



Universiteit Leiden

The effects of political careers and seniority on obtaining a leadership position within the political groups of the European Parliament

Name student: Caitlin Morrin

Student number: 1257412

Supervisor: dr. Tom Louwerse

Bachelor project 2: International Parliamentary Assemblies

Date: 9 June 2016

Number of words: 5569

Abstract

The members of the European Parliament are organized in political groups, referred to as European party groups. Within these European party groups there is a leadership consisting of a chairman and several vice-chairman. This leadership has a notable influence on some of the inner working of the groups, such as the assignment of committees and rapporteurships. However, not much is known about which factors contribute to gaining such a leadership position. The European Parliament is made up of members who have no previous political experience at all, as well as a variety of members who have been previously elected into assemblies and governments on national, regional and local levels. In this thesis the effect of cabinet experience on gaining a leadership position will be tested for. Secondly, the importance of seniority in politics and how this relates to seniority within the European Parliament, will be analyzed.

Original data on previous political experience, seniority and leadership positions of the members from the two biggest political groups; the Europeans People's Party Group (EPP), the Progressive Alliance of Socialists and Democrats (S&D), as well as the influential Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe (ALDE) were gathered. A binary logistic regression was conducted, including control variables, the results confirmed that members of the European Parliament who have been part of a cabinet are more likely to gain a leadership position. Seniority however does not have a significant effect on gaining a leadership position.

Introduction

Politics in the European Parliament can be very complex compared to politics in national institutions, partly because there are so many countries involved that do not share the same culture and history. Studying the European Parliament however can tell one more about the complexity in the European Parliament, and is also useful for understanding politics in other international parliamentary assemblies (Hix, Noury & Roland, 2006, p. 494).

Since MEPs (Members of the European Parliament) are elected through national elections, and then serve five years in the European Parliament, careers are formed in a new unique way. MEPs are expected to be loyal towards their national party but also towards their European party group (EPG) (Meserve, Pemstein, & Bernhard, 2009, p. 1016). As national parties decide who is allowed to stand for election to the European Parliament, the careers of MEPS are dependent on the choices of their national parties (Whitaker, 2014, p. 1509). Despite this, a wide range of professional backgrounds are ascribed to MEPs, from government ministers to local politicians. Their careers are of importance as they form a link between the various professions where they have served and can influence behavior (Daniel, 2015, p. 4). Secondly, careers can influence the prestige and performance of a political institution; having high turnover rates or only a small elite of politicians with an extensive political career affects a political institution's development (Daniel, 2015, p. 7). Furthermore the European Parliament has become increasingly professionalized, and professionalization is connected to political careers (see Bochert and Stolz, 2011; Norris, 2009). Though there has been research on career trajectories of MEPs (see Scarrow, 1997; Daniel, 2015), this has not extended to party leaderships. Therefore not much is known about which factors or careers paths explain who gets a leadership position, chairman or vice-chairman, within an EPG (Hix & Høyland, 2014, p. 598). The increase in legislative powers of the European Parliament has made high ranking offices in the European Parliament, such as party leadership, more significant (Whitaker, 2014, p. 1511). The lack of knowledge on which factors which are of influence on gaining a leadership positions within an EPG, together with its growing importance makes studying this office worthwhile. Though there has been done research on rapporteurship- and committee allocation (see Daniel, 2015; Kaeding, 2004; Yordanova, 2009) which shows that expertise and interest in the committee's subjects are of importance, it is difficult to link these findings to the leaderships of EPGs.

Since careers within European Parliament might also be of influence on gaining a leadership position, seniority will be analyzed as well. Seniority is an important principle in parliaments such as the American House of Representatives and the Swedish parliament (see Kellerman & Shephshle, 2009; Hagevi, 2000). However whether seniority has an effect on gaining a leadership position within an EPG is also unknown. The number of terms an MEP has served in the European Parliament will therefore be taken into account.

As the influence of the European party groups EPP (European People's Party Group), S&D (Progressive Alliance of Socialists & Democrats) and ALDE (Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe) on the workings of the European Parliament is big, and because they account for a majority of the MEPs the members of those political groups will be analyzed. My research question thus is: *Is previous political experience as well as seniority within the European Parliament of influence on gaining a leadership position within the political groups EPP, S&D and ALDE?*

To be able to answer the research question, the development and powers European Party Groups and their leaderships will be described firstly. Secondly, the importance of political experience and seniority will be analyzed. Lastly, the case selection, data and methodology, and results will be discussed.

European party groups

Development

Over the past decades the European Parliament has experienced a noticeable growth; in 1970 it consisted of just 142 members from six different countries, currently it consists of 751 members coming from 28 different countries (Kreppel, 2002, p. 95; European Parliament, n.d.^a). Not only has the European Parliament grown in size over the years, it also has become more powerful and now has legislative-and budgetary powers, as well as an influence on the appoint of the Commission of the European Union (Raunio, 2012, p. 365).

Since the fifties of the 20th century European party groups have formed in the predecessors of the European Parliament (Corbett, Jacobs & Shackleton, 2011, p. 107). Their role was however marginal and inferior compared to the national parties (Hix & Lord, 1997, pp. 13). After the first direct elections of the European Parliament in 1979 the EPGs became more important though (Bardi, 1994, pp. 364-365). The EPGs also became more cohesive during the eighties and

nineties of the previous century as increased parliamentary power meant that they gained more responsibilities and started receiving significant financial and secretarial means, coming from the official budget of the European Parliament (Hix & Lord, 1997, p. 14 & p. 61).

Nowadays there are several conditions which must be met before a group of MEPs with the same political affiliation is recognized as an official EPG; the group must have at least 25 members, who represent at least a quarter of the 28 current member states (European Parliament, n.d.^b). Being part of an EPG gives an MEP more influence since the groups are of great importance in the European Parliament. They are a means of forming coalitions in order to pass legislation, furthermore they choose the presidency of the European Parliament, set up the parliamentary agenda and allocate speaking time (Corbett, Jacobs & Shackleton, 2011, p. 105).

Group structures and powers

Within the EPG's there is a hierarchical structure consisting of a chairman, several vice-chairmen, a bureau and several working groups (Hix and Lord, 1997, p. 61; Corbett et al., 2011, p. 142). The chairmen are elected just before the start term of a new term during a group session (European People's Party Group, 2014; Progressive Alliance of Socialists and Democrats, 2014). After two and a half years the groups have the opportunity to elect a new leadership, but usually the chairmen keep their position for several years (Corbett, Jacobs & Shackleton, 2007, p. 101).

The leadership, the chairman and vice-chairmen, are supported by a secretarial staff and have a significant influence as they are the visible face of the group in the European Parliament and in external meetings (Ringe, 2010, p. 18). Within the group they set up the agenda for the meetings of the group and make decisions about the groups ideological position concerning policy, usually together with the bureau. The bureau is responsible for the group's strategy and policy (European People's Party Group, n.d.; Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe, n.d.). Most importantly, the leadership is influential regarding the allocation of commissions and rapporteurships (Hix, 2005, p. 91). McElroy (2008) for example shows that the leadership of EPGs uses its influence on the allocation on commissions to reward members who have been loyal to the group by voting along party lines during roll call votes (McElroy, 2008, pp. 368-369). The chairman and vice chairmen are part of the bureau, together with heads of national delegations, chairs of committees belonging to the group and members who are part of the

bureau or presidency of the European Parliament. The bureau of the S&D's has a slightly different composition as consists just of the chair and vice-chairmen and no other members (Progressive Alliance of Socialists and Democrats, n.d.).

The leaderships of the EPGs do not only have certain powers within their groups, they can also exert influence on some of the inner workings of the European Parliament in the 'Conference of Presidents'. The chairmen of the different EPGs and the president of the European Parliament, who presides over the 'Conference', meet twice a month. Together they are responsible for maintaining relations with national parliaments and other institutions within the European Union, they also makes decisions about the responsibilities of committees and delegations and set up the agenda for the plenary meeting of the European Parliament (European Parliament, n.d.^b).

Political careers

As referred to by Hix and Høyland (2014), not much is known about which factors might be of influence on gaining a leadership position within an EPG. It is therefore useful to first analyze committee-and rapporteurship assignment. Experience in a national parliament or government does not have a significant influence on the allocation of rapporteurships (Kaeding, 2004, pp. 365-366). However, being a rapporteur is a different job to leading an EPG. As shown by Daniel (2015) rapporteurships require a great deal of a certain sorts of professional expertise, as there is a significant effect of advanced education on rapporteurship assignment (Daniel, p. 83 & pp. 88-91). Rapporteurs are primarily concerned with legislative work and proposals and consult with specialists (European Parliament, 2006). Committees which are technical and information-driven also mainly attract members with a certain education and professional expertise. The committees which are less technical mainly attract MEPs who have a professional background which relates to the committee's area of interest (Yordanova, 2009, pp. 269-273). As rapporteurship- and committee allocation is based more on expertise and professional backgrounds, instead of political experience, it is difficult to draw any conclusions regarding EPGs' leaderships. Therefore analyzing the professionalization and development of political careers might clarify more.

Professionalization at the state level, regionalization and the emergence of supranational institutions such as the European Parliament, have made political careers more attractive over the years and have led to new patterns. Regional and local mandates have evolved and are now seen as full-time jobs with sufficient salaries. Having a professional political career is therefore no longer limited to the national level. Opportunities for politicians have therefore become more widespread as they are now also able to have a long and professional political career at other levels, such as at the European level (Borchert & Stolz, 2011, p. 108). The effects of professionalization of a state legislatures in the United States were tested by Squire (1992) and his results confirm that professionalization leads to an increase of legislators and a decrease of members who have other occupations, such as homemakers and business employees. Today the European Parliament is one of those highly professionalized institutions as it consists of a large group of members with political experience and political ambitions (Norris, 1999, p. 95). Having more career politicians does not only influence the attractiveness of the European Parliament; theories on professionalization express that the presence of experienced career politicians in the European Parliament is important for its development as a strong and effective institution. Such an institution is more capable of resisting the powers of national actors and other European actors (Norris, 1999, p. 86).

Scarrow (1997) created an important categorization for analyzing the career paths of MEPs. Three different types of MEPs are identified. Firstly there are 'European careerists', MEPs who serve in the European Parliament for a long time and don't necessarily intend to use their experience on a national level. Secondly there are the 'domestic careerists', MEPs who are only member of the European Parliament for a short time and use this to obtain a political career in national politics. The third category consists of MEPs for whom the European Parliament is the end of their political career (Scarrow, 1997, pp. 259-260). This shows that there are different career paths linked to those who are a member of the European Parliament. For some the European Parliament is a beginning of a political career, others might have already had a long political career when becoming a member of the European Parliament. Daniel (2015) states that most MEPs either build a career within the European Parliament or use it as a way of obtaining a political career in national politics. The presence of MEP's from the third category, who view the European Parliament as a final stage in their political career, is becoming more rare (Daniel, 2015, p.6). A big part of MEPs have held a political mandate before coming to the European

Parliament; only 29 percent of the sample, of MEPs between 1999 and 2004, did not hold a mandate in the past. Furthermore Daniel's findings that the European Parliament is not often the final stage of a career are confirmed, as only 11 percent of the sample held no mandate after leaving the European Parliament (Feron, Crowley, Giorgi, 2006, pp. 96-97).

Numbers on previous political experience of MEPs show that over the years national parliamentary experience has become more common when running for a seat in the European Parliament; the percentage of MEPs with national parliamentary experience has risen from 26 percent in 1989 to 35.7 percent in 2009. Especially among the newer members of the European Parliament such as Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and Slovakia a big majority of the MEPs have national experience. In contrast some of the older member states such as Germany, the United Kingdom and the Netherlands have very few MEPs with former national experience, with percentages ranging from 8 to 16 percent. The number of MEPs with national ministerial experience has also risen over the past decades; in 1999 just over 10 percent of MEPs had been a minister, this number rose to 16 percent in 2004 and to 17.1 percent in 2009. Lastly, the event of prime ministers and heads of states becoming members of the European Parliament has become more frequent; in the 7th term there were eleven of them. Within the European Parliament these prime ministers have occupied prestigious positions; such as committee chairs, chairs of political groups and the presidency of the European Parliament (Corbett et al., 2011, pp. 77-80).

Furthermore members of the European Parliament interviewed by Feron, Cowley and Giorgi (2006) stressed that while experience is not always necessary for gaining a regional or local mandate, it is of importance in the European Parliament. National experience is also seen by some as very different from a mandate in the European Parliament, as this requires one to have more professional relationships and networks.

As the European Parliament has grown to become very professionalized it is likely this has also had an effect on the leaderships of the EPGs; consisting of politicians with prestigious political careers, such as cabinet experience.

Research on political careers is usually focused on national careers, while this is only one part of a political career. Local and regional politics should also be involved more as there is a strong bias to studying political careers on a national level (Borchert & Stolz, 2011, pp. 109-110)

Therefore these career paths will also be taken into account, leading to the first hypothesis; *MEP's who have been part of a national cabinet are more likely to gain a leadership position within a European party group than MEPs who only have local, regional, or national experience.*

Seniority

The usage of a seniority as a criteria when allocating certain offices varies from parliament to parliament. In Norway for example there is only a small impact of seniority on committee assignment and in Finland there is no impact at all (Hagevi, 2000, p. 254-255). However, in the United States there is an extensive seniority system as members who have been part of the House Of Representatives for a long time are more likely become chairman of a commission than the less senior members (Kellerman & Shepsle, 2009, p. 2). Lastly, in the Swedish and- Danish parliament the senior members, those who have served in more than five sessions, are more likely to be assigned to their preferred commission than those members who have served in four sessions or less (Hagevi, 2000, pp. 254-255).

There is no official seniority system in the European Parliament, but there is a high number of new members every term. Though the number of new members, also known as turnover rate, at the beginning of a term has been declining since 1994, there was still a turnover rate of 50.4 percent in 2009 (Whitaker, 2014, p. 1513). Members who are senior are thus still quite an exception.

Daniel (2015) refers to several interviews in which MEPs concluded that they were inexperienced in their first years, did not know how to cope with the different negotiation processes and did not have a big network. After several years though this changes and they built up a more extensive network. Daniel (2015) verifies these claims by using data to test the effect of seniority, measured by the numbers of terms MEPs have been part of the European Parliament, on report allocation. The results show that seniority is of influence, as members receive more rapports when they become more senior. Seniority especially affects MEPs with low levels of education; after two completed terms they receive significantly less rapports than MEPs with higher education (Daniel, 2015, pp. 96-97). Furthermore interviews conducted by Kaeding (2004) on rapporteurship assignment conclude that group experience is of importance as it helps acquiring connections and building a reputation within a group. MEPs who are in their

first term have no previous group experience and will therefore have less connections than the more senior MEPs.

Although it can be difficult to become a senior member of the European Parliament, Norris and Franklin (1997) show that MEPs who had already served a previous term had a more chance to gain a seat again in the elections of 1994 than those who were running for the first time. Being in the European Parliament for a longer period of time also increases the chances of MEPs gaining a committee chair or vice-chair and other leadership positions (Beauvallet and Michon, 2010; in Whitaker, 2014, p. 1523).

The findings described above lead to the second hypothesis: *First-term MEPs are less likely to obtain a leadership position than MEPs who have already served in a previous term of the European Parliament.*

Case Selection

Currently there are 751 members in the European Parliament belonging to eight different political groups and a group of non-attached members (European Parliament, n.d.^a).

The EPP was the biggest group in the European Parliament after the elections of 2014 with 221 members and the S&D is the second biggest political group with 191 members.

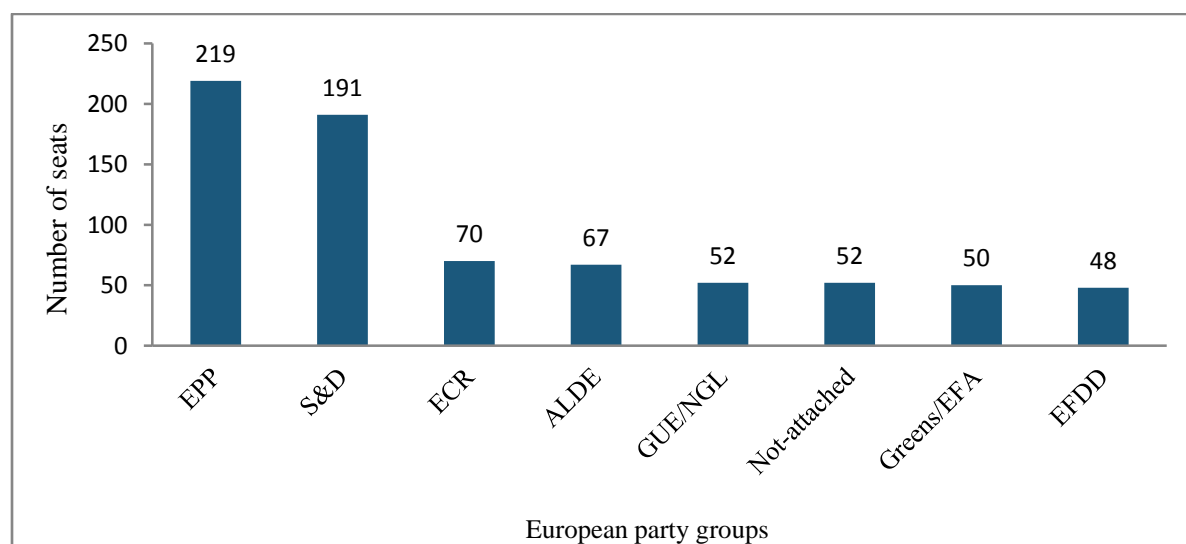


Figure 2. European Parliament election results: 2014¹

¹ Reproduced from: European Parliament, n.d.^a

After the S&D the ECR is the biggest group with 70 members, followed by ALDE with 67 members. The remaining groups make up for the other 272 members.

Data on members from the EPP, S&D and ALDE will be gathered and analyzed. The EPP and S&D have always represented the majority of the members of the European Parliament and have therefore always played an important role in the European Parliament (Corbett et al., 2007, pp. 109-110). The EPP and S&D are the two biggest political groups and together can form a majority and in this way control the legislative agenda and the allocation of committees. Secondly, because these two groups have so much power they make more use of sanctions to make sure their members stay loyal to the group (Hix, 2002, p. 690-691). Data from members from ALDE will also be analyzed, not only because of the availability of the data but also because the ALDE has a powerful position in the European Parliament. ALDE and the EPP are quite close to each other on the left-right position as well as the pro-EU position and therefore often form coalitions (Hix, 2009, p. 4). Research on rollcall-voting by Hix and Høyland (2013) also shows that ALDE, due to its ideological position, it is able to be a part of an oversized coalition with the EPP and S&D, a coalition with parties who are ideologically on the left as well a coalition with parties who are positioned more to the right. This gives ALDE a powerful position as they are able to be part of a lot of coalitions.

Data and methodology

The hypotheses will be tested using data on cabinet experience, and seniority within the European Parliament. This data was gathered from MEPS who were part of the EPP, S&D or ALDE at the beginning of the European Parliament; the elections for the 8th term took place in May 2014 and the political groups were formed in June 2014. During the forming of the political groups the chairs and vice-chairs were elected. Subsequently, on the first of July, the 8th term officially began (European Parliament, 2014). Members from these groups who became a member of Parliament later on in the term, replacing MEPs who left, are therefore not included in the data set.

The primary sources for finding information about the members of the EPP, S&D and ALDE were the website European Parliament, websites of the party groups and personal websites. The data set is nearly complete as information regarding cabinet experience was found from 470 members out of the 481 members included in the dataset, data regarding seniority was retrieved for all 481 members included in the data set. More information on the sources used for finding information about the MEPs included can be found in the appendix.

The data will be tested using a binary logistic regression. This binary logistic regression will include the dependent variable 'leadership position', the independent variables 'cabinet experience' and 'seniority' and lastly a set of control variables which will be discussed below.

Operationalization of the dependent and independent variables

For the dependent variable leadership position within an EPG the presidents and vice-presidents of the political groups are coded with 1, all the members who do not have a leadership position are coded with 0. The first independent variable, previous political experience is coded with 1 when an MEP has been state secretary, minister or prime minister, thus has been part of a cabinet. Members who have not been a state secretary, minister or prime minister are coded with 0. Finally, the second independent variable seniority is measured by the number of terms an MEP has served, even if this was not for the full term of five years, before the start of the current 8th term. MEPs who are in their first term are coded with 0, MEPs who have already served in a previous term are coded with 1.

Control variables

The binary logistic regression will also include control variables. The first control variable is gender. Over the years the number of women in the European Parliament has steadily risen from 16 percent in 1979 to 37 percent in 2014 (European Parliament, n.d.^c). There are big differences between countries regarding the number of women they send to the European Parliament though. Italy sends very few women to the European Parliament, whereas some of the newer member states such as Lithuania and Slovenia have relatively high percentages of female MEPs (Corbett et al., 2007, pp. 49-50). A possible explanation for the unequal distribution is that the majority of national parliamentarians in member states of the European Parliament are still men. Christmas-Best and Kjaer (2007) show that in twelve member states of the European Parliament

men still form the majority. The same goes for the number of women in parliamentary elites; the number of women in parliamentary elites in nine European countries between 1990 and 2003 is still very low with an average of 28.4 percent (Christmas-Best and Kjaer, 2007, p. 100). Though the percentage increased from 24.8 percent to 28.4 percent between 1990 and 2003 this was just a small increase (Best and Kjaer, 2007, p. 100). As there are less female parliamentarians and less females with high political positions at national level, this could be of influence on the number of women elected as MEP as well as on the number of women gaining a leadership position. Therefore women are coded with 0 and men are coded with 1.

A second control variable which will be taken into account is education. The number of parliamentarians with a low level of education has been declining since the 20th century (Gaxie and Godmer, pp. 109-111). Having a high level of education has thus become an important condition for entering a national parliament and having a political career in many West-European countries (Gaxie and Godmer, 2007, pp. 115-116). The control variable education is coded 0 when an MEP does not have any university degree, MEP's who do have an university degree, including a bachelor, master or PhD-degree, are coded with 1.

The third control variable will consist of data on EPG bureau membership and committee chairs before the current 8th term. Members of the bureau are included because they have certain powers since they meet with the group leadership and together coordinate the political activity and strategy of the group (Alliance of Liberals and Democrats, n.d.; Progressive Alliance of Socialists and Democrats, n.d.). Committees have always played an important role in the European Parliament, carrying out much of the detailed work of the European Parliament. The chair of a committee presides over the committee meeting and therefore has significant powers (Corbett et al, 2011, pp. 128-129). When an MEP from the EPP, ALDE or S&D has thus been a member of the group' bureau or has been chair of a commission this is coded with 1, those who have not part of the group' bureau or have not been chair of a commission are coded with 0.

The fourth and final control variable is age. Within the European Parliament a young age does not automatically mean that the MEP will have a long career in the European Parliament. As younger MEPs are especially ambitious for a job on the national level they are more inclined to be loyal towards their national parties and more likely to go against the orders of their group leadership (Meserve et al., 2009, p. 1030). It is likely that this would also affect their chances of gaining a leadership position. However, it is also possible that being young is seen as beneficial.

The age of the MEPs at the official beginning of the European Parliament, the 1st of July 2014, will therefore also be taken into account.

Results

What seems contradictory regarding the results in table 1 is that the percentages regarding cabinet experience are low. However, those with a leadership position only make up for a small percentage of all MEPs, which explains the low percentages.

Table 1. Political experience and leadership positions within EPGs in 2014 (%)

	No cabinet experience	Cabinet experience
No leadership position	94.9	87.1
Leadership position	5.1	12.9
<i>N</i>	369	101
$\chi^2 (1) = 7.453, p= 0.006$		

What is obvious though is that there is a higher percentage of members with cabinet experience in leadership position, than members with no cabinet experience.

Table 2 shows that there is noteworthy difference between the senior MEPs and first-term MEPs regarding leadership positions as well. The percentage of senior members with a leadership position is more than twice as high as the percentage of first-term MEPs.

Table 2. Seniority and leadership positions within EPGs in 2014 (%)

	First-term MEPs	Senior MEPs
Not in leadership position	95.7	91.1
Leadership position	4.3	8.9
<i>N</i>	211	270
$\chi^2 (2) = 4.005, p= 0.045$		

Furthermore table 2 shows that the majority of the MEPs of the EPP, S&D and ALDE are not first-term MEPs but have already served in previous terms. The turnover rate among those groups is therefore lower than the average of all the groups combined. This turnover rate was 50.4 percent in 2009 (Whitaker, p. 1513, 2014).

Although table 2 shows that there is quite a difference between the percentages senior members having a leadership position and first-time MEPs having a leadership position, this relation does not prove to be significant. Cabinet experience does have significant effect on gaining a leadership position though.

Table 3. Binary logistic regression of

Model 1	
(Intercept)	-3.420* (1.524)
Cabinet experience	1.195** (0.431)
Seniority	0.610 (0.455)
Gender (Ref.=Male)	-0.766 (0.405)
University degree	0.668 (1.050)
(Vice)chair of committee or EPG bureau member	0.312 (0.168)
Age	0.05 (0.21)
-2LL	194.999
Cox and Snell's R ²	0.038
Nagelkerke R ²	0.095
N	421

Note: binary logistic regression coefficients with standard errors between brackets.

***p < 0,001, **p < 0,010, * p < 0,05

It therefore seems that seniority might be of influence, but is not one of the main factors behind gaining a leadership position.

Conclusion

The goal of this thesis was to find out if previous political experience, specifically cabinet experience, and seniority acquired in the European Parliament are of influence on gaining a leadership position within the European party groups EPP, S&D ALDE. As the leaderships of the political groups in the European Parliament have a certain powers, such as committee assignment, it is useful to look into these leaderships. Firstly the process of the allocation of committee- and rapporteurship was assessed. Research shows that political experience is not of importance when commissions are being allocated and rapporteurs are being appointed.

Professional work experience and expertise are the main determinants taken into account in the allocation process. However, since committees and rapporteurships require a great deal of expertise it is difficult to relate these findings to leadership position within an EPG.

Secondly the development of political careers, and the different types of political careers were assessed. MEPs can be divided into the three different groups, as identified by Scarrow. The presence of the group containing MEPs who see the European Parliament as the final phase in their career is becoming smaller. A big part of the current MEPs now either try to make a career in the European Parliament, or use it as a way of getting promoted to national offices. The professionalization of the European Parliament and presence of MEPs with a great deal of political experience therefore lead to the hypothesis that cabinet members are more likely to gain a leadership position than MEPs who have not been part of a national cabinet as state secretary, minister or prime minister.

After assessing political careers, the notion of seniority was analyzed as seniority has a noticeable influence on committee assignment in certain national parliaments. In the European Parliament there is no official seniority system, but it does have a significant effect on becoming rapporteur. Furthermore seniority implies that an MEP has the opportunity to build up a network, thereby increasing his chances on gaining sought-after jobs such as leadership of an EPG. MEPs who are in their first term do not have such a network, which makes it less likely that they will be elected into an a leadership position within an EPG.

An original dataset containing data on 481 MEPs from ALDE, S&D and the EPP was used to test the effect of cabinet experience and seniority on gaining a leadership position within an EPG. Cabinet experience proved to have a significant effect on gaining a leadership position within an EPG, seniority however was insignificant.

Discussion

The binary logistic regression shows that cabinet experience has a significant influence on gaining a leadership position within an EPG, confirming the hypothesis that MEPs with cabinet experience are more likely to gain a leadership position within an EPG than members with no cabinet experience. Seniority does not have a significant influence on gaining a leadership position within an EPG though, thus the hypothesis that first-term MEPs are less likely to gain a leadership position within an EPG cannot be confirmed.

However, the results do have some limitations as all of the variables consisted of just two categories. The European Parliament consists of MEPs who have very diverse career backgrounds (see Corbett et al., Daniel, 2015), but by dividing the MEPs into just two categories the diversity is not correctly reflected. Another limitation of this research is that the results cannot be compared with previous terms, this would make the results more valid. Furthermore comparing the results with previous terms could confirm if professionalization of the European Parliament is indeed associated with leaderships consisting of MEPs with cabinet experience.

Besides cabinet experience and seniority there are other factors which could be of influence on gaining a leadership positions.

National delegations also have an influence on the committee assignment within the EPGs (Yordanova, 2009, p. 257). It is therefore a possibility that national delegations exert their influence to make sure that MEPs from their delegation are represented in the EPG' leadership. Secondly, some MEPs of the European Parliament also still view the European Parliament as an institution where they act mainly as representatives of their country, region or constituency (Marsh and Norris, 1997, p. 156). Nationality could therefore still play an important role and is something worth looking into for future research when analyzing leaderships of EPGs.

Furthermore it is also worth questioning the motives of the MEPs for electing certain candidates as chair or vice-chair in general. Assuming people are rational; politicians within a legislative institution will try and shape the institution in such a way that it allows them to fulfil their individual interests (Hibbing, 1999, p. 154). MEPs therefore might vote for a fellow group member not because that member has so much political experience but because they are of personal importance.

Although previous political experience on the national level was assessed during this thesis, political experience gained at other European institutions was not taken into account. Kaeding's (2014) research on report allocation shows that when an MEP has served in a European institutions before becoming an MEP this has a significant effect on becoming rapporteur. Political experience acquired in other parliamentary assemblies such as the Council of Europe and Committee of Regions therefore could have been of influence as well. Furthermore including political experience in other European institutions could also shed a different light on seniority. If an MEP has a long history of service in another European institution before coming to the European Parliament, this might as well also be considered by other MEPs as a sign of seniority.

References

- Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe. (n.d.). ALDE Bureau: Leaders of the national delegations. Retrieved May 2, 2014 from <http://www.alde.eu/alde-group/alde-bureau/>
- Bardi, L. Transnational party federations, European Parliamentary party groups, and the building of Europarties. (1994). In Katz, R.S. and Mair, P. *How parties organize: Change and adaption in party organizations in Western democracies*. (pp. 357-372). London: Sage Publications.
- Bowler, S. and Farrell, D.M. Parties and party discipline within the European Parliament: A norms-based approach (1999). In Bowler, S., Farrel, D.M. and Katz, R.S. *Party discipline and parliamentary government*. (pp. 208-222). Columbus: Ohio State University Press.
- Borchert, J. and Stolz, K. (2011). Introduction: Political careers in multi-level systems. *Regional and federal studies*, 21(2), 107-115.
- Christmas-Best, V. and Kjaer, U. (2007). Why so few and why so slow? Parliamentary representatives in Europe from a longitudinal perspective. In Cotta, M. and Best, H. *Democratic Representation in Europe* (pp. 77-105). Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Corbett, R., Jacobs, F. and Shackleton, M. (2011). *The European Parliament 8th edition*. London: John Harper Publishing.
- Daniel, W. T. (2015). *Career behaviour and the European Parliament: All roads lead through Brussels?* Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- European Parliament (June 27, 2006). A “rapporteur” - the person who presents reports to Parliament. Retrieved from <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?language=en&type=IM-PRESS&reference=20060725STO09938>
- European Parliament. (January 3, 2014). At the end of EP seventh legislature: presidential debate, election night, constitution of groups, constitution of the new Parliament. Retrieved June 3, 2016 from <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/news-room/20140417IPR44805/Series-of-events-from-end-of-seventh-EP-term-to-constitution-of-new-EP>
- European Parliament [Results of the 2014 European elections]. (n.d.^a). Retrieved May 30, 2016 from <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/elections2014-results/en/election-results-2014.html>

- European Parliament [Organisation and rules]. (n.d.^b). Retrieved May 26, 2016 from <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/aboutparliament/en/20150201PVL00010/Organisation>
- European Parliament [Results of the 2014 European elections]. (n.d.^c). Retrieved May 31, 2016 from <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/elections2014-results/en/gender-balance.html>
- European People's Party Group [Structure]. Retrieved May 2, 2016 from <http://www.eppgroup.eu/structure>
- European People's Party Group. (June 4, 2014). Manfred Weber elected as new group chairman. Retrieved June 7, 2016 from <http://www.eppgroup.eu/press-release/Manfred-Weber-elected-as-new-EPP-Group-Chairman>
- Feron, E., Cowley, J., and Giorgi, L. (2006). The emergence of a European political class. In Giorgi, L., von Homeyer, I., and Parsons, W. *Democracy in the European Union: Towards the emergence of public sphere* (pp. 79-114). Abingdon: Routledge.
- Gaxie, D. and Godmer, L. (2007) Cultural capital and political selection: Educational backgrounds of parliamentarians. In Cotta, M. and Best, H. *Democratic Representation in Europe* (pp. 106-135). Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Hagevi, M. (2002). Nordic light on committee assignment. In Esaiasson, P. and Heidar, K. *Beyond Westminster and congress: The Nordic experience* (pp. 237-264). Columbus: Ohio State University Press.
- Hibbing, J. Legislative careers: Why and how we should study them. *Legislative Studies Quarterly*, 24 (2), 149-171.
- 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. (2005). The political system of the European Union. Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMillan.
- Hix, S. (2009). What to Expect in the 2009-14 European Parliament: Return of the Grand Coalition? *Swedish Institute for European policy studies*, 8, 1-12.
- Hix, S., and Høyland, B. (2013). Empowerment of the European Parliament. *Annual Review of Political Science*, 16, 171-189.
- Hix, S., and Høyland, B. (2014). Political Behaviour in the European Parliament. In Martin, S., Saalfeld, T., and Strøm, K. W. (2014). *The Oxford Handbook of Legislative Studies* (pp. 591-608). Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Hix, S. and Lord, C. (1997). *Political parties in the European Union*. Basingstoke: MacMillan.

- Hix, S., Noury, A. and Roland, G. (2006). Dimensions of politics in the European Parliament. *American Journal of Political Science*, 50, 494-520.
- Hulst, M. van der. (2002). *The parliamentary mandate: A global comparative study*. Geneva: Inter-Parliamentary Union.
- Raunio, T. The European Parliament. In Jones, E., Menon, A. and Weatherill, S. (2012). *The Oxford handbook of the European Union* (365-379). Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Kaeding, M. (2004). Rapporteurship Allocation in the European Parliament. *European Union Politics*, 5(3), 353-371.
- Kellermann, M. and Shepsle, K.A. (2009). Congressional Careers, Committee Assignments, and Seniority Randomization in the US House of Representatives. *Quarterly Journal of Political Science* 4(2), 87-101.
- Kreppel, A. (2002). *The European Parliament and supranational party system: A study in institutional development*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Marsh, M. and Norris, P. (1997). Political representation in the European Parliament. *European Journal of Political Research*, 32 (2), 153-164.
- McElroy, G. (2008). Committees and party cohesion in the European Parliament. *Austrian Journal of Political Science*, 37(3), 357-373.
- Meserve, S.A., Pemstein, D. and Bernhard, W. T. (2009). Political Ambition and Legislative Behavior in the European Parliament. *The Journal of Politics*, 71(3), 1015-1032.
- Norris, P. and Franklin, M. (1997). Social representation. *European Journal of Politics Research*, 32(2), 185-210.
- Norris, P. Recruitment into the European Parliament. In Katz, R. and Wessels, B. (1999). *The European Parliament, the national parliaments and European integration*. (pp. 86-102). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Progressive Alliance of Socialists and Democrats. (July 1, 2014). Italian MEP Gianni Pittella elected as new S&D Group President. Retrieved May 2, 2016 from <http://www.socialistsanddemocrats.eu/newsroom/italian-mep-gianni-pittella-elected-new-sd-group-president>
- Progressive Alliance of Socialists and Democrats [Meet the bureau]. (n.d.). Retrieved May 2, 2016 from <http://www.socialistsanddemocrats.eu/bureau>

- Ringe, N. (2010). *Who decides and how? Preferences, uncertainty and policy choice in the European Parliament*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.
- Scarrow, S. (1997). Political career paths and the European Parliament. *Legislative Studies Quarterly*, 22 (2), 253-263.
- Schlesinger, J. (1966). *Ambition and politics: Political careers in the United States*. Chicago: Rand McNally & Company.
- Squire, P. (1992). Legislative Professionalization and membership diversity in state legislatures. *Legislative Studies Quarterly*, 17(1), 69-79.
- Whitaker, R. (2014). Tenure, turnover and careers in the European Parliament: MEPs as policy-seekers. *Journal of European Public Policy*, 21(10), 1509-1527.
- Yordanova, N. (2009). The rationale behind committee assignment in the European Parliament: Distributive, informational and partisan perspectives. *European Union Politics*, 10 (2), 253–280.

Appendix

An overview of all members currently belonging to each European party group was retrieved from the websites of the EPP, ALDE and S&D. However, some of the members displayed on their websites were not part of the group at the official beginning on the 1st of July 2014.

Therefore the list of *incoming members* on the website of the European Parliament was consulted to assure that group members who become MEP after the 1st of July were not included in the dataset. For the MEPs who were part of the European Parliament on the 1st of July 2014, but have left the European Parliament thereafter the list of *outgoing members* was consulted. This was done because these MEPs are no longer displayed on the websites of their former European party group. Information such as seniority, age, party leadership, bureau membership and committee chairmanship of MEPs who are no longer part of the European Parliament, but were on the 1st of July, was gathered from the *directory* on the website of the European Parliament. This directory included *a history of parliamentary service* of each former member.

Information on seniority, age and committee chairmanship of the MEPs who are still part of the European Parliament and were also part of the EPGs on the 1st of July, and therefore included in the dataset, was found by consulting the full list of current MEPs on the website of the European Parliament. This list is called *full list* and gives an overview of all the current members. For each member a personal profile exists, which among other things includes *a history of parliamentary service*.

To find out if a certain member of the EPP has been part of a national cabinet in the past, thus having been state-secretary, minister or prime minister, the website of the EPP was consulted. The website of the EPP contains an overview of all its members, including personal information and cv's. The website of ALDE also contains a full list of all its members including cv's and personal information. However, cv's are not included for every member. For the few members of ALDE and the EPP whose cv was not included other websites were used. Firstly the website of the European Parliament was consulted, since the personal profiles of the members contain cv's, or links to personal websites in some cases. When a cv or link to a personal page was not included other websites were consulted.. Through Google personal websites were found, which were not included on the personal pages on the website of the European Parliament. When an

MEP did not have a personal page other websites were used such as websites of national governments and political news pages, Wikipedia was never used as main source.

Lastly, the process of finding political experience of the members of the S&D is similar to the process described above. The website of the S&D also provides a full list of all its members with personal pages, however this does not include any cv's at all. For some members a link to their website were included though. If this was not the case the search was conducted in the same way as described for the missing members of the EPP and ALDE.

List of main sources:

Alliance of Liberals and Democrats [ALDE MEPs list]. (n.d.). Retrieved May 26, from
<http://www.alde.eu/alde-group/alde-meps-list-member-european-parliament/>

European Parliament [European Parliament MEPs Full List]. (n.d.). Retrieved May 25, 2016
from <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/meps/en/full-list.html?filter=all&leg=>

European Parliament [Incoming members]. (n.d.) Retrieved May 25, 2016 from
<http://www.europarl.europa.eu/meps/en/incoming-outgoing.html?type=in>

European Parliament [Outgoing members] (n.d.). Retrieved May 25, from
<http://www.europarl.europa.eu/meps/en/incoming-outgoing.html?type=out>

European Parliament.[Directory]. (n.d.). Retrieved May 26, 2016 from
<http://www.europarl.europa.eu/meps/nl/directory.html>

European People's Party [MEP Member Index]. (n.d.). Retrieved June 1, 2016 from
<http://www.eppgroup.eu/members>

Europeans People Party Group (2014). *Vademecum of the members of the EPP Group in the European Parliament*. Retrieved June 1, 2016 from
<http://www.eppgroup.eu/document/91810>

Progressive Alliance of Socialists and Democrats [Meet our MEPs]. (n.d.). Retrieved June 1, 2016
from <http://www.socialistsanddemocrats.eu/new-meps>