

**Protect This House? Transnational Party Group Influence on
Candidate Selection to the European Parliament**

William T Daniel
wdaniel@fmarion.edu

Assistant Professor
Department of Political Science & Geography
Francis Marion University
Florence, South Carolina, USA

**Prepared for the
European Union Studies Association Meeting
Boston, Massachusetts**

5-7 March 2015

Please do not cite without the author's permission.

Protect This House? Transnational Party Group Influence on Candidate Selection to the European Parliament

The benefits of legislator seniority are well established in the scholarly literature on legislative politics. Developed initially within the American congressional context (*eg.*, Davis 1990; Holcombe 1989; Weingast and Marshall 1988), the worth of long-serving legislators—viz., their ability to function productively and provide tangible policy and office benefits to their political parties and constituents—has also been explored by scholars of comparative politics (Jones et al. 2002; McKelvey and Riezman 1992; Shomer 2009). Much of this literature has also been concerned with the increasing ‘personalization’ that comes with legislator seniority: legislators feel more independent, having developed an individual brand during their tenure, and begin to behave in ways that appear less beholden to their respective political parties and more directly linked to voters. While such scenarios typically model legislators as the agents of either political party or constituent principals, what happens when the agents are unable to identify who the most important principals are?

The European Parliament (EP) offers a particularly challenging context for the study of legislator seniority benefits. Although recent work has shown that, as in most other legislatures, members of the European Parliament (MEPs) benefit directly from their seniority by being selected for valuable internal positions, such as EP rapporteurships (*i.e.*, Daniel 2013), the transnational party groups that organize these internal offices and allocate the committee reports needed to exercise individual legislative power are not the same as the national political parties that nominate MEPs for election.

To further complicate matters, scholars of the EP have consistently found that there is a surprisingly weak link between MEPs and their national political parties, beyond pressuring their party members during of a handful of key EP votes and lobbying for the acquisition of desirable committee assignments (Ladrech 2007; Mair 2000; Rose and Borz 2013). Moreover, the second-order election theory that dominates the literature on EP elections (*i.e.*, Reif and Schmitt 1980) suggests that voters are mostly disinterested with or unaware of their MEPs' legislative behavior. Therefore, if the traditional legislative principals—constituents and the national political parties that they vote for—are disconnected from the work of their MEP agents, and the transnational party groups are invested in the day-to-day work of their MEPs, but do not have an ability to directly control their electoral fortunes, then who are the real legislative principals in the EP? Furthermore, what benefit do professionally ambitious MEPs have to curry favor with transnational party groups that dominate the internal political processes of the EP, while incurring the risk that their national parties will not acknowledge their contributions and may simply decide to replace them at election time?

Accordingly, this paper explores whether or not the MEPs that are the most valuable to the EP transnational party groups—those that hold key internal positions, exert a disproportionate amount of legislative influence, and benefit from additional perks of legislative seniority—are also protected at election time by the national parties that responsible for selecting them. In so doing, it asks if the benefits accrued by senior, important MEPs are acknowledged and rewarded by their national political principals in

the form of a 'safe' position on the ballot. Should this be the case, the potential confusion created by the 'double principal' problem experienced by MEPs may not be of major practical concern. However, should national parties choose not to protect the EP's most important legislators, then the work that they accomplish may have been in vain.

In the following section, I review important developments in the relationship between national political parties and their EP analogues. After demonstrating that the literature has remained mostly pessimistic about the awareness of national parties to the EP's internal debates and organizational structures, I develop a set of testable hypotheses that can be used to indicate whether or not national parties are indeed influenced by an MEP's internal stature in the drafting of EP election ballots. I test these assertions using original data on the personal backgrounds and careers of all MEPs from the most recently completed session of the EP, 2009-2014. By using a novel selection model to account for MEPs that did not stand for reelection, I am able to demonstrate that senior MEPs holding positions of influence within the EP committee system are routinely retained by their national parties in 'safe' spots on EP election ballots. This may suggest that the connection between the dueling national and transnational party principals and their MEP agents is stronger than initially thought.

1. EP party groups and the national political parties

Although MEPs have worked in ideologically similar transnational party groups (TPGs) since the first direct elections to the EP in 1979, scholars of political science have traditionally assumed that TPGs have had a fairly limited impact on the functioning and

content of Europe's national political parties. Mair (2000) discusses the little 'spillover' that had occurred from the TPGs to the national parties, in terms of change to party organization or programs, by the end of the fourth EP session in 1999. He finds this lack of impact on the national parties to be troubling, particularly as the increased power of the EP since the advent of co-decision should mean that MEPs are often responsible for drafting and amending legislation, long before it reaches national legislator colleague. Three sessions of the EP later, the state of affairs between TPGs and national parties seems relatively unchanged.

The Changing Importance of Transnational Party Groups

The pan-European movement, following World War Two, led to the creation of so-called party 'federations' across the continent – with transnational organizations sprouting up from within each of the major ideological paradigms of democratic Europe: socialists, conservatives, Christian democrats, liberals, and even newer ecological movements all rushed to develop networks to coordinate the work of national political parties across national borders. Hix and Lord (1997) and Raunio (1997) explore this development from within the EP, concurring with earlier work from Reif and Niedermayer (1987) that, although the party federations each offer a different level of institutionalization and professionalization, their most powerful offshoots could be found in the TPGs organizing the work of MEPs in Strasbourg and Brussels. Kreppel's (2002) authoritative tome on the development of the EP firmly established the importance of the TPGs for EU politics—definitively showing that European legislators chose mostly to work along ideological, as opposed to national, lines.

Nonetheless, for as much as the TPGs have been a central focus of internal politics at the EP, there is less conclusive accord that they have effected any real change in the functioning of national political parties. Various scholars have examined changes within specific ideological currents and national arenas (eg., Bomberg 2002; Dietz 2000; Kirchner 1988; Ladrech 1993; Poguntke 2007), but most have maintained the pessimistic tone taken by Mair (2000)—TPGs may be important the EP's internal organization, but they are of little relevance to the national party systems of Europe.

One exception to this literature is the work of Poguntke et al. (2007), who contend that the forces of European integration have changed the standard operating procedures of political parties, at least from an organizational perspective. According to their work, national parties have become increasingly centralized around party executives, as the EU integration process continues to be mostly driven by national elites. Moreover, national political parties have been forced to recruit and identify so-called EU 'specialists' to seek election to the EP—politicians with the legal skills, technical knowledge, and personal ambition to work at the European, instead of the national, level. While this line of thought would seem to indicate that national parties ought to become less invested in the work of their MEPs—handing over the reins to the TPG leadership and not obstructing the careers of their MEPs—this was clearly not the case for all MEPs with the ambition to seek reelection to the EP in 2014.

The 'Double Principal' Problem: Is the National or the Transnational party in control?

The fact remains that the present relationship between the TPGs and the national political parties is problematic for both organizational and political reasons.

Politicians wishing to develop a career within the EP are pressured to craft policy and cast votes that benefit the ideological programs of the TPGs, yet it is the national parties that ultimately decide their fate at election time. For this reason, EP scholars have become increasingly concerned with determining just who is running the show in Strasbourg and Brussels: is it the TPGs or the national parties?

The bulk of this literature has examined the impact of both the TPGs, as well as the national parties, on MEP voting behavior. For example, Lindberg (2008) finds that MEPs who were loyal to their TPGs and reflected their group's mean ideological preferences—in terms of voting behavior—were the most likely to be favored in the allocation of politically valuable committee rapporteurships, although such MEPs also often voted in line with national party preferences. Somewhat differently, Yordanova (2009) finds that TPGs are ultimately responsible for directing EP committee assignments, although national parties also revealed strong preferences for particularly powerful committee assignments.

In terms of the benefits (or costs) of placing one's loyalty correctly, Faas (2003) makes a highly compelling institutional argument. MEPs hailing from national parties with centralized candidate selection procedure, as well as those from proportional representation election systems—where name recognition is less valuable for election—were shown to be the most likely to vote against TPG preferences, when those preferences conflicted with their national political party programs. Similarly, MEPs from national parties currently serving in national governments were also less likely to remain loyal to their TPG, above the wishes of national parties. In other words, the article

suggests that MEPs with less ability to personalize their reelection campaign and more interest in pleasing national party bosses will be less invested in the work of their TPGs.

More recently, similar results were obtained by Rasmussen (2008), using survey data from 2004-2009 MEPs. MEPs were shown to have links with both TPGs and their national parties: legislators reported feeling an “attitudinal link” with their national parties, agreeing with them on most policy areas, but a “regulatory link” to their TPGs, who control their advancement within the EP. In essence, this brings us back to the initial query of the paper. MEPs, as political agents, are essentially trapped in a double principal problem—navigating between decisions that they feel will please their national or their transnational party groups at different times. Meanwhile, both principals control an important aspect of their MEP agents’ work; yet, neither has been shown to work very closely with the other and each retains sovereignty over different portions of the EP’s electoral-legislative processes. Who, then, should an ambitious MEP with career aspirations firmly in the EP decide to listen to?

2. Hypotheses and Research Design

While electoral laws vary by EU member state, each country is responsible for electing their EP delegation via some degree of proportional representation (as opposed to a single member district or ‘first-past-the-post’ system). National parties are responsible for drafting their electoral lists, as well as recruiting and selecting their candidates for election to the EP. In most cases, these lists reveal a degree of preference on the part of the party: candidates appearing at the top of the list are likely ‘safer’ bets for election than those at the bottom. Therefore, if national parties are indeed aware of

the relative importance of their incumbent MEPs, then we should expect to see the most valuable MEPs appearing in the safest list positions.

A host of individual-level variables may suggest which MEPs are the most likely to be viewed as valuable to the TPGs and/or the national parties. As discussed by Daniel (2013), senior MEPs are more likely to be selected to serve as committee rapporteurs—an important internal position that offers both policy and office benefits to their TPGs, as they are responsible for drafting the EP's position on a given legislative topic.

Accordingly, I expect that if the national parties are aware of MEP importance, then MEPs that have served longer in the EP will be offered a more secure spot on the election list (H1). Similarly MEPs that have been more frequently selected by their TPGs to serve as rapporteur will also be offered more secure spots on electoral lists (H2).

MEPs have additional positions of influence that they can acquire within the EP. The EP's internal organization contains an indirectly elected president, a council of vice presidents, legislative quaestors responsible for the Parliament's internal functioning, and a bureau of party group leaders. Taking cues from a similar line of thought discussed above, I expect that MEPs holding an internal office will also be more likely to be selected for a secure electoral position (H3). Within the EP's important legislative committee system, the committees are directed by chairs, vice chairs, and party group coordinators. I similarly anticipate that these committee leaders will also receive safer spots on the electoral lists, as they are more directly responsible to providing policy benefits to their parties and TPGs (H4).

Individual demographics may also come into play. The trend towards encouraging the recruitment of female candidates operates similarly within the EP to other progressive democracies in Europe. Thus, female MEPs seeking reelection may benefit from their gender when it comes to list position (H5). In keeping with Daniel (2013) and Poguntke et al. (2007), the technical nature of EP legislation oftentimes requires MEPs to be policy experts in a way that exceeds the talents of the traditional broker class of politicians. Therefore, MEPs with more advanced educations may also be more likely to be retained by their national parties in safe list spots (H6). All TPGs are not created equally, so an MEP's party group may also affect their reelection prospects. MEPs from national parties currently in government may also benefit (or suffer) from their party's currently heightened national status.

Accounting for the selection effect

While my research question focuses on the determinants of candidate list position in EP elections, this assumes that MEPs have the personal ambition to seek reelection the EP at all. While the majority of outgoing MEPs do seek reelection, many others choose to seek national office, a different career path within the EU, or simply to retire from public life at the end of their mandate (see Daniel 2015). Therefore, any model meant to predict an MEP's likelihood of reelection, based upon their list position, must first consider whether or not the MEP in question desired to seek reelection at all.

In keeping with the theories discussed by Daniel (2015), I consider likely determinates of reelection-seeking. The most productive and central figures of the EP will likely seek reelection, for example, as they have clearly committed themselves to

the spirit of the EP's work. MEPs from federal and decentralized countries have also been shown to seek reelection in higher rates, as their political parties are more accustomed to selecting candidates across multiple levels of representation. By contrast, MEPs that dropped out before the completion of their mandate will likely not seek reelection. Older MEPs, as well as those from countries that are geographically distant from Brussels, may also have less of a desire to seek reelection and maintain the grueling work schedule of an MEP. Each of these possibilities will be considered in by the empirical model.

Data and Variables

To estimate the likelihood of an MEP's selection into a secure spot for reelection, given their desire to do so, I use original biographical data for all MEPs that served during the most recent 2009-2014 term. The data was initially collected for use by Daniel (2015), but has been further refined for this project, with additional variables related to the focus of this paper included. Data was collected from publicly available sources—predominantly the European Parliament website¹ and Burson-Marsteller's *Europe Decides* database of official 2014 EP election lists.² Many coding decisions were then cross-referenced with a similar dataset used by Thomme, Ringe, and Victor (2015).

As the question of candidate list placement relies upon an MEP deciding to seek reelection, I use a two-stage selection specification, similar to what has been advocated by Heckman (1979). The first stage operates as a probit regression, with the dependent variable measuring whether or not an MEP sought reelection at the conclusion of the

¹ Available at: <http://www.europarl.europa.eu>

² Available at: <http://europedecides.eu/european-parliament/#tab-candidate-lists>

2009-2014 term. Descriptive statistics for the variables described below are found in Table 1.

[Table 1 about here.]

The decision to seek reelection to the EP may be influenced by a number of factors: the number of **terms served**, their **age**, whether or not they were an early **dropout** from the session, their gender, whether or not their **national party** was in government in their home country, **committee** and **EP leadership**, how often they were selected to write **rapporteurships**, the presence of **local elections** in their home country (a common measure of federalism, used by Teorell et al. 2011), and the **distance** of the MEP's national capital to Brussels, in miles. While the scope of this paper is not to discuss the determinants of MEP ambition, the results of this dichotomous estimation are displayed in Table 2. All told, 508 or 848 MEPs that served during the 2009-2014 period stood for reelection in May 2014.

Following the dichotomous estimation of an MEP's decision to seek reelection, a second equation estimated a given MEP's security on national election lists. Using data collected from the official 2014 election lists of all member states, I created the variable **MEP list rank**, which serves as the dependent variable for the outcome equation. The variable is trichotomous, where the maximum value of 2 corresponds to an MEP who is featured in the most optimal list spot. In a fully closed and national list, this would be an MEP featured in the first position on the list. For MEPs from countries such as France or the UK, where lists are divided by region, the coding also includes MEPs in the prime position for their region. For MEPs from countries where the list is ranked by the party,

by voters may indicate a preference, the same remains true. This is in keeping with the work of Marcinkiewicz (2014), who shows that Polish voters routinely preference top-listed candidates, even when they can change the order.³

MEPs who do not appear in the prime list position, but do appear in a relatively safe spot, are coded with a 1. In order to ascertain which spots are likely to be safe, I consider the size of national party delegations in the outgoing 2009-2014 EP. If, for example, a given country has five MEPs from the EPP party group at the end of the term, I consider the first five spots on the 2014 EPP list to be relatively safe in the next term. For countries with regional lists, I divide the number of seats held by the party group across by region. Also similar to the logic discussed above, I rely upon this metric for lists that allow voters to re-order candidate position, but which do offer an order suggested by parties. One additional caveat can be added to this category: for purely open lists, where all candidates are unordered and voters are not constrained by party lists, all incumbent MEPs have a theoretically equal position on the ballot and all receive a value of 1.

Finally, MEPs who fall outside of prime or relatively safe positions are coded with a 0. Oftentimes, these are MEPs that desire to be reelected, but who are purposefully demoted by their national political parties. In some cases, MEPs were not selected by their national party for reelection, or left their national party during the 2009-2014 term, and went on to form their own list. As these newly created lists were not previously

³ One exception to this rule is Polish candidates that are placed in the last list spot, which is similarly visible and oftentimes offered as a preference by voters. For MEPs appearing in the list spot on the list, they were also coded with 2.

elected, even incumbents at the head of these lists—such as Dutch MEP Laurence Stassen, who left the Dutch Freedom Party and to run for election in 2014 on a newly created party list in the UK—are given a value of 0. In keeping with the discussion from the start of the paper, if many MEPs that have demonstrated their internal value to the EP appear in such undesirable positions for election, then national parties and TPGs may be more separate in their preferences than previously thought.

As the dependent variable is trichotomous, I estimate the second-stage outcome model using an ordered probit specification, which accounts for multiple discrete values of an ordered nature. Luca, Giuseppe, and Perotti (2010) develop a statistical technique for this process, in which observations that select into the outcome equation, via the first-stage dichotomous probit estimate, can then be estimated using ordered probit. This process differs from a traditional Heckman model, which estimates the second-stage equation using Ordinary Least Squares (OLS). However, as the list rank variable does contain ordered and discrete potential outcomes, the distribution of the dependent variable of interest is not normal and OLS is inappropriate for use.

As mentioned in the hypothesis section above, if the national parties are aware of which of their MEPs are the most valuable to them in the EP legislative process, then I expect that MEPs having served more terms in the EP will receive a better list placement in the election—in other words, a positive effect on the value of the dependent variable. MEPs having written the most rapporteurships during the 2009-2014 term, those having

served in positions of internal leadership, female MEPs, and more educated MEPs⁴ will all also receive a better list placement and have a positive effect on the outcome dependent variable. In keeping with the expectations of Faas (2003) and others, an MEP's TPG and the status of their national party in national government may also have an impact on their list placement. These possibilities are all considered in the results of the regression analysis, found in Table 2.

[Table 2 about here.]

3. Results and Analysis

Regression coefficients for the impact of MEP individual and group characteristics on the decision to seek reelection and be well placed on an electoral list are displayed in Table 2. Model 1 displays the outcome equation—what determines an MEP's list rank on the party electoral list—given that the MEP in question selected into this equation by seeking reelection in the probit equation displayed in Model 2. The Wald Test results displayed at the bottom of the table indicate that the two equations are highly negatively correlated, meaning that the outcome equation is highly affected by the selection equation and the two-stage specification is therefore warranted.

Both models provide interesting insights into the behavior of MEPs and their relationships with TPGs and national political parties. In Model 2, MEPs that served multiple terms were actually *less* likely to seek reelection, though this is likely a

⁴ The education variable is a four-point ordinal scale, coded for an MEP's highest attained degree. MEPs with a postgraduate degree were coded with 4, MEPs with bachelors degrees received a 3, some university courses or a preparatory secondary school education received a 2, and MEPs with only a vocation or elementary education received a 1. For additional information on this coding scheme, please refer to Daniel (2015; 2013).

reflection of the most senior MEPs choosing to retire at the end of the term. In a similar vein, dropout MEPs were less likely to seek election for a future term. Logically, MEPs from countries located the farthest away from Brussels were the least likely to seek reelection. This is also a reasonable finding; a flight from Cyprus to Brussels, for example, takes about as long to complete as one between New York and Los Angeles—quite a long journey for legislators whose jobs have them shuffling between Brussels and Strasbourg, already.

Model 1 provides insight on the connection between MEP value to TPGs and national party reselection for a future term. Here, many of the variables behave in the expected directions. MEPs having served multiple terms are positively associated with list rank, meaning that veteran MEPs do receive privileged spots on national election lists and offering support for H1. Frequent rapporteurs and EP internal leaders, however, do not have a significant likelihood of being well positioned for reelection. This does not support H2 and H3 and suggests that these highly important internal offices may actually be ignored by the national parties of MEPs. Interestingly enough, MEPs serving in committee leadership roles are more likely to be nominated to favorable list positions and more highly educated MEPs are also more likely to lead national lists. This finding supports H4 and H6 and suggests that an MEP's value may be understood differently outside of the legislature. Finally, female MEPs were not shown to have a significant advantage, when it comes to list positioning.

Because the substantive interpretation of an ordered probit model is not directly evident from the coefficients displayed in Table 2, I analyze the substantive effect of the

statistically significant variables of interest in Model 1 using marginal effects. MEP seniority and committee leadership are among the most substantively meaningful. For each additional term served, an MEP is 5.64% more likely to be placed at the head of a national list; committee leaders are shown to be about 9.61% more likely to occupy the top spot on a national list. Education also has a positive impact, with each additional level increasing an MEP's likelihood of being the list leader by 2.9%.

The flipside can also be analyzed and marginal effects were also computed for those MEPs placed in the least secure electoral positions. Each additional term served made an MEP 2.8% less likely to be placed in electoral peril by their national party and committee leaders were 4.39% less likely to be given a poor position; MEP education had a smaller effect, at a decrease of 1.45% likelihood of being placed in an unsafe position with each additional degree earned. Marginal effects were also calculated for the possible outcome of '1', where an MEP is placed in a safe position, but not at the top of the list. In those cases, the substantive significance is very similar to the '0' outcome, where seniority and committee leadership both reducing the likelihood of being placed further down the list.

One final result that deserves some attention are the control variables for party in national government and party groups. Each of the traditional TPGs were controlled for in the outcome model: EPP (Christian democrats), S&D (socialists), ALDE (liberals), and ECR (national conservatives). MEPs from both of the largest party groups—EPP and S&D—were less likely to secure a top spot on the list. Part of this is likely just a reflection of the larger size of these party groups, as there are only a finite number of

prime spots on the list. However, it may also have something to do with MEPs whose national party is in government back at home.

MEPs whose national party is in government at election time were 4.15% *more* likely to occupy an unsafe spot on the reelection list and 8.39% *less* likely to occupy a top position. Why might this be the case? On the one hand, such MEPs opt for an unsafe spot on purpose, desiring to enter into national government and running for the EP with no intention to take their seat. Another possibility is that, with their national party in government, MEPs may find themselves crowded out by an influx of would-be politicians, securing plum spots on EP lists as a reward for loyalty at home. The outcome is interesting and worthy of additional speculation and study.

Model Limitations

While the selection model does an ample job of providing statistically and substantively meaningful results, there are a number of potential drawbacks to this model specification. The most likely is the potential for omitted variable bias. Data was collected for a number of other explanatory and control variables. MEP national delegation heads, for example, might be more likely to be well placed by national parties, as they are also the closest of their country's MEPs to the national party organization. Data on this variable was only partially obtained by the time of this paper's current draft. The data considers only the seventh wave of the EP, 2009-2014, but an interesting addition to the story may be to expand the models to additional waves. However, this will likely prove difficult, as well-organized electoral lists are not easily available for all waves of the EP.

One additional variable that could be collected for a future version of the paper might examine an MEP's ideological extremity, compared to either their national delegation or to their TPG on the whole. The premise here might be that extreme MEPs are less likely to be well positioned for reelection, particularly if their views are out of sync with their national political party. I have previously used Hix's NOMINATE data on earlier waves of the EP to show that extreme MEPs are actually not that likely to be discriminated against, when it comes to report allocation, but similar measures for the 2009-2014 period should be collected and analyzed against MEP list rank.

Additional controls were collected, but could not be included, due to the sensitive nature of two-stage selection models. These include country fixed effects, controls for delegation size, and controls for list type (open, ordered, blocked, etc.). National level data, such as public opinion on the EP and public opinion on the EU, may also play an interesting role on the management of MEPs. In each case, the data is available, but a theoretically driven decision to omit these controls was taken, due to the statistical constraints of the model.

Finally, it is important to note that, while both known and unknown variables were omitted from the model, the selection model is still a vast improvement over a split sample, in which only MEPs who sought reelection are considered. A censored version of the ordered probit, accounting only for list rank and excluding MEPs that did not seek reelection was estimated and proved to be highly inefficient. This further confirms the rho statistic from Table 2, which was used to determine that the two-stage process was an improvement over the separate estimation of the two models.

4. Discussion and Conclusion

The preceding section revealed a great deal of new information about the nature of MEP worth and the ability of national political parties to control the electoral fortunes of their MEPs. While some aspects of an MEP's value to their TPG in the EP seem not to be an influence on national political parties—such as EP leadership positions and rapporteurships—others—like committee leadership positions and seniority—are rewarded by national political parties. What, then, does this mean for the relationship between the TPGs, the national political parties, and MEPs.

The scholarly literature, as well as the popular press, would have us believe that the job of MEP is underappreciated by voters and oftentimes misunderstood by their parties. Nonetheless, certain aspects of an MEP's work do seem to be recognized and rewarded by their national parties. For MEPs that are able to commit to a lengthy period of work in the EP, it appears that national parties are likely to work with them to keep them in office. This is encouraging news for scholars and practitioners who show concern that political parties may actually work against their best interests, by removing veteran MEPs from office. Furthermore, some internal positions—such as committee leadership—do appear to help an MEP become more visible to their national political party. This somewhat echoes the findings of Yordanova (2009) and Whitaker (2009).

Nevertheless, other aspects of MEP work seem to be less important to political parties. While Daniel (2013) shows that MEPs are more likely to serve as important legislative rapporteurs when they possess some degree of seniority, the number of rapporteurships written by an MEP does not have an impact on their reelection

prospects. Similarly, internally important positions, such as members of the EP Bureau or College of Quaestors—themselves highly contested within the legislature—are seemingly ignored by political parties in the drafting of national lists.

In short, it does appear that the European Parliament’s transnational party groups are able to protect their house from potential agency loss to the national parties at election time, but only to a degree. From a normative perspective, this suggests that MEPs with an interest in retaining their position may need to refocus their attention on just how they are behaving while on the job. Meanwhile, transnational party groups must remain cognizant that the most seemingly important positions for their purposes may not be the same for others. The party groups may therefore need to shift their office-seeking ambitions somewhat, in order to guarantee their policy-seeking needs.

References

- Bomberg, E. 2002. "The Europeanisation of Green Parties: Exploring the EU's Impact." *West European Politics* 25(3): 29–50.
- Daniel, William T. 2013. "When the Agent Knows Better Than the Principal: The Effect of Education and Seniority on European Parliament Rapporteur Assignment." *JCMS: Journal of Common Market Studies* 51(5): 832–48.
- . 2015. *Career Behaviour and the European Parliament: All Roads Lead Through Brussels?* Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Davis, Michael L. 1990. "Why Is There a Seniority System? To Solve an Agency Problem." *Public Choice* 66(1): 37–50.
- Dietz, Thomas M. 2000. "Similar but Different? The European Greens Compared to Other Transnational Party Federations in Europe." *Party Politics* 6(2): 199–210.
- Faas, Thorsten. 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): 841–66.
- Heckman, James J. 1979. "Sample Selection Bias as a Specification Error." *Econometrica* 47(1): 153–61.
- Hix, Simon, and Christopher Lord. 1997. *Political Parties in the European Union*. Palgrave Macmillan.
- Holcombe, Randall G. 1989. "A Note on Seniority and Political Competition." *Public Choice* 61(3): 285–88.
- Jones, Mark P., Sebastian Saiegh, Pablo T. Spiller, and Mariano Tommasi. 2002. "Amateur Legislators-- Professional Politicians: The Consequences of Party-Centered Electoral Rules in a Federal System." *American Journal of Political Science* 46(3): 656–69.
- Kirchner, Emil J. 1988. *Liberal Parties in Western Europe*. Cambridge University Press.
- Kreppel, Amie. 2002. *The European Parliament and Supranational Party System: a Study in Institutional Development*. Cambridge University Press.
- Ladrech, Robert. 1993. "Social Democratic Parties and EC Integration." *European Journal of Political Research* 24(2): 195–210.
- . 2007. "National Political Parties and European Governance: The Consequences of 'Missing in Action'." *West European Politics* 30(5): 945–60.

- Lindberg, Björn. 2008. "Are Political Parties Controlling Legislative Decision-making in the European Parliament? The Case of the Services Directive." *Journal of European Public Policy* 15(8): 1184–1204.
- Luca, De, Giuseppe, and Valeria Perotti. 2010. *Estimation of Ordered Response Models with Sample Selection*. Rochester, NY: Social Science Research Network. SSRN Scholarly Paper. <http://papers.ssrn.com/abstract=1619783> (February 25, 2015).
- Mair, Peter. 2000. "The Limited Impact of Europe on National Party Systems." *West European Politics* 23(4): 27–51.
- Marcinkiewicz, Kamil. 2014. "Electoral Contexts That Assist Voter Coordination: Ballot Position Effects in Poland." *Electoral Studies* 33: 322–34.
- McKelvey, Richard D., and Raymond Riezman. 1992. "Seniority in Legislatures." *American Political Science Review* 86(04): 951–65.
- Poguntke, Thomas. 2007. "Europeanization in a Consensual Environment? German Political Parties and the European Union." In *The Europeanization of National Political Parties*, New York: Routledge, 108–33.
- Poguntke, Thomas, Nicholas Aylott, Robert Ladrech, and Kurt Richard Luther. 2007. "The Europeanisation of National Party Organisations: A Conceptual Analysis." *European Journal of Political Research* 46(6): 747–71.
- Rasmussen, Anne. 2008. "Party Soldiers in a Non-partisan Community? Party Linkage in the European Parliament." *Journal of European Public Policy* 15(8): 1164–83.
- Raunio, Tapio. 1997. *The European Perspective: Transnational Party Groups in the 1989-1994, European Parliament*. Ashgate.
- Reif, Karlheinz, and Oskar Niedermayer. 1987. "The European Parliament and the Political Parties." *Journal of European Integration* 10(2-3): 157–72.
- Reif, Karlheinz, and Hermann Schmitt. 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.
- Rose, Richard, and Gabriela Borz. 2013. "Aggregation and Representation in European Parliament Party Groups." *West European Politics* 36(3): 474–97.
- Shomer, Yael. 2009. "Candidate Selection Procedures, Seniority, and Vote-Seeking Behavior." *Comparative Political Studies*.
<http://cps.sagepub.com/content/early/2009/01/30/0010414008330600>
(February 26, 2015).

- Teorell, Jan et al. 2011. "The Quality of Government Dataset, Version 6Apr11."
<http://www.qog.pol.gu.se>.
- Thomme, Jack van, Associate Prof Nils Ringe, and Assistant Prof Jennifer Nicoll Victor. 2015. "Explaining Reelection in the European elections 2014." In *Die Europawahl 2014*, eds. Michael Kaeding and Niko Switek. Springer Fachmedien Wiesbaden, 335–44. http://link.springer.com/chapter/10.1007/978-3-658-05738-1_28 (March 1, 2015).
- Weingast, Barry R., and William J. Marshall. 1988. "The Industrial Organization of Congress; or, Why Legislatures, Like Firms, Are Not Organized as Markets." *Journal of Political Economy* 96(1): 132–63.
- Whitaker, Richard. 2009. *The European Parliament's Committees: National Party Control and Legislative Empowerment*. Taylor and Francis.
- Yordanova, Nikoleta. 2009. "The Rationale Behind Committee Assignment in the European Parliament Distributive, Informational and Partisan Perspectives." *European Union Politics* 10(2): 253–80.

Tables

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics

Variable	N	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min.	Max.
MEP List Rank	508	1.152	0.729	0	2
Seek Reelection	855	0.594	0.491	0	1
Terms Served	855	1.658	1.068	1	7
Female	855	0.354	0.479	0	1
EP Leader	855	0.097	0.296	0	1
Committee Leader	855	0.130	0.336	0	1
Rapporteurships	851	2.558	4.718	0	54
Education	841	3.244	0.892	1	4
EPP	855	0.361	0.481	0	1
S&D	855	0.253	0.435	0	1
ECR	855	0.067	0.250	0	1
ALDE	855	0.115	0.319	0	1
Party in Nat'l Gov't	855	0.543	0.498	0	1
Dropout	855	0.036	0.187	0	1
Age	855	55.118	10.738	26	86
Capital Distance	855	600.345	361.508	0	1805
Local Elections	855	1.343	0.741	0	2

Table 2. Parametric Ordered Probit with Sample Selection for MEP List Rank

<i>1. Ordered Probit Model</i>	Coefficient	R.S.E.	z-score	p-value
DV: MEP List Rank (N=508)				
Terms Served	0.147	0.039	3.80	0.000
Female	0.019	0.087	0.22	0.827
EP Leader	0.196	0.173	1.13	0.257
Committee Leader	0.260	0.131	1.98	0.047
Rapporteurships	-0.010	0.007	-1.54	0.125
Education	0.076	0.034	2.25	0.024
EPP	-0.299	0.114	-2.62	0.009
S&D	-0.351	0.115	-3.05	0.002
ECR	0.182	0.188	0.97	0.332
ALDE	0.033	0.159	0.21	0.834
National Party in Gov't	-0.220	0.094	-2.34	0.019
<i>2. Probit Selection Model</i>				
DV: Seek Reelection (N=848)				
Terms Served	-0.199	0.045	-4.42	0.000
Dropout	-1.287	0.158	-8.15	0.000
Age	-0.004	0.004	-1.19	0.233
Female	-0.090	0.090	-1.00	0.318
National Party in Gov't	0.123	0.088	1.41	0.160
EP Leader	0.080	0.158	0.50	0.615
Committee Leader	-0.111	0.129	-0.86	0.390
Rapporteurships	0.015	0.011	1.31	0.190
Capital Distance	-0.001	0.000	-6.24	0.000
Local Elections	-0.058	0.052	-1.13	0.259
Constant	1.287	0.237	5.42	0.000
<i>Ordered Probit Thresholds:</i>				
Cut 1	-0.992	0.166	-5.99	0.000
Cut 2	-0.060	0.156	-0.39	0.699
ρ	-1.000	0.000	-1.00	1.000
χ^2 (Wald Test)	0.03			0.865

Note: Significant probit coefficient statistics shaded for clarity