the variable gender means a shift from Male (0) to Female (1).

The regression analysis will also measure the significance of the effect of the independent variables. The common requirement for claiming statistical significance is a p-value of less than 0.05. Such a p-value enables a conclusion about a statistically significant association between variables. Significance is used to indicate that the found relationship between the independent and dependent variable applies to the whole population. If a variable is significant, this means that the result has a small likelihood to have been found due to mere coincidence because of the sample (Field 2018).

The SPSS datasets used as the basis for the regression analysis, together with the SPSS document presenting the results and the data used to determine values for the independent variables, are available on request.

5.2 Performing the regression analysis

The dependent variable is the outcome, in this study the MEPs voting choice, in three RCVs for policies with an abolitionist approach. The independent variables are: *EPG Cohesion*, *National legislation*, *Gender*, *National Gender Equality*, *National Party Euroscepticism* and *National Euroscepticism*. A regression analysis will be carried out for each Roll call vote, to be able to compare if the voting patterns and the effects of the variables are similar or different depending on the Roll call vote. Therefore, it is not the same MEPs that will be analyzed for all of the Roll call votes, as MEPs vary between EP sessions and as their attendance vary between votes.

There will be three models for each regression analysis per RCV, with different number of variables included and somewhat different number of cases. In Model 1, all the independent variables will be included. The lack of data on some national parties' euroscepticism resulted in some cases being excluded in Model 1. This resulted in the use of a second model, Model 2, which includes all variables except *National Party Euroscepticism*. With this additional model, the effect of the remaining variables, when *National Party Euroscepticism* is not controlled for, will be possible to compare with the effects in Model 1. The number of cases will also increase in Model 2.

Non-attached MEPs (who do not affiliate with an EPG) and members that do not have a national party affiliation, or affiliate with a national Party which there is no data on euroscepticism for, will be excluded in Model 1 and Model 2. This is because the aim is to measure the effect of each independent variable when controlling for all other, with an analysis of many cases. It is still

important to have in mind that these MEPs will be excluded from the main regression analyses, as this could lead to a type of selection bias. To come to terms with this possibly problematic aspect to some extent, separate regression analyses will be run for these MEPs, to see if the significant effects of the remaining independent variables are the same as in the other models or if there are some substantial changes. This will be done in the Model 3. It seems to be the case that the non-attached members often do not affiliate with a national party either, or that this specific national party has not been evaluated when it comes to the party's euroscepticism. The number of non-attached members vary between 24 and 42 in the selected Roll call votes, and to not end up with too few cases in these analyses, the variables of both *EPG Cohesion For* and *National Party Euroscepticism* will not be included. The variable *National legislation* will also not be possible to measure the effect of, as the variance of value is too small among these MEPs. The result for Model 3 is based on much fewer cases than the other two models, leading to the necessity to interpret and draw conclusion with caution.

A test controlling for multicollinearity has been run prior to the regression analyses, to make sure that the results are not invalid because of two independent variables correlating (Field 2018).

5.3 Material and case selection

The cases are each MEP casting a vote in the selected Roll call votes. The data on the MEPs that voted in the selected RCVs will be gathered from the project Votewatch (Hix et al. 2022). This is a public dataset of all recorded votes in the EP between 2004 and 2022, available on the European University Institute's website through the CADMUS EUI Research Repository. The data on the MEPs casting a vote from Votewatch contains information on whether the MEPs were active in the EP at the point of time of the voting, if they were present at the voting, and also how they voted or if they did not vote. The MEPs that were active in the EP but did not attend the voting, as well as the ones who were present but did not vote (to clarify, did not vote for/against/abstain), has been excluded from the analysis. It is not possible to know why the MEPs did not attend or did not cast a vote, or what they would have voted if they were present. For this study, it is the actual voting choices that is of interest. According to Blomgren (2003), situations where an MEP does not attend a Roll call vote is common to view as a missing case.

5.3.1 The selection of Roll call votes

The MEPs' voting behavior when it comes to policies on prostitution with an abolitionist approach will be studied by analyzing three Roll call votes in the European Parliament. The RCVs have been selected because they have an apparent abolitionist dynamic. This has been assessed departing from the pillars of the abolitionist approach, previously described in section 2.3.

RCVs have been selected from the time period 2014 to 2022. The limitation of time period as well as number of votes included in the study is due to the fact that it was in 2014 that the abolitionist approach came on the voting agenda, and that it has not had the same status since. In a historical overview of the discussion about the prostitution issue in the EP, done by Outshoorn (2018), the first occasion that included voting on the abolitionist approach was the so called Honeyball Resolution in 2014, officially named *The European Parliament resolution of 26 February 2014 on sexual exploitation and prostitution and its impact on gender equality* (European Parliament 2014). There had been discussions, debate and several reports before, but these had not had any success in making it to the voting stage in the EP. At the same time there has not been any RCVs on a policy specifically dealing with prostitution since 2014. However, there has been voting on other types of policies relating to the issue of prostitution, for example policies on EU's gender strategy and trafficking. In these policies, some abolitionist dynamics about the issue of prostitution in a more general sense have been attempted to be included in the proposals and voted on in the EP. These RCVs are included in this study.

The three RCVs in the EP that will be studied have been selected with the assistance of descriptions of the history of the prostitution issue in the EU (for example done by Outshoorn [2015]), in combination with CAP International's document *Positions of the EU parliament and the parliamentary assembly of the council of Europe* (CAP International 2023)*,* presenting a compilation of EU documents that has been voted on that express the EP's abolitionist position. The number of RCVs on this issue that has taken place is quite few in comparison to many other issues. Still, analyzing the ones available is a beginning of studying the voting behavior on the issue. There has been votes on more paragraphs/recitals etc. with an abolitionist approach in the EP, but they are not included in this study as they were not Roll call votes. The Roll call votes selected were those which it was possible to study the individual MEP's voting behavior for. The three RCVs that are included in the study are presented here, together with a motivation of choice:

The European Parliament resolution of 26 February 2014 on sexual exploitation and prostitution and its impact on gender equality (2013/2103(INI), "The Honeyball resolution" (European Parliament 2014).

This resolution is specifically about the issue of prostitution and the abolitionist approach. The voting of the resolution as a whole is included because the abolitionist dynamic is present throughout the policy. The abolitionist dynamic is expressed through paragraphs stating that prostitution is a violation of human dignity and stressing several links between prostitution and trafficking. It situates prostitution in a broader pattern of violence against women and stresses the vulnerable situation that all women in prostitution are in. The measures focus on demand reduction to both reduce prostitution and as strategy against trafficking. It proposes the implementation of client criminalization and a decriminalization of the people in prostitution.

The European Parliament resolution of 21 January 2021 on the EU Strategy for Gender Equality (2019/2169(INI)), recital K (European Parliament 2021a).

The voting of solely the paragraph of recital K from the resolution is selected because this is the paragraph in the more general document that includes an abolitionist dynamic. The abolitionist dynamic is expressed as it states that prostitution fuels trafficking. It also claims that prostitution is a form of violence. The paragraph also criticizes the member states that have legalized prostitution.

The European Parliament resolution of 10 February 2021 on the implementation of Directive 2011/36/EU on preventing and combating trafficking in human beings and protecting its victims (European Parliament 2021a). The voting on paragraph 21 is selected because this is the paragraph in the more general document about the issue of trafficking, which handles the issue of prostitution in a broader sense. The abolitionist dynamic is expressed in the paragraph by highlighting that trafficking of human beings are fueled by prostitution. It problematizes the demand for prostitution and highlight the problems in the member states where prostitution is legalized.

Important to be aware of, is that these are different kind of RCVs. The first one is a vote on a whole resolution on the abolitionist approach, while the other two are votes on individual paragraphs. To include both of these types of votes has been done to increase the number of RCVs. However, this aspect of the selected RCVs should be kept in mind when analyzing the results. It may be that, for example, the Honeyball resolution is perceived as more explicitly promoting the abolitionist approach, and thereby more important in this aspect in comparison to the other votes. The vote on

the whole resolution, that in the literature is described as constituting the abolitionist turn in the EP, may have been of a higher symbolic value, getting more attention and being subject of greater debate in the parliament overall. There could in other words be different dynamics at play for the different RCVs. This could in turn spark a certain voting behavior. There might be a more clear pattern when there is "more" of the abolitionist approach, as is the case of the Honeyball resolution in comparison to the other RCVs. It could be assumed that different voting behaviors and patterns could be seen for the different types of RCVs. Still, if an MEP has a very strong position on the abolitionist approach, because of certain factors, this should become evident in all three RCVs. There will be separate regression analysis for each voting, so that the differences when it comes to results between the voting on the more specific policy and the smaller provisions in the more general policies, can be separated and compared.

5.3.2 About European Parliament Resolutions

Resolutions are non-binding policies which express the parliament's opinion. It is a non-legislative instrument that can be used by the EP. The EP can informally shape the EU policy arena by indirectly promote support for policy action from other actors. Resolutions do not lead to a formal policy proposal that the other EU institutions have to respond to, but it gives the other actors, as well as the public, an indication of the European Parliaments preferences, priorities and opinions (Kreppel & Webb, 2019). To this day (May 2023) there has not been any RCVs on policies that can be categorized as binding policies connected to the issue of prostitution and the abolitionist approach. Therefore, it is important to add that the voting patterns for binding policies may differ from the ones that will be drawn conclusions from in this study.

5.3.3 About Roll call votes

All of the votes included in this study is so called Roll call votes (RVCs). In such a vote, there are three options. The MEP can vote Yes (for), No (against), or abstain. To analyze RCVs is according to amongst others Blomgren (2003) and Cicchi (2011) the only workable way of analyzing MEPs voting behavior, as these are the only votes that there are voting records available with information on an individual level. The limitations that come with analyzing RCVs are that there are many other types of votes in the EP, that are not processed as RCVs. MEPs take decisions in other ways than casting a vote in a RCV. Examples of other voting procedures are "the raise of hands" and "voice" votes. For these, the only thing that gets recorded is whether a bill passes or not. Other votes make

records of the total number of yes and no votes (Cicchi 2011, 138). These limitations that come with studying Roll call votes are important to have in mind when putting the results in relation to how representative they are for all votes on the issue in the EP.

5.4 Operationalization of the variables

5.4.1 The dependent variable: *Voting Choice*

The object of interest in this study is a MEP's voting choice when it comes to voting on the abolitionist approach, and what can explain this. This is the dependent variable, expected to be affected by the factors (independent variables). Because of the nature of the selected RCVs, the vote "For" will mean a voting for the abolitionist approach. The value for each MEP casting a vote will be either 0, when the MEP's voting choice is "For", or 1, when their voting choice is "Against" or "Abstain". The data on the MEPs' voting choice for each RCV will be gathered from the project Votewatch (Hix et al. 2022).

With the focus on the predictors of MEPs voting "For", the votes "Against" and "Abstain" will be aggregated as they in practice means *not* "For". The aim of this study does not include a special interest in the special nature of the "Abstain" vote. The voting choice "Abstain" will thus be seen as belonging to the category of, or being equal to "Against", because of the fact that the nature of the simple majority rule (that applies to the selected Roll call votes) means that it in practice means a no to the adoption of the policy up for voting. This line of argument has led other studies to use this same nature of the dependent variable when studying voting behavior in the European Parliament with statistical methods (Cencaig and Sabani 2017; Buzogányn& Ćetković 2021). Furthermore, there is no consensus among scholars about what the abstain vote actually means; for example if it is a something in-between "For" and "Against" or if it is a third, completely separate category. Even if it is not the focus of this study, it is still worth noticing that there are literature discussing the phenomenon of the abstain vote, and how this might have a strategic meaning (Cencig & Sabani 2017). However, the alternative of voting "Abstain" is not relevant for the research question and aim of this particular study, hence it will not be an aspect of the analysis.

5.4.2 Independent variable 1: *EPG Cohesion For*

Previous literature suggests that the EPG affiliation for the individual MEP has a very strong impact on their voting behavior. A variable controlling for this factor will be roughly indicated by looking at how the different EPGs' members vote on the issue of prostitution. It is very seldom that Party manifestos include stances on the issue of prostitution (Euchner 2019). Adding to this, there is no data on the different official position of each EPG on the issue of prostitution to compare with the MEP's voting choice. Moreover, trying to predict the EPGs' stance on such a sensitive and controversial issue of a very moral nature, not primarily divided by traditional ideological lines, appears very difficult. What can be studied is whether or not an EPG has voted coherently in the RCVs on prostitution in general and in what direction (in favor of or not). The EPG's cohesion and direction can in turn be used as a variable to see if an MEP seems to be affected by being in a group where many members vote a certain way.

Established in the literature, the factor of EPG affiliation is expected to be the far most important factor for MEPs' voting behavior. Referring to the difficulty to measure this, due to lack of EPG official positions, measuring if the EPG affiliation per se can explain the voting behavior on the issue of prostitution will not be in focus. Instead, the interest is to control for whether the MEP voted in line with the party group in general when looking at the effect of the other independent variables. It follows that the factor of interest is not ideology per se, also because of the fact that there are no official EPG positions and that it seems difficult to ascribe the traditional ideologies to the issue of prostitution. It appears to be more about a feminist ideology, possible to ascribe to a variety of the traditional ideologies, and both the left and the right of the political line of conflict. The variable is used to control for the effect of affiliating with an EPG that is "for" or "not for" the abolitionist approach to different degrees.

This variable will be called *"EPG Cohesion For"*, and will capture how big of a share in the EPG group that has voted "For" in the Roll call votes on prostitution and the abolitionist approach, combined. The result will be an index showing how coherently "For" the EPGs have voted in all three Roll call votes, in an attempt to measure the cohesion and position on the issue of prostitution and the abolitionist approach more in general. In the statistical analysis, each MEP will be given the value of this index of the EPG that they affiliate with. Each MEP's vote and the EPG they belonged to when casting the vote will be gathered from the Votewatch dataset (Hix et al. 2022)

A general measurement of how coherent the party group is regarding all policies would be of no help in predicting the outcome (voting choice) of the MEP in this case. For that we would also need to know in what "direction" (for or not) the party group is coherent in. The chosen variable is instead an attempt to capture both the cohesion and the direction, and how this affects the MEPs voting choice, so that this can be controlled for in the regression analysis. The index will go from 0-100, 0 meaning that all MEPs casting a vote on all the three RCVs from an EPG did not vote "for" ("against"/"abstain") and 100 meaning that all MEPs casting a vote on all three RCVs from that EPG voted "for". A value of 50 would mean that the same share of MEPs from that EPG voted "for" and "against"/"abstain".

It is possible that the MEPs making up a European party groups shift between the different RCVs. This is however not a problem, as it is the cohesion of the EPG as an actor that is of interest. European party groups that only existed during one of the two EP sessions included in this study (2009-2014 and 2019-2024), in this case EFD and ID, will have an index based only on the RCVs during their EP session. For ID that will mean two RCVs (the ones in 2021) and for ID that means one voting (in 2014). The European Party group that was named ALDE during 2009-2014, had changed name to Renew Europe during 2019-2024, and is therefore analyzed as the same EPG. For a full list of the EPGs with abbreviation and full name, see Appendix 3.

5.4.3 Independent variable 2: *Gender*

Previous literature suggests that the gender of the MEP might affect their voting behavior on the issue of prostitution. In the analysis, this variable will simply be named Gender. The possible value for the MEP taking a vote will be Male (0) or Female (1). The data will be gathered from documents published by the European Parliament, Review of European and National Election results (2009; 2019), from the different EP sessions 2009-2014 and 2019-2024. All individual MEPs are listed divided by member state, by name and their registered juridical gender. Where the information had not been found in these documents, for example because of the fact that an MEP has been replaced by another during the same session, the MEP's gender has been determined by searching the name on Google and reading what pronoun is used.

5.4.4 Independent variable 3: *National legislation*

This variable is used based on the suggestion that national legislation on prostitution in the MEP's member state might affect the MEP's voting behavior on the issue of prostitution. This variable will be called National legislation. In the statical analysis, the MEP casting a vote will be given the value of their member state's legislation at the time of the Roll call vote. The possible values will be: an abolitionist legislation (0) or a non-abolitionist legislation (1). This categorization of the value given to each member state, will be based on categorization from a study requested by the EP named *The differing EU Member States' regulations on prostitution and their cross-border implications on women's rights* (Policy Department for Citizens' Rights and Constitutional Affairs Directorate-General for Internal Policies 2021) on the member states' national legislation on prostitution. The pillars of the abolitionist approach (described in section 2.3) determines which types of legislation that are categorized as abolitionist legislation, legislation-wise namely the pillar of client criminalization. The study presents five categories of legislation, belonging to one of the two main categories, as described below.

Table 1: Models of legislation on prostitution and EU Member States.

Model 1 - Legalisation		Model 2 - Prohibition		
Model 1a Regulated	Model 1b Unregulated	Model 2a Punishing the sex worker	Model 2b Punishing the client	Model 3b Punishing both the sex worker and the client.
Austria Germany* Greece Hungary Latvia Netherlands	Belgium Bulgaria Cyprus Czech Republic Denmark Estonia* Finland* Italy Luxembourg* Malta Poland Portugal Slovakia Slovenia Spain	Croatia * Romania[16] *	France Ireland Sweden	Lithuania
6 MSs = 22,2% of EU-27	15 MSs = 55,6% of EU-27	2 MSs = 7,4% of EU-27	3 MSs = 11,1% of EU-27	1 MS = 3,7% of EU-27
21 MSs = 77,8% of EU-27		6 MSs = 22,2% of EU-27		

* = Criminalising clients purchasing sexual services from trafficked victims.

Source: Policy Department for Citizens' Rights and Constitutional Affairs Directorate-General for Internal Policies 2021.

The categories represent different legal approaches. These categories are broad, as national legislation can differ in detail. For example, regulations for the category 1a can vary to a great extent. There could also be different local provisions that make the regulatory framework different within the same member state. In member states in the category where prostitution is not prohibited

or regulated, there could still be specific provisions that criminalize third party activities and organized prostitution, meaning that the sex market is not completely unregulated. If "voluntary" prostitution is not addressed in the national laws, it is considered to be legal (Policy Department for Citizens' Rights and Constitutional Affairs Directorate-General for Internal Policies, 2021, 22-23). Only the countries in the category 2b ("punishing the client") will be perceived as having an abolitionist national legislation for this study on the voting behavior on prostitution and the abolitionist approach, due to the client criminalization's central role for the abolitionist approach. Countries belonging to category 3b will not fall under the category of countries with an abolitionist legislation, even if they criminalize the client. This is due to the fact that the abolitionist approach is strongly against the criminalization of the people in prostitution.

This classification was done in 2021. Two of the three member states that today have an abolitionist national legislation, France and Ireland, changed this between 2014 (when one RCV took place) and 2021 (when the other two RCVs took place). Before this change, the purchase of sex was legal, and after they have laws that criminalize the client (ibid.).

5.4.5 Independent variable 4: *National Gender Equality*

This variable is based on the reasoning about the factor of attitude towards gender equality and its possible impact on the voting behavior. In an attempt to create an indicator for attitude towards gender equality, the variable for this factor will be *National Gender Equality*. In the statical analysis, the MEP casting a vote will be given the value of their member state's Gender Equality Index. There is no available data to determine each MEP's attitude towards equality. In some literature it is suggested that individuals in the same country generally share the same attitude towards gender equality. For example, Hansen & Johansson (2022) argue that they control for attitude on gender equality by studying the population in the same country. Jakobsson & Kotsadam (2011) in addition to this, express that the ideas about gender equality can separate countries because of different national history. Thus, it is suggested that we can look to the national level to try to capture the individuals' attitudes. This variable will in this way also constitute a national contextual factor, relating to the factor of national affiliation.

With the available data, even if the national general attitude towards gender equality is not the exact same thing as degree of gender equality, we might assume that the population in a more gender equal country is also generally more positive towards and more supportive of gender equality, and

that the MEP in turn may be more likely to support gender equality as part of this population. Jakobsson & Kotsadam (2011) highlight in their conclusion, after studying attitudes towards prostitution, the importance of controlling for gender equality. Furthermore, they mention the possibility of a macro-level gender ideology which can influence individuals' values when it comes to prostitution. Such a gender ideology may be connected to the degree of gender equality and may influence the county's population's attitude to prostitution.

Data on how gender equal the EU countries are, and thereby data that from previous reasoning can indicate the general attitude to gender equality, can be found in The European Institute for Gender Equality's (EIGE) publication of their Gender Equality Index. This index measures and compares the degree of gender equality in the EU member states and is produced on a yearly basis (every second year between 2013 and 2019). The index measures gender equality in several national domains, for example work, money, knowledge, time, power, health and violence against women. These measures are then made into a total gender equality index for each member state. The EIGE's Gender Equality index is acknowledged as a reliable measurement for Gender equality in the EU by the European Commission's joint research centre (European Institute for Gender Equality 2022).

There will be separate indexes for 2014 and 2021 (the point of time of the RCVs in this study), to make it as close as possible in time with the casting of votes, as gender equality and attitudes towards gender equality can change over time. The index data that will be used to give values to the MEP for the policy in 2014 will be *Gender Equality Index 2017 Measuring gender equality in the European Union 2005-2015* (European Institute for Gender Equality 2017) and for 2021 *Gender Equality Index 2022* (European Institute for Gender Equality 2022).

5.4.6 Independent variable 5 and 6: *National Euroscepticism* and *National Party Euroscepticism*

These variables are based on the reasoning of the possible effect of the factor of the view on EU competence when it comes to voting on policies on prostitution with an abolitionist approach. The view on the EU competence is a dimension included in the broader view of European integration, and euroscepticism is a certain (negative) view on, and attitude to, European integration. The view of EU competence can in other words be seen as part of the view on European integration. De Wilde and Trenz (2012) describe euroscepticism as a practice related to the discourse opposing, or

contesting, European integration. They see it as a component of the discourse on European integration, where the correlated side is pro-European integration. According to them, euroscepticism is a form of polity contestation, about the debated nature of the EU as a political entity, partially connected to the EU's path forward. European integration involves policy integration, meaning a growing number of policy areas being decided on the EU level instead of on the national level. Euroscepticism can be defined as an opposition or cautions approving of this European integration (McLaren 2007).

The question of competences and national sovereignty is clearly linked to euroscepticism. The member states in the EU have since the early 1950s pooled sovereignty to the EU. This process is generally called European integration. It can be seen as still continuing, as the EU during the last 40 years has taken steps from integration in the market area to integration in a broader political sense. At the same time, there is a constant debate and controversy regarding what the political entity that the EU is should look like, and how many competencies it should have. Euroscepticism primarily opposes the considerable expansion of the EU's power and EU competences. The definition of euroscepticism as a form of polity contestation mainly includes an opposition to the growing of the EU when it comes to level and scope. For example, euroscepticism can object the process of steps for more European integration (De Wilde and Trenz 2012, 538-544). In line with this, Baute et al. (2018) argue that one specific concern regarding European integration is for example about national sovereignty, with citizens being fearful of how decisions taken by the EU might affect the national sovereignty and threaten the national identity.

When Outshoorn (2018, 373), reflects on the future when it comes to voting patterns on the issue of prostitution, it is stressed that the rise of more anti-European attitudes and discontent with the growing powers of the EU in many of the EU member states, could make representatives of the member states more hesitant to give up national sovereignty to the EU level, and in particular in areas such as prostitution, that are sensitive and connected to national identity.

5.4.6.1 Independent variable 5: *National Euroscepticism*

Euroscepticism can be described as a form of public discourse, and one of the ways that euroscepticism is mainly approached in by researchers, is in terms of public opinion (De Wilde & Trenz 2012, 538). In lack of available data about how each individual MEP views EU competence and their degree of euroscepticism, one possibility is to turn to the national level. Euroscepticism is

often discussed in relation to different member states, where some are seen as less or more eurosceptic countries (Baute et al. 2018; Blomgren 2003; Cicchi 2011). It has been found that preferences regarding European integration creates division according to national lines, within the European party groups (Hix et al. 2005).

With this as a point of departure, one variable for this factor will be *National Euroscepticism*. In the statistical analysis, the MEP casting a vote will be given the value of their member state's National Euroscepticism Index for the year of the voting. With the rationale regarding the relation between euroscepticism and competence discussed above as a point of departure, it could be likely that an individual that is more eurosceptic has a more restrictive view of EU competence. At the same time, the line of thought is that an MEP coming from a member state that is more eurosceptic generally, could have a higher likeliness of being eurosceptic, and having a more restrictive view of the EU competence. Such a variable will also amount to a national contextual factor.

At the national level, there is available have data on how the public in each member state views the EU. This data will be used to indicate how eurosceptic the EU member states are. The data of public opinion of the EU in each member state will be gathered from results of the Standard Eurobarometer. The Standard Eurobarometer is a flagship public opinion survey, carried out by the European Commission. It is conducted two times per year and amongst other things the surveys analyze attitudes related to the EU and European affairs. The surveys are conducted in all member states and monitor the state of the public opinion, and the results are presented both for the EU as a whole (average) and per member state (The European Union 2022). Even if there are some that are critical towards the use of the tool due to the fact that it is the European Commission that carries it out, the Eurobarometer has since 1973 been a tool to collect and evaluate information about the development of European integration and information about the public (Nissen 2014, 725). Hobolt & de Vries (2016) argues that most researchers rely on data from the Eurobarometer for data on the support for European integration because these surveys make up the only data source than enables cross-national comparison and comparison over time. To look at results from the Eurobarometer to investigate the support for European integration has been done many times in previous research (see for example Jayet 2020).

There are no questions specifically dealing with the question of EU competences in the Standard Eurobarometers, and no question asking outright about European integration. However, there are

two recurrent questions in the Standard Eurobarometer that can be seen as capturing the public opinion and its attitude to European integration: (Q1) In general, does the EU conjure up for you a very positive, fairly positive, neutral, fairly negative or very negative image?; (Q2) Would you say that you are very optimistic, fairly optimistic, fairly pessimistic or very pessimistic about the future of the EU?. These questions relating to the view of European integration, if this phenomenon is understood as the positive or negative view on the EU's present power and its future with a continuing broadening of the EU competences (De Wilde & Trenz 2012). Hix & Goetz (2000) also describes how the EU member states have begun to delegate to the EU level in more politicized areas, previously handled solely on the national arena. Therefore, a eurosceptic view on European integration, including a restrictive view of the EU competences, could be assumed to result in negative/pessimistic answers to the selected questions in the survey.

The result from these two questions will, for this study, be translated into a National Euroscepticism Index for the EU member states. The presentation of the results shows how many percent answered "Fairly negative" or "Very negative" ("Total negative") for Q1, and the total percentage that answered "Fairly pessimistic"/"Very pessimistic" ("Total pessimistic") for Q2. To translate these results into an index, the percentage of the public "Total negative" and "Total pessimistic" will be made into x points of 100 for each member state and question. The points for the two questions will then be added, to give a member state x points of 200. These points will be made into an Index between 0 and 10, with the same proportions, making it possible to relate the member states to each other on a scale. As this index will be measuring how negative/pessimistic the public in the member state has answered, with 0 being non-Eurosceptic and 10 being completely Eurosceptic, it is called a National Euroscepticism Index.

A National Euroscepticism Index will be calculated for the year 2014 and 2021, when the RCVs, included in this study took place, as euroscepticism can change over time. The Standard Eurobarometer used for the index for 2014 is Standard Eurobarometer 81 Spring 2014 Table of Results, public opinion in the European Union (European Commission 2014) and the one used to calculate the index for 2021 is Standard Eurobarometer 94- Winter 2020 – 2021 Public opinion in the European Union (European Commission 2021) to make the public opinion and the RCVs as close as possible in time.

Even if some suggest that the political elite in general tends to be more positive towards European integration than the citizens (Aspinwall 2002; Hooghe 2003), some studies have created a picture of the process of the shaping the support for European integration as being a reciprocal process in which political elites both respond to and shape the views of their supporters (Gabel & Scheve 2007, Steenbergen et al. 2007). This implies that there is a connection between the political elite (a category one could see the MEPs belonging to) and the public, and that it seems unlikely that the political elite's and the public's view on European integration are disconnected or highly divergent.

5.4.6.2 Independent variable 6: *National Party Euroscepticism*

De Wilde and Trenz (2012, 538) argue that another way to approach euroscepticism, besides looking at it in terms of public opinion, is to study the phenomenon within party politics. Hooghe and Marks (2007) express the common perception of certain parties as being more eurosceptic than others, claiming to defend national interest to a greater extent. This, in combination with points made in the previous literature of the great impact of the national party on the MEPs behavior, suggest that the factor of view on competence could be indicated by looking at the national parties' euroscepticism. This variable will be named *National Party Euroscepticism*. In the statistical study, the MEP will be given the value of the national party they belong to. Connecting back to the line of thought for the variable *National Euroscepticism*, we might assume that an MEP from a national party that is more eurosceptic would be more likely to be more eurosceptic and have a more restrictive view on EU competences, possibly leading to the MEP being less likely to favor policies on prostitution and the abolitionist approach. This variable will in one aspect constitute a variable for the factor of national party affiliation.

Data on how eurosceptic the national parties are, will be gathered from The Chapel Hill Expert Survey Trend File 1999 − 2019 (Seth et al. 2022). The Chapel Hill Expert surveys are carried out to estimate the positions of European national parties on European integration, ideology and different policy issues, and have been carried out several points in time since 1999. This expert survey trend file includes an evaluation of how in favor of, or opposed to, European integration national parties in the EU are. One question in the Survey is specifically about the national parties' view on European integration. The question that the experts have been asked to answer is that of the overall orientation of the party leadership towards European integration. The experts have then rated the parties on a scale of 1 to 7, where 1 is strongly opposed and 7 is strongly in favor. To make the scale for this variable correspond to the variable *National Euroscepticism* when it comes to direction, the

scale has been flipped around, so that 1 means strongly in favor (non-Eurosceptic) and 7 means strongly opposed (very Eurosceptic).

The survey from 2014 will be used to gather the value for the national parties' euroscepticism at the point of the RCV in 2014, while the survey from 2019 will be used for the two RCVs in 2021. This is done in an attempt to capture the parties possible change in euroscepticism over time. It is important to have in mind that not all parties present in the European parliament has been evaluated in the surveys. The MEPs affiliating with these parties will therefore lack a value for this variable in the statistical analysis. This could be either because the party is an exclusively EU-party with no national party connection, or because no expert has evaluated the parties. A quick overview show that these parties are often quite small with few MEPs.

5.4.7 Non-included variable: National Party Affiliation per se

The MEP's national Party affiliation, more specifically if they vote in line with the national party's position on prostitution and how coherently the MEPs from the same national party vote, appears interesting for the question about the voting behavior on the issue of interest. Unfortunately, we cannot know every national party present in the EP's position on prostitution, to see whether or not the MEPs vote in line with this. In the same way that there is no data on each EPG's position on the issue, the is no on each national party's line on prostitution. In difference to the EPGs, it is not in the same way useful to look at the national party's cohesion in the voting to try to determine how "For" it is, because of the fact that that there are such few cases per national party. In lack of this data, such a variable for this factor will not be included.

6 Results and Analysis

6.1 Results and Analysis step 1: The variables in the different Roll Call Votes

6.1.1 The European Parliament resolution of 26 February 2014 on sexual exploitation and prostitution and its impact on gender equality

Table 2. Binary logistic regression models of voting "For", RCV1.

Variable	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
Gender	1.223 (0.198)	1.306 (0.189)	15.135 (1.715)
National Gender Equality	0.949*** (0.014)	0.960*** (0.013)	0.735* (0.125)
National Euroscepticism	0.801 (0.117)	0.757** (0.107)	3.018 (0.898)
National Legislation	43.772*** (1.075)	35.750*** (1.071)	-
EPG Cohesion For	1.021*** (0.005)	1.025*** (0.005)	-
National Party Euroscepticism	0.858* (0.074)	-	-
N	508	559	24

Note: Binary logistic regression odds ratios, standard errors in parentheses. N= number of cases. For significance *= p <0.05, ** = p < 0.01, *** = p < 0.001.

In Model 1 and 2, *Gender* did not have a significant effect. *National Gender Equality* had a significant effect in Model 2 and 3. In both cases it seems that the probability of an MEP voting "For" becomes lower if they come from a member state with higher national gender equality. *National Euroscepticism* is significant only in Model 2, when the variable *National Party Euroscepticism* is excluded from the analysis. It seems that the probability of an MEP voting "For" becomes lower if they come from a member state with a higher national euroscepticism. *National*

Legislation had a significant effect. It appears that the probability of an MEP voting "For" becomes higher if they come from a member state with an abolitionist legislation. *National Party Euroscepticism* is found to have a significant effect, and it is indicated that affiliating with a more eurosceptic party lower the probability for the MEP to vote "For". In Model 3 *National Euroscepticism* becomes insignificant (as in Model 1). Otherwise, there are no differences when it comes to the insignificance of *Gender* and the significant effect of *National Gender Equality*.

6.1.2 The European Parliament resolution of 10 February 2021 on the implementation of Directive 2011/36/EU on preventing and combating trafficking in human beings and protecting its victims, paragraph 21.

Table 3. Binary logistic regression models of voting "For", RVC2.

Variable	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
Gender	0.794 (0.338)	0.873 (0.299)	7.169 (1.125)
National Gender Equality	1.013 (0.029)	0.989 (0.024)	0.810* (0.075)
National Euroscepticism	0.425** (0.309)	0.381*** (0.270)	0.198** (0.702)
National Legislation	0.249** (0.527)	0.379* (0.435)	-
EPG Cohesion For	1.100*** (0.009)	1.084*** (0.007)	-
National Party Euroscepticism	0.730*** (0.080)	-	-
N	574	654	42

Note: Binary logistic regression odds ratios, standard errors in parentheses. N= number of cases. For significance *= $p < 0.05$, ** = $p < 0.01$, *** = $p < 0.001$.

In Model 1 and 2, *Gender* did not have a significant effect. In addition to this, *National Gender Equality* did not have a significant effect. *National Euroscepticism* was found to have a significant effect, with coming from a member state that is more eurosceptic meaning a lower probability of voting "For". *National Legislation* also had a significant effect. It seems that the probability of an

MEP voting "For" becomes lower if they come from a member state with an abolitionist legislation. The variable *National Party Euroscepticism* was found to have a significant effect. It was found that affiliating with a more eurosceptic party lower the probability for the MEP to vote "For". In Model 3 in difference to Model 1 and 2, *National Gender Equality* was found to have a significant effect, with belonging to a member state with a higher national gender equality meaning a lower probability for an MEP of voting "For". *National Euroscepticism* had the same significant effect as in Model 1 and 2.

6.1.3 The European Parliament resolution of 21 January 2021 on the EU Strategy for Gender Equality, recital K.

Table 4. Binary logistic regression models of voting "For", RCV3.

Variable	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
Gender	1.485 (0.212)	1.453 (0.193)	1.977 (0.712)
National Gender Equality	1.031* (0.014)	1.017 (0.013)	1.082 (0.044)
National Euroscepticism	0.706* (0.160)	0.747* (0.146)	1.616 (0.522)
National Legislation	0.768 (0.349)	1.295 (0.311)	-
EPG Cohesion For	1.085*** (0.011)	1.065*** (0.007)	-
National Party Euroscepticism	1.328*** (0.061)	-	-
N	551	637	42

Note: Binary logistic regression odds ratios, standard errors in parentheses. N= number of cases. For significance:= p <0.05, ** = p < 0.01, *** = p < 0.001.*

In Model 1 and Model 2, *Gender* did not have a significant effect. *National Legislation* was also found not to have a significant effect. *National Gender Equality* had a significant effect when all independent variables were included. It seems that the probability of an MEP voting "For" is higher if they come from a member state with higher national gender equality. In addition to this, the

variable *National Euroscepticism* was found to have a significant effect. Coming from a member state that is more eurosceptic is indicated to lead to a lower probability of voting "For". *National Party Euroscepticism* is found to have a significant effect. It is found that affiliating with a more eurosceptic party lower the probability for the MEP to vote "For". In Model 3, none of the included variables had a significant effect.

6.2 Results and analysis step 2: The variables in all 3 Roll Call Votes

The variable *EPG Cohesion For* always had a significant effect, with affiliating with an EPG that has a higher cohesion "For" regarding all the RCVs on the issue, resulting in a higher probability of an MEP for voting "For" in all of the individual RCVs. The effect of *Gender* on the MEP's voting choice was not significant in any of the RCVs. The variable *National Party Euroscepticism* had a significant effect on the probability of an MEP voting "For". In two of the RCVs, a higher national party euroscepticism led to a lower probability of voting "For". In one case, the probability changed in the opposite direction, with higher national party euroscepticism leading to a higher probability of voting "For". The variable *National Euroscepticism* overall (except in the case of Model 1 for one of the RCVs), had a significant effect. When significant, a higher national euroscepticism was found to result in a lower probability of an MEP voting "For".

The variable *National Gender Equality* had an overall effect that was somewhat difficult to interpret. In one RCV the variable was not significant. For two RCVs the effect was significant, but had a different effect on the voting choice. In one RCV a higher national gender equality led to a lower probability of voting "For", while it in the other RCV led to a higher probability. *National Legislation* had a significant effect in two of the three RCV. When significant, an abolitionist national legislation had a different effect on the probability of an MEP voting "For", in one case leading to a higher probability and in the other leading to a lower probability. This in turn makes the result regarding this variable somewhat difficult to interpret. For the non-attached MEPs overall, the analyses show to a great degree similar patterns as for the other MEPs, with some smaller variances. *National Gender Equality* is significant in two of the RCVs with a higher national gender equality meaning a lower probability for an MEP voting "For". *National Euroscepticism* was significant in only one of the RCVs, with higher euroscepticism indicating a lower probability of an MEP voting "For". *Gender* was not significant in any of the RCVs.

7 Conclusions

What conclusions can be drawn about which factors can explain whether an MEP votes for the policies on prostitution with an abolitionist approach? The clear conclusions in previous literature, about the effect of EPG affiliation on voting behavior in the EP, led to the assumption that this would play a role also for the issue of prostitution. In lack of data, the hypothesis of the EPG affiliation and the EPGs position on the issue of prostitution as an explanation was not tested per se. However, the variable *EPG Cohesion For* controlled for the factor of being part of an EPG that to different degrees generally votes "For" in the 3 RCVs. The factor of EPG affiliation, in this study indicated by the variable *EPG Cohesion For*, provided a clear explanation for the voting choice of the MEPs. This was expected, as well as somewhat self-evident because of the nature of the variable. When controlling for EPG affiliation in the form of EPG cohesion on the issue (being part of an EPG with a strong position "For" or not), some of the other factors did have a significant effect on the MEP's voting choice in the selected RCVs. Others did not, or gave mixed results.

The variable *National Euroscepticism* and the variable *National Party Euroscepticism* seems to affect the voting behavior in that more euroscepticism overall is found to lead to a lower probability of voting for the policies. This indicates that the factor of the MEP's view on EU competence indicated by these two variables in this study could explain whether an MEP votes for the policies with an abolitionist approach to prostitution. The idea in the literature about the prominent role of the competence argument in the discussion about prostitution policies, is supported. The policies on prostitution, be it with an abolitionist approach or nor, could be seen as a sign of a broadening of the EU competences that may cause MEPs with a more restrictive view of the competences to be reluctant to voting for these policies. The factor on EU competence, measured with the variable *National Euroscepticism,* also shows that such a national contextual factor can play a role, possibly making MEPs with the same national affiliation vote in the same way. This would be in line with literature that suggest that national affiliation can have an effect for certain political issues, and opposing the literature that downplay this role. In addition, the factor on the view on EU competence, also being measured with the variable *National Party Euroscepticism*, give some support to the idea that national party affiliation plays a role, at least in the aspect of how eurosceptic the party that an MEP affiliate with, is. The explanation, informed by literature, could have to do with both organizational incentives and ideological closeness.

Gender does not appear to be a factor that can explain whether an MEP vote for policies with an abolitionist approach. The reason could be that the theoretical assumption that women find prostitution less acceptable than men, due to its impact on women as a group, is only valid in the limited studies that has been carried out. It could also be that this assumption is true, but that it is not translated into a certain voting behavior; maybe because other factors trump this. It could also be possible that a less acceptable view of prostitution does not, contrary to the expectation, lead to a favoring of the abolitionist approach instead of other approaches. For example, the sex work approach also recognizes problems with prostitution and aims for certain regulations to come to terms with this.

Regarding the factor of attitude towards gender equality, in this study indicated by the variable *National Gender Equality,* no clear conclusions can be drawn regarding whether the factor could explain if an MEP vote for policies with an abolitionist approach. In one RCV, coming from a more gender equal member state meant a higher likeliness to vote for these policies, in line with the hypothesis. However, in another RCV it was the complete opposite. The factor about national affiliation is in some way supported, as the national contextual factor of national gender equality was significant. However, these mixed findings about in what way it was significant, indicate that the theoretical assumption that more support of gender equality is connected to a more negative view of prostitution, which was found in limited studies, does not apply outside these limitations. The assumption that an MEP from a more gender equal country would be more likely to support gender equality might be invalid, leading to *National Gender Equality* being a suboptimal indicator for the attitude towards gender equality. It could also/or be that the theoretical assumption that more support for gender equality leads to a more negative attitude towards prostitution, in turn leading to an abolitionist approach, is flawed. Even if literature suggests that a negative attitude towards prostitution is not compatible with an approach that legalizes prostitution, another approach, for example the sex work approach, has its own way of coming to terms with the problematic aspects of prostitution that may in its own way appeal to supporters of gender equality.

The findings about the factor of national legislation were mixed, which indicates that this factor is not able to explain whether an MEP voted for policies with an abolitionist approach in a distinct way. The findings about the effect were only sometimes in line with the hypothesis, which was based on the idea that the connection between laws and values could make MEPs from a member state with abolitionist legislation more likely to support this approach also in the EP. This

assumption may not be valid, possibly due to the fact that it was based on a few examples showing a pattern, and that this might not apply to all MEPs. In this way, the importance of this national contextual factor is not strongly supported.

A conclusion about the non-attached MEPs (constituting a very small sample in this study) is that the findings about what could explain whether they vote for policies on prostitution with an abolitionist approach, most often did not contradict the findings from the models where they were not included. However, it is important to have in mind that these were not included in the more extensive models that the conclusions about all the independent variables are based on.

The patterns of the ability of the different factors to explain whether an MEP vote for policies with an abolitionist approach, varied across the RCVs included in this study. It could mean that the RCVs cannot be compared or seen as similar in the way that was assumed in the selection of them. An abolitionist dynamic was assumed to be in all of them, but it might still be that they are not viewed in the same way by the MEPs and their principals. As mentioned in the discussion about the selection of RCVs, it could be that they are seen as having different weight or value. For example, they could be seen as having an explicit abolitionist approach to different extents, being more or less clear about the abolitionist dynamics that they entail. This could in turn result in a different amount of attention by the MEPs for the different RCVs. The Honeyball resolution (*The European Parliament resolution of 26 February 2014 on sexual exploitation and prostitution and its impact on gender equality)*, as the RCV on a whole resolution about prostitution, might be seen as the most explicit abolitionist policy that was voted on, more clearly a vote on the abolitionist approach. In that case, it may be that the conclusion about the voting pattern on this resolution is slightly more significant than the conclusions about the other RCVs and about all of them added together, if the primary object is to draw conclusions about voting behavior on the abolitionist approach. The conclusions about the factors which overall had a limited ability to explain voting behavior due to mixed results, would in that case be more robust.

Although the various factors included in this study showed different abilities to explain whether an MEP vote for the policies on an abolitionist approach, some other factors than EPG affiliation were found to be able to explain this when controlling for the EPG cohesion. In line with previous literature, this could be due to prostitution being a morality issue, deeply rooted in (national) values which can make the lines of the political conflict different from the traditional ones. The findings

also support the perception of the complex role that the MEPs have, coming from a member state as well as affiliating with a national party and a European party group.

This study supports the scholars arguing that it could be of value to study the voting behavior on specific issue in parallel to voting behavior generally, to possibly find other results in contrast to those on the general level. It seems reasonable not to take common understandings of voting patterns in the European parliament for granted in all issue areas. In some areas the voting behavior may be more complex than in general, with more factors at play, and it could be difficult to predict voting behavior with solely the common understandings. At the same time, some factors that are expected to be important specifically for the issue of prostitution may not be possible to use with certainty to explain or predict the voting behavior on policies with an abolitionist approach.

7.1 Thoughts on future research

Future research could investigate the abstain vote and the choice to not vote at all, and what this means when it comes to the issue of prostitution. A relatively high percentage in the RCVs included in this study were abstain votes and non-votes. Is it a behavior with a certain purpose? In addition to this, there may be special elements in the issue of prostitution which leads to the findings in this study. However, to look more into other specific issues, for example other morality issues, to see if the same patterns (or non-patterns) are found for votes on these issues, would be interesting. Moreover, if there are more votes for soft policies on prostitution, or binding policies, in the future, it would be interesting to compare the voting behavior for these with the findings from this study.

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Appendix 1: Voting choice divided by nationality

RCV The European Parliament resolution of 26 February 2014 on sexual exploitation and prostitution and its impact on gender equality (2013/2103(INI). Voting choice divided by Nationality.

Voting Choice (%) Member State	For	Against	Abstain
Austria	20 %	46.7%	33.3%
Belgium	42.1%	47.4%	10.5%
Bulgaria	60 %	13.3%	26.7%
Croatia	72.7%	9.1%	18.2%
Cyprus	100 %	0 %	0 %
Czech Republic	80 %	0 %	20 %
Denmark	55.6%	22.2%	22.2%
Estonia	40 %	40 %	20 %
Finland	91.7%	8.3%	0 %
France	58.6%	20.7%	20.7%
Germany	42.2%	45.8%	12 %
Greece	70.6%	5.9%	23.5%
Hungary	94.9%	0 %	5.6%
Ireland	100 %	0 %	0 %
Italy	58.7%	13 %	28.3%
Latvia	71.4%	28.6%	0 %
Lithuania	88.9%	11.1%	0 %
Luxembourg	25 %	50 %	25 %
Malta	66.7%	33.3%	0 %
Netlerlands	25 %	58.3%	16.7%
Poland	65.9%	9.8%	24.4%
Portugal	33.3%	50 %	16.7%
Romania	83.3%	8.3%	8.3%
Slovakia	90.9%	9.1%	0 %
Slovenia	83.3%	16.7%	0 %

Spain	85 %	10 %	5 %
Sweden	94.7%	5.3%	0 %
United Kingdom	14.6%	31.3%	54.2%

RCV The European Parliament resolution of 10 February 2021 on the implementation of Directive 2011/36/EU on preventing and combating trafficking in human beings and protecting its victims, Voting choice divided by Nationality.

	For	Against	Abstain
Austria	63.2%	10.5%	26.3%
Belgium	85.7%	4.8%	9.5%
Bulgaria	100 %	0 %	0 %
Croatia	75 %	8.3%	9.5%
Cyprus	100 %	0 %	0 %
Czech Republic	61.9%	38.1%	0 %
Denmark	92.9%	0 %	7.1%
Estonia	85.7%	0 %	14.3%
Finland	64.3%	14.3%	21.4%
France	56.4%	3.8%	39.7%
Germany	80.6%	10.8%	8.6%
Greece	85.7%	4.8%	9.5%
Hungary	100 %	0 %	0 %
Ireland	69.2%	15.4%	15.4%
Italy	97.3%	0 %	2.7%
Latvia	100 %	0 %	0 %
Lithuania	100 %	0 %	0 %
Luxembourg	83.3%	0 %	16.7%
Malta	100 %	0 %	0 %
Netlerlands	72.4%	13.8%	13.8%
Poland	98 %	2 %	0 %
Portugal	95.2%	0 %	4.8%

Romania	100 %	0 %	0 %
Slovakia	78.6%	7.1%	14.3%
Slovenia	100 %	0 %	0 %
Spain	89.8%	6.8%	3.4%
Sweden	90 %	0 %	10 %

RCV The European Parliament resolution of 21 January 2021 on the EU Strategy for Gender Equality (2019/2169(INI)), Voting choice divided by Nationality.

	For	Against	Abstain
Austria	44.4%	22.2%	33.3%
Belgium	80 %	10 %	10 %
Bulgaria	28.6%	0 %	71.4%
Croatia	50 %	0 %	50 %
Cyprus	66.7%	0 %	33.3%
Czech Republic	40 %	40 %	20 %
Denmark	85.7%	7.1%	7.1%
Estonia	71.4%	14.3%	14.3%
Finland	46.2%	23.1%	30.8%
France	53.8%	44.9%	1.3%
Germany	40.2%	19.6%	40.2%
Greece	57.1%	4.8%	38.1%
Hungary	38.1%	0 %	61.9%
Ireland	46.2%	46.2%	7.7%
Italy	80.8%	9.6%	9.6%
Latvia	75 %	0 %	25 %
Lithuania	45.5%	0 %	54.5%
Luxembourg	83.3%	0 %	16.7%
Malta	100 %	0 %	0 %
Netlerlands	50 %	21.4%	28.6%
Poland	90 %	2 %	8 %

Portugal	60 %	0 %	40 %
Romania	57.6%	0 %	42.4%
Slovakia	57.1%	0 %	42.4%
Slovenia	37.5%	21.4%	21.4%
Spain	76.3%	5.1%	18.6%
Sweden	89.5%	0 %	10.5%

Appendix 2: Voting Choice divided by European party group

RCV The European Parliament resolution of 26 February 2014 on sexual exploitation and prostitution and its impact on gender equality (2013/2103(INI), Voting choice divided by EPG.

Voting Choice (%) European Party Group	For	Against	Abstain
ECR	33.3%	0 %	66.7%
EPP	77.3%	5.8%	16.9%
REG/ALDE	40.3%	51.4%	8.3%
EFD	15 %	55 %	30 %
ID	-	-	-
S&D	65.8%	22.4%	11.8%
GUE/NGL	53.6%	32.1%	14.3%
Green/EFA	25.5%	54.9%	19.6%

RCV The European Parliament resolution of 10 February 2021 on the implementation of Directive 2011/36/EU on preventing and combating trafficking in human beings and protecting its victims, Voting choice divided by EPG.

Voting Choice (%) European Party Group	For	Against	Abstain
ECR	82.3 %	8.1%	9.7%
EPP	29.6%	0 %	70.4%
REG/ALDE	78 %	16 %	6 %
EFD	-	-	-
ID	61.3%	35.5%	3.2%
S&D	95.7%	3.5%	0.7%
GUE/NGL	86.8%	10.5%	2.6%
Green/EFA	18.6%	60 %	21.4%

RCV The European Parliament resolution of 21 January 2021 on the EU Strategy for Gender Equality (2019/2169(INI)), Voting choice divided by EPG.

Voting Choice (%) European Party Group	For	Against	Abstain
ECR	85.7%	6.3%	7.9%
EPP	100 %	0 %	0 %
REG/ALDE	94.1%	1 %	4.9%
EFD	-	-	-
ID	58.5%	3.1%	38.5%
S&D	97.9%	0 %	2.1%
GUE/NGL	94.9%	5.1%	0 %
Green/EFA	26.5%	38.2%	35.3%

Appendix 3: The European Party Groups

Abbreviations followed by full name and European Parliament session(s)

ECR: European Conservatives and Reformists Group (2009-2014, 2019-2024)

EFD: Europe of freedom and democracy Group (2009-2014)

EPP: (Group of the European People's Party, Christian Democrats) (2009-2014, 2019-2024)

REG/ALDE: Group of the Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe/ Renew Europe Group (2009-2014/ 2019-2024)

ID: Identity and Democracy Group (2019-2024)

S&D: Group of the Progressive Alliance of Socialists and Democrats in the European Parliament) (2009-2014, 2019-2024)

Green/EFA: Group of the Greens/European Free Alliance (2009-2014, 2019-2024)

GUE/NGL: Confederal Group of the European United Left - Nordic Green Left (2009-2014, 2019-2024)