Rewarding Parliamentary Work?

The effect of MEP performance on re(s)election

Isabelle DE CONINCK

Rewarding Parliamentary Work?

The effect of MEP performance on re(s)election

Isabelle DE CONINCK

Nr. 418

2021

Samenstelling van de examencommissie:

Prof. Dr. Trui Steen (voorzitter)
Prof. Dr. Steven Van Hecke (promotor)
Prof. Dr. Bart Maddens [KU Leuven] (copromotor)
Prof. Dr. Nathalie BRACK [Université Libre de Bruxelles]
Dr. Emmanuel SIGALAS [KU Leuven]
Dr. Mihail CHIRU [University of Oxford, United Kingdom]
Dr. Elena FRECH [Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität München, Germany]

Table of Contents

List of Figures

List of Tables

Abbreviations

BPV	Ballot Position Value
CC	Candidate-centred electoral system
COD	Codecision report
EP	European Parliament
EPG	European Political Group
EU	European Union
INI	Own initiative report
MEP	Member of European Parliament
PC	Party-centred electoral system

Country abbreviations

AT	Austria	FI	Finland	NL	the Netherlands
BE	Belgium	FR	France	PL	Poland
BG	Bulgaria	HR	Croatia	PT	Portugal
CY	Cyprus	HU	Hungary	RO	Romania
CZ	Czech Republic	IE	Ireland	SE	Sweden
DE	Germany	IT	Italy	SI	Slovenia
DK	Denmark	LT	Lithuania	SK	Slovakia
EE	Estonia	LU	Luxembourg	UK	United Kingdom
EL	Greece	LV	Latvia		
ES	Spain	MT	Malta		

Acknowledgements

Introductory chapter

The European Parliament (EP) is known for its high turnover: only half of its incumbents returns after the elections. Though the EP has grown in power and prestige over time, the assumption is that the lion's share of MEPs that do not return did not have an interest in pursuing their EP career further and left voluntarily: their ambition has spoken. The EP is often still portrayed as a retirement home, where national politicians go to die after their luck in the national arena has dried up. At the same time, the idea of the EP as a waiting room for national politics persists too. Starting politicians pay their dues in Strasbourg and Brussels, hoping the party will appreciate their effort and offer them a post in national politics afterwards.

Such perspectives on the EP attribute much of its extra-ordinary turnover rate to non-candidacy. Few incumbent MEPs return after the elections because they did not run the race. Instead, they retired or gladly moved on to other things. Those who competed unsuccessfully are understood to have succumbed to electoral defeat: the voters have spoken. Voter swings or strong opponents led to the MEP's defeat at booth. This story is simple. It is elegant. Yet, a crucial driver of turnover is missing: the party.

Sure, an MEP's ambition is the starting point for pathways to elite recirculation, and voters have the final say. However, neither may be sufficient for an MEP to renew his/her mandate because of the control parties exert over the candidate selection process. In fact, the majority of MEPs is elected using closed or flexible list systems in which not only their presence but also the rank order they occupy on the list is crucial to their chances to return after the elections. Party selectorates have the ultimate decision power over both selection and the order in which candidates appear on the list. They control which aspirants – be they incumbents or newcomers – are placed as candidates on the party's ballot list. Parties therefore have a tremendous control over which incumbents are returning to the EP after the elections; and the quality of representation more broadly.

The choices a party makes, in terms of who gets on the list and where, are vital to incumbents' chances of re-election and therefore central to legislative turnover. This 'choice before the choice' (Rahat & Hazan, 2010) reveals a lot about the party's priorities. The choices made by party selectorates then largely shape the composition of the Parliament and affect the quality of political representation. The selectoral aspect of turnover in the EP therefore undoubtedly merits our attention.

Generally, incumbents are attractive to parties because they have done the job before: they know the drill, the procedures, they have the networks and the experience. Particularly in the specific context and functioning of the EP incumbents may have considerable advantage over their novice colleagues. That said, indiscriminate elite recirculation is not desirable; some level of turnover is needed to keep the democracy healthy. Moreover, parties want to ensure their ballot is attractive to voters and balanced. Parties are responsible for presenting a compelling list of candidates that can convince and adequately represent their constituents. As gatekeepers, parties are expected to guard the quality of its candidates and future representatives. An MEPs' past performance record can be seen as a sign of his/her commitment and quality. Therefore, in making this puzzle, parties are expected to favour incumbents who have proven themselves to be valuable and to boot those that did not pull their weight. Additionally, or alternatively, they may favour MEPs who have previous experience at the national level. Not necessarily for their legislative experience, but rather for their higher visibility and name recognition among voters.

In party-centred systems in particular, selectoral choices decide the race. Parties are aware of their electoral prospects, and strategically select and rank their candidates. This way they can maximise their chances and boost the (re-)entry odds of their preferred candidates. Party mandates are distributed among candidates in the prefixed order they appeared on the ballot. This confers intrinsic '(s)electoral value' to the ballot position one is (re)selected to. Some positions confer near guarantee of election to their holders; others are almost certain to end up defeated. In this thesis I refer to this idea with 'ballot position value'. I set out an original way to capture the electoral prospect a position confers onto its holder in party-centred systems. In candidate-centred systems, in contrast, parties can control whom they allow onto their list but it are voters' decisions – cast through nominal votes – that decide whom among the party's candidates will take home the mandates' won by the party. This elementary difference in electoral systems – both present in EP elections – is not disputed, yet so far literature on MEP re(s)election has not gone into the different dynamics and incentives the electoral systems effectively produce.

This thesis revolves around the concept of selectoral reward and studies whether MEPs' active involvement in the EP's work is rewarded by their party. I do so by testing whether more active MEPs stand better chances of being re(s)elected, and – in party-centred systems- of obtaining so-called high value ballot positions. The main research question of this thesis is: *Are MEPs selectorally rewarded for their active involvement in the EP's work?* Selectoral reward should be understood as decisions made by the party's selectorate that confer the party's best possible endorsement onto an incumbent candidate. The question is answered through a broad-scaled and layered quantitative

analysis in which I look at MEPs' odds on reselection, re-election and obtaining high value ballot positions. An additional question arises pertaining to the ambition of incumbent MEPs: *Are absences from the ballot a consequence of an MEP's lacking ambition or an expression of selectoral choices made by the party?* Hereby the focus no longer specifically lies on the MEPs' individual performance records. Rather, I aim to differentiate voluntary exits from selectoral choices that go against the MEP's own ambition.

In posing these questions, this dissertation speaks to central issues in the study of democratic societies and representation. Questions on which candidates and incumbents parties prefer over others, and research as to which traits and actions boost one's chances to build out a lasting political career are at the heart of democratic studies as they reflect on parties' priorities and the quality of representation. Moreover, the (s)electoral connection of what our representatives do while in Parliament (parliamentary performance) is central to the question of representatives' accountability, a corner stone of democratic politics. Turnover, political career paths and ambitions furthermore speak to the professionalization of a parliamentary assembly. Such reflections are none the least of relevance to the study of the European Union and its representative politics in the European Parliament. Consistent selectoral reward for (elements of) parliamentary performance and an attenuation of the assumption of voluntary exits from the EP both are relevant to the professionalization potential of the European Parliament. Selectoral accountability and reward are all the more salient in absence of an electoral connection – a condition commonly attributed to European elections. The answers to these questions ultimately reflect on the EP's professionalization, party's Europeanisation, and MEPs' accountability – which on their turn tie into normative reflections around the EU's democratic deficit.

The remainder of this introductory chapter is organised as follows. First, I draw your attention to gaps in the literature that inspired this work. Next, I discuss the focus and scope, followed by the aim and objectives of this thesis. Finally, I provide a detailed outline of the dissertation.

1.1   Mind the gap

For a long time, the dominant idea has been that MEPs' individual work matters little – if at all – to voters and party leaders (Hix et al., 20007; Judge & Earnshaw, 2008). Both have been presumed to devote but little attention to the European policy level or the EP's day-to-day workings. Over time however, the European level has become an increasingly attractive arena in which to build a political career (Manow & Verzichelli, 2007). More recently, the idea that more active, better performing, or otherwise leading MEPs enjoy better chances of both reselection and re-election

has gained scholarly attention. Empirical tests of (s)electoral rewards for performance in the EP are fairly recent, made possible by the availability of digitized archives and monitors, tracking MEPs' work in terms of activities, functions, and voting behaviour.

Overall positive effects are found of performance on reselection, re-election and – up to date tested in closed list systems only – of ballot position value. The underlying assumption and prevalent interpretation of the positive effect of performance indicators in these studies is that MEPs' performance records are in some way or another assessed and taken into account in the selection process and list composition (Hermansen, 2018; Frech, 2016; Van Geffen, 2018, Sigalas, 2011; Sigalas & Tiemann, 2012; Navarro, 2012). In other words, it is suggested that parties selectorally reward their EP deputies for their performance or inversely punish shirking behaviour.

This emerging 'performance-reward' literature has illustrated that what MEPs do in Parliament may in fact matter more than previously conceived. Evidence is brought forward that positively links performance in parliament to re(s)election and different measures of list safety. Yet, despite the recent scholarly attention and even in spite of the apparent consensus that what MEPs do in the EP seems to matter for their re(s)election odds, crucial knowledge gaps and limitations remain. Essentially, this thesis touches upon three main gaps.

First, empirical results on the performance-reward question are scattered across legislatures and country selections. Moreover, authors have used various operationalisations and combinations of performance indicators, different ways of measuring (s)electoral reward, and varying sample delineations. While there seems to be an empirical consensus on the positive effect of performance on MEP re(s)election, the evidence remains both scarce and somewhat ambiguous. It is not clear yet, which performance *consistently* matters.

Second, the interpretation that the connection between performance and MEP re(s)election should be explained through *selectoral* reward (granted by parties to their incumbents via deliberate re-selection to ballot positions with a high value) appears common-ground, but has not yet been tested extensively and the argument remains underdeveloped. I found only two studies addressing the question of ballot position value in this context (Frech, 2016; Hermansen, 2018). Both were limited to closed list systems and used divergent measures to capture the quality of the list positions. Overall, the *conceptual delineation of selectoral reward* needs to be elaborated more broadly, while the measures of *ballot position value* currently present in the literature face considerable limitations, particularly when applied to the EP context.

Third, despite growing EP careerism, there is a tacit extension of the assumption that a large share of MEPs do not care much for a renewed mandate and that national parties do not care much about what their members do while in Parliament. The latter is being addressed in the emerging 'performance-reward' literature. The former assumption, on the *voluntary nature* of exits,

however largely remains unexplored. We know little about the motivations, circumstances or ambitions that cause MEPs' absences from the ballot. Without an appreciation of the MEP's ambition, it remains quasi impossible to answer the question whether or when absences should be interpreted as decisions of the party – e.g. booting under-performing incumbents – or as voluntary moves – e.g. having used the EP as a stepping stone for national office. The assumptions we make in this regard have important bearings on how we interpret connections between an MEPs' performance records and his/her odds to be reselected.

1.2   Focus and scope

This thesis tests whether an MEP's active involvement in the EP's work is selectorally rewarded. It examines whether there is a consistent (s)electoral benefit stemming from an MEP's parliamentary performance. The analyses cover two legislative terms in the European Parliament, namely the 7th (2009-2014) and 8th (2014-2019) term and re(s)election in the 2014 and 2019 EP elections respectively. MEPs from all EU member states are included in the research. That said, British MEPs are excluded from observation pertaining to the 8th EP because of the outgrowths of the 2016 Brexit referendum and the uncertainty around the participation of the UK in the 2019 EP elections.

The research includes both explanatory and exploratory elements. The former relates to the broad-scaled quantitative analysis of the impact of parliamentary performance on the odds of reselection, re-election and obtained ballot position of MEPs across electoral systems and across both legislatures under study. A qualitative, exploratory analysis then maps and describes to occurrence of deselection in the EP, investigating mismatches between an MEP's ambition to return and his/her party's verdict.

The European Parliament lends itself as an interesting testing ground for parliamentarians' (s)electoral accountability for their performance in the assembly for a number of reasons. First of all the particular context and the functioning of the EP create opposite expectations. Typically, little (to no) (s)electoral accountability is expected in the EP context because of both parties' and voters' limited interest in this political arena compared to politics 'closer to home'. At the same time, the EP's functioning provides strong incentives for parties to seek out active and influential representatives. Lacking the classic government-opposition structure of national parliaments, the EP bestows individual legislators with ample opportunity to make a difference. This should incentivize parties to look beyond mere party soldiers and seek out active and experienced MEPs. Essentially the expectation is that voters will not care, but that parties should.

The EP case is well suited to test for the presence of *selectoral* accountability (i.e. selectoral

reward by the party) for parliamentary performance as well as the absence of *electoral* accountability (i.e. voter reward). After all, it englobes 28 countries and a variety of electoral systems. At large, EU member states are free to decide on the electoral system they use in the election of their representatives for the EP, as long as it is one of proportional representation. Depending on the ballot structure of the system (essentially, whether in the end voters or parties primarily control whom is elected), these electoral systems can be divided in two broad categories: candidate- versus party-centred. Twelve EU member states use a candidate-centred system; the remaining sixteen countries use a party-centred system. The EP therefore offers a good testing ground across the boundaries of electoral systems.

A third reason why the EP is a highly suitable case in which to study the effect of active involvement in parliamentary work on legislators' odds of being rewarded and re(s)elected, is that the activity records of MEPs are well documented and publically available. For each individual MEP, detailed records of parliamentary activities and leadership roles are available on the official EP website and its archives.

Throughout, the thesis concentrates on incumbent MEPs explicitly. The focal interest is to learn more about which incumbents return and why. Among incumbents, whom do parties put forward and endorse in the subsequent EP elections? Two major aspects pertaining to this problem are addressed; first, does hard work pay off (s)electorally, and second, is ambition what decides reselection? The former relates to selectoral reward for parliamentary *performance*, the latter to whom made the decision to be *absent* from the list: the MEP or the party?

Note that ballot lists are usually submitted by political parties but do not necessarily need to be. They can be for example registered by electoral alliances or independent candidates. For simplicity sake, I do not differentiate between such lists throughout the text and use the terms 'party list', 'ballot list' or simply 'list' to designate any electoral list that was officially registered with the authorities to partake in the EP elections.

1.3 Aim and objectives

The aim of this thesis is to connect insights into the selectoral aspects of legislative turnover in the European Parliament to the idea that more active and influential MEPs stand better chances to renew their mandate in the next elections. More specifically, I am interested in testing the idea that national parties selectorally reward their MEPs' for their active involvement in the EP's work. This thesis aims to bring broad quantitative and explorative analyses on the consistency of the (s)electoral effects of performance, and the usefulness of the concept of selectoral reward and accountability in MEP re(s)election. Evidently, this implies a benchmark for what constitutes

selectoral reward, and an understanding of what active involvement in the EP's work looks like. While the latter is – at least conceptually – straightforward, understanding the concept of selectoral reward and recognizing it demands careful consideration.

The objectives of this dissertation are to:

- *Identify selectoral reward theoretically.* A first objective of this thesis is to identify what selectoral reward *is* by distilling its proper meaning and by situating it relative to more traditional and straightforward concepts such as reselection and re-election.

- *Devise a means to identify selectoral reward empirically.* The second objective of this thesis is to translate the concept of selectoral reward into a tangible, objective measure. The objective is to perform a critical assessment of related concepts and measures currently used in the literature and to improve upon them. The resulting measure of ballot position value (BPV) should be suitable for broad-scaled and comparative research in the context of EP elections.

- *Assess whether more active MEPs are more likely re(s)elected and rewarded*, and *evaluate which connections are consistent and indicative of a performance-reward mechanism* in incumbent reselection. This thesis sets out to find which elements of parliamentary performance – if any – are consistently beneficial to an MEP's (s)electoral chances. In doing so, I seek to uncover whether and how performance-reward dynamics are bound by the electoral system one is elected under, and whether or not the effects are consistent across legislatures.

- *Examine the assumption of voluntary exit* from the EP by exploring the occurrence of deselection by the party of MEPs who had the ambition to continue their EP career. This flows from the concept of selectoral reward by recognizing an MEP's ambition as the starting point within turnover. It helps to reach the aim of the thesis because it reflects on the selectoral (versus voluntary, self-selection) component of an MEP's presence on the ballot and bid for re-election.

1.4   Structure of the thesis

This dissertation follows a somewhat atypical structure. The traditional academic flow – from state of the art toward theory and concept, over methodology, to empirical results and discussion – is largely maintained, yet clear-cut fissures between these elements make room for an elaborative

structure with emphasis on the elaboration of the conceptual frames guiding this research. Rather than firmly tying the research to established theories, I embed it in the current literature by referencing, more loosely, multiple related research fields and relevant theoretical underpinnings. Rather than on theory, the emphasis in this work lies on the reconciliation of concepts and their empirical grounding. In doing so I focus on the conceptual development of selectoral reward, on reviewing the state of the art and consistency of performance reward in the EP, and on casting a fresh glance on the occurrence of (in)voluntary exit from parliamentary office.

The dissertations start with two conceptual chapters structured around the key concepts of this dissertation: selectoral reward (Chapter 2) and parliamentary performance in the EP (Chapter 3). Both chapters contain elements related to the state of the art, theory and referral to methodological implications of the concept. After which the methodology is set out in detail, followed by two empirical analyses and discussions; A first quantitative analysis on the (consistency of) selectoral reward for parliamentary performance, and a second qualitative analysis on the differentiation between non-candidacy as a marker of ambition or selectoral decision. The idea behind this structure is to guide the reader through the relevance and complexity of the main concepts (and research questions) and to thematically introduce and discuss them.

The more detailed outline of the dissertation reads as follows.

Chapter 2 introduces the concept of selectoral reward. Legislative turnover in the EP serves as natural starting point. The chapter introduces and connects different types of turnover as to locate selectoral reward and its constituent elements: ambition and endorsement. The chapter touches upon ambitions and career paths in the EP and clarifies the importance of the 'choice before the choice'. The reader is familiarized with the different dynamics and actors at play in the stages of reselection, reward and re-election; and as such the concept of ballot position value (in party-centred systems) is introduced. The chapter then critically assesses the methods previously used in the literature to assess the (s)electoral value of ballot positions and reflects on relevant limitations, challenges and a possible way forward.

Chapter 3 introduces the concept of parliamentary performance in the EP. It makes a case for parliamentary performance evaluation in selectoral deliberations, setting out the argument why parties should care about it – particularly in the EP context. The argument is nuanced by the recognition of the vote-seeking objectives parties evidently pursue besides their policy-seeking goals. The second section of this chapter reviews the state of the art in performance-re(s)election research pertaining to the EP. This section introduces what the job entails and what therefore can be regarded as 'active involvement in the EP's work'. In doing so it reviews the emerging literature

and draws together their findings pertaining to each of these elements of performance. The chapter concludes by setting out the general expectations and hypotheses guiding this thesis.

Then, **Chapter 4** sets out the methodology used in this research. It presents this thesis' research design, which contains both quantitative and qualitative elements. The first two sections of the chapter deal with the quantitative strand of research presented in this dissertation. First, I discuss the delineation and sampling choices made and introduce the layered structure of the analyses. This structure serves to look for consistency of results across different subsets of the data. An aggregate model tests the effects of parliamentary performance on re(s)election across both the 2014 and 2019 elections and the entirety of the EU. Separate analyses are then conducted for countries using party- versus candidate-centred electoral systems, and –within them – for observations regarding the 2014 versus the 2019 EP elections. The analyses are moreover also layered in that they subsequently address the effect of the predictors (parliamentary performance) and controls on the odds MEPs are (1) reselected, (2) re-elected, and – in party-centred systems – (3) selectorally rewarded through ballot rank. The operationalisation and data sources regarding independent, control and dependent variables are given. This includes a more detailed section on the novel measure for ballot position value I propose in this thesis. The second section of the chapter discusses the model choice and the robustness checks included in these broad-scale quantitative analyses. The third and final section of the methodological chapter describes the qualitative research method and sources used in the explorative strand of research that concludes this thesis.

The empirical part of the thesis consists of two chapters. A first one sets out and discusses the results of the quantitative strand of the analysis. This chapter presents the core of the research. It consists of three parts, each one dedicated to another series of models testing the effect of parliamentary performance on an MEP's receipt of (s)electoral reward. A second empirical chapter deals with the qualitative explorative research into the occurrence of incumbent deselection in EP elections, painting a picture of who was dismissed by the party selectorate despite ambition to continue as MEP.

Chapter 5 presents and discusses the empirical results of the quantitative research. It is the centre of this dissertation. The logistic regressions presented here aim to answer the question *whether an MEP's parliamentary performance is selectorally rewarded*. More precisely, I want to know whether MEPs who were more actively involved in the EP's work stood better chances of being (1) reselected, (2) re-elected, and – in party-centred systems – (3) rewarded with a valuable ballot position by the party selectorate. The chapter therefore comprises three empirical parts, one for each outcome.

After reiterating my hypotheses, the chapter deals with the effect of MEPs' performance on their odds of reselection and re-election respectively. These empirical sections follow the same internal structure, moving from the aggregate toward the subset models, ending with a brief discussion. The next empirical section of Chapter 5 concerns selectoral reward through rank, i.e. the (s)electoral value of the ballot position reselected incumbents obtained. It is limited to the observations from party-centred systems. I first situate selectoral reward in relation to the traditional reselection and re-election models. Next, I apply the novel BPV measure to the positions incumbent MEPs were reselected to in the 2014 and 2019 EP elections. Then the effect of parliamentary performance on an MEP's odds of obtaining selectoral reward through rank is presented and discussed. The chapter concludes with an overview of the results and an intermediate conclusion.

I find that – even though many indicators of parliamentary performance, including activities and leadership functions, seem to affect the odds of incumbents to be reselected, re-election or rewarded through rank – the evidence for a tur (s)electoral performance-reward is quite weak. Indeed, *which* performance matters depends on the stage and driver (outcome variable) we look at, and is inconsistent across electoral systems and legislatures. The evidence that parties provide a systematic performance-reward for active incumbents is unconvincing. Perhaps turnover is more supply-side driven with MEPs' ambitions – rather than selectoral differentiation between incumbents – informing who gets reselected. The absence of a resounding performance connection draws us back to reconsider the elementary drivers of turnover. Is wanting to return sufficient? What explains an incumbent's absence from the ballot?

A second empirical chapter, **Chapter 6,** adds an explorative element to the dissertation, aiming to *distinguish MEPs who voluntary stand down from those who were dismissed by their party despite their ambition to return*. It ponders the question whether reselection corresponds to a selectoral evaluation and decision, or whether it in fact merely is an expression of an incumbent's ambition to renew his/her mandate. The chapter presents the results of a qualitative enquiry into the occurrence of deselection among incumbents, i.e. instances where MEPs are not reselected by their party despite their ambition to renew their mandate. A first section reflects on reselection and ambition in the context of the EP, and the assumption of voluntary exit in particular. A brief state of the art reveals an empirical disregard of deselection as a cause of involuntary exit from parliament in the literature. Research into the mismatch of a politician's ambition to renew his/her mandate and the party selectorate's decision to grant him/her a position on the ballot is scarce. This chapter delivers a first exploration of deselection in the context of European elections. The analysis picks up signals of static ambition and involuntary exits among MEPs that had not been renominated by their party in 2014 or 2019. It does so based on a variety of online – and primarily news media – sources.

After mapping (in)voluntary absences from the EP race among incumbents, the foremost part of the chapter illustrates the occurrence and circumstances of deselection in the 2014 and 2019 EP elections.

I find that retirement is the most common reason for an incumbent MEP not to reappear on his/her party's ballot. Overall, voluntary exits are most common, yet deselection is not a fringe phenomenon. I find both explicit evidences and subtle signals of MEPs being denied access to their party's ballot despite their ambition to renew their mandate. Exits after explicit mismatches between an MEP's ambition and the selectorate's decision are as common as departures of MEPs moving on to national, regional or local political offices. Concerns of ballot balance appear to be the dominant motivation, while evaluations on an MEP's work are seldom mentioned.

The seventh and **concluding chapter** reviews the research problem and knowledge gaps addressed in this dissertation. It summarizes my main findings and contributions. Finally, this chapter also provides me with the opportunity to reflect critically on the limitations of my research, and lay out thought-provoking avenues for future research.

2 Chapter 2. Capturing selectoral reward and ballot position value

The purpose of this thesis is to assess whether national parties reward their MEPs' for their active involvement in the EP's work. To find out whether hard work in the EP pays off, this thesis empirically tests the link between performance of an MEP on the one hand, and his/her reselection odds and electoral prospects on the other hand. However, before answering the question whether MEPs are selectorally rewarded for their parliamentary performance, it is imperative to understand what selectoral reward *is* and how it can be recognized. This chapter introduces its constituent elements – ambition and maximal party endorsement – as well as pitfalls in assessing both. Party selectorates act as gatekeepers through their control over whom gets access to the ballot and – if the electoral system so permits – decide on the ballot placement (ranking) of their candidates. Selectoral punishment or reward therefore can take place in both stages of list drafting: access and rank. Consequently, selectoral decisions are key in the study of legislative turnover. Incumbents who are interested in renewing their mandate seek to be rewarded with a ballot position conferring to them good electoral prospects (reward in both access and rank). Failure to convince the party of your bid can lead to deselection (no access granted) or relegation (access but no reward in rank). All the same, a prerequisite for selectoral reward or punishment is the *ambition* of the incumbent to seek re-election.

This chapter starts by looking at different types of turnover in the European Parliament (EP). It then connects these types of turnover to different actors and drivers involved, pinpointing where *selectoral* reward and punishment are situated. This section covers the importance of both ambition and of placement on the ballot list for the identification of selectoral reward. The third section and bulk of this chapter presents a review of previously used methods to differentiate the (s)electoral value of ballot positions. The chapter concludes with a brief reflection on challenges in capturing ballot position value and introduces a possible way forward.

2.1 High turnover in the European Parliament

Looking at incumbents' chances of continuing their parliamentary career, legislative turnover is a natural starting point. Turnover rates reflect the "proportion of members of a legislative assembly that change after general elections" (Gouglas & Maddens, 2017, p. 1). In other words, it measures alternation in power, the renewal versus re-circulation of political elites. Low legislative turnover rates indicate that many incumbents return and few newcomers manage to get into the assembly – with elections barely changing the parliaments' constellation – whereas high turnover occurs when few incumbents return after the elections. Legislative turnover, therefore, can be understood

as a 'democratic thermometer' (Crowther & Matonyte, 2007). While low turnover may lead to unresponsive legislative bodies (Matland & Studlar, 2004), high turnover rates may make legislators shortsighted and create instability (IPU, 2012, pp. 6, 49). Comparative studies point out that "there is surprisingly little agreement on what constitutes 'normal' turnover", but that the literature estimates "'usual' turnover rate [to be] anything between 20% to 40%" (Gouglas et al., 2016, p. 3 – citing Best et al., 2000, pp. 184-185; Crowther & Matonyte, 2007, p. 291; Kuklys, 2013, p. 30). Consistently renewing by about 50% or more, the EP is marked by a legislative turnover that is "considerably higher than in most Western parliamentary systems" (cf. Westlake 1994; Corbett 1998, as cited in Manow & Verzichelli, 2007, p. 3).

Legislative turnover of political elites is a prominent topic within legislative and electoral studies. However, so far this research has mainly been preoccupied with explaining variation in turnover rates over time and between countries, focusing on macro-variables related to political and institutional contexts. Scholars have sought to uncover the determinants of legislative turnover (cf. Heinsohn & Freitag, 2012; Manow, 2007; Matland & Studlar, 2004) and have discussed advantages and disadvantages of high turnover rates (Putnam, 1976; Somit et al., 1994). Much less studied, is the difference between selectoral and electoral turnover, or why and how parliamentary careers end. Indeed, as Kerby & Blidook put it: "[such macro-level studies] tell us a good deal about why the turnover rates are what they are, but not why members come and go" (2011, p. 623). Much of the EP turnover literature is interested in the second order nature and professionalization of the Parliament and in MEP career paths. This literature mainly focuses on the higher attractiveness of national office and on electoral defeats to explain the EP's high turnover rates. Much less studied, is the *selectoral* component to turnover in European elections.

The concept of turnover can point to diverse elite renewal dynamics. Its timing can be during the course of a legislature (mid-term or intra-term turnover) or following an election (legislative or inter-term turnover), it can be voluntary or upon compulsion, while the driver of the latter can be parties (selectoral turnover) or voters (electoral turnover). This thesis is concerned with the selectoral reward of incumbents. Therefore, selectoral inter-term turnover is core to this work. What exactly this entails becomes clear when it is placed in context and contrasted to other types of turnover.

Intra-term turnover refers to the renewal of parliamentary representatives during the course of a legislature. This happens when an MEP dies, retires or leaves the office for any other reason before the end of his/her mandate. The MEP in question is then replaced by a candidate that was listed but not elected in the preceding election, generally the candidate that would have been elected if the party had won one more seat. *Inter-term* turnover then – commonly referred to as

legislative turnover – occurs between the end of one legislature and the start of the next. It is caused by reselection and re-election rates among incumbents. Best and Cotta (2000) point out that legislative turnover is situated at "the interesting point between the supply of candidates, the demand of selectorates and the choice of the voters" (p.9). The supply of candidates refers to the pool of individuals who aspire to run for office. The selectorates of political parties decide which of these aspirants will figure as a candidate on the party's ballot list. The voters (electorate) then, decide how many of the party's candidates become representatives as their votes are translated into a number of seats for the electoral lists. Depending on the electoral system, voters have more or less control over *which* candidate(s) the party's seat(s) go to. When incumbents decide not to aspire renomination, – for whichever reason – this is called voluntary exit. An MEPs' inability to renew his/her mandate can also be involuntary. Such involuntary turnover can be split into two categories, depending on the actor deciding the fate of the re-election seeking incumbent. Either aspirants are not successful in gaining nomination from their party's selectorate (selectoral turnover; deselection), or candidates suffer electoral defeat (electoral turnover). The position a candidate is nominated to on the ballot can be decisive for his/her electoral prospects. In party-centred electoral systems, the ballot placement largely decides the electoral fortune of the candidate. A distinction can be made between ballot positions granting near electoral certainty (realistic), those conveying reasonable yet uncertain hope (marginal) and others that are hopeless in terms of electoral prospect for their holders. How the selectorates decide to rank the candidates (if the electoral system so permits) hence is crucial to understanding legislative turnover.

Not only is renewed candidature an obvious prerequisite for re-election, studies have already identified it as the main driver of turnover in the EP. Sigalas and Tiemann (2012) found that 55% of the MEPs who served the entirety of the 6th EP legislature (2004-2009) competed again in the 2009 European elections. Just shy of 90% among the reselected incumbents effectively got re-elected, indicating that "party re-nomination almost guarantees re-election" (p.3) and that the drivers for legislative turnover in the EP should be sought in the ambition and reselection of incumbents. If this finding can be corroborated across legislatures, any selectoral reward mechanism for performance should be visible in the reselection of incumbents more so than in their relative position on the list. Figure 1 compares the legislative turnover among full term incumbents of the 6th, 7th and 8th EP legislatures in terms of candidature and re-election.

Figure 1: Full term incumbents' candidature and re-election in the 2009, 2014 and 2019 EP elections
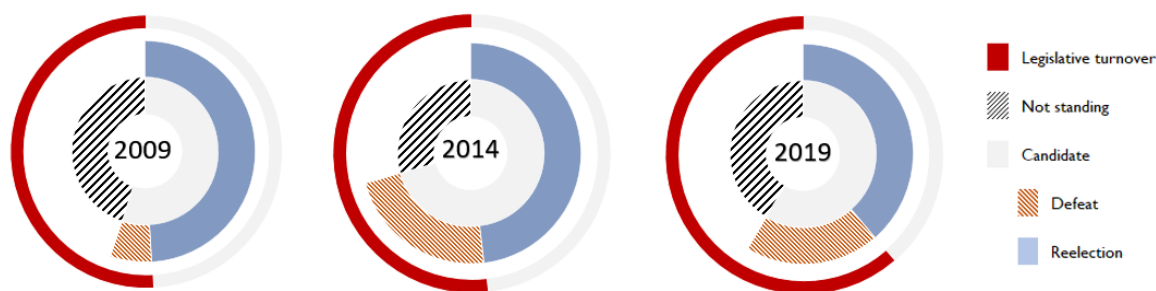
Data on the 6ᵗʰ EP from Sigalas & Tiemann (2012), data on the 7ᵗʰ and 8ᵗʰ EP from own sources.

Legislative turnover surged with the 2019 elections where 60% of the assembly's seats was filled by newcomers, compared to the already high turnover of about 50% in the previous two elections. Despite their similar turnover rate, the 2009 and 2014 elections differ greatly in both candidature of incumbents (55 vs. 70%) and the re-election rate of incumbent candidates (89 vs. 68%). This shows that reselection at the end of the 7ᵗʰ EP was less certain to secure re-election than it did in 2009. In 2019, again a considerable portion of full term incumbents (33%) was not able to renew their mandate *despite* being on the ballot again (electoral defeat) while already 40% had not sought or gotten a position on their party's ballot list.[1]

This first look at the past three EP elections indicates that the 2009 elections stand out for the high re-election rate among incumbent candidates. While the 2014 elections are marked by a high candidacy-rate among incumbents, the 2019 elections led to a record elite renewal caused by the combination of a low candidacy among incumbents and a relatively low success rate for those running for re-election. Considering this, the near guarantee that reselection may constitute for re-election should be nuanced, as this link does not seem to hold across legislatures. This re-iterates the importance of differentiating between types of inter-term turnover and of recognizing dynamics of selectoral turnover through deselection and ballot placement.

---

[1] The graph on the 8ᵗʰ EP and 2019 elections excludes the UK incumbents because of the disruptive effect Brexit arguably has on the ambitions of MEPs and the candidate selection considerations parties make.

2.2   Identifying selectoral reward: ambition meets reselection… to a *good* spot

2.2.1   To seek or not to seek re(s)election, that is the question?

Although the "Mayhewian assumption" that politicians are re(s)election seeking is widely adopted (Samuels, 2000, p.482; cf. Mayhew, 1974) and we know that European political careers have been solidifying over the past two decades, we should bear in mind that MEPs may not all *seek* re-election at the European level. So-called 'stepping stone' MEPs (Scarrow, 1997) to give an example, are building towards a national political career. They see the EP as a waiting room in which they can prove themselves to their party leaderships. For MEPs with such national career ambitions, nomination to a good position on the national list (and not reselection to the EP ballot) is the reward they are after.

Selectoral reward may look different depending on the career aspirations of the incumbent, yet invariably, it is the national party selectorate that holds the 'stick and carrot'. Indeed, "[n]ational political parties have the sole responsibility to distinguish between candidates best destined for either national or European legislative service" (Daniel, 2015, p.22). The career ambitions MEPs hold are therefore important to distinguish voluntary from involuntary turnover, and by extension for evaluating the (performance) reward-mechanism in reselection by party selectorates. On the one hand, incumbent MEPs that aspire re-election but are deselected clearly do not receive the *reward* they are after. On the other hand, incumbents that have no interest in a renewed EP mandate are not *punished* by their absence on the EP ballot. Hence, it is worthwhile to identify those incumbents that strive to be reselected to the EP ballot in order to study whether their past EP performance matters for the selectorate's choice to re-nominate them or not.

Figure 2 sets out a flowchart that captures the different types of legislative turnover. The chart illustrates how ambitions, selectoral decisions and electoral outcomes feed into each other and how they relate to the different types of legislative turnover. This flowchart moreover represents the argumentative structure of this thesis.

Figure 2: Types of inter-term turnover – Identifying selectoral reward
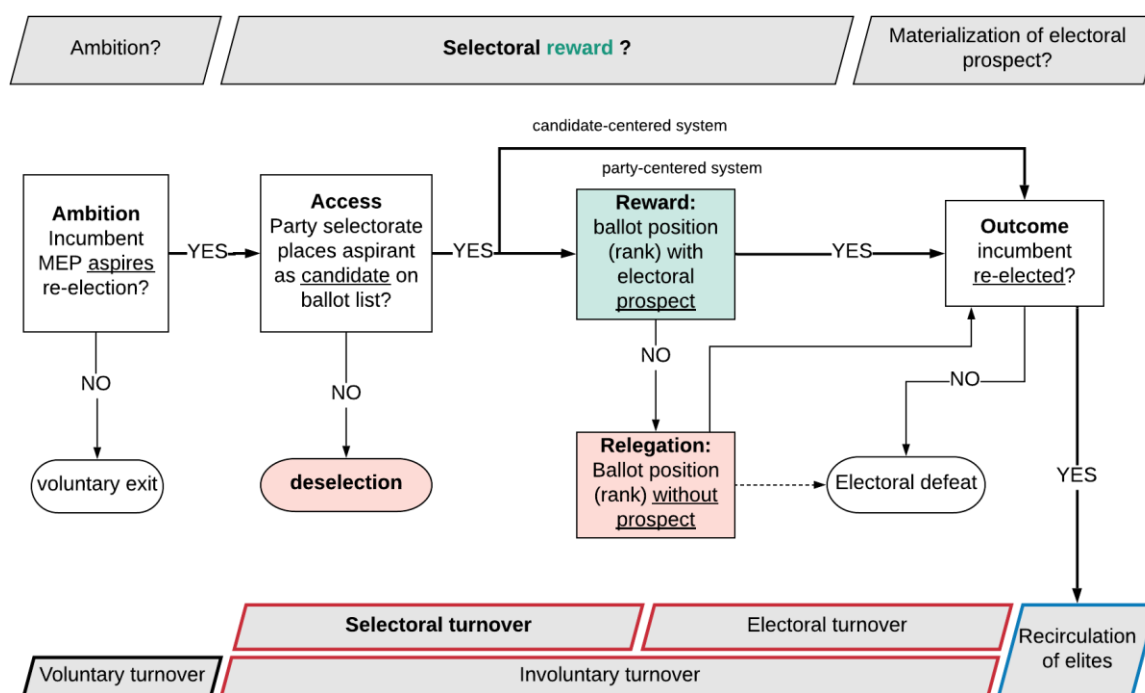
If we want to know whether an incumbent has been rewarded by his/her selectorate we should check whether s/he has been renominated by the party s/he has represented in the past legislature *and* whether the obtained ballot position confers good electoral prospects (green square). This situation denotes selectoral reward as it means the party judged the incumbent to be worthy of a ballot position that is deemed (very) likely to be translated into an actual seat after the elections. Selectoral 'punishment' (the absence of reward among re-election seeking incumbents) is harder to coin. It consists of both relegation and deselection of incumbents. It therefore happens at the intersection between personal career ambitions and the electoral opportunities granted to incumbents by party selectorates. The same observable outcome – absence from the ballot list – can be the result of two distinct pathways, one where the incumbent does not seek reselection (voluntary exit) and one where s/he does but fails to get it (deselection). The punishment lays there where the selectorate's decision goes against the individual's ambitions. This implies that an incumbent's aspiration to renew his or her mandate is the necessary consideration in discussing selectoral reward.

It is tricky to determine whether an incumbent was not seeking re-election or whether s/he was deselected by his/her party despite holding the ambition to continue an EP career. With reason candidate selection is commonly referred to as the 'secret garden of politics' (originally by Gallagher, 1988). Little information is available on what exactly goes on during the candidate selection and ballot composition process. Disclosing the true dynamics of these processes covering

both their formal and informal aspects is challenging as the latter are barely documented. With reliable accounts of nomination deliberations rare, the question of whether an exit from the EP is voluntary or not becomes the selectoral equivalent of the chicken and egg problem. What came first: the verdict of deselection or the decision to pursue another career? Both selectorates and deselected aspirants may have reasons to conceal the involuntary nature of an exit, or at least to give it an elegant explanation. Besides, it is not unusual for party leaderships to gently steer sitting parliamentarians towards retirement or another (party or public service) function to make room for fresh blood (cf. Van Langenakker & Maddens, 2011; Put, et al., 2015). While outcomes -career paths- are traceable, the drivers and ambitions behind them are much less palpable.

2.2.2 *Ambitions and career paths in the EP*

A key contribution to the study of political careers was delivered by Schlesinger (1966). He differentiates between three kinds of political ambition: discrete, static and progressive. While discretely ambitious politicians hold a genuine interest in a particular mandate at a particular time without pursuing a long-term political career, politicians with static ambition have a keen interest in holding the particular office for a lengthy period of time. Progressively ambitious politicians then are in fact not fundamentally invested in their current office, yet wish to use it as a springboard in order to land elsewhere (Schlesinger, 1966; Daniel 2015). While we can expect MEPs with static ambitions to seek re-election in the EP, voluntary exit is more likely when the MEP expresses progressive or discrete ambitions. Short from surveying M(E)Ps (which in itself has its drawbacks and biases too), it is difficult to determine someone's *ambition* without stooling it on their *realized career*.

Political careers can be defined as sequences of political positions that an individual holds across arenas and branches (Jahr & Edinger, 2016). Mapping the political careers of MEPs therefore includes career developments prior to and following their time in the EP (where applicable). Scarrow (1997) delivered a valuable and widely cited typology distinguishing three ways an EP mandate can fit into a politician's career path. The first, 'stepping stone career' pertains to MEPs who wish to use their service in the EP as a springboard for national office, corresponding to Schlesinger's progressive ambition. The EP then serves as a waiting room for a national political career. Second, the EP could be a 'retirement home' for some, referring to established politicians with experience on the national level who take up an EP mandate near their retirement age as a final phase in their career. A third career path she sees for MEPs is that of the 'EP careerist', a career path that corresponds to static MEP ambition. Studying de- and reselection by party selectorates, I am particularly interested in identifying MEPs falling within this latter category, as

they will be most likely to aspire candidacy in the forthcoming European elections.

Mainly building upon Scarrow's work, over time many scholars have developed typologies distinguishing various MEP career paths based on the political mandates they held before and after their term in the EP (Pasquinucci & Verzichelli, 2004; Verzichelli & Edinger, 2005; Van Hecke & Depauw, 2006; Edinger, 2006; Van Geffen, 2016, 2018). In these expanded typologies, Scarrow's three main categories remain but new categories are added, mainly unfolding subsets of EP-careerists. This should not be too surprising as the EP has gained substantial powers and careers at the European level have become more influential and prestigious since the development of the original typology in the mid '90s. Therefore, European political careers have become much more attractive than they previously were (Manow & Verzichelli, 2007, p. 1).

Though the typologies describing MEPs' career profiles have become more fine-grained, they do not necessarily allow capturing the influence of ambitions on realized career paths in politics. Some career typologies profoundly center on pre-EP profiles (cf. Verzichelli & Edinger, 2005) remaining silent on why (or which) MEPs would aim to stay or move on. Others heavily depend on career outcomes (cf. Van Geffen, 2016, 2018) capturing the sequence of political positions an individual held (so far) but not the road towards it. Unrealized ambitions logically slip through the cracks of career typologies, yet the *ambitions* are crucial for understanding selectoral reward. Think of incumbent MEPs wanting but unable to return (either by selectoral or electoral defeat). Their next move will define their career path. They may be branded 'stepping stone MEP' if they are offered a consolation prize in a national political office, or 'one off' MEPs if they leave politics following their deselection or defeat. More so than mere ambitions, unsuccessful candidacies to political offices equally slip through. Former MEPs running an unsuccessful race to a national office are not recognized as stepping stone MEPs who aimed to use their time in Brussels to climb the ladder in national politics. While career typologies are very informative on the constellation of the European political elite and can help reveal larger patterns of EP professionalization, by their nature they are less suited to unveil incumbents' personal ambitions. Although career typologies and their applications may help gauge what successful statically ambitious MEPs look and act like, they cannot grasp what it is that made other statically ambitious MEPs fail at their attempt to renew their mandate.

Ultimately, determining what contributes to selectoral reward demands rewarded incumbents to be set off against the unfortunate incumbent aspirants whose chances of re-election were obstructed by the selectorate (either through deselection or relegation to a hopeless ballot position). An important consequence of the definition of selectoral reward is that – besides the outcome of the candidate selection process – ambition matters too. Before studying what helps incumbent aspirants obtain a high value position, it is imperative to understand which incumbents

are in fact *aspirants*. In other words, to paint a full picture of selectoral reward it is necessary to reflect on the career ambition of the incumbent.

So far, the literature has heavily emphasized the second order attractiveness of EP careers compared to national or even regional and local political office. Exits from the EP that are not directly caused by electoral defeat, i.e. an unsuccessful candidacy for re-election, are considered voluntary departures. The current understanding of the EP as a second order arena for the development of political careers implies a strong prevalence of progressive ambitions among MEPs. The limited scholarly attention to incumbents' actual ambitions furthermore supports the idea that parties are seen to endorse the candidacies of all of their incumbents who aspire to renew their EP mandate almost automatically.

In this thesis, I test these assumptions and I explore the ambitions of outgoing MEPs, moving beyond the derivation of ambition from realized career paths. I do so by exploring the occurrence of deselection, i.e. absence from the list *despite* static ambition (chapter 6). Herein lies a first major contribution of this thesis to the literature. A second contribution lies in the identification of high value ballot positions – and thus true selectoral reward – in EP elections. In practice, being reselected often is insufficient to constitute selectoral reward. Understanding the conditions for selectoral reward and accurately identifying it within the electoral context at hand is crucial. This thesis brings an elaborate discussion of methods and operationalizations used in previous research and proposes a novel measurement for the (s)electoral value of a ballot position.

2.2.3   *The importance of rank in party-centred systems*

> *"All animals are created equal, but some are more equal than others"*
> George Orwell, *Animal Farm*

The previous sections clarified that legislative turnover in the EP is remarkably high, but also that it has multiple drivers. The MEP him/herself, the party selectorates and eventually the voters all drive a part of the EP's inter-term turnover. The occurrence of and interplay between these elements seems to vary across legislatures. So far, the literature on legislative turnover has left the selectoral component of turnover in the European elections underexposed. Attention to this gap and the development of the concept of *selectoral reward*, which captures parties' role in elite renewal beyond re- and deselection, is a central contribution of this thesis. Dependent on the electoral system used, parties' control over which incumbents get to renew their mandate extends beyond their reselection. Legislative turnover consists of at least three subcategories: the voluntary exits

where incumbent MEPs do not aspire to run for office again, the selectoral turnover where party selectorates chose not to renominate statically ambitious incumbents and electoral defeat as an outcome of voters' support for parties and/or candidates. However, subtracting the number of voluntary exiting and deselected incumbents from the total legislative turnover does not strictly leave us with *electoral* defeat. At least not in party-centred systems. This is because here, not all slots on a ballot list have the same value.

Party-centred electoral systems – as opposed to candidate-centred systems – are those in which the composition of the party's ballot list already largely decides whom amongst their candidates will obtain the mandate(s) the party wins in the elections. Voters have little or no say as to whom on the party's list is to represent them. The distinction between party- and candidate-centred systems is made based on the type of ballot list is used (Carey & Shugart, 1995; Shugart, 2001). Closed and flexible ballot lists are considered party-centred. Here, the top-ranked positions are of higher value. In candidate-centred systems, more open lists or the single transferable vote system are used. Here, voters have a much larger sway – or even full control – over which candidates are to take on the parties' mandate(s). In candidate-centred systems therefore, all ballot positions are considered of equal selectoral value. As far as the party is concerned, the reward they extend to their incumbents is one of reselection. They do not have the option to virtually deselect incumbents by relegation.

Selectoral reward beyond reselection is particularly relevant to party-centred systems. This is because here, the rank order in which parties decide to position their candidates essentially determines the race. In closed list systems, this is self-explanatory as voters can only vote for party lists – not individual candidates – and the seat allocation invariably follows the ballot order. While voters are allowed to cast nominal votes in flexible systems, the order of the ballot in practice determines the intra-party seat allocation. By default, the seat allocation follows the list order. Moreover, the highest ranked positions in flexible systems enjoy the advantage of list vote redistributions and of ballot order effects (i.e. the phenomenon where voters tend to cast preference votes to high-ranked candidates). Examining (variation in) the extent to which nominal votes in practice alter the post-electoral rank order of candidates in flexible electoral systems (European elections 2004, 2009 and 2014), Däubler and Hix (2018) find that while voters may well *alter the rank order* of candidates, this *rarely alters who gets elected*. Only in exceptional cases, candidates manage to frog leap over better-ranked contenders to secure a seat they would not have won if the system had been closed. The few that do are spread over multiple countries, elections and parties. In party-centred systems therefore, it goes that the higher a candidate finds oneself on the list, the better chances of (re-)election s/he stands.

In flexible list systems, an exception to the localization of high-value positions may be the

so-called 'list pusher' (Koppell & Steen, 2004). The last position on the ballot enjoys high visibility. On condition of being occupied by a high quality and well-known candidate, this position can attract enough nominal votes for the candidate to frog leap his/her way to electoral success. Parties are understood to use these 'list-pushers' to strategically place party favorites as a 'second list leader' to attract attention and votes (Dodeigne & Meulewater, 2017; Put & Maddens, 2013; Kunovich, 2012; Marcinkiewicz, 2014; Daniel, 2015; van Erkel, 2017; Däubler & Hix, 2018). List pushers deserve our attention. Still, the intrinsic value of the last ballot position should not be overestimated, because only a particular 'kind' of candidate is expected to create a recency effect. Moreover, the tradition of using prominent list pushers does not exist in all flexible systems, nor do all parties use list pushers in all elections. The selectoral value of the lowest list positions flowing from (expected) recency effects is not only case-bound but also conditional upon the personal prominence of its *holder*.

Ultimately, "by the time voters are called to make a choice at the ballot, [turnover] has already been delimited by party selectorate choices" (Gouglas & Maddens, 2017, p. 3). As Gouglas and Maddens (2017) put it: "essentially, what happens prior to general elections at the stage of selection is the body of the iceberg we do not see, elections being its permanently visible tip" (p. 5). Selectoral turnover may therefore very well be the most significant driver of elite recirculation and renewal in party-centred systems, and therefore undoubtedly merits our attention.

2.2.4 *Defining (s)electoral value: realistic, marginal and hopeless positions*

Some places on the ballot bring higher electoral prospects to their holders than others and parties are well aware of the value of their ballot slots. Being reselected to a 'low-value' position is conductive of electoral defeat but surely refers to selectoral turnover as the party selectorates knowingly decide the aspirants' fates. This 'choice before the choice' (Rahat & Hazan, 2010) therefore is crucial for our understanding of the political elite's composition. Indeed, in reality there are 'safe spots' in virtually all elections. Parties anticipate their electoral success and by placing candidates in a specific order on the ballot list, they can largely influence which candidates will receive a seat. Deciding which candidates are selected to a realistic position and which are not is a conscious choice party selectorates make. Parties may even apply different selection procedures to different 'types' of candidates, or rather, to fill different types of ballot positions (Put & Maddens, 2013; De Winter, 1988; De Winter & Brans, 2003; Obler, 1970; Rahat & Hazan, 2010). Neither parties nor candidates expect those running on 'low value' positions to get into parliament. Such candidates are 'filling up' the list and may be strategic inclusions to attract party votes.

It is important therefore, to differentiate between (re-)selection to realistic, marginal and hopeless ballot positions, i.e. between positions with certain, uncertain and without any true electoral prospect. Where static ambition is a condition for selectoral reward or punishment to take place, the (s)electoral value of a ballot position tells us whether or not a listed incumbent is truly *rewarded* by his/her selectorate (see flowchart in Figure 1). A position's electoral value differentiates between selectoral reward and relegation. As I already discussed earlier on, selectoral punishment can take on the direct and harsh form of deselection (access), but it can also be more subtle (rank) where parties make use of the list system to 'virtually deselect' candidates.

Because not all ballot positions offer the same chances to their holders, selection to high-value positions is the true indicator of party endorsement of individual candidates. In other words, since ballot positions have intrinsic yet variable 'worth', the selectoral value of nominations to these positions differs. There is no doubt that the party and its selectorate are well aware of its electoral prospects, of the electoral system it functions in, and of the prominence of certain ballot positions over others. To be clear, the value of a ballot position is determined by the prospect of the ballot *position* itself, regardless of its holder. Which *candidates* are nominated to positions with higher or lower selectoral value says something about whom the party is willing to reward (or punish) but does not alter the value of the position itself. The main driver of the value of a ballot position evidently is its electoral prospect, i.e. the chances that a candidate will be elected from that position given the electoral system and electoral prospect of the party. Electoral prospect then should play a key role in our understanding of selectoral reward.

Realistic positions (also eligible positions, winnable seats) nearly guarantee election for their holders. Candidates nominated to such positions are virtually certain of their electoral success. Yet ballot lists evidently contain a number of candidates that exceeds the number of seats a party expects to win. Consequently, there are also *hopeless* ballot positions: positions from which candidates stand no real chance of being elected. Additionally, ballot lists may have some 'twilight' positions, i.e. positions that are neither realistic nor hopeless. Such ballot slots convey a reasonable hope for their holders to be elected while their fate remains largely uncertain (*marginal* positions). The argument goes that party leaderships and selectorates are well aware of the values of their list positions and will nominate candidates to specific positions accordingly.

The remainder of this chapter is concerned with finding the cut-off point between the highly valuable top positions and those that no longer confer good prospects – i.e. selectoral reward – upon their holder. The differentiation of ballot positions based on their 'electoral value' is widespread and applied to elections in different political arenas and under various electoral systems, yet so far scholars have been using different names to coin the electoral (or selectoral)

value of ballot positions. More importantly, a wide variety of operationalisations on how to determine the number and location of 'high value' ballot positions has been proposed. Many of the existing methods rely on understandable pragmatic simplifications and/or on country-specific insights, but also bear important limitations. In the following sections I discuss these methods and highlight their value as well as the limitations they entail if applied in a broad-scaled comparative study of selectoral reward across countries and electoral systems in the specific context of EP elections. On the basis of this discussion I devised an alternative measurement of ballot position value to identify realistic, marginal and hopeless positions on EP ballot lists, aimed at capturing selectoral reward of incumbent MEPs. In other words, the discussion that follows inspired and underpins the operationalization of selectoral reward through rank I set out in the methodology chapter.

2.3   An evaluation of previously used methods for identifying high-value positions

This section discusses the approaches used to identify 'high-value' positions on electoral lists applied in the extant literature. The novel method for the identification of realistic, marginal and hopeless positions is inspired by the existing approaches to identify realistic positions, and aims to address their limitations particularly in light of the specificities of the EP elections.

The concepts of realistic, marginal and hopeless ballot positions are used to guide us through the various operationalizations of ballot position value. Rahat and Hazan refer to realistic positions as "all those positions/districts that are seen *at least as winnable* before the elections" (2010, pp.13-14, original concept used in majoritarian systems, emphasis added). The terms realistic, eligible, winnable and safe positions or seats are used interchangeably in the literature. In essence, nomination to a realistic position is deemed to decide the electoral race for a candidate. Realistic positions then are those ballot slots that give virtual certainty of election to their holders (Rahat & Hazan, 2010; Put & Maddens, 2013; Dodeigne & Meulewater, 2017; Däubler & Hix, 2018; Buisseret et al., 2018).[2] Candidates on marginal positions can be hopeful about their prospects yet in contrast to candidates on realistic positions their fortune is far from certain. Essentially, "their election is a real possibility on condition that either they obtain a very high personal score [in electoral systems with nominal voting] or that the list performs exceptionally well" (Put &

---

[2] Note that candidates can - against the odds - fail to get elected despite their realistic position, just as candidates on unrealistic positions can, despite their position, manage to get elected based on an exceptional personal result or unexpected party success. Similarly, whether the originally elected candidate decides to take up his/her mandate or not does not matter at this point. Realistic positions remain those who confer an electoral certainty upon their holders. When a deputy elected from a realistic position cedes his/her place to another candidate this does not alter the election prospect of the original ballot position for neither the elected deputy nor the replacement candidate. To be sure, this situation is mediagenic but rare. In 2014, for example, nine MEPs did not take up there mandate and passed it on to their substitute (1.20%).

Maddens, 2013, p. 50). Candidates on such marginal slots therefore find themselves in a precarious position yet their electoral prospect is not non-existent. Hopeless positions then are defined by their lack of electoral prospect. Candidates on these slots stand no real chance of getting into parliament, even if the party would perform well in the elections. Essentially, hopeless positions are occupied by "*symbolical candidates who 'fill' the list*" (Ibidem).

Not all scholars use the same concepts to coin the value of a ballot position. In order to tie the different operationalizations together in this review, I settle on the above set of concepts to reflect on the consequences and possible limitations of each approach discussed below. In the sections below I subsequently review measures based on rank and electoral probability calculations, relative list positions and list mobility (section 2.3.1), categorical measures of value based on parties' known electoral results (section 2.3.2), and measures stooled on parties' electoral prospects (section 2.3.3).

2.3.1   *Ballot rank: it's all relative?*

2.3.1.1   Rank and electoral probabilities

A common and straightforward measure for the value of a ballot position (or 'safety of a list position') is the rank number of the list position itself (e.g. Stratmann & Baur, 2002; Tavits, 2010; Smrek, 2014). The value of the ballot position is highest for the list leader and then simply decreases as the rank number increases. Though elegant in its simplicity, this measurement of position value faces important restrictions. Crucial with regard to selectoral reward is that it does not account for the electoral prospects of parties. Another vital limitation is that without further transformation it cannot be applied across countries, parties and time. As Stoffel (2014) notes, validation of this approach would require comparable constituency sizes (list length) and equally successful parties (number of (safe) seats per party). Indeed, being placed on 'rank n° 5' does not mean the same thing across systems, parties and elections.

In part as an answer to this problem, a number of studies have approached the question of ballot position value through the calculation of electoral probabilities. In these studies researchers have tracked – over multiple elections within the same constituencies – how many times the candidates holding a certain ballot rank on a party's list have succeeded in getting elected into the assembly. They then look for cut-off points where the electoral probability of a ballot position drops (more) significantly from one position to the next. This cut-off point is used to identify the upper positions as realistic and the positions below the cut-off point as unrealistic (Frech, 2016; Stoffel, 2014; Hangartner et al., 2019, distinguishing 'top-ranked' from 'bottom' positions). Others adapted the 'rank number' model differently, moving from a linear decrease in ballot position value to a sigmoidal function aimed at capturing "the marginality of each rank within each party list" based

on past election results and constituency sizes (Buisseret et al., 2019, p. 17). These sigmoidal list safety functions take into account the differential impacts on a candidates' electoral safety when s/he is moved up or down the list by one rank. For a party that won three seats in the past elections for example, the difference between the electoral prospects of the candidates placed on rank 3 and 4 is significant. There is little to no difference in electoral safety however, between the candidates ranked first and second, or between those placed on rank 7 and 8. Buisseret et al. (2019) then recoded the predicted election probabilities into a six-fold distinction of 'ballot rank contestability' (list leaders (99%), safe spots (98%); advantaged, highly contested and disadvantaged (86, 48 and 13% respectively); and 'certain loss' positions (2%), pp.18-19).

In the above-mentioned approaches, the cut-off points for ballot positions to be considered conferring 'good' electoral prospects result solely from a party's past seat gains. The assumption behind these methods is "that parties – and, possibly, voters- can use information about the electoral history of the party to predict its performance in the next election" (Ibid, p.17). A party's anticipation for upcoming elections does not come into play. While past party size certainly may serve as a *starting point* in the anticipation of forthcoming electoral success, I argue that this information is insufficient. Such approaches reach their limit when new players enter the game or when significant electoral shifts take place. Indeed, they cannot accurately capture list safety for rapidly rising or declining parties. Even when the actual results of the studied election are added to the equation next to the party's past results (cf. Frech, 2016) ultimately these methods have difficulties accounting for the electoral expectations of parties. The redistribution of electoral prospect among parties – generated by the rise of new parties or significant electoral shifts – is not (fully) captured. Particularly in smaller constituencies and high volatility contexts, this practical constraint limits the measurement's accuracy and construct validity.

2.3.1.2   Relative list positions and list mobility

Equally using ballot ranks as starting point, other scholars have taken an alternative view on how to interpret ballot placement as an indicator for selectoral reward. Interested in incumbent reselection, they seek evidence of selectoral reward (or punishment) in an incumbents' *relative* list position or list *mobility*, assessing whether an incumbent candidate found him/herself on a better or worse ballot position in the upcoming election compared to the previous one. Table 1 below gives a fictive example of a party's ballot list in two consecutive elections to illustrate the consequences of using the measures described in this section.

Yildirim et al. (2017) approach the question of selectoral reward and punishment by looking at list mobility of incumbent MPs in the Turkish parliamentary elections. They evaluate whether renominated MPs improved their party rank (promotion), were placed at lower rank (demotion)

or on the same ballot rank (list immobility) in the elections at *t*. Additionally, they interact their independent variables with a measure of an MPs' electoral safety in *t-1* (cf. marginality; Bowler, 2010) to control for previously established positions in the party list. They measure the electoral safety (in election *t-1*) of an MP by the distance between the rank of the position s/he occupied and the number of seats won by the party in that election (pp.5-6). All ballot positions that led to election in *t-1* are considered 'safe seats', with the electoral safety of all elected MPs varying between 0 (last elected candidate) and [(rank last elected candidate)-1] (list leader). For the party exemplified in Table 1, the electoral safety of the M(E)Ps in *t-1* therefore ranges from 0 (candidate H) to 7 (candidate A).

Table 1: List mobility as measure of selectoral reward

Rank	Election *t-1*		Mobility		Election *t*			
	Candidate	Electoral *success*			Candidate	Electoral *prospect*		
						Scenario 1	Scenario 2	Scenario 3
1	A	✓	=		A	✓	✓	✓
2	B	✓	▼ (-2)		*k*	✓	✓	✓
3	C	✓	-		E	✓	✓	✓
4	D	✓	-		B	✓	✓	✓
5	E	✓	▲ (+2)		*l*	✓	✓	✓
6	F	✓	=		F	✗	✓	✓
7	G	✓	▼ (-2)		H	✗	✓	✓
8	H	✓	▲ (+1)		J	✗	✓	✓
9	I	✗	-		G	✗	✗	✓
10	J	✗	▲ (+2)		*m*	✗	✗	✗

Following the electoral vulnerability (EV) measure of André et al. (2017), Borghetto and Lisi (2018) apply a similar list mobility method to the Portuguese case. They measure whether an MP's "position on the list either increases, decreases or stays the same at the next election" where in fact they "do not compare list positions [i.e. ranks] but electoral vulnerability scores" (p.8). The promotion, demotion or immobility of the MP is expressed as the decrease, increase or invariability of one's list vulnerability respectively (EV_t - EV_{t-1}). Vulnerability scores are calculated by dividing the occupied list position (rank in *t-1* and rank in *t* respectively) by the number of (party-in-constituency) seats won in *t-1*.[3] Using the example in Table 1, this means that – regardless of the

---

[3] $mobility = EV_{t-1} - EV_t = \frac{ballot\ position_{ij}\ t-1}{constitutency\ seats_j\ t-1} - \frac{ballot\ position_{ij}\ t}{constituency\ seats_j\ t-1}$ for MP i in party j.

electoral prospect scenario at t – candidate B who is demoted with two positions sees his vulnerability increased by 0,25 (from 2/8 or 0,25 in t-1 to 4/8 or 0,5 in t). The reverse is true for candidate E. Candidate H, who moves up one rank on the list, then decreases her vulnerability by 0,125. The authors purposefully compare electoral vulnerability scores rather than position ranks because Portuguese MP's do not necessarily run for re-election in the same constituency. Evidently, the electoral vulnerability of a candidate is tied to the electoral prospect of the (constituency) list on which s/he is placed. For European Parliament elections, this has less bearing as MEPs hardly switch constituencies. More importantly however, this measure could capture upward and downward list mobility as an expression of selectoral reward/punishment *only if* we assume that parties expect to, at each election, yield the same amount of seats as the previous time around without adapting their expectations. Without taking the electoral reality of election t into account, the measure arguably tells us little more than the bare difference in list positions. Consider again candidate B. This time in scenario 1 where his/her party expects to lose 3 seats. The demotion by two ranks now comes down to an increase in vulnerability of 0,55 (from 2/8 or 0,25 in t-1 to 4/5 or 0,8 in t).

To find out which incumbents (or which of their characteristics) are rewarded by their party, a measure of list mobility can be insightful. In choosing to promote some incumbents instead of other (statically ambitious) colleagues, the party selectorate makes a deliberate choice. Moreover, this measure in itself controls for all individual socio-demographic and background characteristics of the incumbents. What it does not do, however, is account for the electoral prospect of the party and thus the electoral value of the ballot positions.

Van Vonno & Louwerse (2019) operationalize their measure of selectoral reward by looking at the (change in) relative list positions (RLP) of incumbent MPs in the Dutch *Tweede Kamer*. Their measure is similar to that of André et al. (2017) and Borgheto and Lisi (2018), but uses the average party size in t-1 and t (average party seats, APS) to capture the consequences of electoral volatility on the list a candidate runs on. More precisely, the relative list positions of MP i of party j is given by: $RLP_{ij} = \dfrac{ALP_{ij} - 1}{APS_j - 1}$ with ALP_{ij} being the absolute list position (rank) of the MP. To assess the mobility of a renominated MP they subtract RLP_{t-1} from RLP_t, using the absolute list positions of an MP in t-1 and t respectively. Relative list positions then range from 0 to 1 with smaller RLP reflecting safer positions. For candidate B in our example (Table 1) this would mean that if scenario 1 plays out (seat loss for party), his relative list position deteriorates from 0,18 (2-1/[(8+5)/2-1]) to 0,54 (4-1/[(8+5)/2-1]). If scenario 3 realizes (party grows) his list position moves from 0,28 (2-1/[8+9]/2-1]) to 0,84. This implies that candidate B is relatively worse of in the case his party wins extra seats compared to the scenario where it faces seat loss. Indeed,

in our example candidate B's demotion is more severe in the scenario of his party winning an additional seat (ΔRLP = 0,56) than when his party loses three seats (ΔRLP = 0,36) in *t*. Using a party's past and present results is a convincing improvement for the measurement of electoral vulnerability. However, the decision to filter out effects of changes in party size by averaging them out and the ensuing asymmetric logic for calculating RLP_{t-1} and RLP_t is less convincing to capture selectoral reward. After all, we would expect parties to anticipate seat gains or losses and to (re-)select candidates accordingly as well as we expect seat gains to have a positive effect *ceteris paribus* on one's electoral safety.

Consider again the position value of the candidates in the example set out in Table 1. In election *t-1* candidates A through H got elected from the positions ranked 1 to 8. Anticipating the upcoming elections, the party could expect to lose some seats (scenario 1), equal its electoral success of *t-1* (scenario 2) or grow (scenario 3). The party reselects six of its eight incumbents (and one non-elected candidate J). Some are moved up the list compared to the previous elections (E, H, J) others are demoted in rank (B, G) or stay immobile (A, F). Whether or not the (im)mobility can be understood as a reward or punishment however, remains dependent on what the party believes will happen at *t*. The promotion of E, immobility of A and demotion of B do not change their electoral *fate* in either one of the three scenarios. In the fictive example, candidate H only benefits from the list promotion if the party does at least as good as last time around, while one additional seat can 'counter' the effect of G's demotion.

Still, upward list mobility (promotion) can be a convincing measure of selectoral reward. However, the selectoral intention behind rank immobility and demotion are somewhat less straightforward, particularly if we factor in parties' electoral prospects and their need to balance their ticket. The element of reward or punishment remains attenuated by the question of whether or not the ensuing ballot position in the end confers electoral prospect. Absence of, or downward list mobility can be the consequence of strategic or quota-inspired considerations while the selectorate still purposefully places the incumbent on a valuable list position. While less glorious than a rank promotion, this situation is much different from one where an incumbent is reselected to a position from which s/he is not expected to be re-elected. This brings us to 'absolute' measures of ballot position value. In what follows, I subsequently discuss ballot value measures that are based on past, present, and anticipated party sizes.

2.3.2 *(Past) electoral success as driver for ballot position value*

Parallel to the list rank and mobility approaches discussed above, another group of candidate selection studies has developed position value measurements using categorical -often dichotomous- outcomes to capture the (s)electoral value of a position. Though using different wording and operationalizations, the idea remains the same: to differentiate realistic positions from (marginal and) unrealistic ones, safe from unsafe seats, promising from hopeless positions. Again, a variety of strategies is used to separate the valuable positions from those that do not confer electoral prospects upon their holder. Remember that the highest reward is a realistic position, which virtually guarantees the (re-)election of its holder. Marginal positions confer some hope of winning a mandate while still being characterized by uncertainty. Hopeless positions then are void of electoral prospect.

2.3.2.1 Past performance as predictor

Often the number of realistic positions on a ballot list is derived from or simply equated to the number of seats the party[4] secured in the previous election. In other words, the current number of seats is supposed to equal the number of seats a party can consider safe in the upcoming elections (ea. used by Rahat & Hazan, 2010; Daniel, 2015; Wilson et al., 2016; here this method is referred to as the *t-1 approach*). While this approach ensures parsimony, it entails severe limitations. Limitations that, maybe particularly in the context of European Parliament elections, should not be ignored.

A first issue is that this approach ignores the effects of national government cycles, electoral volatility, and disruptive events during the course of the legislature on a party's electoral prospects in upcoming EP elections. If European elections are second order elections, in which voters primarily react to national politics, surely these issues matter. An additional crucial limit is that the *t-1 approach* cannot distribute any safe seats to parties taking part in the EP elections for the first time. It therefore neglects the electoral prospects of parties from new member states, parties that did not gain representation in the previous election and of new parties, be they merger-, splinter-, or entirely new parties. In the same vein, it poses difficulties in the identification of safe and hopeful seats on lists of electoral alliances where the same grouping of parties did not present a joint ballot list in the previous election year. While these parties may not be the primary concern in most (s)election research (nor are they here), their prospects and results evidently affect all other parties in the race.

---

[4] We are interested in the realistic/marginal/hopeless positions on ballot lists registered in the EP elections. Such lists are usually presented by political parties yet in some instances a ballot list is presented by an electoral alliance or other constellations of candidates participating in the race within a single list. For clarity sake, we use both 'party' and 'ballot list' throughout the text as to cover any ballot list presented in the EP elections regardless of the above mentioned nuance.

Moreover, the *t-1 approach* ignores the changing number of available EP seats per member state. Due to enlargement rounds, the Lisbon Treaty, and Brexit every EP election since 2004 saw adaptations of the seat numbers and their distribution among member states. Even though the UK ended up participating in the 2019 elections after all, the seat redistributions affect forecasts and parties' expectations. Once the UK leaves the Union, the seat reallocation will take place. Parties account for the seat reallocation that may affect them when they consider their impending electoral prospects, and consequently so should a measure of ballot position value.[5] Where *member states* 'lose' seats in the EP due to such seat reallocations, the *t-1 approach* creates more safe seats on the ballot than actual available seats in the assembly. This defeats the point of considering them as nearly guaranteeing election, particularly so for member states that already have small party delegations and constituencies in EP elections. While these issues may seem negligible, parties gaining their first representation in the EP following the 2014 elections in fact accounted for a sweeping 10% of available seats in the assembly (85) while at the same time the total assembly size slunk by 15 seats notwithstanding the new 11 Croatian mandates. The new and reallocated EP seats alone accounted for 5% of the EP's assembly size in 2014.

Ignoring these limitations of the *t-1 approach* would undermine the conceptual soundness of realistic positions in EP elections. Granted, for research interested in the reselection of incumbents, the ballots presented by previously unrepresented parties are not of core interest. However, the assembly evidently has a fixed number of available seats, and electoral prospects for previously unrepresented parties take away available seats from incumbent parties. Furthermore, the number of seats won at the *t-1* election does not necessarily show the size of a party's delegation in the outgoing legislature. MEPs can change parties or become independent during the course of their mandate and, in the case of the 7th legislature, the Lisbon Treaty added a number of additional seats to the EP (and observer seats for Croatia). Using the number of outgoing seats in the EP as predictor (*t-1' approach*) as to take into account the size of a party closer to election time, however, would equally dismiss the limitations discussed above.

A partial solution may lie in granting each presented list at least one *marginal position*. Studying candidate selection and the allocation of eligible positions in the national Belgian and regional Flemish elections Put & Maddens (2013) do so. They apply the *t-1 approach*, but add a marginal ballot position directly below the lowest-ranked realistic position and an additional one on the lowest position of the ballot list to account for list pushers (also Stoeckl & Walter, 2013).

---

[5] Using party size in the 2009 EP election to count safe seats in the 2014 EP election, the t-1 approach leads to an overestimation of 11 seats over 9 countries and an underestimation of 27 seats over 11 countries (including the 11 Croatian seats). The new and reallocated EP seats account for 4,93% of the total number of available seats in the assembly's 8th legislature. To be clear, this covers the change in available constituency seats only. It takes place regardless of the electoral prospects or successes of parties.

Moreover, they consider the first candidate on the substitute list as realistic. The logic is sound but these decisions too, inflate the number of high value positions available in an election. Their approach is stooled on an in-depth understanding of the Belgian national and regional electoral system and its particularities (list pushers, substitute lists and traditions). Yet it might be less appropriate to transpose their method one-on-one to the (s)election of candidates to eligible positions in EP elections across member states.

Constituency sizes for European elections are markedly smaller than the respective constituency sizes for national parliamentary elections. Indeed, in EP elections there is an "*extremely high number of candidates compared to the number of available seats [..., where the] 'candidate to seat' ratio is extraordinarily high: more than nine candidates are running for each seat in the EP*" (Giebler & Wüst, 2011, p.56). While foreseeing at least one hopeful seat for each party could in part remedy the neglect of safe seats for previously unrepresented parties (who now all get one hopeful seat), adding high-value positions on top of the *t-1* number of seats for each ballot list exacerbates the other limitations of the *t-1 approach* discussed above. Moreover, electoral systems, seat allocation and substitute procedures vary across member states, making the electoral prospects of list pushers and substitutes case-bound, if not anecdotal, in EP elections.

2.3.2.2   Adapting the past to the present

As was highlighted throughout this discussion, past electoral performance is not all that matters. "Party delegates consider current opinion polls and previous European election(s) when they make a judgement on the quality of the list places before positioning the candidates" (Frech, 2016, p.77). Equally, Vandeleene et al. (2016) recognize that safe seats "refer in most parties to the number of seats obtained at the last elections *eventually adapted according to recent polls*" (p. 900, emphasis added). Though the authors differentiate realistic and unrealistic positions in their analysis, they no not specify how they did so. Equally, Dodeigne & Meulewater (2017) differentiate 'unrealistic candidates', designated as "just fill[ing] the list without a realistic prospect of entering the parliament" from 'realistic candidates', understood as those "who have a real chance of accessing office" (p.9). The authors acknowledge that "relying on past results [can] introduce important measurement bias", particularly in situations of strong electoral volatility (p. 11; Dodeigne, 2015), and that "candidates and parties anticipate and adapt when past unrealistic positions become increasingly realistic" and vice versa (Dodeigne & Meulewater, 2017, p. 11). To do away with the potential measurement bias brought about by using past election results, they use the actual number of seats obtained by a party list at election time *t* instead. Yet, this in turn creates another bias. Their analysis in essence captures re-election odds as it assigns ballot position value in hindsight.

Using electoral *success* to measure electoral *prospect* presupposes that party selectorates are

able to perfectly predict their electoral fortune at the time of list composition, and implies that no uncertain positions exist. Applying such '*t-approach*' to EP elections would guard us from overestimating the number of safe seats available in the constituency and allows previously non-represented parties to have realistic ballot positions. However, it does not allow for electoral uncertainty or surprise. Equating the number of seats actually gained (electoral fortune) with the *anticipation* of which candidates stand 'a real chance' (electoral prospect) might obscure crucial selection considerations, equally voiding realistic positions from their conceptual value. Indeed, it does away with the idea of electoral uncertainty altogether by disregarding the lag between candidate list composition and 'election-eve' forecasts, exiting polls and ultimately, election results. What then differentiates *ex ante selectoral decisions* based on ballot position value from *ex post calculations* of re-election odds?

2.3.3   Ballot position value as an expression of electoral prospect

The discussion above highlights that the crux in determining which positions are realistic, marginal or hopeless is in fact their *electoral prospect*. Therefore, we first need to understand how many seats a party certainly expects to win in the upcoming elections and how many additional seats are in the balance in case the party realizes its best-case scenario. Remember that we are dealing with the selectoral value of positions, i.e. the identification of *electoral prospects of list positions as anticipated by the party selectorate*. The question thus is how a party, prior to the election, evaluates the likelihood of a candidate being elected from position x on the list. Interestingly, the (few) studies I found actually using electoral *prospects* as a measure of list safety, look into the campaign effort and social media use of MEP candidates holding ballot positions of different value.

Looking at individual campaign effort of EP candidates, Giebler & Wüst (2011) take into account the probability a candidate gets elected, separating 'hopeless candidates' from those that have "good chances to win a seat" (p.56). In a first phase, the authors distinguish safe, unsafe and hopeless candidates, defining 'safe' candidates as those "who would be elected [in] almost any case" in contrast to 'unsafe' candidates to be those candidates that stand "a reasonable chance of getting elected" (Ibidem). Though their classification stools on the electoral prospect of *candidates*, it neatly corresponds to our notions of realistic, marginal and hopeless positions. Finding no significant differences in campaign effort, they later regroup safe and unsafe (realistic and marginal) candidates together, naming them 'promising candidates' for the purpose of their study. Their

coding of candidates as promising or hopeless, then, is based on "the candidates' list positions in combination with pre-election seat predictions made by [Predict09]" (Ibidem).[6]

Obholzer and Daniel (2016) build on the aforementioned conceptualization of safe, unsafe and hopeless candidates - or 'list safety' as they call it – equally using polling data (PollWatch projections by Cunningham & Hix, 2014) to estimate the number of safe (realistic) candidates (positions). They separate ordered systems from purely preferential lists and single transferable vote systems. To code list safety in the former they start off by identifying hopeless candidates (value of 0) as candidates with a lower list position (larger rank number) than the number of predicted seats for the party. They then split Giebler and Wüst's (2011) category of 'promising candidates' into list leaders (value of 3) and 'safe' candidates (value of 2). Safe seats then are the top-ranked number of seats predicted by the polls, the list leader excluded. In unranked open list systems they attribute all candidates an equal list safety yet one that is subordinate to that of promising positions in ranked systems (value of 1) (p. 15). Interested in the (intensity of the) individual use of social media in EP campaigns, they use multiple PollWatch forecasts "to account for temporal change in list safety over time. [Where the] resulting list safety variable uses polling data from the month closes to that being examined in the model" (Ibid, p.23, note 6). The authors therefore distinguish between list leaders and other 'promising candidates', but not between realistic and marginal candidates/positions.

In contrast to the approaches discussed in the previous sections, these operationalizations of 'safe candidates' and list safety capture the relevant political landscape ahead of the elections. They are therefore interesting measures to capture selectoral reward. Giebler & Wüst (2011) incorporate some measure of uncertainty, based on discrepancies between the polls and the actual election results. Nonetheless, to differentiate the selectoral reward in obtaining a marginal compared to a realistic position, the electoral uncertainty needs to be discernable prior to the registration of the ballot lists. An identification of electoral (un)certainty based on information that is available prior to the elections is still missing.

---

[6] "To incorporate uncertainty, the standard deviation of discrepancy between the predictions and the seats that were actually won was calculated for each country. Candidates with a list position above the predicted seats plus one standard deviation (rounded) were classified as hopeless" (Giebler & Wüst, 2011, p. 56).
Predict09 is the 2009 predecessor of PollWatch EP (2014) election forecasts. Both EP election forecasts use the same methodology and are produced by Cunningham and Hix (2014).

2.4   Towards a novel measurement of selectoral rewards in EP elections

The current chapter at large dealt with the identification of selectoral reward in EP elections. In first instance, incumbents need to *seek* re-election, only then can reselection constitute a reward. Depending on the type of electoral list used, selectoral reward then presents in one or two phases. First, the statically ambitious MEPs needs to be reselected to his/her party's ballot (access). In candidate-centred systems, this is as far as selectoral reward goes. In party-centred systems however, the electoral prospect a specific ballot position confers is an additional criterion to speak of selectoral reward (rank). This chapter devoted a substantial section to the review and discussion of ways in which scholars have previously addressed the question of selectoral reward and the identification of realistic, marginal and hopeless ballot positions. The context of a broad comparative study of selectoral reward in European Parliament elections and the limitations inherent to the existing measures spurred the development of a novel approach to measuring the (s)electoral value of a ballot position. Before concluding this chapter, the idea is briefly introduced below and further developed in the methodology section of this thesis.

In order to develop a more generally applicable and conceptually valid method of identifying realistic, marginal and hopeless ballot positions in European Parliament elections, the concerns discussed so far need to be addressed. Key limitations are the inaccuracies that stem from (1) the heavy reliance on past electoral results, from (2) the inflation of the number of realistic positions, and (3) the possibility to lift the existing methods over national boundaries and over nuances in electoral systems. Many of the discussed methods implicitly refute uncertainty in elections, risk allowing too many (and/or badly distributed) safe seats, and virtually void the concept of realistic positions (i.e. near guarantee of election) from its meaning. Some methods, indeed, do away with electoral cycles or voter swings, anticipated vote shares of new and rising parties and the possibility to anticipate seat loss. Moreover, having *as many* realistic positions than there are seats available in the entire constituency refutes the idea of uncertainty in between- and within-party seat allocation, while ending up with *more* realistic positions than assembly seats voids the concept of its meaning. Consequently, I argue that the number of realistic positions should be reasonably limited and that the values attributed to ballot positions should reflect the electoral prospects at the time selectorates draft the lists if they are to say something about selectoral reward.

The core idea is that – though there are safe seats in every election – not all mandates in the assembly stem from safe seats. Indeed, while parties (candidates, voters, forecasters…) may anticipate the election results, some degree of uncertainty inevitably remains. I therefore propose to move towards a model that prescribes fewer realistic positions than there are seats available in the constituency and bring the anticipated electoral prospect into the equation. The starting point for selectoral reward through ballot placement is that party selectorates evaluate the electoral

prospect of their ballot positions and (re-)select candidates accordingly. In that sense, the anticipation of electoral prospect takes precedence over its realization. Realistic, marginal and hopeless positions should then reflect the expectation of the selectorate when drafting the list, including the 'degree of certainty' that a ballot position will yield electoral success.

An accurate measurement of ballot position value should then be forward-oriented and take note of uncertainty. To this end, this thesis develops an operationalization of ballot position value and selectoral reward based on polling data. Fluctuations are able to capture the uncertainty of some positions while consistent result highlight the near guarantee conferred by others. An additional strength of the proposed method is that it moves past pre-election snapshots based on one round of polling data. Rather, the approach proposed here accounts for the differing degree of electoral (un)certainty of high-value positions, i.e. differentiating realistic from marginal positions, by incorporating and contrasting multiple forecasts of the parties' electoral prospects published throughout the year preceding the election. A schematic view of the logic of this measure is given in Figure 3. The detailed operationalization of realistic, marginal and hopeless positions – as well as the translation of these concepts into dependent variables on selectoral reward in this research – is given in the relevant section of the methodology chapter.

Figure 3: From a party's electoral prospect towards the value of a specific ballot position
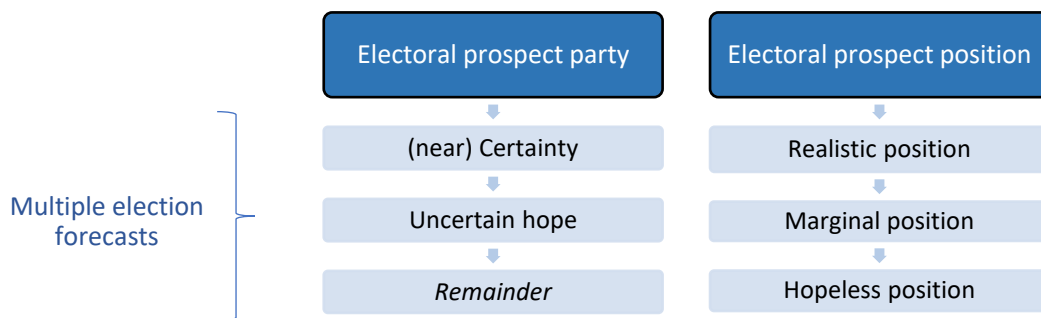
This theoretical and conceptual chapter discussed how to recognize selectoral reward. The first section stressed the importance of an MEP's ambition in any evaluation of the occurrence of selectoral reward. It also highlighted that ambitions and career paths do not necessarily align. In considering MEP ambitions and selectoral reward, some caution is warranted not to confuse realized careers, which are tangible outcomes, with the more elusive ambitions of politicians. Next, the chapter emphasized the importance of ballot placement in party-centred systems. In that respect, I reviewed how other scholars so far have identified and measured the (s)electoral value of ballot positions, with particular attention to the challenges they pose for a broad comparative

study of selectoral reward in EP elections. Finally, the chapter concluded with the introduction and key features of the novel way to identify realistic, marginal and hopeless ballot positions that is developed and applied in this research.

The next chapter elaborates on the second core concept of the thesis, namely parliamentary performance. Ultimately, what this thesis aims to uncover, is whether parties use their power over candidate selection to selectorally reward outgoing incumbents for the work they have done. The next chapter explains why we can expect parties to reward active involvement in parliamentary work and what we should understand by parliamentary performance in the EP context.

3   Chapter 3. A case for rewarding MEPs' parliamentary performance

Even after 40 years of direct elections in the European Parliament (EP), relatively few empirical studies have examined in how far selectorates evaluate incumbents' policy-making capacity when composing European election ballots. Studies on the Parliament's composition, MEP career paths and role types have delivered some insights into who makes it into the EP and how MEPs behave and pursue careers once elected. In a related field, scholars have looked into the way in which parties organize their candidate selection processes with particular attention to *who* decides (i.e. the inclusiveness, decentralization and composition of party selectorates), inspired by the seminal work of Gideon Rahat (2007) coining candidate selection as the 'choice before the choice'. Nevertheless, so far only a handful of studies specifically look at candidate selection procedures for European elections, and the dimension of candidacy eligibility criteria (or 'selectability') has remained understudied.

Over the past decade, scholars have started to address the question of what selectorates reward when selecting and ranking candidates for EP elections. Key predictors used in these studies have been aspirants' political experience and incumbents' work and influence in the EP. Understood as a proxy for candidate quality and visibility to the electorate, prior political experience has been found to boost an aspirant's chances to be (re)selected by the party (Hobolt & Høyland, 2011; Gherghina & Chiru, 2010; Pemstein et al. 2015). Rather unsurprisingly, parties generally prefer aspirants with prior political experience (on local, regional, national or European level) over those who are new to elective politics, and value EP over domestic political experience. The key argument behind these findings lies in the relevance of the candidate's prior experience and its consequences for one's policy-making capacity in the EP. Also *within* the pool of re-election seeking MEPs, parties face selectoral choices. This raises the question whether they evaluate policy-making potential to differentiate between re-election seeking incumbents.

Increasingly, academics turn their attention to what makes one incumbent more likely to return to the EP than another; and in particular if party selectorates evaluate MEPs' past performance when making their decisions. In general, parties are inclined to reselect their incumbents in European elections. As Høyland et al. (2017) put it: "Politicians with […] static ambitions need to […] please those who control their reselection and re-election, who tend to be located at the national level. These national selectors prefer to re-nominate MEPs, everything else equal" (p.5 - referring to Norris, 1997; Pemstein et al., 2015). Quality candidates are a rare commodity and incumbency (more generally prior experience) serves as a useful signal of a politicians' quality (Hobolt & Høyland, 2011, p.481). This is particularly true for parties that are primarily policy-driven, as the uniqueness of the EP and its functioning places high value on

experience, networks and seniority and therefore advantages incumbents in being effective legislators over potentially strong legislators who (still) lack experience at the European level (Pemstein et al., 2015). Incumbency may also bring electoral advantage to a candidate (or his/her party), be it because voters recognize their current representative's name and/or may know his achievements, or simply because they use incumbency as a signal of professional quality, endorsing the choice of many voters in the past election and the choice of the party leadership (cf. also Somit et al., 1994). Parties will consider whether the incumbents' presence on the ballot would increase the party's electoral prospects. "The greater the perceived size of [an incumbent's] personal vote, the more reluctant parties will be to deselect [him/her]" (Matland & Studlar, 2004, p. 97). Both the work and the (relative) visibility of incumbents may therefore motivate selectorates to reselect their incumbents.

This chapter zooms in on why an incumbent's performance record could play an important role in their re(s)election. The first two sections set out why we can expect parties to evaluate and reward their incumbents' parliamentary performance in the EP; or why we should not. Then, performance in the context of the EP is clarified by setting out the main activities and leadership functions available to MEPs and how they are attractive to (s)electorates. Next I discuss recent scholarly attention to the performance-re(s)election connection and their findings, with close attention to each indicator of performance and why it may be of (s)electoral value. The chapter concludes by setting out the research's expectations and the the hypotheses guiding the analyses..

3.1 A case for (and against) parliamentary performance evaluation in selectoral deliberations

3.1.1 *Why we should expect parties to care about performance*

We already know that, at least on some level, selectorates consider relevant legislative experience and incumbents' legislative leverage when deciding on candidate (re-)selection. This is evidenced in parties' predisposition to reselect their incumbents. A primary driver hereof is the specific expertise incumbents have built up on European issues as well as the functioning of the EP, which give them better chances – compared to newcomers - of influencing European policy and achieving the party's policy-making goals (Høyland et. al, 2017; Norris, 1997; Pemstein et al. 2015; Gherghina & Chiru, 2010). Policy seeking, however, is not a party's sole objective. The classical works on party goals – developed in a national political context – identify three major objectives parties pursue: vote-seeking, office-seeking and policy-seeking (Strøm, 1990; Müller & Strøm, 1999). Adapting this unified theory of party behavior to the context of European elections and politics – where no offices (and corresponding office benefits) are to be obtained by parties –

leaves parties to balance two overarching goals.[7] In particular, national parties competing in European elections are expected to seek (and trade off) optimization of policy influence and maximization of votes. The tradeoff and balance a party strikes between these competing goals reflect priorities and may depend on circumstance. Yet, in order to strike a balance between a parties' vote and policy-seeking goals, selectorates should balance "nominees' policy-making potential against other aspects of candidate quality, such as electoral viability" (Pemstein et al., 2015, p.1421).

In their pursuit to "maximize electoral competitiveness, reward party stalwarts, groom young talent, or ensure legislative policy-making ability […] 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" (pp.1422-3). The nomination and ranking choices of the selectorates may further be curbed by legal or voluntary requirements to balance the ticket in terms of gender, minority or geographic representation (Rahat, 2007; European Parliament, 2009; 2015).

The complexity of this daunting and strategic balancing act, makes it improbable (if not impossible) to simply selectorally reward all re-election seeking incumbents. Besides, doing so would hardly be desirable as the resulting lack of elite renewal would be problematic for the democratic nature of the assembly. Next to ballot balancing considerations parties may have other strategic, ideological or disciplinary incentives to renew their delegation and/or (virtually) de-select incumbents (Put et al., 2015; Matland & Studlar, 2004; Sieberer, 2006; Müller, 2000; Van Vonno & Louwerse, 2019).

Within their balancing act parties need to decide which incumbents to reward, implying a strategy for differentiation between incumbents. If parties aim to maximize their policy-seeking goals, past performance and proven policy-making capacity should be a key differentiating factor. "Internal party balances and developments aside, the party leadership should take into account if a candidate […] has been or is likely to be active in the EP" (Sigalas, 2011, p.3). Put differently, parties' preference for incumbent reselection "makes sense only if the incumbents have demonstrated their capacity to work effectively. If this is not the case, parties may be willing to sanction them" (Navarro, 2012, p.8).

Undeniably, political parties want their representatives to be hard working and active in the pursuit of the party's objectives. The MEP is selected by the party to do its bidding in the European Parliament. That is, the party (principal) delegates the pursuit of policy-goals in the EP to its representatives (agent), much like a company principal delegates the task of managing the firm to

---

[7] For a discussion on party goals and the adaptation of the unified theory of party behaviour by Strøm (1990) and Müller & Strøm (1999) to European elections, see Frech (2016, pp.32-36).

an agent – the manager. The principal-agent theory (originally: Jensen and Meckling (1976); Kassim & Menon, 2003), lends itself well to the domain of political representation and perhaps the European Parliament in particular. Principals have a hard time selecting 'the best' agents because principals and agents are driven by different incentives (Doleys, 2000) and because they face an information asymmetry concerning the agent's intentions and actions. Given the fact that "within the EP context, the national party […] cannot directly influence EP policy, [it] has to rely on their agent – the MEP [and] whether or not the party values policy intrinsically or instrumentally, as a principal, the national party must overcome the moral hazard problem to influence policy" (Frech, 2016, p.34).

To overcome adverse selection the principal (party) sets out to control the agent (MEP). Power over the agent's career opportunities is a powerful source of control. In the EP context, members of parliament are understood to be agents of *two* principals. The national party on the one hand, and his/her European Parliamentary Group (EPG) on the other. The latter controls much of the MEP's internal career advancement, but the national party retains the exclusive right to candidate (re-)selection – and is therefore considered the MEP's dominant principal (Hix, 2002; Hix et.al. 2007, Faas, 2003). National parties hold a powerful sanctioning tool via their exclusive rights over the selection of political candidates. The parties' power over re/de-selection enforces their control over the performance of their agents and enables their effective use of selectoral reward or punishment for e.g. parliamentary performance or preferred characteristics. Selectoral decisions can indeed be used for selecting 'the best' candidate, as well as to sanction unsatisfying behavior (shirking), while "the[se] two motivations are not necessarily mutually exclusive" (Frech, 2016, p.31).

A party's candidate selection constitutes an important *ex ante* and *ex post* control mechanism over the principal-agent relationship with their parliamentarians. In its evaluation of incumbents' characteristics and behaviors, the selecting body can "weed out potential troublemakers and leisure shirkers" (Sieberer, 2006, p.154) and reward those who brought (and may again bring) spoils to the party. Candidate (re)selection is the ultimate tool of control (Raunio, 2007, p. 133) to positively reward or negatively sanction the behavior of their members in parliament.

The party's power over candidate (re)selection and list placement serves as a stick and carrot for re-election seeking MEPs (Gherghina & Chiru, 2010; van Vonno & Louwerse, 2019). Damgaard's (1995) 'rule of anticipated sanctions' infers that the mere threat or promise of punishment or reward can suffice to motivate parliamentarians to behave in one way or another. Anticipating *ex post control* of their behavior "incumbent MPs who seek re-(s)election will be prone to work hard for the party in parliament, anticipating that not doing so would result in demotion or complete removal from the party candidate list. They may also do so out of hope to be rewarded

for their input with re-nomination and even advancement to [safer] positions on the list" (van Vonno & Louwerse, 2019, p.5).[8]

This makes sense from both the MEPs' and the party's point of view. Indeed, "[i]f incumbents think that their efforts will not be rewarded by reselection, why should they bother investing any effort?" (Hazan & Rahat, 2010, p. 124). Likewise, why would parties forego the opportunity to improve their legislative punching power, e.g. by doing away with shirking incumbents? Sensibly, parties ought to boost the electoral prospects of their best soldiers. Ultimately, "preselecting and proposing competent candidates to the voters is of course a major, maybe the most important, task of political parties" (Frech, 2016, p.175-6). Maybe even particularly so in EP elections where incumbents remain largely unknown by the electorate. Their limited name recognition among the public may curtail *electoral* incumbency advantages. At the same time, the incumbency advantage *within* the assembly is extensive because the specific nature and functioning of the EP requires experience, network and expertise to exert true policy influence.

Moreover, the EP is a 'working parliament' as opposed to a 'talking parliament'. MEPs are not trapped in a majority/opposition game, rather they can effectively contribute to the legislative process. This makes MEPs' parliamentary performance potentially more important than that of their national counterparts: what MEPs do can actually make a difference and impact legislative outcome (Navarro, 2012, p.7). Parties evidently have strong incentives to care for the policy capacity and potential of their MEPs, which suggests they would – at least to a certain extent - evaluate their statically ambitious MEPs' performance records to decide whether to de-select, relegate or reward them.

We expect parties to selectorally reward their incumbents for the parliamentary work they accomplished in the ongoing legislature. If so rich activity records, all else equal, should bestow MEPs with a selectoral advantage over their less active colleagues. The argument predominantly stools on parties' policy-seeking objectives and the understanding of parliamentary activity records as proof of policy-making capacity and procedural knowhow. Besides, MEPs' activity records may reflect additional desirable candidate qualities: their valence and ambition, networking capacity, and/or visibility among the electorate. Any of these logics (policy-making, valence, network, visibility) or a combination thereof could incentivize selectorates to take past performance into account. Active MEPs show motivation and effort, which can be understood as a minimum sign of candidate quality or valence. So-called leisure-shirking parliamentarians in contrast simply do not do their best for the political party and may be punished by parties for not carrying their weight

---

[8] The control functions of candidate selection and the preference of political parties for active representatives is widely accepted in the literature, yet, have rarely been thoroughly tested empirically so far. Notable exceptions are the works of Yildrim et. al (2017) and van Vonno and Louwers (2019), on the cases of the Turkish and Dutch lower chambers respectively. The relevant literature with regards to the EP overall confirms more active MEPs to be more likely re(s)elected. This literature is discussed in more detail in the next section.

(Müller, 2000; van Vonno & Louwerse, 2019).

A minimum expectation could be MEPs to attend the debates and support the party's stance in votes as these are primordial and easily accessible functions of parliamentary work. More technical or advanced parliamentary work may speak to an incumbent's excellence regarding other desired MEP qualities. MEPs need a good network to successfully pursue their party's goals and their internal career ambitions. Involvement levels in certain activities and leadership roles therefore hint to an MEP's networking capacity. The parliamentary groups within the EP shape the opportunity structures regarding the allocation of the most salient functions, responsibilities and activities. MEPs with long experience, noticeable expertise and good networks are advantaged in obtaining important reports and positions (Navarro, 2012, p.7; Yordanova, 2013; Yoshinaka et al., 2010). If parties seek to reward an incumbent's network, this should show through in the analysis of the performance-re(s)election link. Party selectorates can also respond to the media presence of their MEPs, rewarding more visible MEPs. Certain activities and positions in the EP are well-suited to generate media attention and build a personal reputation, or lend themselves well to representing constituency interests and concerns.

Among the statically ambitious incumbents, parties may be attracted to those MEPs who were highly active on activities associated with functions that can be employed to foster an electoral connection through advertising, credit claiming and position taking[9] (think for example of speeches, parliamentary questions or leadership roles). Because of their relative (potential for) visibility they can increase the MEP's vote-seeking capital (Bowler, 2010; Green-Pederson, 2010; Otjes & Louwerse, 2018; Vliegenthart & Walgrave, 2011).

Conversely, the strive for more transparency has resulted in the public availability of MEPs' entire activity records. Any member of the public is just a click away from his/her representative's activity records in the EP. While it is not expected that individual voters will actively seek out this information it may be "used, and misused, by the media and political opponents or supporters of the candidates" (Sigalas, 2011, p.1) which potentially strengthens electoral accountability for past performance but also further incentivizes parties to reselect "experienced candidates with a good activity record" (p.2). In their bid to convince voters that they will represent their interests effectively in the assembly "parliamentary activity is a matter of credibility" (Navarro, 2012, p.5).

A 2015 study – commissioned by the Parliament itself – set out to identify parties' candidate selection criteria for European elections. Simply put, 'selectability' rules tell us something about what selectorates seek when composing their ballot and include both "criteria that facilitate the selection of certain types of candidates or limits the selection of others" (European Parliament,

---

[9] Mayhew's (1974) three strands of electoral connection.

2015, p.6). Though incumbency nor legislative work appear as formal selection criteria, quite unsurprisingly, parties have been found to evaluate the reselection of statically ambitious incumbents separately from (re-)selecting non-incumbent aspirants.

Aiming to capture informal practices and ballot placement considerations, the study includes interviews with MEPs on what brings about successful candidacies. Reflecting on "what has really mattered in terms of 'selectability' practices" (Ibidem), the MEPs replete the formal criteria with intra-party endorsement, visibility (to the general electorate and the party grass-root), active party involvement and the importance of regional and party-branch balance. They also mention the rather vague requirement of 'knowledge of' and 'interest in' the EU.

As for decisions on incumbent reselection, the interviewees characterized incumbency as an "overarching 'facilitator'" but highlighted that selection criteria "should be considered in an additive manner: it is often not one but several qualities that play in favor of a particular aspirant" (Ibid, p.39). For incumbents, such additional quality– none the least – lays in past EP performance. The interviewees attributed much importance to work accomplished during the previous mandate, but remained somewhat skeptical about the appreciation of parliamentary work by the selectorates. Past performance can be a double-edged sword, particularly if there is limited capacity or willingness in the selectorates for in-depth evaluation. "If the quality of the work done in EP is considered as important to get reselected, this work also constitutes an easy target on which challengers can attack MEPs, as negative points in track records are easily pointed out" (p.30). Even though formal criteria for the (re-)selection of EP candidates do not include incumbency or past performance, the respondents cautiously link performance to the selectoral reward specifying both elements as facilitators for successful candidacies.

3.1.2   *Advocate of the devil: why performance may be (s)electorally irrelevant*

Despite the ideological and policy-seeking incentives for parties to evaluate incumbents' parliamentary performance – *particularly* so in the context of the EP – the same context also produces arguments that might lead us to the opposite assumption: the absence of a (s)electoral accountability mechanism for MEPs' delivered work in Strasbourg and Brussels. Simply put: voters do not know or care about their MEPs' work, whereas parties do but may be preoccupied with vote-seeking, making it uncertain they truly value MEP's activity records. Moreover, European parliamentary groups and European political parties - the actors best informed on MEP behavior - are not involved in the reselection of their members.

Voters have (and seek) little information about their representatives in the EP, or even European politics more generally (cfr. second order election theory: Hix & Lord, 1996; Marsh & Norris, 1997; Hix et. al, 2007; Judge & Earnshaw, 2008). MEPs remain largely unknown to their electorates, making it highly unlikely that voters follow their work in the Parliament, let alone

evaluate it and hold them accountable for it. Though ranking websites and media coverage have made MEPs' work more visible over the past decades, what reaches voters are mainly sensational stories or simplified lists of the 'best vs. the laziest' EP deputies (Sigalas, 2011). It is highly uncertain such sporadic coverage effectively convinces or deters voters at the ballot box. The consensus is that the electoral accountability of MEPs for their parliamentary performance is weak, if not absent.

MEPs have criticized the limited recognition they get from their party and have highlighted that rewards for work achieved during the legislature are curbed by selectorates' limited capacity and willingness for in-depth evaluation (European Parliament, 2015, p.30; Van Hecke et al., 2018). Yet, perhaps in contrast to voters, parties can be expected to be intrinsically interested in, and have access to information on their members' performance. National party leaderships and selectorates could monitor the performance of their representative on their own, or seek information from the **European political party** (often called Europarties) and/or the **European parliamentary group** (EPG) of which they are member. These supranational players the EU's representative politics possess a wealth of information on their members in the EP and the work they have been doing. However, they are not involved or even consulted in the composition of the electoral lists put forward by their national member parties (European Parliament, 2009; 2015).

As a second principal to MEPs, **European parliamentary groups** (EPGs), control much of the internal career opportunities and exert massive influence over performance opportunity structures in the EP (e.g. leadership, reports, speaking time…) (Høyland et. al, 2017). They possess the most information on MEP performance, yet are not involved in reselection decisions (European Parliament, 2009; 2015). Indeed, it are the national political parties that have the exclusive competence over their candidate selection and it seems European political groups and parties are not at all involved in these decisions, not even on an informal basis (European Parliament, 2015). Judge and Earnshaw (2008) point out that the 'division of labour' between national and European level parties causes "a fracturing of the normal liberal democratic linkage between activity of representatives in Parliament and their electoral accountability" (p.117). They go on to conclude that "in the EU, what MEPs do, or what their party groups do in the EP, is not the primary determinant of re-election […], or, for MEPs, of reselection" (Ibidem).

Although intuitively convincing, Sigalas (2011) reminds us that, in the absence of empirical confirmation, the assertion that what MEPs do in the EP does not influence their (s)electoral prospects "may be exaggerated, if not plainly wrong" (p.3). Ultimately, we need to understand if and how national parties evaluate performance and whether or not "a link can still be made

between the behavior of MEPs and their likelihood of getting re-elected, […] through the role that the national party leadership plays" (Van Geffen, 2018, p.37).

It is up to the **national parties** to decide upon (re)selection "according to what they see as most important (recruiting voters, gaining influence in the legislature, changing their image, etc.). Thus, the composition of party lists – and especially the decision to select or reselect certain individuals rather than others – gives an indication of party priorities" (Navarro, 2012, p.5). Parties have good reasons to reward active incumbents considering their objective to seek policy influence. Ultimately, however, their pursuit of votes and electoral victory (vote-seeking goals) may impose tradeoffs to their policy-seeking behavior in ballot list composition. Notwithstanding the evident policy-seeking advantages of reselecting active and influential incumbents, parties may be more driven by vote-seeking objectives directing their focus away from MEPs' past performance and towards their vote earning capacity.

The electoral attractiveness of candidates is a crucial concern in a race where the "'candidate to seat' ratio is extraordinarily high: more than nine candidates are running for each seat in the EP" (Giebler & Wüst, 2011, p.56). Parties' vote-seeking objective may be intensified by the highly competitive nature of European elections: compared to national assemblies the EP only hosts a very limited number of seats to member states and their competing parties. If parties wish to increase their size in the assembly, they need to recruit a considerable number of extra voters. The competitiveness of winnable seats in the EP may push parties away from prioritizing performance evaluation in their candidate selection procedures: highly active and competent incumbents may be more desirable than less influential incumbents or newcomers, but they are of little benefit to the party's policy-making goals if they do not manage to get elected. At the same time, this high competition and relatively small delegation size urges parties to truly put their best candidates forward.

The EP's functioning and particular electoral setting make it an interesting case to research the selectoral accountability of deputies for their legislative activity (and how electoral systems may shape it). The European context typically fosters the expectation of a weak (s)electoral connection to parliamentary performance. However, the same context may in fact provide strong incentives for parties to evaluate and reward parliamentary performance (or at least policy-shaping potential) in the EP. In essence, while we may expect the *electoral* accountability (voter reward) of MEP performance to be weak, the European context may entice a *selectoral* punishment/reward dynamic for MEP's performance (party reward).

3.2   State of the art: The effect of parliamentary performance in the EP on re(s)election

The current section looks into what parliamentary performance designates. Sure, the performance of an MEP can be evaluated, but what does the job entail and how can performance be measured and compared? Parliamentary performance in fact contains of a range of different activities and functions. As in national parliaments, the work of parliamentarians covers multiple dimensions: M(E)Ps are expected to influence and shape policy, represent his/her constituents and party and scrutinize the executive branch. To fulfill these tasks, representatives have a diverse set of tools at their disposal. Parliamentary performance of individual MEPs then should be understood as their use of these tools and their active involvement in the work of the EP. This research incorporates two 'types' of parliamentary performance: *parliamentary activities* on the one hand, and *leadership roles* on the other. Hence performance includes indicators concerning the activities an MEP *does* and the positions an MEP *holds* during the legislature (see Figure 4).

The first category reflects an MEP's use of particular instruments from the parliamentary toolbox. Often these activities are referred to as an MEP's '*legislative* behavior' in the literature, yet as they in fact include both legislative and non-legislative work, I prefer categorizing them simply as parliamentary activities.[10] MEPs' activity records should inform reselection choices *if* party leaderships value and reward their representatives actively taking part in debates and decision-making in the EP. The second form of MEP performance pertains to leading positions MEPs occupy in the assembly. Evidently functions such as (vice-)presidencies and chairmanships are relatively scarce and highly coveted. Being able to occupy such position signals ones' established value and network within the European arena. Leading functions in the assembly and its committees, the European Parliamentary groups or European Political Parties undeniably increase an MEP's potential influence as well as his/her visibility – in the Brussels Bubble and at home. Parties should then prefer reselecting and rewarding such prominent Europarliamentarians.

---

[10] In fact, legislative activities are those activities that bring about "direct material consequences for society, as they lead directly to the passage of new legislation or legislative reform", while non-legislative activities have no such direct consequences as no law is changed (Green-Pedersen, 2010, p.348). Non-legislative activities refer for example to parliamentary debates, questions and interpellations, whereas activities such as voting on bills and law-making evidently are legislative in nature. The distinction however is not always clear-cut: some activities may contain elements of both depending on the context in which they are used (Ibid, pp.348-9; cfr. also Talbert et al., 1995; Kepplinger, 2002).

Figure 4: Parliamentary performance in the EP
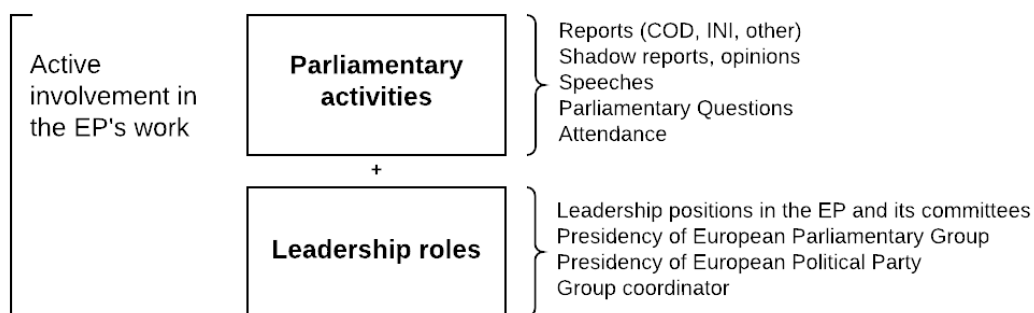
Table 2 gives an overview of the extant literature empirically dealing with the effect of performance on re(s)election in the EP. After succinctly introducing this literature, I move to the discussion of each individual indicator of parliamentary performance included in this research. For each indicator I cover what it consists of, why parties can be expected to selectorally reward it and what the extant literature has uncovered about its effect so far. How the performance-re(s)election connection is tested evidently impacts the results and their meaning. Note that the (combination of) performance indicators, the countries, electoral systems and legislatures studied in the reviewed works vary. So do the applied sampling strategies and performance-re(s)election perspectives.

Three such perspectives can be identified. A first group looks at the question from a '*candidacy*' angle: are incumbents with 'better' performance records more likely to be listed in the upcoming elections? Performance effects then relate to both the incumbents' ambitions and selectoral decisions but do not distinguish between them. Candidacy models do not differentiate between progressive and static ambition, include incumbents running for a different party as 're'-selected, and do not distinguish selectoral reward (rank) from reselection (access).

Other scholars have purposefully focused on the '*re-election'-perspective*: do more active incumbents have better odds to be re-elected? These studies set off the performance of re-elected MEPs against incumbents who unsuccessfully ran for re-election (Wilson et al., 2016; Van Geffen, 2018) or against non-returning incumbents indiscriminate of whether they ran the race or not (Sigalas, 2011; Hermansen, 2018). Implicitly 're-election odds' can point to ballot ordering decisions of the selectorates, depending on the ballot structure used in the European elections.

A third way of addressing the question explicitly looks at the *list safety* of listed incumbents. This perspective examines whether more active incumbents are more likely reselected to higher value positions compared to their less active colleagues. It explicates selectoral reward by differentiating ballot access from a ballot position's (s)electoral value. The 'list safety'-perspective is only useful to study ranked ballot lists. So far this perspective has been applied on MEPs elected in closed list systems (Hermansen, 2018) and on German MEPs (Frech, 2016), though ballot

position value is operationalized differently. Moreover, the focus within this perspective so far has been on leadership roles and less on parliamentary activities (see Table 2).

The studies empirically testing the effect of MEP performance on their re-(s)election odds have generally found active MEPs to be advantaged. Hence, incumbents' performance records appear to affect candidate selection for EP elections, despite being absent from parties' formalized selectability criteria. Overall, the literature suggests parliamentary activities positively affect MEPs' re-(s)election chances, though statistically insignificant effects highlight that ambiguity remains as to which activities and behaviors truly and consistently pay off. In what follows, I introduce each indicator of MEP performance included in this research, covering its function and signal to the party leadership, as well as its theorized connection to MEP re-(s)election and the empirical state of the art.

Table 2: State of the art - The performance-re(s)election connection in European elections

			Reports	INI reports	Shadow reports	Opinions	Speeches	Parl. Questions	Attendance	Voting Loyalty (party)	Leadership roles	Group co-ordinator	EPG presidency	EP bureau	Committee chair	Committee vice-chair
Reselection	candidacy	Sigalas & Tiemann (2012)	▲			▲	⊖	⊕	▲*							
		Navarro (2012)	⊕			▲	▲	▲					▲	▼	⊖	
		Hermansen (2014)	▲								⊕	x	x	x		
		Wilson et al. (2016)	▲				▲		⊖		⊕	⊖	⊕	▼		
		Van Geffen (2018)	⊕	▲		▲		⊕								
Re-election	list safety	Hermansen (2014)	▲							▲		x	x	x		
		Frech (2016)	▲							⊕		x	x	x	x	
	re-election	Sigalas (2011)	▲			▲	⊕	⊕	▲* ▲°							
		Hermansen (2014)	▲							⊕		x	x	x		
		Wilson et al. (2016)	⊕						⊖		⊖	▲	▼	⊖		
		Van Geffen (2018)	▲	⊕		⊕		⊕								

▲ positive effect
⊕ positive direction, not significant
⊖ negative direction, not significant
▼ negative effect

*   in subsets of the sample only (EPG; electoral system; country)
°   effect only found in full sample
x   dichotomous 'leadership role' variable including these functions in the EP
x   Frech (2016) includes both EP and EPG chairs and vice-chairs, but not quaestors

3.2.1 Reports

Drafting committee reports is an activity at the heart of an MEP's parliamentary work. Committees are charged with drafting reports on (legislative or non-legislative) issues concerning the policy area of their competence. Within the committees one MEP is appointed rapporteur: s/he is responsible for drafting the report, which means s/he explores the issue and colleagues' stances, but also discusses with experts and serves as the main point of contact for lobby and interest groups on the matter. The rapporteur presents a draft report in the committee where other members may propose amendments. Once adopted at committee level the rapporteur presents the report in plenary, shaping the EP's position on a particular file. Moreover, rapporteurs act as "linchpin of intra- and inter-institutional decision-making" (Hurka et al., 2015, p.1230) as they enter into direct contact with the Commission and Council, negotiating on behalf of the entire EP. Rapporteurs therefore are influential policy-makers, the 'primary legislator' concerning the issue at hand (Yordanova, 2013, p.100). The allocation of reports is competitive and access to rapporteurships is largely controlled by political groups via their coordinators in the committees. Once a matter is referred to a committee, the coordinators bid on the dossier.[11] The group coordinator that secures the report for his/her political group then choses a committee member from his/her EPG to draft the report. All other group coordinators may appoint shadow rapporteurs (see below).

Rapporteurships in the EP have received abundant scholarly attention. Scholars agree rapporteurs are pivotal and powerful legislators (cfr. Benedetto, 2005; Farrell & Héritier, 2004; Hausemer, 2006; Mamadouh & Raunio, 2003: Rasmussen, 2008; Corbett et al., 2003, 2011) and have extensively studied report allocation (cfr. Keading, 2004; Hausemer, 2006; Benedetto, 2005; Høyland, 2006; Hurka et al., 2015; Yoshinaka et al., 2010; Yordanova, 2013). Studies concerned with the effect of performance on an MEP's chances for re-(s)election too, have consistently included reports as a measurement of performance. Overall the literature suggests a positive impact of rapporteurships on re-(s)election, nevertheless the verdict is not unanimous. While finding rapporteurships to positively affect re-nomination chances, Wilson et al. (2016) do not find a significant effect of reports on incumbents' likelihood to get re-elected. Yet as they include a control variable for an MEP's 'safe list rank' *selectoral* rewards for performance are obscured and their analysis does not explore whether rapporteurships (and other elements of parliamentary

---

[11] Report allocation happens through an auctioning system in which group coordinators bid on rapporteurships, with each EPG receiving a total number of 'points' to spend on reports depending on their size in the assembly. On report allocation and the bidding system, see also Corbet et al. (2011), Yordanova (2013), Daniel (2015), Obholzer et al. (2019a, 2019b) and Benedetto (2005).

performance) inform the safety of an MEP's list rank. Sigalas & Tiemann (2012) find active rapporteurs to enjoy better odds for re-nomination, after Sigalas (2011) already found reports to boost MEPs' re-election prospects.[12] Van Geffen (2018) then, finds reports to boost the re-election chances of listed incumbents, but an increased number of rapporteurships not to be helpful to increase ones changes to be listed in the first place. He suggests parties may top-rank more active rapporteurs (increasing their chances for re-election), rather than radically de-select those who did not acquire (m)any rapporteurships. This potential of rapporteurships to boost an incumbent's ballot position value has been confirmed in other studies (Hermansen, 2018: 'safe seats'; Frech 2016: 'electoral probabilities'). The (s)electoral reward of rapporteurships may indeed be primarily situated at the national party level, with parties rewarding report writing with reselection and higher ballot positions.

Reports are coveted parliamentary activities for MEPs because of the pivotal role rapporteurs play in decision-making in the committee and assembly at large. Among reports, some are considered more salient or important than others. Particularly codecision reports (COD)[13] are influential as rapporteurs in this context represent the Parliament regarding matters on which it is on equal footing with the Council (Yoshinaka et al, 2010, p.462). Under the otherwise lengthy co-decision process, both Council and Parliament attempt to reach early agreement. The function of rapporteur, as EP spokesperson, then gains even more in gravitas. It can be expected that rapporteurships on co-decision dossiers are valued more than non-legislative reports or reports on legislation decided under other procedures (e.g. consultation or coordination) where the EP's stance is less decisive. If this is true, COD reports should be selectorally rewarded more so than other types of reports.

A second type of report that stands out is the own initiative report (INI). Such reports formally do not pertain to decision-making, rather they allow MEPs to request the Commission to produce a legislative proposal on a certain issue. (Co-)authoring an INI report does not depend on appointment by group coordinators. Instead, MEPs can suggest a topic for new (or amendment of) European legislation on an issue that they feel requires so. If the report is adopted in plenary it is sent to the Commission as to nudge her to prepare a legislative proposal on the matter. In this context, rapporteurs are no inter-institutional linchpins and they show initiative rather than policy-

---

[12] Sigalas (2011) offsets re-elected MEPs against not re-elected MEPs without differentiating between MEPs that were not listed and those with unsuccessful candidacies.

[13] Since the Lisbon Treaty the term 'ordinary legislative procedure' is used for the codecision procedure where the EP and Council legislate on equal footing. I keep the term codecision and the abbreviation COD here. I do so because I differentiate between types of reports based on the procedure reference each report has in the EP's database. This procedure number contains the year the rapporteurship was opened, an identification number and a three-letter identification of the procedure type. The abbreviation COD is used to indicate reports under the ordinary legislative procedure; INI designates the own-initiative procedure; DEC for budgetary discharges, and so on.

making capacity. The (s)electoral reward dynamics for INI reports may therefore be different from those of other, and particularly COD, reports. Interested in the link between MEPs' ambitions and legislative behavior, Van Geffen (2018) separated own initiative (INI) reports from the others. He found MEPs who wrote more INI reports more likely to partake in the elections but not more likely to be re-elected, opposite to non-INI rapporteurships. Hence, INI reports may convey static ambition more so than they portray policy-making capacity.

3.2.2   Shadow reports

In contrast to rapporteurships, shadow reports have so far received little scholarly attention. Nevertheless, the role and potential policy-shaping contributions of shadow rapporteurs should not be understated. Rapporteurs are chosen by the committee group coordinators of the EPG that brings home the auction. The group coordinators of the other political groups can appoint a shadow rapporteur. These "'shadows' follow the progress of a file through committee and plenary, and can join the rapporteur in closed-door trilogies with the Commission and Council" (Hurka et al., 2015, p. 1230). As the powers of the EP and consequently the importance of rapporteurs increased, so too has the control by shadow rapporteurs (Judge & Earnshaw, 2011; Corbett et al., 2011), with the most salient files subject to tighter control by the shadows (Rasmussen & Reh, 2013). Next to the rapporteur, they become part of the EP's 'negotiating team', and despite hierarchy the lead and shadow rapporteurs 'work in tandem' and jointly lead the files through the decision-making process (Ibid., p.1020; Ringe, 2010, p.59; Hurka et al., 2015, p.1232). Besides being the primary negotiation partners of the lead rapporteur on a file, shadows also fulfill a crucial function within their political group: they serve as 'primary sources of information' (Ringe, 2010, p.59) and mobilize, coordinate and lead group activity on the matter at hand (Judge & Earnshaw, 2011, p.57). Shadowships have so far eluded the literature on (s)electoral reward of MEP performance. To our knowledge, this study is the first broad quantitative study to incorporate them as an indicator of parliamentary performance.

3.2.3   Reports for opinion

Where multiple committees claim competence for a legislative proposal put forward by the Commission, the presidency can appoint a maximum of two opinion-giving committees next to the lead committee; or assign a joint opinion by two committees.[14] Within the opinion-giving committees, a 'rapporteur for opinion' is chosen (equally via the group coordinator bidding system) who will draft an opinion report on the file at hand, from the viewpoint of his/her policy field and expertise (Keading, 2005). After the draft-opinion has been put to the vote in the opinion-giving

---

[14] Rules of the Procedure of the European Parliament: Rule 54, Procedure with associated committees; Rule 55, Procedure with joint committee meetings; Rule 201, Duties of committees.

committee it is sent to and submitted to a vote in the lead committee after which it is annexed to the final report. Over the past two decades the EP has increasingly facilitated and formalized cooperation between committees where a legislative proposal connects multiple policy remits (Servent, 2017, pp. 223-5; Dionigi et al., 2017; Rasmussen, 2015). Rapporteurs for opinion are "allowed to participate in meetings of the lead committee and even sit in trilogues" (Servent, 2017, p.224), associated committees can request joint meetings, and even delimit areas of 'exclusive competence' (Ibid., p.225). Opinion-giving committees have moved towards a near-equal status to the lead committee and leads are precluded from laying a report in plenary without incorporating the amendments from associate committees (Rasmussen, 2015; Smith, 2008). Nevertheless, opinions have barely been considered indicators of parliamentary performance in studies on (s)electoral reward in the EP. The notable exceptions however, did find the number of opinions to positively impact an MEP's chances for re-(s)election in 2009 (Sigalas, 2011; Sigalas & Tiemann, 2012).

3.2.4 _Speeches in plenary_

Parliamentary debate and legislative speeches are a key element of parliamentary activity in all democratic systems, the EP being no different. It is crucial not only for the legislative and scrutiny dimensions of parliamentary work, but also allows MEPs to explain their position and send signals to their constituents, colleagues and leaderships. As there is a finite time set aside for debate during the plenary sessions, speaking time is a 'precious commodity' in the EP (Hix & Lord, 1996, p.133). Who gets the floor is a function of supply (the amount of available time and who allocates it) as well as demand (who requests to speak). Speaking time is essentially controlled by the political groups who receive speaking time in function of their size which they then allocate among their national delegations and individual members. Some MEPs have reserved speaking time by virtue of a function they fulfill, e.g. the EP presidency who chairs the sessions, or rapporteurs presenting their reports. Speeches are visible acts that can be used to publically reiterate a national/party position or to underscore one's expertise on (or draw attention to) a particular matter. They "provide members with an opportunity to create a record of positive activity for their national party to further their chances for re-election" (Proksch & Slapin, 2010, p. 334). Beyond the party leadership speeches can also be helpful in raising one's public profile, visibility and name recognition as they are easily picked up on by media or MEPs themselves can post them on their personal websites and social media pages to promote their position and signal or inform voters (Marcinkiewicz & Stegmaier, 2017).

At the national level speaking time has proven to significantly better the chances an MP gets reselected by the party (van Vonno & Louwerse, 2019; Yildirim et al., 2017). Speeches also are found to attract preference votes more so than other parliamentary activities, such as bill sponsorship (Marcinkiewicz & Stegmaier, 2017). Pertaining to national legislative elections, it seems floor time is rewarded both by party and voters. As for the EP, the empirical results are mixed at best. Navarro (2012) and Van Geffen (2018) find a small positive effect of speeches on the likelihood an incumbent *partakes* in the EP elections, contrary to Sigalas & Tieman (2012). The number of speeches delivered in plenary does not seem to influence an MEP's re-*e*lection chances (Van Geffen, 2018; Sigalas, 2011).

A possible explanation for the diverging effects of speeches on re-(s)election found on the national and European levels could lie in the locus of control over floor time allocation. In the EP national parties control selection but not speaking time allocation. Yet at home parties control floor time and allocate (most) speaking time to their frontbenchers: MPs they are already likely to reselect. On the national level therefore, re-(s)election might be a second reward for being an established party representative (*next* to getting floor time), rather than being a selectoral reward *for* the speeches delivered.

3.2.5 *Parliamentary questions*

Despite the fact that parliamentary questions are a "central instrument to keep tabs on executive activities in almost all parliaments [they] are among the least studied parliamentary behaviours", in particular when it comes to the EP (Sozzi, 2016, p.349). The scarce studies on the use and function of parliamentary questions suggest that MEPs do not necessarily use parliamentary questions to control the European executive (with the exception of European agencies, see Font & Pérez, 2016). Rather, in the EP questions have been found to mainly serve as a "two-way information channel" between the EP on the one hand and the Commission and Council on the other (Raunio, 1996), or as a means for national opposition parties to stay informed and monitor European affairs (Proksch & Slapin, 2011). They are even used to flag potential infringements by the governing parties in their own countries to the Commission (Jensen et al., 2013).

Parliamentary questions may still be a central instrument to control the executive, but perhaps this is not MEPs' main concern. In fact, it might "not [be] among the motives of MPs at all" (Wiberg, 1995, p.183). Instead, scrutiny can become a 'by-product' while parliamentarians use their questions to "improve their public image and reputation among relevant groups (party, constituency, interest groups)" (Sozzi, 2016, p.350 referencing Martin, 2011). Parliamentary questions can be a tool for representing territorial interests (Brack & Costa, 2019), serving as a 'linkage mechanism' between MEPs and the (local, regional, national) constituencies they represent (Chiru, 2019a). They can also be used to generate visibility of an issue or of oneself. Newspapers

and other media frequently pick up on parliamentary questions (Wiberg, 1995) and "parliamentarians are said to contact the media before asking certain questions as a way of creating more publicity" (Bailer, 2011, p.303).

Beyond the macro-functions of parliamentary scrutiny, information and representation, parliamentary questions also perform micro-functions for individual legislators: the generation of personal publicity, development of reputation and constituency linkage (Wiberg & Koura, 1994; Bailer, 2011; Scozzi, 2016). Legislators can therefore exploit them for self-promotion in their strategy for re-(s)election (Rasch, 1994, 2011). The more so because asking parliamentary questions – particularly written questions – is an easy activity. It is low in technicality, does not require an intricate understanding of the EP, and is relatively free from constraints imposed by party leaderships. This makes the activity easily accessible to all MEPs, regardless of their delegation size, EPG affiliation or experience. While the content of the questions determines their quality[15], asking many questions is an easy way to 'crank up' ones' activity record and/or to generate personal visibility among both party leadership and their constituencies.

The few studies taking up parliamentary questions as an indicator of MEP performance deliver contradictory results. Navarro (2010; 2012) finds questions to increase the likelihood for incumbent *candidacy* in the 2004 and 2009 EP elections, while Sigalas and Tiemann (2012) do not find a significant effect as to the 2009 elections. Studying the effect of parliamentary activities on MEPs' *re-election* probabilities Sigalas (2011) again finds no effect of the number of parliamentary questions asked, but he notices that MEPs from smaller EPGs ask more questions to compensate for the fewer reports they are able to write.

3.2.6 *Attendance to the plenary (participation in roll call votes)*

The European Parliament meets in plenary sittings four consecutive days per month in the Strasbourg chamber and additional plenaries can be held in Brussels. During these plenary sittings, parliamentary debates are held and pieces of legislation are put to the vote. Attendance to the plenary is not mandatory and the EP has been called out on its low attendance rates. Evidently, showing up for the plenary sessions and partaking in the votes is an easy, low-effort activity that lies fully within the control of the MEP him/herself and which can be seen as a minimal sign of valence. However, faced with multiple tasks, MEPs' time is a precious resource which they must divide among other things over preparatory work on upcoming legislation, work within the committees and delegations, constituency work, meeting experts and lobbyists etc. Nevertheless,

---

[15] The quality of MEPs' questions has attracted critique and scorn, none the least by Commission President Juncker. In 2017 he even wrote a formal letter to EP President Tajani denouncing the unnecessary administrative burden and timing issues brought about by an excessive amount of questions and interpellations, and urging MEPs to consider the quality rather than quantity of their questions. (Politico, 2017)

blatant absenteeism and shirking can be expected to be punished by party leaderships and voters alike, though this does not necessarily mean 'good attendance records' are a good predictor of - let alone suffice for – (s)electoral reward.

Attendance rates may play a role in an MEP's chances for re-(s)election as low attendance can be considered a form of responsibility shirking that reflects badly on his/her reputation (e.g. OE24, 2009), particularly since various media pick up on 'MEP rankings' flagging the 'lazy *v.* hardworking' parliamentarians based on activity and attendance records.[16] Empirically, the link between attendance and re-(s)election deserves further research. While it has been found to positively affect an MEP's chances for re-nomination (Sigalas & Tiemann, 2012) and – in closed list systems - for obtaining a safe seat (Hermansen, 2018) and re-election (Sigalas, 2011), these effects are not confirmed in Van Geffen's (2018) study on the subsequent EP elections in 2014. Van Geffen (2018) finds no significant effect of attendance on reselection nor re-election, yet established its link with an MEPs' ambition. He finds young stepping stone MEPs to participate in plenary relatively little compared to MEPs without national political ambitions, and towards EP careerists in particular.

3.2.7   *Voting loyalty to national party*

Besides MEPs' active involvement in the EP's work, selectorates may also consider their voting records, i.e. MEPs' voting loyalty to the *national* party when participating in roll call votes on EU legislation. In order to reach their policy goals, parties need their deputies to defend the party line. Parties not only need their MEPs to be active, they also need them to be loyal. Keep in mind though, that MEPs are agents of two principals, serving both their national party and their EPG. Previous studies have demonstrated that – where the principals' preferences clash – MEPs more frequently toe the national party line rather than obeying the conflicting EPG whip (Faas, 2003; Hix 2002; Hix et al. 2007; Proksch & Slapin, 2010). The literature agrees that national parties are the dominant principal in such situations because they hold exclusive candidate selection powers and therefore determine the MEPs' (s)electoral fate in the upcoming elections. The reverse conclusion is that national parties punish disloyal behavior. Rogue mavericks can therefore be expected to be selectorally punished by the party leadership.

Repeatedly, MEPs have been shown to be loyal party soldiers while voting in the EP. This high cohesion and rare voting rebellion may be a consequence of parties' (threat of) de-selection of disloyal MEPs, but the rarity of raging dissent and the limited variance may also inhibit finding statistically significant effects. The argument has remained mainly theoretical with little empirical

---

[16] Examples of MEP performance monitoring websites are mepranking.eu, kohovolit.eu, openeurope.org.uk and votewatch.eu, data and rankings of which are eagerly taken over by journalists seeking to identify the best and worst MEPs.

evidence. Voting loyalty in the EP so far has not shown to statistically affect one's likelihood of being among the candidates in the next elections, nor - among reselected incumbents – of getting a better chance at a safe spot[17] (Wilson et al., 2016). It has also not shown to increase German MEP's electoral probabilities (Frech, 2016). Sigalas (2011) did find evidence of more loyal MEPs having better re-election chances, but the effect disappeared when applying the model to subsets of MEPs along electoral system or political group. Sigalas and Tiemann (2012) found more loyal MEPs to be rewarded with re-nomination, but not equally so across countries.

The argument that parties sanction disloyal MEPs remains intuitively convincing, but the empirics suggest that MEPs' legislative leverage in terms of active participation in the work of the EP is more decisive for their re-(s)election prospects than their voting loyalty. This thesis focusses on the selectoral reward for active involvement in the EP's parliamentary work, including parliamentary activity records and leadership roles. The voting loyalty of MEPs towards their national party is not included in this research. It is included in the review here because it is an important activity to mention when giving an account of what work in the EP consists of, and some of the previous studies discussed here have included it in their model. That said, voting loyalty in and of itself says little about how active or influential an individual MEP has been.

3.2.8 *Leadership roles*

Leadership roles in the EP are both a token and source of an MEPs' influence in the assembly. In order to be elected to the EP's top positions, MEPs must secure a wide support base in their political group.[18] The EPGs control the candidacies for functions in the EP bureau (EP president, vice-presidencies and quaestors), elect their EP spokesperson (EPG chair in the EP) and their group coordinators. Committee bureaus (chairs and vice-chairs) are elected by the members of the committee and therefore need to find support among their fellow committee members (with committee compositions reflecting the EPG balance in the overall assembly). Lastly, leaders of European political parties, are backed by the party's members. MEPs occupying these leadership roles are valuable to their (national) parties as they built a network, mustered the backing of their colleagues and managed to consolidate it into a leading function. Such leadership functions may in turn reinforce the network, support and influence these individuals have within the EP.

Leadership roles increase an MEPs visibility and overall policy-shaping capacity. They may also affect an MEP's activity levels on other measures of parliamentary performance (e.g. speaking time or rapporteurships). The *EP president* (and in his absence the *vice-presidents*) directs the EP's

---

[17] Note that 'safe spots' in this research are defined using the t-1 approach for ranked lists, and considering all list positions in open and unranked systems safe.
[18] On the procedures, see: European Parliament, n.d. *Who are the MEPs in key functions and how are they elected?* ; Bevington, M. (2019). Key roles in the EU Parliament: what you need to know. The UK in a Changing Europe, King's College London, 18 June 2019.

activities, chairs the plenary and signs off on the EU's budget. S/he also represents the EP to the outside world and vis-à-vis the other EU institutions. *Quaestors* are charged with administrative matters that directly affect the MEPs, and are advisory members of the EP Bureau, which decides on all matters of administrative, staff and organizational nature. *Political group chairs* and the EP president form the EP Conference of Presidents. This body is responsible for the organization of the EP's business and legislative planning; relations with other EU institutions, national parliaments and third countries; and decides upon the responsibilities and memberships of the EP's committees and delegations.

The *committee chairs* then coordinate the work of and cooperation between committees (Conference of Committee Chairs). They also have an advisory agenda-setting power by submitting draft agendas for plenary sessions and dialogue on legislative priorities with the Commission and Council.[19] Assisted in their job by the *vice-chairs*, committee chairs organize and coordinate their legislative committee's work. Together with the group coordinators they decide on the distribution of reports and expert committee hearings (Mamadouh & Raunio, 2003; Daniel & Thierse, 2018; Chiru, 2019b). Chairs moreover often serve as 'rapporteurs of last resort' (Yoshinaka et al., 2010, pp. 468-9). *Group coordinators* are the pivotal actors deciding on report and shadowship allocation within the committee they are assigned to. (Keading & Obholzer, 2012; Daniel & Thierse, 2018; Obholzer et al., 2019a; 2019b; Whitaker, 2001). Finally, I consider MEPs who preside a European political party (*Europarty*) as holding a leadership role in the EP. Europarties have developed from "loose umbrella organization into veritable transnational parties that structure the activities of their party groups in the EP" (Klüver & Rodon, 2013, p.649; Van Hecke et al., 2018). Where Europarty presidents are MEPs, their leadership function reflects and anchors the worth of their network and their policy-shaping influence in the EP, be it via their respective political groups.

So far, only a handful of studies have explicitly tested the effect of leadership roles in the EP on an MEP's re-(s)election chances (see Table 2). Hermansen (2018) and Frech (2016) capture whether or not an MEP held any out of a list of EP leadership functions. The results indicate a positive effect but solely the increased likelihood to obtain a 'safe seat' in closed list systems reaches statistical significance (Hermansen, 2018). Frech (2016), who includes vice-chairmanships as leadership role, cannot confirm EP leadership to enhance one's odds for better re-election probabilities for German MEPs. Others have tested various leadership roles seperately. Navarro (2012) finds EPG leaders to be more, and EP bureau members to be less likely reselected, effects which Wilson et.al (2016) reiterate regarding MEPs' odds for re-election (while obtaining opposite

---

[19] European Parliament, n.d. *Conference of Committee Chairs.*

yet insignificant effects in their candidacy-model). Both articles find committee chairs to be less likely re-(s)elected, though Wilson et. al's (2016) candidacy-model is the only one where statistical significance is reached. Furthermore, the latter exceptionally include group coordinatorships among leadership roles in the EP yet its effect remains unclear. Remember however, that the authors control for list safety in their re-election model, meaning they cannot capture the likelihood for coordinators to obtain valuable positions. Instead, their model captures whether or not coordinators are more likely re-elected all else – including ballot position value – equal.

3.3   Selectoral reward for performance: general expectations and hypotheses

As tickets need balancing and viable positions are scarce, selectorates need to consider which re-election seeking incumbents to reward and whom to oust instead. If a primary advantage of incumbent reselection lies in achieving the party's policy-making goals, I expect selectorates to evaluate and reward their incumbents' active involvement in the EP's work. Politicians are understood to be rational actors, behaving in a way to maximize their chances of being allowed (by their party and voters) to pursue the career they seek. Not only is performance a sign of ambition and valence, it also signals quality, network and policy-influence capability. If parties seek to get maximum return on their selectoral choices, we should expect them to seek out - among their (statically ambitious) MEPs – those incumbents who have shown to be active legislators. The question at hand is whether (and which forms of) parliamentary performances inform selectorates in their deliberation on the reselection and ballot placement of incumbent MEPs. Hence, the central research question of this thesis is: *Are MEPs selectorally rewarded for their parliamentary performance in the EP?*

Overall parties prefer reselecting their incumbents, and they are expected to only rarely deny an incumbent access to the list (Pemstein et al., 2015; Matland & Studlar, 2004, p.97). It seems that static ambition is the principal driver of reselection, though parties retain the power to de-select incumbents where they see fit. If parliamentary performance enhances an MEP's odds of being reselected this can be due to both his/her ambition and the party's choice to reselect him/her. Reselection is of course a prerequisite of re-election. Among relisted incumbents both parties and voters may be attracted to active and visible representatives. Still, EP seats are scarce and a balance needs to be struck on the ballot. Provided the electoral system allows parties to rank order their candidates, they make use of the list system to move beyond the dichotomy of incumbent re/de-selection. An intermediate choice exists in pushing incumbents further down the list, rather than off it (Vandeleene, 2016). Parties can use the list system to make performance reward more

concrete. While relegation is 'softer' than de-selection, it limits (or even alleviates) the incumbent's chances of re-election (Benedetto & Hix, 2007; Mitchell & Bradbury, 2004).

The following hypotheses guide this research.

Overall, the assumption guiding this research is that political parties value and reward their incumbent MEPs' active involvement in the EP's work as part of their policy-seeking strategy. This goal in mind and considering national parties control candidate (re)selection for EP elections, MEPs who were more actively involved in the EP's work should be rewarded with reselection. In as far as national parties furthermore control the intra-party seat allocation (or voters care about their representative's performance), the (s)electoral advantage will extend to providing better re-election odds for more active MEPs.

> *H1: MEPs who were more active in the EP are more likely to be reselected by their party (reselection).*

> *H2: Among those reselected, those who were more actively involved in the EP have better chances of getting re-elected (re-election).*

Besides performance in the EP, the research includes a check for the party's vote-seeking objectives that may inform her choices in candidate (re)selection. Because of their visibility to voters and accounting for the potential vote-seeking strategy of parties in deciding on the reselection of their incumbent MEPs, the name recognition of former national politicians may play to their advantage.

> *H3: MEPs who are former national politicians experience a(n) (s)electoral advantage in EP elections.*

A different dynamic is expected to take place in party- versus candidate-centred systems. As discussed at length in the previous chapter, selectoral reward itself plays out differently in both electoral systems. In candidate-centred systems, selectoral reward is limited to the reselection (access) of incumbents after which voters take control. If parties' policy-seeking goals are an important driver of incumbent reselection, I expect incumbents who actively participated in the EP's work during the past term to be selectorally rewarded and lesser performing incumbents to be pushed out or down. Incumbents generally are attractive candidates; parties can therefore be expected to make their distinction between preferred and replaceable incumbents – between selectoral reward and punishment – at the latest stage in the process they effectively control. I therefore expect the gravitas of selectoral punishment-reward mechanisms for performance to be situated at the selection stage (access) in candidate-centred systems, and at the ballot placement stage (rank) in party-centred systems. Consequently, setting off (s)electoral punishment-reward

mechanisms for performance expected to be present in both types of electoral systems, I hypothesize that:

> *H4: Parliamentary performance matters more for incumbent MEP reselection in candidate-centred systems compared to party-centred systems,* as effective selectoral reward in party-centred systems will rather be located at the ballot placement stage.

> *H5: Parliamentary performance of incumbent MEPs better predicts their electoral fortune (re-election) in party-centred systems compared to candidate-centred systems*, as parties are expected to reward performance much more so than voters are, and the latter drive electoral fortune in candidate-centred systems while parties largely influence their candidates' electoral prospects by means of ballot placement in party-centred systems.

As extensively argued before, national parties should be more aware of and more concerned with the MEPs' behaviour and performance in the EP. The voters, who control which candidates get elected in candidate-centred systems, are not likely to evaluate and reward performance. Political parties to the contrary, are expected to care about both performance and visibility of their candidates in the pursuit of policy- and vote-seeking goals.

Beyond mere reselection and re-election odds, the idea of parties selectorally rewarding their incumbents through ballot placement (rank) in party-centred systems deserves separate attention. Among reselected incumbents, policy-seeking goals will drive the party selectorate to reward performance with better list positions. At the same time the party's vote-seeking goals may drive the party to reward incumbent visibility and name recognition with better list positions. In line with these expectations this research hypothesises that:

> *H6: Among reselected MEPs in party-centred systems, those who were more actively involved in the EP are more likely to be selectorally rewarded by their party selectorate through rank.*

> *H7: Among reselected MEPs in party-centred systems, those who are more recognisable to voters (i.e. former national politicians) are more likely to be selectorally rewarded by their party selectorate through rank.*

In short, overall I expect MEP performance to be selectorally rewarded indeed. Each indicator of activity and leadership is expected to boost re-election seeking MEP's chances[20]. Selectoral reward is measured as incumbent reselection in candidate-centred systems and by a reselected MEPs'

---

[20] While arguably parties may value one type of performance more or differently so compared to another, I purposefully do not speculate as to these differences between performance indicators in this research. Instead, I reviewed the rationale behind the selectoral value of different aspects of EP work and previous findings on their relation to re(s)election – set out in the previous section – before proceeding to a broad-scaled analysis on which of these individual indicators is consistently rewarded.

ballot position value in party-centred systems. To provide context, aid interpretation and link my findings back to previous evidences delivered by other scholars, the quantitative strand of research presented in this dissertation – as the hypotheses suggest – include analyses on the effects of parliamentary performance on the reselection, ballot placement (i.e. selectoral reward in party-centred systems), and re-election of incumbent MEPs. The hypotheses will be tested in a series of models using a similar approach but variations over electoral system, legislative term and outcome variable (reselection, selectoral reward through rank and re-election).

As to the reselection of incumbent MEPs – or conversely their absence from their party's ballot list at the end of their term – the statistical models do not differentiate ambition from selectoral decisions. Either of which can be expected to relate to an MEP's parliamentary performance in a more or less direct way; Statically ambitious MEPs presumably being more involved in seeking active engagement in the EP's work and selectorates expected to reward performance. In a first step towards disentangling self- and selectoral deselection, a second strand in this thesis explores the differentiation between voluntary and involuntary exits and the occurrence of selectoral punishment in form of deselection in European elections. This part of the thesis is explorative and no longer focuses on selectoral reward *for performance*. Instead, it redirects attention to another crucial but evasive concept: political ambition of the individual MEP. This chapter is concerned with capturing MEPs' ambitions and contemplates whether ambition may in fact be what drives turnover. Does selectoral punishment in the form of deselection occur in practice or is it all about ambition? Under what circumstances are statically ambitious MEPs nonetheless ousted? *I expect qualitative data on the circumstances of an MEP's absence from the list to nuance the presumption of voluntary exit.*

The methodology regarding both strands of research present in this thesis is discussed at length in the next chapter.

In the present chapter, I set out the research design and methods used to find out whether parliamentary performance in the EP is selectorally rewarded by national parties. The chapter introduces the different methodological approaches used in the two empirical chapters that follow. Both empirical chapters reflect on and test the concept of selectoral reward (as it has been developed and set out in the conceptual chapter) in the context of incumbent re(s)election in the European Parliament. First I use a series of logistic regressions to test the effect of parliamentary performance on re(s)election odds and the odds of being rewarded through *rank*. Then, I turn to a qualitative exploration of (in)voluntary turnover and the occurrence of deselection in the 2014 and 2019 EP elections.

As mentioned in the previous chapter, studies on the connection between parliamentary work and re(s)election have predominantly focused on incumbents' candidacy or their return to the assembly after the elections. These models remain useful starting points to answer the question at hand, but offer only partial pieces to the puzzle. Analyses estimating incumbents' candidacy and re-election probabilities are inapt to isolate selectoral reward from self-deselection and voter choices that muddy the performance-re(s)election link. This thesis presents a multifaceted, broad comparative quantitative analysis into the question whether parliamentary performance is selectorally rewarded. In this vein, the effect of parliamentary performance is tested on different outcome variables: selectoral reward through *access*, through *rank* (in party-centred systems only), and re-election. To further disentangle the potential confusion between self-selection and selectoral reward through access, a qualitative exploration is presented of the occurrence of mismatches between ambition and reselection.

In this research, the focal point is selectoral reward in the form of reselection to a valuable ballot position. This question is answered through a stepwise approach. From reselection to re-election, via selectoral candidate ranking decisions: (in) how (far) does parliamentary performance enhance MEPs' chances to renew their mandate in the EP? Analyzing the effect of performance on ballot position value amidst its effect on reselection and re-election offers multiple advantages. Not only does it allow including candidate-centred systems (where selectoral reward is essentially limited to reselection) in the overall analysis, and to check for different dynamics in party- versus candidate-centred systems. Next, it provides an extensive testing of the hypotheses through which an encompassing view on the dynamics at play and the different stages and ways through which indicators of parliamentary performance can play a role in an MEP's chances to renew his/her mandate can be obtained. This layered approach moreover helps to interpret and contextualize the

findings and facilitates the comparison of these findings to extant empirical evidence. A schematic presentation of the research design is given in Figure 5.

Figure 5: Research design
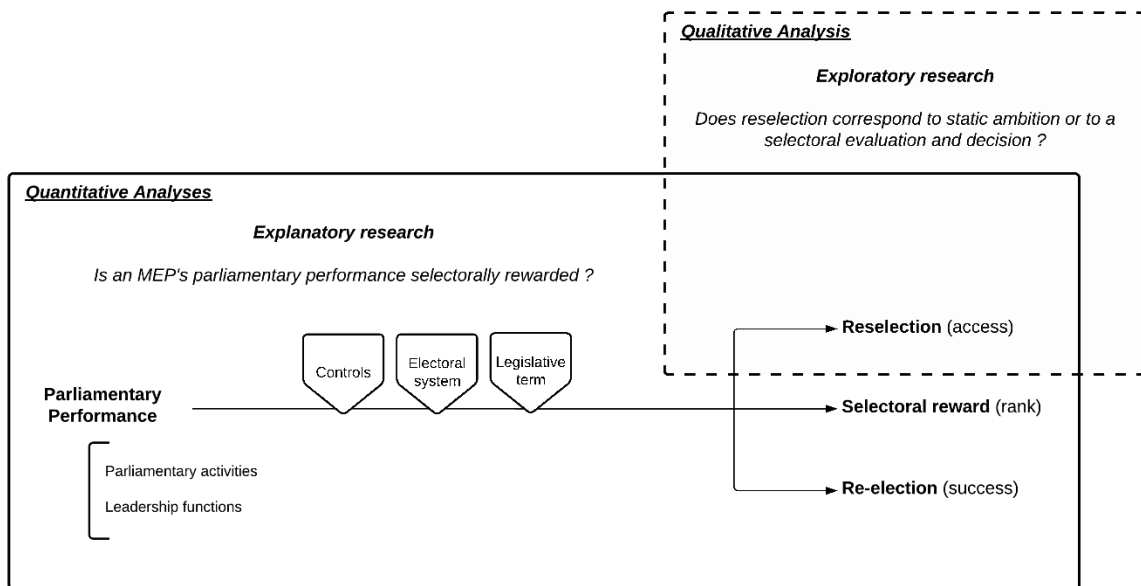
The remainder of this chapter is set out as follows. First, the methodology concerning the quantitative analyses is set out. The sampling strategy and the structure and design of the statistical tests are given, followed by the introduction and operationalization of the independent, control and dependent variables. The operationalization of the third outcome variable, selectoral reward through rank, receives particular attention. Next, I discuss the statistical models and robustness checks used in this research (chapter 5). Finally, I turn to methodological context and remarks to the qualitative exploration of deselection in the EP (chapter 6).

4.1 A quantitative test of (s)electoral reward for parliamentary performance

4.1.1 *Delineation and sampling strategy*

The quantitative analyses presented in this thesis cover the 7th (2009-2014) and 8th (2014-2019) EP terms and all EU member states in all their diversity. For both theoretical and pragmatic reasons, however, not all observations can indiscriminately be included in the analyses. To be precise, the analyses include MEPs who served a full term in the 7th and/or 8th EP as a faithful member of their party. The analyses are based on observations of 984 MEPs, representing 192 different parties from 28 EU member states (27 in each term). The current section sets out which decisions for case inclusion and exclusion were made, and why.

The unit of analysis is the individual MEP: the main predictors of the model reflect his/her

parliamentary performance; and the outcome his/her access, rank or success. In order to ensure comparability of the performance-re(s)election relationships I can only include cases where the (same) national party can evaluate the performance over a full five-year term. Thus, a number of specific cases are excluded. It concerns MEPs not having served a full term, independent MEPs and MEPs having changed party affiliation or having become independent during the legislature. Substitutes entering the EP to replace a colleague did not enjoy the same opportunities – and simply did not have as much time – as full term MEPs to get actively involved in the EP's work. Moreover, also among substitutes the stint lengths vary considerably.

This also means that Croatian MEPs are excluded from the analysis of the 2014 elections, as they had only entered their constituent term in the EP in July 2013. Independent and party-switching MEPs are equally excluded from the quantitative analysis of (s)electoral reward for parliamentary performance. Independent MEPs are not looking to any selectorate for permission to run for re-election (or a reward in any other form). In a similar vein, MEPs that changed party affiliation (or became independent) during their term in the EP are not included in the quantitative analysis as their original party will no longer be evaluating their reselection to their list at all – regardless the criteria they may use in their candidate selection procedure. This also goes for situations where parties split or merge during a legislature, as the party that was served during the term and/or the party that evaluates the performance cannot be considered the same. Finally, I should also mention situations where small parties join forces in the European elections via electoral alliances in which they negotiate a joint ballot list. In these exceptional circumstances, the theorized concept of selectoral reward through rank is affected in practice by the political negotiation between parties.

To keep these non-random cases form potentially skewing the findings on parties' parliamentary performance evaluation in reselection of incumbent MEPs, they are left out. Put differently, the quantitative analyses are run on the population of incumbent MEPs that can be expected to respond to the selectoral sticks and carrots of the party that got them into the EP at the start of the legislature. Finally, the decision has been made to exclude the United Kingdom MEPs from the 2019 analysis. As a consequence of the Brexit Referendum, they were not expected to partake in the EP elections at all. Even though the negotiations were not finalized in time and a European election took place, MEPs' ambitions and parties' candidate selection dynamics and priorities cannot be expected to have remained unaffected by the uncertainty and exceptional nature of the situation.

4.1.2   *Layered structure of the analysis: aggregate and subset models*

In order to tackle the research question *'is parliamentary performance in the EP selectorally rewarded',* this thesis presents a range of model variations that each uncover an essential part of the puzzle. The

matrix in Table 3 sets out the logic of this approach, which essentially is a translation of the turnover flowchart introduced in the previous chapter. Three series of models are run, reflective of (s)electoral decisions made by different actors in different 'stages' of re-election seeking. Each of these series revolves around another dependent variable, capturing reselection (*access*), re-election (*success*) and finally selectoral reward (*rank*). The outcome variables are all dichotomous; therefore, all models are tested via logistic regression. More information on the model choice and robustness checks is given in the penultimate section of this chapter.

Within each model series, different model variations are run to test the effect of performance on the outcome variable. First, an aggregate model is run. This model covers observations across electoral systems and comprises the observations of both the 7th and 8th legislative term. Subsequently, this aggregate model is subset according to electoral system and term. Note that the third model series on selectoral reward through rank only applies to party-centred systems. This is a logical consequence of parties' control over candidates' prospects and the operationalization of selectoral reward. Party-centred systems set the electoral context for the vast majority of MEPs. Figure 6 demonstrates which member states elect their MEP under party-centred systems, and which used candidate-centred systems. The same set of independent variables and controls is used throughout all aggregate and subset models, with the minor exception of the exclusion of the dummy variable for electoral system and/or legislative term in the subset models.

Table 3: Overview analyses performance-re(s)election connection

Dependent variable	Electoral system Population	Aggregate	Party-centred (PC)		Candidate-centred (CC)		Driver of turnover
Reselection	Incumbents						Ambition (MEP) + Selection (party)
Access *Reselection or exit?* DV= incumbent reselected by his/her party (0/1)		PC + CC Both terms (N = 915)	Both terms (N = 648)		Both terms (N = 267)		
			2014 (N = 371)	2019 (N= 277)	2014 (N = 127)	2019 (N = 140)	
Re-election	Reselected incumbents						Electoral result (voters) + Ballot rank in PC (party)
Success *Electoral success or defeat?* DV= reselected incumbent re-elected (0/1)		PC + CC Both terms (N = 608)	Both terms (N = 424)		Both terms (N = 183)		
			2014 (N = 264)	2019 (N = 160)	2014 (N = 84)	2019 (N = 99)	
Selectoral reward	Reselected incumbents						
Rank *Reward or relegation?* *Position has electoral prospect or not?* DV = promising position (0/1) *+ Alternative measure (more strict)* DV = top position (0/1)			Both terms (N = 424)				Selection (party)
			2014 (N = 264)	2019 (N = 160)			

Figure 6: Member states using party- and candidate-centred systems in EP elections
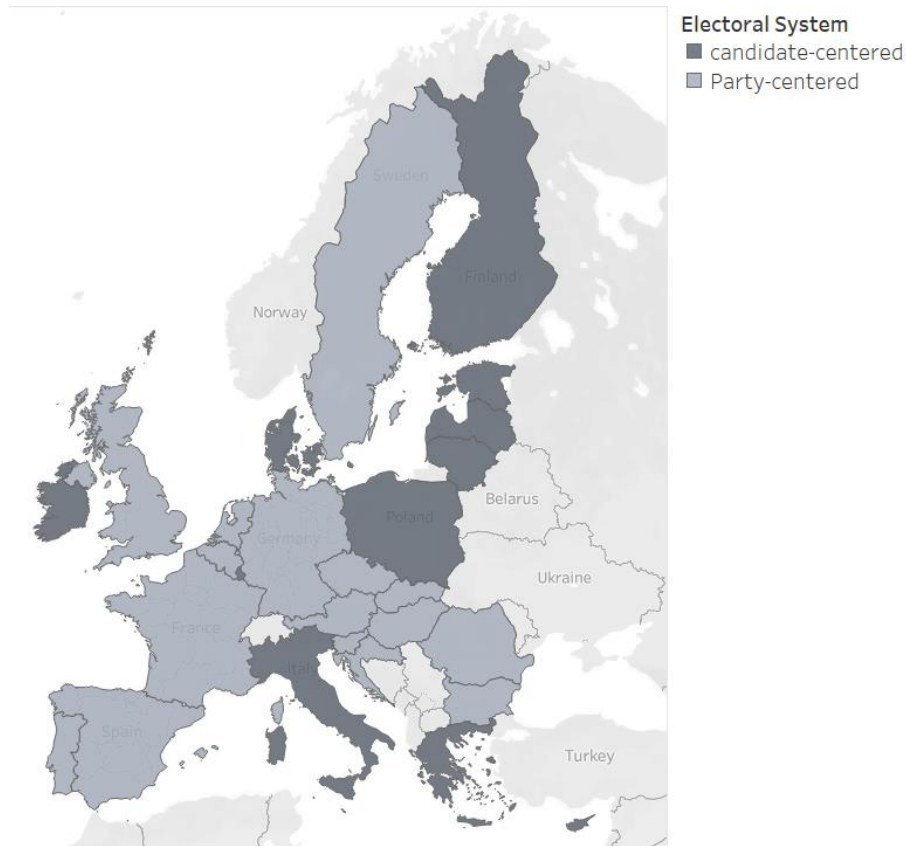
Classification of electoral systems used in EP elections based on Däubler & Hix (2018), verified in electoral laws. Electoral systems using closed and flexible lists are considered party-centred; the candidate-centred systems cover open list and single transferable vote systems.

4.1.3   Independent variables

4.1.3.1   Indicators of parliamentary performance in the EP

The analyses include a wide array of parliamentary activities MEPs can partake in. It concerns (different types of) rapporteurships, speeches in plenary, asking parliamentary questions and attending plenary sessions. Some are more substantial and technical, such as writing reports. Others are highly visible, mediagenic or easily accessible to all. The analysis furthermore includes two variables capturing leadership roles an MEP can take on in the EP. This measurement of parliamentary performance evidently does not claim to be exhaustive. MEPs can make amendments to legislation, perform constituency work, and act as party soldiers or rebel. It is also important to note that the analyses presented in this research cannot fully control for the opportunity structures underlying a given MEP's access to these activities. I do not include interaction terms between individual indicators of parliamentary performance. Such interaction terms may be envisioned for example, to separate speaking time from presiding functions and

report presentations in plenary, or to capture the report-writing advantage committee chairs may have (as rapporteur of last resort when the bidding systems does not produce interested parties).[21]

This research focusses on the set of parliamentary activities and leadership roles listed above as separate indicators of performance. It is concerned with active involvement in the EP's work rather than content and is not concerned with constituency work, voting or campaigning behavior. In what follows, the operationalization and data sources for the predictors are set out.

Parliamentary activities

Data on (all types of) reports written by each MEP was gathered via the official archive 'Oeil': the Legislative Observatory of the European Parliament (oeil.secure.europarl.europa.eu). The archive was scraped as to get key player information for each file under the EP's consideration during the legislature(s), resulting in a database listing all reports each individual MEP worked on. The rapporteurships were then split into three count indicators: (1) COD reports, (2) INI reports, and (3) all other reports. Beyond (lead) rapporteurships, information on the number of reports an MEP had authored as a shadow rapporteur or as a rapporteur for opinion was also collected. Sure, such rapporteurships may be less prestigious compared to those where one acts as the lead negotiator. Nevertheless, both shadows and opinions have an important seat at the table. Considering the importance of EPG-membership in the allocation of reports, it may be all the more interesting to include a measure of such 'non-lead' rapporteurships. The variable 'non-lead reports' captures the sum of shadow reports and opinions written by an MEP over the course of the legislature.

Next, the number of speeches an MEP delivered in plenary as well as the number of parliamentary questions an MEP had submitted during the legislature were included as predictors, measuring the MEPs' active involvement in the EP's work. Data on speeches and questions were scraped from the individual MEP pages on the European Parliament website (europarl.europa.eu/meps). These six predictors are included as count variables in the model. As a final parliamentary activity, attendance to plenary sessions was included. Attendance to the plenary is measured by an MEP's participation in the roll call votes (percentage attended on total organized roll call votes). Notwithstanding the existing critiques on the use of roll call data (see Carrubba et al., 2006) it remains the best available data on attendance in the EP (Hix et al., 2007; Van Geffen, 2018). Data on attendance was collected from Votewatch.eu.

---

[21] Admittedly, integrating this connectedness by including interaction terms among the predictors would enable a more fine-grained understanding. Considering the sample size and model complexity, a tradeoff needed to be made between including a varied scala of performance indicators and the reduction of breadth as to analytically account for interaction between indicators. No issues of multicollinearity were encountered. Given the objective to test a wide variety of indicators (breadth) for the consistency of their effects (across legislatures, electoral systems and (s)electoral stages, as well as compared to previous empirical findings), I did not include interactions between performance indicators. Future work, zooming in on a smaller set of indicators – or working with expanded sample sizes – may very well and understandably decide on this tradeoff differently.

The effect of influential and leading functions within parliament on the re(s)election odds of MEPs is tested via the inclusion of two dichotomous variables: *Coordinator* and *Leader*. The former is coded 1 if the MEP has acted as a group coordinator (for any group, within any committee) during the legislature, and 0 if not. The second variable, *Leader*, is coded 1 if the MEP had occupied one or more of the following functions during the legislature: President or Vice-President of the EP, member of the EP's Bureau, chair or vice-chair of a legislative committee within the EP, President or vice-President of a European Political Group or of a European Political Party. The occupation of leadership functions in the EP or EU politics outside of the legislature studied are not included. Information on which MEPs had occupied leadership roles during the legislature(s) was collected from the websites of the European Parliament, of the European political groups and European political parties, committee meeting minutes, and where needed through information requests with the European Parliament Research Service.

All indicators of parliamentary performance were included in the analysis at the same time as predictors, as no issue of multicollinearity was detected. The correlation matrix of parliamentary performance indicators is given in Table 4 below. The correlation matrix equally comprises the control variables included in the model.

Table 4: Correlation matrix, parliamentary performance indicators and controls in model

	COD	INI	Other reports	Non lead Reports	Parliamentary Questions	Speeches	Attendance	Leader	Group coordinator	Seniority	National experience	Age	Gender	EPG size	Party size	Party-centred	Term
COD (codecision) reports	1																
INI (own initiative) reports	0,018	1															
Other reports	0,169	0,107	1														
Non lead Reports	0,089	0,119	0,331	1													
Parliamentary Questions	-0,044	0,022	-0,042	0,029	1												
Speeches	-0,075	-0,059	-0,012	-0,077	0,550	1											
Attendance	0,107	0,074	0,072	0,022	0,059	0,107	1										
Leader	0,069	0,107	0,124	0,103	-0,037	-0,011	-0,008	1									
Group coordinator	0,113	0,143	0,063	0,211	0,069	-0,029	0,094	-0,048	1								
Seniority	0,166	0,045	0,088	-0,015	-0,140	-0,133	-0,092	0,137	0,046	1							
National experience	-0,006	0,002	-0,039	-0,097	-0,016	0,002	-0,023	0,009	-0,064	0,035	1						
Age	-0,004	-0,026	0,013	-0,064	-0,149	-0,135	-0,048	0,040	-0,054	0,370	0,210	1					
Gender	-0,061	-0,060	-0,030	-0,005	-0,002	-0,009	-0,107	-0,013	0,004	0,075	0,022	0,138	1				
EPG size	0,133	0,090	0,076	-0,231	-0,175	-0,054	0,067	0,004	-0,308	0,120	0,084	0,044	-0,014	1			
Party size	0,078	0,065	0,029	-0,071	-0,161	-0,144	-0,011	0,065	-0,056	0,197	-0,068	0,071	0,011	0,342	1		
Party-centred	0,084	0,022	-0,010	0,064	-0,143	-0,031	0,116	0,029	0,053	0,161	-0,104	-0,023	-0,020	-0,026	0,106	1	
Term	0,008	0,013	-0,017	0,237	-0,037	-0,198	-0,212	0,018	-0,053	0,032	-0,062	-0,003	0,022	0,121	0,113	0,075	1

4.1.3.2   Control variables

Besides indicators or parliamentary performance, the models also include controls for the effects of an MEPs' seniority, prior national experience in politics, age and gender, as well as the sizes of the party and political group s/he belong to. In the (semi) aggregate models dummies are added on the legislative term and/or electoral system the MEP belong to.

Taking into account the premise that policy-making capacity – particularly through prior experience – makes incumbents attractive to selectorates, the model also controls for an MEPs' seniority in the EP and his/her prior political experience outside the EP. While the former relates to an MEP's knowledge of the EP's ins and outs, the latter points to past electoral success in the national (or regional) arena. More importantly, as MEPs are reputedly unknown amongst the electorate compared to national politicians, an MEP's prior domestic experience serves as a measure for an MEP's name recognition and voter attractiveness. Both variables measure aspects of the MEP's experience: seniority as a predictor of policy-making capacity specific to the EP and therefore attractive from a policy-seeking perspective, and prior domestic experience as a proxy for name recognition hence attractive from a vote-seeking perspective.

Seniority can be expected to impact both an MEP's performance and his/her re(s)election chances. Indeed, seniority is a valuable proxy for experience with and understanding of policy-making in the European Parliament. In and of itself this specific experience makes incumbents attractive to their selectorates (Pemstein et.al, 2015). Also, having served multiple terms (high seniority) logically indicates EP careerism, which goes hand in hand with static ambition (Van Geffen, 2018). However, the other side of the coin is that MEPs with high seniority may be closer to retirement and therefore more likely to exit (Hermanssen, 2014) or again, parties may feel incentivized to renew their delegation. We expect seniority to be selectorally rewarded amongst re-election seeking MEPs. In other words, once reselected *ceteris paribus* we expect more senior MEPs to have better chances to receive a valuable ballot position compared to more junior incumbents. The variable *seniority* gives the total number of terms the MEP has served in the EP at the start of the legislature at hand. This variable is calculated by tallying up all days the MEP had served in full or partial prior stints in the EP, which is expressed as a multitude of 5-year terms. To illustrate, an MEP with 20 years of EP experience reaches a seniority of 4 and someone serving his/her first term gets a score of 0. An MEP having entered the previous legislature at midterm as a substitute for example, scores 0.5. Data on the EP experience of the MEPs is gathered from their personal pages on the European Parliament website.

Next, I control for an incumbent MEP's **prior political experience** at the domestic level. This variable should be understood as a proxy for an MEP's visibility to the electorate or voter attractiveness (Frech, 2016; Put et.al, 2020). From a policy-seeking perspective, EP incumbency trumps national experience, but from a vote-seeking perspective, incumbents who previously occupied national political mandates may be more visible to voters – and therefore more attractive to party selectorates – than their colleagues who did not. "Parties will consider whether an incumbents' presence on the ballot would increase the party's electoral prospects" (Matland &

Studlar, 2004, p.97), if so the incumbent is unlikely to be deselected. Previous works on candidate quality and selection in European elections have found parties to prefer aspirants with prior political experience to political novices (Hobolt & Høyland, 2011; Gherghina & Chiru, 2010; Pemstein et al. 2015), and EP experience to be preferred over national political experience. Still, in deciding which incumbents to reward, parties may take into account their entire political capital including that stemming from national politics. Frech (2016) explains national experience reflects an MEP's personal reputation and name recognition among voters which may help parties to convince the electorate of the quality of their bid in the elections (p.39), but concludes that – among German incumbent MEPs - it does not impact re-election probabilities as "all incumbent MEPs have (more) relevant experience in the EP by the time of re-election" (p.154). If an MEP has held an office in the national (or regional) parliament and/or government the variable is coded 1, it is coded 0 if the incumbent has held neither function prior to entering the EP. I gathered the data from the curricula vitae of the MEPs (via the European Parliament website) and additional sources such as national parliament and government archives where CV's could not be located.

Age

An MEP's age may affect his/her chances of selectoral reward. On the one hand, incumbents reaching retirement age may not seek to renew their mandate and parties may be incentivized to rejuvenate their delegation in the EP. On the other hand, young MEPs may be primarily progressively ambitious, using their EP mandate as a stepping-stone for a political career on the national level. In previous research, age has been primarily linked to MEPs' ambition and reselection chances. Data on MEPs' year of birth is collected from their personal pages on the European Parliament website.

Gender

Gender is included as a control in order to test whether all else equal female and male MEPs face different odds for selectoral reward. So far the literature has not found male and female MEPs to face statistically different re(s)election chances in European Parliament elections (cfr. Meserve et al., 2015; Van Geffen, 2018). I therefore have weak expectations regarding the gender control variable.

Party and EPG size

Finally, the models control for the size of the MEP's national party and the size of the EPG s/he belongs to in the EP. Many opportunities for legislative work and leadership functions are controlled by the European Political Groups in parliament. Larger groups control more such opportunities. Belonging to a large EPG therefore affects an MEPs' opportunity structure for influence and performance, but also increases the within-group competition to land coveted dossiers and positions. Within the EPG, the size of the party delegation has a similar impact on

opportunity structures and competitiveness. Additionally, parties with more incumbents to consider for reselection can be expected to decide differently from those who have but one or few. Sizes of both the national party delegations and the EPG are taken from the official election results as posted on the European Parliament website. They refer to the number of MEP memberships at the start of the legislature in question.

The descriptive statistics of all indicators of parliamentary performance and control variables included in the models are given in Table 5. There are no marked differences between the descriptive statistics concerning either electoral system or legislative term (tables given in annex).

Table 5: Descriptive statistics of performance indicators, controls and dependent variables used in this research (aggregate level)

Descriptive Statistics

Independent variable	Function	N	Min.	Max.	Mean	Std. Deviation
COD (codecision) reports	performance indicator	945	0	12	0,75	1,26
INI (own initiative) reports	performance indicator	945	0	6	0,78	0,95
Other reports	performance indicator	945	0	45	1,43	4,09
Non-lead reports	performance indicator	945	0	260	6,87	13,99
Parliamantary questions	performance indicator	945	0	1388	86,02	128,41
Speeches	performance indicator	945	0	1864	225,00	289,23
Attendance	performance indicator	944	0,00	99,78	86,10	11,13
Leader	performance indicator	945	0	1	0,27	0,44
Group coordinator	performance indicator	945	0	1	0,30	0,46
Seniority	control	945	0,00	6,90	0,88	1,12
National experience	control	942	0	1	0,43	0,49
Age	control	945	30	91	56,72	10,49
Gender (male = 1)	control	945	0	1	0,64	0,48
EPG size	control	945	20	274	159,75	85,52
Party size	control	919	1	34	12,49	10,07
Term (7th = 1)	control / subset	945	0	1	0,54	0,50
Party-centred	control / subset	945	0	1	0,71	0,45
Valid N (listwise)		915				

Dependent variable	Sample	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Reselection	aggregate	945	0	1	0,66	0,47
Re-election	aggregate	945	0	1	0,50	0,50
Promising Position	party-centred	440	0	1	0,88	0,41
Top Position	party-centred	440	0	1	0,79	0,33

4.1.4 Dependent variables

The quantitative analyses are presented in three series of models, each using a different dichotomous outcome variable, representing a different stage or aspect of re-election seeking. Each series presents an aggregate model and its subsets. The first two series that are presented are those using reselection on the one hand, and re-election on the other. I briefly elaborate on the relative straightforward operationalization of these outcome variables here. The third series of models uses the selectoral reward through rank as outcome. Two operationalizations hereof are proposed based on the measurement of ballot position value as introduced and discussed in the conceptual frame of this thesis. These outcome variables therefore deserve some more attention and are set out more elaborately in the next section of this chapter.

4.1.4.1 Reselection and re-election

The outcome variable of the first series of models is reselection. The MEP is considered reselected (coded 1) if s/he reappears on his/her party's ballot, and considered not reselected otherwise (coded 0). Note that, rather than denoting whether or not an incumbent figures on *a* ballot list for the upcoming elections, this variable captures whether s/he is reselected on the list of the party s/he was elected for at t-1. As party-switchers are already excluded from the analysis, in practice the difference lies in that incumbents seeking re-election under the banner of another party are not reselected regardless of being candidates for re-election.

All full candidate lists for the 2014 and 2019 EP elections were collected from the relevant official national archives, or requested with the relevant national authorities and liaison offices. As the 2019 EP elections occurred during the writing of this thesis, data collection for this election was rather straightforward. Full candidate lists in the 2014 EP elections was more challenging to locate for some countries and/or parties. Via requests with the liaison offices and DG Communication of the European Commission and where necessary by using the so-called Internet Archive , I was able to reconstruct all ballot lists.

The operationalization of the outcome variable 're-election' – used in the next series of models - is straightforward. Among reselected MEPs, those who were successful in their bid and were officially re-elected were coded 1, those who ran in the race but were defeated were coded O. Official election results and official communications of the newly elected Parliament issued by DG Communication of the European Commission were used.

4.1.4.2 Selectoral reward through rank: promising and realistic positions

Fluctuations in electoral prospect to capture (un)certainty
If we are interested in examining the *selectoral value* of ballot positions in EP elections, and thus in finding out how many (and which) ballot positions are considered realistic, marginal and hopeless

by the party selectorate, we should start by gauging the party's anticipation of the electoral prospect of their lists. For this purpose, polling data is best suited, and accounting for temporal change an adequate way to factor in uncertainty (hopeful but uncertain positions). Note that the relevant parties' anticipations are those prior to final candidate list registration, i.e. during or (shortly) prior to the ballot-placement deliberations. Indeed, we want to know what electoral outcome those in charge of drawing up candidate lists were expecting while they were deliberating whom to put on which ballot position.

In order to establish parties' electoral prospects during the candidate selection period we make use of Poll Watch EP election forecasts (Cunningham & Hix, 2014; Hix, 2019). These forecasts are based on national opinion polls for the European elections (EP voting intentions) yet are corrected as to not "overestimate support for large governing parties, and underestimate support for small parties and 'anti-European' parties".[22] Where no European election opinion poll is available PollWatch complements its data with national general election polling results adjusted for established 'second order election' effects. The forecasts therefore manage to accurately estimate national parties' electoral prospects in the upcoming EP election in a consistent manner for all – new and previously represented – national parties of all EU member states, making them an excellent source for our purposes.

Poll Watch issued forecasts at four occasions starting one year prior to the 2014 EP elections; these were carried out on 19 June and 24 September 2013 and on 22 April and 20 May 2014. Candidate selection procedures however, do not extend to election eve but end the latest at the nationally stipulated deadline dates for candidate registration. Consequently, we base the 2014 electoral prospects of parties on the forecasts made in June and September 2013 and April 2014.[23] Parties' 2019 electoral prospects are based on forecasts made in September 2018 and January 2019 following the same approach.[24] Using time-spread seat predictions has the major advantage of moving beyond a snapshot of the electoral climate. It strengthens the certainty aspect: fluctuations in public opinion and polls are shaved of the actual number of seats a party can be *sure* of. Equally, it shows us those seats that are still 'hanging in the balance'. The multiple forecasts give us repeated measurement, while the consistency of the source and methodology ensures us the comparability of the data.

---

[22] Find the methodology description of PollWatch on https://www.pollwatch2014.eu/
[23] In most cases, however, the forecast results of the May 2014 edition do not differ from those made a month earlier in April 2014.
[24] A third election poll is available for May 2019. Its results are based on polls and information collected mainly prior to the registration of the ballot lists but due to its publication timing it is left out of the calculation here. I did run an alternative calculation including the May forecast results, to check for effects of the last-minute participation of the UK to the 2019 EP elections and the consequent loss (or postponement) of seats for other member states. Only a small minority of party prospects are significantly affected.

When selectorates draw up their candidate lists they keep the electoral prospect of their party in mind. Evidently, party leaderships and selectorates are not blind to government cycles, public opinion or external context. Nor are they unaware of their rival party's prospects, new and upcoming parties, shifting voter loyalties and the like. The number of realistic positions on a party's list equals the number of seats they feel certain to win. The seats that are coherently polled for a party over the entire period (i.e. the lowest electoral prospect for a party across all forecasts) translate into realistic positions. For a position's value to be marginal there needs to be an indication of the *possibility* for its holder to obtain a seat, yet the chances of this realizing should remain largely uncertain. To capture this uncertain prospect we direct our attention to the inconsistently polled seats throughout the three forecast moments. The seats that are anticipated at least once but not throughout all poll moments meet our criteria for hopeful seats: reasonable hope yet unsafe. The number of hopeful seats on a list therefore equals the difference between the best and the weakest forecast result for a party. As explained in the previous chapter, the realistic and marginal positions are situated at the top of the ballot lists. Figure 7 illustrates how the electoral prospect of a party is translated into realistic, marginal and hopeless ballot positions. Table 6 then sets out the example of Dutch parties in the 2014 EP elections. The realistic, marginal and hopeless ballot positions that are identified in this manner directly translate into the occurrence of selectoral reward or not. Before concluding this section and the operationalization of selectoral reward through rank, three specific cases demand some reflection: list pushers, list leaders without electoral prospect and parties presenting candidates in multiple subnational constituencies.

Figure 7: Operationalization of selectoral value of ballot positions in EP elections
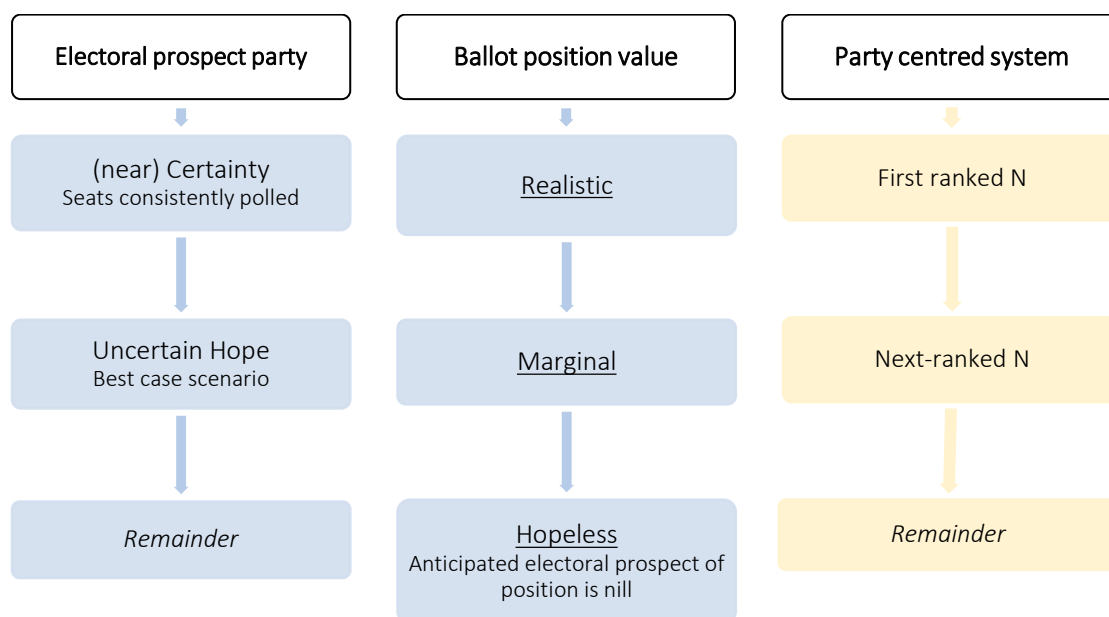
Table 6: Calculation of ballot position value: example of Dutch parties in 2014 EP elections

The Netherlands - 2014				Forecast results			Ballot position values		
Party	Abbr.	List length	MEPs 2009	jun/13	sep/13	apr/14	Realistic	Marginal	Hopeless
People's Party for Freedom and Democracy *(Volkspartij voor Vrijheid en Democratie)*	VVD	20	3	5	6	4	4	2	14
Labour Party *(Partij van de Arbeid)*	PvdA	47	3	4	5	2	2	3	42
Party for Freedom *(Partij voor de Vrijheid)*	PVV	10	4	4	4	4	4	0	6
Socialist Party *(Socialistische Partij)*	SP	25	2	3	2	3	2	1	22
Democrats 66 *(Democraten 66)*	D66	36	3	2	2	4	2	2	32
Christian Union/Reformed Political Party *(ChristenUnie/Staatsgereformeerde Partij)*	CU/SGP	20	2	2	2	2	2	0	18
Christian Democratic Appeal *(Christen Democratisch Appèl)*	CDA	31	5	2	2	4	2	2	27
50PLUS	50+	18	0	2	1	1	1	1	16
Green Left *(GroenLinks)*	GL	22	3	1	1	1	1	0	21
Party for the Animals *(Partij voor de Dieren)*	PvdD	27	0	1	1	1	1	0	26
Total		256	**25**	**26**	**26**	**26**	**21**	**11**	**224**

The Dutch ballot lists in Table 6 exemplify how the electoral prospects of previously unrepresented parties is included (50+, PvdD) and how the electoral success of parties in the previous elections (MEPs in 2009) does not necessarily equal the 'current' electoral prospects of a list. Indeed, parties can anticipate seat loss (here, CDA and GL). Also note that the sum of realistic positions for Dutch parties (21 in total) is lower than the number of seats available to the Dutch in the EP (26 in 2014). Additionally there are marginal positions spread across the Dutch lists (11 in total). Adding the marginal to the realistic positions exceeds the total number of seats available in the constituency. This is because these hopeful but uncertain positions are attributed to one party in the polls, but to another in the next. Different parties are effectively competing for these mandates. The method thus allows room for electoral uncertainty. This underlines the important fact that, while we know there are safe seats in every election, not all seats in the assembly stem from such safe seats. Over the course of the (pre)election year the electoral prospects of parties fluctuate and this operationalization is able to take this into account.

List pushers and leaders

As mentioned earlier, the bottom position on a list *can* – in flexible list systems – be used by selectorates to strategically place a favoured candidate. This visible position confers a marked electoral benefit to its holder because voters and parties understand it as a heuristic cue conveying party endorsement. This makes the last position on these ballots of high-value, yet not unconditionally so. The recency effect is particularly powerful when the final slot is occupied by a prominent high-visibility candidate. If not, the recency effect does not produce similar electoral advantage. Prominent candidates are not used as list pushers in all flexible systems, nor are

prominent figures used as list pushers by all parties or at all times. The (s)electoral value of the list pusher's position thus remains case-bound.

Crucially, John or Jane Doe will not experience (nor expect) a 'list pusher effect' enhancing his/her personal vote result and augmenting the chance s/he enters parliament –a prominent candidate, however, will. For the purposes of this research, I consider the quality of being an incumbent as sufficient to confirm prominence (regardless of any additional high-visibility qualities). Incumbent MEPs who are reselected to a list pusher's position on their party's list are therefore considered reselected to a high-value position. I do not further identify non-incumbent list pushers that may or may not be present on the EP ballots. In the end, whether a list pusher is elected or not still depends on his/her personal performance in the election,[25] i.e. whether s/he could generate the expected list pusher effect.

Therefore, we consider *incumbent* MEPs renominated to the lowest ranked ballot position in ranked open and flexible list systems as being reselected to a *marginal* ballot position. Besides the realistic and marginal positions a party list already contains, I add an *additional* marginal position on its last ballot slot *if* this position is occupied by an incumbent MEP. In the analyses, it might be useful to consider a dummy capturing whether the reselected MEP is a list pusher or not. The data however, points out that incumbent list pushers are not only very rare in EP elections but also not necessarily electorally advantaged (See section 5.4.2).

In order to accurately translate ballot position values based on electoral prospect to selectoral reward or punishment, list leaders too deserve special attention. Not only because the list leader is the most visible and arguably the *most* selectorally rewarded candidate of a party, but to avoid confounding anticipated seat loss with selectoral punishment on lists with poor to no electoral prospect. The measurement of a ballot positions' (s)electoral value as set out in the previous section captures the electoral prospect of a position. Nevertheless, some parties may not have the option of rewarding incumbents with a high-value position as they have none available. Consider party (lists) that have no electoral prospects and therefore only have hopeless positions to offer. If they were previously represented and re-nominate (one of) their incumbent(s) to the first position of the list, we should not consider this an expression of selectoral punishment. The same goes for the incumbent list leader on a party list that holds no safe seats but can only hope to win (at least one) marginal seat. These hopeless and marginal list leaders are given the best spots the party has to offer. While list leadership void of electoral prospect may be a meager reward, it is no

---

[25] Either purely through his/her share of preferential votes received in ranked open systems, or by receiving sufficient preference votes to pass the threshold and frogleap the rank order in flexible list systems.

expression of *selectoral* punishment, as it remains the most hopeful (or least hopeless) position available to the party.

Regional lists

Most member states organize their European Parliament elections within one national constituency. There are however, a handful of countries that divide their territory into multiple constituencies for EP elections. It is not always clear how previous research has dealt with this question of party-in-constituency prospects and ballot position value. One method has been to "*divide [the number of MEPs during the previous term] by the number of regions*" (Wilson et al., 2016, p.1175, note 12; Daniel, 2015). I argue that constituency size – where fixed – should be taken into account, and where constituency size is variable we should look for regional party strongholds rather than assume parties will do equally well in all constituencies, neatly spreading their mandates over the presented regional lists.

Where the size (seats in the EP) of these constituencies is fixed, parties and forecasters anticipate the electoral prospects of party-in-constituency lists.[26] We can therefore determine the (s)electoral value of positions on regional lists following the logic described above. Among party-centred systems, there is, however, one notable exception that demands a slightly adapted approach: namely, the German CDU/CSU lists. Here, the use of regional ballot lists is of "*merely administrative interest or distributive relevance within the party lists*" (OSCE, 2009, p.14). The number of seats a party-in-constituency list obtains is a result both of the national and regional election result for the party. In a first step, seats are allocated to the parties based on their total national vote share (inter-party seat allocation). In a second step, the party's seats are distributed among its regional lists based on the electoral results of the party-in-constituency lists relative to the party's overall performance (intra-party seat distribution). This complicates the identification of realistic positions on regional ballots. This operationalization demands seat *anticipations* to be (party-in-constituency) list-specific. However, polls (seat anticipations) are gathered at the national level and the party-in-constituency size ultimately depends on the national *and* regional *results*.

While I maintain the use of forecast data to determine electoral prospects of regional ballot lists, I use election outcome data to estimate the regional distribution of the forecasted seats. Inspired by the work of Stoffel (2014), Manow and Nistor (2009) and Frech (2016), I use *t-2*, *t-1* and *t* election *results* at regional and national level to find out in which regions the party tends to fare well. While the outcomes of the two past elections help identify party strongholds, the outcome of the 'current' election brings in a more up-to-date measurement of the geographic spread CDU support and allows including CDU prospects in *Länder* were they were previously unrepresented. I then apply

---

[26] Belgium, France (up to 2019), Ireland and the United Kingdom. For the Italian EP elections in 2014 regional constituency sizes for the EP were fixed in rule, but not in practice (see below).

the St. Laguë seat division, using the PollWatch national seat forecasts (prospected total number of CSU/CDU seats) as 'total assembly size'; and the average share of their actual votes received per region (regional party strongholds) as 'votes per party'. In essence, I treat national party size as 'assembly size' and regional results as 'party results' to mimic the regional distribution of prospected party seats. Instead of calculating the allocation of assembly seats among parties, I calculate the allocation of party seats among regions. To do so I use the nation-wide seat forecast for CDU/CSU and the party vote share for each region (averaged over past two and the current election). This is repeated for each Poll Watch data point included in the research. From there on, I follow the operationalization of electoral prospect and position value as set out above.

Tying this up Figure 8 illustrates how the (s)electoral value and location of a ballot position translates into selectoral reward. A statically ambitious MEP is considered selectorally rewarded is s/he is reselected to a promising position, i.e. a position conferring electoral prospect and/or list leadership. List pushers in flexible systems equally belong to this group. An alternative, more stringent operationalization of selectoral reward considers only the top positions on the ballot, conferring (near) certainty of re-election (realistic position) and/or list leadership. Selectoral reward is contrasted by relegation, or selectoral punishment. This happens when an incumbent is placed on a hopeless ballot position. Note that hopeless list leaders are not considered relegated as they receive the best the party has to offer. Both measures of selectoral reward are dichotomous outcome variables in the third series of models presented in the next chapter.

Figure 8: Operationalization of selectoral reward: promising positions and top positions

4.2   On the model and robustness checks

"Essentially all models are wrong, but some are useful"[27]

George Box, British Statistician

All models presented in this research – across the three series and in both the aggregate and subset variations of the model - use dichotomous outcome variables (*reselection, re-election, promising position* and *top position*). Logistic regressions are therefore used throughout. The main models presented in the corpus of this thesis are ordinary binomial regressions with a two-phased blocked variable entry. In a first step, all independent variables – both parliamentary performance indicators and control variables – are entered into the model. In a second step, member state dummies are added. These models, however, use up a copious amount of degrees of freedom. Particularly so when the country dummies are added. This risks overworking the model, above all in the subset models where the number of observations is restricted. To mitigate the risk of reporting on effects that would be caused erroneously due to the number of degrees of freedom used, I run two robustness checks on all models. The results of the main model are compared to those of two plausible alternative model specifications. Each robustness check addresses a specific source of potential model uncertainty in the main model. I perform a stepwise regression to limit the degrees of freedom spent, and a multilevel regression to account for clustering of observations within member states. In what follows, both are introduced in more detail.

The first robustness check consists of logistic regressions with blocked variable entry, similarly to the main model, but uses backward stepwise selection based on Likelihood Ratio (LR) criteria for variable removal in the first block. The backward stepwise regression starts off with all predictors included in the regression model, therefore mimicking the main model. The backward LR method then, will iteratively exclude predictors from the model, until the regression model only holds predictors that effectively contribute to the prediction of the outcome variable. Though the model contains all performance indicators and control variables at the start, those that do not contribute uniquely to predicting the dependent variable of the model are eventually eliminated from the equation. In doing so, the model iterates through the following three steps until no insignificant predictors remain. First, the predictor that contributes least to the model is identified and removed from the model if its *p*-value is below 0.10. The model is rerun after which the *p*-values of all remaining predictors are inspected. Again, the predictor with the highest *p*-value is removed if it is below 0.10, and the reduced model is run again. This cycle continues until all predictors in the model are found to significantly contribute to the predictive value of the model

---

[27] Box, G. E. P.; Draper, N. R. (1987), Empirical Model-Building and Response Surfaces, John Wiley & Sons, p. 424.

(or until no variable is left in the model). The member state controls are not subjected to stepwise elimination because doing so would mean member states would be dropped one by one. The final model would no longer contain all (or any) member state controls. The actual degrees of freedom this block uses varies across the aggregate and sub-models presented. Evidently the number of member states to control for vary depending on whether the model covers party-centred, candidate-centred systems or both. Use of stepwise variable selection has been subject to criticism, perhaps particularly in the social sciences, mainly because important modelling decisions are based on mathematical criteria rather than sound theoretical logic. Indeed the reduction of degrees of freedom used stems from mathematical evaluations of how much a variable contributes to the model fit, and the model no longer contains all variables that were judged relevant to the model from a theoretical viewpoint. For a discussion, see for example Henderson & Denison (1989) or Thayer (2002). The important thing is that in these models the degrees of freedom used by the final model can be drastically reduced, which makes them insightful as robustness checks to the main – theory driven – models.

Another thing to consider is the fact that observations are nested within member states; and that this clustering in the data may be informative. Controlling for an MEP's nationality (and thus electoral, political, cultural… context) through the use of dummies may simplify reality too much. In fact, the data we are dealing with here is clustered, and this clustering is not random. Accounting for hierarchically structured data through multilevel models is recommendable. However, this model too demands some cautionary remarks. For each model presented in the analysis, I run a second robustness check, which takes the form of a multilevel logistic regression accounting for the MEPs' grouping within member states. Again, the same set of independent variables is entered, but rather than entering member state dummies, the country an MEP belongs to is introduced as clusters (2nd level) within which individual observations are nested. In other words, a level-two intercept is included to capture the variation caused by MEPs' nationalities. To mirror the design of the main and stepwise models no additional random effects are added. The multilevel random intercept models do not test any effects of additional, country-level predictors. Rather, they provide an initial assessment of the importance of the clusters (member states) in testing the effect of performance on re(s)election and reward.

Multilevel modelling implies a large-N study as all levels of analysis need to reach sufficiently large sample and cluster sizes. Indeed, there is a need for a large number of units of analysis on the lowest level (MEPs) in order for them to be grouped in enough second level units (Member States). In the study at hand, the number of units of analysis per level are fixed and there is no means to expand the population of available (and suitable) MEPs, let alone to increase the

number of member states. Seminal work on multilevel analysis indicates a sufficiently large number of clusters is needed to avoid biased standard errors and problems of non-coverage. To avoid these risks multilevel models are prescribed to comprise 50 groups at the least (Maas & Hox, 2005).[28] A requirement the models at hand cannot fulfill given the number of EU member states. Nonetheless, multilevel models have been found to outperform models that ignore clusters in terms of accuracy, even with small groups containing few units (Clarke, 2009). Moreover, as a general rule "the sample size that matters most is the sample size at the level the effect is measured" (Grace-Martin, n.d.). In this case, the individual MEP. Besides the number of clusters, also their size, i.e. the number of observations (MEPs) per cluster (country), is also of importance.

There are 28 member states included in the aggregate model. The subsequent subsets however, each contain much less clusters. There are 15 clusters (member states) in the party-centred models, and 12 clusters in the candidate-centred subsets. With either Croatia or the UK excluded in the 2014 and 2019 subsets respectively, the number of clusters drops to 14 where the party-centred model is subset per legislature. The number of MEPs included per member state ranges from three (Estonia) to 163 (Germany). Five member states are represented in the data by less than ten observations overall. Note that there are less observations per member state (smaller cluster size) when models are subset along the legislative term studied, as they then only contain observations from either the 7th or the 8th term. Evidently, the overall sample and cluster sizes of the data is not ideal. Yet, nor is ignoring the existing clustering in the data. I therefore decide to introduce the multilevel logistic regression as a second robustness check to the main logistic model. It can already be mentioned that in most models, no cluster effect on country level was found.

While neither model can claim to be perfect, combined the three methods enable us to overcome the limitations of the available data, sample sizes, statistical power and clustering. Results that are consistent across model variations can be regarded as revealing generalizable performance-reward dynamics. The tables presenting the analytical results in chapter 5 display the results of the main analysis in detail, but flag deviating results in the robustness checks. Where robustness models are not able to confirm the main model's findings this is made explicit in the presentation of the empirical data and made visually clear in the results table. The robustness checks can be found in full in the annex.

---

[28] On sample sizes in multilevel modelling and its effect on the accuracy of the results cfr. Hox (1998),Maas & Hox (2005), Moineddin, Matheson & Glazier (2007), Heo & Leon (2008), Cunningam (2010), McNeish & Stapleton (2014); Bryan & Jenkins (2016).

4.3   A qualitative exploration of the occurrence of deselection

In the second empirical part of this thesis, I explore the fault line between voluntary and involuntary turnover. More specifically, I assess whether the absence of an MEP from his/her party's list is an expression of the MEP's ambition to move on from the EP, or is instigated by selectoral decisions despite the MEP's ambition. In other words, a mapping is presented of the drivers behind MEPs' absence from their party's candidate list for the EP elections at the end of their term. The problem of differentiating voluntary exit from deselection so far has remained underdeveloped. This thesis provides a first exploration of denied static ambitions in the context of the European Parliament. This interpretative research does not claim to overcome all pitfalls of researching ambition, nor do I make conclusive and generalizable claims based on the cases in this analysis. Its foremost aim is to trigger curiosity and stimulate critical reflection on the state of the art regarding the nature of turnover and political ambition in the EP.

Are concepts such as deselection and selectoral punishment useful to explain turnover in the EP context? Or, are absences from the list – as the second order nature of the EP elections suggests - in fact barely more than an expression of the MEP's own volition to pursue another career or retire? As such the chapter reflects on the (in)voluntary nature of the EP's turnover that occurs before the elections. Though evidently constrained by the availability of information, I strive to capture the more elusive career aspirations held by MEPs rather than analyze realized career paths. Rich descriptions combined with broader reflections are used to illustrate the potential wealth of information that lies beneath the surface. As such, it tests the waters and provides meaningful context for thinking about reselection of incumbents in EP elections.

In a first step, the complete ballot lists registered for the EP elections in 2014 and 2019 are collected from the relevant national electoral authorities and their archives, and run against the list of MEPs having served in the 7th and 8th EP legislatures. MEPs that do not reappear on the ballot registered by the party they represented in the last elections are flagged as 'not reselected'. This also applies to MEPs registered on the ballot of another party and are therefore candidates but not reselected. After all, they are candidates but not *re*selected by their party's selectorate. Their renewed candidacy in the EP therefore cannot be understood as any kind of reward or recognition of a job well done by the party they previously served. Similarly, MEPs who had changed party-affiliation during the legislature are flagged as 'not reselected', as are their candidacies for parties other than their 'original' one.

Then, biographical and media sources are used to gather information about the precise circumstances of the incumbent's departure and where they went or aimed to go afterwards. The categorization of MEPs' exit relies on data from a various types and sources. Data on MEPs' age

in the election year, their (switching) party affiliation and their post-EP careers is used as a starting point. This information is gathered from the official EP website and from national and regional assembly's archives. The core of this explorative research into the (in)voluntary nature of their absence from the list however, consists of the search and analysis of media coverage, press releases and MEP's statements about their absence from the race and their ambition. Data sources include regional and national newspaper articles (both written and online-only media), press releases, personal webpages of the former MEPs, party webpages, online archives of regional and national parliamentary assemblies, and the 'revolving doors' section of the website integritywatch.eu. The materials were collected through elementary web searches using LexisNexis as well as the Google search engine. Search terms were entered in English and the native language(s) of the former MEP. Where needed translation software for both search terms and text analysis were used. Based on the content of the materials found, the generic search terms were expanded to include case specifics for each individual, in order to further qualify and corroborate the information found. To categorize the reasons why MEPs' were not reselected by their party I consulted 699 distinct media sources on the individual circumstances of their absence. [29]

Every piece of information was qualitatively analyzed and the type of departure for each former MEP manually coded. Prior to the data collection four base categories: *voluntary exit, retirement, nomination failure* and the rest category *'unknown'* were devised based on the literature. Throughout, nuances categories were inductively added as common threads began to emerge in the data. All raw materials on both elections were revised and again manually coded along the final (sub)categories of exit identified throughout the process. This ensures the data on both legislatures is classified consistently. Figure 9 presents the coding scheme that resulted from these efforts.

I took into account prohibitions of mandate accumulation (*cumul des mandats*), eligibility criteria and candidate selection periods for parliamentary offices (European, national and regional) as well as appointment timings for executive mandates. Former MEPs moving on to national (or regional) parliamentary mandates, executive mandates in national or regional governing bodies and local elected mandates as mayor within 12 months of the European elections, were considered to be progressively ambitious provided there is no evidence to the contrary. Equally, retirement (and assumed retirement based on age if no other information was available) was coded as voluntary exit in the absence of counter-indications.

---

[29] The compilation of these materials and detailed source list can be obtained from the author upon request.

Figure 9: Coding scheme for the (in)voluntary nature of an MEP's non-reselection

Voluntary

Involuntary

Voluntary

Following exit:
political career in other arena
or return to public/private
career

(< 6months; candidacy first
upcoming elections)

Retirement

MEP 64 or older at time of
election

Party 'rejuvination' (explicit
mention and/or clear pattern
among maority of outgoing
MEPs)
if absence of disgruntlement

Ilness

Personal reasons

Death

Unknown

No or insufficient information
+
MEP has not reached
retirement age

Nomination failure

Candidacy withdrawal after not
obtaining valuable position

Party's candidate selection
procedure and focus

Public disgruntlement

Conflict or Scandal

Conflict or strong disapproval
with party

Individual scandal & negative
press

**Ambitious party
switchers**

Static ambition:
Seek to re-enter the EP via
ballot other party

[Party switchers during final 10
months legislature under closer
scrutiny]

As *ambitions* are not often explicitly stated, this effort too had to rely on career *outcomes* to a certain extent. Importantly, the intent of the exploration was not to categorize and file away MEPs as fast as possible based on available official information. Rather, it was to be attentive to any contextual information that could further qualify the exit as voluntary or involuntary. In general, I followed the assumption of voluntary exit but scoured for explicit evidence of the contrary. This assumption that exits are voluntary largely relies on the second order nature of EP elections. Although the EP has become an increasingly attractive place to build a political career, "the EU will always push many Strasbourg politicians to 'look down' to the domestic political level" (Manow & Verzichelli, 2007, p.3).

Signs of involuntary deselection include incumbents speaking out about their static ambition not being materialized or commenting on the party's candidate selection procedure, as well as incumbents facing conflicts with the party and controversies rendering the incumbent unattractive to the party. Finally, I paid special attention to MEPs changing their (national) party affiliation less

than ten months prior to the EP elections. This time period was chosen because this is when internal negotiations and nominations of candidates for the ballot of the party start to take shape and roll out until they consolidate in the final ballot list and are officially registered. Similarly, where MEPs sought access to the ballot of a party other than the one they represented in the final session of the legislature this was considered a soft sign of deselection.[30]

Incumbents on which I find insufficient information to make any inference on the nature of the departure are placed in a separate category 'unknown'. In total 13% of exits end up in this category. There is however, a marked difference between both legislatures. Regarding the 2019 elections, the relative size of the 'unknown' category shrank to only half that of 2014. Overall, more detailed reporting was found of MEPs' exits as to the 2019 elections and 'soft signal' categories clearly gained in importance. Similarly, variation lies between member states where it was noticeably more difficult to locate information on the departures of incumbents from some member states compared to others. This could point to the (un)availability of public information and (news) coverage on this topic in some countries over others. However, it may also reveal deficiencies in the data collection strategy caused by linguistic barriers.

---

[30] For each of these cases I checked that the apparent affiliation change was not merely caused by the name change, merger or new electoral alliance of the deputy's 'original' party.

Chapter 5. The effect of performance on re(s)election and selectoral reward

This thesis aims to find out whether incumbent MEPs' involvement in the EP's work is linked to their (s)electoral fortune in the next European elections. At its core, this research seeks to connect an MEP's parliamentary performance to the notion of selectoral reward, in its form of access (reselection) and rank (ballot position value). In this chapter I test the connection between MEPs' individual parliamentary performance, and their odds of being reselected, re-elected, and – within party-centred systems – their likelihood of obtaining a valuable ballot position. Chapters 2 and 3 set out the context for this research in detail. Chapter 2 dealt with identifying selectoral reward, the importance of ambition and of ballot position value. Chapter 3 then introduced the work of MEPs and the state of the art on research into connecting performance to (s)electoral reward in the EP.

The main message to take away from the presented literature reviews is that, indicators of parliamentary performance have been found to positively affect MEPs' reselection, re-election and so-called list safety odds; yet that the literature is young, scarce and scattered across member state selections and EP elections. The diverging approaches used in the extant literature moreover amplify the difficulty to draw generalizable conclusions from their findings. The current work aims to contribute to this field by providing broad-scaled analyses including a wide array of performance indicators and spanning across legislatures, party systems and outcome variables. Doing so, it aims to alleviate much of the remaining ambiguity on whether and which parliamentary performance consistently matters for an incumbent's chances to return.

The remainder of this chapter is set out as follows. First, I assess whether there is a relationship between the parliamentary performance of an MEP and his/her reappearance as a candidate on the ballot list of the party s/he represented (reselection). The second part zooms in on those incumbents that were reselected by their party and analyses whether their activity in the EP's work is related to their likelihood of actually being re-elected. The structure of this section mirrors the one on reselection odds. For each outcome variable, I rerun the main performance-re(s)election model on subset populations, isolating the dynamics in party-centred and candidate-centred electoral systems as well as per legislature. In the third part, I turn to the question of selectoral reward through rank in party-centred systems. After mapping the ballot position values attained by reselected MEPs in 2014 and 2019, I test whether there is a performance advantage in the pursuit of valuable ballot positions. A brief discussion follows each section.

5.1 The performance-re(s)election connection

As explained in more detail in the methodological chapter, active involvement in the EP's work refers to the concept of parliamentary performance. This covers parliamentary activities (report writing, floor time, parliamentary questions and attendance) on the one hand and leadership roles (acting as a coordinator or leader in the EP) on the other. The expectations for all indicators of parliamentary performance go in the same direction: a more active track record on the activities and positive scores on the leadership variables are hypothesized to increase the incumbent's likelihood for re(s)election. The first two straightforward hypotheses that are tested in this chapter are the following:

> *H1: MEPs who were more active in the EP's work are more likely to be reselected by their party (reselection).*

> *H2: Among those reselected, those who were more actively involved in the EP's work have better chances of getting re-elected (re-election).*

In testing the connection between performance and re(s)election I control for a number of factors that can be expected to affect MEPs' re(s)election odds and/or their performance. The models control for MEPs' seniority within the EP and prior political experience outside the EP, their age and gender as well as the sizes of their national party and EPG. As this project spans two subsequent legislatures and elections a legislative term dummy is included. Equally, a dummy is added identifying the electoral system the incumbent MEP finds him/herself in as either party- or candidate-centred. The choice for this dichotomous categorization of electoral systems is made for two reasons. First, it is a pragmatic choice inspired by the need to conserve as much statistical power in the models as possible, considering the number of observations available and the fast rate at which degrees of freedom are spent. Second, particularly in the context of this thesis, separating party- from candidate-centred electoral systems makes theoretical sense. Indeed, it is in party-centred systems that selectoral reward extends to rank (ballot position value) beyond access (reselection). The ballot position here is vital to a candidates' electoral prospect (re-election), while in candidate-centred systems at large parties control reselection but voters control re-election. Notwithstanding the usefulness and availability of more fine-grained classifications of electoral systems, the distinction between party- and candidate-centred systems captures the difference of interest here. More importantly, the twofold distinction allows to rerun the re(s)election models for the two groups separately. The dynamics linking parliamentary performance to reselection are likely to differ in party- versus candidate-centred systems, none the least because it is the only moment for selectoral reward in the latter. Similarly, the effect of performance on the odds an MEP actually gets re-elected can be expected to differ between both systems as it is steered by

party selectorates in one and decided by voters in the other. The power of the party to use candidate selection to reward parliamentary performance depends on the electoral system. Besides being policy seeking, parties also are vote-seeking, regardless of the electoral system they operate in. This chapter therefore also tests the following hypotheses:

> *H3: MEPs who are former national politicians experience a(n) (s)electoral advantage in EP elections.*

> *H4: Parliamentary performance matters more for incumbent MEP reselection in candidate-centred systems compared to party-centred systems.*

> *H5: Parliamentary performance of incumbent MEPs better predicts their electoral fortune (re-election) in party-centred systems compared to candidate-centred systems.*

Starting with models covering both types of electoral systems facilitates the comparison to previous research and aids in the search for more generalizable patterns of (s)electoral benefits to more active and leading MEPs. Splitting up the models then, enables me to look at different dynamics in party- and candidate-centred systems. Delineating the electoral context of the findings facilitates the interpretation of the findings from a selectoral reward perspective. Before turning to the question of ballot position value and rank (section 5.4), I first address reselection and re-election odds (the dotted quadrangles in Figure 10). Note that the reselection model cannot qualify the nature of an MEP's absence from the list. Just as the re-election model does not distinguish between the pathways that led candidates to electoral defeat.

Figure 10: Recap figure: Situating the reselection and re-election models
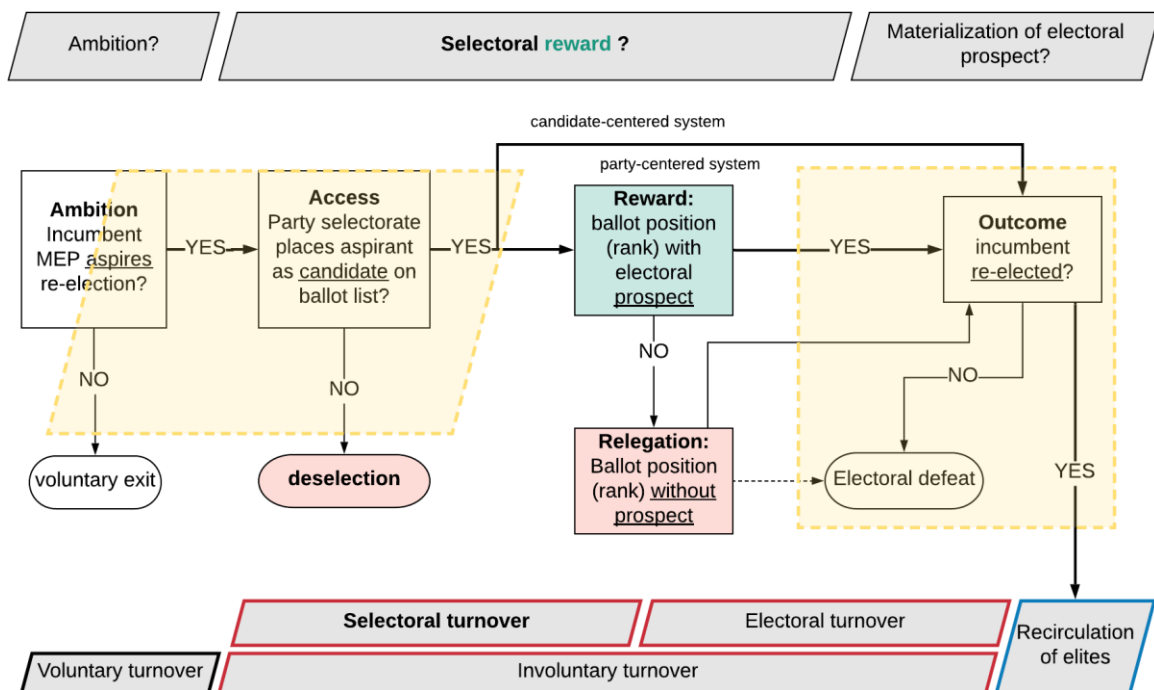
The connection between parliamentary performance and re-(s)election is tested through binomial regressions with blocked variable entry. All independent variables discussed above are entered in a first step; the second block consists of entering member state dummies. Two robustness checks are run on every model. Where their results deviate from the main analysis, this is indicated in the results table. The robustness checks can be found in full in the annex. The first robustness check consists of rerunning each model using backward stepwise entry regarding the independent variables entered in first block. The second robustness check uses multilevel logistic regressions, accounting for the MEPs' grouping within member states by adding 'country' as a second level in the model within which individual observations are nested (rather than entering dummy variables). Combined, the three methods used on each model enable us to overcome the limitations of the available data, sample sizes, statistical power, and clustering. Consistency of results across model variations and methods increases the generalizability of the performance-reward dynamics they point to.

Where statistically significant coefficients are not significant in the stepwise model (or vice versa) the change in likelihood is underlined. Likewise, the symbol <u>m</u> is used to flag those instances where the multilevel binomial regression deviates from the results of the main analyses presented in the table. Where statistical significance is only reached in (one or both) robustness checks but not in the main model, the direction of the significant effect is given in parentheses. Consistent results across models are those that are neither underlined, nor followed by the <u>m</u>-symbol in the tables presented.

5.2   Factors determining the reselection of incumbent MEPs

5.2.1   *Reselection: the electoral system matters*

Table 7 shows the results regarding the factors that affect an MEP's chance of being reselected in the aggregate models covering both legislatures. It presents three model variations each comprising two steps. In the first step (1) the model and stepwise robustness check do not contain member state controls. In the second step (2) country dummies are added. This second step is also compared to the results of the multilevel logistic regression that is ran as an additional robustness check. Throughout the chapter, I focus on the models which include member states controls (2) in the presentation and discussion of the results.

The table first lists the results across the EU, in the last two models I subset the data to conduct separate analyses for MEPs in party-centred and candidate-centred member states. The models contain a set of indicators of parliamentary performance as well as a set of controls on individual characteristics and party (group) size. The logit coefficients reported show the effect of

the independent variables on the logarithm of the odds of being in the 1-category of the outcome variable (reselected), rather than the 0-category (not reselected). To make the results easier to interpret I include a column with the odds ratio converted into percentage changes of those instances where the effects are statistically significant.[31] These percentages show the increase or decrease in the likelihood of an event happening (reselection) when the value of the independent variable increases by one unit.

Table 7: The effect of parliamentary performance on MEPs' reselection (2014, 2019)

Reselection model	EU Both terms				Party-centred Both terms				Candidate-centred Both terms			
	(1)		(2)		(1)		(2)		(1)		(2)	
	β (SE)	%Δ	β (SE)	%Δ	β (SE)	%Δ	β (SE)	%Δ	β (SE)	%Δ	β (SE)	%Δ
Codecision reports	0,084 (0,067)		0,083 (0,069)		0,096 (0,079)		0,086 (0,081)		0,098 (0,141)		0,111 (0,148)	
Own initiative reports	0,118 (0,084)		0,144° (0,087)	15,52%	0,129 (0,101)	___ (+)	0,159 (0,105)	___ (+)	0,110 (0,164)		0,124 (0,167)	
Other reports	0,006 (0,021)		0,011 (0,022)		0,000 (0,025)		0,007 (0,026)		0,022 (0,042)		0,020 (0,043)	
Non lead reports	0,003 (0,007)		0,003 (0,007)		0,002 (0,007)		0,002 (0,007)		0,012 (0,023)		0,012 (0,024)	
Speeches	0,000 (0,000)		0,000 (0,000)		0,000 (0,000)		-0,000 (0,000)		0,002* (0,001)	0,17%	0,002* (0,001)	0,20%
Parliamentary Questions	-0,000 (0,001)		-0,000 (0,001)		0,001 (0,001)		0,001 (0,001)		-0,001 (0,001)		-0,001 (0,001)	
Attendance	0,013° (0,007)	1,29%	0,014* (0,007)	1,46%	0,009 (0,009)		0,008 (0,010)		0,019° (0,011)	2,00%	0,020° (0,012)	2,10%
Leader	0,120 (0,172)		0,135 (0,176)		0,291 (0,206)		0,262 (0,210)		-0,107 (0,347)		-0,061 (0,354)	
Coordinator	0,171 (0,178)		0,122 (0,183)		0,278 (0,208)		0,245 (0,212)		-0,193 (0,380)		-0,286 (0,395)	
Seniority	-0,218** (0,073)	-19,57%	-0,301*** (0,080)	-26,02%	-0,300*** (0,085)	-25,95%	-0,365*** (0,092)	-30,61%	-0,110 (0,189)		-0,127 (0,205)	
National experience	0,196 (0,1542)		0,244 (0,165)		0,335° (0,189)	39,85%	0,411* (0,199)	50,78%	0,052 (0,292)		-0,051 (0,319)	
Age	-0,042*** (0,008)	-4,14%	-0,044*** (0,009)	-4,28%	-0,051*** (0,010)	-4,93%	-0,051*** (0,011)	-4,93%	-0,031* (0,015)	-3,05%	-0,033* (0,015)	-3,26%
Gender (male = 1)	0,248 (0,155)		0,297° (0,162)	34,60% ≜	0,303 (0,187)		0,317 (0,193)		0,201 (0,300)		0,219 (0,324)	
EPG size	-0,000 (0,001)		0,001 (0,001)		0,000 (0,001)		0,002 (0,002)		-0,001 (0,002)		-0,001 (0,002)	
Party Size	0,023** (0,008)	2,34%	0,014 (0,013)	___ ≜ (+)	0,037*** (0,011)	3,79%	0,022 (0,016)	___ ≜ (+)	-0,007 (0,015)		-0,018 (0,025)	
Term (7th = 1)	0,413* (0,164)	51,11%	0,352* (0,175)	42,14%	0,555** (0,197)	74,19%	0,529* (0,212)	69,67% ≜	0,034 (0,325)		0,010 (0,335)	
Party-centered	-0,211 (0,175)		-20,763 (22411,357)									
Constant	1,310° (0,767)		22,230 (22411,357)		1,600 (0,999)		1,969° (1,081)		0,705 (1,275)		0,882 (1,421)	
Member state controls	no		yes		no		yes		no		yes	
Observations	915				648				267			
Missing cases	30				21				9			
Nagelkerke pseudo R²	.119		.153†		.167		.191		.119		.147†	

Notes: Coefficients of binomial regression models, with standard errors in parentheses and change in likelihood expressed as percentage. † Final solution for the model's -2log likelihood could not be reached. The robustness checks are presented in the annex. Where statistically significant coefficients are not significant in the stepwise model (or vice versa) the change in likelihood is underlined. Likewise, the symbol ≜ is used to flag those instances where the multilevel binomial regression deviates from the results of the main analyses presented in the table. Where statistical significance is only reached in (one or both) robustness checks but not in the main model, the direction of the significant effect is given in parentheses. For the full result tables displaying coefficients, standard errors and odds-ratio percentages for the stepwise and multilevel logistic regression models, please refer to the annex. As for the member state controls, Germany serves as reference in the EU and party-centered system models. Finland serves as reference in the candidate-centred system models.

° significant at p < .10; * at p < .05; ** at p < .01; *** at p < .001.

[31] The coefficient (β) is converted into odds ratios percentages by using the following formula: $\%\Delta = (e^{\beta k \Delta} - 1) * 100$, also $\%\Delta = [Exp(\beta) - 1] * 100$ (Box-Steffensmeier & Jones, 1997).

A glance at the three models presented suggests a small and limited but positive effect of active involvement in the EP's work on one's reselection chances. About a third of the performance indicators included in this research positively affect MEPs' chances of reselection in one model variation or another. However, they only reach low levels of statistical significance, effect sizes are small, and none of the indicators predicts reselection in both candidate- and party-centred systems alike.

In the EU model, the effect of writing own initiative reports and attendance to the plenary reach statistical significance in the main model as well as in the corresponding robustness checks. But these effects do not play out in the same way for MEPs from party-centred as opposed to candidate-centred systems. The analyses reveal that writing own initiative reports has a positive effect on the reselection odds of MEPs. The effect of own initiative reports is positive throughout the models, but struggles to reach statistical significance. In the aggregate EU-model, an additional own initiative report increases reselection odds by 15.5% ($p < .10$). Yet, the effect only reaches statistical significance in the stepwise model on party-centred systems.[32]

In contrast, t attendance only generates a statistically significant effect in candidate-centred systems (2.1%, $p < .10$). All else equal, attending 10% more roll call votes corresponds to a 20% bump in reselection odds, but it does not significantly affect MEPs' reselection chances in party-centred systems. Similarly, speaking in plenary increases reselection odds in candidate-centred systems, yet the effect is small (0.20%, $p < .05$). To illustrate, all else equal, an additional speech in plenary each month over the course of the five year term would increase an MEP's reselection odds by 12%. Arguably the effect of speeches in candidate-centred systems was drowned out in the aggregate EU-model due to its size and the fact that the vast majority of MEPs is elected under party-centred rules.

The effects of active involvement in parliamentary activities on reselection odds appear to be positive but weak. Only a handful reach statistical significance. Occupying leadership functions or acting as a group coordinator does not appear to affect MEPs' reselection odds. While consistent in their statistical insignificance, the effects of the latter two variables capturing MEPs' leadership roles take on a negative direction in candidate-centred systems. Interestingly, against the light of the electoral system models we see that the positive effects found of any parliamentary activity, are present *either* in party- *or* in candidate-centred systems. These first findings suggest distinguishing dynamics in both types of electoral context is indeed an interesting path to pursue further.

---

[32] Controlling for member states and all else equal an additional own initiative report increases an MEP's reselection odds in party-centred systems by 21.87%, with p < .05. The result tables of the stepwise logistic regression models can be found in the annex.

As for the control variables in the model, nearly all produce significant effects on MEPs' reselection odds. At least they do so in party-centred systems. The only predictor that has a consistent significant effect throughout the models is age. Seniority and age both negatively affect the likelihood of reselection. Yet only age exerts its small negative effect on an MEPs' chance for reselection regardless of the electoral system s/he finds him or herself in. The steady small negative effect of age shows that older MEPs are less likely to reappear on their party's ballot list for the upcoming elections, regardless of the electoral system they are in. All else equal, one additional year of age decreases reselection odds by 3 to 5% in candidate- and party-centred systems respectively (CC: -3.26%, $p < .05$; PC: -4.93%, $p < .001$). Over an age difference of ten years this mounts up to a decrease in reselection odds by a third or half compared to one's younger colleagues. In candidate-centred systems, this is the only control that reaches statistical significance. The effects of the remaining controls generally follow the same direction as the corresponding effects in party-centred systems, but remain statistically insignificant.

In party-centred systems, seniority too negatively affects reselection. Under closed and flexible lists, MEPs with longstanding EP careers are less likely to return to the ballot. For each additional term an MEP has served, s/he is about 30% less likely to be reselected (-30.61%, $p < .001$). The model presented here cannot speak as to the motivation and (in)voluntary nature of this phenomenon, yet the straightforward explanation of the negative effects of both age and seniority evidently is retirement. At the same time, prior national experience matters in party-centred systems. MEPs who also are former national politicians are 51% more likely to be reselected than their EP colleagues who have never occupied national office (50.78%, $p < .05$). Perhaps parties aim to attract votes through the higher name recognition these politicians arguably have acquired with the public. They may also use their control over intra-party seat allocation to secure mandates for politicians at the end of their (national) political career. Both the vote-seeking and retirement-home perspectives take wind out of the sails of the idea of performance-reward as a driving force in reselection.

The dummy variable for legislative term causes the largest effect on an MEPs' likelihood of reselection in the EU model and in party-centred systems. This variable separates observations in the 7th term and 2014 EP elections from those in the 8th terms and 2019 elections. The mapping of legislative turnover in the European Parliament presented in chapter 2 already showed this dissimilarity between both (s)election rounds. Remember that 70% of full term MEPs ran again in 2014 compared to 60% in 2019. At this point, the models only tell us incumbents were more likely to be reselected in 2014 compared to 2019 (42.14%, $p < .05$). The difference between legislatures originates from party-centred systems. MEPs were 70% less likely to be reselected on flexible and

closed lists in 2019 than in the previous EP elections in 2014 (69.67%, $p < .05$). The reselection odds of MEPs in candidate-centred systems do not statistically significantly differ from one election to the next. To find out whether *parliamentary performance* affects reselection odds similarly across legislatures however, relying on a dummy is insufficient. So far I have presented the aggregate EU model and its subsets along electoral system. In what follows I further subset the models, this time slicing the party- and candidate-centred models along legislature.[33]

5.2.2 *Reselection: limited generalizability across legislatures*

Different performance-reselection dynamics are at play in party-centred compared to candidate-centred electoral systems. The legislative term dummy also warns against the risk of overgeneralizing results across legislatures. This triggers the question whether separate models on each legislature could corroborate the relationships between parliamentary performance and reselection found in party- and candidate-centred systems, or whether perhaps, each legislature might reveal a different dynamic still. The answer to this question evidently speaks to the generalizability of the presented findings, as well as to the degree as to which previous studies' findings on (s)electoral reward for parliamentary performance are case-bound too.

In what follows I take a closer look at the performance reward in party- and candidate-centred systems. Table 8 restates the overall party- and candidate-centred model results (duplicating the last four columns of Table 7). The models are rerun on legislature subsets within the party- and candidate-centred populations, the results of which are added to the table. In other words, for both the party-centred and candidate-centred models discussed above, Table 8 gives a reprint of the results followed by two models in which the data is subset to conduct separate analyses for the 7th EP (2014 elections) and the 8th EP (2019 elections) observations. This section first discusses the results regarding party-centred systems and then moves on to the candidate-centred models. Next, a brief discussion on the connection between parliamentary performance and reselection concludes the first part of this chapter.

---

[33] An alternative option would have been to include interaction terms of Term to all other independent variables in the model. I prefer the option of sub-setting the models to running an all-inclusive stepwise variable selection model containing a long list of interaction terms, and I do so for multiple reasons. While legislative term may be expected to interfere in one way or another with MEPs' re(s)election chances there are no sound theoretical expectations proposed for any one of the interaction terms specifically. Simply putting all possible interactions in the model and reporting the few – if any – that come out strongest, may be a worthwhile step but less appropriate as main model in this deductive study. Moreover, the findings suggest there may be need for three-way interactions between term, party-centred and each of the remaining variables. It is my opinion that sub-setting the models by legislature – though it reduces each model's sample size – is more desirable for its transparency and interpretability.

Table 8: The effect of parliamentary performance on MEPs' reselection odds across electoral systems and legislatures (2014, 2019)

Reselection model	Party-centred												Candidate-centred											
	Both terms				2014				2019				Both terms				2014				2019			
	(1)		(2)		(1)		(2)		(1)		(2)		(1)		(2)		(1)		(2)		(1)		(2)	
	β (SE)	%Δ	β (SE)	%Δ	β (SE)	%Δ	β (SE)	%Δ	β (SE)	%Δ	β (SE)	%Δ	β (SE)	%Δ	β (SE)	%Δ	β (SE)	%Δ	β (SE)	%Δ	β (SE)	%Δ	β (SE)	%Δ
Codecision reports	0,096 (0,079)		0,086 (0,081)		0,006 (0,097)		-0,013 (0,101)		0,238° (0,140)	26,83%	0,239 (0,146)	≡ (+)	0,098 (0,141)		0,111 (0,148)		0,357 (0,274)		0,495 (0,317)		-0,540* (0,268)	-41,72%	-0,534° (0,291)	-41,40%
Own initiative reports	0,129 (0,101)	___ (+)	0,159 (0,105)	___ (+)	0,376** (0,146)	45,65%	0,384* (0,153)	46,85%	-0,188 (0,186)		-0,215 (0,199)		0,110 (0,164)		0,124 (0,167)		-0,071 (0,245)		-0,021 (0,269)		0,026 (0,326)		0,162 (0,381)	
Other reports	0,000 (0,025)		0,007 (0,026)		0,021 (0,036)		0,023 (0,037)		-0,064 (0,089)		-0,061 (0,094)		0,022 (0,042)		0,020 (0,043)		-0,078 (0,066)		-0,064 (0,075)		0,173 (0,157)		0,165 (0,175)	
Non lead reports	0,002 (0,007)		0,002 (0,007)		-0,000 (0,007)		0,002 (0,007)		0,032 (0,077)		0,037 (0,080)		0,012 (0,023)		0,012 (0,024)		0,012 (0,027)		0,008 (0,028)		0,194 (0,175)	___ (+)	0,215 (0,204)	___ (+)
Speeches	0,000 (0,000)		-0,000 (0,000)		0,000 (0,001)		0,000 (0,001)		-0,001 (0,001)		-0,001 (0,001)		0,002* (0,001)	0,17%	0,002* (0,001)	0,20%	0,005** (0,002)	0,50%	0,006** (0,002)	0,64%	0,000 (0,001)		-0,001 (0,001)	
Parliamentary Questions	0,001 (0,001)		0,001 (0,001)		0,001 (0,002)		0,001 (0,002)		0,000 (0,002)		0,000 (0,002)		-0,001 (0,002)		-0,001 (0,001)		-0,003° (0,002)	-0,30%	-0,002 (0,002)		0,001 (0,002)		-0,001 (0,003)	
Attendance	0,009 (0,009)		0,008 (0,010)		0,008 (0,011)		0,008 (0,012)		0,018 (0,019)		0,018 (0,021)		0,019° (0,011)	2,00%	0,020° (0,012)	2,10%	0,038* (0,016)	3,90%	0,039* (0,019)	3,94%	0,008 (0,018)		0,042° (0,023)	4,30% ≡
Leader	0,291 (0,206)		0,262 (0,210)		0,130 (0,289)		0,195 (0,302)		0,404 (0,309)		0,228 (0,331)		-0,107 (0,347)		-0,061 (0,354)		-0,371 (0,490)		-0,687 (0,556)		0,638 (0,596)		0,841 (0,656)	
Coordinator	0,278 (0,208)		0,245 (0,212)		0,501° (0,302)	65,02%	0,446 (0,311)	≡ (+)	0,010 (0,318)		-0,016 (0,331)		-0,193 (0,380)		-0,286 (0,395)		-0,971 (0,637)		-1,419* (0,724)	-75,80% ≡	0,507 (0,571)		0,591 (0,643)	
Seniority	-0,300*** (0,085)	-25,95%	-0,365*** (0,092)	-30,61%	-0,322** (0,111)	-27,54%	-0,396** (0,123)	-32,70%	-0,304* (0,150)	-26,18%	-0,376* (0,162)	-31,33%	-0,110 (0,189)		-0,127 (0,205)		-0,131 (0,264)		-0,141 (0,305)		-0,291 (0,315)		-0,107 (0,374)	
National experience	0,335° (0,189)	39,85%	0,411* (0,199)	50,78%	0,439 (0,273)		0,637* (0,296)	89,07% ≡	0,258 (0,282)		0,205 (0,302)		0,052 (0,292)		-0,051 (0,319)		0,134 (0,439)		0,064 (0,509)		-0,231 (0,462)		-0,087 (0,531)	
Age	-0,051*** (0,010)	-4,93%	-0,051*** (0,011)	-4,93%	-0,031* (0,014)	-3,10%	-0,034* (0,014)	-3,35%	-0,078*** (0,017)	-7,51%	-0,083*** (0,019)	-8,01%	-0,031* (0,015)	-3,05%	-0,033* (0,015)	-3,26%	-0,014 (0,022)		-0,009 (0,025)		-0,036 (0,023)		-0,055* (0,027)	-5,39% ≡
Gender (male = 1)	0,303 (0,187)		0,317 (0,193)		0,018 (0,259)		0,078 (0,267)		0,624* (0,287)	86,63%	0,647* (0,314)	90,57%	0,201 (0,300)		0,219 (0,324)		0,3935 (0,471)		0,535 (0,574)		0,246 (0,449)		0,511 (0,520)	
EPG size	0,000 (0,001)		0,002 (0,002)		-0,000 (0,002)		0,002 (0,002)		0,001 (0,002)		0,002 (0,003)		-0,001 (0,002)		-0,001 (0,002)		-0,005 (0,003)	___ (-)	-0,004 (0,003)		0,003 (0,003)		0,003 (0,004)	
Party Size	0,037*** (0,011)	3,79%	0,022 (0,016)	___ ≡ (+)	0,036* (0,015)	3,70%	0,014 (0,022)	≡ (+)	0,044** (0,017)	4,49%	0,039 (0,027)	___ ≡ (+)	-0,007 (0,015)		-0,018 (0,025)		-0,004 (0,026)		-0,028 (0,054)		-0,010 (0,021)		-0,025 (0,042)	
Term (7th = 1)	0,555** (0,197)	74,19%	0,529* (0,212)	69,67% ≡									0,034 (0,325)		0,010 (0,335)									
Party-centered																								
Constant	1,600 (0,999)		1,969° (1,081)		1,152 (1,175)		1,554 (1,282)		2,369 (1,850)		3,266 (2,094)		0,705 (1,275)		0,882 (1,421)		-1,148 (1,957)		-1,528 (2,226)		1,214 (1,936)		-0,874 (2,474)	
Member state controls	no		yes		no		yes		no		yes		no		yes		no		yes		no		yes	
Observations	648				371				277				267				127				140			
Missing cases	21				4				17				9				5				4			
Nagelkerke pseudo R²	.167		.191		.148		.189†		.240		.306		.119		.147†		.249		.350†		.232		.355†	

Notes: Coefficients of binomial regression models, with standard errors in parentheses and change in likelihood expressed as percentage. † Final solution for the model's -2log likelihood could not be reached. The robustness checks are presented in the annex. Where statistically significant coefficients are not significant in the stepwise model (or vice versa) the change in likelihood is underlined. Likewise, the symbol ≡ is used to flag those instances where the multilevel binomial regression deviates from the results of the main analyses presented in the table. Where statistical significance is only reached in (one or both) robustness checks but not in the main model, the direction of the significant effect is given in parentheses. For the full result tables displaying coefficients, standard errors and odds-ratio percentages for the stepwise and multilevel logistic regression models, please refer to the annex. As for the member state controls, Germany serves as reference in the EU and party-centered system models. Finland serves as reference in the candidate-centred system models.

° significant at p < .10; * at p < .05; ** at p < .01; *** at p < .001.

The results presented in Table 8 confirm that we should not be too quick to presume dynamics match across legislatures. In fact, as with the split of observations along electoral system, performance indicators that are found to affect an MEP's reselection odds reach statistical significance only in either one of the studied legislatures. The subset models separating findings from the 2014 EP elections from the 2019 race moreover reveal previously hidden connections between parliamentary performance and reselection odds, in both party- and candidate-centred systems.

The aggregate party-centred model had hinted at a positive effect of writing INI reports on MEPs' reselection odds. The subset models here confirm such effect, but only regarding the 2014 elections. A different rapporteur-effect is found in 2019, where COD reports are the ones that matter. It follows that both authoring additional COD or INI reports are shown to boost reselection odds, but their effect is inconsistent across legislatures. Whether or not the activity matters for reselection at all depends on the legislature one is in, as neither activity by far approaches statistical significance in the other legislature. In 2014, MEPs who had written more own initiative reports faced higher reselection odds (46.85%, $p < .05$). Instead, MEPs with more co-decision reports on their conto were more likely reselected in 2019 (stepwise: 34.10%, $p < .05$; multilevel: 26.78%, $p < .10$). Moreover, acting as a group coordinator enhanced reselection chances, yet only in 2014. The reselection odds of group coordinators were 65% better than those of their colleagues who had not held such function during the legislature. The importance of the effect should not be overstated as it is only significant at the .10 level in the multilevel logistic regression and the main model excluding member state controls. Other variations cannot confirm the effect, nor do coordinators receive such advantage in the subsequent legislature ($p = .961$).

The negative effects of age and seniority are consistent across legislatures. In both election years, younger MEPs are more likely to return on the party's ballot, though the effect size differs. Between a younger and older MEP who are ten years apart, the younger MEP enjoyed a boost in reselection odds of 80% in the 2019 elections (-8.01%, $p < .001$). In 2014 this advantage was only 34% (-3.35%, $p < .05$). Independent from age, an MEP's seniority also negatively affects reselection chances. One additional five-year term decreases reselection odds by almost a third in both election years (2014: -32.70%, $p < .01$; 2019: -31.33%, $p < .05$).

Interestingly, former national politicians were flagged to have a moderate advantage in the overall party-centred reselection model. Splitting the analysis per term however, the effect is consistently positive but only reaches statistical significance in the 2014 main model with member state controls. Here, a former national politician was found to be almost twice as likely to be reselected as an incumbent who did not have national political experience before entering the EP

(89.07%, $p < .05$). However, no confirmation was found in any other model variation or robustness check I ran. Considering the degrees of freedom spent and the limited power of this particular model we should not rush to conclusions. Rather, this peculiar outcome needs to be interpreted with caution.

Finally, in party-centred systems and all else equal, in 2019 male incumbents enjoyed reselection odds that were almost twice as high than those of their female colleagues (90.57%, p <.05). The effect did not approach statistical significance in 2014 ($p = .771$). The aggregate party-centred model taught us that MEPs overall were more likely to be reselected in 2014 than in 2019. It seems that, within the context of stiffer reselection odds in 2019, female incumbents are at a disadvantage. Whether this is by volition or deselection cannot be derived from the present analysis.

5.2.2.2 Candidate-centred systems

The aggregate models in Table 1 already pointed out that the factors influencing MEPs' reselection odds in candidate-centred systems were different from those in party-centred systems. The results in the right hand half of Table 8 break up the aggregate candidate-centred model into separate analyses pertaining to the 2014 and 2019 EP elections respectively. Again, the results of the subset models suggest that – in candidate-centred systems too – the factors determining MEPs' reselection chances fluctuate across legislatures.

The aggregate model on candidate-centred systems revealed small positive effects of both speeches in the assembly and attending plenary sessions on the odds of being reselected. Attendance in the EP positively affects one's reselection odds in candidate-centred systems. The effect seems to be consistent across legislatures, though regarding the 2019 elections the statistical relevance of the effect drops well below any acceptable significance level in the stepwise and multilevel models. The effect of floor time found earlier in the aggregate model originates from the reselection patterns in 2014 (0.64%, $p < .01$). MEPs in candidate-centred systems who, all else equal, increased their floor time by one speech each month enjoyed a 39% higher likelihood to be reselected in 2014 than his/her colleagues who obtained less speaking time. As for the 2019 elections, speeches did not – by far - produce statistically significant effects.

As was the case with the term-split models for party-centred systems, the subset models surface additional performance effects that had not surged in the aggregate candidate-centred model covering both legislatures. In line with the party-centred models discussed above, the role of group coordinator reappears to affect the MEP's reselection odds in the 2014 elections. In candidate-centred systems however, the effect of this leading role is negative. MEPs who had acted as group coordinator during the 7th term turned out to be 76% less likely to return to the ballot for their

party (-75.80%, $p < .05$). However, the effect could not be confirmed in the stepwise nor multilevel robustness checks, nor does it extend beyond the 2014 elections. Parliamentary questions too, appear to generate a negative effect on the odds that MEPs in candidate-centred systems are reselected in 2014 (-0.3%, $p < .10$). All else equal submitting hundred additional parliamentary questions – which translates to submitting 1 or 2 extra questions each month in office – would decrease reselection odds by a third. However, the effect does not hold when member state controls are added, which suggests the effect may be due to country-specific dynamics. The same model variation hints to a negative effect of EPG size on reselection odds (stepwise: -0.39%, $p < .10$). Considering these effects disappear when member state controls are added and that they are only significant at the 10% level, in the first place it seems advisable to consider it an erroneous consequence of the subset's small sample size and excessive use of degrees of freedom in the main model.

Of the effects found in the aggregate candidate-centred model, a small positive effect of attendance (4.30%, $p < .10$) and the reselection advantage for younger MEPs (5.39%, $p < .05$) are confirmed in 2019. That said, in the 2019 model, not one predictor produced a statistically significant effect consistently across the main, stepwise and multilevel model variations. Additionally, two rather surprising and intuitively contradictory effects of parliamentary performance emerge in 2019. The first is a negative effect of COD reports. Though the stepwise model is unable to confirm this finding, writing COD reports is found to statistically significantly decrease the odds an MEP will reappear on his/her party's ballot by as much as 41% (-41.40%, $p < .10$). No such effect was found in 2014.

The second is a positive effect of non-lead reports reaching statistical significance in the stepwise model (stepwise: 31.31%, $p < .01$). This suggests that authoring additional reports of these types bestows the rapporteur with a significant increase in reselection likelihood. One additional shadow report or opinion increases one's reselection odds by a little less than a third in 2019. Yet, the effect could not be reproduced. Statistical significance is only obtained in the stepwise logistic regression for candidate-centred systems in 2019. In all other models presented, the effect of this parliamentary activity remained well below statistical significance.

As in party-centred systems, older incumbents were less likely to reappear as candidate for their party (-5.39%, $p < .05$). Yet the effect is only significant in the 2019 model. In contrast to party-centred systems, *ceteris paribus* an incumbent's seniority did not increase his or her chances to abstain (or be refrained) from running for re-election. The effect follows the negative direction found in the other models but does not – by far – reach statistical significance (2014: $p = .643$; 2019: $p = .774$). Prior political experience does not affect reselection odds either. The effect

changes direction from one legislature to the next but consistently remains far from reaching any level of statistical significance (2014: $p = .900$; 2019: $p = .870$).

5.2.3 *Discussion*

The analyses presented so far taught us that MEPs that who were more active – regarding particular forms of parliamentary performance – stand better chances of being reselected than their less active colleagues. That is to say, several parliamentary performance indicators are found to increase the reselection odds of MEPs. In this respect, the analyses confirm the positive connection between performance and reselection found throughout the recent literature. Under certain electoral conditions however, the analyses unexpectedly points out negative effects of particular performance indicators. Though the overall image suggests a small to moderate selectoral advantage for more actively involved MEPs, the impact of parliamentary performance on MEPs' reselection odds may be difficult to generalize across electoral contexts.

The subset models present crucial nuances. Exempt the occupation of a leadership function and writing 'other' reports[34] , all performance indicators included in the model generate significant effect on reselection odds under one circumstance or another. They do not however, consistently (dis)advantage MEPs across electoral systems nor legislatures. Splitting up the models **per electoral system** reveals the different dynamics at play. So does separating **legislatures**. No performance indicator generates broadly generalizable results across these fault lines. While there is some indication that parliamentary performance plays a role in the reselection of MEPs, for now the take-away message is one of caution and limited generalizability.

Previous research into the link between MEP performance and reselection (or candidacy) has mainly put forward analyses covering the EU15 or EU27 MEPs and the 6th or 7th legislature. With the exception of Navarro (2012), all found positive effects of report writing on reselection. Van Geffen (2014) specified it as an effect of INI reports. The data presented here partially confirms these findings, specifying it as an effect within party-centred systems. Additionally, in the 2019 elections, it were no longer INI but COD reports that mattered for reselection. With 70% of MEPs elected under closed or flexible lists, I believe the 'traditional' rapporteurships effect to be in fact a manifestation in the aggregate model of dynamics specific to the party-centred systems. In contrast to Wilson et al. (2016) I cannot confirm a reliable benefit of report writing on reselection in (what they labelled) 'more open lists'. To the contrary, in 2019 authoring more COD reports is

---

[34] Remember, the variable 'other' reports groups all reports, authored as lead rapporteur, which are produced under any procedure other than co-decision or own initiative. Think of budgetary discharges, non-legislative reports, or those pertaining to legislation decided under the consultation procedure.

associated with a decrease in reselection odds when it concerns MEPs that compete in candidate-centred systems.

Overall, while the significant indicators vary across legislatures, reselection in party-centred systems is positively linked to report writing and acting as a group coordinator within the committees. Active involvement in these types of EP work demand topical expertise and a good network in the EP and one's political group. There is no evidence that similar work is rewarded with reselection in candidate-centred systems. There is some indication that producing reports as a shadow or opinion rapporteurs increases reselection odds, but COD rapporteurs as well as coordinators are disadvantaged in their chances to reappear on their party's ballot. Instead, plenary activities such as speeches and attendance boost reselection odds. The dynamics of performance reward through access therefore clearly differ between electoral systems.

Parties in candidate-centred systems cannot 'virtually deselect' MEPs by relegating them to hopeless ballot positions. Therefore, the expectation was they would be more demanding gatekeepers at the reselection stage, gravitating towards more active incumbents and denying shirkers access to the ballot. The data refutes this hypothesis. Sure, some parliamentary activities positively affect reselection odds, but the most marked connections between performance and reselection are negative. Perhaps this type of parliamentary work takes away too much of an MEP's time to build or maintain rapport with the constituency, though it is difficult to explain why parties would punish active involvement in this essential type of work at the reselection stage. From an ambition-perspective too, it is hard to explain why MEPs who had been active in these areas would be less likely interested in renewing their mandate in the EP.

In a system where voters have ample control over the electoral success of individual politicians, MEPs are more incentivized to focus on those aspects of EP work that can increase their visibility amongst their electorate and "cultivate a personal vote" (Carey & Shugart, 1995; Katz, 1985). This implies preference for activities that can be easily explained to and shared with constituents. Speeches and attendance rates may be such activities. Asking parliamentary questions however, is not found to help MEPs' reselection odds. Along with attendance, asking parliamentary questions is an activity that is non-technical and open to all MEPs, regardless of their expertise, seniority or network. MEPs who want to use the EP as a stepping stone for national politics – and thus do not seek re-election – may use questions to show their constituency they are well represented. Others may have made extensive use of parliamentary questions as they had little access to more advanced and technical activities and functions. Sigalas (2011) had already found MEPs from smaller EPGs – thus with lesser structural opportunities in the EP for e.g.

rapporteurships and speaking time – to be more fervent users of parliamentary questions. Politicians who are disillusioned with what difference they can make are less likely to seek reselection. A negative effect of parliamentary questions may then relate to incumbents' ambition to return. However, the importance of this effect should not be overstated as its statistical significance disappears in 2019 and doesn't extend to party-centred systems.

Finally, in party-centred systems, older and more senior MEPs were less likely to reappear on their party's ballot. Remember that the model cannot reveal this to be by choice (e.g. retirement) or upon decision by the party selectorate (e.g. to rejuvenate the delegation). Among incumbents, former national politicians were advantaged in 2014. More in-depth explorations of country dynamics and career paths, or perhaps qualitative research endeavours into the benefit of prior national experience *among* incumbent MEPs may prove valuable avenues for further research in this regard.

5.3 Factors determining the re-election of incumbent MEPs

In this section, I consider whether the more active and leading MEPs among the reselected are more likely to effectively get re-elected (see dotted rectangle in Figure 11). Only those MEPs who secured reselection are included in the analyses presented here. The dependent variable is coded 1 for those who were successfully re-elected and 0 for those reselected MEPs that ran the race but were unsuccessful in renewing their mandate. Once more, the dynamic is expected to be different in party- versus candidate-centred systems. Subset models check the generalizability of the results across legislatures. Again, all model variations and subsets are subjected to two robustness checks in the form of backward stepwise and multilevel logistic regressions. Discrepancies are indicated in the tables presented below; the full checks are presented in the annex.

Figure 11: Recap figure: Situating the re-election models
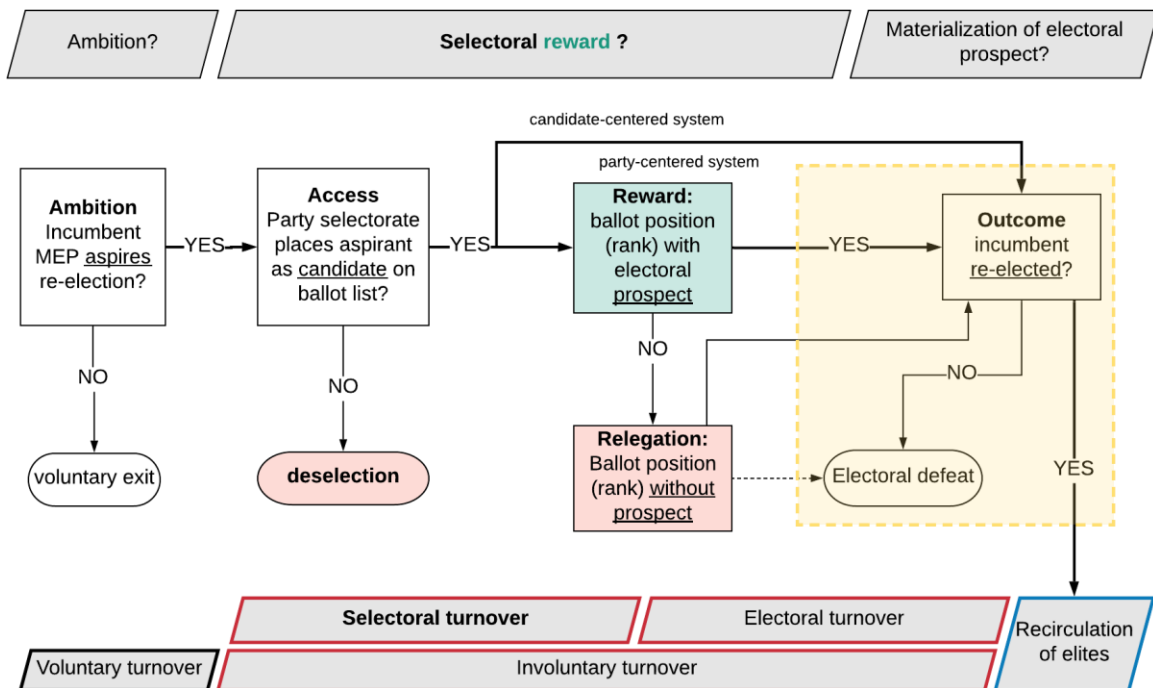
5.3.1   Re-election: the electoral system matters

The structure of this section follows the same build-up as the previous section on reselection. I start with an aggregate EU model and its electoral system subsets. After presenting these results I further separate the party- and candidate-centred models per legislature. Table 9 sets out the results of the re-election models combining observations from the 2014 and 2019 EP elections. From left to right the columns present the results for the overall EU model and the subset models for party- and candidate-centred systems. It mirrors Table 7 of the reselection model, but here the model is defined using a different outcome variable, i.e. re-election, on the population of reselected incumbents.

The main models and robustness checks are consistent in finding only little evidence of *electoral* rewards for parliamentary performance. Only very few effects are found that are statistically significant, among both indicators of parliamentary performance and control variables. The predictors included in this research are more apt to explain which incumbents *seek* to renew their EP mandate for their party than to explain whom among the incumbent candidates will be successful in his/her bid. Including member state controls, only the effect of attendance in plenary reaches statistical significance. The effect is negative – suggesting that spending less time in plenary sessions boosts one's re-election odds. All else equal, an incumbent with a 10% lower attendance rate has a 22% higher likelihood of being re-elected compared to his colleague with a better attendance record (-2.20%, $p < .10$). The negative direction of the effect is consistent throughout model variations and robustness checks, but only reaches statistical significance – at the 10% level - in the main logistic regression of the aggregate EU model.

Overall, though the directionality of the effects is consistent across the main, stepwise and multilevel logistic regressions, they rarely agree on the statistical significance of the effects. As expected, the dynamic is different in party- versus candidate-centred systems. In fact, the candidate-centred model shows no effects of the parliamentary performance indicators of controls included in this research on the odds reselected MEPs are re-elected at all.

Table 9: The effect of parliamentary performance on MEPs' re-election (2014, 2019)

Re-election model	EU — Both terms				Party-centred — Both terms				Candidate-centred — Both terms			
	(1)		(2)		(1)		(2)		(1)		(2)	
	β (SE)	%Δ	β (SE)	%Δ	β (SE)	%Δ	β (SE)	%Δ	β (SE)	%Δ	β (SE)	%Δ
Codecision reports	0,154 (0,094)	____ (+)	0,142 (0,095)		0,256° (0,131)	29,20%	0,239° (0,134)	27,05%	-0,069 (0,146)		-0,054 (0,149)	
Own initiative reports	0,066 (0,105)		0,029 (0,112)		0,076 (0,135)		0,079 (0,143)		0,034 (0,184)		-0,010 (0,203)	
Other reports	0,017 (0,030)		0,019 (0,031)		-0,011 (0,037)		-0,018 (0,037)		0,074 (0,065)		0,074 (0,063)	
Non lead reports	0,008 (0,011)		0,008 (0,011)		0,012 (0,013)		0,013 (0,014)		-0,005 (0,021)		-0,005 (0,021)	
Speeches	0,000 (0,000)		0,000 (0,001)		0,001 (0,001)		0,002* (0,001)	0,17%	-0,000 (0,001)		-0,001 (0,001)	
Parliamentary Questions	0,000 (0,001)		0,000 (0,001)		0,001 (0,002)		0,000 (0,002)		0,000 (0,001)		0,001 (0,001)	
Attendance	-0,014 (0,011)		-0,022° (0,013)	-2,20% ≝	-0,011 (0,014)		-0,016 (0,016)		-0,018 (0,017)		-0,035 (0,021)	
Leader	0,012 (0,223)		0,066 (0,236)		0,014 (0,273)		0,020 (0,290)		0,097 (0,426)		0,205 (0,452)	
Coordinator	-0,008 (0,231)		-0,139 (0,243)		-0,009 (0,276)		-0,101 (0,289)		-0,013 (0,450)		-0,341 (0,485)	
Seniority	0,060 (0,111)		0,014 (0,120)		-0,006 (0,126)		-0,050 (0,138)		0,213 (0,280)		0,076 (0,314)	
National experience	-0,198 (0,196)		-0,288 (0,217)		-0,182 (0,255)		-0,208 (0,275)		-0,094 (0,337)		-0,294 (0,379)	
Age	-0,018° (0,010)	-1,79%	-0,015 (0,011)	____ (-)	-0,025° (0,014)	-2,40%	-0,019 (0,014)	____ (-)	-0,011 (0,017)		-0,004 (0,019)	
Gender (male = 1)	-0,061 (0,201)		-0,152 (0,212)		-0,164 (0,259)		-0,192 (0,271)		0,077 (0,346)		-0,143 (0,386)	
EPG size	0,001 (0,001)		0,000 (0,002)		0,001 (0,002)		0,002 (0,002)		-0,002 (0,002)		-0,003 (0,003)	
Party Size	-0,003 (0,010)		0,001 (0,016)		0,009 (0,014)		0,000 (0,022)		-0,011 (0,017)		-0,010 (0,029)	
Term (7th = 1)	0,040 (0,216)		0,092 (0,238)		0,103 (0,280)		0,357 (0,314)		0,062 (0,368)		-0,158 (0,405)	
Party-centered	0,499* (0,210)	64,77%	0,203 (1,342)	≝ (+)								
Constant	2,630* (1,117)		4,053* 1,897)		2,859° (1,464)		3,471* (1,661)		3,087° (1,817)		4,443* (2,214)	
Member state controls	no		yes		no		yes		no		yes	
Observations	608				424				183			
Missing cases	19				12				6			
Nagelkerke pseudo R²	.054		.142†		.073		.158†		.051		.162†	

Notes: Coefficients of binomial regression models, with standard errors in parentheses and change in likelihood expressed as percentage. † Final solution for the model's -2log likelihood could not be reached. The robustness checks are presented in the annex. Where statistically significant coefficients are not significant in the stepwise model (or vice versa) the change in likelihood is underlined. Likewise, the symbol ≝ is used to flag those instances where the multilevel binomial regression deviates from the results of the main analyses presented in the table. Where statistical significance is only reached in (one or both) robustness checks but not in the main model, the direction of the significant effect is given in parentheses. For the full result tables displaying coefficients, standard errors and odds-ratio percentages for the stepwise and multilevel logistic regression models, please refer to the annex. As for the member state controls, Germany serves as reference in the EU and party-centered system models. Finland serves as reference in the candidate-centred system models.

° significant at p < .10; * at p < .05; ** at p < .01; *** at p < .001.

Parliamentary performance has a limited impact on an MEP's re-election probability once s/he is reselected, and – as far as the aggregate models can tell – only so in party-centred systems. Here an additional COD report increases the incumbents' chance of re-election by 27% compared to his/her colleagues who were less active rapporteurs but otherwise similar (27.05%, *p* < .10). Furthermore, delivering more speeches in plenary has a small positive effect on one's likelihood of re-election (0.17%, *p* < .05). Overall, reselected incumbents have better re-election odds in party-centred systems (multilevel: 57.80%, *p* < .10), but the multilevel model shows no significant country level effect (*p* = .207, see annex). The re-election odds incumbents faced in 2014 do not differ significantly from their odds in 2019. Subset models mirroring the approach used in the

section on reselection above further explore and nuance the relationship between parliamentary performance and re-election in the EP. These are set out in Table 10.

5.3.2 *Re-election: limited generalizability across legislatures*

Parliamentary performance appears to have little impact on which incumbents get re-elected, once they are relisted by their party. In candidate-centred systems, where the electorate's preference votes for individual candidates decides the race, no performance effects are flagged as statistically significant at all. In party-centred systems party selectorates largely control which among their candidates will enter parliament. This is because closed and flexible list systems favour top-ranked candidates, to the point of offering near guarantees of electoral success to their top ranked candidates. Among the incumbents relisted in such party-centred systems, those who had written more COD reports and – to a lesser extent – those who made more speeches in the assembly were found to enjoy higher re-election odds. The aggregate models did not find reselected MEPs to – *ceteris paribus* – have better odds of being re-elected in the 2014 or 2019 elections. It remains worthwhile to split both the candidate- and party-centred model per legislature as to check the consistency of effects across elections.

In what follows I take a closer look at the connection between parliamentary performance and re-election odds separately for the 2014 and 2019 elections in party- and candidate-centred systems. Table 10 restates the overall party- and candidate-centred model results (duplicating the last four columns of Table 9) and adds the models run per election year. The party- and candidate-centred models are discussed subsequently after which a brief discussion concludes this part of the chapter.

Table 10: The effect of parliamentary performance on MEPs' re-election odds across electoral systems and legislatures (2014, 2019)

Re-election model	EU — Both terms (1)	EU — Both terms (2)	Party-centred — Both terms (1)	Party-centred — Both terms (2)	Party-centred — 2014 (1)	Party-centred — 2014 (2)	Party-centred — 2019 (1)	Party-centred — 2019 (2)	Candidate-centred — Both terms (1)	Candidate-centred — Both terms (2)	Candidate-centred — 2014 (1)	Candidate-centred — 2014 (2)	Candidate-centred — 2019 (1)	Candidate-centred — 2019 (2)
Codecision reports	0,154 (0,094) ___ (+)	0,142 (0,095)	0,256° (0,131) 29,20%	0,239° (0,134) 27,05%	0,664** (0,236) 94,22%	0,720** (0,269) 105,30%	-0,188 (0,200)	-0,188 (0,200)	-0,069 (0,146)	-0,054 (0,149)	0,101 (0,225)	0,119 (0,225)	-0,393 (0,301)	-0,608 (0,379)
Own initiative reports	0,066 (0,105)	0,029 (0,112)	0,076 (0,135)	0,079 (0,143)	0,050 (0,169)	0,107 (0,197)	-0,027 (0,291)	-0,027 (0,291)	0,034 (0,184)	-0,010 (0,203)	0,146 (0,323)	0,302 (0,440)	0,094 (0,263)	0,170 (0,346)
Other reports	0,017 (0,030)	0,019 (0,031)	-0,011 (0,037)	-0,018 (0,037)	-0,020 (0,045)	-0,036 (0,044)	-0,081 (0,145)	-0,081 (0,145)	0,074 (0,065)	0,074 (0,063)	0,022 (0,130)	0,055 (0,190)	0,103 (0,092)	0,081 (0,106)
Non lead reports	0,008 (0,011)	0,008 (0,011)	0,012 (0,013)	0,013 (0,014)	0,016 (0,015)	0,021 (0,018)	0,123 (0,13)	0,123 (0,133)	-0,005 (0,021)	-0,005 (0,021)	0,001 (0,030)	-0,016 (0,032)	-0,038 (0,048)	-0,033 (0,051)
Speeches	0,000 (0,000)	0,000 (0,001)	0,001 (0,001)	0,002* (0,001) 0,17%	0,001 (0,001)	0,002* (0,001) 0,20% ≡	0,000 (0,001)	0,001 (0,001)	-0,000 (0,001)	-0,001 (0,001)	-0,000 (0,001)	-0,001 (0,002)	-0,001 (0,001)	-0,002 (0,001)
Parliamentary Questions	0,000 (0,001)	0,000 (0,001)	0,001 (0,002)	0,000 (0,002)	0,002 (0,002)	0,000 (0,003)	0,002 (0,003)	0,002 (0,005)	0,000 (0,001)	0,001 (0,001)	-0,001 (0,001)	0,000 (0,002)	0,004 (0,004)	0,003 (0,004)
Attendance	-0,014 (0,011)	-0,022° (0,013) -2,20% ≡	-0,011 (0,014)	-0,016 (0,016)	-0,033° (0,019) -3,22%	-0,058** (0,023) -5,70%	0,035 (0,029)	0,035 (0,029)	-0,018 (0,017)	-0,035 (0,021)	-0,032 (0,028)	-0,132* (0,055) -12,40%	0,006 (0,030)	-0,002 (0,036)
Leader	0,012 (0,223)	0,066 (0,236)	0,014 (0,273)	0,020 (0,290)	0,091 (0,379)	-0,076 (0,425)	-0,250 (0,449)	-0,205 (0,551)	0,097 (0,426)	0,205 (0,452)	-0,388 (0,587)	-0,289 (0,723)	0,690 (0,749)	0,669 (0,953)
Coordinator	-0,008 (0,231)	-0,139 (0,243)	-0,009 (0,276)	-0,101 (0,289)	-0,280 (0,367)	-0,674 (0,429)	0,228 (0,456)	0,626 (0,519)	-0,013 (0,450)	-0,341 (0,485)	0,570 (0,801)	0,628 (0,963)	-0,229 (0,654)	-0,173 (0,802)
Seniority	0,060 (0,111)	0,014 (0,120)	-0,006 (0,126)	-0,050 (0,138)	-0,143 (0,158)	-0,187 (0,184)	0,401 (0,255)	0,381 (0,289)	0,213 (0,280)	0,076 (0,314)	-0,212 (0,392)	-0,823 (0,588)	0,997* (0,488) 171,05%	1,789** (0,690) 498,48%
National experience	-0,198 (0,196)	-0,288 (0,217)	-0,182 (0,255)	-0,208 (0,275)	0,091 (0,360)	0,133 (0,421)	-0,397 (0,409)	-0,506 (0,461)	-0,094 (0,337)	-0,294 (0,379)	0,686 (0,518)	0,228 (0,708)	-0,886 (0,552) ___ (-)	-1,051 (0,719) ___ (-)
Age	-0,018* (0,010) -1,79%	-0,015 (0,011) ___ (-)	-0,025* (0,014) -2,40%	-0,019 (0,014) ___ (-)	0,004 (0,018)	0,017 (0,019)	-0,077** (0,026) -7,45%	-0,104** (0,032) -9,91%	-0,011 (0,017)	-0,004 (0,019)	-0,005 (0,028)	0,028 (0,036)	-0,011 (0,025)	-0,041 (0,032)
Gender (male = 1)	-0,061 (0,201)	-0,152 (0,212)	-0,164 (0,259)	-0,192 (0,271)	-0,385 (0,347)	-0,237 (0,378)	0,209 (0,431)	0,165 (0,493)	0,077 (0,346)	-0,143 (0,386)	0,251 (0,582)	-0,951 (0,860)	0,021 (0,505)	0,290 (0,625)
EPG size	0,001 (0,001)	0,000 (0,002)	0,001 (0,002)	0,002 (0,002)	0,001 (0,002)	0,000 (0,003)	-0,001 (0,004)	0,001 (0,005)	-0,002 (0,002)	-0,003 (0,003)	0,001 (0,003)	-0,001 (0,005)	-0,004 (0,004)	-0,007 (0,005)
Party Size	-0,003 (0,010)	0,001 (0,016)	0,009 (0,014)	0,000 (0,022)	0,036° (0,019) 3,69%	0,057° (0,030) 5,86% ≡	-0,017 (0,022)	-0,103* (0,050) -9,77% ≡	-0,011 (0,017)	-0,010 (0,029)	-0,003 (0,031)	-0,105 (0,068)	-0,016 (0,024)	0,058 (0,053)
Term (7th = 1)	0,040 (0,216)	0,092 (0,238)	0,103 (0,280)	0,357 (0,314)					0,062 (0,368)	-0,158 (0,405)				
Party-centered	0,499* (0,210) 64,77%	0,203 (1,342) ≡ (+)												
Constant	2,630* (1,117)	4,053* (1,897)	2,859° (1,464)	3,471* (1,661)	2,689 (1,814)	4,762* (2,204)	2,172 (2,847)	4,603 (3,739)	3,087° (1,817)	4,443* (2,214)	3,023 (2,898)	10,478 (5,319)	1,612 (2,999)	5,286 (3,995)
Member state controls	no	yes	no	yes	no	yes	no	yes	no	yes	no	yes	no	yes
Observations	608		424		264		160		183		84		99	
Missing cases	19		12		2		10		6		5		1	
Nagelkerke pseudo R²	.054	.142†	.073	.158†	.028	.312†	.164	.325	.051	.162†	.100	.442†	.237	.410†

Notes: Coefficients of binomial regression models, with standard errors in parentheses and change in likelihood expressed as percentage. † Final solution for the model's -2log likelihood could not be reached. The robustness checks are presented in the annex. Where statistically significant coefficients are not significant in the stepwise model (or vice versa) the change in likelihood is underlined. Likewise, the symbol ≡ is used to flag those instances where the multilevel binomial regression deviates from the results of the main analyses presented in the table. Where statistical significance is only reached in (one or both) robustness checks but not in the main model, the direction of the significant effect is given in parentheses. For the full result tables displaying coefficients, standard errors and odds-ratio percentages for the stepwise and multilevel logistic regression models, please refer to the annex. As for the member state controls, Germany serves as reference in the EU and party-centered system models. Finland serves as reference in the candidate-centred system models.

° significant at p < .10; * at p < .05; ** at p < .01; *** at p < .001.

5.3.2.1   Party-centred systems

The left hand half of Table 10 repeats the overall party-centred model described above, followed by the 2014 and 2019 subsets of the data. The positive effects of COD reports and floor time found in the overall model stem from their impact on MEPs' re-election odds in the 2014 race. Among those reselected, the more active speakers in plenary are more likely re-elected, though the effect of an additional speech is relatively small (0.20%, $p < .10$). For every ten additional speeches an MEP can make in plenary, his/her re-election odds go up by 2%. More decisive for an MEPs' re-election odds in party-centred systems were rapporteurships. Or at least, being lead rapporteur on a dossier that is decided under the ordinary legislative procedure (COD). Authoring one additional COD report doubled a reselected MEP's re-election odds all else equal (105.30%, $p < .01$). In 2019 however, the effect sizes of these parliamentary activities take a dive and they no longer reach statistical significance by far (speeches $p = .902$; COD $p = .348$).

Moreover, both the main and multilevel models find attendance to negatively affect re-election odds in 2014. Increasing one's attendance rate to plenary votes by one unit (1% of total roll calls) decreases an MEP's re-election odds by just shy of 6% (5.70%, $p < .05$). In the 2019 elections, the effect changes direction and loses statistical significance. Attendance has a similar effect on MEPs' re-election odds in candidate-centred systems, discussed in the next section.

5.3.2.2   Candidate-centred systems

In candidate-centred systems the opportunity for *selectoral reward* is limited to the re-or de-selection of incumbents. If MEPs are to be rewarded for their parliamentary performance by their party leaderships this should be captured in the party's choice to re- or de-select its incumbents. Within these systems, the re-election model does not so much reveal a selectorate's preferences as to whom among their running incumbents should return. Instead, effects of performance on an MEP's re-election odds speak to the *electoral* reward of the activity. In other words, do voters reward the most active among the relisted incumbents?

The right hand pane of Table 10 above duplicates the candidate-centred model covering both legislatures adding to it the subset models for each term. Neither variation lends support to the idea of voters rewarding performance by more readily re-electing MEPs with more impressive activity records or functions. No performance indicator brings about a consistent effect on the re-election odds of reselected incumbents in candidate-centred systems. If anything, active involvement in the EP's work negatively affected the re-election odds of MEPs seeking to renew their mandate. A negative effect of attendance is found in 2014 (-12.40%, $p < .05$). A decrease of one's attendance rate in Strasbourg by 10% makes one's re-election more than twice as likely

compared to when the MEP had spent this time attending plenary. The effect is corroborated by the multilevel, but not the stepwise regression.

In the 2019 EP elections none of the performance indicators significantly affect an MEP's re-election odds in candidate-centred systems. Two other factors, that had remained 'hidden' in the aggregate model, reach statistical significance: seniority and national experience. In 2019 seniority is found to have a strong positive impact on one's chances of re-election. To the contrary, prior national experience has a relatively large negative effect (while both are insignificant and of reverse direction in 2014). The re-election odds of MEPs who had served an additional EP term prior to the one studied were up to five times higher compared to those of incumbents who had served less terms so far (498.48%, $p < .01$)[35]. National experience decreased the re-election odds of reselected incumbents by almost 70% (stepwise: -68.67%, $p < .05$). This effect however, was only statistically significant in the stepwise regression. The direction of these effects is mirrored in the party-centred model. Though statistically insignificant in party-centred systems, the disadvantage for former national politicians and benefit for more senior MEPs seeking to renew their EP mandate in the 2019 EP elections, and the reverse effects in the 2014 EP elections appear to be consistent across electoral contexts.

5.3.3 *Discussion*

The second part of this empirical chapter presented aggregated and subset re-election models. These tested whether, among the reselected MEPs, those who had been more actively involved in the EP's work enjoyed better odds of effectively being re-elected. The data supports the premise that hard work in the EP positively affects one's re-election chances, *in party-centred systems*. Caution as to the generalization of the findings nevertheless remains warranted because of the conditionality of the effect on both electoral and temporal context. Once again, the models confirm there is a marked difference between party- and candidate-centred systems. Besides any performance reward, MEPs in party-centred systems already stood better chances of being re-elected than those running in candidate-centred systems. This may be because parties are inclined to reselect their incumbents to top positions to boost their chances to return. The incumbency advantage is larger in systems using closed and flexible lists compared to systems in which mandates are distributed on the basis of nominal votes.

However, in no way does this mean that, in party-centred systems, the activities and leadership functions of an MEP are decisive for his or her electoral success. In fact, only the 2014 subset model brings convincing evidence that being among the more active relisted incumbents

---

[35] The effect is confirmed in both the stepwise and the multilevel regressions, but here the effect size shrinks (stepwise: 140.70%, $p < .05$; multilevel: 171.17%, $p < .05$).

pays off in terms of re-election odds. Incumbents with more co-decision reports stood better chances. This is most likely due to being top-ranked by party selectorates responding well to the MEP's expertise and substantial legislative work. The small effects of attendance (negative) and speeches (positive) in plenary may be linked to the electoral advantage for rapporteurs. Rapporteurs spend a lot of time in research and negotiation which limits the time they have available for attending plenaries in which their presence is not strictly required, and they are given floor time to present their report. Note that the predictors are independent from each other and there is no problem of multicollinearity. Still, the three performance effects found here can be explained by the same logic that postulated that parties are policy-seeking and therefore reward (certain) parliamentary activities when placing incumbents on their ballot lists.

The analyses presented in this section confirm that active involvement in the EP's work can increase an incumbent's odds of re-election. Yet only in the right context. Once more, the subset models reveal fundamental nuances to aggregate models testing the effect of performance across electoral systems and election years. Besides being limited to party-centred systems, the temporal dimension matters too. The evidence of the 2019 subset is weak at best. It appears therefore that the connection between performance and re-election odds is only found in a specific setting of both time and place, which poses questions as to the external validity of the findings. Similarities with results from prior studies may attenuate this concern.

The positive effect of rapporteurships has been a red thread throughout the relevant literature. Though previous studies had not isolated COD-reports from others in their analyses, their findings concur that more active rapporteurs are more likely re-elected than MEPs with less reports to show for. As the vast majority of MEPs is elected under party-centred systems – and some studies have exclusively focused on party-centred member states (cfr. Hermansen, 2018, Frech, 2016) – the positive effect of writing reports is reflected in their findings. Equally in line with previous findings is the positive effect of speeches on re-election odds, but it is first now reaching statistical significance (cfr. Sigalas, 2011; Van Geffen, 2018). Concerning the effect of attendance records prior evidence has been mixed. To my knowledge, this study puts forward a first statistically significant *negative* effect of attendance on MEP re-election.

Across electoral systems, the 2014 model suggested **attendance** to be negatively evaluated in **both party- and candidate-centred systems**. MEPs who had been more absent from the assembly's plenary sessions enjoyed better re-election odds. Yet, this effect need not be an expression on deliberate consideration of MEPs' attendance sheets. Rather, an intuitive interpretation of such effect could be that both parties and voters are more likely to reward MEPs who spent less time in plenary sessions and more time fulfilling other tasks of their mandate.

Parties may prefer their MEPs to focus on more substantial business. Time is a scarce resource, therefore, there is an opportunity cost to attending plenary sessions. Those MEPs who can attain higher attendance rates cannot be but less actively involved in other parts of the job. Rapporteurships – and co-decision reports in particular – demand a large time investment for researching, meeting, and negotiating outside of the hemicycle. For voters one could imagine a preference for incumbents who have proven to stay connected to the constituency. Perhaps they favour more visible and tangible tasks over attendance. Constituency work is without a doubt a dimension of parliamentary work worthwhile to study further. Devising appropriate measures for it and including it in studies on (s)electoral reward falls beyond the scope of this project but caries much potential for future research.

Besides parliamentary activities, the effects of **leadership roles** in the EP (political and committee leaders as well as group coordinators) deserve to be highlighted. Or rather, the lack of statistically significant effects on re-election odds. While the evidence shows that writing coveted reports boosted an MEP's likelihood to be re-elected under certain circumstances, holding an influential position in the assembly or its committees did not. The effect of both leadership functions and acting as a group coordinator failed to reach statistical significance throughout, and the direction of their effects is unsteady. Though using somewhat differently operationalised 'combined functions', my analyses corroborate the non-findings of Hermansen's (2018) re-election model on MEPs in closed list systems. Earlier, Wilson et.al (2016) had found contradicting effects of different leadership roles that are contained in the 'political leader' variable used here. The heterogeneity of the profiles captured by the variable may obscure effects that distinct leadership role may have. Coordinators were more likely to be reselected, but their electoral prospects are not statistically better or worse compared to those who did not hold such function.

The re-election models above confirm that parliamentary performance of incumbent MEPs better predicts their electoral fortune (re-election) in party-centred systems compared to candidate-centred systems. In candidate-centred systems, *no effect* of parliamentary performance on an MEP's re-election odds can be confirmed. This is not surprising, as the assumptions of the second order literature make it highly unlikely that voters would monitor and sanction their MEP's behaviour and performance in Strasbourg and Brussels. In systems where the party's rank order of candidates does not determine the intra-party allocation of mandates, an MEP's parliamentary performance bears no relevance to his/her re-election prospects. The 2019 subset model however, suggests that electorates in candidate-centred systems reward **EU-careerism**. Re-election seeking MEPs who have already served more years within the EP and those who had not previously built a national political career stand a better chance at attracting sufficient preferential votes for re-election. This

would support the premise that relevant EP experience is valued over prior national experience. Though statistically insignificant in party-centred systems, this patterns holds across both electoral systems. Still, as the effects are inconsistent across legislatures – even shifting direction– prudence is called for in the effects' interpretation.

An alternative explanation for former national politician's electoral disadvantage lies in the decline of traditional parties rather than an appreciation for devoted EP careerism. The negative effect in 2019 may be linked to high voter volatility and the ongoing decline of traditional parties. MEPs who had previously served their party in national political mandates likely belong to mainstream parties and the established political elite. This negative effect of prior national political experience in the 2019 candidate-centred model and the absence of a significant effect of national office in the remaining models leads us to reject the idea that among reselected MEPs, those who are more attractive to voters (i.e. who have prior national political experience) stand better chances of re-election.

5.4   Performance and ballot position value

5.4.1   *Relegation of shirkers?*

In party-centred systems, party selectorates can reward incumbent MEPs for their performance in the outgoing legislature in two ways: *access* and *rank*. The first part of this chapter explored the former, this part turns to the latter. Among reselected incumbents those who were more actively involved in the EP's work, are expected to be more likely placed on a ballot position with high electoral value (rank). The idea is that parties boost the electoral prospects of those MEPs it prefers to see return, and that they prefer – all else equal – active legislators. Selectoral reward as *access* was tested in the reselection model (see Table 9 above). The analyses taught us that group coordinators and MEPs with more COD or INI reports were more likely reselected, but underscored that what is rewarded differs from one election to the next. The odds of an incumbent's reappearance on the ballot list does not depend on party choices alone, but also of course on his/her own ambition. The reselection models therefore capture a duality at best. Either the selectorates' performance evaluation causes the effects found, or the parliamentarian's intrinsic interest and ambition serve as the latent link between legislative behaviour and renewed candidacy. Likely, the reselection models capture a combination of both but do not allow us to differentiate these dynamics.

In the second section of this chapter I presented re-election models that tested whether – among those reselected – more active MEPs were more likely to be successful in their bid for a renewed mandate. These models revealed more active MEPs only to have had an advantage in the 2014 election, and not so in 2019. Writing co-decision reports procured MEPs the most outspoken reward in terms of re-election probability. Moreover, performance reward in re-election was only found in party-centred systems, a finding that indulges the idea that reward for parliamentary performance is driven by selectorates, not electorates. Who wins the parties' mandates in party-centred systems is largely decided prior to the race. The common interpretation of (re-)election odds in party-centred systems is that they are an expression of the selectorates' preferences and candidate ranking decisions, rather than a reflection of voter choices at the ballot. In discussing the effect of performance on re-election among outgoing MEPs of the 7th legislature Van Geffen's (2018) puts it as follows:

> "When standing for re-election, MEPs who have participated more by obtaining rapporteurships are more likely to be re-elected than colleagues who participated less. This could be because of the fact that the national party rewards MEPs who have proven their ability to obtain policy influence, by placing them higher on the electoral list. It could also be that the electorate rewards more active MEPs, although this is probably less likely, given the second-order nature of EP elections" (p.133).

Still, the re-election models cannot isolate the dynamic of selectoral reward in the form of rank from other influences on the electoral success of the listed incumbents. What we can see in these models is the combined outcome of selectoral decisions and voter volatility and preference. To make sure to isolate selectoral from voter effects I change the dependent variable of the model once more. This way I can empirically test in how far parties' selectoral choices reward parliamentary performance. Are parties deliberately tallying their active legislators at the top of their lists, rewarding MEPs that are more active and casting less active MEPs down to hopeless ballot positions? Are parties differentiating ballot position values (BPV) and using past parliamentary performance of incumbents to decide whom to boost and whom to boot? This is the commonplace assumption made in the interpretation of re-election models, and the premise of the scant empirical tests on performance and list safety (cfr. Hermansen, 2018; Frech, 2016). Figure 12 situates the current section relative to the reselection and re-election models that were discussed in the first two parts of this chapter.

Figure 12: Recap figure. Situating the reward models
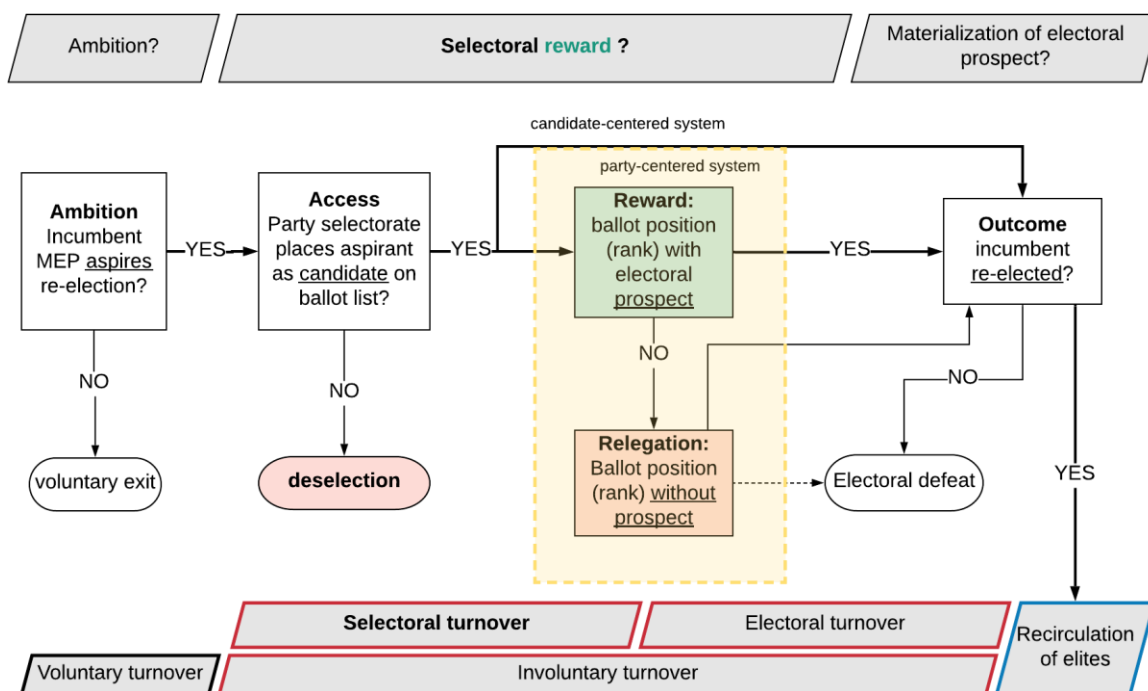
The current section first reports on the ballot positions obtained by outgoing MEPs. Next, a third series of performance-reward models is presented and discussed. These analyses test whether the attainment of a valuable ballot position can be meaningfully linked to the active involvement the MEP had shown during the legislature. The empirical analysis presented in this section therefore tests the following hypotheses:

H6: Among reselected MEPs in party-centred systems, those who were more actively involved in the EP's work are more likely to be selectorally rewarded by their party selectorate through rank.

This hypothesis rests on the key premise that parties are policy seeking and consequently performance rewarding. Additionally, or perhaps alternatively, the vote-seeking goal of parties may drive party selectorates to reward voter attractiveness. Well-known candidates who are likely to attract many (list) votes would then be placed on the ballot's most visible and valuable tickets. Among EP incumbents, prior political experience on the national level could generate the name recognition they need to distinguish themselves from other re-election seeking MEPs on the list.

H7: Among reselected MEPs in party-centred systems, those who are more recognisable to voters (i.e. former national politicians) are more likely to be selectorally rewarded by their party selectorate through rank.

To test these hypotheses I rely on the concepts of realistic, marginal, and hopeless ballot positions as expressions of the (selectorate's) anticipation of the party's electoral prospect. Central to the argument that parties boost the electoral chances of their preferred candidates is that parties anticipate their electoral fortune and understand the differentiated value of the positions on their ballot list. There are two types of ballot positions that hold electoral prospect and thus qualify for constituting selectoral reward: realistic and marginal positions. The former grant their holders near guarantee of securing a mandate, the latter provide reasonable hope for (re-)election. The remainder of ballot positions fill out the list but do not truly hold electoral prospect. Candidates on such hopeless positions are not expected to win a seat in the assembly.

Realistic and marginal positions hold promising prospects and therefore constitute selectoral rewards. MEPs relegated to hopeless positions void of electoral prospect are considered selectorally punished. Recall the theoretical distinction made earlier between selectoral and electoral turnover, and the role ballot position value plays herein (see Figure 12). An exception to hopeless positions constituting punishment is that of list leadership on a ballot list that holds no electoral prospect for the upcoming election. It follows that the binomial regressions below consider selectoral reward to be the allocation of a realistic, marginal or list leadership position on the ballot list of the party that reselected the incumbent (promising positions). An alternative, more stringent operationalisation of selectoral reward is also tested (top positions). In this version, only the highest forms of selectoral reward are withheld: realistic positions and list leadership.

In what follows I present the application of the novel operationalisation of ballot position value (BPV) as proposed in the methodology chapter of this thesis. To get a feel for the (s)electoral fate

of re-election seeking MEPs in party-centred systems I map out the BPV obtained by outgoing members of the 7th and 8th EP in the 2014 and 2019 elections respectively. Subsequently I test in how far the attainment of promising and top positions can be understood as selectoral reward for past parliamentary performance. In other words, do parties indeed promote high achievers to the most secure positions? After a brief reflection on the results reported in this section, I conclude the chapter by tying the findings back to the hypotheses guiding the analyses.

5.4.2   *Reselection to realistic, marginal and hopeless positions in the 2014 and 2019 EP elections*

The current section identifies the BPV of reselected MEPs in the two most recent EP elections (2014, 2019).[36] This mapping gives an idea in how far parties selectorally reward or punish incumbents beyond ballot access through *rank*, regardless of the criteria they use to make this decision. There are safe seats in every election and, in party-centred systems, "*by the time voters are called to make a choice at the ballot, [candidate turnover] has already been delimited by party selectorate choices*" (Gouglas & Maddens, 2017, p. 3)*,* eloquently coined the *'choice before the choice'* by Rahat and Hazan (2010). In closed and flexible list systems, the ballot position a candidate occupies largely decides his/her fate. The value of a ballot position ultimately depends on the certainty of electoral success the ballot position confers onto its holder.

The crux in determining which positions are realistic, marginal or hopeless is their electoral prospect, or more precisely, an accurate anticipation of it. I make use of electoral forecast data collected and published during the period in which parties make their selectoral decisions and compose their ballot lists to grasp the anticipated electoral result for each list. To capture the near certainty of realistic positions and the electoral hope of marginal positions I differentiate seats that are consistently polled in favor of a party's list and those that are not. The seats that are coherently polled for a list over the entire period (i.e. the lowest electoral prospect for a party across the included forecasts) are seen as certain: realistic. Marginal positions are those that are inconsistently polled throughout the forecast moments, i.e. polled prospects that do not meet the criterion for being considered realistic. The seats that are anticipated at least once but not throughout all three poll moments meet the criteria: there is reasonable hope yet the position is uncertain. The number of realistic positions on a list therefore equals the party's best poll result, and the number of marginal positions equals the difference between the best and the weakest forecast result for a party.

---

[36] Note that Croatian MEPs are excluded from the 2014 mapping because their constituent term in the EP only started in July 2013. Further, the UK is excluded from the 2019 mapping of BPV. This is a consequence of Brexit and the seat uncertainty (and lacking poll data) it caused. For the other member states the third PollWatch forecast is adapted to the UK staying in the EU beyond the elections and its consequences on parties' electoral prospects.

The most valuable positions are situated on top of the list. List leaders are always considered a reward as it is the best spot the party has to offer regardless of its actual electoral value. List pushers are counted as an additional marginal position on the list. For each ballot list presented in the 2014 and/or 2019 EP elections I gathered the full candidate list and ran it against the names of the incumbent MEPs. Using EP forecast data I then calculated the number of realistic and marginal positions for each registered ballot and identified the BPV of relisted incumbents accordingly. The operationalization of BPV and the sources used to calculate it have been described in more detail in the methodology chapter. As party leaderships and selectorates are well aware of their electoral prospects and the differential value of the positions on the list, the type of ballot position an incumbent receives is an expression of selectoral reward (or punishment). Reselected incumbents can either be rewarded with a valuable position from which they can get expect or at least hope to be re-elected, or they can be relegated down the list.

This section applies the conceptualization of realistic, marginal and hopeless positions to the reselected incumbents in 2014 and 2019. In doing so it explores two fundamental assumptions of the selectoral reward rationale. Fist, are incumbents frequently relegated to hopeless ballot positions, and second, are an incumbent's BPV and his/her electoral fortune visibly connected? The objective of this section is to map out the BPV of renominated (outgoing) MEPs and to assess the variation present in the data.

Figure 13: Recirculation of elites in party-centred systems: reselection and re-election of MEPs
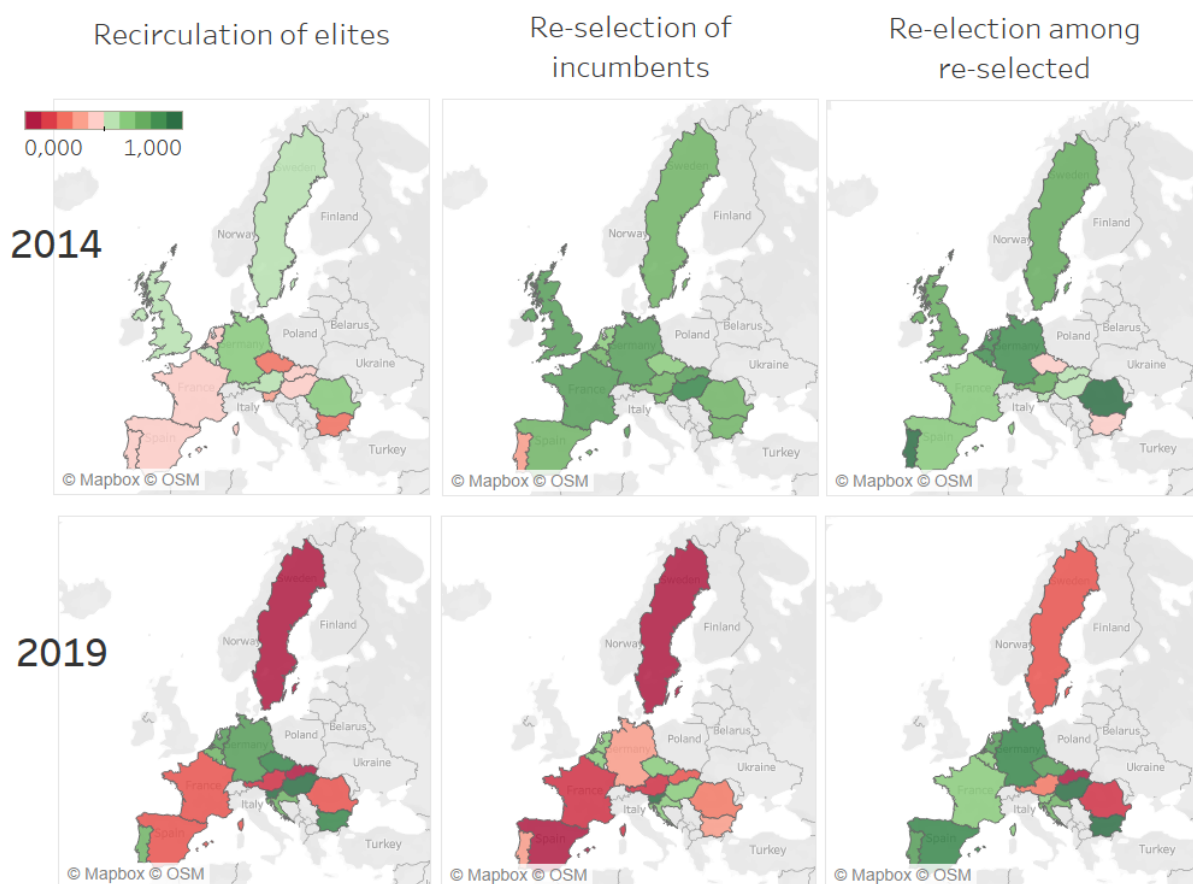
The BPV obtained by reselected MEPs in party-centred systems builds the bridge between the reselection and re-election models. Ballot position allocation is a powerful potential explanation for the extent to which re-election seeking incumbents find their way back to Strasbourg. Figure 13 above maps the legislative turnover in the European Parliament per member state. The left hand panes show the overall recirculation of incumbents, i.e. the percentage of outgoing MEPs in that returns after the 2014 and 2019 elections respectively. Higher percentages denote more incumbent recirculation and therefore lower turnover. The middle and right hand panes zoom in on the nature of this turnover by showing the percentage of outgoing MEPs that is renominated (middle) and the share of reselected incumbents that effectively got re-elected (right hand panes).

If reselection were to guarantee re-election, the maps on the right hand side would be (dark) green, reflecting high re-election rates among incumbent candidates. Yet this is not the case. At least not in all member states. Within party-centred systems there is still considerable variation – between member states and legislatures – as to the shares of incumbents that are reselected and the success rate amongst them. Where the re-election rate among relisted incumbents is low this indicates they either competed from hopeless positions or positions with limited prospect at best, or that the parties' anticipations were a mismatch with election-day reality. In the first case the

failure for the MEP to get re-elected is a matter of selectoral defeat, victim to the party's conscious and strategic list composition; in the latter s/he succumbs to electoral defeat, generated by voters' choices. If the party's electoral anticipations, regardless of its accuracy, informs the composition of the list; then the BPV that candidates – incumbent or other – receive reveals a lot about the party's selectoral focus.

Figure 14 confirms that reselected incumbents are most often rewarded. The majority of relisted MEPs received a realistic position (71% in 2014; 64% in 2019). Another 14% attained a marginal one (15% in 2014, 13% in 2019), while overall a quarter (2019) to a third (2014) of reselected MEPs occupied the list leader position for his/her party. Still, this leaves almost a quarter of reselected incumbents relegated to a hopeless position.

Furthermore, the outer left and right hand panes of Figure 14 demonstrate that indeed, ballot position value is instructive of the electoral fortunes of the candidates. Among re-elected MEPs four in five had competed on a realistic position (85% in 2014; 82% in 2019). Another 9% re-entered the EP from a marginal position. Inversely, more than three quarters of electoral defeats were to the address of those on hopeless (40% in 2014, 57% in 2019) or marginal (34% in 2014; 25% in 2019) positions. This goes to show that the electoral prospect of incumbents on marginal positions truly is hopeful but uncertain. Their electoral fate is neatly split down the middle: while 36 make it into parliament, 38 others are defeated. Note also, that incumbent list pushers are rare and do not seem to have an outspoken electoral advantage. Neither of two list pushers present in the 2014 elections were successful, and the 2019 elections left three out of four defeated.

Figure 14: Ballot position value of reselected outgoing MEPs in 2014 and 2019
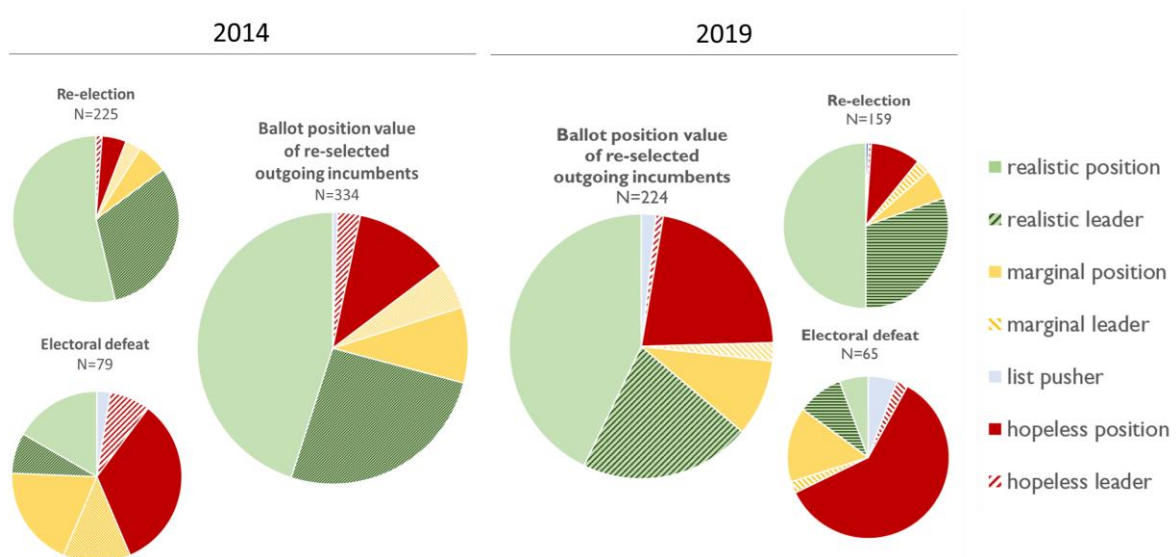
Differences in BPV of renominated incumbents per country are illustrated on the next page. Figure 15 presents the *relative shares* of relisted MEPs that occupy realistic, marginal or hopeless positions – as list leader, 'rank and file' candidates or list pushers – per member state. On the right hand side the percentage of reselected incumbents that effectively got re-elected is also given. Percentages are calculated on the total number of *reselected* MEPs in the member state. To illustrate with an example this means that for the 2019 elections in Germany the BPV is presented for the 70 MEPs that were reselected among the 96 outgoing German MEPs. For France it concerns the BPV of the 28 reselected incumbents, on the total of 74 French outgoing MEPs. Beyond variation in the share of MEPs that are renominated (see also Figure 13), propensities to reward and relegate among reselected MEPs also differ per member state (and election year). As the concept of ballot position value rests on electoral forecasts, relegation proclivity in part relates to anticipation of electoral losses and electoral volatility. Evidently the electoral prospects impact parties' options. The question at hand in this thesis is whether active and influential incumbents are more likely to be among the lucky ones. In other words, is parliamentary performance rewarded with a valuable ballot position?

Incumbents from different member states face different climates for selectoral reward. In Hungary, for example, 67% of outgoing MEPs was reselected in 2019 yet no incumbent got to lead their party's list. Meanwhile in Slovakia 46% enlisted again on their party's ballot and all those who did were first-ranked on the ballot. The differences between the member states are apparent. So is the potential clash between anticipations of electoral prospects and the actual outcome of the elections. This is perhaps most beautifully illustrated by the 2019 elections in Slovakia where all relisted incumbents headed the list on a realistic positon but only one in three got to return to Brussels and Strasbourg. Clearly, the elections did not pan out as forecasted. It falls beyond the scope of this thesis to explore and specify country patterns on reward/relegation proneness or electoral volatility. To be sure, further examination of incumbent relegation and the explanation of variance in the occurrence of this phenomenon along country, electoral landscape or even party family lines is a thought provoking avenue. The question at hand here however remains whether selectoral reward and relegation are motivated by incumbents' parliamentary performance. Most important for the current work is that the data confirms that reselected incumbents are not receiving similar selectoral endorsements. While the majority of reselected MEPs run the race from a comfortable position, relegation is not an incidental phenomenon. The measure for ballot position value proposed in this thesis overall seems to capture the (un)certainty of one's electoral prospect quite well. At the same time, the data highlights the potential mismatch between the anticipation of electoral fortune during the process of candidate selection and ballot composition, and the actual election outcomes.

Figure 15: Ballot position value of reselected outgoing MEPs in 2014 and 2019, per member state
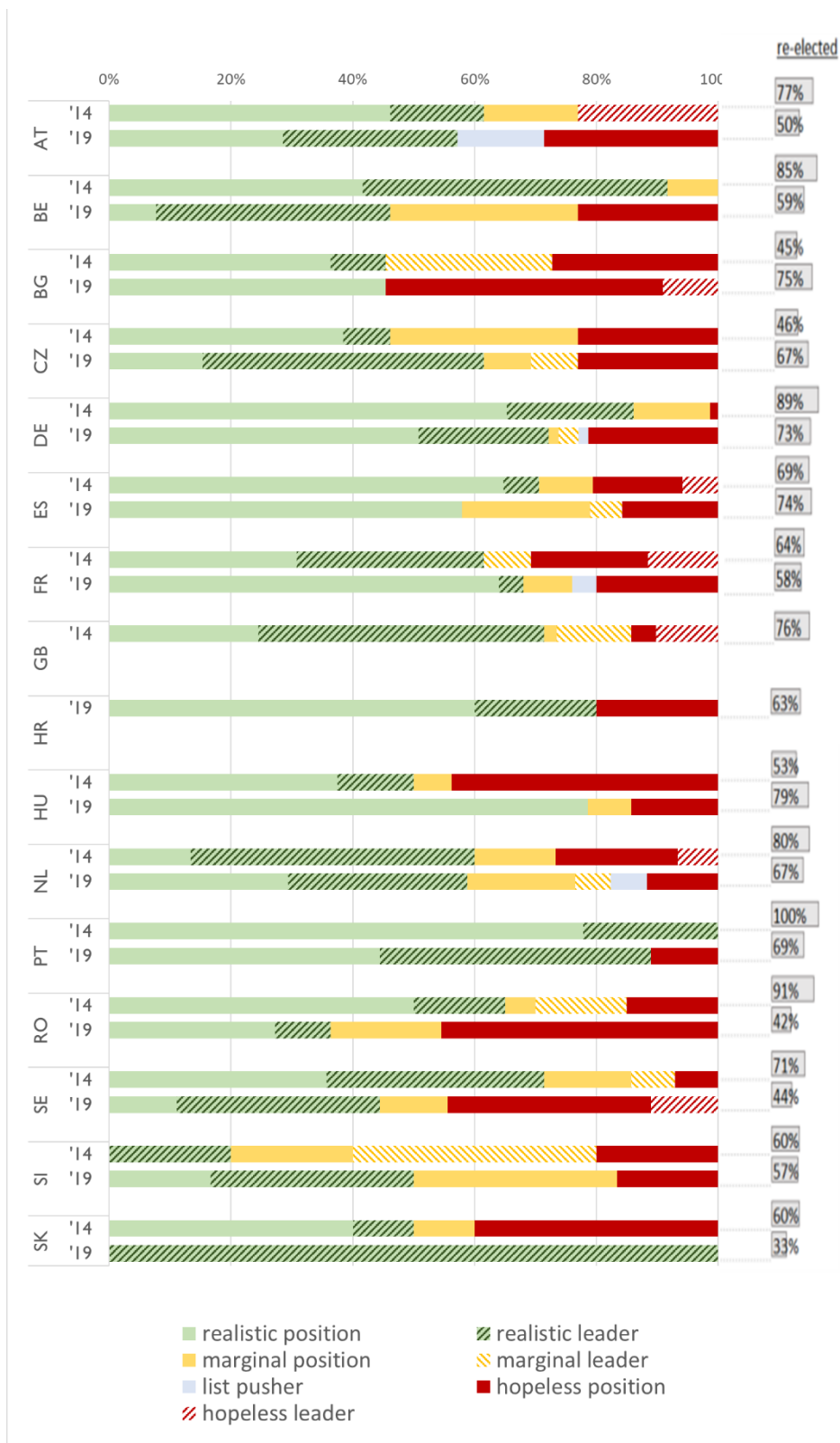
5.4.3 *Rank as performance reward?*

Reselected incumbents predominantly obtain ballot positions which confer actual re-election prospects. Still, not all positions are equally valuable and about a quarter of relisted incumbents is relegated to a hopeless position. Are the more active incumbents more likely to end up on top? The party-centred re-election models already taught us that overall writing co-decision reports and obtaining speaking time increased a re-election seeking MEP's chances of being successful in his/her bid. An explanation for the re-election advantage of more active MEPs can be sought in the evaluation and reward of parliamentary performance by party selectorates seeking to maximize the retention of active representatives in their EP delegation. The question remains in how far parliamentary performance truly aids an incumbent in obtaining an electorally valuable position on the list. In systems where parties can virtually deselect incumbents while keeping them on the ballot, do they differentiate between incumbents (and their position on the list) based on their past parliamentary performance? And is this truly a habitual mechanism where (certain aspects of) performance is (are) consistently rewarded? As far as re-election odds were concerned, the models above did not find such consistency across elections.

This section presents the results of binomial regressions testing the effect of parliamentary performance on an incumbents' likelihood to be selectorally rewarded through rank. Included in the models here are the reselected MEPs within party-centred systems. An aggregate model covers both terms, followed by subset models for the 2014 and 2019 elections (see Table 11). Stepwise and multilevel versions of the models are given in annex, with discrepancies between corresponding models flagged in the table and discussion. Two variations of selectoral reward through rank are tested. The models in the left hand pane of the table test the effect of performance on a relisted MEP's odds to obtain a *promising position* versus being relegated to a hopeless spot. In the models presented in the right hand pane, the change in odds of obtaining *top positions* is tested. Here a more stringent operationalisation of selectoral reward is applied, recognizing only realistic positions and list leaderships as reward through rank.

The selectoral reward models presented in this section give us an insight into the assumption that beneficial re-election odds for active MEPs in party-centred systems are due to deliberate selectoral reward for performance by party selectorates. Re-election and reward models need not necessarily align. Remember the importance of electoral volatility, anticipated prospects, and uncertainty as highlighted in the discussion on how to measure the (s)electoral value of a ballot position. These models, differentiating promising positions and top positions from relegation help us understand in how far performance plays a role in ranking and rewarding incumbents. The re-election models capture who was successful in the end by the grace of both selectorates and electorates. The reward

models at hand zoom in on the selectoral aspect of the relationship between an MEP's performance and his/her electoral prospect. We know that not all ballot positions have the same value.

Parties compose their ballot lists with their anticipated electoral results in mind. Nevertheless, in anticipating one's prospects inevitably uncertainty remains. If parties are deliberately and vigorously pushing active incumbents to the top of their lists, aiming to maximise the odds of their experienced and active players to renew their mandates in Strasbourg, then we should be able to pick up this trace empirically. If so we should find more active MEPs advantaged as to obtaining a realistic position on the list, the most desirable positions that all but guarantee re-election. For parties without realistic positions, their best shot at maximizing their weight in the EP should their electoral fortune turn out favourable, is to reselect the most apt incumbent as list leader. It follows that more active MEPs are expected to enjoy better odds of obtaining a *top* position.

Testing the effect of performance on the odds to obtain a *promising* position follows the same logic, yet extends the idea of selectoral reward through rank to positions that boost a candidate's electoral prospects without the near guarantee of realistic positions. If performance truly matters, then realistic and list leadership positions should be disproportionally occupied by active incumbents. At least, more active MEPs should be more likely to obtain promising positions compared to others who were reselected but who had been less actively involved in the EP's work during the past legislature.

Moreover, if parties take into account their electoral prospects and the degree of uncertainty around it, I should find a difference between realistic and marginal positions, and thus between obtaining *top* or *promising* positions. Consequently, I expect the following: among reselected MEPs, performance records distinguish the relegated (hopeless position) from the selectorally rewarded (promising position), in a way that lesser active MEPs are more likely relegated to fill positions that are (very) unlikely to lead to a renewed mandate. Parties can go beyond the dichotomy of granting a candidate a chance at (re-)election or not. A more extensive selectoral reward (*access + rank*) for parliamentary performance would go beyond ensuring active and leading incumbents stand a chance (promising position); it would ensure they take part in the race with the best chances the party has to offer (top position). The models with a more stringent operationalisation of selectoral reward test whether performance boosts the odds of competing from a realistic position compared to obtaining *any other* position on the list, whether marginal or hopeless. Conversely, if parties are rewarding name recognition in the pursuit of their vote-seeking goals, former national politicians should be found advantaged in gaining promising and/or top positions over incumbent MEPs without public visibility from prior national office.

Table 11: Selectoral reward (rank) for parliamentary performance in party-centred systems (2014, 2019)

Reward model	**Promising position** (realistic | marginal | leader) Both terms (1)	Both terms (2)	2014 (1)	2014 (2)	2019 (1)	2019 (2)	**Top position** (realistic | leader) Both terms (1)	Both terms (2)	2014 (1)	2014 (2)	2019 (1)	2019 (2)
Codecision reports	0,187 (0,174)	0,153 (0,176)	1,313* (0,535) 271,83%	1,508* (0,689) 351,60%	-0,110 (0,218)	-0,198 (0,263)	0,038 (0,110)	-0,005 (0,116)	0,252 (0,193)	0,159 (0,207) ≞ (+)	-0,123 (0,188)	-0,112 (0,211)
Own initiative reports	-0,047 (0,177)	-0,117 (0,188)	0,034 (0,254)	-0,035 (0,378)	-0,139 (0,312)	-0,244 (0,352)	-0,044 (0,134)	-0,098 (0,141)	0,0200 (0,178)	-0,075 (0,205)	-0,082 (0,263)	-0,221 (0,296)
Other reports	-0,069° (0,039) -6,66%	-0,066° (0,039) -6,37%	-0,079 (0,053)	-0,081 (0,080)	-0,226 (0,159)	-0,330° (0,185) -28,09% ≞	-0,013 (0,033)	-0,011 (0,032)	-0,032 (0,039)	-0,027 (0,041)	-0,077 (0,128)	-0,147 (0,145)
Non lead reports	0,0356 (0,030) ‾‾ (+)	0,028 (0,029)	0,033 (0,029)	0,061 (0,042)	0,106 (0,144)	0,171 (0,171)	0,005 (0,013)	0,005 (0,012)	0,015 (0,016)	0,024 (0,021)	0,045 (0,110)	0,093 (0,127)
Speeches	0,000 (0,001)	0,001 (0,001)	-0,002 (0,001) ‾‾ (-)	0,000 (0,002)	0,001 (0,001)	0,000 (0,001)	0,000 (0,001)	0,001 (0,001)	-0,000 (0,001)	0,000 (0,001)	0,001 (0,001)	0,000 (0,001)
Parliamentary Questions	0,001 (0,002)	0,000 (0,003)	0,005 (0,004)	0,002 (0,003)	-0,002 (0,003)	0,000 (0,004)	0,001 (0,002)	-0,000 (0,002)	0,005 (0,003)	0,001 (0,003)	-0,003 (0,003)	-0,001 (0,003)
Attendance	0,014 (0,017)	0,012 (0,020)	-0,018 (0,026)	-0,068° (0,041) -6,50% ≞	0,050 (0,031)	0,060 (0,043)	0,009 (0,014)	0,008 (0,016)	-0,011 (0,019)	-0,019 (0,025)	0,041 (0,027)	0,046 (0,034)
Leader	0,289 (0,370)	0,445 (0,396)	-0,273 (0,551)	-0,516 (0,796)	0,878 (0,585)	1,520* (0,704) 357,07% ≞	0,176 (0,283)	0,356 (0,303)	-0,177 (0,392)	0,054 (0,466)	0,498 (0,446)	0,793 (0,527)
Coordinator	0,341 (0,382)	0,283 (0,403)	-0,325 (0,579)	-1,002 (0,886)	0,859 (0,563) ‾‾ (+)	1,212° (0,675) 236,08% ≞	0,153 (0,288)	0,0464 (0,299)	-0,285 (0,399)	-0,603 (0,455)	0,440 (0,445)	0,525 (0,488)
Seniority	0,304° (0,182) 35,53% ≞	0,213 (0,195)	0,408 (0,280)	0,026 (0,366)	0,333 (0,297)	0,337 (0,349)	0,144 (0,137)	0,070 (0,147)	0,162 (0,184)	-0,025 (0,215)	0,204 (0,236)	0,156 (0,278)
National experience	-0,091 (0,327)	-0,070 (0,353)	0,486 (0,546)	1,025 (0,792)	-0,455 (0,464)	-0,466 (0,529)	-0,158 (0,258)	-0,007 (0,278)	0,397 (0,393)	0,811° (0,489) 124,91% ≞	-0,515 (0,387) ‾‾ (-)	-0,560 (0,438) ‾‾ (-)
Age	-0,041* (0,018) -4,04%	-0,052** (0,020) -5,02% ≞	-0,044 (0,028)	-0,042 (0,033)	-0,032 (0,028)	-0,073° (0,036) -7,08% ≞	-0,018 (0,014)	-0,024 (0,015)	-0,007 (0,019)	-0,010 (0,021)	-0,029 (0,023)	-0,057* (0,029) -5,53% ≞
Gender (male = 1)	0,239 (0,333)	0,347 (0,355)	0,058 (0,508)	0,305 (0,649)	0,373 (0,474)	0,391 (0,546)	0,334 (0,256)	0,457* (0,271) 57,90% ≞	0,190 (0,355)	0,421 (0,399)	0,480 (0,398)	0,596 (0,453)
EPG size	-0,001 (0,002)	0,002 (0,003)	-0,003 (0,003)	0,009 (0,006)	-0,002 (0,004)	-0,001 (0,006)	-0,001 (0,002)	0,003 (0,003)	-0,000 (0,002)	0,007° (0,004) 0,66% ≞	-0,004 (0,003)	-0,004 (0,004)
Party Size	-0,001 (0,017)	-0,062° (0,034) -6,03% ≞	0,027 (0,029)	-0,086 (0,071)	-0,016 (0,025)	-0,094 (0,058)	0,010 (0,014)	-0,039 (0,025)	0,034° (0,021) 3,47% ≞	-0,022 (0,041)	-0,010 (0,021)	-0,089° (0,050) -8,51% ≞
Term (7th = 1)	0,934* (0,368) 154,47% ≞	1,180** (0,418) 225,36% ≞					0,721* (0,282) 105,56% ≞	0,666° (0,305) 94,62% ≞				
Constant	1,992 (1,750)	4,127° (2,16649)	5,434* (2,658)	29,166 (4261,606)	-1,360 (3,013)	1,935 (4,330)	0,714 (1,424)	1,797 (1,658)	1,632 (1,832)	3,022 (2,414)	-0,706 (2,677)	2,736 (3,612)
Member state controls	no	yes	no	yes	no	yes	no	yes	no	yes	no	yes
Observations	424		264		160		424		264		160	
Missing cases	12		2		10		12		2		10	
Nagelkerke pseudo R²	.119	.217†	.212	.538†	.173	.349†	.056	.156†	.081	.196†	.134	.312†

Notes: Coefficients of binomial regression models, with standard errors in parentheses and change in likelihood expressed as percentage. † Final solution for the model's -2log likelihood could not be reached. The robustness checks are presented in the annex. Where statistically significant coefficients are not significant in the stepwise model (or vice versa) the change in likelihood is underlined. Likewise, the symbol ≞ is used to flag those instances where the multilevel binomial regression deviates from the results of the main analyses presented in the table. Where statistical significance is only reached in (one or both) robustness checks but not in the main model, the direction of the significant effect is given in parentheses. For the full result tables displaying coefficients, standard errors and odds-ratio percentages for the stepwise and multilevel logistic regression models, please refer to the annex. Germany serves as reference in the member state controls.

° significant at p < .10; * at p < .05; ** at p < .01; *** at p < .001.

Table 11 presents the reward models, testing the effect of parliamentary performance on the odds of obtaining a promising position among reselected MEPs in party-centred systems across both studied legislatures and for each legislature separately (left hand pane). The right hand pane of the table presents the reward models using an alternative operationalization of selectoral reward through rank, namely top positions only. It is established that parties' selectoral decisions largely control who gets allotted the party's mandate in electoral systems using closed and flexible lists. If the connection between performance and re-election is to be interpreted as an expression of selectoral reward for MEPs' past performance – as is implied in the literature -, then the reward models in Table 11 below should closely match the re-election models presented above (see left hand pane Table 10 on re-election odds in party-centred systems). Recall that, in 2014, writing COD reports and obtaining more floor time to speak increased MEPs' re-election odds, while higher plenary attendance records negatively impacted an incumbent's chances of being re-elected. In 2019, no statistically significant connection was found between active involvement in the EP's work and re-election odds among relisted incumbents.

The reward models in the left hand pane illustrate that selectoral reward clearly links to – but need not coincide perfectly with – re-election. Nearly all indicators of parliamentary performance (and included controls for that matter) are found to have some impact an MEP's odds to selectorally rewarded through rank. Yet again, there is no consistency across legislatures. In both election years the models find statistically significant connections between the parliamentary performance of reselected incumbents and the odds of them occupying a promising position (as opposed to being relegated to a hopeless position). *What* pays off however, varies from one election to the next. As for the 2014 elections, the re-election (cfr. Table 10) and reward models closely mirror each other: the selectoral reward for (certain types of) parliamentary performance translated into an electoral reward (higher re-election odds). This idea is quite intuitive and straightforward. Yet, the empirical evidence for it only stands in the context of the 2014 elections.

In contrast, the aggregate and the 2019 reward models uncover selectoral rewards that had not resulted into higher re-election odds for the MEPs' performing the rewarded activities and roles. In other words, despite being linked to higher odds of obtaining promising positions, parliamentary performance can fall short of actually improving incumbents' re-election odds. Additionally, *which* performance indicators produce statistically significant effects on the odds of selectoral reward differs from one election to the next. This implies that parties do not consistently reward the same set of parliamentary activities and roles across time.

Finally, the right hand pane of the table sets out the results of the alternative, more stringent version of the reward model. None of the performance-reward effects truly persist in the models

that offset top positions against any position falling short of conferring its holder near guarantee of re-election or list leadership.

Once more, the indicators of parliamentary performance do not generate consistent effects across legislatures (nor do the controls included in the model). Overall, the schism between terms is evident: MEPs who were relisted on a 2014 ballot were more than three times as likely to be selectorally rewarded with a promising ballot position (225.36%, $p < .01$) and twice as likely of obtaining a top position (94.62%, $p < .05$) compared to their relisted colleagues in 2019. Concerning both elections a handful of significant results were found, but not one indicator of performance was found to consistently affect the odds of being selectorally rewarded. More often than not, even the direction of the predictors' effects was inconsistent across legislative terms.

5.4.3.1 Promising positions

The patterns of performance reward in 2014 largely correspond to the previously discussed effects of performance on re-election odds. Among reselected incumbents in 2014, those who had written fewer COD reports were more likely relegated compared to those MEPs who had managed to obtain lead rapporteurships on dossiers decided under the ordinary legislative procedure. The odds of obtaining a promising position rose by about 350% for each additional COD report MEPs' authored during the legislature (351.60 %, $p < .05$). Furthermore, MEPs who attended plenary sessions *less* frequently were more likely to be selectorally rewarded through rank (-6.50%, $p < .10$). Compared to someone who had attended all plenary sessions, the incumbent who had skipped 10% would stand a 60% better chance of obtaining a promising position. Surprisingly, making speeches in plenary did not significantly affect incumbents' likelihood to get a valuable position, despite having been found to increase MEPs' re-election odds in the same election year (cfr. Table 9). Instead, omitting member state controls, the stepwise regression even found a small negative yet statistically significant effect (-0.21%, $p < .05$).

The results of the 2019 reward model paint a very different picture. None of the effects discussed above reached statistical significance. Three entirely different expressions of performance come to the fore: writing 'other' rather than COD reports, exercising leadership functions and acting as a group coordinator. In 2019 the effect of COD rapporteurships no longer reached statistical significance ($p = .453$), and even changed direction. In fact, the effects of all (lead) rapporteurships (COD, INI, and other) took on a negative direction in 2019. Authoring 'other' reports (i.e. reports under any but the COD nor INI procedures) consistently generated a negative effect on the odds to obtain a valuable ballot position. Spending time writing such reports comes at a selectoral price. The effect reached statistical significance in the 2019 main model, where acting as rapporteur for

an additional report of this type dropped an MEP's odds of obtaining a promising position by almost 30% (-28.09%, $p < .10$). MEPs' suffering from this negative effect of report-writing are for example those who are actively involved in producing budgetary discharge reports or non-legislative acts. The effect should be read with caution as its' statistical significance is not confirmed in the multilevel and stepwise variants of the logistic regression. Nevertheless, the negative effect of writing this kind of reports – unlike any of the effects of parliamentary performance on selectoral reward so far – carries through in the aggregate reward model covering both election years (-6.37%, $p < .10$).

Taking up leadership roles in the EP, through (vice-) chairing functions or being group coordinator, seems to pay off for re-election seeking MEPs in 2019. Among relisted incumbents, the odds of obtaining a promising position were more than three times better for group coordinators compared to their colleagues who had not occupied such function (236.08%, $p < .10$). Occupying a leadership function in the EP decreased the odds a reselected MEP would be relegated to a hopeless position by 357% (357.07%, $p < .05$). Again, implications of these effects should not be overstated, as they only reach a low level of significance and have difficulties reaching statistical significance in the robustness checks. Both leadership roles had caused insignificant but negative effects on MEPs' ballot position value in the 2014 elections.

5.4.3.2   Top positions

Regarding MEPs' odds of obtaining a top position, only a hint of the positive effect of COD reports remains in 2014. Here the multilevel robustness check finds a statistically significant effect of COD reports on the odds of being reselected on a top position, whereby an additional report almost triples an MEP's odds for selectoral reward (multilevel: 288.32%, $p < .05$). The empirical evidence that parties in party-centred systems nominate their most active reselected incumbents to the *most* coveted top positions on the list to ensure their return in the EP is unconvincing.

Former national politicians, in contrast, stood markedly different chances of obtaining a top position compared to their colleague MEPs without prior experience in national politics. While the effect of national experience is statistically significant in both elections, its' direction shifts from one election year to the next. It should be noted however, that the effects are only significant at the 10% level and that neither effect could be corroborated throughout the main, stepwise and multilevel model variations alike. Former national politicians were advantaged in the 2014 elections; they were more than twice as likely to be reselected to a realistic or list leading position compared to incumbent MEPs without national experience (124.91%, $p < .10$). In 2019, they were less likely to obtain a top position than their colleagues without prior national office (stepwise: -51.41%, $p < .10$)

5.4.4 *Discussion*

The emerging literature on the connection between performance and list safety has so far suggested a (s)electoral advantage for 'leading and influential' MEPs (Frech, 2016; Hermansen, 2018). The advantage of report writing and leadership roles is only partly confirmed. While additional COD reports increase an MEP's odds of obtaining a promising position in 2014, the evidence that such rapporteurships are rewarded with higher odds for obtaining the true top positions is much less convincing. Moreover, the same behaviour is not rewarded in the 2019 elections. Instead, leadership roles are now rewarded (only) with higher odds of a promising position. Authoring additional reports even negatively affects the likelihood of being selectorally rewarded if the report does not fall under the COD or INI procedure.

It should be noted though that the 2019 model may run into statistical power issues as the sample size shrinks. Remember that the reward models only contain the MEPs from our sample that are reselected in party-centred systems, and that a significantly smaller share of incumbents fell into that category in 2019 compared to 2014. While 2019 results should be interpreted with due caution, the analyses of selectoral reward through rank overall suggest parties advantage MEPs who were more actively involved in particular forms of parliamentary performance. What exactly is rewarded appears to differ from one election to the next, which casts doubt on the idea that parties purposefully and systematically evaluate and reward MEP performance in the EP in their composition of the ballot lists.

Moreover, performance effects on reward odds are nearly exclusively limited to the models using a broad definition of selectoral reward through rank. These models capture any position that has been polled to be successful in the election at least once, as well as all list leadership positions as selectoral reward. When the definition of selectoral reward is made more exclusive, capturing only list leaderships and positions that offered the holder near guarantee of re-election (realistic positions), the effects of performance disappear.

Interestingly, the analysis then reveals an effect of incumbents' prior national political experience. In 2014 the analysis showed that parties placed incumbent MEPs who had previously been in national politics on higher value positions compared to those who did not have national experience. An intuitive explanation is that these incumbents are more visible and enjoy more name recognition among the electorate. The idea is that placing them on higher positions makes the list more attractive to voters. Earlier, Frech (2016) had not found an effect of national experience on list safety (re-election probabilities) among German MEPs. In 2019 the dynamic reverses. It no longer pays off to be a former national politician. To the contrary, they are now disadvantaged as to their odds of obtaining a realistic position on their party's list.

Cautious interpretation is advised, but it is worth considering the meaning of this effect and the change of its direction. In 2019 the electoral market was more volatile. Europe braced itself for green waves, populist surges and a continued decline of traditional parties. Uncertainty over the UK's participation in the elections and consequently the EP's seat distribution further complicated the prediction of electoral prospects. In this context, there were less realistic positions (consistently polled to win) to start with, and less of them would go to traditional parties. Former national politicians tend to belong to traditional parties, who have done well in their country of origin in the past. This in itself decreases the odds of former national politicians to be among the incumbents reselected to a top position. Additionally, in 2019's electoral climate, parties may have deliberately stressed renewal – at the very least regarding the top and most visible positions on their ballot list.

Overall, the reward model showed that certain aspects of parliamentary performance can boost an MEP's chances of obtaining a promising position for the next elections. Yet, the inconsistency of the effects across legislatures suggests there is no systematic performance-reward mechanism at play. Moreover, the disappearance of reliable effects of performance under the more stringent interpretation of what constitutes selectoral reward illustrates that parties do not focus their performance reward on realistic positions and list leaderships specifically. This means that party selectorates do not use performance to differentiate between who gets the best, compared to hopeful and uncertain ballot positions. Perhaps they do not differentiate between these two types of valuable positons at all.

5.5 Intermediate conclusion: an inconsistent effect of performance across time and space

In this chapter, I reported the findings of three series of binomial regression models in order to answer the question: are more active MEPs selectorally rewarded? A first series of models tested whether more active MEPs were more likely to be reselected by their party for the upcoming EP elections. The second looked into the electoral advantage active MEPs had once they were reselected. For both series, the aggregate EU-wide model covering two legislatures was gradually split up in more specific subsets along the lines of electoral context and legislature. The third series of models then zoomed in on party-centred systems and the extent to which parliamentary performance matters for obtaining a promising or a top position on the ballot list. Such high value positions demonstrate party endorsement and are central to a candidate's electoral prospect in these electoral systems. These reward-through-rank models too, were subsequently split per legislature. Moreover, across all three model series, each model variation was replicated in two different robustness checks. In total, the results above report on 60 tests of the performance-reward connection in the European Parliament.

At first glance, the analyses presented here align with the tenor of the extant literature in that they confirm a cautiously positive effect of 'parliamentary performance' on reselection, and to a lesser extent on selectoral reward through *rank* and re-election within party-centred systems. Quite crucially however, for all three angles on the link between performance and (s)electoral reward, it goes that the specifics of this dynamic and the actual indicators of performance that generate an effect are inconsistent across both time and electoral context. While the latter confirms the notion that different parties and voters evaluate and reward parliamentary performance differently, the former has serious implications for the external validity of the performance-reward results in this study as in others.

The aggregate models on MEPs reselection and re-election odds which cover both party- and candidate-centred systems as well as both legislatures studied in this thesis, hide system- and term-specific patterns. Which performance indicators matter for re(s)election changed from one electoral context to another, as well as from one election to the next, resulting few if any consistent results as to which activities and roles increase re(s)election odds. Table 12 on the next page gives an overview of the empirical results discussed in this chapter. The idea that active involvement in the EP's work is connected to reselection odds is partially supported by the empirical tests; yet the importance of electoral and temporal context casts doubt on the premise that the link between parliamentary work and reselection is due to deliberate signalling of activity by MEPs, or systematic performance evaluation by parties in a context of performance-reward mechanisms being applied in the candidate (re)selection.

Table 12: Overview results: the effects of performance on re(s)election and reward (2014, 2019)

Reselection model

Reselection model	EU Both terms (1)	EU Both terms (2)	Party-centred Both terms (1)	Party-centred Both terms (2)	Party-centred 2014 (1)	Party-centred 2014 (2)	Party-centred 2019 (1)	Party-centred 2019 (2)	Candidate-centred Both terms (1)	Candidate-centred Both terms (2)	Candidate-centred 2014 (1)	Candidate-centred 2014 (2)	Candidate-centred 2019 (1)	Candidate-centred 2019 (2)
Codecision reports							26,83%	≡ (+)			-41,72%	-41,40%		
Own initiative reports		15,52%	___ (+)	___ (+)	45,65%	46,85%								
Other reports														
Non lead reports													___ (+)	___ (+)
Speeches									0,17%	0,20%	0,50%	0,64%		
Parliamentary Questions									-0,30%					
Attendance	1,29%	1,46%							2,00%	2,10%	3,90%	3,94%	4,30% ≡	
Leader														
Coordinator					65,02%	≡ (+)					-75,80% ≡			
Seniority	-19,57%	-26,02%	-25,95%	-30,61%	-27,54%	-32,70%	-26,18%	-31,33%						
National experience			39,85%	50,78%		89,07% ≡								
Age	-4,14%	-4,28%	-4,93%	-4,93%	-3,10%	-3,35%	-7,51%	-8,01%	-3,05%	-3,26%				-5,39% ≡
Gender (male = 1)		34,60% ≡					86,63%	90,57%						
EPG size									___ (-)					
Party Size	2,34%	___ ≡ (+)	3,79%	≡ (+)	3,70%	≡ (+)	4,49%	___ ≡ (+)						
Term (7th = 1)	51,11%	42,14%	74,19%	69,67% ≡										
Party-centered														
Constant	1,310°	22,230	1,600	1,969°	1,152	1,554	2,369	3,266	0,705	0,882	-1,148	-1,528	1,214	-0,874
	(0,767)	(22411,357)	(0,999)	(1,081)	(1,175)	(1,282)	(1,850)	(2,094)	(1,275)	(1,421)	(1,957)	(2,226)	(1,936)	(2,474)
Member state controls	no	yes	no	yes	no	yes	no	yes	no	yes	no	yes	no	yes
Observations	915		648		371		277		267		127		140	
Missing cases	30		21		4		17		9		5		4	
Nagelkerke pseudo R²	.119	.153†	.167	.191	.148	.189†	.240	.306	.119	.147†	.249	.350†	.232	.355†

Re-election model

Re-election model	EU Both terms (1)	EU Both terms (2)	Party-centred Both terms (1)	Party-centred Both terms (2)	Party-centred 2014 (1)	Party-centred 2014 (2)	Party-centred 2019 (1)	Party-centred 2019 (2)	Candidate-centred Both terms (1)	Candidate-centred Both terms (2)	Candidate-centred 2014 (1)	Candidate-centred 2014 (2)	Candidate-centred 2019 (1)	Candidate-centred 2019 (2)
Codecision reports		___ (+)	29,20%	27,05%	94,22%	105,30%								
Own initiative reports														
Other reports														
Non lead reports														
Speeches				0,17%		0,20% ≡								
Parliamentary Questions														
Attendance		-2,20% ≡			-3,22%	-5,70%					-12,40%			
Leader														
Coordinator														
Seniority											171,05%	498,48%		
National experience											___ (-)	___ (-)		
Age	-1,79%	___ (-)	-2,40%	___ (-)			-7,45%	-9,91%						
Gender (male = 1)														
EPG size														
Party Size					3,69%	5,86% ≡		-9,77% ≡						
Term (7th = 1)														
Party-centered	64,77%	≡ (+)												
Constant	2,630*	4,053*	2,859°	3,471*	2,689	4,762*	2,172	4,603	3,087°	4,443*	3,023	10,478	1,612	5,286
	(1,117)	(1,897)	(1,464)	(1,661)	(1,814)	(2,204)	(2,847)	(3,739)	(1,817)	(2,214)	(2,898)	(5,319)	(2,999)	(3,995)
Member state controls	no	yes	no	yes	no	yes	no	yes	no	yes	no	yes	no	yes
Observations	608		424		264		160		183		84		99	
Missing cases	19		12		2		10		6		5		1	
Nagelkerke pseudo R²	.054	.142†	.073	.158†	.028	.312†	.164	.325	.051	.162†	.100	.442†	.237	.410†

Reward model

Reward model	Promising position Both terms (1)	Promising position Both terms (2)	Promising position 2014 (1)	Promising position 2014 (2)	Promising position 2019 (1)	Promising position 2019 (2)	Top position Both terms (1)	Top position Both terms (2)	Top position 2014 (1)	Top position 2014 (2)	Top position 2019 (1)	Top position 2019 (2)
Codecision reports			271,83%	351,60%					≡ (+)			
Own initiative reports												
Other reports	-6,66%	-6,37%				-28,09% ≡						
Non lead reports	___ (+)											
Speeches			___ (-)									
Parliamentary Questions												
Attendance				-6,50% ≡								
Leader						357,07% ≡						
Coordinator					___ (+)	236,08% ≡						
Seniority	35,53% ≡											
National experience									124,91% ≡	___ (-)		___ (-)
Age	-4,04% ≡	-5,02% ≡				-7,08% ≡						-5,53% ≡
Gender (male = 1)											57,90% ≡	
EPG size									0,66% ≡			
Party Size		-6,03% ≡							3,47% ≡			-8,51% ≡
Term (7th = 1)	154,47% ≡	225,36% ≡					105,56% ≡	94,62% ≡				
Constant	1,992	4,127°	5,434*	29,166	-1,360	1,935	0,714	1,797	1,632	3,022	-0,706	2,736
	(1,750)	(2,16649)	(2,658)	(4261,606)	(3,013)	(4,330)	(1,424)	(1,658)	(1,832)	(2,414)	(2,677)	(3,612)
Member state controls	no	yes	no	yes	no	yes	no	yes	no	yes	no	yes
Observations	424		264		160		424		264		160	
Missing cases	12		2		10		12		2		10	
Nagelkerke pseudo R²	.119	.217†	.212	.538†	.173	.349†	.056	.156†	.081	.196†	.134	.312†

Notes: Coefficients of binomial regression models, with standard errors in parentheses and change in likelihood expressed as percentage. † Final solution for the model's -2log likelihood could not be reached. The robustness checks are presented in the annex. Where statistically significant coefficients are not significant in the stepwise model (or vice versa) the change in likelihood is underlined. Likewise, the symbol ≡ is used to flag those instances where the multilevel binomial regression deviates from the results of the main analyses presented in the table. As for the member state controls, Germany serves as reference in the EU and party-centered system models. Finland serves as reference in the candidate-centred system models.

° significant at p < .10; * at p < .05; ** at p < .01; *** at p < .001.

The central premise of this thesis is that MEPs who are more actively involved in the EP's work (parliamentary activities and leadership functions) are advantaged in both reselection and re-election. The argument stated that parties – who are in control of candidate selection and ballot list composition – are policy-seeking in the EP. Therefore, they want to retain their active representatives who have proven to carry their weight in the past legislature. The first hypothesis is concerned with MEPs' odds of gaining *access* to the ballot of their party: *MEPs who were more active in the EP's work are more likely to be reselected by their party* (**H1**). Overall, I found a modest positive effect of parliamentary performance on reselection odds. The empirics confirm the hypothesis but cast doubt upon the underlying argument of *deliberate* selectoral reward of parliamentary performance by parties. Different sets of activities and leadership roles advantage reselection across electoral systems and legislatures. The low overall explanatory power of the presented models and the inconsistency of the indicators generating statistically significant results indicate that, while performance may play a role, it is unlikely that reselection of incumbents is truly governed by a performance-reward mechanism. While parties act as gatekeepers, static ambition may be the latent variable truly connecting active involvement in the EP's work and running for a renewed EP mandate.

Access to the ballot is only the beginning of the story. Beyond reselection, parties and voters can be expected to favour those who had been most active. Among reselected MEPs, I expected parliamentary performance to have a positive effect again. This time on the odds that relisted incumbents would be successful in their bid for re-election. *Among reselected MEPs, those who had been more actively involved in the EP's work were expected to enjoy better chances of being re-elected* (**H2**). This hypothesis could only partially be confirmed. Again inconsistency casts doubt on the external validity of the results and the deliberateness of any mechanism for performance accountability. Indicators of parliamentary performance were only found to increase the re-election odds of MEPs in party-centred systems, and only so in 2014. Once more, the results failed to be consistent across legislatures. In 2014, co-decision reports and speeches boosted one's re-election odds in party-centred systems. A negative effect of attendance – across electoral systems but limited to the 2014 elections – suggests that MEPs who seek to renew their mandate would be wise to put their scarce time to 'better use'. In candidate-centred systems – where re-election depends on nominal voting and therefore more on voter attractiveness – an MEP's work in Brussels and Strasbourg does not increase his or her chances to get re-elected. If anything, spending time in plenary was penalized.

Former national politicians were not more likely to be re-elected than their colleagues without national political experience. This goes counter the expectation that the name recognition and voter attractiveness associated with national political careers brings about *an advantage for MEPs*

who are also former national politicians in their bid for re-election (**H3**). In candidate-centred systems, former national politicians were even disadvantaged in the 2019 elections while more senior MEPs stood good odds of re-election. Whether this effect stems from voters encouraging EP careerism or punishing traditional parties, fact is that prior national experience did not boost re-election odds. In party-centred systems former national politicians had enjoyed higher odds of reselection, but the advantage did not extend to re-election odds once on the ballot. Still, in 2014, they had been more likely to end up on a top position compared to their colleagues without national experience, but no significant electoral advantage ensued. Clearly the anticipation of electoral prospect does not necessarily match the election outcome.

Because the opportunities for performance reward, and actors deciding upon it vary depending on the electoral context, different performance-reward dynamics were expected in party- vs. candidate-centred systems. Re- or de-selection is the only selectoral tool for parties presenting open lists to reward MEPs for their performance – or to punish shirkers – while parties in party-centred systems have the option of virtual deselection through relegation. Therefore, I expected the *effect of parliamentary performance on reselection to be more pronounced in candidate-centred systems* (**H4**). The evidence is mixed. A wider range of performance aspects is connected to reselection odds in candidate-centred systems. However, the largest effects among them are negative, suggesting active involvement in the EP's work may be punished rather than rewarded. In party-centred systems only few performance indicators affect reselection odds, but there is no doubt as to the direction of the effect active involvement in the EP has on reselection. In the latter system – where rank will eventually be decisive – other factors besides performance matter for reselection odds too, such as gender, age, seniority and national experience.

With regard to re-election odds I expected party-centred systems to show more signs of performance-reward. **H5** posited that *parliamentary performance of incumbent MEPs better predicts their electoral fortune (re-election) in party-centred systems compared to candidate-centred systems.* The analyses confirm this hypothesis. In fact, effects of performance were only found in the 2014 party-centred model. In the 2019 elections in candidate-centred systems, the models did find an electoral advantage of EP seniority, along with a disadvantage of prior national experience. This could point to a reward for EP careerism by voters. Activity records as such however, did not help relisted incumbents convince voters to re-elect them. While attending plenary increased reselection odds, spending too much time in plenary sessions hurt their re-election chances. In party-centred systems then, MEPs who had obtained more COD reports and floor time were advantaged. Again, plenary attendance is punished, suggesting MEPs are expected to put their precious time to other use. As re-election odds on closed and flexible lists are inevitably linked to the position one occupies, this

electoral reward hints that, among those reselected, the more active MEPs managed to obtain higher value positions.

By the fact that parties in party-centred electoral systems control much of their candidates' prospects via the composition and order of the ballot list, links found between performance and re-election are commonly explained as an expression of selectoral reward for a job well done. The argument goes that higher re-election odds for more active and influential MEPs is to be explained by parties, and not voters, rewarding more active MEPs. Parties do so by placing active incumbents higher on the ballot paper. This type of selectoral reward (*rank*) only works in electoral contexts where parties' selectoral choices largely decide the race, i.e. party-centred systems. Yet re-election and reward patterns do not necessarily align, as election outcomes need not match parties' anticipations and strategies. The third series of binomial models ran the effect of performance on two variations of selectoral reward. This selectoral reward through *rank* refers to the concept of ballot position value. It sets off promising and top positions against relegation. These models filter out the effects of volatility and voter decisions made after the party had made its choices and rolled its dice.

The expectation was that *among reselected MEPs (in party-centred systems) those who had been more active would be more likely to be selectorally rewarded by their party selectorate through rank* (**H6**). The results show a cautiously positive relationship between performance and the odds of obtaining promising positions. The rewarded indicator of parliamentary performance however, again differs from one election to the next. That said, the performance indicators significantly improving an MEPs' reward odds in each legislature can be linked to substantive expertise and esteem within both the political group and parliamentary committees. To that extent, rewards across legislatures may be considered consistent. In 2014, writing of COD reports was rewarded, while attendance to plenary as well as floor time negatively affected the odds of obtaining a promising position. On the lists presented in 2019, group coordinators and MEPs with leadership functions stood better odds of selectoral reward. This time rapporteurships did not help an MEPs' chances to obtain a high value position. To the contrary, writing reports under any procedure but COD and INI ('other reports') even statically significantly lowered ones' chances. The reward models confirm that certain forms of performance in the EP can boost one's odds of obtaining a promising position on the list. Yet they found no evidence of a consistent performance-reward mechanism across elections. Neither could the analyses confirm that parties differentiate marginal from realistic positions. There is no convincing evidence that more active MEPs stand better chances of being reselected to *top* positions, as opposed to simply not being relegated to a hopeless position.

135

Finally, in light of the second order nature of European elections and parties' vote-seeking objectives led to the expectation that *among reselected MEPs in party-centred systems, those who are more recognisable to voters (i.e. former national politicians) are more likely to be selectorally rewarded by their party selectorate through rank.*(**H7**). Again, the evidence is mixed. Among reselected incumbents, former national politicians are not more (or less) likely to end up on a promising position than their colleagues without national experience are. When it comes to *top* positions, however, having national experience more than doubled the odds of running from a realistic or list leading position in 2014. Yet this advantage is not a systematic one. In 2019, former national politicians were less likely to obtain top positions than incumbent MEPs who had never occupied a national political mandate.

Performance connects to re(s)election and selectoral reward, but the models discussed in this chapter showed that context and nuance are key, and that the evidence for a deliberate selectoral reward mechanism for parliamentary performance (as captured here) is unconvincing. Overall, active MEPs seem better off in their pursuit of a renewed mandate. Yet the evidence has failed to reveal a convincing performance-reward mechanism in the re(s)election of MEPs. A potential (aid in the) explanation of the linkage between performance and reselection is the ambition of the incumbent MEP. Rather than a consequence of performance evaluation and reward by party selectorates, the higher activity levels linked to reselection may reflect intrinsic motivation and interest in actively carrying out one's mandate instead. That is not to say that static ambition is what effectively gets MEPs reselected, but rather that ambition (and not performance evaluation) is the mediating factor between legislative behaviour and reselection odds. Party leaderships and selectorates may still be evaluating their incumbents within the (re)selection process. Yet the analyses performed in this thesis could not capture convincing empirical evidence of a *consistent* reward for one or another form of performance.

Either way, an individual MEP's ambition to renew his or her mandate in the EP is crucial to his or her reselection odds. MEPs who are not seeking to renew their mandate will move on to other things. Only those who seek to continue their EP career need to convince the party to place them on (a good position on) their list. Recall that ambition – the aspiration of a new EP mandate – was the starting point from which to identify types of turnover. Whether absence from the list is a choice made by the party or by the individual incumbent implies a different understanding of the link between performance and reselection. Ambitions however, are notoriously difficult to capture as they often go unexpressed and, when included in research, out of necessity they are commonly equated to realized career paths. This strengthens the assumption born from the second

order nature of European elections that exits from the EP are voluntary, and thus that little selectoral 'punishment' of MEPs takes place.

Knowing that performance may well have some impact on re(s)election odds but that it falls short of constituting a deliberate practice of performance-reward by selectorates, the second empirical part of this thesis explores to what extent selectoral 'punishment' takes place where selectorates decide not to reselect an incumbent despite his/her ambition to return to the EP. How frequent is deselection – compared to voluntary exit – in EP elections, and under what circumstances does it occur? The next chapter presents a qualitative exploration of mismatches between MEPs' ambitions and parties' choices to grant the incumbents access to their ballot. When does ambition not equal reselection?

Chapter 6. Exploring absence: voluntary exit or deselection?

The objective of this thesis is to uncover whether incumbent MEPs are selectorally rewarded for their parliamentary performance. Selectoral reward refers to the decisions made by the party selectorate – in charge of composing the ballot list – that maximize one's chances to be successful in the race and gain a mandate. Regardless the electoral system, being excluded from the list is the heftiest possible form of selectoral punishment. Evidently, who is not listed cannot be (re-)elected. Yet, not all absence should be understood to be selectoral punishment. Recall that, reselection is not the reward MEPs are after if they are not pursuing a European career. Without static ambition, i.e. if an MEP is not seeking to continue an EP career, the 'failure' to be reselected does not constitute selectoral 'punishment'. The same tangible outcome - not being reselected by the party – can point to either one of two juxtaposed situations: the volition to move on from the EP, or the decision by the party selectorate not to endorse the incumbent's aspiration to pursue his or her career in the European Parliament further (see dotted square in Figure 16).

The difference between voluntary exits and deselection matters, as it can reveal a great deal about the attractiveness of the office, the professionalization of the assembly and career path, as well as about the priorities of party selectorates when considering the (re-)selection of their MEP candidates. The current chapter explores the (mis)match between static ambition and reselection, among outgoing MEPs of the 7th and 8th EP legislatures. It seeks to find out how frequent deselection was in these EP elections, and presents a compilation of clear examples that demonstrate the reasons behind – and reactions to – the deselection of statically ambitious MEPs. These examples serve to illustrate the richness of the data gathered and to bring the categories of (in)voluntary exit alive for the reader.

The exploration of apparent mismatch between MEPs' ambition and selectoral decisions sheds light on some of the factors and circumstances that are conductive of sectoral defeat. The qualitative approach, using media coverage revolving incumbents' absence from the race, discloses rich stories from across the EU on why MEPs choose or are forced to stand down. As such it frames the concept of selectoral reward by scanning for evidence that deselection actually takes place in the context of European Parliament elections. If, on the one hand, all exit were to be voluntary and all statically ambitious incumbents were allowed to rerun for office on their party's list, then surely selectorates are not using the carrot and stick of de- and reselection to urge their incumbents to behave in a certain way. Instead, this would mean ambition is a sufficient condition for reselection to the EP race. If, on the other hand, not all incumbents who *aspire* to renew their mandate are granted access to their party's electoral list, then the question arises what differentiates

those who are from those who are not. Who is affected by deselection and under what circumstances are these incumbents cast aside? Does the evidence suggest a role for parliamentary performance or vote-seeking goals in selectoral decision-making?

Figure 16: Recap figure: situating voluntary exit and deselection within EP turnover and selectoral reward
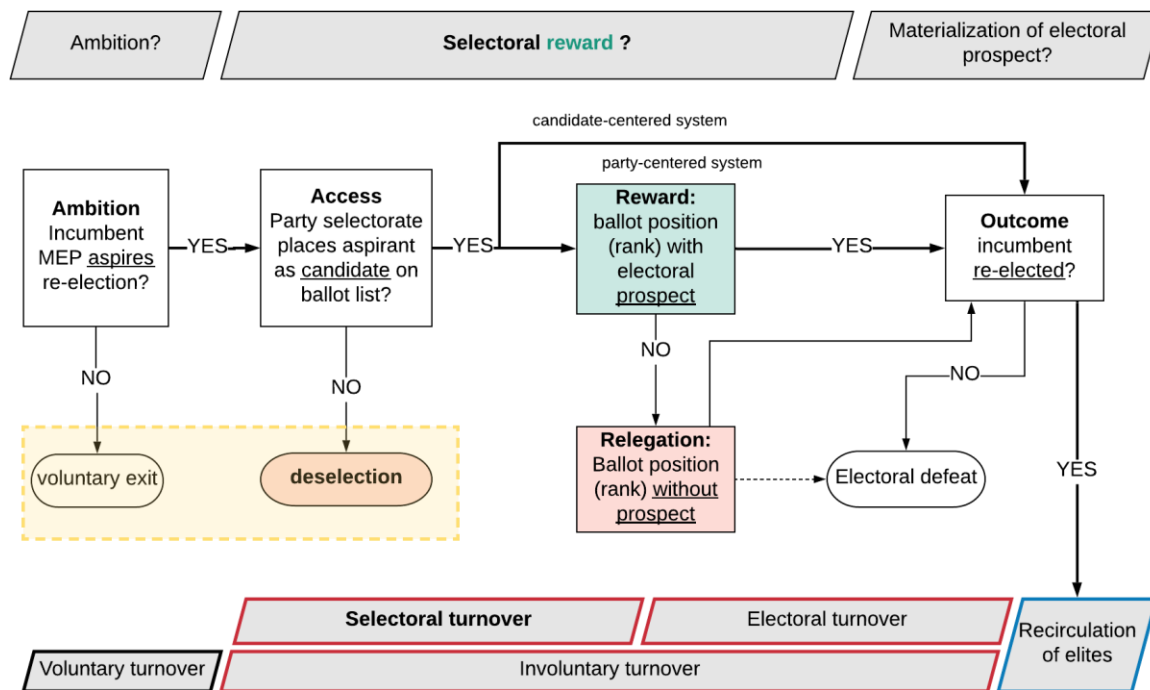
The remainder of the chapter is set out as follows. First, a brief reflection on the reselection and ambition in the EP context hones in on the knowledge gap surrounding deselection. The second section introduces the current state of research into deselection as a specific type of turnover and the differentiation of voluntary from forced exits. Sections 3 and 4 deal with the results of this qualitative exploration of deselection in the EP. Section 3 presents more general remarks on the occurrence of (in)voluntary exit in the EP across both legislatures. Section 4 paints a picture using individual cases to zoom in on signals of deselection. A discussion concludes this chapter.

6.1   Reselection and ambition in the European Parliament

Perhaps particularly in the EP, the ruling assumption is that parties will reselect their incumbents who express static ambition, and that incumbents who do not return to the ballot left voluntarily. The second order nature of the European Parliament may make this assumption all the more appropriate for studying turnover in European Parliament elections. A prevalence of voluntary exit amongst non-standing incumbent MEPs can be explained, on the one hand by the persisting attractiveness of national over European offices for many politicians, and on the other hand by the appeal of incumbency to both party leaderships and voters.

6.1.1   *Presumption of voluntary exits*

Generally, the EP's high turnover is ascribed to the large pool of MEPs with progressive ambitions who do not seek to further their career on the European level. Despite the growing attractiveness of the European mandate, the "mutual permeability of domestic and European career paths" is complex yet crucial as "the importance of domestic politics and the multi-level nature of the policy-related games in the EU will always push many Strasbourg politicians to 'look down' to the domestic political level" (Manow & Verzichelli, 2007, p.3). Nevertheless, along with the powers of the EP, the prestige and attractiveness of the office has been growing, encouraging a larger number of MEPs to pursue a career in the EP (Verzichelli & Edinger, 2005; Beauvallet & Michon, 2010; Whitaker, 2014). Cirone (2018) found that, "while this varies by country, on average supranational career paths are becoming much more durable, [implying that] a European Parliamentary elite is emerging" (p. 7). Overall, it is suggested that many MEPs do not seek re-election (at the European level), but that those who do manage to build a durable career in the EP (Manow & Verzichelli, 2007; Verzichelli & Edinger, 2005; Beauvallet & Michon, 2010; Whitaker, 2014).

While MEPs are not necessarily assumed to seek a continued career at the EP level, parties are expected to reselect their statically ambitious MEPs (Høyland et. al, 2017, Norris, 1997; Pemstein et.al., 2015). As elaborated upon in more detail in the theoretical chapter on parliamentary performance (chapter 3), both the work and the (relative) visibility of incumbents have been found to motivate selectorates to reselect their incumbents. The idea is that incumbents have a quality advantage over EP newcomers, because they understand how the EP works and have been able to prove their worth and build a network within it. Parties may also be reluctant to deselect an incumbent if s/he is expected to bring an electoral advantage, through e.g. name recognition (Matland & Studlar, 2004).

Despite a general preference for incumbent reselection, parties may also have incentives to deselect incumbents. There may be different strategic or disciplinary logics for doing so. Parties may want to bring "input of new candidate profiles to the party list, or fresh ideas to the party in

public office" (Put, Gouglas & Maddens, 2015, p.4) or they may favor some level of turnover in order to "encourage legislative aspirants at lower levels in the party organization to keep working for the party" (Matland & Studlar, 2004, p.97). An ideological motivation, moreover, could drive parties to "rotate candidates and therefore deselect an incumbent" stemming from a heavy emphasis they may place on "the need to ensure their legislators do not grow distant from the people they are supposed to represent" (Ibidem.). None the least, deselection may also be used to "punish MPs who displayed dissident behavior or caused damage to the party image" (Put, Gouglas & Maddens, 2015, p.4). The selectorates' prerogative to (re/de)select candidates serves as an important *ex ante* control mechanism through which parties can make sure to (re-)select candidates whose (ideological) preference are in line with their own (Sieberer, 2006). Yet it's also an *ex post* control mechanism allowing to discipline incumbents who did not behave in the way the party expected or needed them to (Louwerse & van Vonno, 2019; Müller, 2000).

6.1.2 *It's the ambition, stupid?*

Political careers are tangible, the underlying (or unrealized) ambitions in contrast, are notoriously difficult to capture. Both realized career paths and careful rhetoric may distort our view on the true career aspirations of politicians. In a unique project Hix, Scully and Farrell (2011) collected survey data on, among others, the career aspirations of MEPs. A representative sample of MEPs participated and responded to the question 'where would you most like to be in ten years from now?'. The multiple choice options included the ambition to stay on as MEP, to move to national parliament, and retirement. In 2018, Van Geffen used the responses to the 2000 (1999-2004 EP) and 2006 (2004-2009 EP) editions of the survey to model the likelihood an MEP was still in office at the end of the 7th EP (i.e. in June 2014). He found that those MEPs who had expressed the desire to remain in the EP for ten years were about three times as likely to still serve in Strasbourg than those who had not. MEPs aspiring to have retired by then had 60% higher odds of no longer serving as an MEP in 2014. Progressively ambitious MEPs who aimed for national office did not yield statistically significant effects. Key is that static ambition proved to be a strong predictor for continued presence in the EP.

That ambition is a good predictor for reselection, and eventually for EP careerism, should not be surprising. It should, however, not be understood as a *sufficient* condition. Not all MEPs seek re-election, and while those who do are more likely to obtain it, they are not immune to deselection nor electoral defeat. Moreover, an MEP's static ambition could act as a catalyst for, or coincide with behavior (e.g. performance) and characteristics parties are after – rather than directly constituting the object of the reward. Incumbents who do not partake in the EP election are almost

invariably assumed to have *chosen* another path. Despite their potential wealth of insight into (re-)selection priorities of parties in EP elections, situations in which the party decided *against* an incumbent's ambition to renew his/her EP mandate are rarely discussed.

In fact, this knowledge gap extends well beyond the context of the EP. A commonly used proxy for reselection is to capture whether or not the incumbent *partakes* in the upcoming elections (Daniel, 2015; Vanlangenakker & Maddens, 2011; Put, Gouglas & Maddens, 2015; Kerry & Blidook, 2011). Reselection and candidacy are then equated. Yet, politicians with static ambition can fail to be reselected by their party. They may drop out of the race altogether, or seek re-election under the banner of another party. Occasionally incumbents speak up in the press about their discontent with their party's decision not to re-nominate them to (a promising position on) the ballot. These politicians clearly aspired to renew their mandate but did not overcome the necessary hurdle of reselection. This type of selectoral turnover is often disregarded, or brushed of as anecdotal. A closer look, however, reveals it may be more common than generally presumed.

6.2   Deselection: rarity or rarely studied?

Deselection concerns a particular type of legislative turnover. Crucially, an incumbent needs access to the ballot if s/he is to stand a chance at re-election. Deselection is the situation where- despite his/her aspiration to renew the EP mandate – an incumbent is absent from his/her party's ballot, due to decisions made by the party selectorate. Key is the incumbent's ambition as this is what differentiates voluntary turnover from involuntary turnover. It separates exits made on own volition from those instigated by selectoral choices. Making this distinction offers insights in the attractiveness of particular political careers as well as the priorities of party selectorates. Still, empirical research into the actors driving turnover – and into the selectoral versus voluntary turnover in particular – is scant.

6.2.1   *Theorized but rarely tested*

The literature on turnover is primarily concerned with (comparative) country studies and is characterized by its' focus on macro-variables. Predominantly legislative turnover is understood as the sum of 'voluntary exits' on the one hand and electoral defeats on the other. Voluntary exit then simply covers *every* scenario with the exception of unsuccessfully running for re-election. While some scholars have already pointed to the distinction between voluntary exit and involuntary forms of turnover (both selectoral and electoral), the literature offers few empirical tests. Empirical work on the (in)voluntary nature of turnover is scarce and tends to end up pitching voluntary exit against electoral defeat while other reasons for non-candidacy are overlooked. There is a need for

qualitative and exploratory research attentive to individual stories, as the field is dominated by broad-scaled macro-level research, which remains intrinsically inapt to capture the distinction between voluntary exits and nomination failure.

Promisingly, Matland and Studlar (2004) distinguish between voluntary and involuntary exit in their cross-national analysis on determinants of turnover. However, they only do so in theory. Looking at aggregate results of a large-N study, they do not go on to categorize the exits of individual legislators. According to the authors voluntary exits are the result of a cost-benefit analysis legislators make between running for re-election and opting for another career.[37] For involuntary exit then, Matland and Studlar (2004) see four drivers: (1) the defeat of the candidate at the ballot box (electoral defeat), (2) the failure to be renominated by the party when re-nomination is desired (party victim), (3) being forced to resign the seat, for example due to scandal, and (4) dying in office. The authors expect the latter two occurrences of involuntary exit to be minimal and not to follow any structural patterns, while they further theorize on institutional aspects that could trigger more electoral defeat and/or party victims.

They expect electoral defeat to be the main driver of involuntary turnover, rather than the failure to obtain access to the ballot. Particularly "electoral systems that expose sitting MPs to the threat of intra-party defeat will lead to higher levels of turnover. […] Preferential voting systems should increase turnover compared to systems where the party presents a ballot that voters may not disturb" (Matland & Studlar, 2004, p.96; Katz, 1986). This implies that parties are expected to reselect their incumbents on top-ranked positions (see also Shomer, 2009), though this argument is not further elaborated upon. Matland & Studlar (2004) go on to point out that "deselection *appears* to be a relatively rare phenomenon, the norm being that incumbents desiring to run for re-election are renominated" (p.97, emphasis in original). They continue: "one of the reasons that deselection appears to be so rare may be that incumbents who face a serious danger of being deselected may opt for 'voluntary' retirement instead" (p.97).

Micro-level research into the (in)voluntary nature of legislative turnover remains scarce. Perspectives covered are intra-term turnover and replacement (Hamm & Olson, 1992), partisan patterns of (legislative) retirement (Raymond & Overby, 2019) and post-legislative careers of MPs (Edinger & Schwarz, 2009; Theakston, Gouge & Honeyman, 2007), and cost-benefit analyses and progressive ambitions of incumbent MPs (Francis & Baker, 1986; Hibbing, 1982; Samuels, 2000). Interestingly, Samuels (2000) finds that voluntary exit among incumbent MPs in Brazil accounts

---

[37] Such analysis would be based on pension benefits, progressive ambition, career opportunities outside politics, the amount of power an individual legislator has and the quality of work life within the legislature.

for about half of the Chamber's legislative turnover. Driven by "extra-legislative ambition" the bulk of politicians are not interested in a long-term parliamentary career but seek to access "more illustrious offices" (pp.482-483). Congressional seats are considered stepping-stones to higher positions, with executive but also municipal and bureaucratic offices outside the Chamber perceived as more attractive. The "Mayhewian assumption" of re-election seeking parliamentarians should therefore not be overstated (p.484), a finding that may well be resonant in the European Parliament context too. Though evidently linked to the (in)voluntary nature of exit, none of these studies looked into the selectoral dimension of non-candidacy. Rather, again, they pitch voluntary exit against electoral defeat, practically equating non-candidacy with the former.

Even where the distinction between nomination failure and voluntary exits is made in theory, the distinction hardly ever survives in the actual analysis. Kerby and Blidook (2011) for example, studying 'voluntary legislative turnover' in the Canadian Lower House, underline the inaptitude of the extant turnover literature to explain "*why* members come and go" (p.623, emphasis added). Despite their emphasis on voluntary turnover and the presence of what Matland and Studlar (2004) had called party victims (i.e. deselection), they too end up conflating voluntary exit and deselection. They purposefully categorize all non-candidatures as voluntary exits (therefore reducing involuntary exit to electoral defeat) despite finding cases where incumbents "failed to receive their party's nomination prior to an election, either because they were defeated in the re-nomination process or because their re-nomination was not authorized by the party leadership" (Kerby & Blidook, 2011, p. 640, note 5). These cases were found to be "either anecdotal, sporadic or unreliable [and] unfortunately, the nature of the data makes it impossible to systematically address these rare cases" (Ibidem).

Promisingly, Würfel (2017) and Schmück (2019) map types of exit and post-parliamentary careers of members of the German Bundestag, coding 'renomination failures' separately from defeat at the ballot; Both scholars do so on the basis of newspaper articles, press releases and MPs' webpages. Evidence of involuntary deselection is found after each Bundestag legislature, though voluntary exits (as well as electoral defeat) are more frequent. The likelihood an incumbent gets deselected by the party is highest following his/her first term, after which ones chances of re-nomination failure drop markedly but do not disappear (Schmück, 2019, pp.12-15).

Another notable exception that deals head-on with incumbent deselection is the work of Vanlangenakker et al. (2013) on the gender dynamics in regional parliamentary career termination. The authors use biographic and survey data on former MPs in regional assemblies to determine, at micro-level, whether absences from the ballot are the result of voluntary exit or deselection by the party. The survey asks respondents to choose one or more reasons that best describe the

reason(s) for their departure from a list of 52 proposed items. They find that among former MPs 14.1% was deselected by the party, which made *selectoral defeat* more frequent than unsuccessful bids for re-election among relisted incumbents (9.1%).

Deselection might matter more than commonly assumed, but researching it is not evident. The scarcity of empirical research into involuntary deselection is without a doubt partly due to the fact that data collection on former M(E)Ps is notoriously cumbersome and time consuming. Additionally, there is a risk of confounding career ambitions and outcomes due to data scarcity and potential discrepancies between actual drivers and the explanations one communicates. While the chicken-and-egg problem remains difficult to overcome, micro-level research into (in)voluntary exit from parliament is an avenue worth pursuing, particularly if we are interested in selectoral punishment and reward of incumbents.

6.2.2 *Exploring incumbent ambition and deselection in EP elections*

I use the term 'voluntary exit' to stay in tune with the extant literature. Though in some cases, dichotomizing incumbent departures as contested vs. uncontested seems to cover the load better. This is because public and elegant explanations or realized career paths may obscure cases where exit from the EP was not the incumbent's first choice, but where it was not contested either. Retiring MEPs, for example, are considered voluntarily ceding their place. They may very well have been asked to make way for a new generation, but unless solid evidence of contestation is apparent, they must be understood as voluntary exits. Moreover, besides explicit accounts of both deselection and progressive careerism, in ample case the evidence is more nuanced, if not ambiguous. Some signals on selectorally imposed exits are indeed soft. They indicate potential deselection by flagging instances where the party can be understood to have a principled, reputational or representational incentive to no longer see the incumbent as a viable candidate in the upcoming elections. I.e. in cases where the MEP is in conflict with the party or its leadership, s/he is involved in a scandal or controversy, or where the MEP and party have increasingly diverging views that are no longer reconcilable.

Hard evidence of deselection is found in those instances where the static ambition of the MEP is articulate and a mismatch between this ambition and what the party is willing to offer is evident. These cases include accounts of MEP's surprise, discontent or anger with the party's decision. Yet not all deselected incumbents feel the need to hackle the party's decision publically. If it is clear that the absence from the ballot was instigated by the party selectorate's decisions, and not motivated by the MEP's ambition I consider the MEP deselected. This includes statically ambitious MEPs who miss the boat because of intricate ticket balancing exercises and selectoral

priorities, and those who withdraw despite their ambition for reasons of not obtaining a valuable ballot position. The latter hints to the importance of *rank* beyond *access* and the extension of selectoral punishment beyond mere deselection. For a schematic overview of the coding scheme used, please refer to the methodology chapter of this thesis.

6.3 Voluntary exits and signs of deselection in the EP

Turnover is largely decided before the race, as has been the central premise throughout this thesis. High turnover in the EP is in part due to the fact that a considerable share of outgoing incumbents is not reselected. Evidently, candidacy precedes re-election, and any form of selectoral reward presupposes reselection. At the EP elections of 2014 and 2019, respectively 30 and 45% of incumbents did not compete for re-election on their party's list.[38] MEPs reaching retirement age takes up a big chunk of exits. Surprisingly, I find progressive ambition to be less, and scorned static ambition to be more frequent than what one would expect based on established knowledge and assumptions pertaining to EP careers.

6.3.1 *General results: (in)voluntary exits in the 2014 and 2019 EP elections*

A general view of the findings (see Table 13) shows that a little more than half of the outgoing MEPs who were not reselected moved on from the EP voluntarily. In these cases, I did not find expressions of static ambition, nor any indications they had become less attractive candidates to their party. Most among them appear to have simply reached the end of their career – or at least retirement age. Retirement accounts for about a third of MEPs' exits. Others moved on from the EP towards public, private and academic sector jobs – often returning to the career they had occupied before entering the EP. In the absence of any expressions of an MEP's static ambition, these are considered voluntary exits.

Table 13: Voluntary departures and signs of forced exit among the MEPs not reselected in 2014 and 2019

	Both terms		2014		2019	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Voluntary exit	283	53.70%	123	55.16%	160	52.63%
Retirement	172	32.63%	75	33.63%	97	31.9%
Other elected mandate	37	7.02%	20	8.97%	17	5.59%
Signs of deselection	87	16.51%	36	16.14%	51	16.78%
Nomination failure	44	8.35%	17	7.62%	27	8.88%
Remaining	157	29.79%	64	28.70%	93	30.59%
Total	527		223		304	

---

[38] Remember that Croatian MEPs are not included in the 2014 data, and UK MEPs are excluded from the analysis in 2019.

Finally, voluntary exit also covers those incumbents with progressive ambitions. Their ambition had not been to renew their MEP mandate, but rather to move on to another political post elsewhere. Strikingly, the share of MEPs who pass up the EP elections and instead move on to elected office on local, regional and national level is quite small. Among the non-reselected MEPs in 2019 I find only 5.6% taking this path, compared to 9.0% in 2014. This is a noteworthy finding within the context of second order elections and the presumption that the EP is still used as a waiting room for national political careers on the one hand and as a retirement home for politicians on the other. While retirees are easily the largest group among the MEPs who are not running for re-election, level-hoppers (re)turning to another political arena are rather scarce.

In contrast to MEPs voluntarily stepping down at the end of the term, there are clearly also cases where an MEP's absence from the list was a choice made by the party selectorate, rather than one made by the MEP him/herself (16.5%). In roughly half these cases, the MEP expressed clear static ambition the party selectorate did not answer (nomination failure). These cases are the most explicit illustrations of deselection present in the data. The other half of cases containing signals of forced exit are based on indirect evidence. It concerns MEPs who were involved in scandals, controversies and conflicts – therefore made unattractive to the selectorate. The cases where – subtle or unequivocal – signals of deselection were found are the focus of more in-depth descriptive analysis in the remainder of this chapter.

Finally, pursuing re-election under the banner of another party, under certain circumstances, can be considered a signal of deselection too. Some MEPs who had not been reselected nevertheless were candidates in the race, seeking to renew their mandate under another party's banner or as an independent. This mainly happened where the MEP had changed party affiliation somewhere during the legislature (8% of not reselected MEPs), but in some cases the MEP dutifully served the entirety of term only changing affiliation at the ballot (3% of not reselected MEPs). Party switching in itself evidently is insufficient as a signal of deselection, as it can happen for any number of reasons. In and of itself, the renewed candidacy only illustrates the static ambition of the MEP in question. If the timing of the affiliation change coincides with the composition or registration of their former party's ballot list, the switch may signal deselection.

It needs to be noted that – concerning a considerable share of MEPs who were not reselected – very little to no information was found. Indeed, concerning 30% of all outgoing MEPs who were not reselected, the driving actor behind the decision cannot convincingly be identified. Besides MEPs on whom information could simply not be found, this group mainly consists of substitutes

and MEPs who had changed party affiliation or had become independent during their term in the EP. Note that neither of these groups are included in the statistical analyses on performance-reward presented earlier. Among the full term and party faithful MEPs included in the quantitative analyses, this exploration was able to qualify the departures of seven out of eight MEPs (12.64%) who had not been reselected by their party.

6.3.2   Substitutes, party-switchers and full term party faithful MEPs

Substitute MEPs are those that had not gotten elected the last time around, yet instead entered the EP at a later date to replace a colleague from his party that prematurely terminated his/her mandate. They make up 12% of not reselected outgoing MEPs, but they tend to depart as subtly as they enter. Little information is found on the ambitions of those who are not reselected. Perhaps because few were at all expected too and remained fairly invisible.

For party-switchers too, the mismatch between ambition and party choices is difficult to gauge. It is evident that those MEPs that left their party to either join another or found their own party, or to stay on as an independent, will not be reselected by their former party. Many among the party-switchers appear statically ambitious. Indeed, they run for re-election under the banner of their new party, seek access to the ballot list of yet another party, register their own list in the elections, or run as an independent. Changing party affiliation may be a consequence of deselection. Yet, this switch may of course also have been voluntary or a result of expulsion, either which may not have anything to do with candidate selection. The timing of the party switch may be telling. For example, MEPs who left their party around the time the candidate selection process was being decided may be considered deselected. Particularly if they show static ambition by applying to another list. Still, the data gathered indicate that party switches are mainly explained in the press by 'diverging views' on policy and choices made by the leadership. This may concern an individual de-alignment between an MEP and his/her party, or indicate a split of more serious implications for the party.

The presence of substitutes (and therefore of *intra*-term turnover) and party-switchers points to a certain volatility within the EP legislatures. This volatility too may impact the EP's professionalization trajectory as well as link to parties' propensity and opportunities to recirculate elites. The 8th term seems particularly tumultuous. Many MEPs changed affiliation while parties split and reoriented. Some of the larger Eurosceptic party delegation, for example, faced a rowdy term with *MoVimento 5 Stelle, Alternative für Deutschland* and *Front National* losing the majority of their members in Strasbourg to defection before the legislature was over. France seems to be the country hardest hit by a redrawing of the political landscape and changing loyalties, with the arrival

of *La République en Marche*, the rupture in Marine Le Pen's *Front National*, and the inability of the (far) left to present a unified front. Overall, there is much more intra-term party switching going on during the 8th EP compared to the 7th. Party loyalties seem to wane as the political landscape is fracturing. This, in part, explains the relatively low reselection rate in the 2019 elections. Still, many party switchers sought to renew their mandate in 2019 under the banner of a new party. Though it falls beyond the scope of the present study, it would be interesting to further look into intra-term movements and their implications.

Figure 17: Voluntary exits and signals of deselection (2014, 2019)
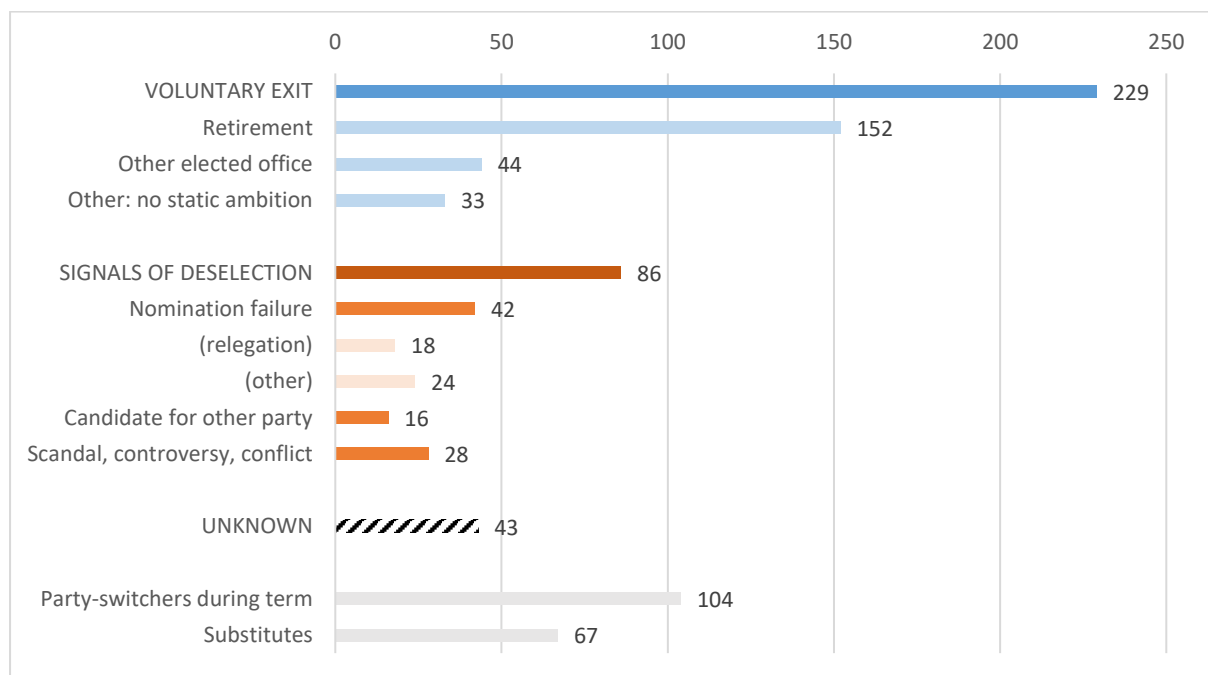
Figure 17 graphically represents the frequency of (in)voluntary exits from the EP across both legislatures. The particular cases of both substitutes and MEPs who had changed party affiliation during the legislature are added as separate categories. As stated above there is insufficient information to infer whether or not the fact they were not reselected on their party's list was due to their own choice and ambition, or whether they had been dismissed. More important – and telling – are the reasons why full term party faithful MEPs were not reselected at the end of their term. They are the MEPs that were included in the reselection models in the quantitative analyses in the previous chapter and had fallen in the 0-category of the outcome variable, i.e. not reselected. The circumstances of their absence from the ballot are explored here.

The vast majority of MEPs who were not reselected seem to have left the EP voluntarily,

the chief reason being retirement. Others displayed progressive ambition and moved on to national, regional or local politics. Others still, moved (back) to private, public and academic careers and showed no static ambition. Absences due to death or severe health issues are also included in this category. Signals of deselection are only half as frequent as MEPs retiring at the end of the legislature. Explicit nomination failure despite static ambition however, is almost equally common than moving on to an elected office in another arena. Some MEPs downright refuse reselection to a ballot position that does not confer them sufficient electoral safety, others fail to obtain a ballot position offer altogether. Finally, indirect signals that the party selectorate unlikely was inclined to reselect the incumbent were found were the MEP was involved in scandal, controversy or conflict; or where the MEP sought re-election on another list. Arguably, these latter two categories form a twilight zone in the absence of evidence of the underlying causal direction. Nevertheless, they merit a closer look, rather than being presumed voluntary exits.

Building upon this exploration regarding the total population of MEPs who do not reappear on their party's ballot list after their term, the next section zooms in on the categories of 'voluntary exit' and 'signals of deselection'. I set out and illustrate the different sub-categories I deduced from the broad collection of media materials. Note that the section does not set out a detailed story on *every* MEP captured under the (sub)categories of (in)voluntary exit, nor does it bring detailed A to Z stories on a handful of departures – which would require a much more intensive and hardly scalable methodological approach such as process tracing. Instead, the accounts in the following section bring together numerous telling extracts from the consulted media accounts to paint a vivid picture of how ambition and selectoral decisions can (mal)align.

6.4 Storylines of the dismissed: painting the picture of deselection

The stories of deselected MEPs are far from inconsequential to the study of parliamentary turnover and the exploration of selectoral punishment. To the contrary, if we want to dig into intra-party competition for reselection amongst incumbents and possible selectoral punishment/reward mechanisms, the accounts of former MEPs who were involuntarily deselected become very interesting. Remember that this explorative design aims to identify mismatches between MEPs' ambitions to renew their mandate and the party's decision to renominate them. Who are the deselected incumbents, and why was their bid for reselection not given a positive response by the party? Given the elusive nature of ambitions, I cannot be sure to have captured all instances where an MEP's absence from the list was not entirely out of own volition. At the same time, the cases that do surface are sure to constitute true and rich examples. There is no reason to expect 'false positives' in deselection accounts.

This section illustrates both soft signals of deselection and cases of MEPs who faced nomination failure in the 2014 and 2019 EP elections. The section is structured along four broader categories present in the data. The former two concern indirect evidence pertaining to partyies' focus on renewal, and MEPs' involvement in conflicts and scandals. The latter two cover explicit cases of nomination failure whereby MEPs withdraw from the race after failing to obtain the list position they were after, and accounts of MEPs' anger and disappointment upon being dismissed by the selectorate.

6.4.1 'Generationswechsel': selectoral focus on renewal

The evidence suggests parties are attentive to renewal, yet that deselections under the motto of '*Generationswechsel*' (i.e. Generation switch, rejuvination) rarely spur contestation amongst 'victim' incumbents. Indeed, some deselected incumbents admit they were not renominated by the party despite static ambition, but emphasize the exit happened on good terms. After having served his second term in Brussels Antolín Sánchez Presedo (ES, PSOE) for example, felt like "*the traveler who returns home*" and contemplated that "*in politics everyone is important and nobody is essential*".[39]

In 2014, the German socialists (SPD), to give an example, rejuvinated their delegation, with six incumbents refrained/-ing from candidature. All six were in their sixties and had already served in the EP for 20 or even 25 years. It seems then, that SPD traditionally reselects its incumbents, but that they had reached an age and seniority in 2014 that cristalised considerable turnover in this

---

[39] *La Voz de Galicia (2014, 15 March). Antolín Sánchez Presedo no repite en las listas del PSOE a las elecciones europeas.*

election. While the party leadership may have hinted at the need for renewal, the evidence does not point to any of these departures being contested. Rather, the deselected incumbents indicated that their time in the EP had been 'long enough' and that it was time to cede room to new delegates. These incumbents, and other former MEPs in similar situations, (voluntarily) moved on to other careers or retired.

The German Christian-Democrats (CDU) faced their own '*Generationswechsel*' placing younger candidates on top-positions, causing involuntary departures among the older incumbents who regretterd no longer being allowed to compete on a promising position despite their explicit pursuit of it (see below).[40] In both the 2014 and 2019 elections a considerable share of CDU members with long-term EP service made way for a new generation. Equally so a rejuvination of the EP delegations of the French Republicans (UMP) and Spanish People's Party (PP) was apparent in 2019. Within the EP's smaller delegations it is less straightforward to identify selectoral generation renewals and separate them from purely voluntary retirements or reorientations.

In 2014, a selectoral focus on renewal had been central in the dismissal of candidatures of the Dutch Labour Party (PvdA) incumbents. Whereas in 2019 all three incumbents were reselected, in 2014 the entire delegation (Thijs Berman, Emine Bozkurt and Judith Merkies cf.) had been "*advised to refrain from candidacy*" by the party leadership, despite their ambition to return. This decision would have been taken in light of a "*need for renewal and more highly visible candidates*".[41] In vein, Judith Merkies had aspired to become PvdA's list leader, yet this was undoubtedly an unreachable dream as she had already been discarded from the national delegation by her colleagues Berman and Bozkurt on accounts of difficult cooperation and faced allegations of having unrightfully received daily allowances.[42] The explicit ambition of Claudia Tapardel (RO, PSD) did not suffice either. In February 2019 she pleaded:

> "I really want to run again for the European Parliament, first of all because I have a lot of projects going on [...]. I think that in Brussels we need people who care about this country, [...] have expertise in terms of legislative activity at European level and who understand the European mechanism very well. [...] I think I qualify for the eligibility criteria for Brussels [and] deserve the chance to continue".[43]

---

[40] *Mitteldeutsche Zeitung (2013, 15 April). CDU Halber Wachwechsel.*
[41] *NOS (2013, 19 June). PvdA: andere Europarlementariërs; Parool (2013, 19 June), 'Europarlementariërs PvdA hoeven niet meer terug te komen na verkiezingen'.*
[42] *NRC (2013, 25 October). PvdA schrapt kandidatuur Judith Merkies voor leiding eurofractie; NRC (2014, 14 January). PvdA zet Merkies uit eurodelegatie – 'financiële afspraken geschonden'; RTL Nieuws (2014, 14 January). PvdA-Europarlementariër uit fractie gezet.*
[43] *DC News (2019, 21 February). Tapardel ne am batut pentru Romania.*

Instead, the Romanian Social Democrats opted for a wildly renewed list that was criticized for its "*bizarre candidacies [including] strange figures, media fantasies, […] various inappropriate people [and] above all… no electoral vision*". [44] Relevant experience and even explicit ambition do not always seem to weigh up against the attractiveness of visible figures and vote canons. In search for votes some parties are found to favor exciting new names, if need be to the detriment of their incumbents.

The Cypriot Workers' Party AKEL introduced a 'quality critereon' in its 2019 candidate selection procedure on top of the existing term limit and prevailing over the idea of geographical representation. This '*quality upgrade*', as the party puts it, is aimed at bringing in new faces, namely those of "*people who have a foothold in the party base but also in society at large".* [45] Similarly, in a logic of rejuvination and the search for young and attractive new faces, Neos had pressured its MEP Angelika Mlinar to refrain from running. The party was looking for "*a familiar face outside the party that could guarantee a good election result*"[46], therefore casting aside Mlinar who had been co-founder of the movement. In the final years there had been incresaing conflicts over the content of the party however, and she barely passed the election to stay part of the party's executive in January 2018. Mlinar complains not having received enough support from her party, but also acknowledged she perhaps had acted too independently while in Parliament. Though she uttered "*not to leave [Neos] in an argument*", and that re-election seeking elsewhere was "*not the goal*"[47], she eventually ran as leading candidate for a Slovenian sister party of Neos.[48]

The party's 'advise' may often be more elegantly covered. In 2019, Hans Van Baalen (NL, VVD) explained he thought it time for a new generation of Europarliamentarians and stressed he enjoyed the idea of spending time with family again, only five months after expressing his interest in renewing his mandate in the EP.[49] He is not alone in expressing the wish to '*make way for younger people*' or to simply declare it is '*time for a change*', for a '*new challenge*'.[50] Without further information the question remains whether this is a truly voluntary decision in the absence of static ambition, or whether it is rather an elegant explanation after not being invited to defend their seat.

---

[44] *Sputnik (2019, 25 March). Lista PSD Europarlamentare candidati alegeri.*
[45] *Offsite (2018, 3 October). Akel Mpainoyn sta bathia enopsei eyroeklogon.*
[46] *Der Standard (2018, 18 May). EU-Abgeordnete Mlinar beklagt mangelnde unterstützung bei Neos.*
[47] *Ibidem.*
[48] Kleine Zeitung (2019, 19 March). *Mlinar kandidiert für Slowenische Liberale Partei*; Salzburger Nachrichten (2019, 30 March). *EU-Wahl – Drei Österreicher mehr als bisher im EU-Parlament.*
[49] Parlement.com (2018, 16 July). *Hans Van Baalen niet beschikbaar voor derde termijn als Europarlementariër*; NOS (2018, 25 February). *Hans Van Baalen wordt geen Minister van Buitenlandse Zaken.*
[50] See for example: [Gabriele Zimmer] Neues Deutschland (2019, 13 February). *Gabi Zimmer: Ich habe gelernt wütend zu sein*; [Christopher Fjellner] Dagens Industri (2018, 24 October). *Corazza Bildt petas fran EU parlamentet djupt besviken*; Aftonbladet (2018, 24 October). *M profil ska lamna Bryssel*; [Hannah Hedh] Barometern (2018, 19 December). *Anna Hedh lamnar EU politiken*; Socialdemokraterna.nu (2018, 19 December). *Anna Hedh lamnar EU parlamentet efter valet i maj 2019.*

Particularly so if the MEP in question is neither a newcomer with a high likelihood of progressive or discrete ambition, nor reaching retirement age. At age 52 Anna Hedh, member of the Swedish Social Democrats (SAP) withdraws after four terms to "*move on to new tasks [and to] hand over to others to take over*".[51] Quite the turnaround, as she had been very clear on her ambition to run again until a couple of weeks before she gave this message of seeking a change. By December 2018 however, she rescinded her candidature. Hedh explains to have changed her mind during a delay in the Social Democrats' nomination process. She stresses,

> "I have not, it is important, received any message from my party that I will be pushed down on our upcoming list. Sure, there are signals that there will be big changes, but it is not more accurate than that. This decision, to step down from EU policy, I have made after a couple of weeks of careful consideration. That should be enough now, it's time to move on to new tasks".[52]

What those new tasks should entail was still unclear six months after the 2019 EP elections she withdrew from. The argument of seeking a new challenge or wanting to accommodate a new generation of MEPs is often neither entirely convincing nor explicitly contradicted. Either way, these MEPs make way for a new generation without contestation.

6.4.2   Scandal, controversy and conflict

Scandal, controversies and irreconcilable differences with the party support the idea of deselection for a number of additional MEPs. They are considered to be denied renewed candidacy by their party. These former MEPs did not continue their political career in the national arena either. Oftentimes, however, I found no *explicit* mentions by neither the incumbent nor the party that deselection and scandal/conflict were related. Some are ousted after fraud-, corruption-, and conflict of interest-scandals or allegations of having bought votes; others brought public disgrace upon their parties and provoked public outrage through nazi-slogans, racial slurs and plagiarism scandals. Others still, were accused of mistreating staff; had propagated hoaxes and false or manipulated news with political intention; or had even presented fake degrees. One MEP was dismissed after causing a drug-induced deadly car accident. Another ended up having his party membership revoked over a family dispute, shortly after the party had defended him for racial slurs in the EP. Another remarkable story is that of Bela Kovács, a Hungarian MEP with Jobbik who was accused of being a Russian KGB spy.[53] He was equally facing fraud charges for fictitious

---

[51] *Socialdemokraterna.nu (2018, 19 December). Anna Hedh lamnar EU parlamentet efter valet i maj 2019.*
[52] *Barometern (2018, 19 December). Anna Hedh lamnar EU politiken*
[53] *European Press Prize (n.d.). The Secret Life of Bela Kovacs; V Square (2017, 4 October). The Great Escape of KGB; Hungary Today (2017, 12 June). Jobbik MEP Bela 'KGB' Kovacs to be charged with spying on the EU for Russia.*

employment of interns at the EP.[54] Such scandals of course do not make attractive candidates and are a risk for the party's reputation and appeal to voters.

The impact of controversy surrounding an MEP on the selectorate's willingness to take this person to the polls again is illustrated by the case of Cecilia Wikström (SE, L). Despite having served dutifully and actively during the past legislature, the Liberals' Party Congress was more than reluctant to allow her to pursue her EP career further. Wikström's lucrative side-gigs and board memberships had sparked controversy during her time in Parliament. Despite explicit support and nomination by her local district of the Swedish Liberals, the opposition in the central Party Congress was clear. Delegates feared an endorsement of Wikström would allow the controversy to follow her and cause electoral damage to the entire party.[55]

The Austrian FPÖ-member Barbara Kappel was also not reconducted. She had however been a very active and influential member of the EP and sought to continue her career there. Her frequent disagreement with the FPÖ's delegation leader, Harald Vilimsky, cost her the renomination though she had held "*hope to be nominated again in the 2019 elections despite all resistance*"[56]. The French MEP Jean-Luc Bennahmias, then, claims to have left the UDI/MoDem out of discontent with its policy course and starts his own party to compete in the 2014 elections. Other sources however, reveal UDI/MoDem had refused to grant him a leading spot on the list, after which Bennahmias – unsuccessfully – sought access to the ballot with PS.[57] The Belgian socialist Véronique De Keyser (PS) created tension with her party leadership after she made an unapproved visit to Bachar Al-Assad during a trip to Libya and Syria during the Syrian civil war. She was de facto deselected by her party, whose only offer was the one-before-last slot on the substitute list, which clearly gave her no chance at all of continuing her political career. Frustrated with this decision she considers herself "*disposed of like old trash*"[58]. These latter two cases bring us to the importance of ballot placement, and give first insights into deselection through relegation, albeit combined here with party conflict.

---

[54] *Sky News (2018, 10 July). Hungarian MEP Bela Kovacs on trial for spying on EU for Russia.*
[55] *Göteborgs-Posten (2019, 29 March). Wikström inte med pa liberalernas EU lista.*
[56] *Nachrichten.at (2018, 14 July). FPÖ Einzelkämpferin hofft wieder auf EU Mandat.*
[57] *Le Parisien (2014, 16 June). Bennahmias, ex-MoDem, crée son parti aux côtés du PS.*
[58] *Original: "Véronique De Keyser […] affirmant s'être 'fait jeter comme un chien'". La Libre (2014, 22 March). Véronique De Keyser éjectée du PS, "tel un chien".*

6.4.3 Forfeit beats failure

Static ambition may remain hidden as incumbents refrain from communicating prior to securing (re)selection to a promising ballot position. Once the desire for re-election is uttered, it is harder to feed the public an elegant story about one's absence from the list. Franciso Assis (PT, PS) had been head of list in 2014 and had held leadership positions during his term. Still, when he was asked about his ambition to run again right before the final ballot registrations in 2019 he had not been contacted by the party leadership. His milk-and-water response captures the fear of losing face well.

> "I like being in the European Parliament [but] I cannot say that I am available, I can only say that I am available by any invitation, which has not yet arrived. If it arrives, I will ponder. If I say now that I am available, it seems that I am here with overwhelming availability, which is not the case".[59]

It is hard to admit deselection. It is also no less difficult to ascertain it has taken place in the absence of explicit proof. This lays in line with the uncertainty on how to interpret departures explained by 'personal reasons' or 'looking forward to new challenges'.

Focusing on candidate selection and looking beyond an MEP's realized post-EP career, the analysis catches a more subtle mismatch between ambition and career. More specifically, national political office is found to serve as a consolation prize or safety net for some MEPs who fail to convince their selectorate of their bid on a renewed EP term. Though surely these examples illustrate exceptions rather than the norm, these findings nuance the second order nature of EP careers – or rather holds MEPs' presumed progressive ambition up to the light. Adam Szejnfeld's (PL, PO) successful run in the elections to the Polish Senate in October 2019, for example, may suggest progressive ambition. In reality however, he had been demoted from head of list on his constituencies' EP ballot when former Prime Minister Kopacz had decided to enter the EP race. Unhappy with the hopeless fourth place, Szejnfeld renegotiated as to obtain the list pusher's position, but eventually withdrew altogether as he did not estimate he could win a seat.[60]

Similarly, Ricardo Serrão Santos (PT, PS), who had been among the most influential Portuguese MEPs, found his ambition to continue his EP stint dismissed as territorial balance and renewal was brought to the EP list. He expressed his desire to continue and "*his 'pity' for not remaining in the European Parliament for the next term, but guaranteed not to be hurt*" by the decision.[61] His

---

[59] *Publico (2019, 13 May). Assis demitese cargo Europeu apos impedido falar debate pe Venezuala.*
[60] *Plus Gloswielko Polski (2019, 10 April). Wyborgy do parlamentu europejskiego 2019 – Adam Szejnfeld rezygnuje ze startu z list koalicji europejskiek wyborach do PE; Poznan Wyborcza (2019, 11 October). Wybory Parlamentarne 2019 fatalna kampania adama Szejnfelda.*
[61] *Publico (2019, 23 May). Bailinho eurodeputados acores madeira ano polemico; Jornal Acores 9 (2019, 15 October). Ricardo Serrao Santos e o novo Ministro do mar.*

unanswered static ambition is easily masked, however, by his appointment as Minister of Maritime Affairs in October 2019.[62] In another example, it is somewhat ironic that Philippe Juvin (FR, UMP) was not reselected himself, after proudly having announced that the strength of the 2019 UMP list lay in the party's attention to long term EP careers and reselection of experienced incumbents. The more so because he had been flagged as the party's likely list leader. Finally, eight out of twenty UMP incumbents were reselected; while Juvin explained he withdrew his candidature because he rather wanted to "*dedicate himself to his beautiful town*", La Garenne-Colombes of which he was mayor. It seems that, though not new, the prohibition of *cumuls de mandats* provided him with an elegant out.

Not all incumbents are willing to run a race they cannot win. I find ample evidence of incumbents who were absent from the ballot after they had not been able to secure a promising position on the list. Oft they even pursued list leadership and withdrew from the race upon failure to obtain it. It is clear that incumbents and parties alike consider ballot position value and the consequences of a hopeless slot. In these cases, the incumbent clearly wanted to renew his/her mandate, but withdrew the candidature once faced with the real threat of electoral defeat. These departures are evidently not due to a lack of static ambition and should therefore be considered involuntary. Rather than setting themselves up to lose the election, they opted to not enter the race on poor prospects. While the choice not to accept a hopeless position (or anything less than list leadership) is voluntary, the fact that they could not convince their selectorates to renominate them to a promising spot on the list points to *s*electoral defeat. Indeed, for incumbents in this category it holds that their party's list had at least one promising ballot slot available, but the deselected MEP had not made the cut.

Isabelle Durant (BE, Ecolo) and Anne Delvaux (BE, CdH) both pursued list leadership, and followed up on their threat to leave if their request was not granted. While the former accepted the 'consolation prize' in the Brussels regional parliament, Delvaux equally turned down the offer for a promising position in the concurrent federal elections.[63] Convinced she was "*lynched*' [by the] *barons, caciques et huiles*"[64] (chiefs) of the party she's frustrated with its functioning and resigns.

Other incumbents could not convince the selectorate in a bid for the realistic position they

[62] *Portugal.gov (n.d.)* Ministires, Maritime Affairs, Minster*; Jornal Acores 9 (2019, 15 October).* Ricardo Serrao Santos e o novo Ministro do mar
[63] *De Standaard (2013, 19 October).* Ecolo kiest Philippe Lamberts als Europese lijsttrekker*;; DH Net (2014, 18 March).* Anne Delvaux (cdH) quitte la politique et… la RTBF*. Le Soir (2014, 13 February),* Anne Delvaux règle ses comptes avec le cdH: "La politique, je n'en ferai plus mon métier"*; Le Vif (2014, 13 February).* Lynchée par les barons du parti, Anne Delvaux ironise sur l'humanisme du cdH*; Parlement francophone bruxellois (n.d.) Les Parlementaires,* Durant Isabelle*.*
[64] *Le Vif (2014, 22 February).* Anne Delvaux éjectée d'une particratie belge, dopée au celebrity marketing*.*

were after – despite their local support and candidacy in the intra-party primaries – and turned down the option for a lower spot.[65] Media accounts hint to different stages of candidate selection whereby incumbents are defeated once the national list is being decided and ballot balancing, in terms of geography and gender, throws a spanner in the works. Territorial balance seems to be a theme of particular relevance in Germany, Portugal and Spain – countries with strong regions but national EP lists. The application of gender quota and 'zipper' rules also makes its victims as ticket balancing and strategic candidate placement becomes increasingly complicated and being 'the first listed' female or not may make or break electoral prospects.

In 2014, the Dutch Marije Cornelissen (GroenLinks) sought list leadership on a list with two promising positions. When she was offered only fourth place (and 2nd female on the list) she tried to convince the selectorate to place her second (and 1st female candidate). These efforts equally being in vain, she called the selectorates' decision "*surprising, very disappointing and odd*" after which she left politics.[66] In 2019, Marietje Schaake (NL, D66) left politics after losing the list leader election against her incumbent colleague Sofie in't Veld. Schaake had been widely recognized as the leading force on digital affairs in the EP and was named one of the most influential MEPs. After losing the internal campaign, she made a career switch to an academic think tank on digital technology and innovation.[67]

6.4.4   Anger and dissappointment

Others did not take the deselection so kindly and showed their disgruntlement with their parties' candidate selection procedure. Perelló Rodríguez Andrès hackles the lack of communication and the unclear organisation of the PSOE's nomination process that fails to set forward clear candidate selection criteria.

> "We are elected for five years, that is clear to me. What I do not know is the type of criteria followed, I think there is no method, nor was there when I was chosen. […] I have talked to many colleagues and they have the same experience as me: they only know what the newspapers say,

[65] *Some examples of such nomination failure can be found here: Volksstimme (2012, 11 December)* CDU-Dreikampf: Europa-Aktivistin und Nachwuchskraft gegen Genussbotschatfer Eva Wybrands und Sven Schulze wollen Horst Schnellhardt den Sitz; *Mitteldeutsche Zeitung (2013, 15 April).* CDU Halber Wachwechsel; *Pfalz Express (2014, 14 January).* Letzter Abgeordneter der FDP: Jürgen Creutzmann will wieder in's Europaparlament; *SWR Aktuell (2014, 26 May).* CDU hat die Nase vorn, SPD legt zu; *Rhein-Zeitung (2014, 15 April).* Europawahl: Die aussichtsreichen Kandidaten aus Rheinland-Pfalz. *Naiz (2019, 3 April).* Carlos Iturgaiz deja la politica tras ser relegado en la lista europea del PP; *El Mundo (2019, 14 April).* Malestar en Ciudadanos pol el número de independientes en la lista europea; *Plus Gloswielko Polski (2019, 10 April).* Wyborgy do parlamentu europejskiego 2019 – Adam Szejnfeld rezygnuje ze startu z list koalicji europejskiek wyborach do PE.
[66] *The Post Online (2013, 2 December).* Interview: Marije Cornelissen, kandidaat-Europarlement GroenLinks.
[67] Schaake, Marietje (2018, 20 July). *"We beleven een sleutelmoment in de geschiedenis. Ik stel me kandidaat als lijsstrekker voor D66 in Europea, om samen te bouwen aan het Europa van de toekomst"* [Twitter update]; Parlementaire Monitor (2018, 11 September). *Marietje Schaake (45%) verliest van Sofie in't Veldt (55%)*; Trouw (2019, 8 May). *Schaake (D66) is bij haar afscheid somberder over Europa dan toen ze begon*.

nobody from the party or the management body has said anything to us. I think there is another way of doing things".[68]

After Schaake's exit and in't Veld's list leadership at D66 (NL) the third D66 MEP, Matthijs Van Miltenburg, found out he was not renominated on the list. In anger, he accused leading candidate Sofie in't Veld of having deliberately ousted him for having voted for her opponent.[69] In Greece, Georgios Epitideios of Golden Dawn felt "*sacrificed*" too. He left the party in fury one month before the 2019 elections took place. Stating

> "the reason for his departure is the 'offensive' way in which he was treated, as the party decided not to include him in the European ballot, despite his 'successful course'". In a letter he writes: "My name was not included in the ballot because […] as I was informed by phone by the leader, on my own initiative, a few days before the names of the first candidates were announced, my descent creates a problem in the election of former party officials, because I have an advantage towards then, due to my position.

Epitideios goes on to acclaim his performance record, emphasizing his ranking and commitment to producing speeches, questions, amendments, explanations of vote as well as the time he made for interviews, journalists and television stations. He rejects the idea there would have been a single term limit and denounces

> "there was no personal meeting on my candidacy […] I think I deserve this meeting. […] I was treated in a derogatory way [and] I do not think it makes sense to continue to be active in a political space where my work and contribution are not valued but other things".[70]

It is Anna Maria Corazza Bild's indignation that takes the crown. The Swedish Moderates' MEP announces to leave the party once her term in the EP is over as she is

> "deeply dissappointed by the Moderate Nomination Committee's proposal to completely throw me out of every opportunity to be a candidate for the party in the important European elections next year. They want to deny me every possible place on the moderate list […] Now apparently [they believe] that I have been and am a burden for our party. I have a hard time understanding and accepting that".[71]

She considers herself kicked out and demands an independent investigation into the Moderates' nomination process, which she believes reflected a Soviet-style power and modus operandi

---

[68] Levante, El mercantile Valenciano, (2014, 16 March). *Andrés Perelló: «Nadie nos ha dicho nada, las formas revelan el fondo»*.
[69] Trouw (2019, 24 January). *"Europees lijstduwer Jan Terlouw: 'D66 had het neoliberalisme eerder moeten bestrijden'*; Europa-nu (2018, 10 December). *Relletje bij de Europese D66-fractie*.
[70] Documento News (2019, 22 April). *They "sacrificed" Epitideios for the sake of the Hare in the Golden Dawn - Crisis in the neo-Nazi organization with the departure of the MEP*.
[71] Dagens Industri (2018, 14 October). *Corazza Bildt petas från EU-parlamentet – "djupt besviken"*, updated on 30 April 2019.

(original: "*marked by power and mold in a soviet way*"). She goes on to elucidate that "*it is always that clique of men that governs how far you should go – and how you should go on…*".[72] There had been a rumor Corazza Bildt was dismissed because of "*outbursts of anger and shitty treatment of staff*", which the MEP brushes off as jealousy. "*Obviously there are some who perceive me as a threat precisely because I am strong*".[73]

Making room for (former) party officials and the need to run an internal campaign first, more than once sparked bitter frustration. In 2014, French socialist MEPs Françoise Castex, Liêm Hoang Ngoc and Bernadette Vergnaud claim to be party victims due to their insufficient weight within the party: they are being replaced to accommodate inter-party arrangements and pay for the candidacy of, or for being on bad terms with, one of the party's leading figures. Surprised and angered by their eviction from the list, they speak out against the internal haggling between party leaders, the need to 'court the leadership' to get in their grace and the primacy of internal arrangements over the work delivered by the incumbents in deciding on the ballot placements.[74] Castex laments

> "we are three socialist MEPs, among those most involved in parliamentary work, to have been rejected this way. Right and left, the French political parties consider [the European] election as the opportunity to "cast" some personalities involved in the internal life of their political party".[75]

In 2019, the problem seems to persist as Christine Revault D'Allonnes Bonnefoy of the Parti Socialiste (FR) deplores a similar situation. Overnight she had found herself demoted from second place on the nation-wide list in 2019 to well below eligibility as 6th ranked female candidate. Territorial balancing had definitely proven costly now that France consisted of one national consituency for the European elections, but (re)selection priorities came down to more than that. After being relegated the MEP criticized her party's short-sighted focus on the electoral campaign and it's broken promise to take into account members' performance.

> "I thought that in view of my record as an MEP, my investment as co-lead of the socialist project, I could claim to be in an eligible position on the 2019 list. My party judged that I did not deserve

[72] *Europa Portalen (2018, 26 november).* [Corazza Bildt om Moderaternas EU-lista: Makt och mygel.](#)
[73] Aftonblated (2019, 23 April). [*"Det räcker nu, Corazza Bildt"*](#), updated on 24 April 2019.
[74] *Politico, (2013, 20 November).* [Elections in Europe and Azerbaijan](#); Sud Ouest, (2013, 21 November). [Elections européennes: les socialistes du Sud-Ouest envoient leur liste sur les roses](#); Sud Ouest, (2014, 17 February). [Gers: Francoise Castex claque la porte du PS](#); Le Plus, (2013, 22 November). [Députée européenne, écartée des listes PS pour 2014, mon travail est perdu](#); Slate, (2013, 9 Demcember). [La France, le pays où les bons europdéputés sont évincés](#); FranceInfo, (2013, 17 November), [Bernadette Vergnaud évincée de la liste du Parti socialiste aux élections européennes](#); Le7, (2013, 18 November). Elections européennes – [Bernadette Vergnaud ne sera pas sur la liste PS](#).
[75] *Sud Ouest, (2014, 17 February).* [Gers: Françoise Castex claque la porte du PS](#).

to compete in an eligible position, I therefore consider that it does not carry the same assessment of my [performance] record. It seems that the promise of the congress not to take into account the very old allegiances to the very old sub-sensitivities has not been kept, not more than those of taking into account investment and work. I therefore draw the consequences of the vision that my party has, of my work in the European Parliament by stepping down from the presidency of the socialist delegation".[76]

She contrasts the short term focus on the campaign French parties – beyond her own – exhibit with the strategy of other member states where parties understand it takes multiple mandates to weigh in and see big projects through. "*I have the impression of having given everything for these elections. Since September, I have been in the field all the time, but probably I haven't campaigned enough internally*".[77] Ultimately diligent work and handling big dossiers is a solid asset within the Parliament, but seem to be "*too complicated to summarize on a campaign poster*", she concludes.[78]

Few if any explicit connections are found between *'bad'* performance and selectoral punishment in the evidence considered here. It seems José Inácio Faria (PT, MPT) is a rare case of clarity. Despite Faria's extraordinary influence on EP Health policy[79], his party unanimously decided to withdraw political confidence from him. As a response to

> "the 'individualist political positions' he has assumed, […] 'in some cases even opposed to those of [the party's] competent bodies to issue them, and always in spite of the relevant and democratically formed will of the party".[80]

The MPT further justified its motion by stating Faria's parliamentary performance "*does not fulfill the primary function of his political mandates, which is the representation of the party that elected him*".[81] Pleasing the party leadership seems to remain key, but the question remains whether parliamentary performance is truly a way of doing so. Marie-Christine Vergiat (FR, FG), stepping down voluntarily herself, joins her French colleagues in underscoring the lack of appreciation for work delivered in the EP.[82] She reflects:

> "What I found the most difficult, the most ungrateful, is without a doubt the absence of knowledge and therefore appreciation of our work, including during the electoral campaign, whichever political group we adhere to for that matter. And it is rather troubling to observe,

[76] *94.Citoyens.com (2019, 27 March). Cuisine électorale européenne: le PS sacrifie Christine Revault-d'Allonnes.*
[77] *Ibidem.*
[78] *Ibidem.*
[79] *RTP Europa (2019, 18 February). "MEP Awards 2019" elege para finalist o eurodeputodo José Inácio Faria.*
[80] *Observador (2018, 30 October). MPT retira confiança política ao eurodeputado José Inácio Faria.*
[81] *Ibidem.*
[82] *Actu Citoyenne (2019, 22 March). Interview de Marie Christine Vergiat, députée européenne front de gauche [Facebook update].*

and it is particularly true in France, how little is known about the functioning of European institutions".[83]

6.5   Intermediate conclusion: Balance beats ambition

The assumption of voluntary exit among non-candidates has important bearings on our understanding of parliamentarians as re-election seekers. The conventional wisdom that parliamentarians are "single-minded seekers of re-election" (Mayhew, 1974) should be nuanced, as research has shown that the majority of parliamentary career terminations (both intra- and inter-term) turns out to be voluntary (Vanlangenakker & Maddens, 2011; Francis & Baker, 1986; Hamm & Olson, 1992; Edinger & Schwarz, 2009). An important share of outgoing incumbents retires or voluntarily switches gears. At the same time, the prevalence of uncontested exits should not blind us to the occurrence of deselection. Theoretical distinctions have been made, yet only a handful of empirical studies have attempted to move beyond the constricted view of electoral defeat as only source of involuntary exit. This thesis contributes to this field, being among only few studies that effectively seeks to differentiate voluntary exits from nomination failure.

To be sure, deselection is not the norm in EP elections, but it is more frequent than what one might assume based on the current state of the literature. The totality of voluntary exits, covering both retirement and progressive ambitions, outweighs the number of cases where signals of deselection were found. The vast majority of voluntary exits consisted of MEPs of 64 years or older concluding their career and signing off. Retirement appeared to be the number one driver of incumbents' absence on their party's list.

Interestingly, homebound progressive ambition only showed through in a small portion of MEPs who were not reselected. Similarly intriguing is the finding that – at least in some cases – it was the national or local office that served as a 'plan B' in response to unrealized static ambition in the EP. Considering the importance placed on the superior attractiveness of the national political arena and stepping stone MEPs in the literature, it is remarkable at least that blatant nomination failure despite explicit static ambition appears to be as common as incumbent MEPs swiftly moving on to a national, regional or local offices after their EP term. Besides clear-cut nomination failure, also soft evidence was found regarding deliberate rejuvenation of party delegations, controversies and scandals shattering the incumbent's attractiveness for the party, and MEPs getting back from nomination failure by seeking re-election under another party's banner.

---

[83] *Les Nouvelles Libres (2019, 6 August). L'interview du mois: épisode 1 – Marie-Christine Vergiat (ex-eurodéputée de 2009 à 2019).*

The mapping revealed that a considerable portion of MEPs who did not reappear on their party's ballot, in fact held the static ambition to continue their career in the EP. Of all MEPs who were not reselected, one in six showed signs of being deselected by their party. Among full term party faithful MEPs (as included in the quantitative analyses presented in the previous chapter) signals of deselection were found in a quarter of cases. Some accepted their fate while others sought access to the EP race by offering their candidature to another party, or made public statements about their discontent or unbelief. The accounts of the incumbents who spoke up about their deselection are particularly telling. They criticize the selection procedure or express their frustration with feeling 'kicked out'. Those who do denounce the party's nomination procedure or it's tendency to value internal campaigning and personal allegeance more than dutiful work in the EP.

The intricacies of presenting a balanced ticked is a red thread throughout the accounts of nudged and forced exit from the EP. Balancing the list and its top positions in terms of geography and gender proves a difficult endeavor. Together with incentives for elite renewal they seem to mark important constraints. Clearly, parties want to attract voters with fresh and well-known faces and are eager to allot at least part of the (valuable) ballot positions to non-incumbents. This provides chances for a younger generation but also for former party officials and leading figures.

Courting the leadership comes forward as an intricate part of reselection. Any role parliamentary performance may play therein however remains obscure. Rather – so proclaim those left behind – internal campaigning, visibility and personal allegiances are key. It is even more striking then, that many MEPs do not seem to have been actively involved in the ballot negotiations, signaling their desire to continue or pleading their case. Some deselected MEPs are clearly taken aback by their selectorate's choices and – eerily close to the registration deadline for ballot lists – come to the conclusion that their party has not called or invited them yet, that no meeting on their ambition took place. They seem to simply stumble upon the fact of their deselection at the same time as – or barely earlier than – the rest of the nation.

The exploration of mismatches between ambition and reselection also underscores the importance of ballot position value in systems where the ballot's order greatly affects one's chances. Several re-election seeking incumbents were found to drop out of the race once they realized they had not obtained a ballot position holding actual electoral value. They rather bow out than lose the race. This underlines the importance of ballot position value and the two-step nature of the selectoral reward/punishment mechanism (*access* and *rank*). Of particular relevance to this thesis is the confirmation that parties and MEPs are aware of their electoral prospects and decide their next move accordingly. Incumbents who are not rewarded with both access and rank may opt out of the race despite their ambition.

7   Concluding chapter

This thesis considered the question whether MEPs are selectorally rewarded for their performance in the EP. In doing so, its aim was to connect selectoral turnover to the idea that better performing MEPs are advantaged in their chances to renew their mandate. I therefore asked: *Are MEPs selectorally rewarded for their parliamentary performance in the EP?* In order to answer the question, an understanding of what selectoral reward is and how it can be recognized and measured is crucial. Empirical tests of selectoral reward then should take into account the electoral context and test for subset dynamics as well as for consistency. Does performance matter across legislatures and electoral systems? Which performance records create advantages at the reselection, reward and re-election stages?

Consistent results would signal the existence of a performance-reward mechanism. Isolated results however, may reveal that the connection between performance and (s)electoral advantage does not stem from a systematic, party-driven performance appraisal. Instead, the MEP's ambition could be the driving force behind both his/her active involvement in the EP's work and his/her better odds. The second research strand in this thesis therefore explored the *reasons behind incumbents' absence from their party's ballot* in the EP elections following their term. Are the MEPs who are not reselected discarded by their party, for example because their performance was below par, or are they simply not seeking to renew their mandate?

The concluding chapter is structured as follows. First, I restate the rationale and objectives of the thesis. In the second and third sections, I consequently summarize the main findings and discuss their implications. In the final section, I take the opportunity to acknowledge the limitations of this study and to propose some avenues for future research.

7.1   Thesis rationale and objectives

Despite growing EP careerism, there is a tacit extension of the assumption that most MEPs do not care much for a renewed mandate and that national parties do not care much about what their members do while in Parliament. The (s)electoral accountability of MEPs on how they've spend their time in the EP is often considered negligible or absent altogether. Recently, a literature has emerged putting this assumption to the test by linking MEPs' parliamentary performance to their chances of being reselected by their party, re-elected by their electorate or competing in the race from a safer position. The idea is that parties benefit from having experienced representatives in the EP, particularly if they have shown to be actively involved in the parliamentary work.

Therefore, in drawing up their ballot lists, party selectorates will aim to send their best incumbents back to Strasbourg.

These studies have brought forward empirical evidences of (s)electoral advantages for more active and influential MEPs. What an MEP does consequently seemed to matter more for re(s)election than commonly assumed. However, this emerging literature is scarce and scattered. It remained unclear what indicators of performance *consistently* matter. At the same time, the concept of selectoral reward and the measures used to capture it faced important limitations, particularly in the EP context. While the common interpretation of the positive connection between performance and re(s)election odds was that parties recognize the value of their MEPs' work and experience, little empirical testing of this idea had so far taken place. We know surprisingly little about *why* MEPs do not return to the ballot and about *which driver* of turnover had determined their fate: their ambition, the selectorate or voters.

The theoretical perspectives connecting parliamentary performance to incumbent re(s)election are not new. However, the dynamics and empirical consistency of the effects of performance on incumbents' chances to be re(s)elected and selectorally rewarded needed further testing. This thesis set out to help bridge the gap in the extant literature with both empirical and conceptual contributions. It did so through the pursuit of four research objectives:

- the theoretical situation of *selectoral reward*;
- the conception of a *measure to empirically test it*;
- the *evaluation of increased (s)electoral odds for active MEPs as a signal of selectoral reward*;
- the *examination of the assumption of voluntary exit in the EP*.

The former two take shape through critical appraisal of the literature and current approach to the questions of (selectoral) turnover, and the intrinsic (s)electoral value of ballot positions. The latter two objectives relate to data-driven contributions. One testing subset dynamics and the consistency of performance effects on (s)electoral rewards in a broad-scaled layered statistical approach. The other exploring the occurrence of deselection, shedding light onto unrealized ambitions and the surrounding circumstances.

7.2   Selectoral reward for parliamentary performance in the EP?

The expectation was that MEPs who were more actively involved in the EP's work, would be more likely re(s)elected, and more likely rewarded with a valuable ballot position in systems that allow it. For each indicator of performance, and concerning each model series, a positive effect of

higher activity was hypothesized. Because the tools for selectoral reward are different in party-versus candidate-centred systems, I expected to find different dynamics of selectoral performance reward in both systems. If the effects then extend beyond one legislature, this indicates they are stable and consistent. If so, they can be interpreted to designate patterns of (s)electoral accountability for past performance. The inconsistency of effects found, however, suggest such deliberate selectoral connection to MEP performance is missing.

Overall, I find that quite a wide range of parliamentary performance indicators exert statistically significant effects upon MEPs' (s)electoral odds. Which performance records matter however, differs not only between electoral systems but also between legislatures. Parliamentary performance seems better suited to predict reselection compared to re-election odds. In candidate-centred systems the selectoral advantage of performance seems meager at best. MEPs under such systems moreover, do not experience an electoral advantage to active involvement in the EP's work. To the contrary, MEPs who attend the plenary sessions of the EP more often are less likely to be re-elected. In party-centred systems, performance has a stronger impact on MEPs' re(s)election odds. Obtaining reports under the ordinary legislative procedure (COD) appears to be the most consistently rewarded parliamentary activity. Yet here too, the effects could not be confirmed across series and legislatures.

Equally, the analyses could not consistently confirm that prior political experience – as a proxy for voter attractiveness – yields (s)electoral advantage for incumbent MEPs seeking re-election. Former national politicians in party-centred systems were more likely to obtain a top position in 2014; but in the 2019 elections, they were electorally disadvantaged regardless of the electoral system in which they were competing. Rather than (s)electoral advantage for former national politician's name recognition among voters, the effects may have been instigated by the volatile electoral climate and the decline of traditional parties, affecting the electoral prospects of former national MPs, ministers and their party list more generally.

After reviewing previously used measures to capture the (s)electoral value of a ballot position and their limitations, I devised a novel operationalization. The primary reason to do so was to return to the idea of electoral uncertainty and to differentiate between 'near certain' (cfr. realistic) and 'hopeful' (cfr; marginal) positions. The application of the novel measure for ballot position value shows that the majority of reselected MEPs obtains a valuable ballot position. Most reselected incumbents are therefore selectorally rewarded, through *access* and *rank*. Nevertheless, relegation to a ballot position from which one cannot expect re-election is not a fringe phenomenon. Nearly a quarter of reselected incumbents ends up on a hopeless position.

The measure captures the (un)certainty of the electoral prospects a ballot position onto its holder well. Over 80% of re-elected incumbents competed from a realistic position; half the MEPs competing on marginal positions succeed, and incumbents on hopeless positions are typically defeated. The connection between performance and receiving higher value positions however is insufficient to conclude that parties deliberately tally highly active incumbents on their top positions. While parliamentary performance could be linked to the odds of obtaining a promising ballot position, I do not find evidence that parties differentiate whom among their incumbent candidates receives the best value positions based on their performance records.

The findings cast doubt on the existence of any consistent (s)electoral reward for (types of) an MEP's active involvement in the EP's work. I do not find evidence of a systematic performance-reward mechanism in deciding on the reselection (and placement) of incumbents.

The second empirical strand of the research consists of an exploration of the occurrence of deselection in the EP, i.e. the decision of the party selectorate not to reselect an incumbent despite his/her ambition to continue an EP career. For each outgoing MEP that is not reselected to his/her party's list, I aim to uncover the reasons behind the departure. This speaks the tacit assumption of voluntary exit from the EP by aiming to differentiate voluntary departures from deselection. I show that nomination failures (the most explicit evidence of deselection) is as frequent as departures due to MEPs' progressive ambition towards national, regional or local elected office. Still, retirement is the most common reason behind an incumbent's absence from the list.

The analysis also underscores the importance of ballot position. I found multiple cases where MEPs withdrew their candidatures in the EP race after they estimated their chances of re-election, competing from the position they had been offered by their party, were too low. Finally, among the deselected, little evidence points to selectoral scrutiny of the MEPs' work. If anything, dismissed MEPs hackle the lack of attention to and appreciation for their work. Under the various circumstances that lead (or required) selectorates to dismiss an incumbent's static ambition, balancing the ticket is the most important underlying motivation.

7.3   Relevance and contributions

The work presented in this thesis links – and contributes – to various fields. The concepts and empirical tests of selectoral reward, deselection and ballot position value in the EP speak to scholars of legislative turnover and candidate selection in particular. Additionally, testing the effect

of a wide array of indicators of parliamentary performance in the EP on a set of outcome variables relating to different 'stages' of the pathway to elite renewal, this dissertation speaks to scholars of legislative behavior, legislative elites and (s)electoral accountability of parliamentarians. More generally, this thesis is of interest to EP scholars because – besides the topics mentioned above – it touches multiple core questions such as the professionalization of the assembly, the ambitions of its members and the selection priorities of its (national) parties. Such questions on the professionalization potential of the European Parliament and the attention selectorates devote to the legislative behavior of their representatives in the supranational assembly inevitably relate to essential and normative reflections on the democratic quality of the representation of citizens in the European Union. In an arena marked by troubled electoral connection, the seeming lack of selectoral accountability raises serious questions on the current state of European democracy and the investment of both parties and politicians in the European arena of politics. If voters nor parties are concerned with how MEPs perform – or at least not sufficiently so to consistently reward it – then it is paramount to uncover what it is they seek and reward in order to critically reassess the EU' democratic deficit.

The thesis makes both conceptual and empirical contributions, which largely correspond to the themes of the research objectives set out above. A first contribution to the literature is *conceptual* and adds to the theoretical literature on legislative turnover and its practical applications. Theoretical perspectives and classifications of (legislative) turnover are well developed. My contribution to this field is not one of innovation, but rather one of structure and conceptualization. I hope to make both a conceptual contribution that adds practical value to researchers of legislative careers and turnover, by bringing together different (sub)types of turnover and their drivers into a flowchart that illustrates how the different concepts are connected. This also allows identifying the windows in which selectoral reward - and conversely selectoral punishment – can take place.

A second *conceptual* contribution to the literature pertains to the measurement of 'ballot position value', i.e. the certainty of electoral success - and therefore the selectoral endorsement – a candidate obtains in party-centred systems by virtue of his/her rank on the ballot list. The concept predates this research. Measures of ballot position value are known under many different names and have been operationalized in a wide variety of ways. Think of concepts and different measurement of list/seat safety, eligible, winnable or realistic seats, electoral probabilities, list mobility measures and so on. This thesis contributes to this literature by presenting an extensive and critical review

of how 'ballot position value' has been measured in past research. I identify, discuss and build upon the limitations they face – particularly in the context of European Parliament elections. I then propose a novel measure to remedy current pain points, and apply it in the empirical section of this thesis. Instead of determining list safety based on past or future election results, I use fluctuation in poll forecasts to capture the relative certainty with which parties can expect to win a seat. The major contribution of this operationalization is that it reflects the *anticipation* of electoral prospect (prior to the election), while capturing different *degrees of electoral (un)certainty* conferred by the positions.

A third contribution of this thesis is *empirical* in nature. This dissertation presents an *empirical extension of existing research* in that it tests the effect of performance on reselection (*access*), re-election (*success*) as well as ballot position value (*rank*) in two subsequent EP elections. As such, it is also the first study to cover the 2019 EP elections. By studying two legislative terms and the respective elections, this thesis focusses on uncovering which performance advantages are *consistent*. The focus on consistency further translated into a *multifaceted research design* in which I ran analogous models on the combined population of all EU member states and two EP legislatures on the one hand, and on subset populations based on electoral system and single election years on the other hand. Inconsistencies of reward across elections are revealed, as are different dynamics at play in party-centred versus candidate-centred systems. The advantage of running separate analyses on both systems is that the *moderating effect of the electoral system* on the performance-re(s)election odds of MEPs is made visible. Moreover, in this way, the test of the effect of performance on selectoral reward through rank is empirically extended from closed list systems to include flexible list systems too.

The fourth and final contribution of this dissertation similarly is *empirical*. It concerns the *exploration of the occurrence of and circumstances surrounding deselection of MEPs*, i.e. their failure to be reselected despite their ambition to renew their mandate in the EP. Though the distinction between types of turnover and between voluntary and involuntary exits is theorized upon in the literature, this divide is hardly researched empirically. Through means of a qualitative, exploratory research, I offer a first mapping of deselection in the EP. Capturing elusive ambitions and pondering the chicken-and-egg questions on an MEP's absence from the list are daunting tasks. This thesis does not aim or claim to have alleviated ambiguity in researching ambitions. Nevertheless, the coding scheme, reflections and – perhaps most of all – the results presented here contribute to the literature by shedding light into an underexplored corner of the black box that is candidate (re)selection and political ambition. In exploring new ground, it also adds original empirical material to the nascent micro-level research into legislative turnover.

7.4   Limitations and avenues for future research

This study analyzed whether MEPs are selectorally rewarded for their active involvement in the EP's work. I have shown that ambition must be considered the starting point of legislative turnover and that an MEP's ambition to continue is fundamental to grasping selectoral reward. In party-centred systems, selectoral reward is a two-step issue as the (s)electoral value of a ballot position is crucial. Selectoral reward then is contrasted against voluntary departure from the EP, deselection and relegation. The analyses point out that performance has a, overall positive but limited and scattered effect on an MEPs' chances to be reselected, selectorally rewarded and re-elected. Moreover, I have shown that – among incumbents that are not relisted – deselection is relatively common, but rarely – if at all – relates to the incumbent's performance record. I conclude that, despite the positive effects of various performance indicators, it is improbable that parties systematically review their incumbents' performance records and compose the ballot list deliberately so as to reward active MEPs and dismiss less active legislators.

This dissertation finds no compelling proof that parties across the EU are evaluating their MEPs' performance in the EP and deliberately rewarding them for it in a consistent manner across legislatures. Even within electoral systems, the effects of performance are not consistent over time. This absence of proof however, does not necessarily prove absence of a selectoral connection to incumbents' re(s)election. There are numerous ways to build further upon the finding that MEPs' activity records do not yield consistent effects across the 2014 and 2019 EP elections. I first highlight limitations stemming from the nature of the data, such as its sample size, clustering, temporal specificity and the measurement of performance as activity. Then, I articulate three ways in which future research can expand on my analyses.

7.4.1   *On the data*

In the quantitative analyses, I present both aggregate and subset models on the (s)electoral consequences of performance. I do so to uncover the dynamics that are specific to electoral systems and/or legislative terms, which would have remained hidden in the aggregate model. As such, it also provides a test to the external validity and generalizability of the findings across these fault lines. The downside of subsetting the data is a natural limitation regarding the number of observations that can be included in the statistical analyses. Evidently, the size of the EP and the delegations within it are beyond the researcher's control. The diversity present within the EP makes it a promising and versatile testing ground. However, the same diversity poses practical and

methodological constraints. It is worthwhile to consider that small sample sizes and the presence of many small clusters in the data limit the statistical power of the models and could therefore interfere with finding consistent effects.

Moreover, the inconsistency of performance effects can largely be attributed to a (near) lack of convincing effects in the 2019 models. It will be up to future research to examine whether the inability of the 2019 model to reproduce the 2014 findings results from the *absence* of a generalizable rule or from the presence of an *exception* to that rule in 2019. Expanding the research to span more EP legislatures is advised to sanction the finding that there is no systematic advantage for particular types of EP performance, or – conversely – flag the 2019 EP elections as an odd one out. In the latter case, the specific context of the 2019 EP elections – with Brexit, rising populism and green waves – may have corroded parties' attention to the work of their MEPs.

An evident constraint on the explanatory reach of the analyses of parties' consideration of MEPs' work as it is studied here, is that the results can only reflect the effect of an MEP's *activity* level, indiscriminate of its quality, impact or salience. Capturing such qualities demands in-depth examination of parties' stances and priorities, of MEPs' actual input and a measure of output impact. Qualitative and mixed methods designs could further expose selectoral views on what matters in reselection, to pave the way for future research that would aim to take on such Herculean task.

Without going into the salience and impact of individual acts of parliamentary performance, more advanced measurements of parliamentary performance can be envisaged in future research. Besides, parties may base performance evaluations on relative scores or an overall assessment of one's commitment. Testing the former would require devising relative performance scores, setting off an MEPs' activity against that of his colleagues from the same country or party for example. Again, the multitude of small delegations in the EP may trouble this exercise. The latter demands compound scores of an MEPs' performance, tallying his work across different areas and perhaps weighing some activities more than others. Inspiration could be drawn from the recent attempts by VoteWatch analysts to distill 'influence algorithms' and indices of 'political' and 'social influence'.[84] Devising such a compound measure is a complex challenge and a thought-provoking avenue for future research.

Finally, when it comes to performance, other tasks and dimensions of an MEPs' work may be of importance for the party. It does not ask much imagination to think of other relevant aspects of an MEPs' work and time in the EP that the party may consider. The difficulty lies in devising

---

[84] See for example: VoteWatch (2017, 11 September). Who holds the power in the European Parliament? Assessing the Influence of individual MEPs; and BCW (2020). Influence Index. Who has influence in the European Parliament?

reliable measures for it. Think of constituency work, policy-impact, network, loyalty (to whom and where it matters), visibility or media resonance, and so on.

7.4.2 *On ballot position value: construct validity and use*

In this dissertation I aimed to find out whether – in reselecting incumbent MEPs – past performance as helpful in distinguishing which incumbents received promising (or top) positions from those who were relegated. I contribute by reviewing the measures that were used in previous research to capture selectoral reward through rank, and by addressing some of the major challenges they faced. This resulted in a novel measure to capture the (s)electoral value of a ballot position. Evidently, the usefulness of the measure of ballot position value (BPV) proposed and applied in this research extends beyond MEP reselection. It extends beyond the studies on the EP too, as it can easily be applied to national or regional electoral races in party-centred systems. The concepts of marginal, realistic and hopeless (or alternatively, promising and top positions) can be meaningfully used to examine parties recruitment priorities beyond the incumbent population. Such research could, among other things, focus on what selectorates seek when composing the ballot, which balances are struck across the ballot as a whole and across valuable positions, which conditions alter their priorities, or what motivates their preferences.

Essentially, the measure of ballot position value can be envisioned to do two things. First, capture the electoral prospect of a party and the positions on its list. The BPV measure is designed (and has shown to) capture the (un)certainty of electoral prospects well, leaving room for inter-party competition and voter volatility. The second purpose of the measure is to capture a distinction in *selectoral* value of ballot positions. A crucial line of future research lies in confirming the construct validity of the measure for this purpose. If we are to use the BPV measure for the sake of understanding selectoral choices and party preferences, priorities and goals – a crucial question is whether the selectorate's practices concerning estimated electoral prospects and ballot position differentiation align with the design of the measure. Theoretically, the case for the measure is strong. Practically, the use of the measure relates to how parties think of and apply these concepts. To crack open the black box of candidate selection further, gaining insight into how parties perceive the prospect of their tickets is a, invaluable next step.

7.4.3   On chickens and eggs: ambition and deselection

Cases of deselection – and of blatant nomination failure in particular – are relevant to the study of party's candidate selection procedures and practices, selectorates' preferences, parliamentary professionalization and political careers. Deselection might not be as marginal a phenomenon as often presumed. Much of it may still have gone unnoticed as elegant explanations are given and alternative careers unfold, or any information is simply lacking. While this explorative research cannot assert decisive conclusions as such, it has demonstrated the value of pursuing this question further and can hopefully give impetus to a fresh research agenda on (in)voluntary turnover and political ambitions.

To move beyond the exploration presented in this thesis however, media accounts of MEP ambitions and party motivations in candidate selection for EP elections are unlikely to suffice. Using media accounts on incumbent's absence from their party's list is useful to gain insights that can lay the basis for more systematic research. It also paints a lively picture of mismatching ambitions and selectoral decisions. However, the data remains imperfect at best. Language barriers and uneven background knowledge on the national political contexts may have created biases. The insights of this interpretative research can inspire and guide confirmatory designs, but more fleshed-out qualitative methodologies and in-depth comparative country studies are needed.

To cut through the remaining ambiguities, in-depth research is needed. A promising path could be to devise a common conceptualization of (in)voluntary exits, setting up common definitions and operationalization, and then performing country studies in which country experts can make most of their knowledge on political landscape, climate and culture as well as on the politician's popularity, power within the party, career path and aspirations. Interviews with party leaderships, selectorates and (former) MEPs could further clarify the question. Of course it remains challenging to do away with elegant explanations and social desirability. If one wants to move past this, there may be inspiration to be found in techniques of psychological research, where interviewers ask about the actions and motives of a subject to people close to the subject (e.g. colleagues, family members, …). Mixed-method research into incumbent reselection and selectoral priorities more generally is an exciting avenue for further research.

Another thing to consider is that I found statically ambitious MEPs withdrawing their candidature for failure to obtain a valuable ballot position from which they would have been certain, or at least hopeful, to renew their mandate. This evidences that parties and MEPs are well aware of the differential (s)electoral value ballot positions confer, and that they act strategically accordingly. This also means however, that incumbent MEPs who are reselected to hopeless positions are likely

aware of their impending electoral fate, but accept the position nonetheless. It is worthwhile to consider that incumbents who do not truly seek to renew their mandate may figure among these candidates as a service to the party to attract votes for example. It would be interesting to find out more about the ambition and incentives of incumbents who accept a hopeless position on the list.

7.4.4 *On perspective: towards a selectoral view on turnover*

This research sought to find out whether party selectorates reward their incumbent MEPs for their activity in the EP's work and found performance to matter but inconsistently so. It may be naïve however, to assume parties equally prone to incumbent reselection and/or performance reward. Surely, if performance is rewarded by some, not all parties necessarily do so in the same way or to the same extent. Depending on their organizational and ideological characteristics, parties can be more or less prone to selectorally reward incumbents. The selectorate's constellation (i.e. *who* decides on the incumbents' fate), the party's ideological family or its attitude towards the EU for example, could affect their inclination to reselect incumbents and/or to reward them for past parliamentary work. Similarly, the countries and their political cultures could be (additional) relevant dividing lines.

In other words, finding inconsistent effects of performance on incumbent reselection across the EU and its member states using party- versus candidate-centred electoral systems, suggests performance-reward is not a systematic, broadly generalizable element within candidate (re)selection in the EP. Subset models in this analysis showed the value of considering (and testing) reward-dynamics that are specific to a subset of the whole. The effects of party-characteristics, however, fell beyond the scope of this research, yet constitute an exciting avenue to pursue next. Little is known about how parties select their candidates for the European Parliament. This concerns both the procedures used and the strategies and priorities followed. With reason, literature on candidate selection procedures and related issues is emerging in the context of the EP. I much welcome future research into moderating, mediating and proper effects that a party selectorate's characteristic or selectoral procedure may have on incumbent reselection and performance reward. Factors to consider could include the selectorate's composition, candidate selection procedures, emphasis on and attitude towards the EU.

A final call I want to make to build further upon this research is to approach the question of selectoral reward from a truly selectoral perspective. It is uncertain how parties evaluate their impending prospects and how selectorates determine whom amongst their (incumbent) candidates

receives the most valuable positions. Particularly concerning candidate selections and party goals in European elections, much remains to be uncovered. We know parties and candidates evaluate their electoral prospects and act strategically. We also know parties have to balance their ticket and need to take into account a plethora of criteria, rules and preferences. Considering the relative sizes of the constituencies – and therefore the limited length and seat prospects of EP ballots – parties may simply be juggling too many elements. They may be very limited in practice as to what consequence they can give to incumbents' past performance amidst a series of pressing aspects to consider.

There is irrefutable value in directing future research as to catch the intricate balance parties are trying to reach in the composition of their ballot list. Such research could look into the trade-offs that selectorates need to make between different objectives and how they go about it. What are selectorates looking for and how do they cope with tensions between the pursuing policy- and vote- seeking goals and required ticket balancing? What matters to them, and how do they prioritize? Such questions step well beyond the issue of performance-reward. From the selectorate's own perspective – in terms of what they desire and what they can hope to achieve in practice –, how would they judge the relative importance of gender, geographical balance, experience, voter attractiveness, renewal, loyalty, and so on. How do they appraise their candidates' quality? In this complex reality, the balance is so delicate that – given the current state of knowledge on candidate selection in EP elections – broad comparative quantitative analyses on the matter may well be premature. Qualitative and mixed method research into the selectorate's perspective on balance and priorities on EP lists is indispensable to cracking open the black box.

8 Referenced works

8.1 Academic literature

Alvarez, M. R., Sinclair, B., & Hasen, R. L. (2006). How Much is Enough? The 'Ballot Order Effect' and the Use of Social Science Research in Election Law Disputes. *Election Law Journal*, 5(1), 40-56.

André, A., Depauw, S., Shugart, M. S., & Chytilek, R. (2017). Party nomination strategies in flexible-list systems: Do preference votes matter? *Party Politics*, 23(5), 589-600.

Bailer, S. (2011). People's voice or information pool? The role of, and reasons for, parliamentary questions in the Swiss parliament. *The Journal of Legislative Studies*, 17(3), 302-314.

Bakker, E. A., & Lijphart, A. (1980). A Crucial Test of Alphabetic Voting: The Elections at the University of Leiden. *British Journal of Political Science*, 10(4), 521-25.

Beauvallet, W., & Michon, S. (2010). Professionalization and Socialization of the Members of the European Parliament. *French Politics*, 8(2), 145-165.

Benedetto, G. (2005). Rapporteurs as Legislative Entrepreneurs: The Legislative Dynamics of the Codecision Procedure in Europe's Parliament, *Journal of European Public Policy,* vol. 12(1), 67-88.

Benedetto, G., & Hix, S. (2007). The rejected, the ejected, and the dejected: Explaining government rebels in the 2001-2005 British House of Commons. *Comparative Political Studies*, 40(7), 755-781.

Best, H., & Cotta, M. (2000). Parliamentary Representatives in Europe 1848-2000. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Best, H., Hausmann, C. & Schmitt, K. (2000). Challenges, failures and final success: The winding path of German parliamentary leadership groups towards a structurally integrated elite, 1848–1999. In H. Best & M. Cotta (eds), Parliamentary representatives in Europe, 1848–2000. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Bevington, M. (2019). Key roles in the EU Parliament: what you need to know. The UK in a Changing Europe, King's College London, 18 June 2019, available online via https://ukandeu.ac.uk/explainers/key-roles-in-the-eu-parliament-what-you-need-to-know, last accessed 21 September 2020.

Blom-Hansen, J., Elklit, J. (2014). Ballot position and electoral results: evidence from a natural experiment, Conference proceedings, *Danish Political Science Association*, 23-24 October 2014.

Borghetto, E., & Lisi, M. (2018). Productivity and Reselection in a Party-based Environment: Evidence from the Portuguese Case. *Parliamentary Affairs*, 71(4), 868-887.

Bowler, S. (2010). 'Is There an "Electoral Connection" to Private Member's Bills? Evidence From the 1997-2001 and 2001-2005 Parliaments'. *Journal of Legislative Studies*, 16(4):476–494.

Box, G. E. P.; Draper, N. R. (1987), Empirical Model-Building and Response Surfaces, John Wiley & Sons

Box-Steffensmeier, J.M. & Jones, B.S. (1997). Time is of the essence: event history models in political science. *American Journal of Political Science*, 41(4), 141-1461.

Brack, N., & Costa, O. (2019). Parliamentary Questions and Representation of Territorial Interests in the EP. In The European Parliament in Times of EU Crisis (pp. 225-254). Palgrave Macmillan, Cham.

Brockington, D. (2003). A Low Information Theory of Ballot Position Effect. Political Behavior, 25(1), 1-27.

Bryan, M. L., & Jenkins, S. P. (2016). Multilevel modelling of country effects: A cautionary tale. European sociological review, 32(1), 3-22.

Buisseret, P., Folke, O., Prato, C., & Rickne, J. (2019). Nomination Strategies in List Proportional Representation Systems. 46. Available at SSRN 3425692

Burson-Marsteller (n.d.) 'Europe Decides', Publically available here: http://europedecides.eu.

Byrne, C., & Theakston, K. (2015). Leaving the house: The experience of former members of parliament who left the house of commons in 2010. Parliamentary Affairs, 69(3), 686-707.

Carey, J. & Shugart, M. (1995). 'Incentives to Cultivate a Personal Vote: A Rank Ordering of Electoral Formulas', *Electoral Studies*. 14: 417-39.

Chiaramonte, A., De Sio, L., Emanuele, V. (2017). The Evolution of Italian Representation in the European Parliament: Electoral Laws, Systemic Effects and MP's Characteristics, in the Italian Parliament in the European Union, Eds. Lupo, N., Piccirilli, G., Hart Publishing, Oxford and Portland, Oregon.

Chiru (2019c) How the European Parliament could improve its selection of committee chairs. (LSE blog)

Chiru, M. (2019a). Electoral incentives and legislator-constituency linkages in supra-national contexts. Paper presented at the 5th Conference of the ECPR Staning Group on Parliaments, Leiden, June 28-29.

Chiru, M. (2019b). Loyal soldiers or seasoned leaders? The selection of committee chairs in the European Parliament. *Journal of European Public Policy*, 27(3), 612-629.

Cirone, A. (2018). "Political Dynasties in the European Parliament", Online version (1.0) for Toronto 2018, not published, 28p. Available here: https://rubenson.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/cirone-tpbw18.pdf

Clarke P. (2008). When can group level clustering be ignored? Multilevel models versus single-level models with sparse data. Journal of epidemiology and community health, 62(8), 752–758.

Corbett, R. (1998). The European Parliament's role in closer EU integration. Springer.

Corbett, R., Jacobs, F., & Shackleton, M. (2003). The European Parliament at fifty: A view from the inside. *JCMS: Journal of Common Market Studies*, *41*(2), 353-373.

Corbett, R., Jacobs, F., & Shackleton, M. (2011). *The European Parliament* (Vol. 8). London: John Harper.

Crisp, B., Olivella, S., Malecki, M., & Sher, M. (2013). Vote-earning strategies in flexible list systems: seats at the price of unity. *Electoral Studies*, 32(4), 658-69.

Crowther, W., & Matonyte, I. (2007). Parliamentary Elites as a Democratic Thermometer: Estonia, Lithuania and Moldova Compared. Communist and Post-Communist Studies, 40, 281-299.

Cunningham, T. (2010). Power and Sample Size for Three-Level Cluster Designs.

Damgaard, E. (1995). How parties control committee members. *Parliaments and majority rule in Western Europe*, 308(25), 308-325.

Daniel, W. T. (2015). Career behaviour and the European Parliament. All roads lead through Brussels? Oxford University Press, 175p.

Daniel, W., and Thierse, S. (2018) 'Individual determinants for the selection of group coordinators in the European Parliament', *JCMS: Journal of Common Market Studies,* 56(4): 939–954.

Darcy, R., & McAllister, I. (1990). Ballot Position Effects. *Electoral Studies*, 9(1), 5-17.

Däubler, T., & Hix, S. (2018). Ballot structure, list flexibility and policy representation. *Journal of European Public Policy*, *25*(12), 1798-1816.

Däubler, T., & Rudolph, L. (2020). Cue-taking, satisficing, or both? Quasi-experimental evidence for ballot position effects. Political behavior, 42(2), 625-652.

De Winter, L. (1988). Belgium: democracy or oligarchy? In M. Gallagher, & M. Marsh, Candidate Selection in Comparative Perspective: The Secret Garden of Politics (pp. 20-46). London: Sage.

De Winter, L., & Brans, M. (2003). Belgium: political professionals and the crisis of the party state. In J. Borchert, & J. Zeiss, The Political Class in Advanced Democracies (pp. 45-66). Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Dionigi, M. K., Dionigi, K., & Finotello. (2017). Lobbying in the European Parliament. Palgrave Macmillan.

Dodeigne, J. (2015). *Representing a minority group in multinational federal systems: Career patterns in Catalonia, Scotland and Wallonia* (Doctoral dissertation, UCL-Université Catholique de Louvain).

Dodeigne, J., & Meulewater, C. (2017). Popular Candidates and/or Party Soldiers? The Interactive Effect of Candidates' Vote-Earning Capacity and the Candidate-Party Congruence at the 2014 Belgium Elections. ECPR Joint Sessions of Workshops 2017 – 25-30 April 2017, (p. 27). Nottingham.

Doleys, T. J. (2000). Member states and the European Commission: theoretical insights from the new economics of organization. Journal of European Public Policy, 7(4), 532-553.

Edinger, M. (2006). Making sense of parliamentary careers in the European multi-level-system. In *20th World Congress of IPSA, Fukuoka, Japan.*

Edinger, M., & Schwarz, B. (2009). Leben nach dem Mandat. Eine Studie zu ehemaligen Abgeordneten.

European Parliament (2009, October). *The Selection of Candidates for the European Parliament by National Parties and the Impact of European Political Parties,* PE 410.672. Brussels, Directorate-General for Internal Policies, Policy Department C: Citizens' Rights and Constitutional Affairs, 378p.

European Parliament (2015, May). *Candidate selection procedures for the European elections,* PE 519.206. Brussels, Directorate-General for Internal Policies, Policy Department C: Policy Department C: Citizens' Rights and Constitutional Affairs, 67p.

European Parliament, n.d. Who are the MEPs in key functions and how are they elected?, available online via https://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/faq/4/who-are-the-meps-in-key-functions-and-how-are-they-elected, last accessed 5 October 2020.

Faas, T. (2003). To defect or not to defect? National, institutional and party group pressures on MEPs and their consequences for party group cohesion in the European Parliament. *European Journal of Political Research*, 42(6), 841-866.

Farrell, D.M., & Scully, R. (2010). The European Parliament: one parliament, several modes of political representation on the ground?, Journal of European Public Policy, 17(1), 36-54.

Farrell, H., & Héritier, A. (2004). Interorganizational negotiation and intraorganizational power in shared decision making: Early agreements under codecision and their impact on the European Parliament and Council. *Comparative political studies*, *37*(10), 1184-1212.

Font, N., & Perez Duran, I. (2016). The European Parliament oversight of EU agencies through written questions. *Journal of European Public Policy*, 23(9), 1349-1366.

Font, N., & Pérez Durán, I. (2016). The European Parliament oversight of EU agencies through written questions. Journal of European Public Policy, 23(9), 1349-1366.

Francis, W. L., & Baker, J. R. (1986). Why do U.S. State Legislators Vacate Their Seats? Legislative Studies Quarterly, 11, 119-26.

Frech, E. (2016). Re-electing MEPs: The factors determining re-election probabilities. *European Union Politics*, 17(1), 69-90.

Gallagher, M. (1988). Candidate Selection in Comparative Perspective: The Secret Garden of Politics. London: Sage.

Gherghina, S., & Chiru, M. (2010). Practice and payment: Determinants of candidate list position in European Parliament elections. *European Union Politics*, 11(4), 533-552.

Giebler, H., & Wüst, A. M. (2011). Campaigning on an upper level? Individual campaigning in the 2009 European Parliament elections in its determinants. *Electoral Studies*, 30, 53-66.

Gouglas, A., & Maddens, B. (2017). Legislative turnover and its sources: It's the selection. Politics, 1-12.

Gouglas, A., Maddens, B., & Brans, M. (2018). Determinants of legislative turnover in Western Europe, 1945–2015. European Journal of Political Research, 57(3), 637-661.

Grace-Martin, K. (n.d.). Three Issues in Sample Size Estimated for Multilveel Models, *The Analysis Factor*, available online via http://www.theanalysisfactor.com/sample-size-multilevel-models/, last accessed 2 October 2020.

Green-Pedersen, C., 2010. Bringing Parties Into Parliament. Party Politics 16(3), 347-369.

Hamm, K., & Olson, D. M. (1992). Midsession Vacancies: Why do State Legislators Exit and How Are They Replaced? In G. F. Moncrief, & J. A. Thompson, Changing Patterns in State Legislative Careers. Univeristy of Michigan Press.

Hamm, K., Olson, D. M., Moncrief, G. F., & Thompson, J. (1992). Midsession Vacancies: Why Do State Legislators Exit and How Are They Replaced?. Changing Patterns in State Legislative Careers, 127-46.

Hangartner, D., Ruiz, N. A., & Tukiainen, J. (2019). Open or Closed: How List Type Affects Electoral Performance, Candidate Selection, and Campaign Effort. VATT Institute for Economic Research Working Papers, 120.

Hausemer, P. (2006). Participation and political competition in committee report allocation: under what conditions do MEPs represent their constituents?. *European Union Politics*, *7*(4), 505-530.

Heinsohn, T., & Freitag, M. (2012). Institutional foundations of legislative turnover: A comparative analysis of the Swiss cantons. Swiss Political Science Review, 18(3), 352-370.

Henderson, D. A., & Denison, D. R. (1989). Stepwise Regression in Social and Psychological Research. Psychological Reports, 64(1), 251–257.

Heo, M., & Leon, A. C. (2008). Statistical power and sample size requirements for three level hierarchical cluster randomized trials. Biometrics, 64(4), 1256-1262.

Hermansen, S. S. L. (2018). Striving for influence: The effect of performance on candidate selection. *Party Politics*, *24*(4), 382-396.

Hibbing, J. R. (1982). Voluntary retirement from the US House of Representatives: who quits?. American Journal of Political Science, 467-484.

Hix, S. (2002). Parliamentary behavior with two principals: Preferences, parties, and voting in the European Parliament. *American Journal of Political Science*, 46(3), 688-698.

Hix, S., & Lord, C. (1996). The making of a president: The European Parliament and the confirmation of Jacques Santer as president of the Commission. *Government and Opposition*, 62-76.

Hix, S., Hobolt, S. B., & Høyland, B. (2012, August). Career paths and legislative activities of members of the European Parliament. In Annual Conference of the American Political Science Association, New Orleans (Vol. 30).

Hix, S., Marsh, M. (2007). "Punishment or Protest? Understanding European Parliament Elections." The Journal of Politics 69 (2), 495–510.

Hix, S., Noury, A. G., & Roland, G. (2007). *Democratic politics in the European Parliament*. Cambridge University Press.

Ho, D. E., & Imai, K. (2008). Estimating causal effects of ballot order from a randomized natural experiment. The California alphabet lottery, 1978-2002. Public Opinion Quarterly, 72(2), 216-40.

Hobolt, S., & Høyland, B. (2011). Selection and Sanctioning in European Parliamentary Elections. *European Union Politics*, 10(1), 477-98.

Hox, J. (1998). Multilevel modeling: When and why. In Classification, data analysis, and data highways (pp. 147-154). Springer, Berlin, Heidelberg.

Høyland, B. (2006). Allocation of codecision reports in the fifth European Parliament. European Union Politics, 7(1), 30-50.

Høyland, B., Hobolt, S., & Hix, S. (2017). Career Ambitions and Legislative Participation: The Moderating Effect of Electoral Institutions. *British Journal of Political Science*, 1-22.

Hurka, S., Kaeding, M., & Obholzer, L. (2015). Learning on the job? EU enlargement and the assignment of (shadow) rapporteurships in the European Parliament. JCMS: Journal of Common Market Studies, 53(6), 1230-1247.

IPU. (2012). Global Parliamentary Report: the Changing Nature of Parliamentary Representation. Inter-Parliamentary Union and United Nations Development Program. United Nations Publications.

Jahr, S. & Edinger, M. (2016). *Making Sense of Multi-Level Parliamentary Careers: An Introduction*, in Edinger, M., & Jahr, S. (Eds.). (2016). Political careers in Europe: career patterns in multi-level systems. Bloomsbury Publishing.

Jensen, M. C., & Meckling, W. H. (1976). Theory of the firm: Managerial behavior, agency costs and ownership structure. Journal of financial economics, 3(4), 305-360.

Jensen, C. B., Proksch, S. O., & Slapin, J. B. (2013). Parliamentary Questions, Oversight, and National Opposition Status in the European Parliament. *Legislative Studies Quarterly*, 38(2), 259-282.

Judge, D., & Earnshaw, D. (2011). 'Relais actors' and co-decision first reading agreements in the European Parliament: the case of the advanced therapies regulation. *Journal of European Public Policy*, *18*(1), 53-71.

Judge, D., Earnshaw, D. (2008). The European Parliament, Basingstoke: Palgrave Maxmillan.

Juncker, J.-C. (2017). Letter to EP President Tajani, A 002970, 13 March 2017, accessible online via https://g8fip1kplyr33r3krz5b97d1-wpengine.netdna-ssl.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/Juncker-Letter-Tajani-Parliamentary-Questions.pdf, last accessed 21 September 2020.

Kassim, H., & Menon, A. (2003). The principal-agent approach and the study of the European Union: promise unfulfilled?. Journal of European Public Policy, 10(1), 121-139.

Katz, R.S. (1986). Intraparty preference voting. In B. Grofman & A. Lijphart (eds), Electoral laws and their consequences. New York: Agathon Press.

Keading, M. (2004). Rapporteurship allocation in the European Parliament: Information or distribution? *European Union Politics*, *5*(3), 353-371.

Keading, M. (2005). The world of committee reports: rapporteurship assignment in the European Parliament. *The Journal of Legislative Studies*, 11(1), 82-104.

Keading, M., & Obholzer, L. (2012). Pulling the strings: party group coordinators in the European Parliament. EIPAScope, 2012(1), 13-18.

Kelbel, C. (2018). Itineraries of Spoiled Children: An Analysis of Candidate Selection Processes for European Elections. (Unpublished doctoral dissertation). Université libre de Bruxelles, Faculté de Philosophie et Sciences sociales - Sciences politiques et sociales, Bruxelles.

Kelley, J., & McAllister, I. (1984). Ballot paper cues and the vote in Australia and Britain: alphabetic voting, sex and title. Public Opinion Quarterly, 48(2), 452-66.

Kepplinger, H. M. (2002). Mediatization of politics: Theory and data. *Journal of communication*, *52*(4), 972-986.

Kerby, M., & Blidook, K. (2011). It's not you, it's me: determinants of voluntary legislative turnover in Canada. Legislative Studies Quarterly, 36(4), 621-643.

King, A., & Leigh, A. (2009). Are Ballot Order Effects Heterogeneous? Social Science Quarterly, 90(1), 71-87.

Klüver, H., & Rodon, T. (2013). Explaining policy position choice of Europarties: The effect of legislative resources. *British Journal of Political Science*, 43(3), 629-650.

Koppell, J. G., & Steen, J. A. (2004). The effects of Ballot Position on Election Outcomes. Journal of Politics, 66(1), 267-281.

Kuklys, M. (2013). Legislative turnover in the Baltics after 1990: Why is it so high and what are the implications? Baltic Journal of Political Science 2: 29– 49.

Kunovich, S. (2012). Unexpected Winners: The Significance of an Open-List System on Women's Representation in Poland. *Politics and Gender*, 8(2), 153-77.

Lutz, G. (2010). First come, first served: the effect of ballot position on electoral success in open ballot PR elections. Journal of Representative Democracy, 46(2), 167-81.

Maas, C. J., & Hox, J. J. (2005). Sufficient sample sizes for multilevel modeling. Methodology, 1(3), 86-92.

Mamadouh, V., and Raunio, T. (2003) 'The committee system: powers, appointments and report allocation', *JCMS: Journal of Common Market Studies,* 41(2): 333–351.

Manow, P. (2007). Electoral rules and legislative turnover: Evidence from Germany's mixed electoral system. West European Politics, 30(1), 195-207.

Manow, P., & Nistor, M. (2009). Wann ist ein Listenplatz sicher? Eine Untersuchung der Bundestagswahlen 1953 bis 2002. *Zeitschrift für Parlamentsfragen*, 603-620.

Manow, P., & Verzichelli, L. (2007). Tenure and Parliamentary careers in the European Parliament. Draft paper presented at the ECPR joint sessions. Helsinki.

Marcinkiewicz, K. (2014). Electoral contexts that Assist Voter Coordination: Ballot Position Effects in Poland. *Electoral Studies*, 17(2), 322-34.

Marcinkiewicz, K., & Stegmaier, M. (2019). Speaking up to stay in parliament: the electoral importance of speeches and other parliamentary activities. *The Journal of Legislative Studies*, 25(4), 576-596.

Marsh, M., & Norris, P. (1997). Political representation in the European Parliament. *European Journal of Political Research*, *32*(2), 153-164.

Martin, S. (2011). Parliamentary questions, the behaviour of legislators, and the function of legislatures: An introduction. *The Journal of Legislative Studies*, 17(3), 259-270.

Matland, R., & Studlar, D. (2004). Determinants of legislative turnover: A cross-national analysis. British Journal of Political Science, 34(1), 87-108.

Mayhew, D. R. (1974). Congress: The Electoral Connection. Yale University.

McNeish, D. M., & Stapleton, L. M. (2016). The effect of small sample size on two-level model estimates: A review and illustration. Educational Psychology Review, 28(2), 295-314.

Miller, J. M., & Krosnick, J. A. (1998). The Impact of Candidate Name Order on Election Outcomes. Public Opinion Quarterly, 62(3), 291-330.

Mitchell, J., & Bradbury, J. (2004). Political recruitment and the 2003 Scottish and Welsh elections: candidate selection, positive discrimination and party adaptation. *Representation*, 40(4), 288-301.

Moineddin, R., Matheson, F. I., & Glazier, R. H. (2007). A simulation study of sample size for multilevel logistic regression models. BMC medical research methodology, 7(1), 34.

Müller, W. C. (2000). Political parties in parliamentary democracies: Making delegation and accountability work. *European journal of political research*, *37*(3), 309-333.

Navarro, J. (2010). Le travail parlementaire, un investissement payant ? Les élections comme évaluation rétrospective du bilan des députés sortants. *Revue internationale de politique comparée*, 17(4), 141-160.

Navarro, J. (2012). Does Hard Work Pay Off? Incumbency, Parliamentary Performance and the Selection of Candidates for European Parliament Elections. Paper presented at Inaugural General Conference of the ECPR Standing Group on Parliaments "Parliaments in Changing Time", Dublin, June 24-27th.

Norris, P., ed. 1997. Passage to Power. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Obholzer, L., & Daniel, W. T. (2016). An online electoral connection? How electoral systems condition representatives' social media use. *European Union Politics*, 17(3), 387-407.

Obholzer, L., Hurka, S., & Kaeding, M. (2019a). Party group coordinators and rapporteurs: Discretion and agency loss along the European Parliament's chains of delegation. European Union Politics, 20(2), 239-260.

Obholzer, L., Hurka, S., & Keading, M. (2019b) Discretion and agency loss: what factors shape the selection of European Parliament rapporteurs? (LSE blog)

Obler, J. (1970). Intraparty democracy and the selction of parliamentary candidates: the Belgian case. *British Journal of Political Science*, 4(2), 163-185.

Oe24 (2009). *EU-Politiker: Die Faulen & die Fleißigen.* Accessible online via https://www.oe24.at/oesterreich/politik/eu-politiker-die-faulen-die-fleissigen/705415, last accessed 21 September 2020.

Otjes, S., & Louwerse, T. (2018). Parliamentary questions as strategic party tools. *West European Politics*, *41*(2), 496-516.

Pasquinucci, D., & Verzichelli, L. (2004). Elezioni europee e classe politica sovranazionale: 1979-2004. Il mulino.

Pemstein, D., Meserve, S., & Bernard, W. (2015). Brussels Bound: Policy candidate selection in European elections. *Comparative Political Studies*, 48(11), 1421-1453.

Politico (2017). European Commission to Parliament: enough of your stupid questions! By Maïa De La Baume and Ryan Heath, 16 March 2017, accessible online via https://www.politico.eu/blogs/playbook-plus/2017/03/european-commission-to-parliament-enough-of-your-stupid-questions, last accessed 21 September 2020.

Proksch, S.-O., Slapin, J. (2011). Parliamentary Questions and Oversight in the European Union, *European Journal of Political Research,* 0(1), 53-79.

Put, G. J., Muyters, G., & Maddens, B. (2020). The effect of candidate electoral experience on ballot placement in list proportional representation systems. West European Politics, 1-22.

Put, G.-J., & Maddens, B. (2013). The Selection of Candidates for Eligible Positions on PR Lists: the Belgian/Flemish Federal Elections 1999-2000. Journal of Elections, Public Opinion and Parties, 23(1), 49-65.

Put, G.-J., Gouglas, A., & Maddens, B. (2015). Candidate Selection, Intraparty Competition and Incumbency Turnover: Analysis of the Belgian Lower House Elections. 73rd Annual Conference of the Midwest Political Science Association; April 16-19th, (p. 30). Chicago.

Putnam, R. (1976). The Comparative Study of Political Elites. Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall.

Rahat, G. (2007). Candidate selection: The choice before the choice. *Journal of Democracy*, 18(1), 157-170.

Rahat, G., & Hazan, R. (2010). Democracy Within Parties: Candidate Selection Methods and Their Political Consequences. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Rasch, B. E. (1994). Question time in the Norwegian Storting. In M. Wiberg (Ed.), Parliamentary control in the Nordic countries (pp. 247-275). Tampere: Finnish Political Science Association.

Rasch, B. E. (2011). Behavioural consequences of restrictions on plenary access: Parliamentary questions in the Norwegian Storting. *The Journal of Legislative Studies*, 17(3), 382-393.

Rasmussen, A. (2008). Party soldiers in a non-partisan community? Party linkage in the European Parliament. *Journal of European Public Policy*, 15(8), 1164-1183.

Rasmussen, A., & Reh, C. (2013). The consequences of concluding codecision early: trilogues and intra-institutional bargaining success. Journal of European Public Policy, 20(7), 1006-1024.

Rasmussen, M. K. (2015). The battle for influence: The politics of business lobbying in the European Parliament. *JCMS*: *Journal of Common Market Studies*, 53(2), 365-382.

Raunio, T. (1996). Parliamentary questions in the European parliament: Representation, information and control. *The Journal of Legislative Studies*, 2(4), 356-382.

Raunio, T. (2007). Open list, open mandate? Links between MEPs and parties in Finland. *Perspectives on European Politics and Society, 8*(2), 131-146.

Raymond, C. D., & Overby, L. M. (2019). Calling It Quits: Legislative Retirements in Comparative Perspective. Political Studies, 0032321719865111.

Reif, K. and Schmitt, H. (1980). Nine second-order national elections: a conceptual framework for the analysis of European election results. European Journal of Political Research, 8(1), 3-44

Renwick, A., & Pilet, J.-B. (2016). Faces on the ballot. The personalization of Electoral Systems in Europe. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Ringe N. (2010) Who Decides, and How? Preferences, Uncertainty, and Policy Choice in the European Parliament. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Samuels, D. (2000). Ambition and competition: Explaining legislative turnover in Brazil. Legislative Studies Quarterly, 481-497.

Scarrow, S. E. (1997). Political career paths and the European Parliament. Legislative studies quarterly, 253-263.

Schlesinger, J.A. (1966). Ambition and politics: Political careers in the United States. Chicago, IL: Rand McNally.

Schmitt, H. (2005). The European Parliament elections of June 2004: still secondorder? West European Politics, 28(3), 650-79

Schmück, D. (2019) 'Competing Risks, Competing Rationale: how do Legislators Leave Their Seat in the German Bundestag?', Paper presented at the 2019 ECPR General Conference, Wroclaw, 4-7 September 2019.

Servent, A. R. (2017). The European Parliament. Macmillan International Higher Education.

Shomer, Y. (2009). Candidate selection procedures, seniority, and vote-seeking behavior. Comparative Political Studies, 42(7), 945-970.

Shue, K., & Luttmer, E. F. (2006). Who Misvotes? The Effect of Differential Cognition Costs on Election Outcomes. NBER Working Papers 12709. Cambridge: MA: NBER.

Shugart, Matthew. 2001. 'Electoral "Efficiency" and the Move to Mixed-Member Systems', *Electoral Studies*. 20: 173-93.

Sieberer, U. 2006. "Party unity in parliamentary democracies: A comparative analysis." *The Journal of Legislative Studies,* 12(2):150–178.

Sigalas, E. (2011). When quantity matters: activity levels and re-election prospects of members of the European Parliament. RECON Online Working Papers 2011/17.

Sigalas, E., & Tiemann, G. (2012). Performance in the European Parliament and MEP Re-Nomination: First Evidence of a Connection? IPSA Annual Meeting 'Representation & Renewal', August 30 - September 2. New Orleans.

Slapin, J. B., & Proksch, S.-O. (2010). Look who's talking: Parliamentary debate in the European Union. European Union Politics, 11(3), 333–357.

Smith, M.P. (2008) 'All Access Points are Created Equal: Explaining the Fate of Diffuse Interests in the EU'. *British Journal of Politics and International Relations*, 10(1), 64–83.

Smrek, M. (2014). Explaining Political Selection: What Factors Determine One's Party-List Rank at t+ 1?. Unpublished work, available online via: http://www.diva-portal.org/smash/record.jsf?pid=diva2%3A723764&dswid=1190

Somit, A., Wildenmann, R., Boll, B., & Rommele, A. (1994). The Victorious Incumbent: A Threat to Democracy? Alderschot: Darthmouth.

Sommet, N., & Morselli, D. (2017). Keep Calm and Learn Multilevel Logistic Modeling: A Simplified Three-Step Procedure Using Stata, R, Mplus, and SPSS. International Review of Social Psychology, 30(1), 203–218. DOI: http://doi.org/10.5334/irsp.90

Sozzi, F. (2016). Electoral foundations of parliamentary questions: evidence from the European Parliament. *The Journal of Legislative Studies*, 22(3), 349-367.

Stoeckl, I., & Walter, F. (2013). Who Stands on Which Position? An Intersectional Analysis of Party Lists for Austrian Parliamentary Elections, 1995-2008. Paper presented at the 7th *ECPR General Conference*, 4-7 September 2013, Bordeaux.

Stoffel, M. (2014). A Unified Scale of Electoral Incentives. Representation, 50(1), 55-67.

Stolz, K (2003) Moving up, Moving down: Political Careers across Territorial Levels. European Journal of Political Research 42 (2): 223–248.

Stratmann, T., & Baur, M. (2002). Plurality rule, Proportional Representation, and the German Bundestag: How Incentives to Pork-barrel differ accross Electoral Systems. *American Journal of Political Science*, 43(3), 506-514.

Strøm, K. (1990). A behavioral theory of competitive political parties. *American journal of political science*, 34(2), 565-598.

Strøm, K., & Müller, W. C. (1999). Political parties and hard choices. Policy, office, or votes, 1-35.

Talbert, J. C., Jones, B. D., & Baumgartner, F. R. (1995). Nonlegislative hearings and policy change in Congress. *American Journal of Political Science*, 383-405.

Tavits, M. (2010). Effect of local ties on electoral success and parliamentary behaviour: the case of Estonia. *Party Politics*, 16(2), 215-235.

Thayer, J. (2002). Stepwise Regression as an Exploratory Data Analysis Procedure. Accessed online via https://www.researchgate.net/publication/234648237_Stepwise_Regression_as_an_Exploratory _Data_Analysis_Procedure/stats, data last accessed on 3 September 2020.

Theakston K., Gouge E., Honeyman V. (2007). 'Life After Losing or Leaving: the Experience of Former Members of Parliament', available online via:http://www.oafp.ca/assets/research/life-after-losing-or-leaving.pdf

Upton, G., & Brook, D. (1975). The Determination of the Optimum Position on a Ballot Paper. Applied Statistics, 24(3), 279-87.

van Erkel, P. F. (2017). Preferential votes. Explaining individual electoral success in intra-party competition. Antwerp: Proefschrift voorgelegd tot het behalen van de graad van doctor in de sociale wetenschappen: politieke wetenschappen aan de Universiteit Antwerpen.

Van Geffen, R. (2016). Impact of Career Paths on MEPs' Activities, *Journal of Common Market Studies*, vol.54 (4), pp.1017-1032.

Van Geffen, R. (2018). Essays on the career paths and legislative activity of Members of the European Parliament (Doctoral dissertation, The London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE)).

Van Hecke, S., & Depauw, S. (2006). Brussel-Strasburg enkele reis? De Belgische Europarlementsleden sinds 1979. In S. Fiers, & H. Reynaert, Wie zetelt? De gekozen politieke elite in Vlaanderen doorgelicht (pp. 143-162). Leuven: LannooCampus.

Van Hecke, S., Andrione-Moylan, A., Brack, N., Day, S., Gagatek, W., van Haute, E., Hertner, I., Magnus Johansson, K., Lavrelashvili, T., Pittoors, G., Wolfs, W., De Coninck, I.; (2018). Reconnecting European Political Parties with European Union Citizens. Reconnecting European Political Parties with European Union Citizens Publisher: International IDEA; online publication IDEA website, available online via https://www.idea.int/publications/catalogue/reconnecting-european-political-parties-european-union-citizens, last accessed 5 October 2020.

van Vonno, C.M.C. & Louwerse, T. & (2019). Hard Work Pays Off. Candidate Selection and Parliamentary Activity. Paper presented at the 2019 ECPR General Conference, Wroclaw, 4-7 September 2019.

Vandeleene, A. (2016). Does candidate selection matter? A comparative analysis of Belgian political parties' selection procedures and their relation to the candidates' profile (Doctoral dissertation, UCL-Université Catholique de Louvain).

Vandeleene, A., Dodeigne, J., & De Winter, L. (2016). What Do Selectorates Seek? A Comparative Analysis of Belgian Federal and Regional Candidate Selection Processes in 2014. *American Behavioral Scientist*, 60(7), 889-908.

Vanlangenakker, I., & Maddens, B. (2011). Turnover at the Micro-level: (In)voluntary reasons for Leaving Regional Parliament. ECPR General Conference, Reykjavik, August 25th-27th 2011 (section 35, panel 3 on Elite Recruitment in International and National Settings), (p. 14). Reykjavik.

Vanlangenakker, I., Wauters, B., & Maddens, B. (2013). Pushed toward the Exit? How Female MPs Leave Parliament. Politics & Gender, 9, 61-75.

Verzichelli, L., & Edinger, M. (2005). A critical juncture? The 2004 European elections and the making of a supranational elite. The Journal of Legislative Studies, 11(2), 254-274.

Vliegenthart, R., & Walgrave, S. (2011). Content matters: The dynamics of parliamentary questioning in Belgium and Denmark. *Comparative Political Studies*, *44*(8), 1031-1059.

Westlake, M. (1994). A modern guide to the European Parliament. Pinter Pub Ltd.

Whitaker, R. (2001). Party control in a committee-based legislature? The case of the European Parliament. *Journal of Legislative Studies*, 7(4), 63-88.

Whitaker, R. (2014). Tenure, turnover and careers in the European Parliament: MEPs as policy-seekers. Journal of European Public Policy, 1509-1527.

Wiberg, M. (1995). Parliamentary questioning: Control by communication. Parliaments and majority rule in Western Europe, 179-222, in Döring, Herbert, ed. Parliaments and Majority Rule

in Western Europe, Mannheim: Mannheim Centre for European Social Research (MZES), University of Mannheim.

Wiberg, M. and Koura, A., 1994. The Logic of Parliamentary Questions. In: M. Wiberg, ed. Parliamentary Control in Nordic Countries. Helsinki: Finnish Political Science Association, 19–43.

Wilson, S. L., Ringe, N., & van Thomme, J. (2016). Policy leadership and re-election in the European Parliament. *Journal of European Public Policy*, 23(8), 1158-1179.

Würfel, M. (2017). Life After the Bundestag: An Analysis of the Post-Parliamentary Careers of German MPs. German Politics, 27(3), 295-316.

Yildirim, T. M., Kocapınar, G., & Ecevit, Y. A. (2019). Staying active and focused? The effect of parliamentary performance on candidate renomination and promotion. Party Politics, 25(6), 794-804.

Yordanova, N. (2013). Inter-Institutional Rules and Division of Power in the European Parliament: Allocation of Consultation and Co-decision Reports. In Naurin, Daniel, and Anne Rasmussen, eds. Dynamics of change in the European Union. Routledge, 2013, pp. 97-121.

Yoshinaka, A., McElroy, G., & Bowler, S. (2010). The appointment of rapporteurs in the European Parliament. Legislative Studies Quarterly, 35(4), 457-486.

8.2   Other sources

8.2.1   *Media sources cited in text*

94.Citoyens.com (2019, 27 March). Cuisine électorale européenne: le PS sacrifie Christine Revault-d'Allonnes.

Actu Citoyenne (2019, 22 March). Interview de Marie Christine Vergiat, députée européenne front de gauche [Facebook update].

Aftonbladet (2018, 24 October). M profil ska lamna Bryssel.

Aftonblated (2019, 23 April). "Det räcker nu, Corazza Bildt", updated on 24 April 2019.

Barometern (2018, 19 December). Anna Hedh lamnar EU politiken.

Dagens Industri (2018, 14 October). Corazza Bildt petas från EU-parlamentet – "djupt besviken", updated on 30 April 2019.

Dagens Industri (2018, 24 October). Corazza Bildt petas fran EU parlamentet djupt besviken.

DC News (2019, 21 February). Tapardel ne am batut pentru Romania.

De Standaard (2013, 19 October). Ecolo kiest Philippe Lamberts als Europese lijsttrekker

Der Standard (2018, 18 May). EU-Abgeordnete Mlinar beklagt mangelnde unterstützung bei Neos.

DH Net (2014, 18 March). Anne Delvaux (cdH) quitte la politique et… la RTBF.

Documento News (2019, 22 April). They "sacrificed" Epitideios for the sake of the Hare in the Golden Dawn - Crisis in the neo-Nazi organization with the departure of the MEP.

El Mundo (2019, 14 April). Malestar en Ciudadanos pol el número de independientes en la lista europea.

Europa Portalen (2018, 26 november). Corazza Bildt om Moderaternas EU-lista: Makt och mygel.

Europa-nu (2018, 10 December). Relletje bij de Europese D66-fractie.

European Press Prize (n.d.). The Secret Life of Bela Kovacs.

FranceInfo, (2013, 17 November), Bernadette Vergnaud évincée de la liste du Parti socialiste aux élections européennes.

Göteborgs-Posten (2019, 29 March). Wikström inte med pa liberalernas EU lista.

Hungary Today (2017, 12 June). Jobbik MEP Bela 'KGB' Kovacs to be charged with spying on the EU for Russia.

Jornal Acores 9 (2019, 15 October). Ricardo Serrao Santos e o novo Ministro do mar.

Kleine Zeitung (2019, 19 March). Mlinar kandidiert für Slowenische Liberale Partei.

La Libre (2014, 22 March). Véronique De Keyser éjectée du PS, "tel un chien".

La Voz de Galicia (2014, 15 March). Antolín Sánchez Presedo no repite en las listas del PSOE a las eleccions europeas.

Le Parisien (2014, 16 June). Bennahmias, ex-MoDem, crée son parti aux côtés du PS.

Le Plus, (2013, 22 November). Députée européenne, écartée des listes PS pour 2014, mon travail est perdu.

Le Soir (2014, 13 February), Anne Delvaux règle ses comptes avec le cdH: "La politique, je n'en ferai plus mon métier".

Le Vif (2014, 13 February). Lynchée par les barons du parti, Anne Delvaux ironise sur l'humanisme du cdH.

Le Vif (2014, 22 February). Anne Delvaux éjectée d'une particratie belge, dopée au celebrity marketing.

Le7, (2013, 18 November). Elections européennes – Bernadette Vergnaud ne sera pas sur la liste PS.

Les Nouvelles Libres (2019, 6 August). L'interview du mois: épisode 1 – Marie-Christine Vergiat (ex-eurodéputée de 2009 à 2019).

Levante, El mercantile Valenciano, (2014, 16 March). Andrés Perelló: «Nadie nos ha dicho nada, las formas revelan el fondo».

Mitteldeutsche Zeitung (2013, 15 April) CDU Halber Wachwechsel.

Nachrichten.at (2018, 14 July). FPÖ Einzelkämpferin hofft wieder auf EU Mandat.

Naiz (2019, 3 April). Carlos Iturgaiz deja la politica tras ser relegado en la lista europea del PP.

Neues Deutschland (2019, 13 February). Gabi Zimmer: Ich habe gelernt wütend zu sein.

NOS (2013, 19 June). PvdA: andere Europarlementariërs.

NOS (2018, 25 February). Hans Van Baalen wordt geen Minister van Buitenlandse Zaken.

NRC (2013, 25 October). PvdA schrapt kandidatuur Judith Merkies voor leiding eurofractie.

NRC (2014, 14 January). PvdA zet Merkies uit eurodelegatie –'financiële afspraken geschonden'.

Observador (2018, 30 October). MPT retira confiança política ao eurodeputado José Inácio Faria.

Offsite (2018, 3 October). Akel Mpainoyn sta bathia enopsei eyroeklogon.

Parlement francophone bruxellois (n.d.) Les Parlementaires, Durant Isabelle.

Parlement.com (2018, 16 July). Hans Van Baalen niet beschikbaar voor derde termijn als Europarlementariër.

Parlementaire Monitor (2018, 11 September). Marietje Schaake (45%) verliest van Sofie in't Veldt (55%).

Parool (2013, 19 June), 'Europarlementariërs PvdA hoeven niet meer terug te komen na verkiezingen'.

Pfalz Express (2014, 14 January). Letzter Abgeordneter der FDP: Jürgen Creutzmann will wieder in's Europaparlament.

Plus Gloswielko Polski (2019, 10 April). Wyborgy do parlamentu europejskiego 2019 – Adam Szejnfeld rezygnuje ze startu z list koalicji europejskiek wyborach do PE.

Politico, (2013, 20 November). Elections in Europe and Azerbaijan.

Portugal.gov (n.d.) Ministires, Maritime Affairs, Minster.

Poznan Wyborcza (2019, 11 October). Wybory Parlamentarne 2019 fatalna kampania adama Szejnfelda.

Publico (2019, 13 May). Assis demitese cargo Europeu apos impedido falar debate pe Venezuala.

Publico (2019, 23 May). Bailinho eurodeputados acores madeira ano polemico.

Rhein-Zeitung (2014, 15 April). Europawahl: Die aussichtsreichen Kandidaten aus Rheinland-Pfalz.

RTL Nieuws (2014, 14 January). PvdA-Europarlementariër uit fractie gezet.

RTP Europa (2019, 18 February). "MEP Awards 2019" elege para finalist o eurodeputodo José Inácio Faria.

Salzburger Nachrichten (2019, 30 March). EU-Wahl – Drei Österreicher mehr als bisher im EU-Parlament.

Schaake, Marietje (2018, 20 July). "We beleven een sleutelmoment in de geschiedenis. Ik stel me kandidaat als lijsstrekker voor D66 in Europea, om samen te bouwen aan het Europa van de toekomst" [Twitter update].

Sky News (2018, 10 July). Hungarian MEP Bela Kovacs on trial for spying on EU for Russia.

Slate, (2013, 9 December). La France, le pays où les bons europdéputés sont évincés.

Socialdemokraterna.nu (2018, 19 December). Anna Hedh lamnar EU parlamentet efter valet i maj 2019.

Socialdemokraterna.nu (2018, 19 December). Anna Hedh lamnar EU parlamentet efter valet i maj 2019.

Sputnik (2019, 25 March). Lista PSD Europarlamentare candidati alegeri.

Sud Ouest, (2013, 21 November). Elections européennes: les socialistes du Sud-Ouest envoient leur liste sur les roses.

Sud Ouest, (2014, 17 February). Gers: Françoise Castex claque la porte du PS.

SWR Aktuell (2014, 26 May). CDU hat die Nase vorn, SPD legt zu.

The Post Online (2013, 2 December). Interview: Marije Cornelissen, kandidaat-Europarlement GroenLinks.

Trouw (2019, 24 January). "Europees lijstduwer Jan Terlouw: 'D66 had het neoliberalisme eerder moeten bestrijden'.

Trouw (2019, 8 May). Schaake (D66) is bij haar afscheid somberder over Europa dan toen ze begon.

V Square (2017, 4 October). The Great Escape of KGB.

Volksstimme (2012, 11 December) CDU-Dreikampf: Europa-Aktivistin und Nachuchskraft gegen Genussbotschatfer Eva Wybrands und Sven Schulze wollen Horst Schnellhardt den Sitz.

8.2.2 *Raw data sources*

Cunningham, K. & Hix, S. (2014). PollWatch.eu Project, June2013-May2014. Unpublished dataset.

European Parliament (n.d.). Individual MEP webpages, accessible via www.europarl.europa.eu/meps

EU Legislative Observatory (n.d.). Database for monitoring the EU decision-making process, accessible via https://oeil.secure.europarl.europa.eu

Hix, S. (2019). European elections 2019 seat forecasts, unpublished dataset.

Integrity Watch (n.d.). Archive on Revolving Doors in the EP, accessible via www.integritywatch.eu

VoteWatch (n.d.). Archive on roll call vote data in the EP, accessible via www.VoteWatch.eu

8.2.3   Own data collection and resulting datasets

The dataset as they were used for this research – and resulting from the compilation of the information that was gathered from the sources above, my calculations and operationalization of the data – is available with the author upon request.

So is the collection of candidate lists pertaining to the 2014 and 2019 EP elections, gathered from the responsible national authorities and liaison offices.

Similarly, the detailed source list regarding the (in)voluntary nature of MEPs' absence from their party's ballot list (used in Chapter 6) is available upon request.

9   Annex

Doctoraten in de Sociale Wetenschappen en in de Sociale en Culturele Antropologie

Table A1. Descriptive statistics of performance indicators and controls included in the models, per legislature and per electoral system subset

Descriptive Statistics - 7th term (2009-2014)

Independent variable	Function	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
COD (codecision)	performance indicator	507	0	12	0,76	1,325
INI (own initiative) reports	performance indicator	507	0	6	0,79	0,950
Other reports	performance indicator	507	0	45	1,37	4,181
Non-lead reports	performance indicator	507	0	260	9,96	18,007
Parliamentary questions	performance indicator	507	0	1388	81,58	144,562
Speeches	performance indicator	507	4	1864	171,75	254,747
Attendance	performance indicator	507	0,00	99,41	83,9036	11,87218
Leader	performance indicator	507	0	1	0,2742	0,44653
Group coordinator	performance indicator	507	0	1	0,28	0,449
Seniority	control	507	0,00	6,00	0,9176	1,15549
National experience	control	505	0	1	0,40	0,490
Age	control	507	30	86	56,69	10,294
Gender (male = 1)	control	507	0	1	0,65	0,478
EPG size	control	507	31	274	169,35	94,162
Party size	control	500	1	34	13,53	10,068
Term (7th = 1)	control / subset	507	1	1	1,00	0,000
Party-centred	control / subset	507	0	1	0,74	0,439
Valid N (listwise)		498				

Descriptive Statistics - 8th term (2014-2019)

Independent variable	Function	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
COD (codecision)	performance indicator	438	0	6	0,74	1,183
INI (own initiative) reports	performance indicator	438	0	6	0,76	0,951
Other reports	performance indicator	438	0	40	1,51	3,978
Non-lead reports	performance indicator	438	0	45	3,30	4,869
Parliamentary questions	performance indicator	438	0	682	91,15	106,639
Speeches	performance indicator	438	0	1679	286,63	313,789
Attendance	performance indicator	437	0,00	99,78	88,6396	9,60457
Leader	performance indicator	438	0	1	0,2580	0,43803
Group coordinator	performance indicator	438	0	1	0,33	0,470
Seniority	control	438	0,00	6,90	0,8452	1,08588
National experience	control	437	0	1	0,46	0,499
Age	control	438	32	91	56,76	10,725
Gender (male = 1)	control	438	0	1	0,63	0,485
EPG size	control	438	20	216	148,63	72,799
Party size	control	419	1	31	11,25	9,942
Term (7th = 1)	control / subset	438	0	0	0,00	0,000
Party-centred	control / subset	438	0	1	0,67	0,470
Valid N (listwise)		417				

Descriptive Statistics - Party-centred systems

Independent variable	Function	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
COD (codecision) reports	performance indicator	669	0	12	0,82	1,295
INI (own initiative) reports	performance indicator	669	0	6	0,79	0,958
Other reports	performance indicator	669	0	45	1,41	3,913
Non-lead reports	performance indicator	669	0	260	7,45	15,378
Parliamentary questions	performance indicator	669	0	1229	74,24	113,204
Speeches	performance indicator	669	1	1864	219,23	285,194
Attendance	performance indicator	669	0,00	99,78	86,9237	10,05815
Leader	performance indicator	669	0	1	0,2750	0,44687
Group coordinator	performance indicator	669	0	1	0,32	0,466
Seniority	control	669	0,00	6,90	1,0004	1,19929
National experience	control	668	0	1	0,39	0,489
Age	control	669	32	91	56,57	10,227
Gender (male = 1)	control	669	0	1	0,63	0,483
EPG size	control	669	20	274	158,33	85,462
Party size	control	649	1	34	13,18	10,058
Term (7th = 1)	control / subset	669	0	1	0,56	0,497
Party-centred	control / subset	669	1	1	1,00	0,000
Valid N (listwise)		648				

Descriptive Statistics - Candidate-centred systems

Independent variable	Function	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
COD (codecision) reports	performance indicator	945	0	12	0,75	1,261
INI (own initiative) reports	performance indicator	945	0	6	0,78	0,950
Other reports	performance indicator	945	0	45	1,43	4,086
Non-lead reports	performance indicator	945	0	260	6,87	13,993
Parliamentary questions	performance indicator	945	0	1388	86,02	128,409
Speeches	performance indicator	945	0	1864	225,00	289,227
Attendance	performance indicator	944	0,00	99,78	86,0960	11,12944
Leader	performance indicator	945	0	1	0,2667	0,44245
Group coordinator	performance indicator	945	0	1	0,30	0,460
Seniority	control	945	0,00	6,90	0,8840	1,12376
National experience	control	942	0	1	0,43	0,495
Age	control	945	30	91	56,72	10,491
Gender (male = 1)	control	945	0	1	0,64	0,481
EPG size	control	945	20	274	159,75	85,515
Party size	control	919	1	34	12,49	10,069
Term (7th = 1)	control / subset	945	0	1	0,54	0,499
Party-centred	control / subset	945	0	1	0,71	0,455
Valid N (listwise)		915				

Backward stepwise

Table A2. Backward Stepwise Logistic Regression – Reselection models (aggregate and subset models)

Reselection model	EU — Both terms (1) β(SE)	%Δ	(2) β(SE)	%Δ	Party-centred — Both terms (1) β(SE)	%Δ	(2) β(SE)	%Δ	Party-centred 2014 (1) β(SE)	%Δ	(2) β(SE)	%Δ	Party-centred 2019 (1) β(SE)	%Δ	(2) β(SE)	%Δ	Candidate-centred — Both terms (1) β(SE)	%Δ	(2) β(SE)	%Δ	Candidate-centred 2014 (1) β(SE)	%Δ	(2) β(SE)	%Δ	Candidate-centred 2019 (1) β(SE)	%Δ	(2) β(SE)	%Δ
Codecision reports	0,130 (0,079)		0,156° (0,083)	16,94%									0,275* (0,123)	31,78%	0,294* (0,128)	34,10%												
Own initiative reports					0,168° (0,095)	18,36%	0,197* (0,100)	21,87%	0,399*** (0,142)	49,10%	0,399** (0,149)	49,11%																
Other reports																												
Non lead reports																									0,199* (0,091)	22,00%	0,272** (0,105)	31,31%
Speeches																	0,001* (0,000)	0,13%	0,001° (0,000)	0,12%	0,004** (0,001)	0,46%	0,005* (0,002)	0,50%				
Parliamentary Questions	0,012° (0,006)	1,27%																			-0,002° (0,001)	-0,20%	-0,002 (0,002)					
Attendance			0,015* (0,007)	1,60%													0,021* (0,010)	2,10%	0,021° (0,010)	2,13%	0,033* (0,015)	3,30%	0,03° (0,017)	3,00%				
Leader																												
Coordinator									0,496° (0,279)	64,32%	0,432 (0,292)																	
Seniority	-0,205** (0,068)	-18,58%	-0,252*** (0,075)	-22,35%	-0,262*** (0,08)	-23,08%	-0,314*** (0,084)	-27,00%	-0,319** (0,106)	-27,32%	-0,342** (0,113)	-29,00%	-0,275* (0,137)	-24,07%	-0,364 (0,148)	-30,55%												
National experience					0,323° (0,184)	38,14%	0,401* (0,196)	49,34%																				
Age	-0,040*** (0,007)	-3,93%	-0,041*** (0,008)	-4,10%	-0,050*** (0,010)	-4,88%	-0,050*** (0,010)	-4,92%	-0,029° (0,013)	-2,80%	-0,031* (0,014)	-3,00%	-0,072*** (0,015)	-7,01%	-0,077 (0,017)	-7,47%	-0,031* (0,013)	-3,10%	-0,033* (0,013)	-3,25%					-0,046* (0,018)	-4,55%	-0,055* (0,021)	-5,40%
Gender (male = 1)													0,611* (0,280)	84,23%	0,617 (0,307)	85,40%												
EPG size																					-0,003* (0,002)	-0,39%	-0,003 (0,003)					
Party Size	0,019* (0,007)	1,96%	0,018° (0,011)	1,88%	0,035*** (0,009)	3,64%	0,030° (0,013)	3,06%	0,028* (0,012)	2,91%	0,023 (0,018)		0,046** (0,015)	4,70%	0,045 (0,022)	4,66%												
Term (7th = 1)	0,370* (0,150)	44,89%	0,39° (0,159)	40,37%	0,520** (0,178)	68,31%	0,503** (0,192)	65,39%																				
Party-centered																												
Constant	1,565* (0,744)		1,712* (0,842)		2,809*** (0,564)		3,236*** (0,673)		2,059** (0,754)		2,418** (0,871)		3,688*** (0,864)		4,619 (1,124)		0,578 (1,151)		0,928 (1,315)		-1,645 (1,287)		-1,447 (1,686)		3,125** (1,127)		2,846° (1,465)	
Member state controls	no		yes		no		yes		no		yes		no		yes		no		yes		no		yes		no		yes	
Observations	915				648				371				277				267				127				140			
Missing cases	30				21				4				17				9				5				4			
Nagelkerke pseudo R²	.103		.137†		.149		.171		.128		.158†		.215		.289		.098		.126†		.164		.253†		.147		.272†	

Notes: Coefficients of binomial regression models using backward stepwise variable selection, with standard errors in parentheses and change in likelihood expressed as percentage. † Final solution for the model's -2log likelihood could not be reached. Germany serves as reference in the member state controls.
° significant at p < .10; * at p < .05; ** at p < .01; *** at p < .001.

Backward stepwise

Table A3. Backward Stepwise Logistic Regression – Re-election models (aggregate and subset models)

Re-election model	EU Both terms				Party-centred 2014				Party-centred 2019				Party-centred Both terms				Candidate-centred 2014				Candidate-centred 2019			
	(1) β(SE)	%Δ	(2) β(SE)	%Δ	(1) β(SE)	%Δ	(2) β(SE)	%Δ	(1) β(SE)	%Δ	(2) β(SE)	%Δ	(1) β(SE)	%Δ	(2) β(SE)	%Δ	(1) β(SE)	%Δ	(2) β(SE)	%Δ	(1) β(SE)	%Δ	(2) β(SE)	%Δ
Codecision reports	0,169° (0,087)	18,53%	0,136 (0,088)		0,604** (0,213)	82,98%	0,546* (0,227)	72,60%																
Own initiative reports																								
Other reports																								
Non lead reports																								
Speeches					0,001° (0,000)	0,16%	0,001° (0,001)	0,19%																
Parliamentary Questions																								
Attendance																								
Leader																								
Coordinator																								
Seniority																					0,814* (0,363)	125,70%	0,878* (0,401)	140,70%
National experience																					-0,994* (0,461)	-63,00%	-1,160° (0,569)	-68,67%
Age	-0,017° (0,009)	-1,77%	-0,017° (0,01)	-1,74%					-0,066** (0,022)	-6,40%	-0,075** (0,025)	-7,30%												
Gender (male = 1)																								
EPG size																								
Party Size					0,030° (0,015)	3,09%	0,046* (0,022)	4,79%																
Term (7th = 1)																								
Party-centered	0,506* (0,197)	65,96%	0,553 (1,268)																					
Constant	1,595** (0,556)		1,954 (1,429)		0,286 (0,323)		0,559 (0,594)		4,841*** (1,29)		5,648*** (1,551)		0,693*** (0,157)		0,588 (0,558)		0,693** (0,231)		-0,287 (0,763)		0,788* (0,328)		2,099° (1,193)	
Member state controls	no		yes		no		yes		no		yes		no		yes		no		yes		no		yes	
Observations	608				264				160				183				84				99			
Missing cases	19				2				10				6				5				1			
Nagelkerke pseudo R²	.038		.120†		.106		.248†		.087		.198†		.000		.092†		.000		.185†		.118		.181†	

Notes: Coefficients of binomial regression models using backward stepwise variable selection, with standard errors in parentheses and change in likelihood expressed as percentage. † Final solution for the model's -2log likelihood could not be reached.
Germany serves as reference in the member state controls.
° significant at p < .10; * at p < .05; ** at p < .01; *** at p < .001.

Backward stepwise

Table A4. Backward Stepwise Logistic Regression – Reward models (aggregate and subset models)

Promising position (Realistic | Marginal | Leader)

Reward model	Both terms (1) β (SE)	%Δ	Both terms (2) β (SE)	%Δ	2014 (1) β (SE)	%Δ	2014 (2) β (SE)	%Δ	2019 (1) β (SE)	%Δ	2019 (2) β (SE)	%Δ
Codecision reports					1,287* (0,504)	262,24%	1,127* (0,528)	208,80%				
Own initiative reports												
Other reports	-0,077* (0,038)	-7,40%	-0,071° (0,039)	-6,82%								
Non lead reports	0,051° (0,028)	5,30%	0,036 (0,027)									
Speeches					-0,002* (0,001)	-0,21%	0,000 (0,001)					
Parliamentary Questions					0,005 (0,003)		0,002 (0,002)					
Attendance												
Leader												
Coordinator									0,868° (0,493)	138,33%	0,943° (0,528)	156,90%
Seniority	0,344* (0,17)	41,00%	0,261 (0,182)									
National experience												
Age	-0,041* (0,017)	-3,99%	-0,048** (0,018)	-4,70%								
Gender (male = 1)												
EPG size												
Party Size	0,662* (0,326)	93,90%	0,783* (0,352)	118,97%								
Term (7th = 1)												
Constant	3,470*** (0,983)		4,479*** (1,101)		1,919*** (0,318)		20,581 (4654,097)		1,29*** (0,24)		1,121** (0,406)	
Member state controls	no		yes		no		yes		no		yes	
Observations	424				264				160			
Missing cases	12				2				10			
Nagelkerke pseudo R²	.094		.179†		.142		.440†		.035		.162†	

Top position (Realistic | Leader)

Reward model	Both terms (1) β (SE)	%Δ	Both terms (2) β (SE)	%Δ	2014 (1) β (SE)	%Δ	2014 (2) β (SE)	%Δ	2019 (1) β (SE)	%Δ	2019 (2) β (SE)	%Δ
Codecision reports												
Own initiative reports												
Other reports												
Non lead reports												
Speeches												
Parliamentary Questions					0,004 (0,003)		0,001 (0,001)					
Attendance												
Leader												
Coordinator												
Seniority												
National experience									-0,602° (0,357)	-45,24%	-0,721° (0,394)	-51,41%
Age												
Gender (male = 1)												
EPG size												
Party Size	0,640** (0,242)	89,66%	0,523* (0,255)	68,83%	0,027° (0,016)	2,83%	0,023 (0,024)					
Term (7th = 1)												
Constant	0,969*** (0,177)		1,292*** (0,278)		0,933** (0,322)		1,346* (0,636)		1,252*** (0,253)		1,516*** (0,392)	
Member state controls	no		yes		no		yes		no		yes	
Observations	424				264				160			
Missing cases	12				2				10			
Nagelkerke pseudo R²	.025		.122†		.044		.228		.26		.164†	

Notes: Coefficients of binomial regression models using backward stepwise variable selection, with standard errors in parentheses and change in likelihood expressed as percentage. † Final solution for the model's -2log likelihood could not be reached. Germany serves as reference in the member state controls.
° significant at p < .10; * at p < .05; ** at p < .01; *** at p < .001.

Table A5. Multilevel Logistic Regression – Reselection models (aggregate and subset models)

Multilevel

Reselection model	EU Both terms (1) β(SE)	%Δ	EU Both terms (2) β(SE)	%Δ	Party-centred Both terms (1) β(SE)	%Δ	Party-centred Both terms (2) β(SE)	%Δ	Party-centred 2014 (1) β(SE)	%Δ	Party-centred 2014 (2) β(SE)	%Δ	Party-centred 2019 (1) β(SE)	%Δ	Party-centred 2019 (2) β(SE)	%Δ	Candidate-centred Both terms (1) β(SE)	%Δ	Candidate-centred Both terms (2) β(SE)	%Δ	Candidate-centred 2014 (1) β(SE)	%Δ	Candidate-centred 2014 (2) β(SE)	%Δ	Candidate-centred 2019 (1) β(SE)	%Δ	Candidate-centred 2019 (2) β(
Codecision reports			0,084 (0,067)				0,095 (0,095)				0,005 (0,097)				0,237° (0,14)	26,78%			0,097 (0,141)				0,388 (0,284)			-0,5
Own initiative reports			0,122 (0,084)	13,02%			0,131 (0,101)				0,372* (0,145)	45,18%			-0,197 (0,187)				0,109 (0,163)				-0,060 (0,250)			0,2
Other reports			0,007 (0,002)				0,000 (0,024)				0,021 (0,035)				-0,068 (0,089)				0,022 (0,041)				-0,070 (0,067)			0,0
Non lead reports			0,003 (0,007)				0,001 (0,007)				0,000 (0,007)				0,038 (0,077)				0,012 (0,022)				0,011 (0,027)			0,3
Speeches			0,000 (0,000)				0,000 (0,000)				0,000 (0,000)				-0,001 (0,000)				0,001* (0,000)	0,17%			0,005** (0,002)	0,54%		0,1
Parliamentary Questions			0,000 (0,000)				0,001 (0,001)				0,001 (0,001)				0,000 (0,002)				0,000 (0,001)				-0,002 (0,001)			0,1
Attendance			0,012* (0,007)	1,28%			0,008 (0,009)				0,008 (0,011)				0,016 (0,019)				0,019° (0,010)	1,96%			0,037* (0,016)	3,80%		0,1
Leader			0,118 (0,172)				0,287 (0,205)				0,130 (0,288)				0,346 (0,312)				-0,105 (0,346)				-0,440 (0,498)			0,
Coordinator			0,161 (0,178)				0,274 (0,207)				0,499° (0,301)	64,85%			-0,009 (0,319)				-0,192 (0,380)				-1,061 (0,644)			0,5
Seniority			-0,230** (0,074)	-20,61%			-0,305*** (0,085)	-26,30%			-0,320** (0,110)	-27,45%			-0,331* (0,152)	-28,22%			-0,109 (0,189)				-0,138 (0,269)			-0,
National experience			0,206 (0,155)				0,338* (0,189)	40,35%			0,436 (0,272)				0,241 (0,284)				0,051 (0,291)				0,083 (0,452)			-0,
Age			-0,041*** (0,008)	-4,11%			-0,050*** (0,010)	-4,90%			-0,031* (0,013)	-3,09%			-0,077*** (0,016)	-7,43%			-0,030* (0,014)	-3,05%			-0,013 (0,022)			-0,1
Gender (male = 1)			0,252 (0,155)				0,302 (0,187)				0,017 (0,258)				0,615* (0,291)	85,10%			0,199 (0,299)				0,387 (0,486)			0,2
EPG size			0,000 (0,001)				0,000 (0,001)				0,000 (0,001)				0,001 (0,002)				-0,001 (0,002)				-0,004 (0,003)			0,0
Party Size			0,021* (0,008)	2,17%			0,036*** (0,010)	3,69%			0,036* (0,014)	3,68%			0,039* (0,019)	4,08%			-0,006 (0,015)				-0,011 (0,031)			-0,1
Term (7th = 1)			0,409* (0,165)	50,54%			0,554 (0,198)												0,032 (0,324)							0,0
Party-centered			-0,242 (0,187)																							
Constant			1,311° (0,770)				1,597 (1,000)				1,152 (1,174)				2,425 (1,882)				0,709 (1,274)				-1,205 (1,986)			
Random Effect Covariance (Intercept)			0,019 (0,034)				0,008 (0,032)				.				0,118 (0,124)				.				0,255 (0,264)			
Observations			915				648				371				277				267				127			
Missing cases			30				21				4				17				9				5			
Akaike Corrected			4196,039				3008,020				1780,534				1322,257				1287,541				657,590			
Bayesian			4200,834				3012,461				1784,395				1325,806				1291,047				660,263			

Notes: Coefficients of 2-leveled General Linear Mixed Models (GLMM) with EU member states entered at group level- in text referred to as multilevel logistic regression models - with standard errors in parentheses and change in likelihood expressed as percent...

° significant at p < .10; * at p < .05; ** at p < .01; *** at p < .001.

205

Multilevel

Table A6. Multilevel Logistic Regression – Re-election models (aggregate and subset models)

Re-election model	EU — Both terms (2) β (SE)	%Δ	Party-centred — Both terms (2) β (SE)	%Δ	Party-centred — 2014 (2) β (SE)	%Δ	Party-centred — 2019 (2) β (SE)	Candidate-centred — Both terms (2) β (SE)	Candidate-centred — 2014 (2) β (SE)	%Δ	Candidate-centred — 2019 β (S…
Codecision reports	0.152 (0.093)		0.251° (0.131)	28.63%	0.662** (0.245)	93.89%	-0.191 (0.202)	-0.067 (0.146)	0.119 (0.216)		-0.3 (0.2…
Own initiative reports	0.065 (0.106)		0.083 (0.138)		0.089 (0.182)		-0.076 (0.295)	0.034 (0.184)	0.237 (0.356)		0.05 (0.24…
Other reports	0.016 (0.030)		-0.012 (0.036)		-0.025 (0.044)		-0.103 (0.148)	0.072 (0.064)	0.013 (0.143)		0.05 (0.08…
Non lead reports	0.008 (0.010)		0.012 (0.013)		0.019 (0.016)		0.141 (0.136)	-0.005 (0.021)	-0.005 (0.029)		-0.0 (0.04…
Speeches	0.000 (0.000)		0.001° (0.000)	0.13%	0.001 (0.001)		0.000 (0.001)	0.000 (0.000)	0.000 (0.001)		-0.0 (0.00…
Parliamentary Questions	0.000 (0.000)		0.000 (0.001)		0.000 (0.002)		0.001 (0.003)	0.000 (0.001)	0.000 (0.001)		0.00 (0.00…
Attendance	-0.015 (0.011)		-0.013 (0.015)		-0.044* (0.02)	-4.39%	0.037 (0.029)	-0.018 (0.016)	-0.058° (0.034)	-5.70%	0.00 (0.00…
Leader	0.033 (0.225)		0.038 (0.277)		0.039 (0.392)		-0.220 (0.459)	0.096 (0.427)	-0.314 (0.637)		0.66 (0.77…
Coordinator	-0.048 (0.233)		-0.058 (0.280)		-0.504 (0.392)		0.280 (0.460)	-0.021 (0.450)	0.514 (0.849)		-0.2 (0.64…
Seniority	0.035 (0.113)		-0.034 (0.130)		-0.175 (0.170)		0.356 (0.260)	0.207 (0.280)	-0.356 (0.438)		0.99 (0.48…
National experience	-0.217 (0.200)		-0.196 (0.260)		0.141 (0.384)		-0.431 (0.413)	-0.110 (0.339)	0.568 (0.564)		-0.8 (0.54…
Age	-0.016 (0.010)		-0.021 (0.013)		0.011 (0.018)		-0.080** (0.026)	-0.010 (0.017)	0.008 (0.03)		-0.0 (0.0…
Gender (male = 1)	-0.091 (0.203)		-0.191 (0.262)		-0.328 (0.357)		0.181 (0.438)	0.064 (0.347)	-0.188 (0.673)		0.0 (0.5…
EPG size	0.000 (0.001)		0.001 (0.002)		0.001 (0.002)		0.000 (0.003)	-0.001 (0.002)	0.000 (0.003)		-0.0 (0.0…
Party Size	-0.004 (0.011)		0.003 (0.016)		0.036 (0.023)		-0.028 (0.025)	-0.010 (0.017)	-0.037 (0.045)		-0.0 (0.0…
Term (7th = 1)	0.060 (0.221)		0.212 (0.293)					0.051 (0.368)			
Party-centred	0.456° (0.263)										
Constant	2.794* (1.150)		2.893° (1.521)		3.398° (1.957)		2.107 (2.89)	3.160° (1.825)	5.313 (3.416)		1.474° (0.884)
Random Effect Covariance (Intercept)	0.108 (0.086)		0.182 (0.139)		0.593 (0.363)		0.239 (0.255)	0.022 (0.083)	1.474° (0.884)		
Observations	608		424		264		160	183	84		
Missing cases	19		12		2		10	6	5		
Akaike Corrected	2862.600		2078.710		1379.869		824.241	879.708	435.938		
Bayesian	2866.947		2082.709		1383.366		827.183	882.796	438.097		

Notes: Coefficients of 2-leveled General Linear Mixed Models (GLMM) with EU member states entered at group level- in text referred to as multilevel logistic regression models - with standard errors in parentheses and change in likelihood expressed as pe[rcentage]

° significant at $p < .10$; * at $p < .05$; ** at $p < .01$; *** at $p < .001$.

Table A7. Multilevel Logistic Regression – Reward models (aggregate and subset models)

Multilevel

Reward model	Promising position (Realistic | Marginal | Leader)						Top position (Realistic | Leader)				
	Both terms		2014		2019		Both terms		2014		2019
	β (SE)	%Δ	β (SE)	%Δ	β (SE)	%Δ	β (SE)	%Δ	β (SE)	%Δ	β (SE)
Codecision reports	0,183 (0,172)		1,356* (0,614)	288,32%	-0,099 (0,216)		0,028 (0,110)		1,356* (0,614)	288,32%	-0,099 (0,216)
Own initiative reports	-0,058 (0,179)		-0,008 (0,319)		-0,127 (0,307)		-0,052 (0,135)		-0,008 (0,319)		-0,127 (0,307)
Other reports	-0,069° (0,039)	-6,68%	-0,074 (0,064)		-0,21 (0,156)		-0,013 (0,032)		-0,074 (0,064)		-0,21 (0,156)
Non lead reports	0,033 (0,029)		0,044 (0,036)		0,098 (0,14)		0,004 (0,012)		0,044 (0,036)		0,098 (0,14)
Speeches	0,000 (0,000)		0,000 (0,001)		0,001 (0,001)		0,000 (0,000)		0000 (0,001)		0,001 (0,001)
Parliamentary Questions	0,001 (0,002)		0,002 (0,003)		-0,001 (0,003)		0,000 (0,001)		0,002 (0,003)		-0,001 (0,003)
Attendance	0,013 (0,017)		-0,05 (0,035)		0,048 (0,03)		0,008 (0,014)		-0,050 (0,035)		0,048 (0,03)
Leader	0,348 (0,374)		-0,324 (0,672)		0,789 (0,566)		0,240 (0,287)		-0,324 (0,672)		0,789 (0,566)
Coordinator	0,325 (0,385)		-0,716 (0,729)		0,785 (0,548)		0,117 (0,289)		-0,716 (0,729)		0,785 (0,548)
Seniority	0,266 (0,185)		0,151 (0,321)		0,314 (0,291)		0,112 (0,139)		0,151 (0,321)		0,314 (0,291)
National experience	-0,098 (0,331)		0,829 (0,681)		-0,424 (0,456)		-0,127 (0,262)		0,829 (0,681)		-0,424 (0,456)
Age	-0,041 (0,018)		-0,035 (0,029)		-0,029 (0,027)		-0,018 (0,014)		-0,035 (0,029)		-0,029 (0,027)
Gender (male = 1)	0,226 (0,337)		0,131 (0,57)		0,365 (0,466)		0,346 (0,258)		0,131 (0,570)		0,365 (0,466)
EPG size	-0,001 (0,002)		0,003 (0,004)		-0,001 (0,004)		0,000 (0,002)		0,003 (0,004)		-0,001 (0,004)
Party Size	-0,014 (0,02)		-0,03 (0,049)		-0,016 (0,024)		0,000 (0,016)		-0,030 (0,049)		-0,016 (0,024)
Term (7th = 1)	1,039 (0,383)						0,698 (0,29)				
Constant	2,037 (1,822)		7,907* (3,363)		-1,345 (2,982)		0,742 (1,471)		7,907* (3,363)		-1,345 (2,982)
Random Effect Covariance (Intercept)	0,231 (0,201)		3,754° (1,964)		.		0,184 (0,142)		3,754° (1,964)		.
Observations	424		264		160		424		264		160
Missing cases	12		2		10		12		2		10
Akaike Corrected	2327,674		1808,152		863,536		2075,676		1401,289		800,983
Bayesian	2331,673		1811,649		866,78		2079,675		1404,786		803,924

Doctoraten in de Sociale Wetenschappen en in de Sociale en Culturele Antropologie

Our doctors (Doctor of Social Sciences & Doctor of Social and Cultural Anthropology) – Doctoral Programme Social Sciences (kuleuven.be)
http://soc.kuleuven.be/fsw/doctoralprogramme/ourdoctors