Policy Influence and Reelection in the European Parliament

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Introduction

Are powerful Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) more likely to be reelected than their "regular" colleagues? At first glance, this question appears straightforward and the answer a rather obvious "yes." Upon further consideration, however, neither is the case. To start, it is neither clear nor easy to determine, who is influential and who is not in legislative politics, because power and influence are multifaceted and diffuse concepts. They may derive from formal leadership positions, for example, but also from personal traits such as skills, experience, expertise, ambition, determination, or a lack of scruples, which are exceedingly difficult to measure. Moreover, influence may not only be diffuse, but also limited to particular policy areas, which means that determining who is powerful in general (across a broad range of issues and legislation) likely masks important nuances in "who matters" in legislative decision-making. Finally, the elusive nature of power and influence makes it difficult to answer the question whether or not powerful lawmakers are more likely to secure reelection.

In this paper, we undertake two challenges: measuring political influence and using influence to explain reelection. First, we develop a new measure of policy leadership in the European Parliament (EP), by which we mean leadership by lawmakers in particular policy domains. Second, we investigate the predictive power of this new indicator by considering its ability to explain individual MEPs' reelection. In other words, we ask if policy leaders are more likely to be reelected, controlling for relevant confounding factors, such as formal party and legislative leadership, seniority, and the electoral performance of MEPs' national parties.

Our policy leadership variable builds on a recently developed measure of influence in legislative politics, namely political actors' centrality in co-voting networks (Ringe and Wilson 2014). This measure uses legislators' voting patterns to capture their social connectedness and determine the relative influence of individual lawmakers by examining their relative positions in the network structure of the legislature (Bailey and Sinclair 2008). The basis for this conceptualization of voting as a relational activity is a simple cueing dynamic in which some lawmakers follow the lead of their colleagues when voting in a legislature. Those legislators who most influence the greatest number of colleagues' voting decisions are most central, and thus most influential, in the legislative co-voting network.

We calculate co-voting centrality for 21 policy areas (defined by the jurisdictions of the EP's standing committees) using the complete set of roll-call votes from the 2009-14 EP term. For each policy area, we identify the most influential MEPs and aggregate the measure across all policy domains, which we then use to predict the likelihood that incumbent MEPs secure reelection in the 2014 EP election. Our results confirm, most notably, that policy leadership is positively associated with the likelihood of reelection. They also show that MEPs who serve as rapporteurs, party leaders, and intergroup chairs are more likely to be reelected for another term.

An important innovation and contribution of this paper is the use of social network analysis to gain insights into legislators' voting behavior and the use of voting data to identify influential lawmakers. Often, legislative voting is treated as an individual-level activity, and key to many analyses of voting behavior is the assumption that voting decisions are independent of each other. However, in this paper we conceptualize voting,

and voting data, in broader terms, by considering how we can garner information about individual-level influence by investigating the co-voting network structure as a whole. Treating co-voting data as a relational measure and using them to identify influential legislators constitutes a novel approach to the study of legislative influence. Moreover, we extend and fine-tune the concept of co-voting centrality to capture influence in particular policy domains, which allows for a more nuanced identification of which MEPs "matter." After all, considering only who matters across all policy areas and votes likely masks the role of policy specialists who are highly influential in particular issue areas.

Importantly, we allow the voting data to help us identify influential MEPs, rather than build on assumptions about who *should* matter because of formal leadership positions, seniority, or visibility. This allows our measure to travel easily to other legislative arenas, as long as a sufficient number of roll-call votes are available for analysis.

Finally, we contribute to our understanding of the dynamics of EP elections. While we have learned much from applications (and recent extensions) of the second-order election model to EP elections and from considerations of voter motivations, most analyses are focused on either individual-level vote choice or the aggregate performance of national or EU-level parties in EP elections. We ask specifically what helps explain that incumbent MEPs make it back to the EP for another term.

The paper proceeds as follows: we begin by discussing the difficulty of measuring "influence" in legislative politics in general, and in the EP in particular, and discuss in some detail Ringe and Wilson's co-voting centrality measure (2014), on which our policy

leadership variable builds. We then describe the operationalization of our measure. After briefly discussing what we already know about EP elections, we move on to the empirical analysis explaining reelection to the EP, which demonstrates the predictive power of policy leadership. The final section concludes.

Measuring Legislative Influence

Who is influential in EP politics? This is the first main question our research seeks to address, but also one that is exceedingly difficult to answer, for two reasons. First, the EP's institutional setup and practical operation does not unambiguously empower a particular set of political actors over others. On the one hand, the EP is a party-centered legislature, and there is abundant evidence for the (growing) importance of party politics (see, in particular, Hix, Roland, and Noury 2007). On the other hand, the EP's legislative backbone are its standing committee (Westlake 1994), which are (largely) populated by expert MEPs and committed individual members. We therefore cannot say, *a priori*, that the influence of parties necessarily trumps that of committees, for example, and (by extension) that party leaders dominate decision-making processes and outcomes (as they do in many lawmaking bodies). Indeed, there is no single leadership group that fully controls the activities and vote choices of individual MEPs (Kreppel 2006, 260) because policy-making in the EP is a rather decentralized process that eschews strict hierarchies (Ringe 2010). What often matters is participation in substantive deliberations and negotiations of legislative proposals, as the majority of substantive changes in the content of legislation and cross-party compromises are made in committee (Kreppel 2006) following deliberations and negotiations among small

groups of key actors (Ringe 2010). Individual MEPs can, therefore, have a great deal of influence on decision-making processes and outcomes by choosing to actively participate in the policy process (Ringe 2010, 59; also Marshall 2010, 559).

This brings us to the second reason why it is difficult to identify who "matters" in EP politics (as well as in numerous other legislative contexts): much of the influence individual lawmakers may yield is diffuse. While it is surely the case that MEPs who hold formal positions of power (such as party leaders, committee leaders, coordinators, or rapporteurs) are likely able to sway others in EP decision-making processes, influence is also reflective of certain personal attributes—and others' perceptions thereof—that are difficult to gauge, such as being knowledgeable, cooperative, trustworthy, well connected, cunning, effective, or ruthless. These attributes are difficult to capture, and we do not attempt to do so in this paper. Instead, we capture the *observable implication* of legislators' influence, namely that other lawmakers *follow their lead* when making individual-level choices that are aggregated into collective decisions. In particular, we are interested in capturing what we call "policy leadership," that is, the extent to which MEPs guide others in making decisions in particular policy areas.

Our indicator of policy leadership builds on a recently developed measure of legislative influence that draws from the study of power in social networks: political actors' centrality in co-voting networks (Ringe and Wilson 2014). Voting is thus conceived of as a *relational* activity. It is not, in other words, an atomistic act performed by legislators independently of one another, but mutually interdependent: one legislator's voting intention affects those of others, and vice versa. Specifically, voting is conceptualized a simple cueing dynamic, where one (set of) legislator(s) sends a signal to

(an)other (set of) legislator(s) indicating the appropriate vote choice. This signal can be "any communication – verbal or non-verbal – intended or unintended – that is employed by the cue-taker as a prescription for his vote" (Matthews and Stimson 1975, 51; see also Kingdon 1973, 1977; Stimson 1975; Sullivan et al. 1993; Masket 2008; Ringe 2010; Box-Steffensmeier, Ryan, and Sokhey 2015). Those legislators (cue-providers) who influence the greatest number of colleagues' (cue-receivers) voting decisions are most central, and thus most influential, in the legislative co-voting network.

There are a variety of reasons why an individual legislator may follow a colleague's cue when casting a vote, such as coercion (Legislator A forces Legislator B to adopt the cue, for example by threatening sanction), expertise (A is a policy expert, B is not), a division of labor (B adopts A's cues in one policy area and A adopts B's cues in another), normative considerations (e.g., B feels a sense of loyalty toward A), or persuasion (A convinces B to adopt the cue). Ringe and Wilson's model does not, however, make any restrictive assumptions about legislators' motivations for adopting a cue. All it assumes, *a priori*, is that there is a temporal voting sequence in which the cue-provider offers the cue at time *t* and the receiver casts a vote, either following the cue or not, at time *t+1*. The model's principle proposition is that cue-providers are more central in the legislative co-voting network than cue-receivers; indeed, the more cue-receivers are influenced by the cue-provider, the greater the latter's centrality in the co-voting network. It is in this sense that centrality implies influence.

In social network terms, legislators constitute the *nodes* in a social network in which like-votes (i.e., the two members of a *dyad* of legislators both cast yes votes, both cast no votes, or both abstain) form the *ties* that connect them. Observing like-votes

between two lawmakers does not, however, allow us to determine who influences whom: we may observe that Legislators A and Legislator B cast like-votes, but cannot observe the direction of their connection. Co-voting data, in other words, are undirected (or *symmetric*). This is an important challenge because the data used to capture legislators' social ties do not match the theoretical proposition of a cueing dynamic, where the cue-receiver's vote choice is dependent on the cue-provider's signal. In other words, Ringe and Wilson's theory of legislative influence implies a directionality that is, as such, unobservable in the data they use to measure it (roll-call votes from the 2004-2009 EP term).

This is only a problem when examining co-voting at the dyadic level, however; observing broader network patterns provides additional analytic leverage. Simply put, we may not be able to differentiate between cue-provider and cue-receiver when we only look at any two legislators, but we are able to do so when we consider the voting patterns of larger groups, because an individual legislator will be more central in the co-voting network if a group of colleagues systematically adopts or opposes his or her positions across a number of votes.

The notion of co-voting centrality as a measure of influence therefore presupposes that cue-providers be more central than their followers in co-voting networks. Only if this is true does it become possible to use co-voting centrality to identify those legislators who are most influential. Ringe and Wilson make this case, first, by presenting a formal mathematical proof demonstrating that cue-providers are *always* more central than cue-followers. Second, they construct an agent-based model that simulates legislatures of various sizes and parameterizations, which demonstrates the proof's robustness to the

noise and intricacies of various real-world scenarios. Finally, they present a construct

validity test, which involves deriving expectations about the determinants of influence in

the EP (the concept they proclaim to measure) and testing them by empirically

identifying the predictors of co-voting centrality (the measure itself). Their findings lend

credence to the conception of co-voting centrality as a measure of legislative influence,

because the empirical results make substantive sense given what we know about

institutional politics and the process of policy-making in the EP: influential MEPs tend to

be those who serve as committee coordinators and rapporteurs, introduce amendments to

a greater number of reports, have served a greater number of EP terms, and are

ideologically centrist.

Co-voting centrality is an innovative way of measuring influence, as a concept

that is exceedingly difficult to capture and operationalize. Importantly, it does not make

assumptions about legislative influence by considering the formal positions of power

legislators hold, their seniority, or their fund-raising prowess; instead, it lets the data tell

us who wields power by influencing the votes of the greatest number of fellow

legislators. Moreover, the approach travels easily across legislative arenas, for two

reasons. First, the model is parsimonious and general, in that it does not rely on restrictive

a priori assumptions about why legislators follow cues, or who serves as cue-provider or

cue-receiver. Second, all that is needed to calculate co-voting centrality are a sufficient

number of roll-call votes, which are readily available in many contexts.

These advantages are considerable because of the difficulty of measuring

influence outside of particular empirical contexts. For example, in research on American

legislative politics, individual legislators' influence is usually conceptualized in terms of

legislative "effectiveness" or "productivity." A common measure is the "hit-rate" of legislators, that is, the percentage of bills that members sponsor that pass in committee, on the floor, or make it into law (e.g., Matthews 1960; Arnold 1979; Frantzich 1979; Sinclair 1986; Schiller 1995; Bratton and Haynie 1999; Howell et al. 2000; Wawro 2000; Anderson, Box-Steffensmeier, and Sinclair-Chapman 2003; Jedel and Taylor 2003; Adler and Wilkerson 2005; Garand and Burke 2006; Hasecke and Mycoff 2007; Cox and Terry 2008). The most sophisticated version of this approach is Volden and Wiseman's "Legislative Effectiveness Score," based on members of Congress "proven ability" to advance their own agenda items through the legislative process and into law (Volden and Wiseman 2014).[2] An alternative proxy for legislative influence has been derived from cosponsorship data, most importantly Fowler's measure of "connectedness" (Fowler 2006a, 2006b). While these measures are useful and fairly accessible indicators of legislative effectiveness, however, they are problematic for students of comparative legislative politics because they do not easily travel to many lawmaking bodies. After all, sponsorship and cosponsorship of legislation by individual lawmakers is not the norm in many chambers.

An alternative approach to measuring legislative effectiveness is to rely on survey data. The problem with this approach, aside from common concerns about validity and reliability (see Hall 1992), is that survey data are often not readily available and generally costly to acquire. It is thus not surprising that there are only a few examples of survey-based studies of legislative effectiveness, and that their findings are not easily generalized beyond the single U.S. state legislature or the small number of legislative bills they focus

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2. Their measure is based on the number of each member's bills that (1) are introduced, (2) receive action in committee, (3) receive action on the floor, (4) pass the House, and (5) become law, for three types of bills (1) commemorative, (2) substantive, and (3) substantive and significant.

on. Weissert (1991a, 1991b) and Miquel and Snyder (2006), for example, rely on surveys of legislators, lobbyists, and journalists to assess the effectiveness of legislators in the North Carolina House of Representatives. Meyer (1980) uses data from the same legislature, based on a questionnaire administered through interviews. DeGregorio (1997) surveys interest-group advocates in an effort to identify U.S. congressional "leaders" on a small number of specific bills. Perhaps the most promising example of survey-based research is Hall's survey of legislative staffers in the U.S. Congress (Hall 1992).

Calculating co-voting centrality, in contrast, is possible whenever roll-call vote data are available. The concept does not, however, capture what we seek to measure in this paper: leadership in particular policy domains. We thus build on and extend the original measure by determining co-voting centrality *by policy area* using the complete set of roll-call votes of the 2009-2014 EP term and *by aggregating* leadership in one domain across all.

Measuring Policy Leadership

There are many types of centrality that can be calculated from a given network. In our case, *degree centrality* is most appropriate, as it captures the basic intuition that influence reflects the capacity to influence the greatest number of colleagues' voting decisions. Moreover, types of centrality that focus on distance between nodes are not useful in this application since every node of the network touches every other, but with varying degrees of intensity. Additionally, due to the non-directional nature of co-voting data, measures of centrality that account for directionality are not appropriate either. In

mathematical terms, we calculate the degree centrality of each legislator using the
method developed in Ringe and Wilson (2014), using the following equation:

$$C_i = \frac{1}{n} \sum_{j=1}^{n} |\rho_{ij}|$$

Where *n* is the total number of legislators and ρ_{ij} is the Pearson correlation
coefficient between the voting records of legislators *i* and *j*. The output of this equation is
bounded between zero and one. A value of one represents a legislator perfectly correlated
with every other, while zero represents a legislator voting randomly relative to others.

We screen out votes for which there is greater than 95% cohesion using Hix et al's
agreement index (Hix, Noury, and Roland 2007). The reason for eliminating these votes
from the calculation is that perfectly cohesive votes increase all voters' centrality (not by
equal amounts, but in an order-preserving sense). Because centrality has a maximum
value of one, having extremely cohesive votes compresses the centrality measure together
up around that maximum value, reducing the variance in the measure without providing
any additional information.[3]

The reason for taking the absolute value of the correlation is to account for the
fact that influence upon fellow legislators can be both positive and negative (Ringe,
Victor, and Gross 2013). The centrality of a particular legislator should be reflected by
the tendency of others to both vote for or against, such that low centrality is not indicative
of *losing* votes so much as being *irrelevant* to votes. The alternative to this approach -

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3. It is a standard to drop votes above a certain cohesion threshold for that reason, though the actual
threshold varies from 95% to 97%. We calculated all values using both thresholds (and no threshold at all)
and found that all measures were nearly identical and all findings are robust to any threshold within that
range.

merely summing correlations - leads to the most influential leaders having minimal centrality, as the positive and negative correlations cancel each other out algebraically.

Due to the relatively large number of parties of significantly different sizes in the European Parliament, we further normalize this centrality by the size of the party of each legislator. This is to compensate for the fact that with very different party sizes, centrality tends to correlate heavily with party size: all else being equal, members of large parties will end up with higher centrality than those of smaller parties simply because their voting records are similar to everyone else in their party. We normalize by party size by dividing each legislator's centrality by the maximum centrality in that party (so after normalization, the maximum centrality within each party is exactly equal to one). There are seven parties in the EP, but also a number of legislators who are unaffiliated. These unaffiliated voters we normalize by treating the entire EP as their party for the purposes of normalization, thus dividing by the maximum centrality across the entire EP. This adjusted centrality for each legislator is a variable we call *party centrality*.

Next, we calculate (and normalize using the same algorithm) centrality separately for votes within 21 substantive policy areas delineated by the jurisdictions of the EP's standing committees), as summarized in Table 1.

[TABLE 1 HERE]

This allows us to evaluate legislator centrality within individual policy areas, and thus to tease out those legislators who have very high levels of influence in specific policy areas rather than simply general influence across the entire range of legislation. We define as policy leaders the top 5% most influential MEPs in each policy area, which

are assigned a value of one (otherwise zero), and then add up the instances when each MEP falls into this category. This creates a count measure (called *policy leader*) of policy influence across policy areas, ranging from 0 (leadership in zero policy areas) to 19 (leadership in 19 areas of 21 areas). Table 2 lists the EP's top policy leaders (those who are leaders in eight or more policy areas).

[TABLE 2 HERE]

Next, we run a negative binomial regression analysis to determine what predicts this count variable. Table 3 presents the results and shows three predictors to be associated with policy leadership: serving as rapporteur (the number of reports drafted), the total number of intergroups joined (intergroups are voluntary organizations composed of MEPs who share a common interest in an issue or cause),[4] and participation in roll-call votes. In other words, policy leaders are MEPs who draft legislation on behalf of the EP, participate in voluntary, issue-based legislative member organizations, and fulfill their most basic (and consequential) duty: voting on the EP floor.

[TABLE 3 HERE]

European Parliament Elections: What We Know

Aside from measuring policy leadership, a second empirical objectives of this paper is to identify the predictors of reelection to the European Parliament, and to determine if policy leadership contributes to the likelihood that individual MEPs are reelected to the chamber. EP elections have received a substantial amount of attention in

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4. Intergroups play an important role in the provision of policy-relevant information in the EP (Ringe and Victor 2013).

previous research, much of which revolves around the conceptualization of EP elections as "second order national elections" (e.g., Reif and Schmitt, 1980; Reif 1984, 1985; Koepke and Ringe 2006; Hix and Marsh 2007, 2011). EP elections are second-order because voters attach less salience to them than to "first-order" electoral contests (generally those that determine the composition of the national level executive in the member states) and tend to think of these elections as having lower stakes, which has important implications for their voting behavior.

Specifically, voters behave differently in three main ways when casting their ballots in EP elections. First, they are less likely to turn out to vote in the first place. Second, they are more likely to vote *sincerely* (for their genuinely most preferred parties), rather than *strategically* (for less-preferred parties with a better chance of winning, for fear of "wasting their votes" on likely losers). Third, due to the perceived lack of direct policy consequences, citizens feel free to cast *protest* votes to express dissatisfaction with government party behavior in the first-order arena, (without, however, changing the composition of the first-order executive). These voting dynamics have important consequences for party performance in second-order elections: less strategic voting entails that large parties tend to do worse, sincere voting that small and more ideologically extreme parties perform well, and protest voting that parties that are part of the national executive lose.

More recent research has moved past the traditional boundaries of the second-order elections model and has focused on individual-level factors in EP vote choice. Much of this research focuses on how voters cast their ballots strategically to send signals to national-level parties (Hix and Marsh 2007; Hobolt et al 2009; Hobolt and Spoon

2012). While many have explored the nature of EP voting as a signaling mechanism between voters and national parties, some scholars have sought to identify more clearly which factors determine selection of specific parties. These studies have found, most importantly, that vote choice is informed by the structure of national institutions and voters' attitudes toward national parties (van der Eijk et al 1996; Hix 2002), but also that voters will make decisions on the basis of pro-/anti-EU attitudes if they are given information specific to the EU context (Hobolt and Wittrock 2011). There is, in other words, an emerging European dimension that drives electoral considerations.

Other recent scholarship has tried to predict party change and success within the structure of second-order elections. Some branches of this research have pointed to a shift in the composition of party manifestos, insisting that, as the EU becomes more salient in the mind of voters, parties have adapted their manifestos to focus more on EU issues (Spoon 2012; Kovar 2013). Moreover, both party size and the timing of elections affect the nature of change in party manifestos (Somer-Topcu and Zar 2014). Party success, in other words, appears less tied to traditional, left-right ideological cleavages and more to the way in which parties navigate an evolving issue space (Proksch and Lo 2012; Rovny 2012).

Existing research on EP elections does a great deal to explain the relationship between voters, institutions, and parties, but there is a gap in our understanding of the factors which contribute to individual MEPs' prospects for reelection. Much of this research correctly notes the importance of the configuration of domestic institutions in determining incumbents' chances reelection. Because there is variation in the nature of the renomination process, some incumbent MEPs will fail in their reelection bid simply

because they receive a poor placement on the party list while others will fail to secure renomination by a more local constituency (Faas 2003; Hix 2004). Given the variation of renomination constituencies, MEPs face varying incentives to demonstrate their political value to either voters or copartisans (Sigilas and Tiemann 2012). Similarly, MEPs are responsive to the career paths available to them and these contextual factors may shape their behavior while in office (Meserve et al 2009).

Though domestic institutions and renomination constituencies for incumbent MEPs are certainly important factors in the reelection process, they do little to explore the importance of incumbents' behavior while in office. Unfortunately, current scholarship on MEP reelection provides few comprehensive analyses of the relationship between behavior and reelection. Of the research that is available, scholars identify certain activities such as legislative speeches and roll call voting as ways for incumbents to signal their value to partisan and domestic constituencies (Slapin and Proksch 2010; Sigilas 2011). At a broader level, scholars have argued that incumbent MEPs are also more likely to be reelected when they adopt the behavioral patterns of other incumbent MEPs (Lindstädt et al 2012). That is, because MEPs face competing demands from constituencies at multiple levels, those who quickly learn how to balance these demands will be rewarded with re-election. While such arguments do point to behaviors that may contribute to reelection, they do not get at the relationship in which we are interested: between policy leadership and reelection.

Predicting Reelection

Beyond identifying policy leaders in EP politics, the main questions our research seeks to address are: what determines the likelihood that incumbent MEPs are reelected and, specifically, does policy leadership help explain reelection? We take as the starting point for considering these questions the theory of retrospective voting (esp. Fiorina 1981), according to which an incumbent legislator's likelihood of reelection is a function of voters' evaluations of his or her term in office. In the context of the EP, this straightforward proposition is complicated, first, by the weakness of the "electoral connection" between voters and representatives: voters tend not to know much about the EP and its members, despite the legislature's recent empowerment. Second, not all members of the EP are elected using the same electoral rules. Most importantly, even though all EU member states now use some form or proportional representation, almost half of all MEPs (371 of 751) are drawn from closed party lists (EPSR 2014), which do not give voters the opportunity to indicate a preference for individual candidates. For these reasons, we consider retrospective voting from the perspective of both parties *and* voters. Which attributes increase the likelihood that parties (when they draw up their electoral lists) and voters (when they cast a ballot) will reward incumbent MEPs with reelection?

Two important caveats should be noted before we proceed. The first is that, because of limited data availability, we can only imperfectly measure incumbent MEPs' ambition for reelection, in that we can only account for their "revealed ambition," not their actual ambition. That is, we only know if an MEP sought reelection if s/he was

included on a national party's electoral list, which means that we are necessarily excluding incumbents who sought reelection but were excluded from their parties' lists.

To determine the extent of possible selection bias, we consider how the MEPs included in our sample (i.e., MEPs who were included on national party electoral lists) differ systematically from MEPs not included (i.e., MEPs who either chose not to run again or who were not included on national party electoral lists), across our independent variables and a variety of additional attributes.[5] We find that MEPs in our sample are, on average, about two years younger, have marginally less seniority (.18 terms), and are members of slightly larger parties (13 instead of 11.4 members). There is also a greater number of party group vice chairs in our sample (30) than in the group of MEPs not included (18). However, the main determinant of inclusion on national party lists, and thus our sample, seems to be legislative activity: the average MEPs in our sample participated in 3.29% more roll-call votes (84.55% vs. 81.26%), introduced 14 more motions for resolutions (38 vs. 24), made 42 more speeches (195 vs. 153), introduced slightly more written declarations (1.77 vs. 1.22), and amended ten more reports (71 vs. 61). Overall, however, most differences between MEPs in our sample and those not in our sample are either not statistically significant (and therefore not reported here)[6] or substantively slight.

Second, we do not account for the ranking of MEPs on party lists, again due to a lack of information. In this sense, we fail to capture what is likely an important intervening variable, especially for those candidates on closed party lists. We are forced

5. See footnote 4 for a list of those attributes.
6. It is particularly notable that MEPs who are more loyal to their national parties (that is, the "principals" who draw up electoral lists and therefore control the career paths of individual members) when casting votes on the EP floor are no more likely to secure spots on their parties' electoral lists.

to skip this intermediate step and observe the final outcome: if an incumbent was reelected or not, operationalized as a dichotomous indicator where being reelected in the 2014 EP election is coded 1 (otherwise 0).

Our principal hypothesis of interest revolves around policy leadership in the EP, and we expect that *MEPs who were policy leaders during the preceding (2009-14) EP term are more likely to be reelected in 2014 than non-policy leaders (H1)*. The variable is operationalized as described above, but we do not, of course, expect policy leadership to be the only determinant of reelection. We also account for several other factors that are likely to matter. To start, *we expect MEPs who have served as rapporteurs in 2009-14 to have a greater likelihood of being reelected (H2)*. Rapporteurs are MEPs who draft the EP's official reports on specific policy proposals, have relevant policy expertise, shepherd the legislation through the lawmaking process, and serve as the EP's main negotiator with other EU institutions. As such, they are valuable from the perspective of their national parties and EP party groups (who rely on their expertise and ability to bring legislation to a successful conclusion) and have greater visibility, from the voters' perspective, than the average backbench MEPs. The *rapporteur* variable is operationalized as the number of reports drafted by each MEP. However, because many MEPs do not ever serve as rapporteurs, the variable would be highly skewed (zero-inflated); we therefore use its log in our analyses.

We also *expect MEPs in formal leadership positions in 2009-14 to have a greater likelihood of reelection (H3)*, all else equal. This is for several reasons, for example because formal leadership entails greater internal status (even in a legislature in which decision-making is decentralized); because leaders may yield some coercive capacity

(despite the reality that they cannot "whip" their rank-and-file in the EP as effectively as in many other legislative context); and because leaders are likely selected for leadership positions because they possess certain attributes that make them effective or influential in the first place. We include several dichotomous indicators to capture a premium paid on formal leadership: having served, during the previous EP term (2009-14), as chair or vice-chair of one of the EP political groups;[7] as committee chair or vice-chair; as a member of the EP's Bureau (which consists of EP President, Vice-Presidents, and Quaestors); as committee coordinator (a party groups' spokespersons and main negotiators in each of the EP's standing committees);[8] or as the chair of one of the EP's intergroups.

We also include a number of control variables. The first set of controls is internal to the EP and includes the number of previous terms served (as a measure of seniority, or experience); the proportion of votes cast that are identical with the national party line (which serves as an indicator for loyalty, since it is national parties that nominate candidates for election or reelection); as well as the total number of intergroup memberships and the proportion of all roll-call votes an MEP cast (to capture MEPs' level of voluntary activity or dedication). Second, we account for the second-order election dynamics discussed previously. After all, it has important implications for the likelihood that individual MEPs secure reelection that small, ideologically more extreme, opposition parties tend to perform well while large, centrist, government parties tend to

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7. Note that, unlike in the negative binomial regression presented in Table 3, we combine party chairs and party vice chairs into a single "party leader" category and committee chairs and vice-chairs into a single "committee leader" category, because party chair perfectly predicts reelection success and is thus dropped from the equation. The substantive results presented in Table 4 do not change, however, as a result of this change.

8. Within "their" policy areas, coordinators are "the nexus mediating between individual MEPs, national party delegations that citizens voted for, and the European party group" (Kaeding and Obholzer 2012).

lose votes. We therefore include variables for national party size (operationalized as the party's vote share in the last national election), national party ideology (position on the left-right dimension), and national party government status (a dichotomous indicator coded 1 if a party is part of the national executive) for each MEP. Finally, it stands to reason that the existence of preferential voting rules may systematically affect incumbent legislators' likelihood of reelection. This is because such rules empower voters (who get to indicate their preferences for particular candidates) relative to parties (that draw up electoral lists). Accordingly, we control for ballot structure (measured dichotomously such that closed list is coded 1 and preferential voting 0).

The results of the logistic regression analysis predicting 2009-14 incumbent reelection in the 2014 EP election, with standard errors clustered on country, are reported in Table 4.

[TABLE 4 HERE]

Most importantly, we find that being a policy leader is highly predictive of reelection: across the variable's range (from its minimum to maximum values), the predicted probability of reelection increases by 36 percent, which confirms H1. We also find support for H2, as rapporteurships are associated with a greater likelihood of reelection: the difference in the probability of reelection increases by 47 percent across the variable's range.[9] Together, these results are not surprising, given the often highly technical legislation considered in the EP and the influential role policy experts play in EP decision-making (e.g. Bowler and Farrell 1995; Ringe 2010; Yoshinaka et al. 2010; Whitaker 2011; Daniel 2013). Politics in the EP are more bottom-up than in many

9. Note that this range is quite large, from 0 to 168.

national legislative contexts; it thus stands to reason that policy leaders and policy specialists (like rapporteurs) are the center of the law-making process.

In contrast, support for H3, on the impact of formal leadership, is mixed. Serving as party leader in 2009-14 is a positive indicator of reelection, demonstrating that parties and voters reward those (high profile) MEPs with a proven record of formal leadership. Party leaders are 29% more likely to be reelected than rank-and-file MEPs. Also positive and significant, with an effect almost as sizable as that for party leaders, is intergroup leadership. MEPs who chair those voluntary groups are 27% more likely to secure reelection.

Committee leaders and coordinators, in contrast, are not more likely to be reelected, which is somewhat surprising, but perhaps an indication that our policy leadership measure is picking up an important element of technocratic competence that is being rewarded by re-election, while not necessarily being reflected in the formal structure of the EP. Even more surprisingly, however, is that serving on the EP's Bureau in 2009-14 is negatively associated with reelection (making reelection 27% less likely). The result has to be taken with a grain of salt, however, because of the small number of only 19 EP leaders, of which 11 were not reelected. In fact, if only two of those EP leaders had not lost their seats, this particular result would disappear.[10]

Of the control variables, only ballot structure impacts the likelihood of reelection: incumbent MEPs elected from closed lists are 21 percent more likely to be reelected, which suggests an anti-incumbent bias among voters against sitting MEPs in 2014—at

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10. In light of the second-order election dynamics discussed above, it is notable that of those EP leader who were not reelected, 82% are from national government parties (compared to an average of 47% for all MEPs) that are substantially larger (with a vote share of 29.6% in the previous national election) than the average (21.17%). This might help explain the poor electoral performance of these particular MEPs.

last among those who were able to indicate a preference for individual candidates because of preferential voting rules.

Conclusion

This paper sought to answer three research questions: who is influential in EP politics? Does policy leadership help explain reelection? And what factors other than policy leadership predict the likelihood that incumbent MEPs return for another term?

In response to the first question, we developed a new measure of policy leadership in the EP that captures which lawmakers influence the greatest number of colleagues' voting decisions within particular policy domains. Policy leaders, we found, are those MEPs who serve as rapporteurs; who participate in the EP's intergroups; and who show up to vote on the EP floor. We then used this new measure to answer the second and third research question, by predicting the likelihood that incumbent MEPs secure reelection in the 2014 EP election, and found that policy leaders are more likely to be reelected, as are rapporteurs, party leaders, and intergroup chairs.

Our paper contributes to the study of legislative politics by offering a new measure of influence that, notably, travels easily to other legislative arenas, as long as a sufficient number of roll-call votes are available. This is an important addition to the toolbox of legislative scholars, both of European politics and other legislative contexts, because it captures a notoriously diffuse concept while eschewing restrictive and highly contextual *a priori* assumptions about who *should* matter. It lets the data speak for itself. Finally, we contribute to the set of existing research on EP elections by identifying what helps explain that incumbent MEPs make it back to the EP for another term.

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Table 1: Votes by policy area

Policy Area	# of Votes	% of Votes
Agriculture	452	6.5%
Budget	675	9.7%
Budgetary Control	438	6.3%
Civil Liberties, Justice, & Home Affairs	436	6.3%
Constitutional & Inter-institutional Affairs	262	3.8%
Culture & Education	80	1.1%
Development	107	1.5%
Economic & Monetary Affairs	565	8.1%
Employment & Social Affairs	436	6.3%
Environment & Public Health	732	10.5%
Fisheries	242	3.5%
Foreign & Security Policy	754	10.8%
Gender Equality	259	3.7%
Industry, Research, & Energy	486	7.0%
Internal Market Consumer Protection	141	2.0%
Internal Regulations of EP	8	0.1%
International Trade	397	5.7%
Legal Affairs	216	3.1%
Petitions	17	0.2%
Regional Development	101	1.5%
Transport & Tourism	157	2.3%
TOTAL	6,961	100%

Table 2: Top Policy Leader

Last Name	First Name	Party Group	Country	Policy Leader (# of policy areas)
MATULA	Iosif	PPE	Romania	19
PREDA	Cristian Dan	PPE	Romania	19
SALVINI	Matteo	EFD	Italy	19
LIOTARD	Kartika Tamara	GUE/NGL	Netherlands	17
BOZKURT	Emine	S&D	Netherlands	16
BREPOELS	Frieda	Verts/ALE	Belgium	16
HIBNER	Jolanta Emilia	PPE	Poland	16
LICHTENBERGER	Eva	Verts/ALE	Austria	15
SILVESTRIS	Sergio Paolo Francesco	PPE	Italy	15
SZYMANSKI	Konrad	ECR	Poland	14
DAUL	Joseph	PPE	France	13
DORFMANN	Herbert	PPE	Italy	13
KLASS	Christa	PPE	Germany	13
URUTCHEV	Vladimir	PPE	Bulgaria	13
BAUER	Edit	PPE	Slovakia	12
FERNANDES	Jose Manuel	PPE	Portugal	12
KOSTINGER	Elisabeth	PPE	Austria	12
PANAYOTOV	Vladko Todorov	ALDE	Bulgaria	12
SZAJER	Jozsef	PPE	Hungary	12
GRIESBECK	Nathalie	ALDE	France	11
GROSSETETE	Francoise	PPE	France	11
KUKAN	Eduard	PPE	Slovakia	11
MARINESCU	Marian-Jean	PPE	Romania	11
ANDRIKIENE	Laima Liucija	PPE	Lithuania	10
ANTONESCU	Elena Oana	PPE	Romania	10
MANN	Thomas	PPE	Germany	10
OLBRYCHT	Jan	PPE	Poland	10
PASCU	Ioan Mircea	S&D	Romania	10
STOLOJAN	Theodor Dumitru	PPE	Romania	10
ARIF	Kader	S&D	France	9
BACH	Georges	PPE	Luxembourg	9
CUTAS	George Sabin	S&D	Romania	9
GAHLER	Michael	PPE	Germany	8
GOMES	Ana	S&D	Portugal	8
in 't VELD	Sophia	ALDE	Netherlands	8
KOCH	Dieter-Lebrecht	PPE	Germany	8
RUBIG	Paul	PPE	Austria	8

Table 3: Predicting Policy Leadership

Variable	C (SE)	p>|z|
Reports Drafted (log)	.21 (.1)	0.05*
Party Group Chair	1.03 (.66)	0.12
Party Vice Chair	-.09 (.34)	0.79
Committee Chair	-.68 (.49)	0.16
Committee Vice Chair	-.21 (.24)	0.38
Coordinator	-.28 (.26)	0.28
Intergroup Chair	.50 (.34)	0.14
Terms Served	.06 (.08)	0.4
National Party Loyalty	.03 (.04)	0.41
Total # of Intergroups	.11 (.04)	0.005**
Roll Call Votes	.08 (.01)	<0.001***
Constant	-10.34 (3.5)	0.003**
Log Alpha	1.12 (0.10)	
Alpha	3.07 (0.31)	

$p < 0.001$***, $p < 0.01$**, $p<0.05$*
Number of obs=837; LR $chi^2(10)=122.46$; Prob>chi^2=0.0000; Log likelihood = -995.3
Pseudo R^2=0.0580

Table 4: Logistic Regression Predicting Reelection

Variable	Hypothesis	C (SE)	p>|z|	Pred. Prob. of Significant Variables	Pred. Prob. Change
Policy Leader	H1	0.10 (0.04)	0.03**	mean: 0.54 (0.40,0.67) min: 0.51 (0.37,0.64) max: 0.87 (0.68,1.07)	+36%
Reports Drafted (log)	H2	0.46 (0.16)	<0.01***	mean: 0.54 (0.40,0.67) min: 0.42 (0.28,0.57) max: 0.89 (0.74, 1.03)	+47%
Party Group Leader	H3	1.42 (0.49)	<0.01***	0: 0.54 (0.40,0.67) 1: 0.83 (0.71, 0.95)	+29%
Committee Leader	H3	-0.21 (0.26)	0.42		
EP Leader	H3	-1.12 (0.47)	0.02**	0: 0.54 (0.40,0.67) 1: 0.27 (0.12, 0.43)	-27%
Coordinator	H3	-0.17 (0.35)	0.63		
Intergroup Chair	H3	1.29 (0.64)	0.04**	0: 0.54 (0.40,0.67) 1: 0.81 (0.60, 1.02)	+27%
Terms Served	Control	-0.10 (0.09)	0.29		
National Party Loyalty	Control	0.01 (0.04)	0.87		
Total # of Intergroups	Control	-0.01 (0.06)	0.93		
Roll Call Votes	Control	0.00 (0.01)	0.89		
Closed List	Control	0.96 (0.29)	<0.01***	0: 0.54 (0.40,0.67) 1: 0.75 (0.68,0.83)	+21%
National Party Vote Share	Control	0.78 (0.95)	0.41		
National Party Left-Right Score	Control	-0.07 (0.06)	0.26		
National Party in Government	Control	-0.08 (0.24)	0.75		
Constant		-0.56 (4.29)	0.895		

*p < 0.01***, p < 0.05***

Standard Errors Clustered by Country

Number of obs=478; Wald $chi^2(15)$= 257.26; Prob>chi^2=0.0000;Log pseudolikelihood = -282.20228

Pseudo R^2=0.0980