**Online Appendix to Wojciech Rafałowski, ‘Campaigning on the Ability to Govern: A Study of Strategic References to Competence Made by Political Parties in Europe’, published in *Government and Opposition***

Table A1. Polling reports used as data sources of pre-electoral poll results.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Country | Election | ‘Poll One Month Before’ source | ‘Poll Three Months Before’ source |
| Czechia | 2010 | 13–28 April 2010 Médea Research | 4 Jan – 2 Feb 2010 *Median* |
|  | 2013 | 24 September 2013[6] CVVM | 11 July 2013[157] *Sanep* |
| Denmark | 2007 | Not available | Not available |
|  | 2011 | Not available | Not available |
| Germany | 2009 | GMS[10] 24 Aug | Not available |
|  | 2013 | 21 Aug *Forsa* | 19 Jun *Forsa* |
| Hungary | 2006 | Gallup March | Gallup January |
|  | 2010 | Gallup[26] 25 March 2010 | Századvég-Kód[15] 26 January 2010 |
| the Netherlands | 2010 | Not available | Not available |
|  | 2012 | 27 July 2012[18] *Ipsos* Neth. | 2 June 2012[16] *Ipsos* Neth. |
| Poland | 2007 | TNS OBOP 16 September 2007 | TNS OBOP 9 July 2007 |
|  | 2011 | 1–4 September 2011 TNS OBOP | 7–11 July 2011 TNS OBOP |
| Portugal | 2009 | 23–28 Jul *Eurosondagem* | 25–30 Jun *Eurosondagem* |
|  | 2011 | 28 Apr–3 May *Eurosondagem* | 23–28 Feb *Eurosondagem* |
| Spain | 2008 | *Obradoiro de Socioloxía*/*Público* [84] [85] 7 Jan – 12 Feb 2008 | *Sigma Dos*/*El Mundo*[120][121] [122] 14–26 Dec 2007 |
|  | 2011 | *Sigma Dos*/*El Mundo*[49][50] 7–20 Oct 2011 | NC Report/*La Razón*[89] 28 Aug 2011 |
| Sweden | 2010 | Not available | Not available |
|  | 2014 | 6–12 Aug *Sentio* | Not available |
| the United Kingdom | 2005 | 1–3 Apr 2005 ICM/*Guardian* | 4–6 Feb 2005 *Populus*/*The Times* |
|  | 2010 | 6 Apr *Populus*/*The Times* | 5–7 Feb *Populus*/*The Times* |
|  | 2015 | 2–6 Apr *Populus* | 4–5 Feb *Populus* |

Table A2. Pearson correlations between the macroeconomic variables included in the analysis of the aggregated dataset.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | GDP per capita | GDP Growth Positive | Unemployment Below Median | Unemployment Drop |
| GDP per capita | 1.0000 |  |  |  |
| GDP Growth Positive | 0.0287 | 1.0000 |  |  |
| Unemployment Below Median | 0.3491 | 0.0433 | 1.0000 |  |
| Unemployment Drop | 0.1067 | 0.2432 | 0.1734 | 1.0000 |

Table A3. Supplementary models predicting the share of references to competence.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Model A1  Dependent variable: Competence | | | Model A2  Dependent variable: Competence | | | Model A3  Dependent variable: Competence | | |
| competence | Coef. | Std. Err. | P>z | Coef. | Std. Err. | P>z | Coef. | Std. Err. | P>z |
| Incumbent | .0271 | .01822 | 0.137 | -.0263 | .0661 | 0.691 | -.0548 | .0305 | 0.073 |
| ENEP | .00731 | .0133 | 0.583 | .0215 | .0113 | 0.058 | .0234 | .00943 | 0.013 |
| Incumbent\* ENEP |  |  |  | .00898 | .0140 | 0.521 |  |  |  |
| Leftist Newspaper |  |  |  |  |  |  | -.0360 | .0253 | 0.155 |
| Incumbent\* Leftist Newspaper |  |  |  |  |  |  | .0325 | .0410 | 0.427 |
| Leftist Party |  |  |  |  |  |  | -.0490 | .0295 | 0.096 |
| Leftist Newspaper\* Leftist Party |  |  |  |  |  |  | .0365 | .0386 | 0.344 |
| Incumbent\* Leftist Party |  |  |  |  |  |  | .127 | .0557 | 0.022 |
| Incumbent\* Leftist Newspaper\* Leftist Party |  |  |  |  |  |  | -.0125 | .0727 | 0.863 |
| GDP per Capita | -4.00e-06 | 3.06e-06 | 0.192 | -5.17e-07 | 2.66e-06 | 0.846 | 6.03e-07 | 2.22e-06 | 0.786 |
| GDP Growth Positive | .0449 | .0397 | 0.258 | .0908 | .0301 | 0.003 | .0939 | .0263 | 0.000 |
| Unemployment Below Median | -.0257 | .0300 | 0.393 | -.0881 | .0310 | 0.005 | -.101 | .0263 | 0.000 |
| Unemployment Drop | -.0247 | .0266 | 0.352 | -.0104 | .0197 | 0.596 | .00515 | .0181 | 0.776 |
|  |  |  |  | .00217 | .000708 | 0.002 | .00135 | .000685 | 0.048 |
|  |  |  |  | .00415 | .00320 | 0.194 | .00413 | .00265 | 0.118 |
| Post-Communist Country | -.0117 | .0600 | 0.845 | .0412 | .0507 | 0.416 | .0612 | .0427 | 0.152 |
| Constant | .246 | .104 | 0.018 | .0224 | .0984 | 0.820 | .0207 | .0847 | 0.806 |
| Observations – level 2 (parties) | 99 |  |  | 83 |  |  |  |  |  |
| Groups – level 2 (elections) | 17 |  |  | 15 |  |  |  |  |  |
| Parties x Newspapers - Level 1 |  |  |  |  |  |  | 135 |  |  |
| Newspapers - Level 2 |  |  |  |  |  |  | 26 |  |  |
| Elections - Level 3 |  |  |  |  |  |  | 13 |  |  |
| Log likelihood | 101.251 |  |  | 91.440 |  |  | 131.940 |  |  |

For each variable in each model, the row contains unstandardized linear regression coefficients, standard errors, and statistical significance. Source: Own calculations.

## Supplementary Analysis 1

In general, party systems exhibit a great deal of stability, which is why parties that participated in the formation of the previous government tend to be the leading competitors in the following election. The ‘Incumbent’ and ‘Polls One Month Before’ variables are indeed correlated at 0.2988. Thus, it is possible that the regression analysis presented in the main body of the article does not detect the influence of the previous participation in government, because the results of the polls are controlled for. The results of the estimation of Model A1 (Table A3) falsifies this suspicion. The ‘Incumbent’ remains statistically insignificant even if the variables representing the results of pre-electoral polls are absent from Model A1, which, in respect to its other properties, remains identical to Model 1 in Table 1 of the main article.

## Supplementary Analysis 2

The main conclusion of the analyses presented in the article is that a political party’s previous experience in the government does not influence its inclination to emphasize competence during an electoral campaign, despite the fact that such a dependency exists in two-party electoral races in the USA. A possible explanation of this pertains to the party system size. It might be that in two-party systems incumbents are more likely to refer to competence than their competitors are. Model A2 tests this possibility by expanding Model 1 from the article with an interaction of the ‘Incumbent’ and ‘ENEP’ variables. Results presented in Table A3 show that the interaction is statistically insignificant. The estimated marginal effects of the ‘Incumbent’ at various levels of the ENEP are also insignificant.

## Supplementary Analysis 3

Another question that can be raised with regard to the obtained results is whether the ideological orientation of the newspaper affects the way in which claims regarding party and leader competence are reported in a press article. This is important insomuch as the CCDD was based on such publications. The Pearson correlation between a newspaper being affiliated with the political left and the reporting of party claims about its own competence in the non-aggregated data used in the analyses in the article is very weak and equals -0.0058. The strongest correlation between the two variables exists in data obtained with regard to the UK 2010 campaign – 0.1158.

Further tests were conducted using a dataset in which every party in every election was represented with two observations – one for each of the dailies used for obtaining the data gathered in the CCDD. It was constructed in order to assess whether the newspapers are selective when reporting parties’ references to competence, especially when both the newspaper and the party identify with the same side of the political spectrum. Based on Vernby and Finseraas (2010), leftist parties were coded as ‘1’ and other parties were coded as ‘0’. Newspapers affiliated with the political left were coded in a similar manner based on their Wikipedia depictions, which were available for all countries in the sample except for Portugal. Model 1 was re-estimated as Model A3 upon adding those two variables along with their three-way interaction with the ‘Incumbent’. It does not provide sufficient evidence to substantiate the claim that reporting references to competence made by incumbents and their challengers depends on the ideological orientation of the party and of the newspaper. The ‘Incumbent’ variable exerts a statistically significant (p=0.043) influence only when it represents the political left and when its claims are reported in a leftist newspaper. However, this coefficient only narrowly passes the conventional 0.05 significance threshold and it does not survive the robustness tests performed by restricting the sample by filtering out the observations from the studied countries one by one and re-estimating Model A3.

## References

Vernby K and Finseraas H (2010) Xenophobia and Left Voting. Politics & Society 38(4), 490–516, https://doi.org/10.1177/0032329210381237.