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**Online Supplementary Material 1 – Elite survey: Response rates and representativeness of the data**

In the framework of the POLPOP project, we surveyed members of parliament (MPs) from Belgium (Flanders and Wallonia separately), Canada, Germany and Switzerland. In each country, *national* MPs were surveyed. In Belgium, Canada and Switzerland, we also surveyed *regional* MPs. In Belgium, exceptionally, we also targeted ministers and party leaders.[[1]](#footnote-1)

We treat the two major parts of Belgium—the Dutch-speaking part (region Flanders) and the French-speaking part (region Wallonia)—as two distinct political systems in the analysis. This makes sense because they have entirely separate party systems with Dutch-speaking parties competing only in Flanders and the French-speaking parties only competing in Wallonia. The media systems are also fully distinct, and public opinions are divergent (see e.g. Deschouwer, 2009). A third region (Brussels, the bilingual capital) has mostly Francophone representatives but also some Dutch-speaking ones. We only interviewed French-speaking MPs in Brussels, however, and treated them as part of the French-speaking system. For the sake of simplicity, we refer to ‘Flanders’ and ‘Wallonia’.

In Belgium, Canada and Switzerland, *all* MPs from the targeted populations were invited to participate in the study. In Germany, a slightly different procedure was followed because of the large size of the German Bundestag (19th legislative period), which consists of 709 members. A stratified sampling procedure was used and groups of politicians were contacted in several rounds. Sampling and contacting were terminated after 79 interviews were done—at that moment, 511 politicians had been contacted.

Table A1.1 below reports the cooperation rates per country and level (national/regional). And Table A1.2 shows the representativeness of the data on several key characteristics: gender, age and seniority. The table shows that, some (substantively small) deviations notwithstanding, our data are representative for the full population.

Further information about the data collection is available from the authors upon request.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Table SM1.1 - Population of targeted politicians, sample, and response rates** | | | | |  |
|  |  | Population | Sample | Response rate (%) | Timing of interviews |
| **Canada** | National MPS | 334 | 50 | 15.0 | March – Sep 2019 |
|  | Regional MPs Ontario | 124 | 30 | 24.2 |  |
|  | TOTAL Canada | 458 | 80 | 17.3 |  |
| **Flanders** | National MPs, ministers and party leaders | 98 | 77 | 77.0 | March – July 2018 |
|  | Regional MPs, ministers and party leaders | 135 | 102 | 76.7 |  |
|  | TOTAL Flanders | 233 | 179 | 76.8 |  |
| **Germany** | National MPs | 511 | 79 | 15.5 | Sep 2018 – Feb 2019 |
|  | TOTAL Germany | 511 | 79 | 15.5 |  |
| **Switzerland** | National MPs | 236 | 151 | 64.0 | Aug – Oct 2018 |
|  | Regional MPs Berne and Geneva | 259 | 217 | 83.8 |  |
|  | TOTAL Switzerland | 495 | 368 | 74.3 |  |
| **Wallonia** | National MPs and party leaders | 65 | 43 | 62.3 | March – July 2018 |
|  | Regional MPs and party leaders | 149 | 117 | 79.6 |  |
|  | TOTAL Wallonia | 214 | 160 | 74.8 |  |
|  | GRAND TOTAL | 1,911 | 866 | 45.3 |  |

**Table SM1.2 Representativity of MPs who cooperated compared with the MP population for gender, age and political experience.**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Flanders | | Canada | | Germany | |
|  | *Cooperated*  *(N = 179)* | *Population*  *(N = 233)* | *Cooperated*  *(N = 80)* | *Population*  *(N = 458)* | *Cooperated*  *(N = 79)* | *Population*  *(N = 709)* |
| Female | 66 (37%)\* | 97 (42%) | 31 (39%) | 140 (31%) | 20 (25%) | 219 (31%) |
| Age in years (SD) | 48.0 (8.7) | 48.6 (9.1) | 52.3 (12.3) | 52.2 (11.9) | 50.2 (10.8) | 49.4 (10.1) |
| Political experience in years (SD) | 10.1 (6.9) | 10.5 (7.5) | 6.3 (8.7) | 6.0 (6.7) | 4.9 (5.8) | 6.0 (6.7) |

(continued)

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Switzerland | | Wallonia | |
|  | *Cooperated*  *(N = 368)* | *Population*  *(N = 495)* | *Cooperated*  *(N = 160)* | *Population*  *(N = 214)* |
| Female | 116 (31%) | 158 (32%) | 54 (34%) | 73 (34%) |
| Age in years (SD) | 51.3 (11.3)\* | 52.1 (11.0) | 51.2 (10.4) | 51.6 (10.3) |
| Political experience in years (SD) | 9.9 (7.9)\* | 11.0 (8.6) | 10.9 (7.9) | 11.5 (8.5) |

*Note.* \* Means that the characteristic is a significant predictor of whether a politician participated in the survey (result from logistic regression analysis; p < .05). This is the case for only two characteristics (gender in Flanders and age in Switzerland) and the bias is, in substantive terms, negligible. On all other aspects, the elite sample is fully representative.

We also assess the data based on cooperation rates per party. Because full confidentiality was promised to the participating politicians and parties regarding their participation in the project, Table A2 lists the cooperation rates in anonymized form. It becomes clear that participation varied somewhat between parties. There is, however, no strong ideological bias in the dataset. We analyzed, for the full population of respondents, whether the ideological position of a politician (left-right score, taken from the Chapel Hill Expert Survey 2014) is related to their participation. The correlations are overall low and insignificant (see bottom of Table A1.3). Only in Switzerland is the correlation (r = .15) significant (right-wing politicians participated slightly less) but note that even for the least-cooperating party, the response rate was 58% here. All in all, we find proof that all main parties and ideologies, in all countries, are represented in substantive numbers in the dataset.

**Table SM1.3 Cooperation rates per party**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Canada** | **Flanders** | **Germany** | **Switzerland** | **Wallonia** |
| Party A | 40% | 93% | 18% | 90% | 93% |
| Party B | 25% | 89% | 17% | 83% | 85% |
| Party C | 16% | 84% | 13% | 83% | 75% |
| Party D | 16% | 82% | 12% | 83% | 73% |
| Party E | 0% | 74% | 10% | 78% | 67% |
| Party F |  | 67% | 7% | 78% | 63% |
| Party G |  |  | 4% | 73% |  |
| Party H |  |  |  | 69% |  |
| Party I |  |  |  | 63% |  |
| Party J |  |  |  | 60% |  |
| Party K |  |  |  | 58% |  |
| Others (parties with max. 3 seats + independents) | 0% | 20% | 0% | 86% | 75% |
| Correlation between left-right score and cooperation | -.07 | -.12 | .03 | -.15 | .00 |
| N (cooperated) | 80 | 179 | 79 | 368 | 160 |

*Note.* Letters allocated to parties randomly to ensure anonymity; party A in one parliament is not the same party (family) as party A in another parliament. For Germany, cooperation rates based on the parliament with 709 MPs (although only 511 were contacted).

**Online Supplementary Material 2 – Number of top politicians in the dataset**

**Table SM2.1 Number of top politicians in the dataset**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Canada** | **Flanders** | **Germany** | **Switzerland** | **Wallonia** |
| Top politician at time of interview | 14 | 29 | 4 | 30\* | 12 |
| … minister | 4 | 10 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| … junior minister | 9 | 3 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| … party leader | 0 | 6 | 1 | 14 | 2 |
| … caucus leader | 1 | 10 | 2 | 17 | 10 |
| Not a top politician at time of interview, but previously held such a function (combination of several functions possible) | 12 | 25 | 9 | 64 | 22 |
| Politician without top function experience or current position | 54 | 125 | 66 | 274 | 126 |
| **N (cooperated)** | **80** | **179** | **79** | **368** | **160** |

*\*Note.* In Switzerland, one politician was caucus leader and party leader at the same time

**Online Supplementary Material 3 – Selection and batch of policy proposals in each country**

Our first criterion for issue selection was that issues should not be overly technical. Even without much prior knowledge, citizens (and politicians) should be able to understand what the proposals entail. Second, all proposals are topical or relevant in the sense that, at the time of the survey, they were present in the public realm in the country at stake; we did not invent new proposals but drew on existing debates. Third, aiming to get politicians’ estimations with regard to salient and less salient issues, the salience of the proposals and of the underlying issues varies systematically. To select proposals with varying salience but, at the same time, having a minimum salience level, in some countries, a broader list of many more policy proposals was pretested on a random sample of country nationals. Basically, pretest respondents were asked whether they agreed, disagreed or were simply undecided about a larger number of policies—undecided both including people who said they did not have an opinion and those placing themselves in the middle of the scale. We considered the share of undecided citizens as an indicator of the salience of the policy and only policies above a certain minimum threshold of salience were retained (e.g. in Flanders only the proposals of which less than 30% said they were undecided about). Policies with higher shares of undecided were considered to be non-salient and/or too technical-unknown for people to have a sensible opinion about (and for politicians to estimate these opinions). Still, as one can glance from the full list of policies below in **Table A2.1**, among the retained eight policies in each country, there still is much wanted variance in salience (measured by the share of undecided). Fourth, in each country, the eight policies represent a good deal of issue variation. They include policy proposals situated on the traditional socio-economic left-right axis (e.g. retirement age, right to strike, taxes…) as well as proposals that belong to the cultural left-right divide (e.g. immigration, environment) while some proposals do not belong to any of the two main cleavages (e.g. defense, democracy). Fifth, based on pretest data, we sought policy proposals varying in their distribution of public opinion support. The clarity of a public opinion signal probably depends to a large extent on the share of people (dis)agreeing with a policy. For instance, 50%-50% distributions may be more difficult to estimate correctly than 80%-20% distributions. Accordingly, the eight policies were chosen in each country conditional upon showing variation in distributions. This is documented in Supplementary Material 2 as well. Sixth and finally, the eight policies we employ in each country vary in the sense that for some of them party electorates hold different opinions while for other policies all party electorates converge on the same side of the debate. If politicians get contradictory signals from their own electorate and from general public opinion, this may confuse and decrease the accuracy of their estimations. Based on all these six criteria, in each country, a set of eight policy proposals was selected. We cannot prove that the set of policies in each country is perfectly functionally equivalent, but we selected balanced and comparable sets of policies as carefully as possible.

**Table SM3.1 – Policy proposals per country**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Flanders** | | **Issue** | **% citizens undecided** | **% citizens agree** | **Maximum party electorate difference % agree\*** |
| 1 | National armies should be replaced by one European army. | EU | 22.1 | 60.9 | 44.2-66.7 |
| 2 | Voting should remain compulsory. | Political system | 15.4 | 70.0 | 52.9-76.4 |
| 3 | The most polluting cars should be forbidden in cities. | Environment | 11.2 | 68.5 | 50.6-81.9 |
| 4 | Company cars should be more heavily taxed. | Taxes | 16.2 | 66.4 | 58.7-84.4 |
| 5 | The right to strike should be restricted | Labor | 12.0 | 58.7 | 27.0-72.5 |
| 6 | Belgium should never expel someone to a country where human rights are violated. | Migration | 12.4 | 69.0 | 32.3-85.6 |
| 7 | The full income of all parliamentarians should be published yearly. | Political system | 6.8 | 91.2 | 91.6-94.2 |
| 8 | The retirement age may not exceed 67 years. | Social policy | 3.8 | 91.1 | 89.3-95.1 |
|  | **Wallonia** |  |  |  |  |
| 1 | National armies should be replaced by one European army. | EU | 17.0 | 48.7 | 37.0-66.7 |
| 2 | Voting should remain compulsory. | Political system | 6.3 | 57.1 | 50.4-68.5 |
| 3 | The most polluting cars should be forbidden in cities. | Environment | 8.3 | 66.6 | 53.4-81.9 |
| 4 | Company cars should be more heavily taxed. | Taxes | 14.9 | 59.4 | 60.1-76.9 |
| 5 | The right to strike should be restricted | Labor | 7.3 | 55.8 | 39.6-76.4 |
| 6 | Belgium should never expel someone to a country where human rights are violated. | Migration | 11.5 | 64.7 | 59.2-85.1 |
| 7 | The full income of all parliamentarians should be published yearly. | Political system | 7.1 | 82.0 | 82.4-89.8 |
| 8 | The retirement age may not exceed 67 years. | Social policy | 3.2 | 81.4 | 80.1-88.8 |

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Switzerland** | |  |  |  |  |
| A1 | Switzerland needs to buy new fighter jets. | Defense | 10.7 | 39.8 | 16.8-66.9 |
| A2 | Jobs in my Canton need to be reserved for people residing my Canton. | Political system | 8.7 | 60.0 | 27.7-68.6 |
| A3 | The concerned Cantons need to allow the hunt of wolves that attack flock. | Environment | 10.1 | 43.1 | 15.3-60.4 |
| A4 | Hospitals need to have a "Babyklappe" where parents can leave their infant anonymously. | Ethics | 8.7 | 70.7 | 69.4-79.8 |
| A5 | Sexual harassment at work needs to be punished more severely. | Ethics | 6.1 | 89.2 | 80.9-94.2 |
| A6 | Switzerland should only accept well-educated immigrants. | Migration | 11.2 | 33.6 | 9.8-57.5 |
| A7 | Citizens should be able to participate in federal elections via internet. | Political system | 10.4 | 69.6 | 57.0-76.6 |
| A8 | Taxes on high-income should be raised while taxes on low-income should be reduced. | Taxes | 7.2 | 78.3 | 47.4-90.0 |
| A9 | The pension age needs to be raised to 67. | Social policy | 4.7 | 20.6 | 18.2-44.7 |
| B1 | Civil defense facilities that are not in use need to be closed for good. | Defense | 19.2 | 30.1 | 27.2-41.5 |
| B2 | Elderly employees need to be protected better from dismissal. | Labor | 4.3 | 91.5 | 81.5-95.6 |
| B3 | Private households should be able to freely choose their electricity provider. | Economy | 18.1 | 77.0 | 65.5-78.5 |
| B4 | Same-sex couples who have registered their partnership should be allowed to adopt children. | Ethics | 9.0 | 58.9 | 36.8-76.1 |
| B5 | The police needs to prevent unauthorized demonstrations at all costs. | Rights | 9.8 | 64.8 | 36.8-86.2 |
| B6 | My Canton should spend more for the integration of asylum seekers. | Migration | 11.3 | 31.5 | 7.9-77.2 |
| B7 | Foreigners who have lived in Switzerland for at least ten years should be able to participate in Cantonal elections and referenda. | Migration | 6.9 | 45.7 | 14.9-82.6 |
| B8 | Wedded people need to be assessed separately for taxation. | Taxes | 17.4 | 55.8 | 58.4-70.0 |
| B9 | My canton should create a cantonal health insurance institution for its residents. | Social policy | 15.0 | 55.5 | 41.3-78.7 |
| **Germany** | |  |  |  |  |
| A1 | The cooperation between EU member states should be strengthened. | EU | 13.3 | 80.7 | 61.7-97.7 |
| A2 | Video surveillance in public spaces should be expanded. | Crime | 8.1 | 74.2 | 57.8-84.8 |
| A3 | Citizens with higher incomes should be taxed more heavily than today. | Taxes | 11.1 | 78.3 | 63.9-88.9 |
| A4 | There should be referendums on the federal level. | Political system | 13.5 | 79.3 | 72.9-95.2 |
| A5 | There should be more driving restrictions in cities suffering from air pollution. | Environment | 10.0 | 46.4 | 31.7-79.5 |
| A6 | The retirement age should be raised step by step. | Social policy | 4.6 | 21.4 | 4.0-25.8 |
| A7 | If equally qualified women should be privileged on the labor market. | Labor | 17.7 | 34.8 | 26.4-40.0 |
| A8 | Foreign citizens’ children that were born and raised in Germany should be allowed to keep their parent’s citizenship in addition to the German citizenship. | Migration | 11.9 | 36.4 | 7.8-51.2 |
| B1 | There should be no further EU enlargement. | EU | 21.5 | 73.4 | 57.1-90.4 |
| B2 | Delinquents should be punished more severely. | Crime | 7.9 | 93.2 | 79.5-98.8 |
| B3 | Income and wealth should be redistributed in favor of poorer people. | Social policy | 12.5 | 72.1 | 60.0-91.5 |
| B4 | The electoral age should be lowered to 16 years for federal elections. | Political system | 10.1 | 23.8 | 18.6-27.6 |
| B5 | Activities with high CO2 emissions such as air travel should be taxed more heavily. | Environment | 12.9 | 66.8 | 42.2-85.1 |
| B6 | There should be a right to full-time child care until the end of elementary school. | Social policy | 12.7 | 79.5 | 74.4-91.5 |
| B7 | There should be an “opt-out” system for organ donations. Everyone that does not decline explicitly would be organ donor. | Social policy | 13.4 | 63.3 | 50.0-67.9 |
| B8 | Declined asylum seekers should be more consequently deported. | Migration | 9.1 | 91.2 | 75.6-98.3 |
| **Canada** | |  |  |  |  |
| 1 | Canada should increase the number of immigrants it admits each year. | Migration | 14.5 | 37.5 | 24.3-49.6 |
| 2 | The government should provide a guaranteed annual income. | Social policy | 12.5 | 74.7 | 55.0-84.3 |
| 3 | The federal government should support the building of oil pipelines in Canada. | Energy | 17.2 | 69.3 | 49.1-90.1 |
| 4 | The federal government should have more powers to combat terrorism, even if it means that citizens have to give up more privacy. | Crime | 13.8 | 57.8 | 42.0-69.0 |
| 5 | A carbon tax is a good policy to help reduce greenhouse gas emissions. | Environment | 13.2 | 48.1 | 16.0-67.6 |
| 6 | The retirement age to receive Canada Pension Plan benefits should be raised to 70. | Social policy | 8.2 | 15.5 | 14.5-17.1 |
| 7 | The Goods and Services Tax (GST or HST) should be increased. | Taxes | 9.8 | 16.4 | 10.1-19.8 |
| 8 | Individuals who are terminally ill should be allowed to end their lives with the assistance of a doctor. | Ethics | 12.9 | 85.1 | 73.5-92.4 |

\* ‘Maximum party electorate difference % agree’ refers to any of the party electorates in the country at stake with the lowest share of support of the proposal (first figure) and with the highest share of support for the proposal (second figure). It demonstrates the heterogeneity of support among party electorates.

**Online Supplementary Material 4 – Population survey: Response rates, representativeness and weights**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Table SM4.1 – Survey company, timing and sample size by country** | | | | |  | |
|  | Survey company | Survey timing | Sample size | Minimum number of citizens who gave own opinion on policy proposal b | | Number of citizens who estimated general public opinion for at least 6 out of 8 policy proposals | |
| **Canada** | Qualtrics | June 2019 | 1,012 | 876 | | 1,012 | |
| **Flanders** | Survey Sampling International (SSI) | Feb-March 2018 | 2,389 | 2,058 | | 2,209 | |
| **Germany** | YouGov | Oct 2018 | 1,520 | 746 | | 1,298 | |
| **Switzerland** | FORS a | May-July 2018 | 4,677 | 2,260 | | n.a. | |
| **Wallonia** | Survey Sampling International (SSI) | Feb-March 2018 | 2,371 | 1,966 | | 2,134 | |

a In Switzerland, a probability sample of 10,261 citizens was drawn and contacted to participate by FORS (response rate: 45.6%). In all other countries, an online survey panel was used and possible respondents were contacted until quota were met.

b Due to missing values on the variables used to create weights and/or missing values on the policy opinions themselves, the number of ratings per policy proposal (on which we base our public opinion numbers) is typically a bit lower than the sample size. Moreover, in Germany and Switzerland citizens rated only one out of the two batches of policy proposals so the sample is divided into halves.

**Information about weights:**

To calculate the general public opinion on a policy proposal in a country, weights are used. This is only necessary in Belgium, Canada and Germany; politicians in Switzerland did not estimate the general public opinion and hence we do not need to calculate public opinion at the country level.

We weigh by age, gender, education and previous party vote. (Note that for age, gender and education, quota were used; but the weights allow to account for small remaining deviations). The weighing is done with the ipfraking command in Stata. The weights are trimmed to avoid that individual respondents count too heavily on the outcome; an upper bound of 5 is used. Any respondent who has a missing on one of the four weighing factors, does not get a weight and is hence not included in the calculation of public opinion at the country level.

No weights are used to calculate the opinion of a specific partisan electorate, because we do not know how other factors (e.g. gender or age) are distributed within party electorates.

**Online Supplementary Material 5 – Explaining inaccuracy based on elite status and seniority**

**Table SM5.1 – Explaining inaccuracy of *general public opinion* with elite status (at moment of interview *or* former experience) and seniority as IVs**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **(1) Poisson** | **(2) Poisson** | **(3) Linear regression** | **(4) Linear regression** |
|  | Number of majority misplacements | Number of majority misplacements | Percentage accuracy | Percentage accuracy |
|  |  |  |  |  |
| Elite politician | .088 | — | .174 | — |
|  | (.069) |  | (.616) |  |
| Seniority | — | .005 | — | .015 |
|  |  | (.004) |  | (.038) |
| Female politician | .088 | .078 | .731 | .711 |
|  | (.063) | (.063) | (.560) | (.558) |
| Age | -.004 | -.005 | -.011 | -.015 |
|  | (.003) | (.003) | (.026) | (.029) |
| Opposition party | .126\* | .132\* | .808 | .817 |
|  | (.062) | (.062) | (.551) | (.547) |
|  |  |  |  |  |
| Country (ref.: Flanders) |  |  |  |  |
| Wallonia | -.087 | -.097 | -2.09\*\* | -2.108\*\* |
|  | (.075) | (.075) | (.657) | (.652) |
| Germany | -.013 | -.009 | 2.42\*\* | 2.446\*\* |
|  | (.092) | (.092) | (.814) | (.819) |
| Canada | -.028 | -.006 | .257 | .320 |
|  | (.092) | (.094) | (.822) | (.837) |
|  |  |  |  |  |
| Constant | .952\*\*\* | .989\*\*\* | 17.699\*\*\* | 17.792\*\*\* |
|  | (.156) | (.158) | (1.373) | (1.387) |
|  |  |  |  |  |
| Observations | 483 | 483 | 483 | 483 |
| R-squared | .007 (pseudo) | .007 (pseudo) | 0.060 (adj) | .060 (adj) |

Standard errors in parentheses

\*\*\* p < .001; \*\* p < .01; \* p < .05

° From all politicians (N=866), the 368 Swiss did not estimate general public opinion, 7 skipped the estimations entirely and 3 are left out because of missing values (rating less than 6 out of the 8 policy proposals). Finally, we were unable to retrieve the age of 5 politicians. This brings the n to 483. Some politicians rated only 6 (n=4) or 7 (n=16) items. Their number of incorrect placements is re-scaled to match the 8-point scale.

**Table SM5.2 – Explaining inaccuracy of *party electorate opinion* with elite status (at moment of interview *or* former experience) and seniority as IVs**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **(1) Poisson** | **(2) Poisson** | **(3) Linear regression** | **(4) Linear regression** |
|  | Number of majority misplacements | Number of majority misplacements | Percentage accuracy | Percentage accuracy |
|  |  |  |  |  |
| Elite politician | -.008 | — | -1.152\* | — |
|  | (.057) |  | (.579) |  |
| Seniority | — | -.000 | — | -.052 |
|  |  | (.003) |  | (.035) |
| Female politician | -.033 | -.033 | -.733 | -.643 |
|  | (.053) | (.053) | (.536) | (.535) |
| Age | -.002 | -.002 | -.003 | .010 |
|  | (.002) | (.003) | (.024) | (.026) |
| Opposition party | -.094 | -.095 | -1.056 | -1.154 |
|  | (.061) | (.060) | (.599) | (.597) |
|  |  |  |  |  |
| Country (ref.: Flanders) |  |  |  |  |
| Wallonia | -.373\*\*\* | -.372\*\*\* | -1.560 | -1.438 |
|  | (.086) | (.086) | (.802) | (.800) |
| Switzerland | .037 | .037 | .595 | .547 |
|  | (.064) | (.064) | (.673) | (.676) |
| Germany | .118 | .119 | 2.715\*\* | 2.748\*\* |
|  | (.093) | (.093) | (.996) | (1.000) |
| Canada | -.061 | -.063 | -1.445 | -1.648 |
|  | (.101) | (.102) | (1.015) | (1.028) |
|  |  |  |  |  |
| Constant | .922\*\*\* | .918\*\*\* | 20.778\*\*\* | 20.333\*\*\* |
|  | (.128) | (.129) | (1.317) | (1.327) |
|  |  |  |  |  |
| Observations | 795 | 795 | 795 | 795 |
| R-squared | .016 (pseudo) | .016 (pseudo) | .036 (adj) | 0.033 (adj) |

Standard errors in parentheses

\*\*\* p < .001; \*\* p < .01; \* p < .05

°°From all politicians (N=866), 33 come from very small parties from which we did not survey enough voters. Another 6 politicians are independents without partisan electorate. Seventeen skipped the second estimation module entirely, and (analogously to the procedure for general public opinion estimations) 10 are left out of the analysis because of missing values: they rated less than 6 out of the 8 policy proposals. Finally, we were unable to retrieve the age of 5 politicians. This brings the n to 795.

**Table SM5.3 – Models with elite status (at moment of interview *only*) as IV**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **(1) Poisson** | **(2) Linear regression** | **(3) Poisson** | **(4) Linear regression** |
|  | General public opinion° | General public opinion° | Party electorate opinion°° | Party electorate opinion°° |
|  | Number of majority misplacements | Percentage accuracy | Number of majority misplacements | Percentage accuracy |
|  |  |  |  |  |
| Elite politician | .109 | .254 | .021 | -1.622 |
|  | (.091) | (.830) | (.081) | (.835) |
| Female politician | .089 | .736 | -.032 | -.732 |
|  | (.063) | (.561) | (.053) | (.536) |
| Age | -.003 | -.009 | -.002 | -.007 |
|  | (.003) | (.026) | (.002) | (.024) |
| Opposition party | .141\* | .839 | -.095 | -1.214\* |
|  | (.062) | (.547) | (.060) | (.596) |
|  |  |  |  |  |
| Country (ref.: Flanders) |  |  |  |  |
| Wallonia | -.091 | -2.094\*\* | -.371\*\*\* | -1.547 |
|  | (.075) | (.655) | (.086) | (.802) |
| Switzerland | — | — | .040 | .501 |
|  |  |  | (.064) | (.676) |
| Germany | -.019 | 2.410\*\* | .123 | 2.757\*\* |
|  | (.091) | (.809) | (.093) | (.994) |
| Canada | -.032 | .247 | -.062 | -1.376 |
|  | (.093) | (.823) | (.101) | (1.016) |
|  |  |  |  |  |
| Constant | .927\*\*\* | 17.642\*\*\* | .916\*\*\* | 20.944\*\*\* |
|  | (.158) | (1.390) | (.129) | (1.327) |
|  |  |  |  |  |
| Observations | 483 | 483 | 795 | 795 |
| R-squared | .007 (pseudo) | 0.060 (adj) | .016 (pseudo) | 0.035 (adj) |

Standard errors in parentheses

\*\*\* p < .001; \*\* p < .01; \* p < .05

° From all politicians (N=866), the 368 Swiss did not estimate general public opinion, 7 skipped the estimations entirely and 3 are left out because of missing values (rating less than 6 out of the 8 policy proposals). Finally, we were unable to retrieve the age of 5 politicians. This brings the n to 483. Some politicians rated only 6 (n=4) or 7 (n=16) items. Their number of incorrect placements is re-scaled to match the 8-point scale.

°°From all politicians (N=866), 33 come from very small parties from which we did not survey enough voters. Another 6 politicians are independents without partisan electorate. Seventeen skipped the second estimation module entirely, and (analogously to the procedure for general public opinion estimations) 10 are left out of the analysis because of missing values: they rated less than 6 out of the 8 policy proposals. Finally, we were unable to retrieve the age of 5 politicians. This brings the n to 795.

**Online Supplementary Material 6 – Explaining inaccuracy based on perceptions of who are good public opinion estimators**

**Table SM6.1 – Frequency table of number of nominations**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Number of times MP is nominated | Frequency |
| 0 | 656 |
| 1 | 116 |
| 2 | 39 |
| 3 | 16 |
| 4 | 7 |
| 5 | 8 |
| 6 | 4 |
| 7 | 1 |
| 8 | 1 |
| 12 | 1 |
| 25 | 1 |
| 32 | 1 |
| Total | 851° |

The n here is 851 (instead of 866) as there are 15 politicians in our dataset—more precisely Flemish ministers and party leaders—who are not member of parliament. These politicians are left out here because our question specifically probed respondents to nominate fellow MPs as best public opinion estimators.

**Table SM6.2 – Models with number of best public opinion estimator nominations as IV**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **(1) Poisson** | **(2) Linear regression** | **(3) Poisson** | **(4) Linear regression** |
|  | General public opinion | General public opinion | Party electorate opinion | Party electorate opinion |
|  | Number of majority misplacements | Percentage accuracy | Number of majority misplacements | Percentage accuracy |
|  |  |  |  |  |
| Nr. of nominations | -.029 | -.071 | .007 | .036 |
|  | (.022) | (.135) | (.013) | (.144) |
| Female politician | .077 | .654 | -.023 | -.595 |
|  | (.064) | (.568) | (.054) | (.544) |
| Age | -.003 | -.005 | -.002 | -.004 |
|  | (.003) | (.026) | (.002) | (.024) |
| Opposition party | .134\* | .747 | -.098 | -1.231\* |
|  | (.063) | (.551) | (.061) | (.602) |
|  |  |  |  |  |
| Country (ref.: Flanders) |  |  |  |  |
| Wallonia | -.076 | -2.053\*\* | -.352\*\*\* | -1.321 |
|  | (.076) | (.665) | (.088) | (.819) |
| Switzerland | — | — | .056 | .726 |
|  |  |  | (.067) | (.698) |
| Germany | -.018 | 2.417\*\* | .145 | 3.073\*\* |
|  | (.092) | (.820) | (.094) | (1.010) |
| Canada | -.016 | .287 | -.039 | -1.321 |
|  | (.094) | (.836) | (.102) | (1.036) |
|  |  |  |  |  |
| Constant | .923\*\*\* | 17.505\*\*\* | .876\*\*\* | 20.392\*\*\* |
|  | (.158) | (1.385) | (.130) | (1.036) |
|  |  |  |  |  |
| Observations | 469 | 469 | 781 | 781 |
| R-squared | .007 (pseudo) | 0.060 (adj) | .016 (pseudo) | 0.031 (adj) |

Standard errors in parentheses

\*\*\* p < .001; \*\* p < .01; \* p < .05

1. In contrast to many other countries, ministers in Belgium are not members of parliament. Party leaders *can* be MPs at the same time, but some are not. In Flanders, ministers and party leaders were invited to participate in the study. In Wallonia, only party leaders were invited. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)