

Accepted Manuscript

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PII: S0261-3794(18)30287-7

DOI: [10.1016/j.electstud.2018.09.007](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.electstud.2018.09.007)

Reference: JELS 1973

To appear in: *Electoral Studies*

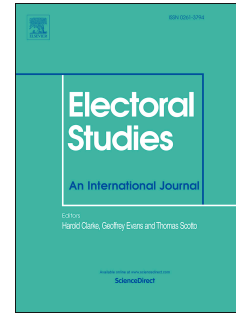
Received Date: 18 June 2018

Revised Date: 17 September 2018

Accepted Date: 19 September 2018

Please cite this article as: Bol, D., Blais, André., Gillard, X., Nunez, L., Pilet, J.-B., Voting and satisfaction with democracy in flexible-list PR, *Electoral Studies* (2018), doi: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.electstud.2018.09.007>.

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Voting and satisfaction with democracy in flexible-list PR¹

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Accepted for publication in *Electoral Studies*

Abstract

A vast literature shows that voting for the winning party in elections boosts satisfaction with democracy. But in many list PR systems, voters do not only vote for a party, they can also vote for candidates within parties. Yet, we know very little about how such votes affect voters' satisfaction with democracy. In this paper, we analyse pre- and post-election panel survey data from Belgium, in which we asked respondents to report their vote choice for parties and for candidates. The main finding is that casting a preference vote for a winning candidate makes little difference, as party-list voters are those with the largest increase in satisfaction with democracy. Such a finding is very important as reforms that increase voters' opportunities to vote for candidates within list have multiplied recently, and many of these

¹ Acknowledgements: Previous versions of the paper have been presented at 2016 EPSA Annual Conference, 2017 APSA Annual Meeting, 2017 Belgium: State of Federation Conference, and 2018 KCL Comparative Politics Seminar. We would like to thank the participants to these events for their helpful suggestions, in particular Shane Singh and Tom Verthé. The data has been gathered within the framework of the Making Electoral Democracy Work Project funded by the SSHRC of Canada. Declarations of interest: none'

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