

# Measuring Candidate Selection Mechanisms in European Elections: Comparing Formal Party Rules to Candidate Survey Responses

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## Online Appendix

As we discuss in the main text, we performed a number of OLS regressions on the difference between survey and expert coded responses using party characteristics that might be associated with differences in survey responses.

First, we utilize several variables of the party manifestos data for the 2009 EP election in order to see if differences in party ideology predict how reliably candidates perceive their institutional features. Manifestos are a commonly used measure of party positioning measuring ideology through text analysis and coding of election manifesto statements (Klingemann et al., 2006; Braun et al., 2009). First, we use right-left positioning on manifestos to test whether broad ideology corresponds to discrepancies between survey and statute-based measures of candidate selection mechanisms. Second, we include a measure of pro-anti EU positioning. It could be the case that anti-EU parties have little interest or understanding of their own EP selection mechanisms because they hold ideological positions against the institution itself.<sup>1</sup>

Next, we include a number of party characteristics that seek to measure the level of institutionalization and professionalisation of political parties. We expect that more professionalized and institutionalized parties, more invested in the European Parliament as an institution, will have a much better grasp of how their selection mechanisms function. First, we expect that well-resourced parties hailing from richer countries will produce candidates with a much better grasp on their own institutional rules when compared to poorer parties hailing from other regions of the European Union, which we proxy using GDP per capita. Similarly, we expect that the newer entrants into the European Union, the post-communist states, will feature candidates that are not savvy to how EP elections work and whom they responsible to, a logic consistent with findings in Lindstädt et al. (2011), so we include a

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dummy for post-communist parties. Finally, we expect that large parties with many representatives in the European Parliament will feature more formalized rules, communicated to candidates. Because of increased institutionalization, large party candidates should have a better idea of the system used to elect them and give more consistent and reliable responses vs. coded rules. We proxy this by measuring the number of MEPs received by the party in the 2009 EP election.

Our last variable is not related to party characteristics, but rather to reliability of survey measures themselves. It is possible that the variation around the party-median survey respondents result from random errors of individual candidates rather than systematic misunderstandings within a party. It stands to reason, therefore, that parties where many respondents replied to the survey with their perception of selection mechanisms should provide more reliable signal of candidate beliefs about nomination processes. There is significant variance between parties in how many respondents replied to PIREDEU's surveys. Even large Spanish parties median figures, for example, are based on very few surveys while German parties are better identified with many survey takers. We therefore include the number of respondents that a party's survey median was based on as a predictive variable in the regression.<sup>2</sup>

The regression results are presented in Table 1. Recall that it predicts the difference between coded and median survey respondent importance of each of the most important party selectorate groups (national officials, regional/local officials, and individual party members) to the candidate's nomination in the 110 parties where we have expert codings, survey respondent and background characteristic data. Positive coefficients mean that there is less concordance between expert and survey assessments. The results are striking: there is no consistent bias—based on measured party characteristics—in how different survey respondents' elicited perceptions are from codes based on party statutes. None of the variables show any substantive or statistical significance. In addition, the model does fit the data particularly well, indicating that party characteristics do not effectively jointly explain differences either.

## Notes

1. Note that this line of argument is similar to Klüver and Spoon's (2015) argument that MEPs defect when in the EP due to the salience of a particular issue to themselves and their party. Candidates may only invest in deep knowledge of the institutional rules if the legislature is important to them.

2. Note, however, that any parties that had no respondents to PIREDEU are not included in this analysis whatsoever, leaving us silent on the effect of survey bias for parties that neglect or refuse to answer surveys.

**Table 1.** Predicting Differences Between Expert Coded and Survey Selectorate Importance

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
	National	Regional/Local	Individual
Right-left	0.0022 (0.0066)	-0.0031 (0.0088)	-0.0043 (0.0076)
Pro-anti EU	0.0132 (0.0068)	0.0067 (0.0090)	-0.0008 (0.0078)
GDP/cap	0.0047 (0.0053)	-0.0089 (0.0071)	-0.0060 (0.0061)
Post-Communist	0.1692 (0.2632)	-0.5056 (0.3489)	-0.2621 (0.3012)
Size MEP Delegation	-0.0092 (0.0139)	-0.0034 (0.0185)	-0.0006 (0.0160)
Number Respondents	0.0146 (0.0121)	-0.0140 (0.0160)	-0.0142 (0.0138)
Constant	0.3967 (0.3647)	1.9678* (0.4836)	2.0466* (0.4174)
N	110	110	110
$R^2$	0.0558	0.0318	0.0241

*Note:* Linear regression with dependent variable difference between author-coded selectorate importance coded based on formal institutions (1-5) and the median of an identical question (1-5) asked to MEP candidates. Standard errors in parentheses. Models 1-3 each for a different selectorate group.

\* p-value less than 0.05

## References

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