Brussels Bound: Policy Experience and Candidate Selection in European Elections[*]

Daniel Pemstein,[†] Stephen A. Meserve,[‡] and William T. Bernhard[§]

Abstract

Parties in list systems must select candidates to best accomplish their electoral, organizational, and policy goals. In particular, parties must balance nominees' policy making potential against other aspects of candidate quality, such as electoral viability. We exploit the unique variation in candidates and parties in European elections to study this trade-off. We develop a statistical ranking model to examine how parties facing varying strategic contexts construct electoral lists and apply it to a novel dataset chronicling the political backgrounds of candidates in the 2009 European parliamentary elections. Parties that place high salience on the target legislature, are well positioned to influence policy once in office, and that have less access to competing policy making venues place particular emphasis on institution-specific policy making experience relative to other types of candidate experience. This systematic variation in parties' candidate nomination strategies may fundamentally alter legislative output and partisan policy influence.

Parties channel political careers through nominations to stand for election (Gallagher 1980, Norris 1997, Best & Cotta 2000, Rahat & Hazan 2001). In turn, the identities, experiences, and qualifications of a party's candidates condition not only its electoral success but also its ability to affect policy and governance once in office (Ranney 1981, Gallagher & Marsh 1988, Besley 2005, Shomer 2009). A party with visible, loyal, experienced, and knowledgeable candidates is likely to be successful at the polls and in government. However, not all available candidates have these desirable qualities. Parties must therefore manage their candidates as scarce resources during elections.

Parties most clearly have the opportunity to manage candidate type in list-based proportional representation systems (Gallagher 1988). In closed-list systems, parties determine the order of candidates on the party list, and voters cast their ballot for the party, rather than a particular candidate. When lists are open, voters can use preference votes to alter candidate ranks, but the list provides a default ordering and sends the electorate signals about the relative value that the party selectorate places on candidates (Carey & Shugart 1995). Thus, list construction presents parties with an opportunity to behave strategically, balancing vote, office, and policy-seeking incentives (Strom 1990). While pursuing these goals, party leaders may employ a variety of nomination strategies designed to maximize electoral competitiveness, reward party stalwarts, groom young talent, or ensure legislative policy making ability. Moreover, leaders must often balance selection strategies across a variety of venues ranging from local council races to national elections, and sometimes, supranational competitions. Parties therefore need to ration their supply of experienced candidates when considering any one list. What determines which types of candidates parties nominate? How do party circumstances, both in the legislature at hand, and other electoral venues, affect these decisions?

While party selectors must differentiate between potential candidates on a variety of dimensions, we focus on the fundamental choice of rewarding visible and well-connected party members and cultivating expertise within a particular legislative venue. The first strategy

caters to vote and office-seeking goals while the second is likely to maximize policy influence. Where party competition focuses on the national parliament, long-standing national legislators will simultaneously stand near the pinnacle of the party hierarchy, visible to voters, and wield the knowledge and institutional connections to get things done in office. But when parties must balance effectiveness in multiple policy-making venues, this connection can break down. Candidates with policy-making experience in a particular venue may not be the ones who possess the most visibility with the electorate, political connections within the party, or long-term potential for higher office. Similarly, non-linear career paths can undermine the linkage between partisan prestige and venue-specific policy-making experience in important—even national—parliaments (Samuels 2003). Thus, parties often face a stark choice between cultivating institutional experience and rewarding intra-party stature, generalized political skill and clout, electoral visibility, or future potential. How parties manage this tension may determine whether a legislature effectively and efficiently meets evolving policy demands. In turn, parties that favor candidates with institutional knowledge and experience may exert more policy influence.

Despite the importance of list construction for party success and, indeed, the quality of democratic governance, political scientists have conducted few comparative studies of candidate nomination. We ask what factors lead parties to prioritize the maintenance of institutionally experienced delegations in legislatures, and specifically investigate this question in European elections. European Parliament elections present a critical venue within which to explore the relative value that parties place on developing institutional experience within their parliamentary delegations. In European elections, voters in each of the 28 European Union (EU) member states elect national representatives to the EP. As of 2002, all member states must employ some form of proportional representation for these elections.[1] Parties in member-states, therefore, present ranked lists of aspiring candidates to stand for election.

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[1] The Treaty of Amsterdam in 2002 required all countries to either change to proportional representation, or in the case of Ireland, Northern Ireland and Malta, to STV. Ireland is the only non-list country included in our candidates database. While we present descriptive statistics for Ireland, we exclude it from the core analysis.

Because EP elections generally take a back seat to national contests (see e.g. Follesdal & Hix 2006, Moravcsik 2002), and because jobs as members of the EP (MEPs) are almost universally regarded as less consequential than national parliamentary posts, European incumbents will rarely rival former national legislators in visibility or partisan clout. At the same time, because European institutions differ dramatically from the governing structures in member states and because they often deal with highly technical legislation (Ringe 2010), parliamentary experience at the national level will often fail to seamlessly translate into efficacy within the EP. Thus, the relative value that parties place on incumbents and national politicians in EP elections can shed light on how important policy making ability and institutional experience is to them when they select candidates.

To assess how parties select candidates, we construct a new data set of biographies of candidates in the 2009 European election. We identify the link between how parties rank-order candidates and their political contexts using a purpose-built statistical approach, explicitly modeling how parties construct lists based on the candidates at their disposal and the political environment that they face. We find that parties that emphasize the policies that a legislature controls, who have the ability to affect important legislation within the target parliament, and have fewer opportunities to place candidates in competing venues, place relatively higher priority on candidates' policy making potential.

1 Candidate Experience, Party Strategy and List Placement

We conceptualize candidate nomination as a process in which parties determine the list rankings of a limited number of available candidates. Indeed, parties must portion the available candidates between a number of different elections at the local, regional, national, and European levels (Scarrow 1997, Stolz 2001, Meserve, Pemstein & Bernhard 2009, Hix, Hobolt & Høyland 2012). Broadly, parties seek three goals: votes, offices, and policy (Strom 1990). Parties, however, do not have unlimited supplies of experienced, visible candidates (Norris 1997), and cannot simultaneously maximize these three goals in all of the legislative

venues in which they compete. Parties, therefore, must decide how to prioritize different types of candidates, depending on their electoral and legislative prospects and emphases, both in the target parliament and in competing venues.

At election time, vote and office-seeking incentives reinforce one another. Parties focused on these goals should seek to elect candidates who will maximize votes, and thus control over seats in parliament. In the European context this means choosing politicians who have held national parliamentary posts. These are often well known public figures who are positioned to attract electoral support (Hobolt & Høyland 2011). Conversely, policy-seeking parties should favor candidates with legislative influence, maximizing the likelihood that, after the election, the party can use its representatives to influence policy and manage public affairs effectively. Incumbency is a key predictor of policy-making ability. Candidates with previous experience in the institution understand how to navigate and manipulate the policy process and have had the opportunity to develop venue-specific policy expertise. Personal networks also play a key role in legislative effectiveness (Fowler 2006). Incumbents have formed relationships, become embedded in the committee structure of the parliament, and have accrued seniority in the institution. Finally, parties may also make room on their lists for less accomplished candidates, including regional or local politicians, or even outright novices. This may give young talent opportunities to demonstrate their political acumen, or reward long-serving, but only moderately successful party members. The latter strategy serves the office-seeking motivations of party loyalists while the former develops the party's potential to meet broad vote, office, and policy goals in the long term.

In many legislative elections, it is difficult—if not impossible—to distinctly identify the value that parties place on institutional experience because incumbents will also represent the cream of the party's crop. That is, when examining national legislatures, it is impossible to know if parties renominate incumbents because of their institutional experience or because of their status as party insiders or well-known politicians. Thus, party nomination strategy typically yields little insight into how parties weigh vote and office-seeking incentives against

policy-making potential. Our focus on European elections allows us to overcome this issue. European elections are second order (Reif & Schmitt 1980, Marsh 1998, Schmitt 2005). Thus, even in European elections, it is nationally experienced politicians, not European incumbents, who are likely to be most highly regarded within the party and best positioned for electoral success. However, legislative experience is not necessarily transferable, and a background in the national legislature may not prepare a politician to be effective in the EP. The EP is an institution quite unlike most national legislatures in Europe. There is no government or opposition and rank-and-file legislators in the EP have the potential to play a more pivotal role in the legislative process than do members of many national parliaments in Europe. Committees matter, rapporteur assignments provide MEPs with substantial influence over policy outcomes, many of the relevant policy domains are highly technical, and the EP heavily amends much of the legislation that it considers. Indeed, the keys to legislative influence in the EP reside in access to rapporteurships, committee leadership positions, and party group coordinator roles (Bowler & Farrell 1995, Farrell & Heritier 2004, Ringe 2010, Yoshinaka, McElroy & Bowler 2010). Tellingly, McElroy (2006) has found a seniority norm in EP committee assignments. Nationally experienced politicians, while potentially strong legislators, will often find it hard to craft European policy out of the gate, simply because their lack of seniority, and under-developed networks, are likely to impede their policy influence. Additionally, many non-incumbents, even old party hands, will have little experience maneuvering in a supranational policy space and may have few established connections to lobbyists in Brussels or power brokers in the European Commission and Council. Therefore, parties that are primarily interested in influencing the policy process should value incumbency more than those that view the EP as a retirement venue, a well-paying job for proven party stalwarts, or a good place for inexperienced politicians to get their feet wet. This incentive structure allows us to observe variation in how parties weigh vote and office-seeking concerns against policymaking effectiveness.

2 Incumbency and European Policy Making Experience

Our theoretical argument is predicated on the existence of a significant policy making advantage for national parties that use MEP incumbents rather than non-incumbents. We argue that European policy making knowledge and connections are largely non-transferable. While candidates with experience in other parliaments are likely to legislatively outperform truly new members, incumbents should sport a distinct advantage. To assess this claim, we compare the legislative activities of MEPs who were elected as incumbents and those MEPs who lacked experience in the EP (non-incumbents). We further divide the non-incumbent category into MEPs who had national-level legislative experience and those that did not. The evidence shows that incumbents perform more critical, and technically demanding, legislative activities than non-incumbents, even non-incumbents with previous national experience.

We split MEP activities into two categories: technical and non-technical. If our assumption has merit, incumbent MEPs should be more active in technically demanding activities. We tallied the number of codecision reports, non-codecision reports, and opinions reported by MEPs on behalf of an EP committee. These activities represent the most substantively important and technically demanding work an MEP can perform.[2] To measure participation in less technical areas, we code MEPs' speeches in plenary, motions for resolution (motions to a vote, generally for non-legislative statements about human rights, democracy, or rule of law), declarations (non-binding statements by MEPs), and questions for the European Commission.

The descriptive statistics in Table 1 highlight the difference between incumbent and non-incumbent activity. For any activity requiring formal institutional action, irrespective of the technical/non-technical split, incumbents tend be more active. For the most uncommon and technical activities—codecision reports and other rapporteurships—incumbents are far more likely to participate. Incumbents even tend to produce non-binding declarations or

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[2]We obtained the data that we analyze here from the EP's online member directory (`http://www.europarl.europa.eu/meps/en/directory.html`) and focus on the 7th term, which began in 2009. The data were collected in late September 2013.

Table 1: Average Activity by MEP Type

| Activity	Incumbent	Non-incumbent	National Experience Only
More Technical Activities			
Codecision Reports	0.70	0.41	0.70
Other Reports	2.32	1.70	1.67
Opinions	2.05	1.93	1.77
Less Technical Activities			
Motions	30.40	24.98	16.09
Declarations	1.24	1.00	0.84
Speech	129.41	139.88	105.33
Questions	67.17	79.16	97.70
N	375	467	43

motions for resolution more frequently. Only for the routine, low difficulty activities—speeches in plenary or questions to the commission—do non-incumbents engage more often.[3] This pattern is consistent with our assumption, and highlights the importance of incumbents in the EP for any party that wishes to shape and pass legislation.

The differences remain even after considering outliers. Figure 1 shows box plots of the data in table 1. For less difficult activities, medians and quartiles are similar across incumbents and novice MEPs, though incumbents are slightly more active in declarations and motions than non-incumbents. For technically-demanding activities, incumbent MEPs participate more than non-incumbents. Incumbents handle more reports, both codecision and other. The boxplots show that this is not simply a story about outliers: notably, while the average production of codecision reports for non-incumbents is 60 per cent of incumbent activity, this non-incumbent mean is actually inflated by a handful of outliers. Despite being a technical and relatively rare form of participation, opinion production appears to occur at similar rates between incumbents and non-incumbents. This could perhaps reflect the fact that the final opinion represents an entire committee, and may be created with the assistance of more experienced committee members. Moreover, many opinions reflect
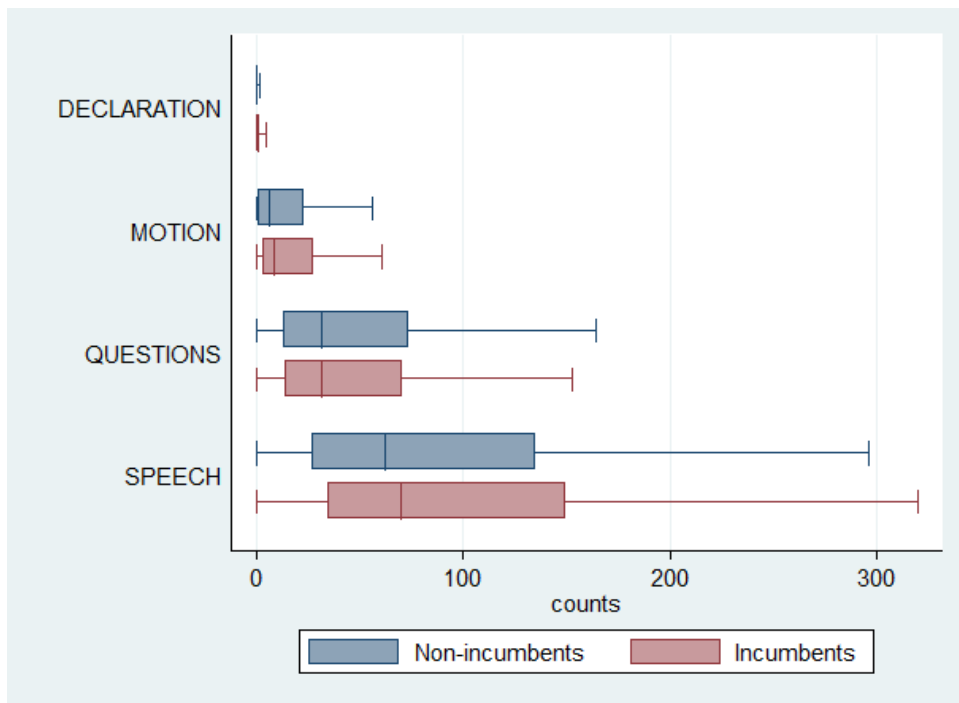
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[3]T-tests indicate statistically significant differences between incumbents and other candidates, at the 0.05 level, for codecision reports, other reports, and declarations.

Figure 1: Box Plots of Frequency of Activity
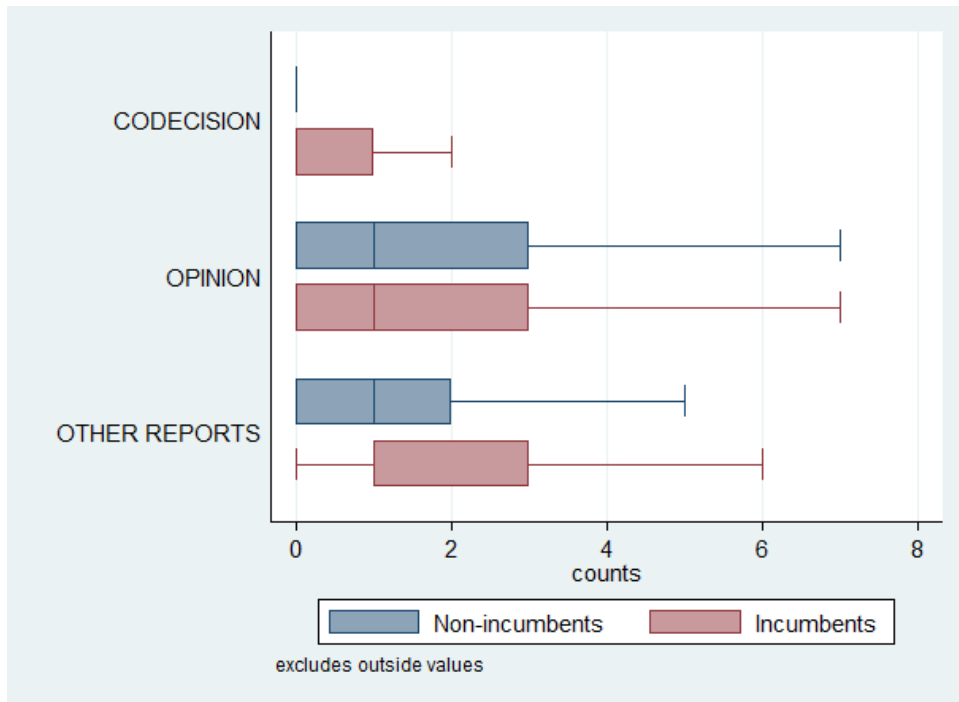
(a) Technical

(b) Non-Technical

non-binding reports which are less demanding, and valuable, than reports considered under legislative procedures.

As a further test, we performed negative binomial regressions on the most important MEP activities: codecision and other reports. Even including fixed effects for European group membership, to account for differences in agenda control and access to reports, and country specific effects, to account for proportionality norms, incumbency remains a positive and statistically significant predictor of MEP (codecision) report production.[4]

Finally, since we argue that policy-making abilities developed in national parliaments are unlikely to overcome incumbents' policy advantages within the EP, we compared parliamentary activity by incumbents and the 43 non-incumbent MEPs in our 12-country subsample who had previously sat in national parliament.[5] If national parliament prepares individuals to act effectively as MEPs, we should observe similar patterns of activity across these two types. The final column in Table 1 demonstrates that national level domestic experience does not appear to prepare individuals to hit the ground running as policymakers in the EP. In virtually every measure, the amount of activity for non-incumbent national parliamentarians is well below that of incumbents. The only important exception is codecision reports, where the sample means are similar across the two groups. This lack of difference, however, is driven almost entirely by an outlier among the nationally experienced non-incumbents. Italy's Paolo de Castro, a previous adviser of former European Commission head Romano Prodi, and a non-incumbent with substantial European policy making expertise, produced a whopping 10 codecision reports.[6] Removing de Castro from the sample reduces the average report production among non-incumbents with national experience to 0.48, very close to the non-incumbent mean.

Together, these data show that incumbents are more likely, on average, to perform technically demanding work in the EP. Further, the data suggest that national service cannot

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[4]Coefficient in codecision model= 0.48, coefficient in other report model= 0.39, $p < 0.01$ for both.

[5]We introduce these data in section 4.

[6]As figure 1 shows, overseeing 10 codecision reports is highly unusual.

substitute for European experience when it comes to preparing politicians to be productive in the EP. Our assumption, therefore, seems tenable: prioritizing incumbency in list orderings should be an indicator of a party's emphasis on achieving policy goals.

3 The Determinants of Party Policy Making Preferences

European elections provide a unique opportunity to observe the relative emphasis that parties place on policy making experience and other candidate characteristics—such as public exposure, loyalty, personal support, party influence, and campaigning skill—when constructing lists. The divorce between candidate policy making potential and other important candidate qualities, created by the unique challenges of legislating in the EP, makes it possible to shed light on factors that affect the importance of policy making to parties. Here, we lay out a general theory that describe how parties that compete in multiple venues will prioritize different types of candidate experience in a given legislature, and link our theoretical arguments to observable aspects of European parties. Throughout this section, we identify direct analogs between EP elections and domestic settings.

3.1 Institutional Emphasis

Parties that care about policy will naturally desire to maximize their influence over the process that produces it. Thus, they will want to nominate candidates with the ability to affect policy once in the legislature, prioritizing those candidates with the experience to shepherd proposals through the process. Consequently, we argue that the level of emphasis a party places on the EU, independent of its attitude toward the institution, affects its likelihood of sending effective policymakers to Europe. Parties that care about European-level policy want to place their most capable policymakers in the EP in order to pursue their interests. Based on the evidence introduced earlier, parties can expect MEPs with seniority as incumbents to do a large amount of substantive, technical EP policy making. As a result, parties that are highly invested in the EU will tend to rank EP incumbents higher than both

high quality candidates with national experience and low quality, inexperienced candidates.

Hypothesis 1. *Parties that emphasize Europe in their policy programs will prioritize incumbents over other types of candidates.*

Critically, this hypothesis challenges the common view that parties do not take the EP seriously because they nominate incumbent MEPs who are relatively unknown and invisible to the electorate. Instead, sticking with European careerists is a prime indicator that a party is invested in European institutions. Contrary to what one would anticipate in most other electoral venues, the parties that care about policy outcomes do not necessarily rank their most well connected party insiders, with high profile national experience, highest on lists.

But note that this EP-specific argument has clear analogs in national party politics. In multi-tiered systems, parties place varying emphasis on different institutions in which they contest elections. For example, the literature on party system regionalization finds that systems with many small regional parties may not prioritize effective public policy production at the national level, instead focusing on regional governance (Caramani 2004, Crisp, Olivella & Potter 2013). We argue that this variance in institutional emphasis will affect who parties nominate to represent them in particular legislatures; parties pursue policy more vigorously in institutions that they find most salient, and nominate accordingly.

3.2 Potential for Productivity

A party's preference for maximizing the policy making capabilities of its delegation is also modulated by its expectation that those legislators will have the ability to use those skills once in parliament. In the context of domestic politics, parties that anticipate being in government—or holding other influential positions within parliament—face incentives to prioritize candidates who can contribute to policy making once they take power, simply because they can leverage those skills. Parties with little hope of influencing policy in a given institutions are unlikely to adopt nomination strategies that focus on cultivating policy making experience.

There is no formal governing coalition in the EP. Instead, prior to the 2009 election, the institution was dominated by the three largest party groups: the European People's Party (EPP), Progressive Alliance of Socialists and Democrats (S&D), and the Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe (ALDE). These groups held the great majority of seats in the EP, shared party affiliation with many government ministers on the Council and were well represented in the Commission. Their members held the highest committee positions, generated many of the most sought-after reports, and were generally well situated to influence policy. Parties from other European groups, by contrast, often find themselves in the role of the opposition, and must focus more on position-taking than policy making. As a consequence, we expect that national parties belonging to one of the three largest groups rank candidates with maximal policy making advantages—incumbent MEPs—higher on their lists.

Hypothesis 2. *Parties belonging to the EPP, S&D, and ALDE will prioritize incumbents over other types of candidates.*

In practice, the implication of this strategy for the composition of the EP is clear. Parties in the dominant groups will rank careerist EP incumbents in high places, relying on them to manage European legislation. Meanwhile, parties in outsider groups have less reason to rank incumbent candidates who can make effective policy. With little hope of pursuing policy goals, they should focus on vote and office-seeking, grooming talent, and rewarding party stalwarts.

3.3   Inter-institutional Coordination

Tiered or multichambered legislative systems, like federal or bicameral systems, with multiple policy making venues, may also create incentives for parties to coordinate across tiers. When a party has influence in one tier, and must also develop clout in other tiers to pass and implement its policies, it has incentives to place experienced policy makers in those other tiers in order to coordinate policies effectively. The European Union is a multi-chambered

legislative institution, requiring the cooperation of the Council and the Parliament to pass policies into law. It also oversees laws that affect individuals across Europe and may generate consequences for parties competing on the national stage, and thus resembles a federation.

The Council is composed of national ministers, and therefore gives national-level parties in government substantial policy influence at the European level. Council members, however, need to coordinate with the EP, which possesses substantial influence over most binding European legislation. Moreover, parties in government must rely on the EU to produce policies for which they may be rewarded or blamed in national elections. Parties in government therefore desire an EP delegation with competent policy makers in order to facilitate effective coordination and to promote policy that will play well to a national audience. We argue that a party's roles, both as a member of the Council and of national-level government, alter the relative value that it places on policy experience in the EP and, therefore, its propensity to rank incumbents higher on candidate lists.

Hypothesis 3. *Parties belonging to a domestic government will prioritize incumbents over other types of candidates.*

Parties should favor policy-oriented candidates when they must rely on the target institution to produce policy that affects their effectiveness in other domains. This dynamic may represent pure policy-seeking by parties, or a balancing of goals. In the bicameral context, parties should be more inclined to pursue policy in a given legislature if they have the necessary resources to influence the process in the other house. Under federalism, policy-making in one venue may also facilitate vote or office-seeking in another. Voters may, for example, reward or punish national parties for policies that were largely built at the local or regional levels. Thus, politicians in government may prioritize policy-making acumen regionally in order to maintain hold over national offices. The EP context closely mirrors the sorts of coordination problems that parties that compete in multiple national venues face at home. It provides a good test for the proposition that a party's status in one policy-making institution can affect its nomination strategies in another. Of course, we see both bicameral and

federal-style pressures in the EU; thus we cannot tease out the relative influence of these two mechanisms here.

3.4   Venue Options and Career Management

Parties must balance immediate policy goals and a longer-term need to manage the careers of their politicians. In particular, parties that have more opportunities to place candidates in different venues may be more likely to balance different goals through their nomination strategies. In this context, large national parties may appear to place less emphasis on the policy making ability of their nominees to the EP than smaller parties. While nationally successful parties may value policy making in the EP similarly to smaller parties, they also must manage a greater number of candidates and are likely to face more competing pressures than their counterparts. Thus, they may use European elections to pursue a variety of strategies, such as grooming up-and-comers, storing candidates during electoral downturns, or providing a pleasant retirement venue for party stalwarts (Meserve, Pemstein & Bernhard 2009, Daniel 2013). Smaller parties have less pressure to use their party lists for these alternative goals. For example, why would nationally unsuccessful parties groom young candidates who have nowhere to go? Similarly, nationally small parties have few politicians who need temporary housing during periods of national misfortune. These competing motivations could alter the relative emphasis that parties place on policy making.

We therefore expect that parties that control a large proportion of seats in their national legislature will exhibit relatively less bias towards incumbents, because they are using the EP lists for numerous purposes simultaneously. Smaller parties, meanwhile, will be more likely to maintain a policy making focus because they are not juggling other ranking strategies.

Hypothesis 4. *Parties with a smaller share of national legislative seats will prioritize incumbents.*

In general, parties with limited electoral options in other venues, will face fewer trade-offs in pursuing their goals through nomination strategies. When you have limited success

in other institutions, you will maximize votes, obtain the most offices, and influence policy most effectively by investing in candidates with previous success in the current institution.

3.5 Attitudes Towards Europe

Finally, it seems sensible to account for the possibility of ideological differences in strategies of candidate rankings. Individual parties take policy positions with respect to the European Union. Some parties take strongly euroskeptic positions, opposing European expansion while other parties push for deeper integration and stronger powers for supranational institutions. Parties outline their policy positions vis-a-vis the European Union during elections, on the campaign trail, and in manifestos. In general, we have weak expectation about differences in candidate ranking priorities or party emphasis on policy making stemming from euro-skeptic or pro-integration views. Euroskeptics may have just as much interest in nominating capable MEPs as pro-European parties, if only to more effectively undermine European institutions. While we include this variable mostly as a control, we have weak expectations that pro-Europe parties will emphasize policy making ability in the EP more than euroskeptics.

Hypothesis 5. *Pro-EU parties will prioritize incumbents when nominating EP candidates*

Note that there is a fundamental distinction between approving of an institution and emphasizing it in your policy program; anti-system parties may, in general, find existing institutions highly salient venues for pursuing policy goals. Including attitudes in our analysis allows us to parse out how these related—but different—aspects of a party's approach towards Europe correspond with their nomination strategies. This variable helps us parse the correlated, but differential, effects of emphasis and attitude.

4 The EP Biographies Project

Evaluating list placement strategies requires extensive data on the characteristics of candidates. Most existing studies of the EP focus on elected MEPs rather than candidates

16

(Patzelt 1999, Hix, Hobolt & Høyland 2012, Daniel 2013) or examine a single country (Schweitzer & Carl-Christoph 1989, Westlake 1994, Kauppi 1996, Linek & Outly 2006, Gherghina & Chiru 2009).[7] Attempts to survey candidates have had low response rates (Norris & Franklin 1997, Farrell, Hix, Johnson & Scully 2006). Even the largest candidate survey project covering European elections, the European Parliament Candidate Election Study (EECS), has response rates to its 6500 surveys ranging between 0% and 40% of a party's candidates (Giebler, Haus & Wessels 2010), and few parties are represented by more than one or two respondents. Thus, while these surveys generate reasonable pictures of candidate characteristics on average, they provide limited traction for questions about how candidate selection strategies vary across parties.

Therefore, we collected original data describing EP candidate characteristics and experiences. In the months before the 2009 EP election, we gathered native language candidate information from internet sources for virtually all national parties predicted by Hix, Marsh & Vivyan (2009) to receive a single seat in the 2009 EP election.[8] We drew the bulk of the biographical information from official party websites, but also used other sources, including blogs, personal websites, media reports, and governments' candidate rolls. The biographical materials ranged from short descriptions to full CVs.

Fluent language speakers then coded information about salient political positions, career histories, and demographic variables for each candidate. Coding biographies is extremely time and resource intensive, so we focused those efforts on a sample of EU countries including both the largest, most powerful countries and representatives of the major regions of Europe save Scandinavia. The sample includes 3089 candidates from 71 national parties in 12 countries: Bulgaria, Czech Republic, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, the Netherlands, Romania, Spain and the United Kingdom (see Table 2).[9] While we include

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[7] Blomgren (1999) studies a sample of three countries.

[8] We were unable to find lists and/or biographies for only 4 parties in this group.

[9] One possible concern about our sample is that it is non-representative. To test for sample bias, we gathered descriptive data on all our independent variables (see section 5) across the EU, and performed comparisons between parties within and outside of our sample. In general, the parties in our sample are largely representative of the European population. The supplementary appendix provides descriptive statis-

Table 2: Number of Candidates per Country

Country	Number of Candidates Coded
Bulgaria	51 (2%)
Czech Republic	188 (6%)
France	991 (32%)
Germany	199 (6%)
Greece	132 (4%)
Hungary	78 (3%)
Ireland [Excluded from analysis]	30 (1%)
Italy	428 (14%)
Netherlands	190 (6%)
Romania	153 (5%)
Spain	300 (10%)
UK	352 (11%)
Total	3092

descriptive statistics about Ireland here for illustrative purposes, it is not included in any of our statistical models because it uses STV for EP elections.[10]

We distinguish between viable and non-viable candidates. For a candidate to be classified as viable, she must be placed no more than four positions below the lowest successfully elected candidate on national lists.[11] This cutoff serves as proxy for whether or not a candidate's list position was "in the ballpark" of electability. In our subsequent analysis, we focus on explaining how parties select and order their most viable candidates from all of the candidates included in the list. Thus, while our models consider every candidate listed, they focus on ordering decisions at the top of the list. This approach captures the idea that differences in rank-order at the top of the list are substantially more important than ordering decisions lower down the list. Thus, we break down candidate characteristics by viability in the

tics and statistical test results that support this argument.

[10]We did not fully code German lists because of excessive lengths. Specifically, we coded either as many candidates as each party listed, or approximately twice as many candidates per party, in list order,than were actually elected to the EP, whichever was smaller. As a result, unlike other countries, the current German data excludes some minor candidates at the bottom of lists.

[11]For regional PR lists with small district magnitude and much more predictable election outcomes and seat distributions, we label candidates as viable if they are no lower than one position below the lowest successfully elected candidate. Our results are robust to perturbing these cutoffs.

Table 3: Candidates With Elected Experience

Country	All Candidates		Highly Viable Candidates	
	Elected Experience	No Experience	Elected Experience	No Experience
Bulgaria	14 (27%)	37 (73%)	10 (42%)	14 (58%)
Czech Republic	62 (33%)	126 (67%)	32 (64%)	18 (36%)
France	422 (43%)	569 (57%)	86 (70%)	37 (30%)
Germany	128 (64%)	71 (36%)	105 (81%)	25 (19%)
Greece	34 (26%)	98 (74%)	22 (48%)	24 (52%)
Hungary	47 (60%)	31 (40%)	21 (66%)	11 (34%)
Ireland	25 (83%)	5 (17%)	25 (83%)	5 (17%)
Italy	217 (51%)	211 (49%)	89 (87%)	13 (13%)
Netherlands	62 (33%)	128 (67%)	27 (44%)	34 (56%)
Romania	59 (39%)	94 (61%)	33 (72%)	13 (28%)
Spain	76 (25%)	224 (75%)	44 (59%)	30 (41%)
UK	176 (50%)	176 (50%)	89 (70%)	38 (30%)
Total	1322 (43%)	1770 (57%)	583 (70%)	262 (30%)

descriptive statistics that we present here.

We recorded all elected political positions mentioned in the candidate biographies. We differentiated between local, regional and national positions. While 43% percent of candidates had held some type of elected position (Table 3), 69% of viable candidates had been elected to office. Individuals near the top of their lists frequently had multiple elected positions in their biographies. Yet, there were significant cross-national differences. In Greece, Spain, and the Netherlands, only about one third of candidates reported elected experience while in Ireland, the UK, and France, experience in an elected office was far more common.

5   Other Data

We supplemented our biographical data with information from a variety of sources, all measured and varying at the level of the national party. First, we measured national party size at home (*% Seats*), and party governing status (*In Government*) from the *European Journal of Political Research*. We coded EP group identity (*Big 3 Group*) from the time

Table 4: Determinants of Candidate Ranking on EP Lists

Hypothesis	Operationalization	Variable Name
Institutional Emphasis	Proportion of manifesto sentence fragments mentioning EU	EU Emphasis
Potential for Productivity	Big 3 EU group dummy	Big 3 Group
Inter-institutional Coordination	National governing status dummy	In Government
Venue Options & Career Management	Proportion of seats held in national lower house	% Seats
Pro-Anti EU Position	Manifesto pro-integration sentence fragment proportion minus anti-integration proportion	Pro/Anti EU

of the election in 2009. We also made extensive use of the PIREDEU group's 2009 European election study (EES 2010), drawing our measures of support for, and emphasis on, European institutions from PIREDEU's EP election manifesto study. These manifestos are unique EP election manifestos drafted by national parties, as European groups do not campaign on single manifestos.[12] We operationalized EU attitudes (*Pro/Anti EU*) in terms of the proportion of sentence fragments in the party's manifesto that the PIREDEU coders classified as pro-integration minus the proportion of sentence fragments that they coded as integration-sceptic.[13] We measure a party's emphasis on Europe (*EU Emphasis*) in terms of the total proportion of sentence fragments in their manifestos classified as pertaining to EU institutions. Table 4 summarizes the independent variables in our analysis. The supplementary appendix contains summary, and covariance, statistics for these variables, and a discussion of collinearity.

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[12]Although parties are, of course, able to adopt European-wide party manifesto language if they wish.

[13]This is the pro_anti_EU variable in the PIREDEU dataset.

6 Modeling List Construction

Our goal is to model the decisions that parties make when ranking candidates on their EP lists. Parties may rely on more or less centralized selectorates and a variety of decision-making processes when developing lists (Rahat & Hazan 2001). Thus, while our modeling framework treats parties largely as unitary actors, we emphasize that this approach represents a deliberate over-simplification of the true process. This model pays substantial dividends by focusing our attention on how broad party circumstances translate into nomination behavior. In some parties this process may represent explicit strategy by a small leadership, in others, the result of a more complex choice process.[14]

We model which candidates parties selected for viable—as defined in the previous section—list spots, and how parties rank candidates within these viable positions. There is a set $I = \{1, 2, \ldots, n\}$ of available candidates across all parties, with each potential nominee indexed by $i \in I$. For simplicity, we assume that parties make selections in list order—that they choose the candidate heading the party list first, and so on. Furthermore, we assume that a function, $f(\Theta_t^p, \Psi_t^p, \mathbf{x_p}, i) = \Pr(i_{pt} = i)$, probabilistically determines party p's choice of the candidate at list position t, where $\Theta_t^p \subset I$ is the set of candidates on party list p after choice $t-1$, $\Psi_t^p \subset I$ is the set of party p's potential candidates at choice t, $\mathbf{x_p}$ is a vector of covariates describing party p, and $i_{pt} \in I$ is the candidate that party p selects for list position t.[15]

Each element of Ψ_0^p, the party's pool of available candidates, is associated with a K-vector, $\boldsymbol{\gamma_i}$, representing candidate i's membership in each of K ideal types, or groups. In this paper, we group potential viable candidates in terms of their previous elected experience at the

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[14]How party organization affects nomination strategy is a fascinating topic of potential investigation. Unfortunately, reliable data on this question is difficult to obtain across the parties in our sample. Nonetheless, we use candidate survey data to investigate how one aspect of party organization—centralization of candidate selection—affects nomination strategy, in the supplementary appendix. While our core results are robust to including this variable in the analysis, we find that centralized parties place less emphasis on incumbency than decentralized parties, suggesting the potential for future work on this topic.

[15]A number of technical assumptions complete the description of $f(\cdot)$: $\Theta_t^p \cap \Psi_t^p = \emptyset$, $\Theta_t^p \subset \Psi_0^p$ $\forall t$, $\Psi_t^p \subset \Psi_0^p$ $\forall t$, and $\Theta_0^p = \emptyset$.

local/regional and national levels, and their incumbency status in the 2009 European election.[16] Specifically, available candidates could hold membership in either the no-experience category, or in some combination of the local/regional, national, and incumbent categories. So, we represented every candidate with no record of previous elected experience by the vector $\boldsymbol{\gamma_i} = (1, 0, 0, 0)$, while an incumbent with previous elected experience at both the local/regional and national levels obtained the coding $\boldsymbol{\gamma_i} = (0, 1, 1, 1)$, and so on. Thus, multiple group membership is possible, except for candidates with no prior elected experience. This is an important modeling decision with respect to our theory, since it allows for the possibility that incumbents are chosen based on previous national, or other, electoral experience.

In general, party p's choice of nominee for list place t might depend both on the characteristics of the remaining available candidates, Ψ_t^p, and those of the members already on the list at point t, Θ_t^p. For example, parties might wish to balance the experience composition of their lists. Nonetheless, in this work, we make the simplifying assumption that parties' selections are independent of the choices that they have already made and that they consider only their remaining available candidates when making list selections (i.e. $f(\Theta_t^p, \Psi_t^p, \mathbf{x_p}, i) = f(\Psi_t^p, \mathbf{x_p}, i)$). Building on standard statistical models of choice, we assume that

$$f(\Psi_t^p, \mathbf{x_p}, i | \boldsymbol{\beta}) = \begin{cases} 0 & \text{if } i \notin \Psi_t^p \\ \dfrac{\sum_{k=1}^{K}\left(\gamma_{ik} \cdot e^{\mathbf{x_p}\boldsymbol{\beta_k}}\right)}{\sum_{j \in \Psi_t^p}\left[\sum_{k=1}^{K}\left(\gamma_{jk} \cdot e^{\mathbf{x_p}\boldsymbol{\beta_k}}\right)\right]} & \text{otherwise.} \end{cases} \tag{1}$$

Equation 1 implies that parties make nomination choices in terms of how much affinity they feel towards candidates of each ideal type, and that affinity compounds additively for individuals that belong to multiple groups. Parties' characteristics determine their preferences, and, in particular, each $\boldsymbol{\beta_k}$ is a vector of m coefficients that captures the extent to which

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[16]While 1.7 per cent of non-incumbents in the dataset had previous EP experience, explicitly coding such experience has no impact on results because it is so rare. 2009 incumbents were coded as those individuals sitting in the EP at the end of the 6th term, thereby omitting candidates who ran in the preceding EP election, immediately vacated their positions, and gained no EP policymaking experience (e.g. Silvio Berlusconi).

parties value candidates representing group k, as a function of party characteristics $\mathbf{x_p}$. We represent a party's overall bias towards a potential nominee in terms of the sum of the party's affinity towards each of the K types, weighted by the potential candidate's degree of membership—described by $\boldsymbol{\gamma_i}$—in each group. The probability that party p selects candidate i for list position p is simply this bias divided by the party's overall affinity towards the candidate pool that remains at choice t.

Note that this model is a generalization of multinomial logit (see e.g. Long 1997). Indeed, if, at every time t, every Ψ_t^p contains K candidates, each of which is a full member of just one of the K candidate groups, and no two members of Ψ_t^p belong to the same group, equation 1 simplifies to the functional form assumed by multinomial logit. Therefore, one can interpret the coefficient matrix $\boldsymbol{\beta}$ in the model that we present here similarly to coefficients in a multinomial logit; specifically, they capture the relative affinity that parties sporting a particular set of characteristics have for full representatives of each of the K candidate groups, given the counterfactual situation in which party p has the opportunity to select a single candidate from a full set of ideal types.[17] This characteristic of the estimator is crucial to understanding how we use the model to examine European nomination behavior. In particular, we do not directly address questions of candidate supply in this paper. Rather, we ask: who is at the top of the list, and why, given the menu of candidates available to the party? Thus, for example, the fact that small parties are less likely to have incumbents does not reduce our estimate of the value that such parties place on experienced candidates. The lack of pertinent observations makes our estimates less certain, but the model can capture the fact that small parties value the incumbents that they do have very highly. Put another way, the quantity of interest here is not who, on aggregate, different types of parties place into European office. Rather, we ask who they would prioritize were they given the chance to choose their ideal type. Ideally, we would predict parties' list placements in terms of

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[17]In reality, parties forming lists never face the choice structure implied by the multinomial logit at each—and sometimes even at any—list position. The model we describe here takes this complicated choice structure into account, adjusting coefficient and error estimates to reflect the empirical data structure. Nonetheless, it provides predictions of the choices that parties would be likely to make given an idealized choice structure.

the universe of potential candidates available to them. Unfortunately, this set is generally impossible to observe, and even harder to collect biographical data about. Therefore, we analyze how parties select viable candidates—or how they fill the places at the top of their lists that have some probability of providing nominees with seats in the legislature—from the set of candidates that appear on the entire list. Our results, therefore, speak to how parties prioritize among candidates that are willing to appear on the list.

We model the selection and ordering of n_p top list positions from N_p total list spots for each party, p.[18] In so doing, we assume that the universe of potential nominees to top list positions, Ψ_0^p, is captured by each party's full list.[19] Combined with equation 1, this strategy leads to the observed data likelihood

$$\prod_{p\in P}\prod_{t=1}^{n_p} \frac{\sum_{k=1}^{K}\left(\gamma_{c(p,t)k}\cdot e^{\mathbf{x_p}\boldsymbol{\beta_k}}\right)}{\sum_{j\in\Psi_t^p}\left[\sum_{k=1}^{K}\left(\gamma_{jk}\cdot e^{\mathbf{x_p}\boldsymbol{\beta_k}}\right)\right]},\tag{2}$$

where $c(p,t)$ is a function mapping party p's nominee at list position t into I. Note that this likelihood makes two key modeling assumptions explicit. First, as we mention above, we assume that parties make their viable list placement decisions in order, and that each choice is independent of previous list placements. Second, each party's nominations are strategically independent of other parties' decisions. That is, we model list construction as decision-theoretic, rather than game-theoretic. Both of these assumptions are restrictive. Nonetheless, we think that they represent a reasonable foundation for systematic investigation of the determinants of party list construction.

We estimated the model using a Bayesian approach and adopted diffuse normal priors on the coefficients, $\boldsymbol{\beta}$. Specifically, after making the identifying restriction that the first row

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[18]In general, parties in EP elections nominate substantially more candidates to their lists than can possibly expect to obtain seats in the Parliament, such that $N_p > n_p$ by some measure. In fact, many parties maintain lists that are longer than the total number of EP seats allocated to representatives of their countries.

[19]It is certainly possible to conceive of situations when this assumption might break down. For instance, some potential nominees, failing to attain viable positions, might refuse any list spot, and thus escape our notice. Nonetheless, this approach represents perhaps the only practical way to approximate the full viable nominee pool.

of the parameter matrix $\boldsymbol{\beta_1} = 0$, we assumed that each $\boldsymbol{\beta_2}, \boldsymbol{\beta_3}, \ldots, \boldsymbol{\beta_K} \sim N_m(0, 25 \cdot \mathbf{I}_m)$, a priori. The supplemental appendix provides a detailed description of the sampling algorithm that we used to fit the model.

7   Results and Discussion

We applied this model to the European Biographies data, including the independent variables mentioned in table 4 in the embedded regression equation.[20] We also included country dummies in our specification in order to control for unobserved cross-national variation in appetites for different types of candidates. These controls are important for a variety of reasons, but serve primarily to account for differences in European electoral procedures across states. In particular, fixed effects control for any possible differences between open and closed list systems in nomination patterns.[21] Moreover, the inclusion of country fixed effects means that our results are driven by inter-party differences within countries rather than cross-country differences in party characteristics, since the fixed effects fully account for the latter form of variation.

Figure 2 displays the model coefficient estimates graphically, suppressing the country dummy coefficient estimates for readability.[22] The model generates a set of coefficient estimates for each of the K experience-based groups of candidates. Figure 2, which can be read like a regression plot for a multinomial logit model, uses pure incumbents as the reference category because our foremost interest is in examining when parties prioritize policy mak-

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[20]We standardized continuous independent variables to fall roughly between -1 and 1 before fitting the model.

[21]The supplementary appendix describes two model specifications examining whether party nomination patterns vary across list types. We find little evidence for this proposition. Our results are also robust to dropping Italy, the only country in our sample where preference votes significantly perturbed party rank order.

[22]We had to drop a number of party lists from the dataset because of missing covariate data. These include (with associated PIRDEU codes and candidate counts) the Czech Green Party (1203110, 25 candidates), Czech SNK/European Democrats (1203321, 29 candidates), Dutch Party for Animals (1528006, 15 candidates), Italian Anticapitalist Left (1380212, 72 candidates), Romanian Social Democrats (1642300, 30 candidates), Spanish Coalition for Europe (1724950, 50 candidates), Spanish Europe of the Peoples-The Greens (1724930, 50 candidates), and British Ulster Unionist Party (1826621, 1 candidate).

Figure 2: Regression coefficients (base category: incumbent)
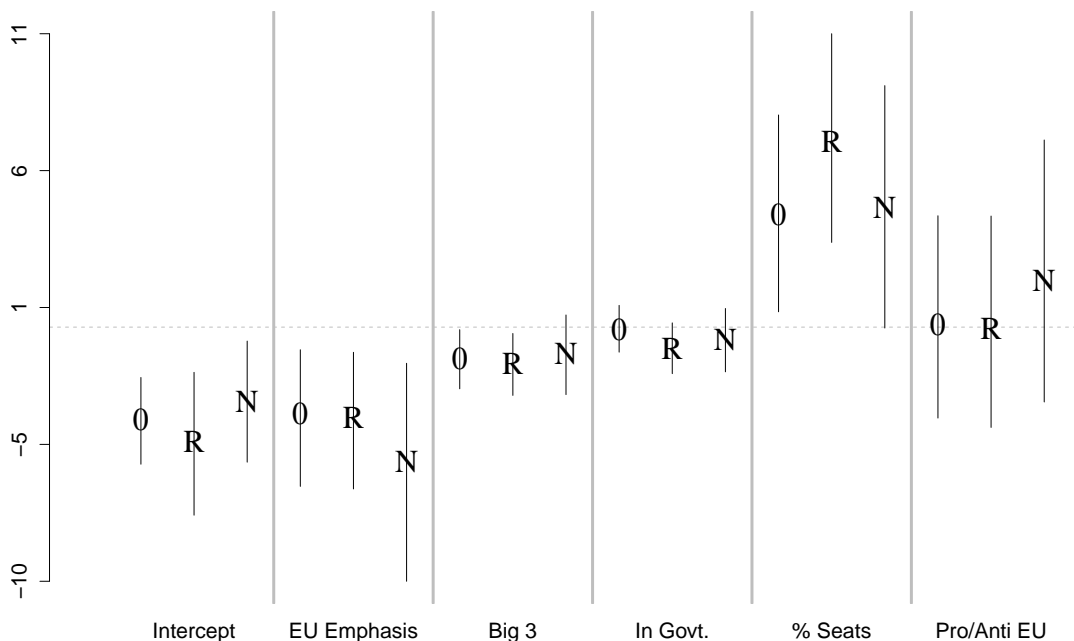
ing in their list creation strategies by preferring incumbents to other candidate types. We mark coefficients for nationally experienced candidates, candidates who have attained either regional or local offices, and inexperienced nominees, with **N**, **R**, and **0**, respectively. These coefficients represent the marginal relative tendency for parties to rank members of each of these candidate groups above an incumbent, given an idealized choice between representatives of each ideal type, in terms of party characteristics. We plot three such coefficients for each independent variable that we included in the analysis. Vertical lines represent 95 percent highest posterior density (HPD) regions. In general, the average effects displayed in figure 2 correspond to our expectations and are consistent with the idea that parties that have good reasons to value policy making in the EP prioritize incumbents more than other parties.

First, figure 2 shows that, on average, parties become more biased towards incumbents as the emphasis that they place on the EU in their programmatic documents grows. Indeed,

Figure 3: Party emphasis on electoral venue
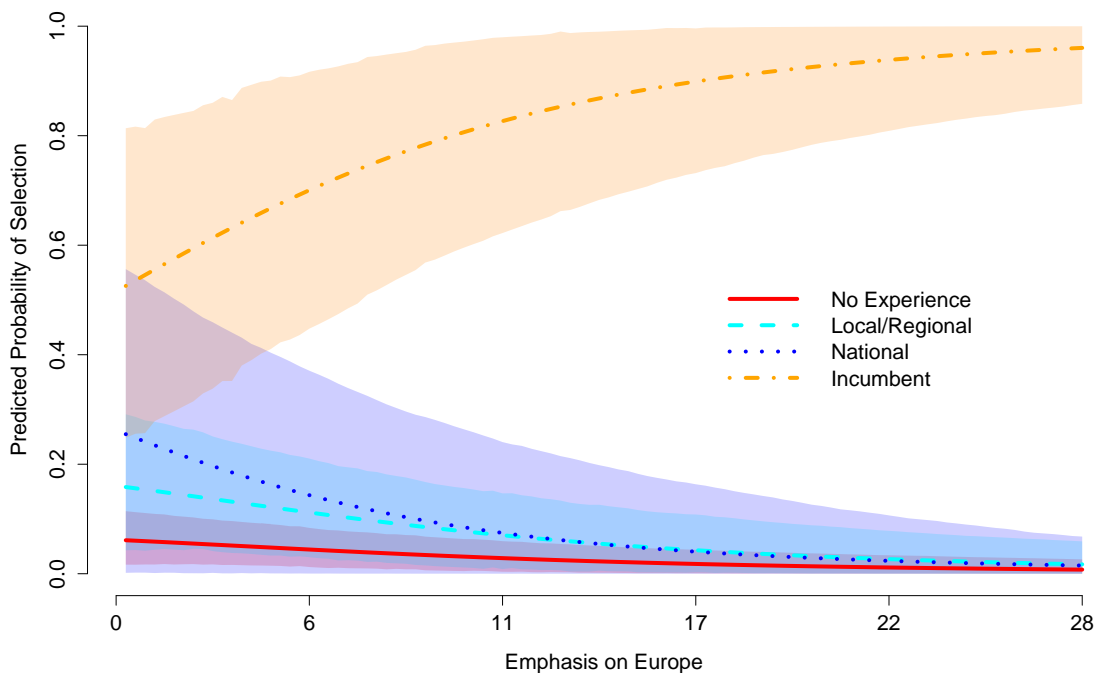
all three coefficients for this variable are negative, and their 95 percent HPD regions do
not cover zero, indicating a consistent increasing preference for incumbents over all three
alternative candidate types. Moreover, this effect is substantively overwhelming. Figure 3
lays plain the fact that parties that place substantial emphasis on the EU in their platforms
display a dramatic preference for incumbents. This figure plots predicted decision proba-
bilities for an average—with respect to size and ideology—out-of-government German party
that is a member of a big 3 group, facing a choice between four ideal types. That is, it must
choose between a non-incumbent, a candidate with no higher than local or regional expe-
rience, a candidate with only national experience, or an incumbent with no non-European
background.[23] The x-axis of figure 3 spans the within-sample variation in the salience that

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[23]We chose this comparison because it paints the overall picture effectively and focuses attention on the
fundamental choice between incumbency and other experience-based predictors of candidate quality. A
substantively identical story emerges if we compare pure incumbents to national candidates with regional
experience, or consider incumbents with previous career experience. Similarly, our choice of a German
opposition party as a representative case does not drive the results that we present here.

Figure 4: European party group membership
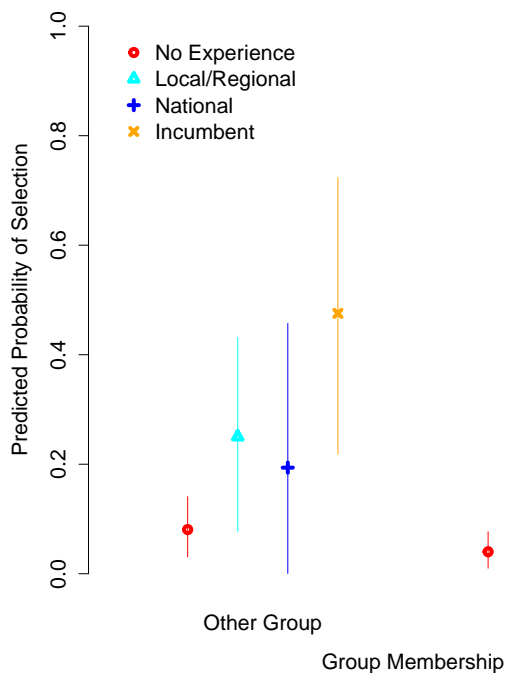
parties place on Europe in their manifestos and vertical lines represent 95 per cent HPD intervals around the predicted probabilities. Parties that are especially uninterested in the venue are just as likely to choose national, and in extreme cases, local or regional candidates, as they are incumbents. Yet, as EU emphasis increases, incumbents quickly become the dominant option. Indeed, the probability of choosing an incumbent rises from around one half for EU-indifferent parties to nearly one among parties that place extremely high value on the venue. For parties that really take EU policy seriously, incumbents are, by far, the first choice. These results provide resounding support for hypothesis 1. Generally, given the fact that incumbents have distinct advantages in policy production within the EP, this behavior is consistent with the idea that parties that especially care about a particular institution will use nomination strategies to develop policy influence within a given legislature.

Turning to hypothesis 2, we find that parties that belonged to the three dominant groups in the EP prior to the 2009 election did tend to select incumbents at higher rates than other

parties. All three coefficients in figure 2 fall below zero, and the 95 per cent HPD regions for the novices and candidates with regional experience exclude zero. Furthermore, the model estimates that the probability that the coefficient for nationally experienced candidates is negative is greater than 0.9.[24] Thus, it is probable that, looking across candidate types, parties within the big 3 groups place a higher emphasis on incumbency than do parties hailing from smaller groups. In terms of predicted probabilities, figure 4 shows that, at standard levels of statistical confidence, the predicted probability that such a party will choose an incumbent over a national candidate is statistically distinguishable for parties in dominant groups, but not for their less influentially placed counterparts. In fact, the estimated probability of selecting an incumbent over another option increases by about 26 percentage points across party group types, although the variability around that estimate is quite large (95% HPD=(0.03,0.52)). We can also use the model to calculate how the difference in the probability of selecting ideal candidate types differs across party group membership. For example, when faced with a choice between an incumbent and a national candidate, a representative big 3 party is roughly 61 per cent more likely to select an incumbent, while a representative party belonging to another group is only 28 per cent more likely to select the incumbent. These estimates are, of course, subject to error, but the model indicates that the probability that the big 3 premium on incumbency—relative to national experience—exceeds that of other group members is almost 96 per cent. This difference in incumbency premium is even larger for regional and novice candidates. We have, therefore, strong evidence to support the contention that parties in big 3 groups value incumbency over other forms of political experience, including a history holding national legislative office. This is consistent with the general contention that parties that have the potential to influence policy within a given venue are most likely to strategically nominate candidates with the connections or aptitude necessary to effectively produce policy once in the target office. While less emphatic than the evidence with respect to hypothesis 1, our findings show that hypothesis 2 is consistent

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[24]Put another way, the 90 per cent credible interval excludes zero. Remember that our Bayesian approach allows for such probabilistic statements about parameter estimates.

with the data.

Hypothesis 3 maintains that party governing status positively predicts policy-making emphasis and a preference for incumbents. Governing parties engage in European policy making within the Council and require competent partners in the EP if they wish to be most effective. They also bear the brunt of national distaste with European policy outcomes. Here, we find weak support for our argument. Again, all three coefficients in figure 2 are negative, as expected, yet all three 95 per cent HPD regions cover zero. Using our Bayesian approach, we find that the probabilities that the coefficients for novice, regionally experienced, and nationally experienced candidates are less than zero are 0.58, 0.95, and 0.79, respectively. Thus, while the balance of evidence is consistent with hypothesis 3, it fails to meet conventional null-hypothesis-test-based standards for statistical significance. It is possible that multicollinearity between our independent variables is undermining our ability to draw strong statistical conclusions here; we address this issue in the supplementary appendix.

On the other hand, as hypothesis 4 predicts, parties with minimal national representation prefer incumbents to other types of candidates, even nationally experienced politicians. Remember that the model predicts choices based on the options at hand. Thus, while small national parties are likely to have limited supplies of both incumbents and candidates with other experience, when they do face such an option, they prioritize incumbency. This is consistent with the idea that parties that are not successful in multiple venues will have less reason to adopt strategies that involve prioritizing outsiders over those with venue-specific backgrounds. Figure 5 shows that nationally larger parties choose not only nationally experienced politicians, but also those with regional and local experience at rates that are statistically indistinguishable from incumbents. For very large parties, even the 95 percent HPD intervals for incumbents and novices overlap. This makes sense because parties with strong outside options have incentives to pursue cross-venue candidate management strategies at the expense of cultivating policy experience. They can benefit at the national

Figure 5: Success in a competing electoral venue
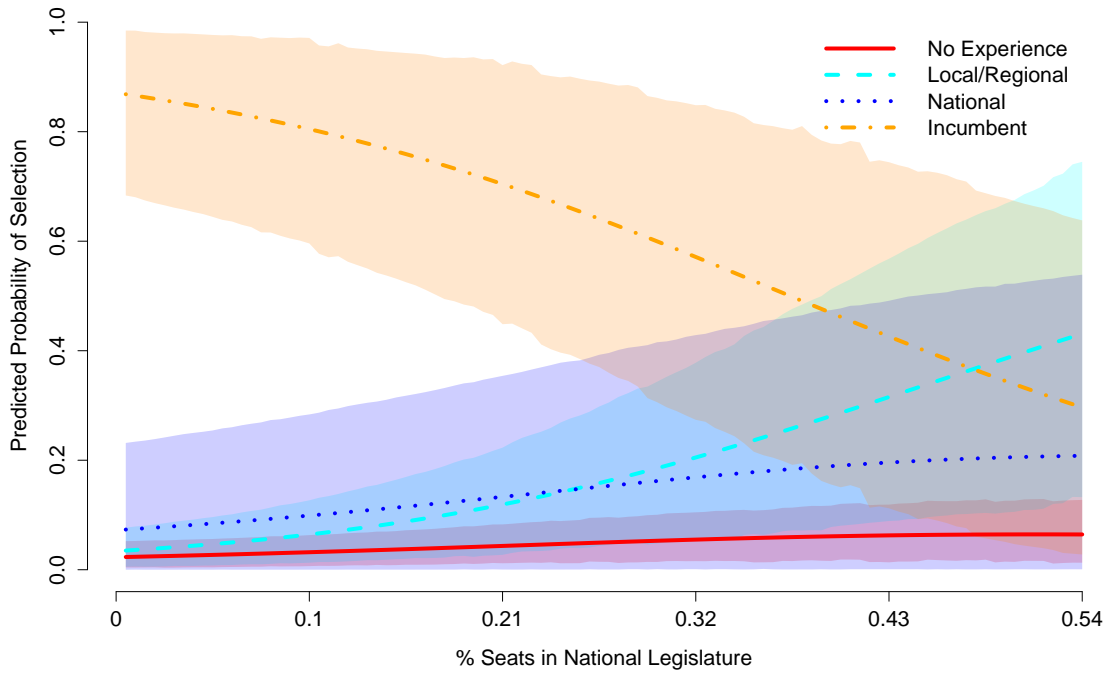
level from grooming young talent in the EP and nationally experienced members can ride out electoral dry spells with work at the European level, or use European seats as a hedge against poor national electoral fortunes. Furthermore, obtaining a reputation for placing party members that are nearing retirement in EP jobs—in other words, for rewarding aging party stalwarts for their years of service—might enhance an organization's ability to recruit candidates at all levels, and meets individuals' office-seeking demands. Additionally, because they will also tend to have more seats in the EP than their small national counterparts, large parties are better able to sacrifice an incumbent or two to pursue competing goals.[25]

Finally, we find no clear relationship between attitudes towards Europe and preference for incumbents, contra hypothesis 5. On the one hand, this seems like an unintuitive result. Why should euroskeptics engage in long-term careers, and perhaps even develop policy mak-

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[25]We do not explicitly model list balancing in our analysis but this result indicates that it deserves further investigation in follow-up work.

ing advantages, within the EP? On the other hand, this result exposes the key distinction between attitudes and emphasis. What matters for nomination decisions is not so much whether or not you like an institution, but if you care about the policies that the institution oversees.

8   Conclusion

Experienced candidates are a scarce commodity. Thus, effective parties will rank candidates on lists to best accomplish their electoral, organizational and policy goals. The unique character of the EP allows us to identify party motivations based on the career backgrounds of the candidates ranked towards the tops of party lists. Clearly, this informs our understanding of European politics, but it also addresses comparative questions about how, and under what circumstances, parties use nominations to pursue votes, offices, and policy. We find that the relative emphasis that a party places on the EU, the party's expected potential to be productive in the EP, and the party's status at the national level have implications for what sorts of candidates they prefer to provide with valuable electoral nominations. There is also weak evidence that parties that need to coordinate policy production across governing institutions prioritize institutional experience when selecting candidates.

More generally, our results imply that partisan variation in attitudes towards particular offices, the ability to affect policy in an institution, and the opportunity to place candidates across electoral venues, should all help to explain the types of politicians that parties choose to represent them in a given legislature. Thus, we propose—and provide evidence in support of—a broad framework for understanding how parties that compete in a variety of electoral contests may strategically use nomination to achieve over-arching goals. Moreover, parties that seek policy in one venue may prioritize other goals elsewhere. Thus, our results should encourage scholars to further develop a research agenda that acknowledges that goal-seeking behavior by parties is often context-dependent, and while parties sometimes appear one dimensional when evaluated in light of a single institution, they may pursue a more complex

strategy across venues. Furthermore, our results have broad implications for understanding patterns of legislator behavior. Because the power to nominate provides parties with overwhelming control over who actually gets into office in many systems, party-based mechanisms may be more comparatively influential in shaping how legislators behave in office than incentives that derive from personal vote cultivation. To enjoy career success, legislators must be aware of party goals and invest their time and resources to meet those goals. Indeed, party goals may provide incentives for legislators to invest in policy making expertise in some situations, but to emphasize electoral visibility, constituency service, or fund-raising in others (Adler & Wilkerson 2012).

Candidate nomination strategies should, in turn, affect legislative policy making effectiveness. For instance, our finding that parties that expect to govern nominate candidates with policy making advantages suggests that surprise electoral victories are likely to reduce legislative competence since the unexpected winner likely nominated candidates with qualities other than legislative expertise. This is an intuitive argument, but one previously based on little empirical evidence. Similarly, our emphasis on party nomination strategies may also help explain why some parties enjoy more policy influence than others within a legislature, even if they hold similar numbers of seats. Parties that prioritize candidates with policy making expertise possess advantages in understanding complex issues, manipulating parliamentary procedures, and developing personal networks. Parties that nominate candidates on the basis of other goals—like electoral visibility or fund-raising capability—may be left at a disadvantage when it comes to passing legislation. Thus, how parties choose to rank candidates has downstream implications for legislative output and policy influence. Understanding those nomination choices, therefore, is critical if we wish to account for patterns of legislative policy making within and across countries, and over time.

Finally, we introduce data that provide researchers with a rich vein of information about candidates in European elections, and statistical tools that are applicable to the study of candidate nomination in many contexts. Given that the EP biographies dataset contains a

number of characteristics beyond legislative experience of candidates, it allows researchers to investigate many other theoretical questions about the way parties prioritize candidate characteristics or skills. For example, when do parties prioritize female candidates? Do parties nominate individuals with particular professional backgrounds to accomplish their goals in parliament? Do candidates' educations matter for nomination? The dataset that we introduce will allow researchers to investigate a multitude of questions about what different types of parties value in their candidates. And, as candidate-level electoral data becomes more readily available, scholars can leverage the methods that we introduce here to study nomination strategies in other elections.

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Appendix

Descriptive Statistics

Table 5: Descriptive Statistics, Lists Level

	Mean	Std. Deviation	Min	Max
EU Emph.	6.58	7.23	0.00	27.51
Big 3 Group	0.53	0.50	0.00	1.00
In Govt.	0.30	0.46	0.00	1.00
% Seats	0.18	0.19	0.00	0.54
Pro/Anti EU	-0.87	23.18	-76.92	22.69

Table 6: Correlation Matrix and Variance Inflation Factors

	EU Emph.	Big 3 Group	In Govt.	% Seats	Pro/Anti EU	VIF
EU Emph.	1.00	-0.01	-0.01	-0.06	-0.57	1.85
Big 3 Group	-0.01	1.00	0.45	0.59	0.54	2.18
In Govt.	-0.01	0.45	1.00	0.71	0.33	2.07
% Seats	-0.06	0.59	0.71	1.00	0.39	2.51
Pro/Anti EU	-0.57	0.54	0.33	0.39	1.00	2.65

Tables 5 and 6 provide summary statistics, cross-variable correlations, and variance inflation factors for the independent variables, for lists included in the core analysis. A potential point of concern is that multicollinearity may be causing us to overstate our standard errors, making it difficult to establish statistically strong results. Yet, while some of the independent variables correlate highly with one another, the variance inflation factors—a measure of multicollinearity—are all reasonably low. Thus, multicollinearity is likely to be responsible for only moderately inflating our standard error estimates.

Table 7 lists descriptive statistics of all independent variables for parties that received a seat in the 2009 EP election, in and out-of-sample. Hotelling's T-squared test, a multivariate analog to the two-sample t-test, cannot reject the null hypothesis that the means of the two samples are equal at the 0.05 level. To further examine this issue, we performed as series of

Table 7: Descriptive Statistics, Party Level

| | In Sample | | | | Out of Sample | | | |
	Mean	SD	Min	Max	Mean	SD	Min	Max
EU Emph.	4.67	5.08	0	27.51	4.88	3.94	0.00	20.75
Big 3 Group	0.53	0.50	0.00	1.00	0.67	0.47	0.00	1.00
In Govt.	0.29	0.46	0.00	1.00	0.45	0.50	0.00	1.00
% Seats	0.16	0.17	0.00	0.54	0.17	0.13	0.00	0.53
Pro/Anti EU	1.58	17.45	-76.92	22.69	5.54	13.40	-37.84	49.45

two-sample t-tests, comparing in and out of sample averages for each independent variable. We could not reject the null hypothesis that the two sample means were equal, at the 0.05 level, for any variable except for *in government*.[26] Thus, our sample appears largely representative of the population of parties that competed in EP elections in 2009, with the caveat that governing parties may be under-represented in our analysis.

Model Fitting

We fit the model described in section 6 using Markov chain Monte Carlo (MCMC) methods. We used a basic Metropolis-Hastings algorithm and implemented the sampler using the Scythe Statistical Library (Pemstein, Quinn & Martin 2011) and the R Language for statistical computing (R Development Core Team 2010).[27] The algorithm generates a chain of values for the $K \times m$ coefficient matrix $\boldsymbol{\beta}$ that, at convergence, represents a random walk over the posterior probability distribution of the coefficient matrix, based on the model in section 6. The algorithm begins with an arbitrary starting matrix $\boldsymbol{\beta}^0$, subject to the identifying constraint that the first row of the coefficient matrix $\boldsymbol{\beta_1} = 0$. Next, at each iteration s, the sampler generates a draw from the proposal distribution,

$$\boldsymbol{\beta_{-1}}^p \sim \mathcal{N}_{m(K-1)} \left(\boldsymbol{\beta_{-1}}^{s-1}, c^2 \mathbf{I}_{m(K-1)} \right), \tag{3}$$

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[26]We did not correct for multiple testing here. Thus, the probability that we encountered a type I error in any of these five tests is around 20 per cent.

[27]The replication package for this paper, which can be found at `http://thedata.harvard.edu/dvn/dv/dbp`, contains both data and software to fit the models presented in the paper.

where $\boldsymbol{\beta_{-1}}$ is the submatrix of $\boldsymbol{\beta}$ that excludes $\boldsymbol{\beta}$'s first row, $\boldsymbol{\beta_1}$, and c is a tuning parameter that we set to 0.09 in practice. Next, using equation 2 and our assumed prior distribution for $\boldsymbol{\beta}$, the sampler computes an acceptance probability,

$$r = \min\left(1, \frac{g(\boldsymbol{\beta}^p|\Psi, \mathbf{X})}{g(\boldsymbol{\beta}^{s-1}|\Psi, \mathbf{X})}\right), \tag{4}$$

where Ψ is the set of all party sublists Ψ_t^p, $\mathbf{X}$ is the full matrix of party covariate vectors $\mathbf{x_p}$, and $g(\cdot)$ represents the posterior probability of the parameter matrix given the observed data. Finally, with probability r, the sampler sets $\boldsymbol{\beta}^s = \boldsymbol{\beta}^p$; otherwise, it sets $\boldsymbol{\beta}^s = \boldsymbol{\beta}^{s-1}$.

We ran ten chains of the sampler, from dispersed starting points, for six million iterations each, and discarded the first one million iterations of each chain to allow the sampler time to reach convergence. We saved every thousandth draw from each chain, recording five thousand draws to summarize the posterior distribution of $\boldsymbol{\beta}$ given our observed data. Standard MCMC diagnostics for the sample are consistent with Markov chain convergence (Gelman & Rubin 1992, Brooks & Gelman 1998).

Robustness Checks

We fit a number of alternative specifications to check the robustness of our results, and to check for the possibility of interaction effects. First, figure 6 displays the coefficient estimates for a model that includes a measure of the centrality of party nomination, which we drew from a candidate survey included in the PIREDEU group's 2009 European election study (EES 2010). Specifically, we coded the average response of party candidates, on a five-level ordinal scale, to the question: "In your party, how important are [National party officials] in the selection of candidates for the European Parliament?" We are forced to drop 12 parties from the analysis because their members did not provide a response to this question. Nonetheless, this model helps to establish that variations in the ways in which parties develop nomination strategies do not undermine our key findings. Our other results

Figure 6: Model including measure of national party role in selection
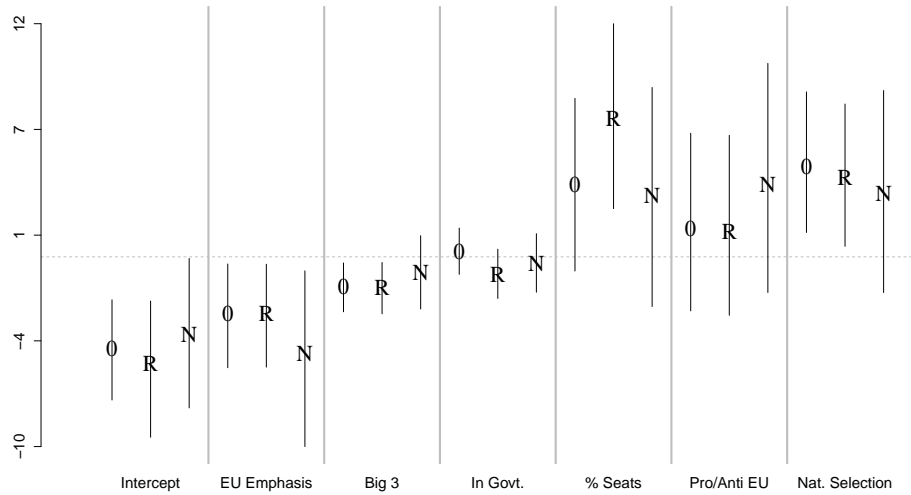
are largely robust to the inclusion of this additional variable, although the credible intervals around the party size coefficients for nationally experienced and inexperienced candidates now cross zero. Given the drop in sample size here, this rise in sampling variability is not surprising; also note that corresponding coefficients in our core model and in the model depicted in figure 6 are nowhere statistically distinguishable from one another. Furthermore this model provides some evidence that more centralized parties are actually more likely than decentralized parties to choose non-incumbent candidates, although the marginal effects only meet traditional levels of statistical significance for inexperienced and regionally experienced candidates. While admittedly post-hoc, one interpretation of this finding is that national party organs have more leeway, or inclination, to ignore incumbents in favor of broad party-wide nominating strategies. This is a topic that deserves further data collection and analysis.

Second, we fit a model examining the role that the type of proportional system, open or closed list, had on nomination strategy. Because list system is a country-level variable, we cannot include country fixed effects in this analysis. Thus, the model that figure 7 shows is substantially less controlled than our core analysis. Yet, while we therefore trust the findings in our core analysis more than these results—they control for list type in addition to a host of

Figure 7: Model including open list indicator
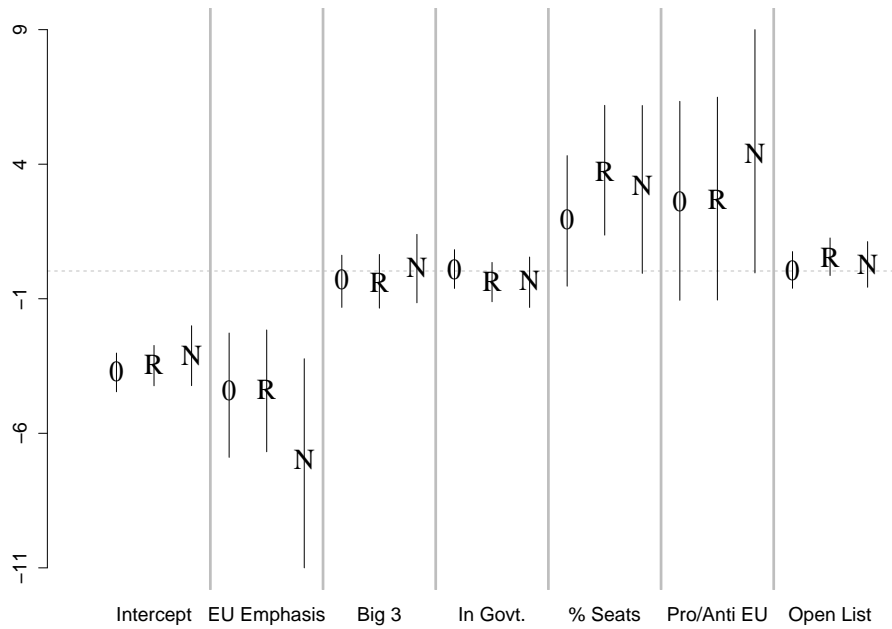
other fixed country-level characteristics—it is substantively interesting to ask if the type of list system affects parties' nomination strategies. In particular, one might expect that well-known candidates—likely those with national experience—would garner personal votes in open list systems, potentially influencing party strategy. Nonetheless, figure 7 provides little evidence that this is the case; the coefficients for open list are all near zero and statistically insignificant.

Finally, while we found no clear relationship between list type and nomination patterns, it is plausible that only parties that place particular emphasis on the EU would alter their nomination strategies in light of electoral institutions. Therefore, we test for an interaction between list type and EU emphasis. We find that the effect of EU emphasis is mitigated in open list systems, but the relevant coefficients are not statistically significant, as figure 8 shows. Thus, standard practice would suggest that we not include the interaction effect in our analysis.

Figure 8: Modeling including open list and its interaction with EU emphasis