

# Eurovision DNA (IX): The vices of the televote in the jury

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Eurovision juries are not without controversy. They were introduced to clean up the image of a heavily influenced televoting system. However, the numerical evidence shows that the experts follow the public's biases, exacerbating inequalities. To what extent does the expert vote replicate the televoting's point exchanges?

## EUROVISION DNA: THE VICIES OF TELEVOTING

Over the previous eight blog posts in this section, we've examined different voting patterns in Eurovision. We've analyzed the most prominent ones, such as the Soviet, Yugoslavian, and Nordic patterns, and others less well-known, like the Visegrad and Islamic patterns. But what exactly is a voting pattern? A voting pattern is a way of voting that is frequently observed, to a greater or lesser degree, in different countries and has a historical, demographic, or social explanation. For example, we say that Soviet-era countries vote for each other, and this is due to a shared past (and present).

Statistics help us identify these patterns, providing two pieces of information for each: the pattern itself, meaning which countries are consistently voted for; and which countries exhibit this pattern, or in other words, who votes in this way and to what extent.

Without getting into technicalities, these patterns can be understood as flaws in the system that distort the Eurovision results. What are the three most significant flaws, and which ones are most frequent? As we've seen, the most common are the Soviet, Yugoslavian, and Nordic patterns. These flaws essentially consist of countries within these blocs voting for each other.

Let's make this clearer. The following table illustrates the typical voting pattern for each flaw: the Soviet, Yugoslavian, and Nordic patterns.



LOS 3 VICIOS DEL TELEVOTO			
	SOVIÉTICO	YUGOSLAVO	NÓRDICO
12 puntos	Ucrania	Serbia	Suecia
10 puntos	Rusia	Bosnia y H.	Islandia
8 puntos	Azerbaiyán	Macedonia del Norte	Dinamarca
7 puntos	Armenia	Croacia	Noruega
6 puntos	Bielorrusia	Montenegro	Finlandia
5 puntos	Georgia	Eslovenia	Bosnia y H.
4 puntos	Moldavia	Italia	Australia
3 puntos	Israel	Rusia	Estonia
2 puntos	Polonia	Albania	Turquía
1 punto	Noruega	Ucrania	Ucrania

For example, we're saying that it's common for Soviet countries to give their 12 points to Ukraine, followed by Russia, Azerbaijan, and so on. It's not that they do it exactly like this every year, but it's the average vote, the typical pattern they've followed in recent years.

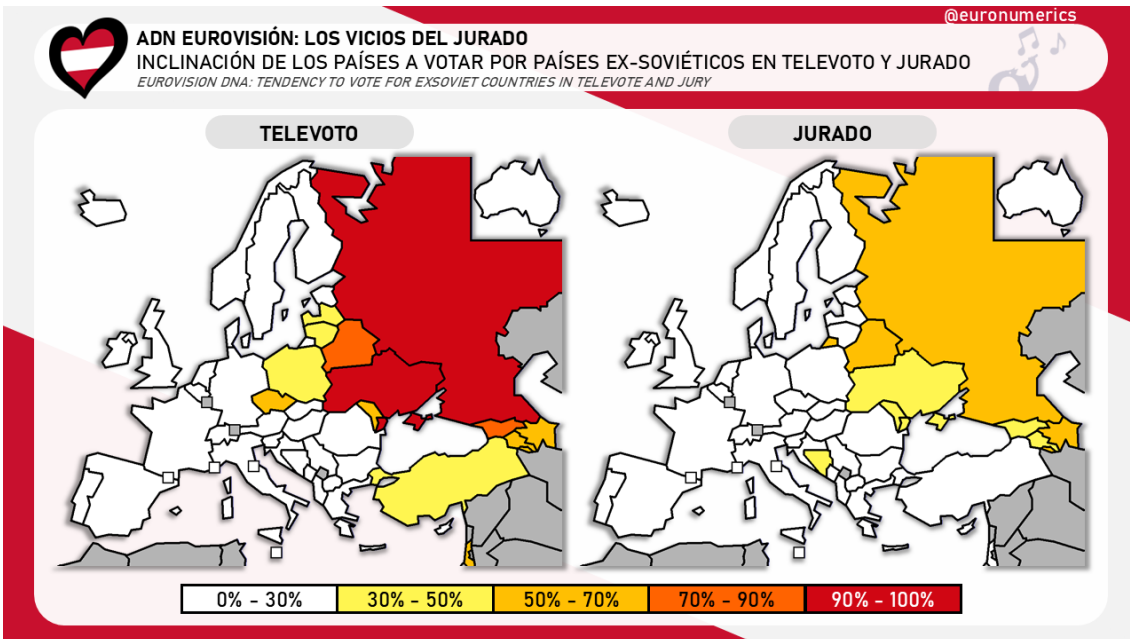
That's regarding televoting. How does the jury behave? Do juries also follow these bad habits? To what extent? Let's put the "impartiality" of the expert vote to the test.

### THE VICIOS OF TELEVOTING IN JURIES: YES, BUT LESS SO

In the previous section, we examined three typical voting patterns. Below, we've correlated the historical voting patterns of each country with these three flaws or patterns. The higher the correlation, the greater the similarity. In other words, if a country has a high correlation with the Nordic flaw, it's because it votes heavily for these countries.

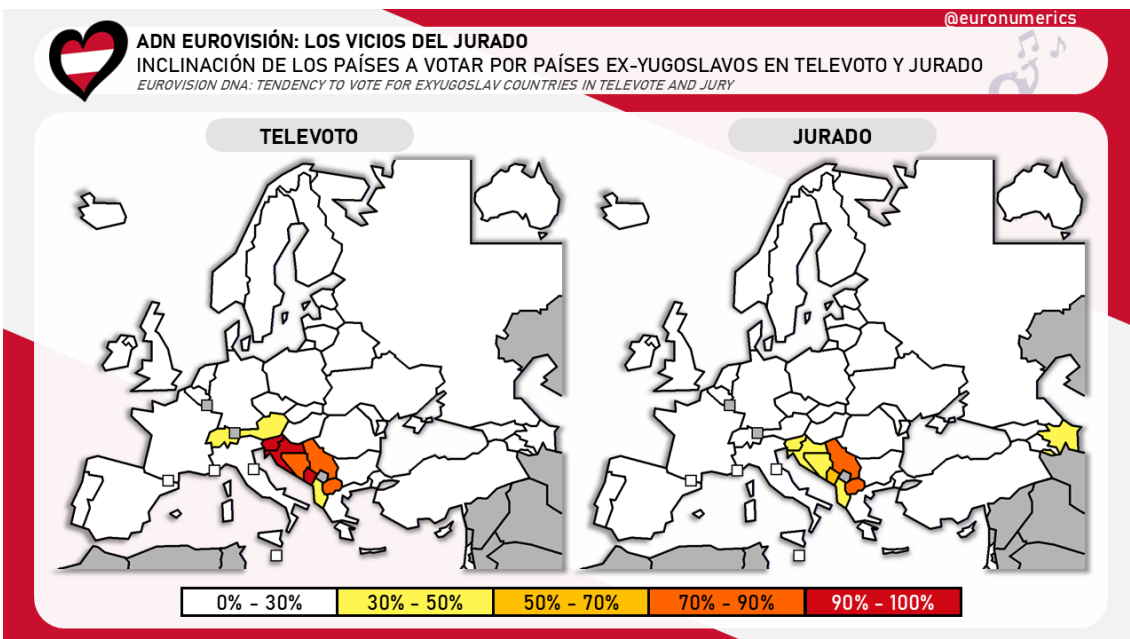
We extracted this correlation for both the historical televoting (left map) and the historical jury voting (right map). The higher the correlation, the more intense the color and the greater the prevalence of the flaw.

To analyze whether juries follow these same flaws, we used the historical jury voting data from 2014 to 2023. We decided to exclude the Stockholm edition because since then, an external factor has emerged to corrupt the Eurovision voting, distorting the results. Therefore, to isolate the data sample, we excluded 2024 and 2025.



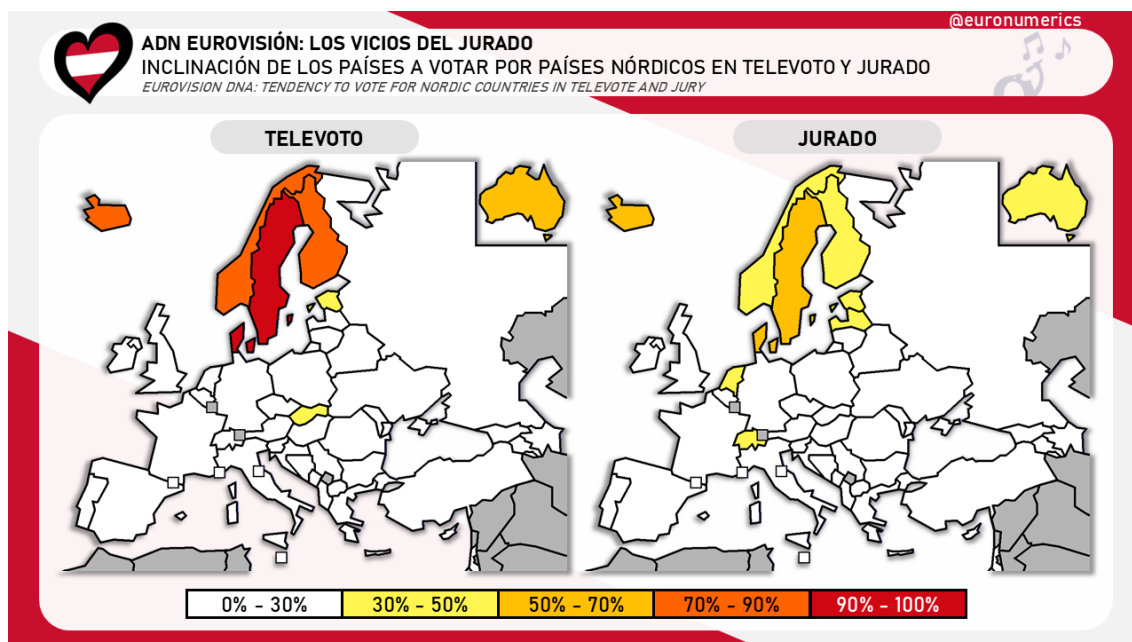
In this first example, we clearly see that Eastern European countries vote for each other. The colors are more intense in the televote than in the jury vote, and fewer countries are highlighted in the jury vote. Consequently, we see that practically the same countries exhibit this bias in the jury vote, but it is less pronounced than in the audience vote. The Eastern European juries also show a bias towards the former Soviet republics, but to a lesser extent.

It is true that this decline is not uniform across all countries. For example, in Ukraine, participation drops from 91% to 49%, while in Azerbaijan it only falls from 62% to 53%, and in terms of rankings, it moves from seventh to third with a greater bias.



We see the same pattern in the case of the Yugoslav republics: they vote for each other, but with somewhat less intensity. In fact, their traditional audience support, Austria and Switzerland, is dwindling.

Here too, the decline is distributed differently depending on the country. For example, Serbia and North Macedonia remain in the same 79-90% range, while the rest are dropping in the rankings.



The juries in the Nordic countries vote for each other less than their televotes do. However, in this case, the juries of some countries have adhered to this pattern, such as the Netherlands, Latvia, and Switzerland.

Unlike what we saw in the Soviet and Yugoslavian cases, here the decline is widespread in the Nordic countries (20 percentage points or more in all of them). While not entirely Nordic, Estonia is the most resistant.

Therefore, we can conclude that Eurovision juries exhibit the flaws of televoting, but to a lesser extent than the audience. As we have seen, these declines are distributed unevenly among countries: in some, the drop is greater than in others. On the other hand, this doesn't negate the fact that the jury has other flaws, as we already saw with the language in another blog post. Ultimately, the jury's vote is of a higher quality than that of the audience, but it's true that it perpetuates its inequalities and shortcomings.

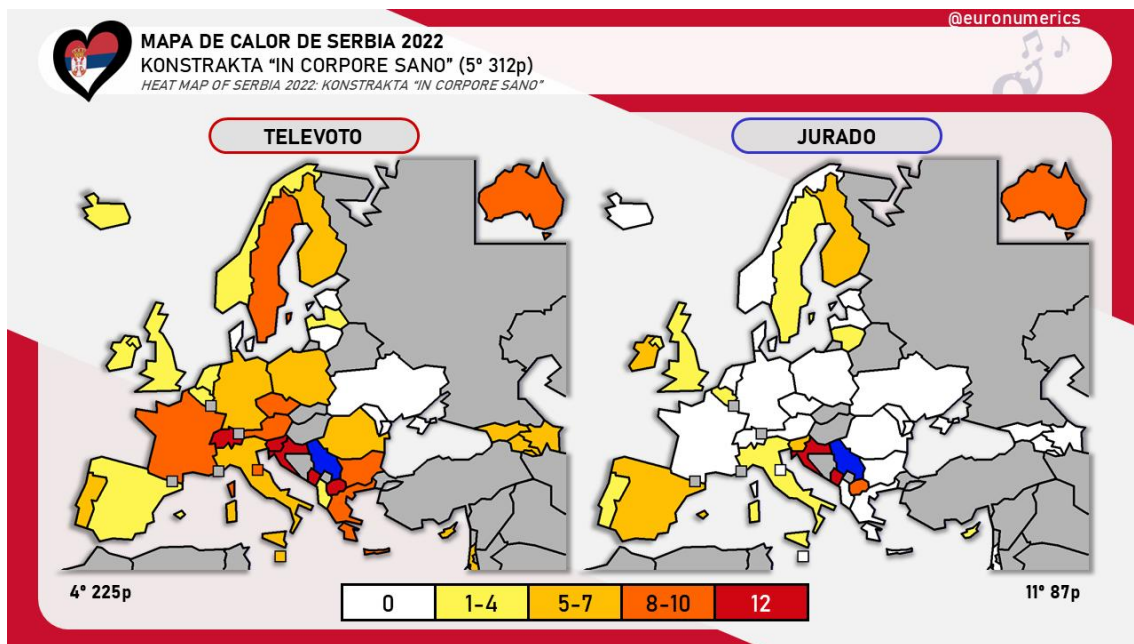
### TO LEARN MORE... YUGOSLAV JURIES REDUCE THE VICE LESS

We have seen that in the three cases analyzed, juries follow the voting pattern less than the public. But has the decrease been the same in all cases? The answer is no.

First, it is noticeable in the relative importance. In televoting, the most important patterns are, in this order, Soviet, Yugoslavian, and Nordic. However, in juries, the Soviet pattern falls to third place, and the Yugoslavian pattern becomes the most important.

In comparative terms, the Soviet pattern loses 60% of its followers, the Yugoslavian pattern 50%, and the Nordic pattern 40%. The Nordic pattern actually falls the most, but this is offset by increases in all the other countries (in some of them, as we saw, the Netherlands, Latvia, etc., notably), except in several Southeast Asian countries (Bulgaria, Greece, Albania). This leads us to reconsider the North-South divide we already saw in the juries.

Serbia 2022 is a clear example of how juries retain the biases of the televote. The map on the left shows the televote received by Konstrakta in the Turin final, while the map on the right reflects the experts' vote. The more intense the color, the higher the score received. In both cases, Serbia received a lot of support from its own voters, but the bias is more evident in the jury vote.



In short, in this blog we've seen that in their voting, juries exhibit the same biases as the televote, but to a lesser degree. The deviation doesn't decrease equally in all groups or countries; for example, the Yugoslavian juries remain very loyal to each other. And you, do you think the jury vote has fewer biases than the public vote? Should the organization take more measures to avoid these patterns?