Moving up or down: parliamentary activity and candidate selection
Louwerse, T.P.; Vonno, C.M.C. van

Citation
Louwerse, T. P., & Vonno, C. M. C. van. (2021). Moving up or down: parliamentary activity and candidate selection. *The Journal Of Legislative Studies*. doi:10.1080/13572334.2021.1885871

Version:	Publisher's Version
License:	Creative Commons CC BY-NC-ND 4.0 license
Downloaded from:	https://hdl.handle.net/1887/3204227

Note: To cite this publication please use the final published version (if applicable).

The Journal of Legislative Studies

ISSN: (Print) (Online) Journal homepage: https://www.tandfonline.com/loi/fjls20

Moving up or down: parliamentary activity and candidate selection

Tom Louwerse & Cynthia van Vonno

To cite this article: Tom Louwerse & Cynthia van Vonno (2021): Moving up or down: parliamentary activity and candidate selection, The Journal of Legislative Studies, DOI: 10.1080/13572334.2021.1885871

To link to this article: https://doi.org/10.1080/13572334.2021.1885871

© 2021 The Author(s). Published by Informa UK Limited, trading as Taylor & Francis Group

Published online: 22 Feb 2021.

Submit your article to this journal

View related articles

View Crossmark data

Full Terms & Conditions of access and use can be found at
https://www.tandfonline.com/action/journalInformation?journalCode=fjls20

THE JOURNAL OF LEGISLATIVE STUDIES
https://doi.org/10.1080/13572334.2021.1885871

Routledge
Taylor & Francis Group

OPEN ACCESS Check for updates

Moving up or down: parliamentary activity and candidate selection

Tom Louwerse and Cynthia Van Vonno

Department of Political Science, Leiden University, Leiden, Netherlands

ABSTRACT

Although often theorised, empirical research concerning the relationship between parties' candidate selection and MPs' parliamentary activity is scarce. Our analysis focuses on the Dutch case, which features national party lists. It is therefore well-suited to examine the relationship between parliamentary activity (in terms of speeches, resolutions, amendments and questions) and candidate selection: are MPs reselected and do they move up or down the candidate list from one election to the next? We expect that more active MPs have a higher probability of reselection and promotion, i.e. moving up the candidate list. The empirical analysis of the Dutch lower house of Parliament between 1998 and 2017 combines data from the Dutch Parliamentary Behaviour Dataset with data on parliamentary speech-making. Our main finding is that speaking in the plenary is the parliamentary activity most strongly related to reselection and promotion.

KEYWORDS Candidate selection; legislative behaviour; parliaments; parliamentary behaviour

Introduction

According to the normative Responsible Party Model (APSA, 1950), individual Members of Parliament (MPs) ought to behave in concert with the other members of their political party to enable representation and accountability (Thomassen, 1994). Political parties have a number of different instruments at their disposal to influence and control the behaviour of their MPs. Aside from selecting candidates whose (ideological) preferences match those of the party, political parties can create an environment in the parliamentary party group that fosters norms of party loyalty and solidarity (Andeweg & Thomassen, 2011; Crowe, 1986; Norton, 2003). In addition, parties can take advantage of MPs' motivation for political career furtherance (Mayhew, 1974) by advancing those who engage in party-centred behaviour. Potential rewards include granting MPs important parliamentary spokespersonships and committee memberships,

CONTACT Tom Louwerse t.p.louwerse@fsw.leidenuniv.nl

© 2021 The Author(s). Published by Informa UK Limited, trading as Taylor & Francis Group
This is an Open Access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives License (http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/), which permits non-commercial re-use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited, and is not altered, transformed, or built upon in any way.

(junior) ministerial positions in the case of government participation, and a higher slot on party candidacy list for upcoming elections. If all else fails to incite MPs' party-centred behaviour, parties can resort to disciplinary measures, such as removing MPs as spokesperson, evicting them from the parliamentary party group, demoting MPs by placing them low on the party's candidacy list for upcoming elections, or even removing them from the list completely.

Although political parties' control over candidate selection (Hazan & Rahat, 2006; Rahat & Hazan, 2001) is often considered in the literature on parliamentary behaviour and party unity specifically (Andeweg, 2000; Andeweg & Thomassen, 2011; Cox & McCubbins, 1993; Kam, 2009; Norton, 2003; Owens, 2003), empirical analysis is generally limited to establishing a relationship between party unity and the degree to which control over candidate selection is centralised and/or exclusively located in the hands of the political party leadership (Depauw & Martin, 2009; Sieberer, 2006). In other words, the actual use of political parties' control over the electoral candidacy list as a disciplining tool has not been studied extensively (see Papp, 2019; Yildirim et al., 2019, for two recent exceptions). We propose and test a theory of parties' use of candidate selection as a positive (advancement) or negative (demotion and removal) sanction at the level of the individual MP which focuses on the level of MPs' parliamentary activity. Our general hypothesis is that higher levels of activity in parliament are related to higher (i.e. better) list positions at the subsequent elections. We test this hypothesis on data from the Dutch Parliamentary Behaviour Dataset (1998-2017). The electoral system of the Netherlands is one of the few cases that uses only national party lists; therefore it allows us to observe a full ranking of candidates at election time. Given the limited impact of voters' preference voting in the Dutch system, a candidate's place on the electoral list is directly linked to their probability of reelection. Our results show a link between the level of parliamentary activity, the probability of reselection and the list position of a candidate. We observe the strongest relationships with speech activity (speaking in the plenary), which suggests that activities that are under strict party control matter most in terms of improving one's chances of reselection and reelection. In the conclusion we highlight that this association between speech making and reselection as well as promotion is not necessarily causal: it may very well be that there is an interaction between activity throughout a parliamentary term, a positive evaluation by the party leadership and their subsequent willingness to give successful MPs more relevant policy portfolios and hence, floor time.

Candidate selection and parliamentary behaviour

(Re-)election is presumed to the be one of the main objectives of (potential) parliamentary candidates. There is a general acknowledgement that MPs'

(re-)election, and subsequently their behaviour in parliament, is influenced by the interaction between countries' electoral laws and political parties' candidate selection procedures (Andeweg, 2000; Andeweg & Thomassen, 2011; Cox & McCubbins, 1993; Hazan, 2003; Kam, 2009; Mitchell, 2000; Owens, 2003). In contrast to the abundance of literature concerning the nature and impact of electoral systems, research on the impact of candidate selection procedures on parliamentary behaviour is scarce.

Studies concerning the impact of electoral systems on parliamentary behaviour and party unity focus on in how far electoral laws provide candidates with incentives to cultivate a personal-vote or rely on the party label to appeal to the electorate (Bräuninger et al., 2012). On the one hand, candidate-centred electoral systems enable intra-party electoral competition and provide incentives for personal-vote seeking, and therefore make candidates relatively independent from their parties with respect to their (re-)election (Carey & Shugart, 1995). In terms of their effect on MPs' subsequent parliamentary behaviour and the level of party unity in parliament, candidate-centred electoral systems are expected to lead to greater individualised parliamentary behaviour and relatively low levels of party unity. On the other hand, party-centred electoral systems create a situation in which candidates are highly dependent on their party and association with the party label is key to be (re-)elected. Party-centred electoral systems are hypothesised to induce party-centred behaviour on the part of individual MPs and are associated with higher levels of party unity (Carey, 2007, 2009; Depauw & Martin, 2009; Sieberer, 2006). Electoral systems that employ party candidacy lists, in particular, show great variation when it comes to either favouring the candidate or political party (Mitchell, 2000). In all systems in which candidates are presented on party candidate lists, however, obtaining a position on an existing political party's lists, and maybe even more importantly, being placed on a high or 'eligible' position, considerably increases an individual candidate's chances of (re-)election (Depauw & Martin, 2009, pp. 107–108). This is especially so in closed-list systems, in which voters' preferential voting is not possible, and flexible yet in practice rather closed-list systems (such as in the Netherlands, i.e. the case at hand), in which voters' preferential voting is considered virtually ineffective (Farrell, 2001; Mitchell, 2000).

Whereas elections are critical control mechanisms in the principal-agent relationship between voters and their representatives in parliament, candidate selection is an important *ex ante* control mechanism in the principal-agent relationship between a political party's selectorate and its representative actors in parliament. Control of candidate selection enables the selectorate to influence the composition of the parliamentary party group by allowing them to select candidates whose (ideological) preferences are most in line their own (Sieberer, 2006, p. 154). Thus, through candidate selection, the selecting body is able to ensure a certain level of congruence

between its own preferences and the behaviour of its MPs and weed out potential troublemakers and leisure shirkers (Sieberer, 2006, p. 154). By enabling the party selectorate to do so, candidate selection procedures also function as a *ex ante* screening mechanisms for voters (Mitchell, 2000, pp. 338–339).

Central to the study at hand is that candidate selection procedures also provide political parties with *ex post* control mechanisms that allow for the disciplining of incumbent MPs who seek re-(s)election. Incumbent MPs who seek re-(s)election will be prone to work hard for the party in parliament, anticipating that not doing so would result in demotion or complete removal from the party candidate list. They may also do so out of the hope to be rewarded for their input with renomination and even advancement to higher (and thus safer) positions on the list. This 'rule of anticipated sanctions' (Damgaard, 1995, p. 312) holds that mere threat or promise of the use of disciplining and advancement measures can be enough elicit MPs to engage in party-centred behaviour and enable political parties to create and maintain party unity. Moreover, if threat and promise are not enough, political party selectorates can use their power over the electoral candidate list composition and order to actually punish those who are do not carry their weight. Most studies on party discipline, however, do not consider the actual *use* of these measures and rather focus on MPs perceptions of whether party discipline is too strict or too lenient (Andeweg & Thomassen, 2011). This article looks at how parties use candidate selection tools to punish those that do not perform well.

Candidate selection: a solution to agency problems

According to Müller (2000) political parties solve many of the collective action problems associated with the delegation process inherent in representative democracy (Carey, 2009; Cox & McCubbins, 1993). Before being able to deal with these collective action problems in the legislative arena, however, political parties risk running into agency problems within their own ranks. As highlighted by Kiewiet and McCubbins (1991, pp. 26–27), 'the very same problems of collective action that delegation is intended to overcome – prisoners' dilemmas, lack of coordination, and social choice instability – can reemerge to afflict either the collective agent or a collective principal', i.e. the parliamentary party group.

Most of the literature on parliamentary party group (voting) unity is, albeit implicitly, concerned with *dissent-shirking* (Andeweg & Thomassen, 2011; Carey, 2009; Depauw & Martin, 2009; Hix et al., 2005; Kam, 2009; Krehbiel, 1993; Sieberer, 2006). Dissent-shirking arises because political parties are not monolithic actors (Müller, 2000); MPs may have a heterogeneous range of positions and be more or less oriented towards their

party. When in disagreement with the party line on a vote in parliament, and norms of party loyalty and solidarity are not enough to elicit an MP to voluntarily toe the party line, an MP who engages in dissent-shirking abstains from voting or vote against the party line. Although political parties try to limit dissent-shirking *ex ante* through candidate selection, they cannot completely streamline their MPs for informational purposes as the workload of parliament necessitates specialisation (Andeweg, 1997, 2000; Andeweg & Thomassen, 2011; Van Vonno et al., 2014). Furthermore, depending on the inclusiveness and decentralisation of candidate selection procedures, the composition of parliamentary party groups may be more or less diverse. And, as mentioned above, the electoral system may also induce MPs to cultivate a personal-vote, which may lead them to engage in dissent-shirking when it comes to their parliamentary voting behaviour.

Dissent-shirking is, however, not a very strong potential explanation for candidate's reselection prospects in most Western democracies for the simple reason that party unity is generally very high. In the Dutch case we study voting unity is over 99 per cent (Louwerse et al., 2018). Simply toeing the party all the time does not guarantee a high place on the electoral list at the next elections: basically everyone does it (Yildirim et al., 2019). Given that party voting unity is near perfect, it is unlikely that MPs engage in much dissent-shirking in their other parliamentary behaviours either (at least in the Dutch case). While the threat of sanctions may be a relevant factor in explaining high levels of voting unity, this threat does generally not have to be translated into actual deselection or demotion and therefore patterns of promotion and reselection are likely to be determined by other factors.

The problem of *leisure shirking* Müller (2000) is to a far lesser extent considered in the literature on parliamentary behaviour. An MP who engages in leisure-shirking simply does not do his best for the political party. Having applied a division of labour, political parties expect their MPs to be active in pursuing the party's policies on the topic area they are assigned (Müller, 2000, pp. 320–321). Activities MPs are expected to pursue include the drawing up of legislation, attending and participating in plenary debates and committee meetings, as well as asking oral and written questions. Not doing so may lead to inefficiencies, as other MPs from the same party may need to pick up the slack, and result in ineffective or even no policy outcomes for the party as a whole.

There are also other reasons why an MP may not be as active as his political party expects him to be. An MP may be specialised in or made spokesperson for a particular policy or issue area, which, due to either the nature of the policy or political climate, does not allow them to be active in parliament. It may also not be the issue, but fellow party group members who encroach on an MP's policy area and limit their

activity in parliament. Finally, an MP may be active behind the scenes, but not in the public arena of parliament – or the MP might be active outside the parliamentary arena. Thus, it may not be leisure that leads an MP to be (or appear) less active. We argue that the consequence, however, remains the same. Political parties want their MPs to be publicly active, and those who manage to succeed in doing so are more likely to bring about legislative and electoral success to the political party, and therefore also to themselves. In other words, MPs must be active in order to survive (Wiberg, 1994). For the purpose of this analysis, therefore, this type of agency problem will be referred to as *activity-shirking* and encompasses MPs' parliamentary inactivity that results from both leisure as well as other potential determinants. Our general expectation based on the literature is that parties would want to avoid activity shirking and penalise MPs who do so:

> General Activity Hypothesis: The more active an MP is, the more likely she will be reselected and promoted.

Our analysis focuses on four types of parliamentary activity: (1) making speeches in the plenary,[1] (2) introducing parliamentary motions (which in our case are mostly substantive policy statements), (3) proposing amendments to bills and (4) asking written questions to ministers. We expect that some activities will be more relevant for reselection and promotion than others. First, the extent to which activity might be rewarded may depend on the cost of using a particular tool, specifically how tightly access to that tool is controlled by the party. Time to speak in parliament is usually tightly regulated by parties (Yildirim et al., 2019), at least so in the Dutch case. Therefore those who manage to gain access to this tool are likely to be positively evaluated by the party leadership: if they do not value an MP, they will probably end up with a very small and irrelevant portfolio and have difficulty in gaining access to the floor during plenary debates. This is particularly true for the Dutch context where MPs are generally expected to act as the spokesperson of their party. The introduction of motions and amendments is similarly controlled by the leadership, although once an MP has managed to become spokesperson on an important topic, it will probably also be relatively easy to propose amendments and motions on that topic. Asking written questions is the most lightly regulated activity (of these four) in most parties. It is also the most used parliamentary tool, because questions can be asked at any time to any minister: there are virtually no formal limitations and party control is lower. Because it is relatively easy for an individual MP to ask written questions, this type of activity might be seen as less important and therefore be a worse predictor for reselection and promotion than the other types. All in all, we would thus expect that party

control over an activity affects the extent to which the use of such a tool is beneficial for reselection and promotion chances:

> Party Control Hypothesis: The more tightly parties control the use of a particular tool, the stronger the association between the use of that tool and the probability of reselection and promotion.

One may also consider the potential impact of the use of various parliamentary tools. Parliamentarians can use parliamentary tools to build a name for themselves within their party, with journalists and for the general public (Louwerse & Otjes, 2016). Parties are likely to positively reward such visibility, because it could potentially expand their electorate (Otjes & Louwerse, 2018). From this perspective, it does not matter so much how difficult it is to gain access to a tool, but whether the parliamentary tool can be used to boost visibility of the MP and their party (Green-Pedersen, 2010). Written parliamentary questions, for example, are regularly reported in the media and are therefore used to 'continue the election campaign by other means' (Otjes & Louwerse, 2018; Vliegenthart & Walgrave, 2011). According to this logic, we should expect that the most visible tools reap the strongest benefits in terms of reselection and promotion. Speech, motions and asking questions are all arguably more visible parliamentary tools than the introduction of amendments.

> Visibility Hypothesis: The more visible a parliamentary tool, the stronger the association between the use of that tool and the probability of reselection and promotion.

Research design

Case selection

We study these relationships in the context of the Dutch multi-party system between 1998 and 2017. The Netherlands is an excellent case for looking at the use of candidate selection as a disciplinary mechanism as parties' electoral candidacy lists are essentially national, which means that we have an electoral rank for each candidate within each political party. Voters are presented with a ballot paper displaying lists of candidates as ordered by the political parties,[2] and cast their vote for an individual candidate. Therefore, strictly speaking all votes are preference votes and there are no party votes (van Holsteyn & Andeweg, 2010, 2012). However, the number of parliamentary seats obtained by a party is determined on the basis of the total number of party's votes pooled nationwide, and in order to obtain a seat on the basis preference votes a candidate must cross the threshold of 25 per cent (50 per cent until 1996) of the electoral quota. Candidate lists, although flexible, are therefore in practice rather closed which means that the electoral system is

quite party-centred (Mitchell, 2000). Association with the party label is important to candidates and, since the order of the list it difficult to overturn by voters, where an MP appears on the list does have meaningful consequences for candidates' chances of (re-)election (Marsh, 1985, p. 367). Although van Holsteyn and Andeweg (2010) detect a trend in voters increasingly casting second-order preferences votes (those not cast for the party leader who is usually placed first on the list) over time, the percentage of candidates running a personal campaign remains very low in comparison to other countries, and the number of candidates who obtain one of the 150 seats in the Dutch Parliament on the basis of preference votes who would not have been elected on the basis of their parties' list ordering is limited to only one or two per election.[3]

In the Netherlands the state regulates a few formal aspects of candidate selection, but parties are more or less free to determine their procedures at their own discretion (Hazan & Voerman, 2006, p. 155). Hazan and Voerman (2006, p. 150) categorise Dutch parties' candidate selection procedures as rather exclusive and centralised. The latter can be related to the electoral system, which as mentioned above treats the country as one constituency thereby contributing to the centralisation of national party organisations.

In determining who is on the candidate list and in what order, most political parties use the following procedure: the party executive appoints a special committee or party agency to select (and if necessary to recruit) candidates on the basis of criteria set by the party executive or as prescribed in the party statutes. The committee makes recommendations to the party executive who then drafts a provisional list. Informally, however, party executives and special committees often seek consultation from the parliamentary party group leadership in evaluating incumbent MPs.

In most parties, party members are allowed to influence the ranking of candidates on the list indirectly via representatives at party conferences or directly via membership ballots, but usually there are not many changes to the provisional list drafted by the executive. There are a few parties in which the selection procedure is less exclusive and centralised. In the Green Left party *GroenLinks*, for example, the executive is formally not involved in candidate selection; the party council appoints a committee, that then makes recommendations to the party conference (more recently, the membership in a ballot). In the Liberal Democratic party *D66*, members first express their preference for the candidate list by means of postal ballot, after which the party conference appoints an advisory committee to determine the ranking on a provisional list (to ensure that the composition is balanced in terms of gender for example), which is again submitted to the party conference.

Since the beginning of the twenty-first century, other political parties have also increased the inclusiveness of their candidate selection procedures.

In the *PvdA* (Social Democrats), *VVD* (Liberals) and *CDA* (Christian Democrats), as well as in the aforementioned *GroenLinks* and *D66*, members are entitled to elect the party leader, who is usually the first candidate on the electoral list. Candidate selection by the socialist *SP* and the Christian centrist *CU*, however, remains rather hierarchical with only the party congress (consisting of representatives of local party branches) having a say in the procedure. The Orthodox Protestant *SGP* allows for party congress involvement in the selection of the party leader, but not the rest of the list composition or order. Finally, the right-wing *PVV* is rather exceptional, as it formally only has one member (party leader Geert Wilders) who makes all decisions himself (Lucardie & Voerman, 2011, pp. 188–192).

Lucardie and Voerman (2011, pp. 196–197) consider the consequences of the changes towards internal party democracy implemented by a number of parties since the beginning of the twenty-first century. The authors doubt that the increased inclusiveness and decentralisation of candidate selection procedures made political parties more representative of the population in social-geographic terms, or less homogeneous as groups in parliament. This is corroborated by Andeweg and Thomassen (2011), who find that the Dutch parliamentary party groups have remained fairly homogeneous since the 1970s and detect no decline in terms of their ideological agreement since the turn of the century.

Lucardie and Voerman (2011) also consider the possibility that these changes towards inclusiveness and decentralisation may lead individual MPs to engage in personal vote-seeking and campaigning. This may also have consequences for an MP's loyalty towards the party and subsequent behaviour in parliament, as an MP elected on the basis of a personal-vote in essence has a personal mandate from his party members, a wider selectorate. The authors conclude that these consequences have not taken effect. As stated, the number of MPs elected into the Dutch Parliament on the basis of personal-votes alone is limited and research by Andeweg and Thomassen (2011) based on the Dutch Parliamentary Studies shows that MPs' subscription to the norm of party loyalty has actually increased since to turn of the century. Moreover, party voting unity in the Netherlands is still exceptionally high, with a rice score of over 99.9 per cent since the early 1980s (van Vonno, 2016, p. 174).

Summarising, the way in which elections are organised in the Netherlands make it an excellent case to study the use of candidate section as a disciplinary mechanisms. We have an electoral rank for each candidate for each political party which means that if candidate selection is used as a disciplining mechanisms it can easily be observed. Moreover, although there has been some movement towards strengthening the internal democracy of political parties, political party leaders' control over candidate selection procedures remains rather exclusive and centralised, meaning that they maintain the

option to use their power of candidate selection as a disciplinary tool. However, the high levels of ideological agreement and party loyalty found by Andeweg and Thomassen (2011) lead us to expect that party discipline is probably not usually necessary in the Dutch Parliament, as most MPs will toe the party line voluntarily. Andeweg and Thomassen's (2011) suggest that if party discipline is used as a means of maintaining party unity, it mainly functions as an *ultimum remedium*. Bailer (2018) confirms this, but at the same time finds that the use of candidate selection as a disciplinary tool is relatively common in the Netherlands, at least in the eyes of parliamentary party group leaders and country experts.

Operationalisation

Our data set contains information on MPs in five parliamentary terms (1998–2002, 2003–2006, 2006–2010, 2010–2012 and 2012–2017) for which behavioural data are available. We exclude MPs who did not complete their parliamentary term, which occurs quite regularly in the Dutch Parliament, since these MPs are not likely to be selected again. We also excluded MPs who quit their parliamentary party during the parliamentary term as they would not be subject to the disciplinary measures of their former party. We also exclude MPs who held government office during the period preceding the election of interest, as in the Netherlands ministers do not sit in parliament.[4] Lastly, we exclude MPs who were the leader of their parliamentary party group for at least one year during the relevant parliamentary period, as well as the Speaker of the House. Arguably both parliamentary party group leaders and the Speaker are not subject to the same disciplinary mechanisms as their colleagues.

Party candidate lists

We seek to explain two aspects of candidate selection, for which we use the official candidate lists and electoral results from the Electoral Council. The first is whether a sitting MP is reselected as a candidate for the next elections. This variable simply measures whether an MP who was in parliament before an election was put on the electoral list again. Obviously, there might be different reasons why MPs do not appear on upcoming electoral candidacy lists: candidates might not be reselected by their party, but they may also voluntarily decide not to run. We do not distinguish between these reasons in the measurement of this variable, but rather aim to distinguish between different reasons for reselection in our explanatory model. On average 74 per cent of the MPs in our data set were reselected at the next elections (see Table 1).

Our second dependent variable is the position of an incumbent MP on their party's electoral candidacy lists. As we compare MPs from party of

Table 1. Descriptive statistics.

	N	Mean	SD	Median	Minimum	Maximum
Reselected	669	0.73	0.44	1.00	0.00	1.00
Relative List Position$_t$	488	0.66	0.43	0.60	0.00	3.51
Relative List Position$_{t-1}$	669	0.82	0.46	0.79	0.03	2.53
Speech	669	0.37	0.26	0.32	0.00	1.00
Motions	669	0.44	0.27	0.39	0.00	1.00
Amendments	669	0.31	0.29	0.23	0.00	1.00
Questions	669	0.37	0.25	0.31	0.00	1.00
Sex (0 = Female, 1 = Male)	669	0.62	0.49	1.00	0.00	1.00
Ethnic minority (1 = Yes)	669	0.09	0.29	0.00	0.00	1.00
Preference Votes (logged)	669	7.65	1.22	7.50	4.63	11.77
Experience (Years)	669	2.48	3.29	0.69	0.00	17.36
Age (Years)	669	47.29	9.04	46.77	22.40	73.55
Government Party (1 = Yes)	669	0.53	0.50	1.00	0.00	1.00
Party Size (Seats)	669	28.64	13.02	30.00	2.00	45.00

varying sizes, we express an MP's position relative to the average number of seats their party received in the election of interest and the previous elections. More precisely, the relative list position (RLP) of MP i of party j is given by:

$$RLPij = \frac{ALP_{ij} - 1}{APS_j - 1}$$

where ALP gives the absolute list position of the candidate and APS the average number of party seats in the election of interest and the previous election.[5] The first person on the list scores 0, while the person that is on the exact same position as the average number of seats received by the party, has a RLP score of 1. MPs with a score over one (normally) are those who enter parliament between elections because they succeeded a party colleague who left early. Take for example, Christian Democrat (*CDA*) backbencher Theo Rietkerk. He was number 22 on the electoral list in 1998 and moved up to position 9 in the 2002 election. His party won 29 seats in 1998 and 43 in 2002. We express his relative list position as a proportion of the average number of seats of his party, so his relative list position at $t-1$ was $(22-1)/[(29+43)/2-1] = 0.60$. In 2002, his relative list position improved considerably to 0.22.[6]

Level of parliamentary activity

Our main independent variables concern an MP's level of parliamentary activity. Data on the introduction of parliamentary motions and amendments was obtained from the *Dutch Parliamentary Behaviour Dataset* (Louwerse et al., 2018), data on parliamentary questions was drawn from Otjes and Louwerse (2018) and data on parliamentary speeches was collected by the authors using similar custom-build scripts that were used for the data

set previously mentioned and scraped all plenary speeches from the official parliamentary transcripts.

We look at four activities: (1) speaking in parliament (expressed in the number of words), (2) tabling parliamentary motions (most of which are on substantive issues, technical motions are exceptional), (3) proposing amendments to bills and (4) asking written parliamentary questions (Louwerse & Otjes, 2016). For each of these activities, we calculate the number of activities per parliamentary sitting day from the start of a parliamentary term until four months before the end.[7] For example, Esther Ouwehand (Party for the Animals, *PvdD*) spoke 500 words on an average sitting day, which was slightly more than her parliamentary party group colleague Marianne Thieme. As we are looking at competition within parties, we express each activity as a percentage of the highest score for a party in a parliamentary term. For the *PvdD* which had two seats in 2006–2010, Ouwehand spoke most, obtaining a score of 1. Her colleague Thieme received a score of .86 as she was 86 per cent as active in terms of speech as Ouwehand.[8] The scores for the different activities are moderately to strongly related ($.26 < r < .59$), which would potentially lead to efficiency problems in the estimation of our statistical models (O'brien, 2007). Therefore we estimate separate statistical models for each type of activity, before estimating a full model including all four activities.

We expect that the use of party-controlled and visible tools is more strongly predictive of list position than the use of less controlled and not very visible tools. A problem for our analysis is, however, that there is an association between party control and visibility: speeches and motions are both visible and highly controlled (questions are probably more visible than controlled and amendments more controlled than visible, but arguably both score lower on control and visibility than the other two tools). To explore in more detail whether it is party control or visibility that matters, we look at different types of parliamentary speech. All of these are arguably controlled by the party leadership, but the visibility varies a lot. One the end of the spectrum there are high-profile debates that may be broadcast on TV or shared on social media, while on the other there are technical debates about the order of business and debates which follow-on from parliamentary committees and which only purpose is to table parliamentary motions.[9] Therefore, in an additional analysis we analyse whether particular types of speech are more strongly associated with reselection and promotion. We distinguish between Debates on Bills (Legislation), Debates on the Budget, Order of Business, Follow-on from Committees (VAO), MP-initiated Debates,[10] Question Time, Major Debates,[11] and other Debates (which includes a wide range of debates, usually more general debates about an issue in which broad lines of policy are discussed). Usually only party group leaders will speak in Major Debates, so we do not expect much of

an effect in those cases. We do expect that Question Time, which is perhaps one of the most visible parts of parliamentary proceedings (broadcasted live on TV), will show a larger effect than other types of debate. We expect that speaking a lot in Business, Follow-on from Committees and MP-initiated Debates will be unlikely to be related to higher changes of reselection and promotion.

Control variables

Individual-level controls We expect that an MP's chance of reselection and list position are related to the position he had at the previous election. MPs who were high on the list before are expected to be high on the list again. It is especially important to control for this variable, because our main explanatory variables are likely to be related to them: MPs at the top of the list are expected to be more active and party-oriented. If we want to distinguish between prior standing in the party and an MP's activities and party orientation in the previous parliamentary period, we have to control for this.

The relative list position at the previous election is measured in the same way as the relative list position at the election of interest.

There are a number of socio-geographic electoral considerations that may also influence the list composition of political parties. First, although there are no legal quotas, a number of political parties have rules concerning the composition of their candidacy lists in terms of gender. The Social Democratic party *PvdA*, for example, uses a gender quota and alternates male and female candidates on the lists. Other parties apply other affirmative action related to gender (Caul, 2001). Second, political parties are also known to include and maybe advantage candidates from minority groups. Gender and minority are included as simple dichotomous variables.

Next, although personal-vote seeking is not very popular in the Netherlands and the number of MPs who get into Dutch Parliament on the basis of personal-votes alone (i.e. those who would otherwise not been elected on the basis of the total number of votes cast for the party alone) is limited to only one or two per election, there are candidate who do receive personal-votes (Nagtzaam & van Erkel, 2017). As any vote that is cast for an individual candidate also count as a vote for the party, political parties may place MPs who received a high number of personal-votes during the previous election on a more prominent position on the list in order to maximise their visibility and let the party as a whole profit from their individual reputation (André et al., 2017). We use the logged number of preference votes as arguably the effect of preference votes on list position would not be linear (see Table 1).

Last, we control for the experience and age of an MP. In terms of reselection we expect that MPs with longer tenure are less likely to be reselected,

mostly because of voluntary retirement, but also because some parties have maximum tenure limits. If long-serving MPs are reselected, however, we expect them to be relatively high on the list. We calculated total parliamentary experience in years on the day of the election at *t*. We control for age to capture the expected pattern of older MPs' higher likeliness to resign.

Party-level controls On the party level we control for a party being in government. Government parties generally put (a number of) ministers, who may not necessarily have been on the electoral list at the previous election, high on their electoral list, which may have a push-down effect on other MPs. We also control for the size of the party (in seats). While our measure of an MP's list position is relative, the effect of some of the explanatory variables, especially parliamentary activity, might be different depending on the size of a party. For example, the workload seems to be more evenly divided in smaller parties than in larger ones. Even though the Dutch Parliament is comparatively small, it is sometimes joked that some backbenchers are the spokesperson for issues like 'cycling lanes in the province of Drenthe'. Thus, the competition for floor time and the use of parliamentary instruments is fiercer in larger parties than in smaller ones.

Data analysis

The data are analysed using multilevel regression techniques. For the dichotomous dependent variable 'reselection' a binary logistic regression model is used and for the continuous dependent variable 'list position' a linear model was specified. We model individuals as nested into (a total of 12) parties and (five) parliamentary terms. The random intercepts for these two grouping levels should capture party or term-level heterogeneity, while the partial pooling of a multilevel model allows us to use the party-level variables specified above.

Results

Reselection

The first hurdle for incumbent MPs is to actually get reselected. Table 2 displays a multilevel binary logistic regression analysis with reselection as the dependent variable and parliamentary period and parties as grouping levels. On average, the probability of reselection is large (73 per cent, see Table 1).

The relationship between parliamentary speech on the probability of reselection is strong in both Model 1 and the full Model 5. Based on model 5, we estimate the probability of reselection for someone who does not speak at all in the plenary session to be 65 per cent, while for the most active member of a

Table 2. Explaining candidate reselection.

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5
(Intercept)	1.86	3.79**	3.91**	3.87**	1.63
	(1.40)	(1.29)	(1.32)	(1.27)	(1.42)
Relative List Position$_{t-1}$	−0.86**	−1.12***	−1.11***	−1.15***	−0.91***
	(0.26)	(0.26)	(0.25)	(0.26)	(0.27)
Sex – Male	0.31	0.44*	0.47*	0.42*	0.30
	(0.21)	(0.21)	(0.21)	(0.21)	(0.21)
Ethnic Minority	−0.22	−0.38	−0.41	−0.53	−0.26
	(0.34)	(0.34)	(0.34)	(0.34)	(0.34)
Preference Votes (logged)	0.15	0.10	0.13	0.08	0.10
	(0.10)	(0.10)	(0.10)	(0.10)	(0.10)
Experience	−0.17***	−0.13***	−0.13***	−0.14***	−0.17***
	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)
Age	−0.06***	−0.07***	−0.07***	−0.06***	−0.06***
	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)
Government Party	0.08	0.10	0.11	0.16	0.10
	(0.25)	(0.25)	(0.25)	(0.25)	(0.25)
Pary Seats (logged)	0.35	0.11	0.07	0.04	0.40
	(0.21)	(0.20)	(0.20)	(0.19)	(0.22)
Speech	2.51***				2.19***
	(0.54)				(0.62)
Motions		1.15**			0.31
		(0.41)			(0.48)
Amendments			0.79		−0.23
			(0.41)		(0.48)
Questions				1.65***	1.09*
				(0.47)	(0.49)
Log Likelihood	−327.54	−335.86	−337.99	−333.26	324.26
Num. obs.	669	669	669	669	669
Num. groups: Party	11	11	11	11	11
Num. groups: Period	5	5	5	5	5
Var: Party (Intercept)	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Var: Period (Intercept)	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

Note: Multilevel binary logistical regression coefficients with standard errors in parentheses. *** $p < 0.001$; ** $p < 0.01$; * $p < 0.05$.

parliamentary party in terms of speech-making the probability of reselection is 94 per cent (see Figure 1). This is a significant and substantial difference, which conforms to our theoretical expectations.

The relationship between introducing motions and reselection is less clear. In model 2 we observe a significant and sizeable effect, but this disappears in the full model. This can partially be attributed to the moderately strong correlation between speech-making and introducing motions ($r = .51$). The introduction of parliamentary motions in fact takes place during plenary debates; therefore, we should expect a positive correlation between the two activities. However, if we include both activities in the statistical model, speech clearly has superior predictive value for reselection. While we should be careful in the attribution of causality, it seems that when keeping speech-making constant, introducing more parliamentary motions is not related to a higher probability of reselection.

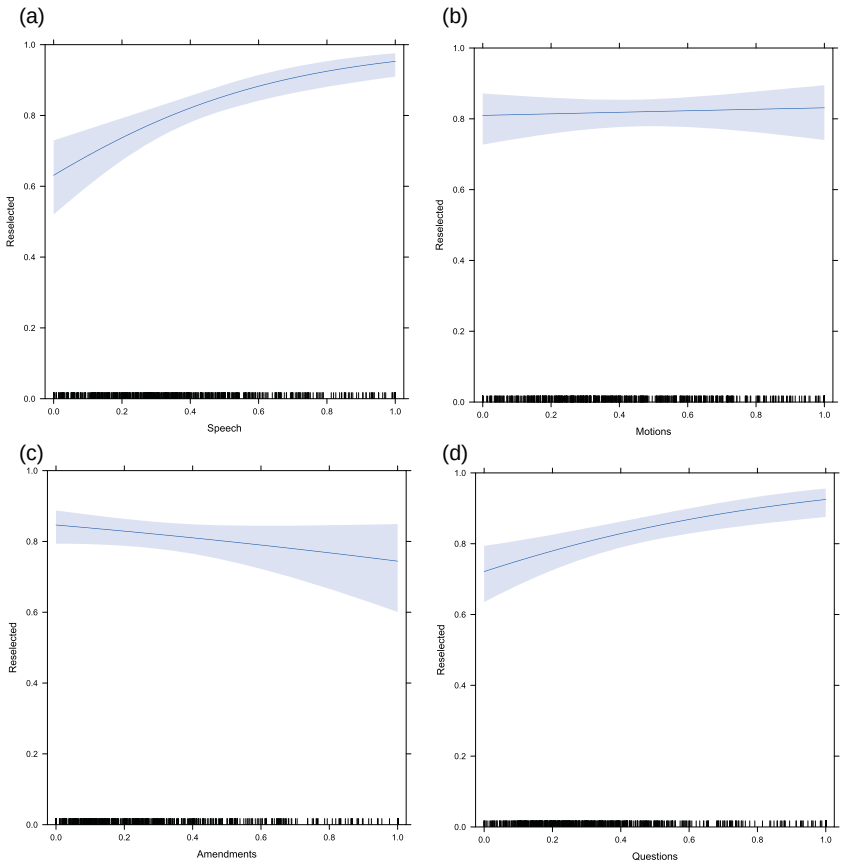

Figure 1. Effect of parliamentary activity on reselection.

Note: Effect plots based on Model 5 in Table 2. The main explanatory variable for each graph ranges from its minimum to its maximum, while all other explanatory variables are kept at their means or modes.

Introducing amendments to bills is also unrelated to the probability of reselection. If anything, the full model shows a negative (but non-significant) relationship between the level of activity in terms of tabling amendments and the probability of reselection.

Asking written questions, however, is found to be related to the probability of reselection. In the full model the probability of reselection goes up from 73 per cent for those who ask no written questions to 89 per cent for MPs who are the most active party member in terms of asking questions. This lends support to the *visibility hypothesis*, which states that activities that result in more public visibility are more strongly related to reselection and promotion, and is at odds with the *party control hypothesis*, which states that activities that are under more strict party control are more likely to be related to reselection and promotion.

An important limitation of our reselection models is that they do not distinguish between voluntary retirement and unsuccessful bids for reselection. The inclusion of the control variables age and experience intend to capture this distinction: older MPs with longer parliamentary careers are more likely to (voluntarily) step down at elections than young MPs who have only been in parliament for a single term. These two variables do, however, not fully capture voluntary retirement. Sometimes, young first-term MPs do step down of their own will. If MPs are already anticipating stepping down at the next elections, they might be less eager to engage in activities that they might regard as futile. When we run a separate analysis predicting the level of question activity from age and experience we find that more experienced MPs ask *more* questions, while older MPs ask *fewer* questions, which can be interpreted as mixed evidence for the 'retirement' explanation. Ideally we would be able to exclude those who voluntarily retire from the analysis, but in many cases it is difficult to observe whether the retirement was truly voluntary.

List position

The second analysis focuses on the list position of those who are reselected, of which there are 488 in our dataset. Not reselecting an MP is a very strict disciplinary measure, so parties may instead opt to put incumbents lower on the electoral list. A demotion is a clear signal to an MP that something in his behaviour has to change. We model an MP's relative list position in election t as a function of parliamentary activity and a number of control variables, using a cross-classified multilevel model with party and parliamentary period as grouping levels (see Table 3).

Speech is strongly related to list position: the more an MP speaks (compared to his copartisans), the higher she will be on the electoral list at the next elections (controlling for, among other things, list position at the previous election). Note that our dependent variable, Relative List Position, assigns a value of 0 to those on top of the electoral list and 1 to the member that was the last one of the list to be elected (i.e. candidate on position 23 if a party got 23 seats). Therefore, low values on Relative List Position mean that someone was actually 'high on the list'. Those who did not speak at all are expected to be around value 0.74 on the Relative List Position, so around position 15 for a party with 20 seats (see Figure 2). The most prolific speakers in a party would be around 0.35, which corresponds to rank 8 for a 20-seat party. Note that in this analysis other variables are kept at their mean or mode, which means that for an older, inexperienced MP with few preference votes who was only barely elected at the last election, speaking little or a lot may very well be the difference of being on position 22 or 16 at the subsequent election for a 20 seat party.[12] These differences are substantially important.

Table 3. Explaining candidate relative list position.

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5
(Intercept)	0.61**	0.35	0.29	0.27	0.60**
	(0.22)	(0.21)	(0.21)	(0.20)	(0.22)
Relative List Position$_{t-1}$	0.44***	0.47***	0.47***	0.47***	0.43***
	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.04)
Sex – Male	0.03	0.02	0.02	0.02	0.04
	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)
Ethnic Minority	0.09	0.11	0.12*	0.13*	0.08(0.06)
	(0.06)	(0.06)	(0.06)	(0.06)	
Preference Votes (logged)	−0.04*	−0.03*	−0.04*	−0.03*	−0.04*
	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)
Experience	−0.00	−0.01	−0.01	−0.01	−0.00
	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)
Age	0.01***	0.01***	0.01***	0.01***	0.01***
	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)
Government Party	0.11**	0.11*	0.10*	0.10*	0.11**
	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.04)
Pary Seats (logged)	−0.08*	−0.05	−0.03	−0.03	−0.07*
	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)
Speech	−0.29***				−0.31***
	(0.07)				(0.08)
Motions		−0.13			−0.08
		(0.07)			(0.08)
Amendments			−0.05		0.10
			(0.06)		(0.07)
Questions				−0.05	0.02
				(0.06)	(0.07)
Log Likelihood	−189.11	−194.95	−196.49	−196.52	−193.26
Num. obs.	488	488	488	488	488
Num. groups: Party	11	11	11	11	11
Num. groups: Period	5	5	5	5	5
Var: Party (Intercept)	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Var: Period (Intercept)	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Var: Residual	0.11	0.12	0.12	0.12	0.11

Note: Multilevel linear regression coefficients with standard errors in parentheses. *** $p < 0.001$; ** $p < 0.01$; * $p < 0.05$.

The effect of motions and that of questions fails to reach conventional levels of statistical significance in any of the models. While both did seem to bear at least some relationship to reselection, they do not seem to matter for list position. Introducing amendments seems to be an even worse idea for the MP looking for a promotion: the positive, but non-significant, coefficient suggests that if anything tabling more amendments is related to a lower relative list position.

The fact that we do find a strong positive relationship between speech and list position, but not for the other activities, offers some support for the *visibility hypothesis.* Written questions and particularly motions are, however, also quite visible activities (at least when done in large numbers), but these do not result in a positive effect. Perhaps activities that are both controlled by the party and visible are the most likely to affect one's chances of promotion on the electoral list (Table 4).

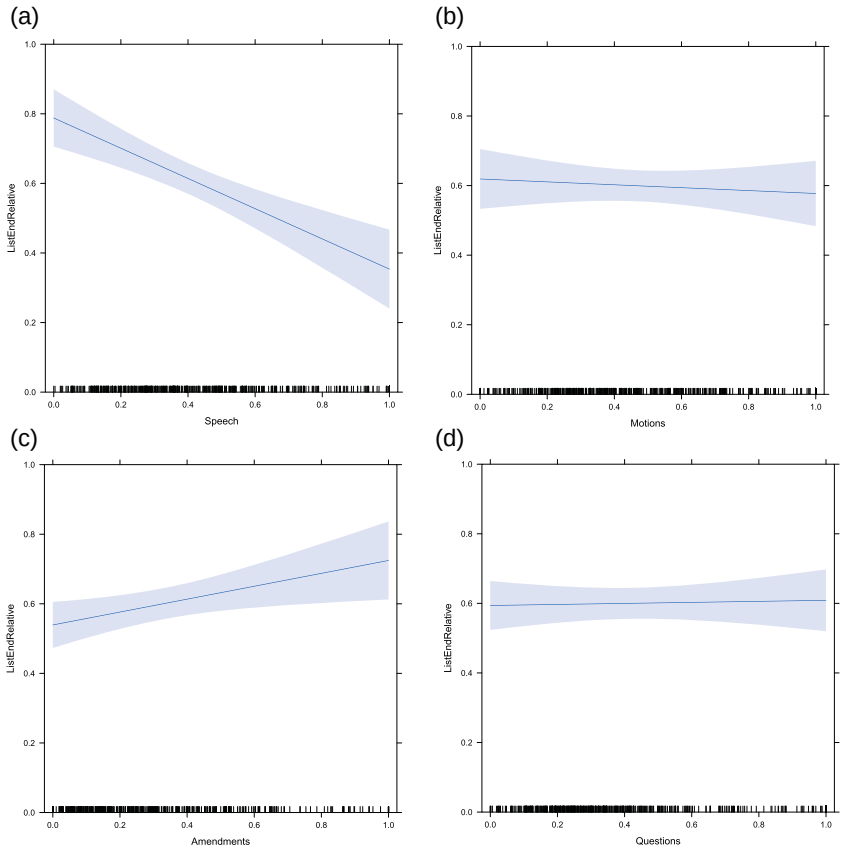

Figure 2. Effect of parliamentary activity on relative list position.

Note: Effect plots based on Model 5 in Table 3. The main explanatory variable for each graph ranges from its minimum to its maximum, while all other explanatory variables are kept at their means or modes. A value of 0 on Relative List Position corresponds to the top of the electoral list, while a value of 1 corresponds to the last elected candidate on the list.

What type of speech matters

The previous analysis showed that speaking in parliament is positively related to both reselection and getting higher on the electoral list. There we treated all types of parliamentary speech as one single category and expressed activity in relation to the most active speaker within the parliamentary party group. When we break down the type of speeches into various categories, we find relevant differences. For this analysis we created 9 separate variables, each expressing how much an MP spoke related to the most active MP in their group. A value of 0.5 on the variable 'Debate on Bill', for example, means that in debates on legislation, this MP spoke 50 per cent as many words as the most active MP in legislative debates in that party group (in that parliamentary term).

Table 4. Types of speech, reselection and list position.

	(1) Reselection	(2) List Position
(Intercept)	1.55	0.87***
	(1.51)	(0.23)
Relative List Position*t*0	−0.91***	0.40***
	(0.27)	(0.05)
Sex – Male	0.37	0.05
	(0.22)	(0.03)
Ethnic Minority	−0.16	0.08
	(0.35)	(0.06)
Preference Votes (logged)	0.11	−0.04*
	(0.10)	(0.02)
Experience	−0.17***	−0.00
	(0.03)	(0.01)
Age	−0.06***	0.01**
	(0.01)	(0.00)
Government Party	0.11	0.11**
	(0.26)	(0.04)
Pary Seats (logged)	0.49	−0.14***
	(0.25)	(0.04)
Speech Variables		
Debate on Bill	1.03*	0.07
	(0.52)	(0.07)
Debate on Budget Bill	0.84	−0.13
	(0.51)	(0.07)
Order of Business Debate	0.91	−0.03
	(0.65)	(0.09)
Follow on from Committee	0.71	0.02
	(0.49)	(0.07)
MP Initiated Debate	0.09	−0.10
	(0.52)	(0.07)
Other Debate	−0.41	−0.23*
	(0.61)	(0.09)
Major Debate	0.37	−0.44
	(2.54)	(0.33)
Question Time	0.21	−0.16*
	(0.51)	(0.07)
Other	0.27	−0.02
	(0.56)	(0.08)
Log Likelihood	−325.02	−190.83
Num. obs.	669	488
Num. groups: Party	11	11
Num. groups: Period	5	5
Var: Party (Intercept)	0.00	0.00
Var: Period (Intercept)	0.00	0.00
Var: Residual		0.11

Note: Multilevel binomial (model 1) and linear (model 2) logistical regression coefficients with standard errors in parentheses. *** $p < 0.001$; ** $p < 0.01$; * $p < 0.05$.

We find diverging patterns for reselection and list position. For reselection we find a statistically significant effect only for 'Debate on Bill'. We do find positive, but non-significant associations, for most other variables, which may very well be due to inefficiency in the model. The speech variables are moderately to strongly positively related to the main speech variable ($.28 < r < .79$) and to each other. When modelling each type of speech variable separately, we find significant effects for all variables except *Major Debate*

and *Other Debate* (table not shown). This suggests that for reselection simply speaking more seems to be the main thing. It is important to keep in mind that we are looking whether those in parliament on the day before the election were on the electoral list for the next election. Therefore, those who voluntary stand down and those who know that their chances of reselection are small, might actually choose not to speak as much. Indeed, the association between speaking and reselection might run in two ways: those who voluntary resign might anticipate deselection and those who are trying to get reelected may use the instrument of speech to demonstrate their ability as a parliamentarian.

For list position, we find significant effects for *Other Debate* and *Question Time*: speaking more in these types of debates is associated with a higher list position.[13] Question Time is perhaps among the most visible parts of parliamentary debate, while the category of *Other Debates* encompasses a wide range of debates including broad debates on government policy. Again, if we run the model separately for each type of speech, we find significant associations for more types of speech (but not for *Debate on bill*, *Follow on from Committee* or *Other*). Still, taking into account the size of the coefficients, it does seem that while speaking generally is associated with receiving a higher list position at the subsequent election, speaking in some debates makes a particularly strong difference. The more visible debates, such as Question Time, seems to be beneficial, while debates on legislation and debates that are (technical) follow-ons from committee work are not significantly related to list position. The estimate for 'major debates' is quite large, but also problematic, as most of these are done by the party group leaders, which are not part of this analysis.

Discussion and conclusion

The use of candidate (re)selection as an *ex post* control mechanism is often mentioned in the literature, but has not extensively been put to the test empirically. Basing our predictions on Müller's (2000) model of agency problems we expected that MPs who are active in parliament would do particularly well in the reselection process, whereas MPs who engage in activity-shirking would be less likely to be reselected and if reselected, would be placed lower on the party's electoral candidacy list. In terms of reselection, our analysis of the Dutch Parliament between 1998 and 2017 shows that being active in parliament is positively related to the probability that an MP will be rewarded with reselection, whereas an MP who scores below average on parliamentary activity has an especially low chance of being reselected. This is true particularly for parliamentary speech and asking parliamentary questions. When it comes to their position on the list, an active MP, particularly in terms of speech, is

also likely to be moved up to a safer position, whereas an MP who is inactive is likely to be bumped to a lower position on the list. Candidate selection as a *ex post* control mechanism appears to be about the (amount of) work they deliver.

While our analysis shows an association between parliamentary activity and subsequent reselection and list position, we stress that this relationship is not necessarily causal. Our analysis controls for a candidate's list position at the previous election, which means that our finding is not simply the result of those who were high on the list at the previous election talking more in parliament. Still, a low-ranking candidate who shows themselves a strong MP early on in a parliamentary term, may gain favour with the party leadership and thereby gain access to more important spokespersonship and subsequently receive more floor time. The exact mechanism that underlies the relationship we find could thus entail an interaction between performance, activity and evaluation by the party leadership.

These findings thus contain some good news and some bad news for parliamentarians. The good news is that there is a relationship between speaking in parliament and reselection and promotion. This suggests that it is possible for MPs to further their career by being active in parliament. The bad news is that gaining access to the floor is restricted by the party leadership, in the case of the Netherlands specifically through the assignment of spokespersonships. Indeed, as we allude to above, these decisions might be the consequence of other factors, unobserved in our analysis. If that is the case, MPs who try to increase their chances of reselection or promotion simply by talking as much as they can in parliament, would be unsuccessful. While measuring the significance of spokespersonships is non-trivial because of issues of data availability and comparability, it would be an important avenue of further research to assess what role obtaining important spokespersonships plays in this framework.

Our findings correspond to the analysis by Yildirim et al. (2019) on the Turkish case. They also find a large positive effect of speech-making, while their measure of other activities (introducing private member bills) is not (or even negatively) related to reselection and promotion. Although their analysis is not exactly the same as ours, finding similar effects across quite diverse cases does lend credibility to the theoretical idea that activity shirking affects reselection and promotion perspectives. It also suggests that parties do closely pay attention to what MPs do in parliament. Of course, these findings should be further explored in a broader range of cases. Furthermore, in order to understand why certain activities are more beneficial than others, we need to assess the visibility and party control of various activities across parliaments and countries in more detail.

Notes

1. Although committees are important to the work done in the Dutch parliament (Mickler, 2017), structured data on MPs' committee activity is not available. This means that we cannot use it for our data analysis, but also that political parties are likely to have difficulty monitoring MPs' committee activity, and it is resultantly likely to be less consequential for candidate list positions.
2. Before 2010, the maximum number of candidates on each party list was equivalent to twice the number of seats a party obtained during the last election, with a minimum of 30 candidates. From 2010, the maximum number of candidates is 50 for parties that received fewer than 15 seats in the previous elections and 80 for parties that received 15 or more seats in the last election.
3. In the election of 2017 the number of candidates who were elected accordingly was slightly higher (still only a handful). This slight increase can be linked to the 'Vote for a woman' (*Stem op een vrouw*) campaign, which advised voters to cast a preference vote for a woman placed low on the electoral list.
4. In one of our cases, four (junior) ministers returned to parliament after the government coalition broke down. They would have only a very short tenure in parliament, but they would probably end up high on the candidate list because of their service as a (junior) minister. As this is not the focus of our analysis, we exclude these cases.
5. We use the average number of party seats for the relative list position at t and the relative list position at $t-1$. Thus, the denominator of the formula does not change, so that any changes in the number of seats a party gained or lost will not affect our analysis.
6. The average relative list position at the start of a parliamentary period is 0.82, which is higher than 0.5 because our selection includes only those who were MPs at the end of a parliamentary period (and excludes parliamentary party group leaders and the Speaker of the House). This includes a large number of MPs who succeeded a party colleague, for example someone who became a cabinet member or who retired early.
7. Candidate lists have to be introduced at least 43 days before the election. Parties usually start their recruitment procedures much earlier. On the other hand, our data concerns a number of early elections which were called in most cases about 3–4 months before the elections. Therefore we use a four-month cut-off for our behavioural data.
8. Alternatively, we took the ratio of the score to the average party score. This indicator obtained similar results in the subsequent analyses, although the effects were slightly weaker.
9. *Verslag Algemeen Overleg*, literally 'Continuation of a General Meeting', which is a committee meeting.
10. Interpellations, majority debates, 30 member-debates, *spoeddebatten*.
11. Queen's Speech Debate (*Algemene Beschouwingen*), Accountability Debate (*Voorjaarsnota, Verantwoordingsdebat*), Debate on Government Inaugural Statement (*Debat Regeringsverklaring*).
12. For this particular example, we set age at 60, experience at 4 years, the number of preference votes at 103 (the minimum in the data set) and the Relative List Position at the start at 1. Position 22 is the predicted value for those who speak 10% as much as the most active speaker in their party and position 16 is predicted for those who speak 90% as much.

13. This translates into a lower value on the dependent variable, relative list position, which is why the coefficients are negative.

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author(s).

Notes on contributors

Tom Louwerse is Associate Professor of Political Science, Institute of Political Science, Leiden University, the Netherlands. His research focuses on legislative politics, political representation and elections, and has appeared in journals such as Party Politics, Political Studies, and West European Politics.

Cynthia van Vonno is Assistant Professor of Political Science, Institute of Political Science, Leiden University, the Netherlands. Her research focusses on party politics, legislative behavior and political representation, and has appeared in journals such as Party Politics and The Journal of Legislative Studies.

ORCID

Tom Louwerse http://orcid.org/0000-0003-4131-2724
Cynthia Van Vonno http://orcid.org/0000-0002-6123-8886

References

Andeweg, R. B. (1997). Institutional Reform in Dutch Politics: Elected Prime Minister, personalized PR, and popular Veto in comparative perspective. *Acta Politica*, *32*(3), 227–257.

Andeweg, R. B. (2000). Fractiocracy? Limits to the Ascendancy of the Parliamentary Party Group in Dutch politics. In K. M. Heidar, & R. A. Koole (Eds.), *Parliamentary Party Groups in European democracies: Political parties behind closed doors* (pp. 89–105). Routledge.

Andeweg, R. B., & Thomassen, J. J. A. (2011). Pathways to party unity: Sanctions, loyalty, homogeneity and division of labour in the Dutch parliament. *Party Politics*, *17*(5), 655–672. https://doi.org/10.1177/1354068810377188

André, A., Depauw, S., Shugart, M. S., & Chytilek, R. (2017). Party nomination strategies in flexible-list systems: Do preference votes matter? *Party Politics*, *23*(5), 589–600. https://doi.org/10.1177/1354068815610974

APSA. (1950). Towards a more responsible Two-Party System. *American Political Science Review*, *44*(3), 1–99. https://doi.org/10.2307/1950997

Bailer, S. (2018). To use the whip or not: Whether and when party group leaders use disciplinary measures to achieve voting unity. *International Political Science Review*, *39*(2), 163–177. https://doi.org/10.1177/0192512116676907

Bräuninger, T., Brunner, M., & Däubler, T. (2012). Personal vote-seeking in flexible list systems: How electoral incentives shape Belgian MPs' bill initiation behaviour. *European Journal of Political Research*, *51*(5), 607–645. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1475-6765.2011.02047.x

Carey, J. M. (2007). Competing principals, political institutions, and party unity in legislative voting. *American Journal of Political Science*, *51*(1), 92–107. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-5907.2007.00239.x

Carey, J. M. (2009). *Legislative voting and accountability*. Cambridge University Press.

Carey, J. M., & Shugart, M. S. (1995). Incentives to cultivate a personal vote: A rank ordering of electoral formulas. *Electoral Studies*, *14*(4), 417–439. http://linkinghub.elsevier.com/retrieve/pii/0261379494000352 https://doi.org/10.1016/0261-3794(94)00035-2

Caul, M. (2001). Political parties and the adoption of candidate gender quotas: A cross-national analysis. *Journal of Politics*, *63*(4), 1214–1229. https://doi.org/10.1111/0022-3816.00107

Cox, G. W., & McCubbins, M. D. (1993). *Legislative Leviathan: Party government in the house*. Cambridge University Press.

Crowe, E. W. (1986). The web of authority: Party loyalty and social control in the British House of commons. *Journal of Legislative Studies*, *9*(4), 161–185. https://doi.org/10.2307/439874

Damgaard, E. (1995). How parties control committee members. In H. Döring (Ed.), *Parliaments and majority rule in Western Europe* (pp. 308–324). St. Martin's Press.

Depauw, S., & Martin, S. (2009). Legislative party discipline and cohesion in comparative perspective. In D. Giannetti, & K. Benoit (Eds.), *Intra-Party Politics and Coalition Governments* (pp. 103–120). Routledge.

Farrell, D. M. (2001). *Electoral systems: A comparative introduction*. Palgrave.

Green-Pedersen, C. (2010). Bringing parties into parliament: The development of parliamentary activities in Western Europe. *Party Politics*, *16*(3), 347–369. https://doi.org/10.1177/1354068809341057

Hazan, R. Y. (2003). Does cohesion equal discipline? Towards a conceptual delineation. *Journal of Legislative Studies*, *9*(4), 1–11. https://doi.org/10.1080/1357233042000306227

Hazan, R. Y., & Rahat, G. (2006). The influence of candidate selection methods on legislatures and legislators: Theoretical propositions, methodological suggestions and empirical evidence. *Journal of Legislative Studies*, *12*(3–4), 366–385. https://doi.org/10.1080/13572330600875647

Hazan, R. Y., & Voerman, G. (2006). Electoral systems and candidate selection. *Acta Politica*, *41*(2), 146–162. https://doi.org/10.1057/palgrave.ap.5500153

Hix, S., Noury, A., & Roland, G. (2005). Power to the Parties: Cohesion and competition in the European Parliament, 1979-2001. *British Journal of Political Science*, *35*(2), 209–234. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0007123405000128

Kam, C. J. (2009). *Party discipline and Parliamentary Politics*. Cambridge University Press.

Kiewiet, D. R., & McCubbins, M. D. (1991). *The logic of delegation: Congressional Parties and the appropriations process*. The University of Chicago Press.

Krehbiel, K. (1993). Where's the party? *British Journal of Political Science*, *23*(2), 235–266. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0007123400009741

Louwerse, T., & Otjes, S. (2016). Personalised parliamentary behaviour without electoral incentives: The case of the Netherlands. *West European Politics*, *39*(4), 778–799. https://doi.org/10.1080/01402382.2015.1111041

Louwerse, T., Otjes, S., & van Vonno, C. (2018). The Dutch parliamentary behaviour dataset. *Acta Politica*, *53*(1), 149–166. https://doi.org/10.1057/s41269-017-0042-4

Lucardie, P., & Voerman, G. (2011). Democratie Binnen Partijen. In R. B. Andeweg, & J. J. A. Thomassen (Eds.), *Democratie Doorgelicht: Het Functioneren van de Nederlandse Democratie* (pp. 185–201). Leiden University Press.

Marsh, M. (1985). The voters decide? Preferential voting in European list systems. *European Journal of Political Research*, *13*(4), 365–378. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1475-6765.1985.tb00132.x

Mayhew, D. (1974). *Congress: The electoral connection*. Yale University Press.

Mickler, T. A. (2017). *Parliamentary Committees in a party-centred context. structure, composition, functioning*. Phd thesis, Leiden University. http://hdl.handle.net/1887/46112

Mitchell, P. (2000). Voters and their representatives: Electoral institutions and delegation in parliamentary democracies. *European Journal of Political Research*, *37*(3), 335–351. https://doi.org/10.1023/A:1007025105144

Müller, W. C. (2000). Political parties in parliamentary democracies: Making delegation and accountability work. *European Journal of Political Research*, *37*(3), 309–333. https://doi.org/10.1023/A:1007073021074

Nagtzaam, M. A. M., & van Erkel, P. F. A. (2017). Preference votes without preference? Institutional effects on preference voting: An experiment. *Journal of Elections, Public Opinion and Parties*, *27*(2), 172–191. https://doi.org/10.1080/17457289.2016.1243542

Norton, P. (2003). Cohesion without discipline: Party voting in the House of Lords. *Journal of Legislative Studies*, *9*(4), 57–72. https://doi.org/10.1080/1357233042000306254

O'brien, R. M. (2007). A caution regarding Rules of Thumb for variance inflation factors. *Quality & Quantity*, *41*(5), 673–690. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11135-006-9018-6

Otjes, S., & Louwerse, T. (2018). Parliamentary questions as strategic party tools. *West European Politics*, *41*(2), 496–516. https://doi.org/10.1080/01402382.2017.1358936

Owens, J. E. (2003). Explaining party cohesion and discipline in democratic legislatures: Purposiveness and contexts. *Journal of Legislative Studies*, *9*(4), 12–40. https://doi.org/10.1080/1357233042000306236

Papp, Z. (2019). Same species, different breed: The conditional effect of legislator activities in parliament on re-selection in a mixed-member electoral system. *Parliamentary Affairs*, *72*(1), 59–75. https://academic.oup.com/pa/article/72/1/59/4831464 https://doi.org/10.1093/pa/gsx049

Rahat, G., & Hazan, R. Y. (2001). Candidate selection methods: An analytical framework. *Party Politics*, *7*(3), 297–322. https://doi.org/10.1177/1354068801007003003

Sieberer, U. (2006). Party unity in parliamentary democracies: A comparative analysis. *The Journal of Legislative Studies*, *12*(2), 150–178. https://doi.org/10.1080/13572330600739413

Thomassen, J. J. A. (1994). Empirical research into political representation: Failing democracy or Failing models? In M. K. Jennings & T. E. Mann (Eds.), *Elections at home and abroad* (pp. 237–265). Ann Arbor.

van Holsteyn, J. J. M., & Andeweg, R. B. (2010). Demoted leaders and exiled candidates: Disentangling party and person in the voter's mind. *Electoral Studies*, *29*(4), 628–635. http://linkinghub.elsevier.com/retrieve/pii/S0261379410000624 https://doi.org/10.1016/j.electstud.2010.06.003

van Holsteyn, J. J. M., & Andeweg, R. B. (2012). Tweede Orde Personalisering: Voorkeurstemmen in Nederland. *Res Publica (Liverpool, England)*, *54*(2), 163–191. https://doi.org/10.5553/RP/048647002012054002002

van Vonno, C. M. C. (2016). Achieving party unity: A sequential approach to why MPs act in concert Phd thesis Leiden University. https://openaccess.leidenuniv.nl/handle/1887/38275

Van Vonno, C. M. C., Malka, R. I., Depauw, S., Hazan, R. Y., & Andeweg, R. B. (2014). Agreement, loyalty, and discipline: A sequential approach to party unity. In K. Deschouwer & S. Depauw (Eds.), *Representing the people: A survey among members of statewide and sub-state parliaments* (pp. 110–136). Oxford University Press. http://www.oxfordscholarship.com/view/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780199684533.001.0001/acprof-97801

Vliegenthart, R., & Walgrave, S. (2011). Content matters: The dynamics of parliamentary questioning in Belgium and Denmark. *Comparative Political Studies*, *44*(8), 1031–1059. https://doi.org/10.1177/0010414011405168

Wiberg, M. (1994). *Parliamentary control in the Nordic countries. Forms of questioning and behavioural trends*. Helsinki.

Yildirim, T. M., Kocapinar, G., & Ecevit, Y. A. (2019). Staying active and focused? The effect of parliamentary performance on candidate renomination and promotion. *Party Politics*, *25*(6), 794–804. https://doi.org/10.1177/1354068817740338