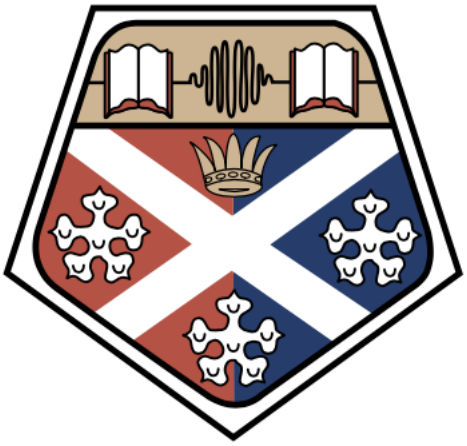

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Department of Government and Public Policy

DOCTORAL THESIS

The Effects of Candidates' Pre-Parliamentary Career Experiences on Congruence Between Parties and Voters

Iakovos Makropoulos

Supervisors:

Dr. Wolfgang Rüdig

Dr. Zachary D. Greene

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Declaration of Authenticity and Author's Rights

This thesis is the result of the author's original research. It has been composed by the author and has not been previously submitted for examination which has led to the award of a degree.

Signed: Iakovos Makropoulos

Date: 13 February 2025

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As I write this, my mother has an aggressive form of cancer in her body. I have to be more "aggressive" than this to witness me becoming assistant professor. I hope I can make it.

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Abstract

There is the conventional belief that politicians are out of touch with voters. Historically, most politicians entered politics after gaining experience in various non-political roles. However, in recent years, a new trend has emerged where individuals start working in politics directly after leaving university, for example being employed as advisors to MPs or ministers. As a result, election candidates and MPs might be drawn from a pool of political "insiders", leading to a declining number of candidates with skills acquired outside of politics. This career path raises several questions. Are young careerist politicians really out of touch with voters? How do distinct career types of politicians affect the level of congruence between parties and voters? Previous research has not adequately addressed the effects of career paths on the relationship between politicians and voters, as well as between politicians and their parties. To explore this in greater depth, the project comprises three research papers using comparative data from the Comparative Candidates Survey (CCS) and the Comparative Study of Electoral Systems (CSES). The first paper explores the effects of diverse career paths on ideological congruence with voters. The second paper investigates party congruence focusing on the effect of previous career experiences that lead candidates to dissent from their party's ideological position. The third paper shifts the focus on priority congruence examining how career paths may affect the congruence between candidates and voters on issue priorities. Accounting for these links, the research findings indicate that younger careerists are more congruent in comparison with other candidates. The findings have important implications for political parties, politicians, and voters who seek to understand the factors that influence political representation and accountability in democratic societies.

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Introduction

The professionalization of politics has become an increasingly dominant feature of modern representative democracies (McAllister, 2007). Traditionally, political candidates entered the political field after gaining experience in various non-political sectors, such as business, law, or public service (e.g. King, 1981). However, in recent years, there is a perception of a new type of politician—the "young careerist"—who enters politics directly from university or after brief stints as party advisers, bypassing any substantial "real-life" professional experience.

The prevalence of this argument has been predominantly observed in the British political landscape, where scholars have raised some concerns about a potential increase in the share of MPs from within the political class (Allen, 2013; Cowley, 2012; Henn, 2018; Goplerud, 2015). While prominent cases have fuelled this narrative, there is little empirical evidence considering a representative sample of cases. Is this phenomenon a specific British issue or does it reflect a global shift in political career patterns? Careerist politicians often possess specialised knowledge in governance and political maneuvering, but their limited exposure to non-political sectors raises questions about their ability to represent the broader electorate (Allen, 2013; Cowley, 2012; Snagovsky et al., 2023). These concerns lead to the central issue of this project. Are politicians "out of touch" with voters? How do different career paths influence politicians' congruence with voters and their ability to reflect voter priorities?

Understanding the role of political career paths in shaping representation is crucial for addressing larger issues such as political disillusionment (Ezrow & Xezonakis, 2011), voter apathy (Reher, 2014) or the declining trust in democratic institutions (Dalton, 2004). But if politicians are perceived as "out of touch" with the electorate (e.g. Cowley, 2012), voters may search for alternatives that better represent their priorities (Kitschelt, 1995). For instance, Left parties such as SYRIZA in Greece, Podemos in Spain or Radical Right parties such as the UKIP party in the United Kingdom or AfD in Germany have increased their popularity by

addressing issues neglected by major parties (Fuchs & Klingemann, 1990; Van Der Brug & Van Spanje, 2009). In Western Europe, evolving attitudes towards environmentalism, immigration, crime and other issues have led to new political dimensions that traditional major parties -often dominated by career politicians- may struggle to address.

The "politics-only" career path raises significant concerns about politicians' ability to authentically represent voters, a notion that has gained attention in recent political discourse. Critics argue that politicians who enter the field without substantial "real-life" work experience, particularly in sectors outside of politics, often become disconnected from the issues faced by ordinary citizens. In the UK, populist figures like Nigel Farage have criticized the uniformity of political leaders' backgrounds, arguing that their privileged educational paths and lack of experience in everyday work diminish their capacity to understand and address the concerns of ordinary families (Farage, 2013). Similarly, Isabel Hardman, in her book "Why We Get the Wrong Politicians" (2018), underscores how the overrepresentation of career politicians—lacking experience in fields like science, technology, and manual labour—results in a Parliament disconnected from the broader electorate. However, not all agree with this characterization. In contrast to this populist critique, Professor Philip Cowley, during a recent podcast on POLITICO (Cowley, 2021), challenges the notion that MPs are inherently "out of touch" dismissing it as one of the biggest myths in British politics. Cowley argues that the portrayal of MPs as disconnected elites lacks empirical support, suggesting that the issue is more nuanced than public discourse implies.

At the core of this debate is the interplay between career-driven motivations and effective representation. Candidates, particularly those pursuing long-term political careers, often prioritise vote- and office-seeking incentives over policy-driven ones (O'Grady, 2019). Following the principles of spatial politics introduced by Downs (1957), one might expect that young careerists may adopt more centrist positions, as their goals might be vote and office

oriented. However, this strategic positioning may come at the expense of addressing more specific, urgent grassroots concerns, potentially deepening the disconnect between politicians and voters. On the other hand, "outsider" candidates, having spent time in professions closely related to the public (e.g. teachers, lawyers, journalists, doctors) may better understand the electorate's priorities. These politicians may focus on policy-seeking incentives, driven by their desire to effect substantive change rather than advance their political careers. Also, assuming that success in politics is defined by metrics such as sustained tenure within a party or consistent electoral success, it becomes essential to assess not only whether political elites are disconnected from their voters but also whether the nature of their career trajectory influences their strategic decisions, such as prioritising congruence with voters versus party interests. Therefore, are politicians truly "out of touch" with the electorate? How does a politician's career trajectory shape congruence with the public? Are certain career paths more effective at representing voters' issue priorities? And how do specific career types of politicians contribute to party unity?

These questions have so far received very little attention. Traditional studies on political careers have illuminated the transition from amateur to professional politicians and the rise of the so-called career politicians (Black, 1972; King, 1981; Riddell, 1995; Schlesinger, 1966; Weber, [1919] 1991). However, more recent literature has identified a distinct new category of politicians, that I describe them as "young careerists" in this project; young individuals who may have previously been employed by their national party or gained working experience from positions within MPs or ministerial offices, without acquiring experiences in local politics or having the opportunity to establish professional careers outside politics (Allen 2013; Cowley 2012; Craft 2016; Eichbaum & Shaw, 2011; Monroe 2001; Taflaga & Kerby, 2020; Yong & Hazell 2014). Despite this emerging trend, the academic literature on young careerists and their influence remains limited signalling a significant gap in the literature. Existing research has

focused extensively on the professionalisation of politics, particularly in majoritarian systems like the U.S. and the U.K., where professional politicians dominate political careers (e.g. McAllister, 2007; O'Grady, 2019). While previous comparative studies offer comprehensive insights into the social and professional backgrounds of politicians (Best & Cotta, 2000; Borchert & Zeiss, 2003), yet they primarily focus on MPs without delving into the new phenomenon of young careerists that are increasingly appeared in politics. In particular, the role of "careerists" as a stepping-stone to successful parliamentary careers has been noted in countries like the U.K. (Yong & Hazell, 2014) and the U.S. (Monroe, 2001). However, there is little comparative research that specifically examines the emergence of young careerists leaving a gap in understanding how these individuals impact ideological congruence.

While Snagovsky et al. (2023) touch upon the issue, their focus is on the representation style among former staff members, not on ideological congruence. Similarly, Önnudóttir (2014) links "loyal partisans" to reduced congruence between parties and voters, while Pedrazzani and Segatti (2022) highlight a correlation between a partisan representation style and candidates' ideological alignment with party voters. However, it seems plausible that representation style may not be a fixed stance from the start of politicians' careers but could evolve over time, as their relationship with the party develops. Therefore, it is notable that the academic literature on this subject, particularly concerning ideological congruence, presents limited evidence supporting such claims.

A central objective of this thesis is to explore the role of the emerging phenomenon of young careerist politicians. Typically, politicians who are highly ambitious, they place significant emphasis on their career development, personal profile and electoral survival, sometimes even at the expense of party loyalty (Benedetto & Hix, 2007). The logical question that comes forward is whether this new generation of young careerist politicians shift their positions in pursuit of electoral incentives. For instance, a move to the ideological centre, where

the median voter is, could be attractive for young careerists. This assumption aligns with well-known traditional theories on representation such as the median voter theory of Downs (1957). In my first chapter, I am to examine this question through a comparative analysis of elite-level data.

Moving forward, the analysis of ideological congruence between individual politicians and voters has to be combined with a respective analysis of politicians' alignment with their party's ideological stance. The Responsible Party Model suggests that parties should align their policies with voter preferences (APSA, 1950; Thomassen, 1994), yet politicians, who are deeply embedded in party structures, may exhibit higher levels of party loyalty (e.g. Benedetto & Hix, 2007) at the expense of voter alignment or pursue an independent "rebel" profile moving closer to voters and appealing to a broader electorate (Campbell et al., 2019; Kam, 2009). While the prominence of young careerists is notable, there is another major category of politicians, the "party soldiers" coming from the local arena, having first served a career in local politics and then deciding to make a transition to the national level, or even "outsider" politicians coming into politics after working first in jobs outside the political sphere. There is no ideal political career path; all routes can potentially lead to a successful parliamentary career, yet some may challenge party unity more than others. One interesting question here is how distinctive career paths of politicians affect party dissent behaviour. Are specific types of politicians more likely to "rebel" than others? Recent studies have begun exploring how politicians' career paths influence dissent behaviour within parties, but the literature remains fragmented. Much of this research has focused on analysing the dissent behaviour of Members of Parliament (Greene & Haber, 2015; Vivyan & Wagner, 2012), with previous studies primarily relying on data from the UK and US contexts (Campbell et al., 2019; Carson et al., 2010; Cowley, 2012). Additionally, former studies have presented conflicting approaches to

measuring career incentives (Alexiadou, 2016; Binderkrantz et al., 2019; O'Grady, 2019; Ohmura et al., 2018).

In the first place, May (1973) and Strøm (1990) have highlighted variations in ideological position of hierarchical groups of politicians. In the Special Law of Curvilinear Disparity theorem, May (1973) sets the foundations that parties are not unified entities. May argues that contrasting motivations for being politically active lead different strata of politicians to move on the ideological space. Party elites ("upper elites") adopt moderate views appealing to the median voter position for vote maximization, whereas core party members ("middle-elites") adopt more extreme views compared to their party leadership and voters (May, 1973). Similarly, Strøm (1990) argues that politicians who depend on politics for their livelihood are primarily driven by office benefits, whereas party activists and members are more likely to promote extreme ideological positions. Building on the previous logic, young careerists may pursue an independent profile "rebelling" from their party's line moving closer to a more centrist position, whereas party soldiers -and outsiders- may follow views closer to the core values of their party. Thus, the first objective of the analysis requires the theoretical and empirical identification of the diverse career routes of politicians. The second objective focuses on the causal links of party incongruence and its direction. The last part is particularly important as it allows to test whether a specific career type of politicians, by moving closer to the centre or adopting extreme positions, drives party dissent. By incorporating comparative elite data, I can model candidate behaviour from parties with diverse ideological cores.

Building on the analysis of ideological voter and party congruence, however, it is crucial to recognize that alignment between candidates and voters might go beyond the traditional left-right spectrum. Especially, as mainstream parties converge on similar policy positions, voters may feel underrepresented and turn to alternative parties that better reflect their priorities (Kitschelt, 1995). Thus, the ideological left-right spectrum may no longer fully capture the

complex nature of modern political issues. The rise of new political parties and the increasing salience of issues like environmentalism, immigration, and other social values have introduced new dimensions to the political landscape (Heath et al., 1994; Inglehart, 1997; Kriesi et al., 2008). These evolving dimensions, such as the GAL-TAN framework (Hooghe et al., 2010; Kriesi et al., 2008; Marks et al., 2006), distinguishing green, alternative, and libertarian values from traditional, authoritarian and nationalist positions, challenge the adequacy of the left-right dichotomy in capturing the full range of political priorities. The main question, thus, becomes whether traditional left-right positioning, that is widely used for measuring political congruence (Golder & Stramski, 2010; Powell, 2004), can actually be effective to measure these emerging divides. For instance, political elites and voters may be ideologically congruent, e.g. adapting themselves a specific core ideological identity, but maybe they prioritise diverse needs. Characteristically, a study by Freire and Belchior (2013) has shown significant differences in results when comparing voters and MPs using the left-right scale and attitudes measured by specific questions.

While much of the literature has focused on policy congruence (Bevan & Jennings, 2014; Hobolt & Klemmensen, 2008; Jennings & John, 2009; Jones & Baumgartner, 2004; Stimson et al., 1995; Wlezien, 1995), the degree to which candidates and voters share the same positions on issues, I shift the f*ocus* to priority congruence. Priority congruence refers to the alignment of issues that candidates and voters consider most salient, independent of their stance on those issues. For example, two voters might both prioritise the same issue e.g. European Union, yet one advocates against the EU, whereas the other supports the EU. Conversely, two individuals might share the same position on an issue, but for one, it is the top priority, while for the other, it is considered second or third priority. Priorities are more adaptable than issue positions, offering a more accurate measure of how aligned politicians are with voters, which has been associated with higher levels of satisfaction with democracy (Reher, 2016). Previous studies

on priority congruence offer valuable insights on political representation (Clayton et al., 2019; Giger & Lefkofridi, 2014; Klüver & Spoon, 2016; Reher, 2015; Walczak & Van der Brug, 2012; Walgrave & Lefevere, 2013), nevertheless they do not address the effect of candidates' career traits in shaping the level of (in)congruence. Recent studies examining career traits on representative behaviour (Binderkrantz et al., 2019; Keena & Knight-Finley, 2018; O'Grady, 2019; Ohmura et al., 2018), primarily use MPs' data without considering priorities. These gaps in the literature highlight critical questions regarding the impact of career trajectories on priority congruence.

Main Data Source and Methodological Challenges

The scope of the study is comparative, focusing on career trajectories and their impact on congruence between political elites and voters across different electoral contexts. Previous research on congruence has predominantly relied on election manifestos, voting records, or expert surveys (e.g., Blais & Bodet 2006; Golder & Stramski, 2010; Hanretty et al., 2016). Most of the prior research predominantly focus on senior politicians, although candidates represent a broader sample of politicians with distinctive career paths and incentives.

This study utilises candidate survey data from the Comparative Candidates Survey[1] (2016). Specifically, it draws on the Wave I CCS dataset, released in 2016, which includes candidate data from 31 elections in 23 countries between 2006 and 2012. One of the key strengths of the CCS dataset lies in its comparative nature, which enables scholars to simultaneously investigate micro-level (candidate), meso-level (party) and macro-level (country) dynamics. This multi-level approach allows for a robust and comprehensive examination of candidates'

[1]The official website of the Comparative Candidates Survey (CCS) is available at: http://www.comparativecandidates.org [accessed 16 January 2025]. CCS data can be accessed and downloaded via the Swiss Center of Expertise in the Social Sciences (SWISSUbase): https://www.swissubase.ch/en/ [accessed 16 January 2025].

political behaviour in different institutional settings. In the future, the CCS will enhance its value by facilitating longitudinal studies, upon releasing of the next Waves[2] of data.

A key asset of the CCS dataset is that offers a unique opportunity to examine the triadic relationship between candidates, parties and voters. Its compatibility with voter data, such as the Comparative Study of Electoral Systems[3] (2015), provides an integrated framework for studying candidate-voter congruence, representation, and democratic process. The CCS Wave I dataset broadly matches with the CSES Module 3 (2006-2011), providing a strong foundation for cross-national comparisons. However, I have put significant effort to expand the number of cases with matching data on candidates and voters, enhancing the scope of comparisons across different elections[4]. A full list of country-cases and data sources is depicted in the Appendix A Table A1. By merging these datasets, the thesis has a strong cross-national focus seeking to analyse the effects of career paths in different electoral institutions and parties on congruence between candidates and voters.

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[2] Currently, the CCS Wave I and CCS Wave II have been fully released as full datasets, while the 2nd release of the CCS Wave III is also available.

[3] The official website of the Comparative Study of Electoral Systems (CSES) is available at: http://www.cses.org [accessed 16 January 2025].

[4] The national voter studies: Greece 2012, Romania 2012, and Switzerland 2011 are taken from the CSES Module 4. The UK was not included in CSES Module 3. However, the British Election Study (BES), under the direction of Principal Investigators Harold D. Clarke, David Sanders, Marianne C. Stewart, and Paul Whiteley, included the CSES Module 3 questionnaire in an Internet survey run by YouGov after the 2010 election in Great Britain. A total of 927 interviews were collected. At the time of access, the dataset was publicly available on a website created by the BES team for their project (http://bes2009-10.org/) [retrieved 8 Feb 2018]. However, this website is no longer accessible. The BES survey that included CSES Module 3 drew respondents from a panel built using a non-probability sample, not a probability sample, and thus the study was not included in the CSES Module 3 Full Release. To further enhance the dataset, I incorporated voter attitude data for Sweden 2010, Italy 2013, Hungary 2010, Portugal 2011, Greece 2007, Denmark 2011, and Belgium 2007 and 2010 from national voter studies, following approval from the respective Principal Investigators. With this effort, I aimed to match all election studies of the CCS Wave I with their corresponding voter studies.

Moving forward, a major challenge of this study is the operationalisation of careers. In the past, many scholars tried to categorize politicians based on their past experiences in the political sphere. Research has typically classified political careers by socioeconomic background (Best & Cotta, 2000; Norris, 1997) and occupation (Binderkrantz et al., 2019; Cairney, 2007; O'Grady, 2019; Ohmura et al., 2018; Riddell, 1995), focusing on distinctions like full-time politicians (Riddell, 1995), careerists vs. working-class (O'Grady, 2019), and career politicians vs. parachutes (Narud & Valen, 2008). This project makes a significant theoretical and empirical contribution on careers of politicians by defining political elites based on their pre-parliamentary career routes. The early-stage career categorizations may have profound implications for representation and intra-party dynamics.

Although the CCS dataset provides a solid foundation, some aspects pose significant challenges and limitations when analysing career data. First, when I started writing this Ph.D. dissertation, only the CCS Wave I was available. Much later, the CCS Wave II and subsequently the CCS Wave III were released. At that moment, I aspired to merge the CCS datasets and revise my analyses to include additional election studies. However, the later CCS Waves have several notable limitations compared to the CCS Wave I, particularly, on measuring the phenomenon of young careerists (Appendix A, Table A2). For instance, the element "before becoming a candidate for the national parliament" is missing, making it more challenging to determine when individuals were employed by the party and/or MPs compared to the earlier version of data. Also, the CCS Wave II does not differentiate between paid party work, campaign work, and MP employee work. This lack of distinction could lead to misleading results, as campaign work, for instance, may often relate to local elections. Thus, my analyses rely on the CCS Wave I dataset. Second, the available data are not suitable to define young careerists properly in terms of the usual criteria, as somebody who moves straight from university to a political position as a party employee or MP or ministerial aid. For

example, the CCS data do not indicate when a candidate started to be employed by the party and/or MPs. Additionally, one key variable that could assist with the operationalisation of the young careerists "*duration of party work and/or MPs' office experience*" is missing for most country-election cases. To address these limitations, therefore, I use alternative approaches, such as incorporating candidates' age at the time of survey to identify young careerists. As part of robustness checks, I have tested different combinations and approaches, all of which are documented in the respective Appendix sections of the main empirical chapters.

A second limitation of the CCS dataset lies in its ability to allow to thoroughly investigate 'outsider' politicians. This group of candidates may include professionals such as doctors, lawyers, academics etc., as well as prominent figures -most of the times famous in society- such as actors, athletes or even influencers that parties may need them to enhance their electoral appeal. With respect to professional career experiences, the CCS dataset offers the question *"What is your current [IF Member of Parliament and/or retired: what was your former] occupation?"*. However, it is difficult to distinguish between the two categories of outsiders mentioned above, limiting my ability to test related hypotheses. Also, one cannot assume whether a candidate is an MP or not, unless explicitly stated in their response beforehand. According to the CCS Wave I dataset, only 14 election-studies provide data on this question, with 62.1% of responses missing (Appendix A, Table A3). Therefore, to identify outsider candidates, I rely on the political career experiences variables, focusing on whether a candidate is a complete "novice" in politics. More detailed explanations are provided in the respective chapters.

While the limitations in occupational data are clear, a similar challenge arises with the rest data on political career experiences. The CCS Wave I dataset includes a range of questions[5]

[5] In Appendix A, I provide some initial descriptive statistics for each career question. The exact question wording is also provided in the Appendix section of each respective chapter.

designed to explore pre-parliamentary career experiences of election candidates. It begins with questions on candidates' career experiences prior to their candidacy for national parliament, including their roles in the offices of State or Federal MPs, or ministers, or as paid employees of their party. Then, it continues with questions on public office experiences, encompassing positions such as mayor, member of local or regional governments, national government, local or regional assemblies, national parliament, and the European parliament for countries in the EU. Although there is no specific pattern in the missing data, the combination of missing questions in each election study affects the number of country-election cases available for analysis (Appendix A, Table A4). For instance, some data may be unavailable due to data protection restrictions[6]. Despite this challenge and drawing on past theoretical approaches as a guide, my aim is to generate a reasonable operationalisation to define career routes. Also, I run a series of robustness tests to enhance the reliability of the results.

A next challenge that could potentially impact the validity of results relates to the survey responses. The CCS targets the whole population of election candidates. Prominent candidates from larger parties or sitting MPs may be less likely to respond (Sajuria et al., 2023). In contrast, candidates that respond may represent hopeless and smaller parties. Typically, this type of parties has few -or even zero- young careerists. To ensure a fair and balanced representation of all categories of career trajectories, I focus on parties with parliamentary representation. On the one hand, this approach minimizes the over-representation of smaller and "fringe" parties. On the other hand, this approach offers a solution to test how young careerists behave in larger and niche parties in parliaments.

[6] For example, UK data on candidates' MP status, and data on whether candidates were members of a regional government, national government, or members of the European Parliament are not released for data protection reasons. Similarly, for Ireland 2007, Switzerland 2007, Switzerland 2011 political experience data are largely unavailable.

Another challenge of this project is the operationalisation of the dependent variable of congruence. Existing literature offers various ways to conceptualize congruence between candidates and voters. For instance, Golder and Stramski (2010) identify three types of measurement: (a) one representative and one voter, (b) one representative and many citizens, and (c) many representatives and many citizens. A common approach is measuring the average absolute distance between all citizens and representatives (Achen, 1978; Andeweg, 2007; Blais & Bodet, 2006) or party voters and representatives (Andeweg, 2007) or voters and party members (Adams, 2001; Converse & Pierce, 1986). Other scholars, such as Pedrazzani and Segatti (2022) explore voter-party congruence from candidates' perspective by analysing the distance between each candidate and party voters. Since my analysis centers on candidates and aims to test theories such as the rational choice theory of Downs (1957) and the Special Law of Curvilinear Disparity (May's 1973), I focus on examining congruence between each candidate and the mean voter position.

To address the effects of election candidates' careers from a comparative perspective, I employ a Multilevel Regression Modelling (MLM) approach, which accounts for variability across countries, parties, and candidates. This approach is particularly suited given the sufficient number of countries included in the datasets, enabling robust cross-national analyses. I come back to a detailed description of the research design in each methodology section of the succeeding chapters.

This section introduced the main data source for the following main chapters. As shown, the Comparative Candidates Survey (CCS) project provides a systematic comparative dataset on examining candidates' political career experiences. I have argued and demonstrated via a few examples that despite the challenges and limitations of the data, I have managed to overcome those issues to effectively utilise the career data in explaining voter and party

congruence. Building upon that data, in the following chapters, I seek to analyse the effects of careers in more detail.

Overview of the Ph.D. Project

The thesis is structured around three interconnected papers, each contributing to the overarching research question of how pre-parliamentary career paths affect politicians' ability to not only represent their parties but also effectively represent voters' interests. Below is an overview of how the empirical chapters are organised.

The first chapter focuses on the rise of a new political career path, the young careerist, and its implications for democratic representation. The term "careerist" refers to an ambitious type of politicians that start working in politics directly after leaving university, for example being employed as advisors to MPs or ministers. This chapter explores how the "careerist" phenomenon has shifted the dynamics of political representation affecting politicians' ability to align ideologically with voters. It demonstrates that young careerists are ideologically close to the mean position of voters; however, at the dusk of their political career, they are more prone to becoming "out of touch". By focusing on the "careerists" trend and its impact on candidate-voter congruence, this chapter paves the way for analysis of party congruence in the subsequent chapter.

The second chapter provides a foundational understanding of the different career paths that politicians may follow and delves into how these distinct careers shape politicians' behaviour within their political party, particularly in terms of party dissent. Party dissent is an important mechanism through which politicians express their discontent with the party and party leadership. This chapter proposes the existence of three distinct types of politicians: the *party soldiers*, the *young* careerists, and the outsiders, arguing that "rebel" behaviour is linked to the previous career paths of politicians, and specifically, the emergence of young careerist

candidates who lead parties toward a more centrist stance. The chapter demonstrates that young careerists are significantly more likely to disagree with their party's views compared to outsiders and party soldiers. Furthermore, it reveals a strong correlation between career advancement and ideological divergence, as young careerists' electoral prospects improve, so does their propensity to disagree with the party's ideological views. By offering both theoretical and empirical insights, this chapter deepens our understanding of the professionalization of politics and its implications on intra-party dynamics.

The final chapter narrows the focus to the core issue of how candidates' career experiences directly affect priority congruence with voters. Drawing on the analysis of career paths from Chapter 1 and Chapter 2, this chapter investigates the specific ways in which political careers shape the congruence -or incongruence- between politicians' and voters' priorities. Most of the theoretical and empirical literature focuses on the ideological congruence between parties and voters, but few studies have examined whether voters' issue priorities align with those of politicians. This chapter demonstrates that young careerist candidates decrease the distance between them and voters' needs, compared to outsider candidates. However, party dynamics and electoral system characteristics may also play a significant role. The chapter brings the thesis full circle by showing how the career paths discussed throughout the Ph.D. dissertation ultimately impact democratic representation.

The thesis concludes by summarizing the key findings from the three empirical chapters and reflecting on the broader implications of political careers to democratic representation. It acknowledges the need for awareness related to data limitations and suggests for further research building upon the findings of this project.

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Chapter 1

The Rise of the Young Careerist And Its Consequences on Congruence with Voters

Introduction

Do we witness a new wave of career politicians shaping the political scene? Traditionally, most politicians used to start their career in politics after spending some years working in jobs unrelated to politics. However, in recent years, a new career path appears to have become more common where people start working in politics after leaving university, for example being employed as advisors to MPs or ministers. This exclusive "politics-only" career path has led to a decline in the number of candidates with diverse skills acquired outside the political sphere.

The prevalence of this argument is predominantly observed in the British political landscape. Allen (2013) examines the occupational backgrounds of MPs elected in 1997, revealing an emerging trend of politicians with focus on their political careers. Recent research by Henn (2018) extends the coverage to 2010 suggesting a potential increase in the share of MPs with political jobs. Similarly, Allen et al. (2020) investigates the concept of the 'career politician' through interviews with British MPs and Cowley (2012) highlights a new career pattern among senior politicians in the UK, further reinforcing the notion of a shift to politicians with a previous strong political background. While Goplerud (2015) researching candidates, and not exclusively Members of Parliament, finds an increase in the appearance of politicians who have worked as special advisors in the UK General Elections from 1970 to 2010.

However, despite the contribution of these studies, there are several limitations that make difficult to understand the overall picture of this phenomenon. On the one hand, their claims are based on extremely limited data (Allen 2013; Goplerud 2015) or evidence, such as referrals to King's work in 1981 (Cowley 2012). On the other hand, these studies focus mainly on

Members of Parliament in the UK, leaving out a broad range of candidates with diverse career trajectories, and thus prompting a deeper exploration into this phenomenon. Is this emerging trend, specifically, a British issue or does it reflect a global shift in political career patterns? There is no comprehensive study investigating "careerist" politicians either in the UK or in a comparative perspective.

This "politics only" career path may raise several doubts on politicians' ability to accurately represent voters. In recent discourse, a prevailing claim asserts that politicians, particularly in the UK, are progressively becoming 'out of touch' with the electorate (Hardman, 2018). This assertion posits that as politicians increasingly start their political career without substantial "real-life" job experience, their perspectives may diverge from those of the public. Populist politicians, including Nigel Farage, have echoed these sentiments. During his "Common Sense Tour", Farage (2013), expressed concerns about the disconnect between politicians and the daily struggles of ordinary British families. He highlighted a perceived uniformity among political leaders, criticizing their educational backgrounds and lack of real-world work experience. Along the same lines, in her book "Why We Get the Wrong Politicians" (Hardman, 2018), journalist Isabel Hardman criticizes the composition of Parliament, emphasizing an excess of career politicians and a lack of experience from sectors such as science, technology, retail, and manual work. On the other hand, during a recent podcast on POLITICO, Professor Philip Cowley (Cowley, 2021) rejects this notion, declaring that one of the greatest myths in British politics is the idea that MPs are now an out-of-touch elite.

Previous scholars have predominantly focused on the motives of politicians to either represent their party, themselves or their voters rather than considering the career trajectories that may shape these motives. For instance, while Snagovsky et al. (2023) touch upon the issue, their focus is on the style of representation among previous staff members rather than on congruence. Önnudóttir (2014) explores representation style and congruence, contending that

"loyal partisans" are linked to reduced congruence between parties and voters. Meanwhile, Pedrazzani and Segatti (2022) uncovers a systematic correlation between a partisan representation style and the proximity of candidates to party voters. However, one cannot readily accept that the style of representation is an inert philosophical position adopted by candidates from the very beginning of their careers. Instead, it may be more likely a result of how they position themselves in relation to their party. It's notable that the academic literature on this subject, particularly concerning ideological congruence, presents limited evidence supporting such claims. This sets the stage for critical questions regarding the impact of career trajectories on politicians' connection to the electorate. What does the influx of this type of politicians mean for congruence with voters? Are politicians really out of touch with voters or is this notion a myth?

As discussed below, the possibility that career patterns influence representation has been studied by political scientists. Most of the prior research is flawed on methodological grounds, relying primarily on impressions, anecdotal evidence, and limited studies, predominantly focused on senior politicians. This study seeks to advance the field by addressing these shortcomings and investigating whether the rise of young careerists and their potential disconnect from the electorate is a specifically British phenomenon or part of a broader cross-national trend. To examine this, I use data from the Comparative Candidates Survey (2016) that provides the ideal tool for analysing attitudes of candidates running for national parliamentary elections across different countries. Candidates represent a broader sample of politicians with distinctive career paths and incentives. To measure voters' positions, I use data from the Comparative Study of Electoral Systems (2015, 2018). By merging, then, these datasets, I can investigate candidates' ideological congruence with voters.

The results of this study shed light on three lines of research. Firstly, the results contribute to the debate on the phenomenon of "careerist" politicians, exploring whether it is a broader

emerging trend or is particularly a British issue. Secondly, the results reveal that young careerists, regardless of societal impressions, share a common trait: they are closer to the electorate. These candidates act as rational actors, pursuing electoral success, and thus, ideological congruence with the average voter position. Thirdly, the results imply that the intentions of young careerists are influenced by their age and, consequently, their future as politicians.

These findings make an important contribution to the field of professionalization of politics (King, 1981; McAllister, 2007) and theories on spatial analyses (Downs, 1957; May, 1973). In an era of parties without partisans (Dalton & Wattenberg, 2002), parties need to work harder to convince the electorate to vote for them. Politicians' weighty role is to deliver preferable policies to voters, retain party ideology, while another primary target should be their (re)-election. A better understanding, therefore, of how previous career experiences influence candidates' spatial positioning will inform voters on their representatives. I return to these implications in the concluding section of the article.

The Young Careerist Politician

The evolution of careers of politicians has been extensively examined by scholars, such as Weber (1991 [1919]), King (1981), and McAllister (2007), with recent attention focusing on the emergence of a new distinctive type of politicians (Allen, 2013; Cowley, 2012) that I describe as *young careerists*. In this paper, I aim to address this phenomenon where individuals entering politics directly after university serving as party and MPs advisors or ministerial staff with limited or no "real-life" career experiences outside the realm of politics.

In the first place, political careers experienced an initial transition as amateurs shifted to professional politicians (McAllister, 2007; Weber, 1991 [1919]). This transformation was driven by a decline in the representation of working-class politicians and a rise in the number

of individuals coming from wealthy families with higher education. Subsequently, another pivotal transition came with the emergence of the so called "career politicians" (King, 1981; Riddell, 1995), individuals willing to abandon any other activity irrelative to politics and committing themselves entirely to political duties. The rise of them, identified over three decades ago by King (1981), has reshaped the political landscape in favour of professionalisation of politics. In contemporary times, politicians invest more time, energy, and financial re- sources into politics. The noteworthy shift lies in the fact that political careers have evolved into their sole profession.

The shift towards the professionalization of politics is evident in the United States and the United Kingdom, where a majoritarian two-party system prevails. There is a scarcity of comparative studies delving into this phenomenon. Notably, Best and Cotta (2000) have investigated the changes in the professional and social backgrounds of politicians, by studying how the development of institutions and parties has influenced their recruitment and selection from 1848 to 2000. One key finding of their comprehensive study is the gradual increase of the proportion of legislators who have held lower political office or leadership positions within their national or local parties, alongside a decline in those coming from professional background e.g. business owners, lawyers (Best & Cotta, 2000). Similarly, Borchert and Zeiss (2003) have identified the concept of "political class" to describe politicians who have devoted themselves to politics, often having extensive involvement in party organisations, local politics, or youth wings. In addition to that, a substantial body of literature has explored the phenomenon of professionalization within diverse national parliaments. For instance, studies have focused on countries exhibiting a prevalence of career politicians, including Canada, Belgium, Norway, Portugal, the UK, Germany, Switzerland, the Czech Republic, Sweden, the Netherlands, and Spain (DeWinter & Brans, 2003; Dorcherty, 2003; Hagevi, 2003; Leyenaar & Niemoller, 2003; Magone, 2003; Matuschek, 2003; Narud & Valen, 2008; Saalfeld, 1997; Shabad &

Slomczynski, 2002; Wiesli, 2003), yet these studies have focused on individual countries without incorporating a broader comparative analysis. Italy has also witnessed a rise in career politicians, although the emergence of new parties tends to be associated with a lower proportion of career politicians (Fiers & Secker, 2007). Yet, these studies have not specifically addressed the emerging category of young careerist politicians, which is the focus of my research.

The professional politicians of McAllister (2007) or the career politicians of King (1981), differ significantly from the distinct category of candidates lacking skills acquired outside the political arena and often exclusively serving their party or MPs of their party. Traditionally, the concept of a political career was closely tied to the professional background of politicians, rarely considering their pre-parliamentary experiences, such as working for the party or serving as advisers. Politicians were typically candidates with backgrounds in middle-class white-collar professions (O'Grady, 2019). Nowadays, this role is transferred to special advisors and those that have previous party work experience. Special advisers often find that advancing their careers requires leaving their current positions, with some switch into politics as election candidates. The young careerists acting as insiders of the system can advance to higher positions compared to other candidates (Goplerud, 2015; Ohmura et al., 2018), as they gain valuable political experience through their prior work in parties and MPs offices. However, past research on politician recruitment (Best & Cotta, 2000; Borchert & Zeiss, 2003; Fiers & Secker, 2007; Norris & Lovenduski, 1995) has approached careers simply by identifying the various professional and social backgrounds of MPs over time, without distinguishing pre-parliamentary party and political experiences. Examining recruitment trends, especially in Western European parliamentary contexts, reveals that prospective candidates need well-established party connections and a proven record of party service to secure nominations (Fiers & Secker, 2007). This emerging trend can be identified across the institutions of the US

(Monroe, 2001), the UK (Yong & Hazell, 2014), Australia (Taflaga & Kerby, 2020), New Zealand (Eichbaum & Shaw, 2011) and Canada (Craft, 2016). Is a parallel career pattern emerging in the political scene of other countries?

In the UK, particularly, there is a notable shift from MPs with diverse backgrounds to those mainly involved in political activities, such as advisers, consultants, and parliamentary researchers (Cairney, 2007; Durose et al., 2011; Rush, 1994). Political careers often start directly from university (Allen, 2013; Cowley, 2012), with many MPs transitioning from academia to political roles, gaining valuable experience before entering Parliament (Goplerud, 2015; Riddell, 1995). This trajectory is usually successful as young careerists acquire skills such as governmental competence-knowledge, political skills, presentational capacity, and policy compatibility almost by necessity (Yong & Hazell, 2014). Party leaders may follow this path with examples including Ed Miliband who served as an advisor to Gordon Brown, Cameron, who worked as a political researcher, and Nick Clegg, who served as an MEP (Barber, 2014; Cowley, 2012). There is a sense of a "closed league" making it much more difficult for anyone to transfer over from business or other professions into politics in their 40s unless they have previously been involved with a political party. Special advisers examined by Goplerud from 1979 to 2010, reveals that those who run for Parliament are more likely to compete in safe seats enjoying massive electoral success (Goplerud, 2015). Another study indicates that 17 former special advisers achieved the position of Ministers of State before turning 40, while the median parliamentary candidate is still striving to be elected (Allen, 2013).

Empirical studies of US politics have mainly focused on the institutional characteristics that contribute to the rise of professionalism. For example, politicians often have to distinguish themselves beyond their party affiliation, specifically during the pre-congressional phase of their political careers (MacKenzie & Kousser, 2014). Also, as Ehrenhalt (1991) describes the

emphasis is on the politicians, not the voters. Politics has transformed into a full-time profession, requiring longer and harder campaigning to secure nominations. These new developments led to a new class of professional politicians. Indeed, a notable study among state legislators in California found that there has been a significant rise of political aides in the US. Interestingly, in 1960, no member of the California state assembly had been a political aide. In 1970, it was 13%, in 1980, 32% and in 1998 55% (Monroe, 2001).

In Canada, there is a significant increase in partisan advisers that has positioned them as recognized policy workers (Craft, 2016). In Australia, those individuals considered young careerists are governed by distinct legislation known as the Members of Parliament (Staff) Act, setting them apart from bureaucratic regulations. Taflaga and Kerby (2020) examined political advising careers from 1979 to 2010 using the term politically appointed staff but including policy advisers but also receptionists who are appointed under the same legislation. In any case, the legislation, while not explicitly defining specific roles designates their appointment authority to Members of Parliament or Senators. In New Zealand, a survey study has concentrated on the activities of advisers, with Eichbaum and Shaw (2011) categorizing these activities based on their respective contributions to the executive government.

In Europe, recent research on careers of politicians have given scant attention to the varied pre-parliamentary career routes and their effects on representation. A case in point is a study in Denmark that identifies three ideal-typical pre-parliamentary career paths: the party local, the party functionary, and the party civilian (Binderkrantz et al., 2019). In Denmark's parliamentary landscape, the share of party locals -politicians with strong local routes- has grown over time, deviating from the party's ideological views on behalf of their constituents' demands. Similarly, Ohmura et al. (2018) unveiled distinctive career tracks such as Party Animals, Local Heroes, Late Bloomers, Land Legislators, High-Flyers, and Career Changers, based on a comprehensive dataset of German parliamentarians' biographies from 1998 to 2014.

Notably, the Party Animal, a career type similar to what I define as young careerist, starts the political career early in life occupying several party offices leading to a rather lengthy pre-parliamentary path. Interestingly, this career path seems less accessible or attractive to women, reflecting the lowest proportion of female representation in parliament (Ohmura et al., 2018). While these studies shed light on specific case studies, they often overlook the phenomenon of young careerist politicians and their impact on ideological congruence.

One of the prominent comparative studies (Snagovsky et al., 2023), using Comparative Candidate Survey data, examines the influence of "staff" members on representation by considering three distinctive representation styles, similar to the research design by Önnudóttir (2016). The study finds that former advisors are more inclined to prioritise their party's preferences over their constituents' preferences, indicating that "staff" members tend to behave as partisans. However, the study by Snagovsky et al. (2023) assumes that the representation style is inherently fixed, whereas, in reality, it can change based on career motives, age, and party leadership. This raises the question of their impact on actual congruence with voters. Are parliaments evolving into a closed shop of politicians? Then, if young careerists are the dominant category of candidates within parties, this prompts inquiries into the alignment of "careerists" with the ideological values and policies of the general population.

Broadly, theoretical and empirical studies have systematically analysed the professionalisation of politics and the development of politicians' careers. Scholars have mostly examined the effect of careers on intra-party politics, while others have made research on the influence of institutional and party characteristics. Nevertheless, these studies, use MPs data without considering election candidates' career traits. Few studies address candidate data to investigate pre-parliamentary career routes in politics, yet they do not predict the actual (in)congruence between candidates and voters on ideological congruence. Are careerists closer

to the electorate? I expand this literature, and I test this new career pattern of politicians and its impact on ideological congruence with voters offering an answer into this question.

Theoretical Rationale

As Max Weber (1991 [1919], p. 84), has first articulated that "politicians not only live for politics but try to make a living off politics", most politicians' ideological position and views are determined by career motives. The question, therefore, that comes forward is whether young careerists position themselves closer to the electorate or are "out of touch". There is a compelling indication that they may exhibit an electorally conscious disposition towards shifting to the centre despite the prevailing notion that politicians, in general, are often perceived as disconnected from voters.

In the Special Law of Curvilinear Disparity theorem, May (1973) argued contrasting motivations for being politically active lead different strata of politicians to move on the ideological space. May suggested that party elites adopt moderate views appealing to the median voter position for vote maximization, whereas party activists adopt more extreme views compared to their party leadership and voters. While curvilinear disparity is typically associated with the Anglo-American political experience, it can theoretically occur within any party system (Bäckersten, 2022; Belchior, 2013). All integral parts of May's theory have been subjected to empirical scrutiny. None, however, has attracted more scholarly attention than the role of party elites in weakening ideological ties with their party. Even though, some studies challenged this claim (Kitschelt & Hellemans, 1990; Norris, 1995), a significant amount of research on professionalisation suggests that politicians considering their career and intra-party advancement develop vote-, office-, or policy-seeking incentives (Alexiadou, 2016; O'Grady, 2019; Strøm, 1990).

Indeed, career politicians are highly ambitious politicians focusing a lot on their career development (Black, 1972; Borchert, 2011; Schlesinger, 1966). Their job in politics is their life

job. They want to be successful in their career as politicians and they are more likely to pursue electoral and office incentives (Strøm, 1990). Politicians coming from outside can be less anxious on a negative electoral result, as most of the times they can return back to their profession. Young careerists, however, may have never accomplished a successful career neither in politics nor outside the political field making them highly career ambitious. It could be argued that since their whole life is committed to reaching higher offices, young careerists may desire to advance to higher positions faster than any other type of politician, potentially by moving themselves and their party closer to the ideological centre.

The assumption that young careerists may shift positions to pursue electoral incentives also align with well-known traditional theories on representation such as the median voter theorem of Downs (1957). Young careerists can be portrayed as acting similar to homo economicus, with their behaviour driven by their career survival. For instance, they may abandon their own beliefs in order to achieve their political ambitions (Benedetto & Hix, 2007; O'Grady, 2019) or they may, even, defect if the party loses appeal, as the party is simply a vehicle for their career. Especially, those with experience as MPs may pursue to stand out from the party in order to make their name (King, 1981; Riddell, 1995). Thus, young careerists, as rational actors aiming to maximize their votes, may move their parties to the ideological centre.

Aside from that, young careerists often have extensive expertise in the political arena compared to "outsider" politicians. This can make them well-versed in the complexities of governance, policymaking, and the legislative process, potentially leading to more effective representation. Over the course of a career, politicians can build strong relationships with constituents, community leaders, and other stakeholders. Young careerists may have a more consistent and well-defined policy agenda, as they have had the time to develop and refine their positions on various issues. This can provide voters with a clear understanding of what the politician stands for. Likewise, young careerists may be perceived as being more accountable

to voters since they rely on continued voter support for their long-term political careers. This accountability can lead to a closer connection between themselves and voters. For all the above arguments, I would expect young careerists to be closer to the mean voter ideological position.

Hypothesis 1: Young careerists are more likely to be congruent with the average voter's ideological position.

Politicians, however, do not establish their career at the same age and political careers progress over time. Are young careerists likely to be close to the electorate throughout their political career? Candidates who have previously worked in positions related to politics are more likely to be elected at a younger age than candidates who have first spent some time working in different professional occupations before entering parliament (Best & Cotta, 2000). In addition, previous research on careers of politicians has shown that political ambition tends to decrease as politicians age (Fishel, 1971; Hain, 1974; Schlesinger, 1966). At the beginning of their career, "careerists" are young and full of stamina aspiring rapid progression, while at the age of 60s or 70s they may abandon the idea of pursuing higher offices realizing their career limits and revising their ambitions downward.

Another significant aspect is that the association between age and previous career path may strengthen the ideological bond of politicians with the party. Politicians, who have been involved in politics at an early age and have grown up within a political organisation, are more likely to be strongly connected to it (Rehmert, 2021). For young careerists, the path through parliament is neither easy nor immediate. These candidates begin as party voters, then become party members working either for the party or an MP. Subsequently, they become national party candidates, and - if popular enough - get elected as MPs. Later in life, their ambition to progress encourages their desire to achieve higher offices (Benedetto & Hix, 2007), and a few

of them now lead their party. Even if they differentiate themselves from the party line towards the end of their political career, they may take more extreme policy positions (Cain et al., 1987) on behalf of their constituents (Carey, 2007), rather than aligning with the average voter. Thus, I would expect senior young careerists who spend their entire lives in the same political party, achieving higher positions, to be 'out of touch' with the average voter's demands.

Hypothesis 2: Young careerists are less likely to align with the ideological position of the average voter as they grow older.

Moreover, it is noteworthy to examine the influence of electoral institutions on the behaviour of young careerists. Existing research has emphasized the role of institutional structures (Carey & Shugart, 1995) with a particular focus on the candidates' selection process (Benedetto & Hix, 2007; Norris & Lovenduski, 1995). For instance, in open-list systems, voters can influence candidate rankings by selecting those they favour, prompting candidates to differentiate themselves from others and establish a unique personal "brand". For example, in the Proportional Representation Single Transferable Vote system (PR-STV), voters have the option to rank all candidates, enhancing individual-level competition both within and across parties. Carey and Shugart (1995) distinguished different electoral systems with reference to the incentives they provide to cultivate a personal vote. In these types of systems, where individuals have more control over their electoral campaigning and voting relationships, politicians are more interested in cultivating a personal vote. In cases, therefore, that young careerists' survival may depend on their parties, it would be expected these individuals to be closer to their party rather than the mean ideological position, given the candidacy's strong dependence on the leader. Nevertheless, in open systems where candidates need to cultivate a personal vote, young careerists may have greater incentives compared to other politicians to

align with the average voter's ideological position. Rather than simply contrasting proportional representation with single-member districts, I focus on how different electoral rules prompt candidates to cultivate a personal vote (Carey & Shugart, 1995). Thus, I would expect that candidates, in institutions where the cultivation of a personal vote is necessary for (re-)election, would align closer to the average ideological position.

Hypothesis 3: Countries with electoral systems that create stronger incentives for a personal vote are more likely to encourage young careerists to position themselves closer to the average voter.

Additionally, of equal importance is the examination of young careerists within each political party and an exploration of their behavioural patterns. Parties closer to the ideological centre may have higher percentages of young careerist candidates that may be closer to the mean average voter ideological position. Therefore, an investigation into the distribution of them across parties would be interesting. For example, party families recognised for their stability and long political presence may attract more candidates with prior political experience (Cromwell & Verzichelli, 2007). On the contrary, parties affiliated with specific political movements, such as the labour movement, ecological movement, or even factions associated with extremist ideologies like fascist/neo- Nazi movements, typically draw fewer professional politicians (Linz et al., 2007; Ilonszki, 2007), and consequently fewer young careerists. Instead, these parties may be more likely to attract individuals that are strongly aligned with the ideological position of the party. Nevertheless, young careerists within these parties may be inclined to shift parties towards the centre. For parties who are vote and power oriented the effect of party positioning on electoral success has become the main vehicle to define what is the electoral interest (Kitschelt, 1988; Przeworski & Sprague, 1986). Thus, I would expect

young careerists within party families that represent the status quo to be more ambitious to get elected and start a political career, and thus be more likely to be congruent with voters. Young careerists of 'movement' parties, on the other hand, may have fewer chances to starting a career within these parties; the ambition related motivation to embrace a more moderate position should be lower.

Hypothesis 4a: Young careerists within party families representing the status quo are more likely to be congruent with the average voter ideological position.

Hypothesis 4b: Young careerists within party families tied to a political movement are less likely to be congruent with the average voter ideological position.

This study departs from the existing literature in several significant respects. First, I bring in a different range of theories from the careerism literature to examine professionalisation in politics. Second, I investigate the effect of young careerist politicians on congruence with voters. Third, I measure the effects of pre-parliamentary career experiences using comparative candidate data instead of MPs data. Doing so, I explore career incentives taking into account the diverse pool of potential politicians running for national elections. The next section describes the research design in more detail.

Data and Methodology

In this paper, I posit two key arguments. First, I argue that the trend of candidates having prior experience in parties and MPs' offices is not confined to the UK, but it is a phenomenon expanding across various countries and political parties. Second, I challenge the common perception that young careerists are disconnected from the average voter, suggesting that these individuals actively seek alignment with the positions held by the general electorate.

To assess these hypotheses, I rely on two primary datasets: Wave I of the Comparative Candidates Survey (2016) and the Comparative Study of Electoral Systems (2015, 2018), encompassing data on candidates' previous career experiences and self-reported left-right positions of both candidates and voters during the same period. The CCS project includes surveys of all candidates[7] standing in parliamentary elections. Responses related to career traits are available on 14 countries-election from the Wave I CCS dataset: Sweden 2010, UK 2010, Portugal 2009, Norway 2009, Netherlands 2006, Italy 2013, Greece 2007, Greece 2009, Greece 2012, Germany 2005, Germany 2009, Finland 2011, Czech Republic 2006, Belgium 2010. This broadly matches the data from the CSES[8] Module 3: 2006-2011 and CSES Module 4: 2011- 2016. To further enhance the dataset, I use data from national voter studies[9] that were not included in the CSES. The CCS and CSES datasets include individual-level data about recalled voting behaviour, party identification, socio-economic background as well as policy

[7] The response rate varies across countries: Norway 2009 has the highest number of respondents 51.5% and Czech Republic 2006 has the lowest 16.2%. The data and technical report documentation can be accessed and downloaded via the Swiss Center of Expertise in the Social Sciences (SWISSUbase): https://www.swissubase.ch/en/ [accessed 16 January 2025].

[8] The UK dataset was not included in CSES Module 3. However, the British Election Study (BES), under the direction of Principal Investigators Harold D. Clarke, David Sanders, Marianne C. Stewart, and Paul Whiteley, included the CSES Module 3 questionnaire in an Internet survey run by YouGov after the 2010 election in Great Britain. A total of 927 interviews were collected. At the time of access, the dataset was publicly available on a website created by the BES team for their project (http://bes2009-10.org/) [retrieved 8 Feb 2018]. However, this website is no longer accessible. The BES survey that included CSES Module 3 drew respondents from a panel built using a non-probability sample and thus the study was not included in the CSES Module 3 Full Release.

[9] For Greece 2007, I use data from the True European Voter project, provided by the GESIS Institute https://search.gesis.org/research_data/ZA5054) [accessed 16 January 2025]. For Belgium 2010, I use the European Social Study data as made available by the Institute for Social and Political Opinion Research (ISPO) at KU Leuven (https://soc.kuleuven.be/ceso/ispo/projects/copy_of_the-transformation-of-the-socio-economic-left-2013-right-cleavage) [accessed 16 January 2025].

preferences and ideological positioning, but also aggregate data to facilitate multi-level analysis.

To empirically examine hypotheses on the rise of careerists, I utilise data pertaining to candidates' past experiences in the political sphere. Past research has traditionally determined the categorization of career types among politicians by considering factors such as age, socioeconomic background, education, previous occupation, and political experience (Best & Cotta, 2000; Borchert & Zeiss 2003; Binderkrantz et al., 2019; Cairney, 2007; O'Grady, 2019; Ohmura et al., 2018; Norris, 1997; Riddell, 1995). The prevailing method for evaluating the career dimension primarily relies on binary categorisation, typically distinguishing politicians regarded as professionals; those make their "living off" politics, as Weber (1991 [1919]) described. For instance, within the realm of these studies, there have been discussions about full-time politicians (Riddell, 1995), "careerists" versus working-class politicians (O'Grady, 2019), and career politicians versus "parachutes" (Narud & Valen, 2008). In their comparative work, Borchert and Zeiss (2003) discuss the concept of a political class, describing it as comprising professional politicians who dedicate themselves to full-time political careers, often progressing through institutional pathways such as party organizations, local politics, or youth wings. However, their approach blends national and local elements of prior political involvement.

In this chapter, I define the distinct career path of *young careerists* based on their early political involvement prior to running as national election candidates. Young careerists are those who start early their career in politics, often commencing shortly after completing their university studies. This category includes young candidates who may have previously been employed by their party or gained working experience from positions within MPs or ministerial offices, without acquiring experiences in local politics or having the opportunity to establish professional careers outside politics. My aim is to compare young careerists to all other

candidates (*non-careerists*) to establish a baseline understanding of how this distinct career trajectory differs from the general population of candidates.

To construct the dummy variable '*young careerist'*, I use three key career questions from the CCS Wave I: (a) "Before running as a candidate for the [national parliament], did you have employment experience in a State or Federal MPs or minister's office?", (b) "have you ever worked as a paid employee for this party?"; and (c) "years served as member of a local assembly?". However, the CCS data do not capture when candidates began working for a party or MP, while the question regarding the duration of their party and/or MPs' office work is missing for many election studies. To address these limitations, I employ an alternative approach, using candidates' age at the time of the survey as a proxy to identify young careerists. From a theoretical perspective, the decision to stand as candidates is a natural progression for "staffers" who may typically spend 10 to 15 years in their role (see Snagovsky et al., 2023). Following a 'mixture' analysis, a valid age cut-off point is 41 years[10]. This method allows to identify potential age groups of candidates in a probabilistic way and their distribution within the data (Fraley & Raftery, 2002; Pearson 1894). Also, it is important to mention that I explicitly exclude independent candidates and candidates from parties that have no instances of young careerist politicians to ensure a fairer comparison. In Figures 1.1-1.2, I present the percentage of young careerists per country-election and party family.

[10] As part of robustness checks, I tested various age cut-off points and combinations of approaches to ensure the validity of the results, which are documented in the Appendix B.

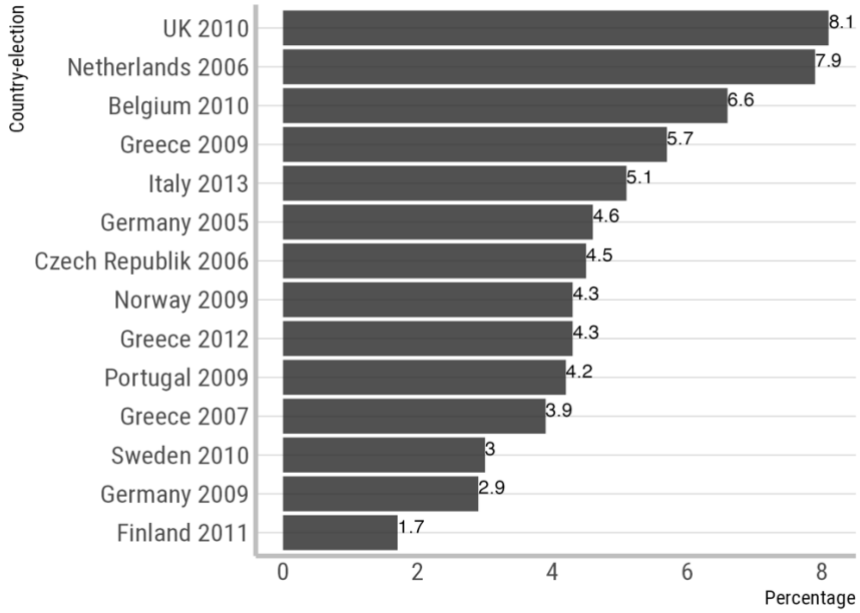

Figure 1.1: Young careerists per country-election (data: CCS Wave I)

Figure 1.1 highlights the presence of young careerists per country-election[11], challenging the notion that this phenomenon is solely a concern within the UK. Notably, the UK is at the top, recording the highest percentage of young careerists at 8.1%, reaffirming the prominence of this tendency. The Netherlands in 2006 follows closely at 7.9%. In the Belgian elections in 2010, Greek election in 2009, Italian elections in 2013, and German elections in 2005, the proportion of young careerists ranges from 4.5% to 6.6%. Interestingly, an earlier study (Fiers & Secker, 2007) indicated fewer number of career politicians in Italy, but the candidate data show a potential evolution of young careerists. On the contrary, the Finnish elections in 2011 is at the bottom with 4.1% of the candidates being classified as young careerists. Notably, previous research in Finland (Ruostetsaari, 2000) has shown support for the idea to diminish

[11] The CCS project aims to encompass the entire population of candidates. It is important to note that this category of politicians may be particularly challenging to reach for survey participation.

professionalization justifying this result. Meanwhile, in Germany, spanning two time points, there is a reduction of young careerists between 2005 and 2009 elections, likely influenced by the shift to emerging political parties against the traditional ones that were more likely to have such politicians. In Greece, spanning three time points, there is a notable rise between 2007 and 2009 Greek elections ranging from 3.7% to 5.7%. Then, in 2012 Greek elections the percentage of young careerists lowers to 4.3%, possibly affected by the economic crisis i.e. public dissatisfaction with the traditional parties and rise of SYRIZA party (see Kakepaki & Kountouri, 2023). Overall, it is important to note that this phenomenon transcends electoral systems, indicating its expansion irrespective of the type of electoral system in place.

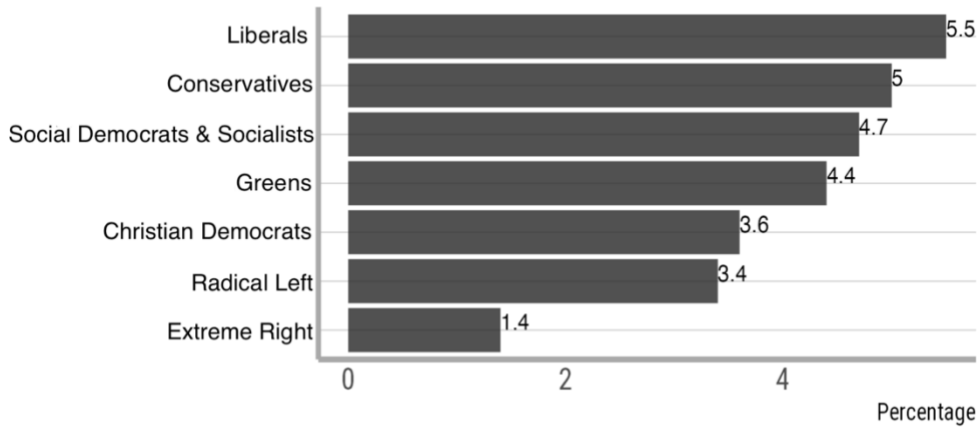

Figure 1.2: Young careerists per party family (data: CCS Wave I)

To continue with, figure 1.2 illustrates the percentage of young careerists within each political party family[12], shedding light on whether careerists are an exclusive phenomenon of

[12] Party family classifications are derived from the Party Facts dataset, which harmonizes data from sources like the *Comparative Manifesto Project* and *ParlGov*. For more details on the methodology and

a specific party family or represent a new trend across diverse political groups. For example, traditional parties or parties that positioned closer to the ideological centre may be more inclined to attract "careerist" candidates. The results indicate that the Liberal party family has the highest percentage of young careerist politicians at 5.5%, followed by the Conservatives at 5%, and Social Democrats and Socialists[13] at 4.7%. Indeed, over time Liberals have demonstrated a high degree of political professionalisation, with many of their members having held roles such as party officials and other key party positions (Ruostetsaari, 2007). Also, historically, Conservative parties, associated with a more stable and established political presence, tend to attract candidates with prior political experience (Cromwell & Verzichelli, 2007). At the lower end are the Extreme Right-wing parties and Radical Left parties with 1.4% and 3.4% respectively. In the first case, Extreme Right-wing parties as anti-system opposition parties or protest parties are more likely to have few professional politicians (Linz et al., 2007), while Radical Left parties are typically known for politicians with previous strong local roots rather than career politicans (Ilonszki, 2007). The findings also suggest that several parties essentially tied to political movements (e.g. labour movement, ecological movement, fascist/neo-nazi movement) may attract fewer "careerists" candidates that embrace the logic of party competition and more individuals that may represent the ideology of the party (Kitschelt, 1988; Przeworski & Sprague, 1986). Greens are placed in the middle of the range with 4.4% of their candidates being classified as young careerists. It may be the case that, in recent years, their participation in coalition governments has started to attract young careerists.

criteria, see Party Facts' documentation: https://partyfacts.herokuapp.com/documentation/about/ [accessed 16 January 2025].

[13] Social Democrat and Socialist parties include mainstream centre-left parties e.g. SPD in Germany, Labour Party in the UK, PASOK in Greece, etc., while Radical Left are parties to the left of the main centre-left parties e.g. Die Linke in Germany, SYRIZA in Greece etc.

Measuring the effect of young careerists on congruence

The second objective of the paper is to assess the effect of young careerists on candidate-voter congruence. Most of the previous scholars have employed different strategies for measuring congruence. For instance, some scholars have used the average self-location of party voters and the average self-location of party members (Adams, 2001; Converse & Pierce, 1986; Costello et al., 2012; Dalton, 1985; Dalton et al., 2012; Esaiasson & Heidar, 2000; Irwin & Thomassen, 1975; Kitschelt, et al., 1999; Miller et al., 1999; Powell, 2000, 2004; Rohrschneider & Whitefield, 2012; Schmitt & Thomassen, 1999; Thomassen, 1994; Walczak & der Brug, 2013). Others have utilised the entire preference distribution of MPs and the entire preference distribution of the country's voters (Andeweg, 2007; Golder & Stramski, 2010) or the distance between single party voters and the average self-location of party members (Belchior, 2013). More recently, Pedrazzani and Segatti (2022) have investigated voter-party congruence by analysing the distance between each candidate and the average self-location of party voters.

In this paper, I adopt a candidate-centred approach. I construct the dependent variable for (in)congruence as the difference between the absolute distance of a candidate's self- location and the average self-location of voters in each country-election using the question 'In politics, people sometimes talk about the 'left' and the 'right'. Where would you place your own views on a scale from 0 to 10, where 0 means the most left and, 10 means the most right?' that is common in both CCS and CSES datasets. Importantly, the dependent variable is an outcome that indicates how far each candidate is from the mean country-voter with a scale from 0 (minimum incongruence) to 5.5 (maximum incongruence). In Figure 1.3, it is evident that the total average ideological incongruence across all country-elections remains relatively low (2.03 on a 0-10 scale). Notably, Norway in 2009 exhibits the highest average ideological incongruence at 2.52, followed by the elections in Finland in 2011, Czech Republic in 2006

and Portugal in 2009. Conversely, the lowest levels of incongruence are observed in Italy in 2013 at 1.75, succeeded by Greece in 2012, and Sweden in 2010.

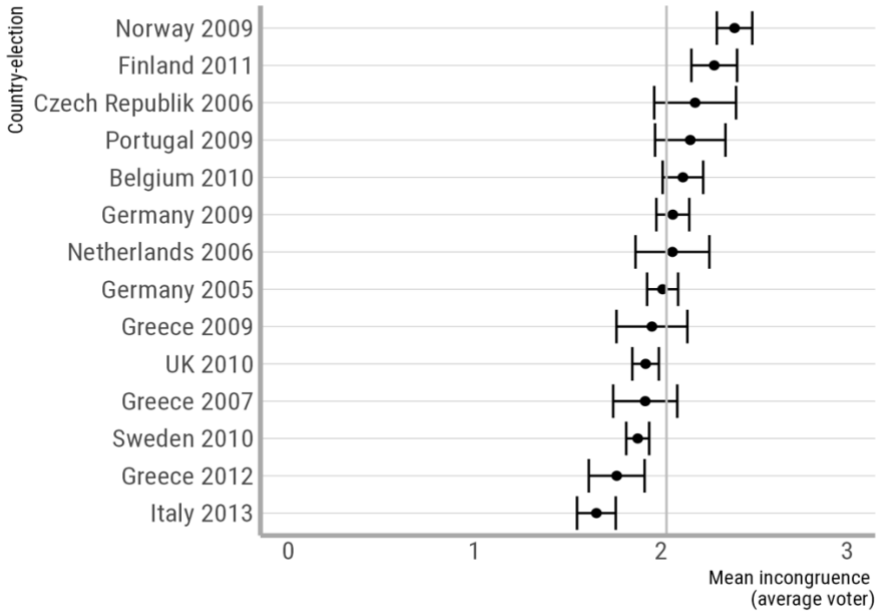

Figure 1.3: Ideological Incongruence by country-election. Grey line (2.03) shows the total average incongruence among all cases (confidence intervals at 95%)

To test hypotheses related to the impact of young careerists, I use both individual level and aggregate level variables in my analysis. At the individual level, the main variable of interest is the career variable, that is a binary outcome indicating the previous pre-parliamentary career experience of candidates. In addition to that, I would expect careers to change over time, therefore, I include the variable of age (measured in numbers) to explore potential associations as candidates age. Additionally, I include the continuous variable "perceived chanced of being elected"[14] measured based on candidates' perception of their likelihood of (re-)election (a five

[14] Due to the availability of data instead of candidates' status, I include another variable from the CCS questionnaire that measures candidates' perceived chances of (re-)election. Additional analysis using the candidate status (elected or non-elected) is provided at Appendix B.

point scale, ranging from 0 Very unlikely to 4 Very likely). To account for demographic factors, I include control variables for the gender and education of candidates, using two additional dummy variables respectively.

At the aggregate level, I would expect candidates in different party families due to their ideology and motivations (Kitschelt, 1988; Przeworski & Sprague, 1986) to affect congruence differently. Therefore, with the help of the Party Facts Database[15], I categorise parties into seven party- families: Conservatives, Christian Democrats, Social Democrats and Socialists, Liberals, Greens, Radical Left and Extreme Right. Besides, the behaviour of candidates may be influenced by the diverse institutional environments of different countries (Carey, 2007; Carey & Shugart, 1995; Cox et al., 2000; Hix, 2004; Samuels, 2003). According to career theories, I would expect politicians to make decisions based on potential electoral benefits. This implies that a greater opportunity for voter choice articulation results in higher incentives for politicians to cultivate a personal vote. Carey and Shugart (1995) have outlined three criteria determining the openness for voter choice: ballot control, vote pooling, and types of votes, assigning scores ranging from 0 (most restrictive) to 2 (most open). Following the approach of Trumm and Sudulich, these three characteristics are aggregated, resulting in a scale from 0 (closed) to 5 (open) defining the 'incentive index of personal vote[16]' that measures the strength of electoral incentives for cultivating the personal vote (Trumm & Sudulich, 2014). The scores are derived from the dataset "Electoral Systems and the Personal Vote" (Johnson & Wallack, 2012).

In what follows, I examine the effect of pre-parliamentary career experiences of candidates in more detail. I first explore the effects of this distinctive new career path arguing that young

[15] See https://partyfacts.herokuapp.com [accessed 16 January 2025].

[16] Electoral incentives across countries in the analyses: Portugal, Iceland are categorized 0, Czech Republic and Norway are assigned a value of 1, Finland and the Netherlands 2, Germany 3, Italy 4, and the UK 5.

careerists are more likely to decrease incongruence compared to "non-careerists". Next, I investigate the hypothesis that the interaction between careers and age may mitigate the results, with seniors being less congruent with voters. Finally, I test the potential impact of institutional rules and party-level characteristics on the behaviour of young careerist politicians on ideological incongruence.

Results

In this section, I describe the results from a series of multilevel models with 6205 individual candidates nested into 14 country-elections predicting the ideological incongruence between candidates and voters. This specification accounts for the country-election (2nd level) effects that may affect uniquely the distance between candidates and voters in each election. Importantly, the dependent variable measures the levels of incongruence. That means a negative sign indicates a lower distance between the candidates' and the voters' position, while a positive sign indicates a greater incongruence.

The first hypothesis (H1) predicts that young careerists produce lower incongruence between candidates and voters. In Table 1.1, the career coefficient is consistent with this hypothesis. Young careerists are closer to the mean ideological position compared to non-careerist politicians. This finding is amplified using as robustness check different measurements of the career element (see Appendix B). Notably, as candidates age and if they are female, there is a higher likelihood of an increase in incongruence with the mean voters' ideological position. Conversely, candidates with higher level of education tend to be closer to the average ideological position of voters. In Model 2, where aggregate level variables are introduced, the incentive index of personal vote decreases incongruence, albeit insignificantly, as the electoral system becomes more open. On the other hand, the party family variable plays a substantial role in predicting incongruence. Using Christian Democrats as the reference

category, the results show that Conservatives, Social Democrats and Socialists increase dramatically incongruence between candidates and voters. In contrast, Liberals are more likely to be congruent with voters.

Table 1.1: The effect of young careerists on candidate-voter ideological incongruence

	DV: Ideological Incongruence (continuous)	
	Model 1	**Model 2**
Main predictors		
Young Careerist *(ref. category.: non-careerist)*	−0.193**	−0.167**
	(0.081)	(0.071)
Age (in numbers)	0.000	0.001
	(0.001)	(0.001)
Incentive Index of personal vote		−0.040
		(0.057)
Party family (ref. category: Christian Democrats)		
Conservatives		0.755***
		(0.053)
Extreme Right		0.265**
		(0.106)
Greens		0.386***
		(0.058)
Liberals		−0.245***
		(0.052)
Social Democrats & Socialists		0.784***
		(0.051)
Radical Left		2.034***
		(0.064)
Control variables		
Female	0.102***	0.044*
	(0.034)	(0.030)
University (degree)	−0.144***	−0.073**
	(0.038)	(0.034)
Perceived chance of being elected	−0.023*	−0.030*
	(0.013)	(0.012)
Constant	2.089***	1.587***
	(0.098)	(0.165)
N candidates (level 1)	6205	6205
N country-elections (level 2)	14	14
Log Likelihood	−8074.0	−7430.008
AIC	20677.0	19172.4
BIC	20730.7	19273.4

*Notes: Estimates are based on a two-level multilevel model, with candidates (level 1) nested within country-election units (level 2). All predictors are included at Level 1. Significance Codes: *** p<.001, ** p<.01, * p<.05.*

The next hypothesis is related to the interaction between candidates' career and age. Particularly, the second hypothesis (H2) predicts that senior young careerists contribute to higher levels of incongruence between them and voters. In Model 1 from Table 1.2, however,

the coefficient indicates a lower level of ideological incongruence, although this result is not statistically significant, providing only limited support for this hypothesis. Young careerists are more likely to be aligned with the average voter's ideological position but as they age this alignment weakens. This suggests to some extent that congruence may be influenced by career incentives as candidates at the later stages of their political career might show incongruence with the average voter.

The third hypothesis (H3) predicts that young careerists in institutions offering greater incentives to cultivate a personal vote would boost congruence levels with the average voter position. In Model 2 from Table 1.2, the coefficient produces a statistically significant negative result providing strong support for this hypothesis. The findings suggest that young careerists are more likely to align with the average voter position when influenced by career and electoral incentives.

The fourth hypothesis (H4a-H4b) investigates the interaction between careers and party families. In Model 3 from Table 1.2, the coefficients show that young careerists within the Conservative party family produce positive results contributing to an increase in incongruence and thus failing to support the hypothesis (H4a). In contrast, young careerists within the Greens and Extreme Right party families, representing a "movement cause", produce mixed results, providing partially support for the hypothesis (H4b). These results suggest that the career effect may shift parties toward the ideological centre or ideological extremes, but the extent of this shift depends on the ideological motives of the party. For instance, young careerists in certain party families, such as the Greens, may slightly move the party toward the ideological centre, particularly when some of these parties have held positions in governments. However, these party families are more likely to adopt an approach closely aligned to their core values.

Table 1.2: Interactions between the career and election- and party-level predictors

	DV: Ideological Incongruence (continuous)		
	Model 1	**Model 2**	**Model 3**
Main predictors			
Young Careerist *(ref. category.: non-careerist)*	−0.121*	-0.144**	−0.149**
	(0.081)	(0.072)	(0.070)
Age (in numbers)	0.000	0.000	0.000
	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)
Incentive Index of personal vote	−0.040	−0.033	−0.039
	(0.057)	(0.057)	(0.057)
Party family (ref. category: Christian Democrats)			
Conservatives	0.756***	0.757***	0.734***
	(0.053)	(0.058)	(0.054)
Extreme Right	0.265*	0.267*	0.236*
	(0.106)	(0.106)	(0.107)
Greens	0.386***	0.385***	0.411***
	(0.058)	(0.066)	(0.059)
Liberals	−0.245***	−0.242***	−0.255***
	(0.052)	(0.052)	(0.054)
Social Democrats & Socialists	0.784***	0.786***	0.794***
	(0.051)	(0.051)	(0.053)
Radical Left	2.034***	2.037***	2.033***
	(0.043)	(0.042)	(0.064)
Control Variables			
Female	0.044*	0.041*	0.048*
	(0.030)	(0.030)	(0.030)
University (degree)	−0.073*	−0.071*	−0.073*
	(0.034)	(0.034)	(0.034)
Perceived chance of being elected	−0.030*	−0.031*	−0.031*
	(0.012)	(0.012)	(0.012)
Interactions			
Young Careerist x Age	−0.003		
	(0.013)		
Young Careerist x Incentive Index of Personal Vote		−0.121*	
		(0.048)	
Young Careerist x Conservatives			0.478*
			(0.179)
Young Careerist x Extreme Right			2.055**
			(0.304)
Young Careerist x Greens			−0.534*
			(0.283)
Young Careerist x Liberals			0.232
			(0.251)
Young Careerist x Social Democrats & Socialists			−0.163
			(0.250)
Young Careerist x Radical Left			0.014
			(0.335)
Constant	1.610***	1.532***	1.541***
	(0.171)	(0.171)	(0.172)
N candidates (level 1)	6205	6205	6205
N country-elections (level 2)	14	14	14
Log Likelihood	−7498.423	-9544.9	−9531.8
AIC	19181.2	19172.3	19161.6
BIC	19288.9	19280.0	19303.0

*Notes: Estimates are based on a two-level multilevel model, with candidates (level 1) nested within country-election units (level 2). All predictors are included at Level 1. Significance Codes: *** p<.001, ** p<.01, * p<.05.*

The values of the AIC and BIC suggest that models incorporating the party and electoral predictors fit best the data. By including these variables, the model provides a more comprehensive explanation of the effects on ideological congruence compared to an exclusive focus on individual-level traits of candidates.

Overall, the analyses indicate that young careerists tend to align closely with the ideological position of voters. Interestingly, while older candidates are generally more likely to deviate from the mean voters' position, senior young careerists do not exhibit significant evidence of such deviation. Moreover, the study suggests that institutions may play a key role for young careerists, particularly those that create stronger incentives for a personal vote. Last but not least, young careerists that belong to party families representing the status quo, such as the Conservatives, are less likely to adopt centrist positions.

Discussion

There is the perception that politicians are 'out of touch' with voters. At the same time, a growing number of politicians start their political career directly after university without any real-life job experiences. How does this category of young careerist politicians affect congruence between themselves and the electorate? I provide a clear answer on this research question using comparative national-level data from the Comparative Candidate Study (CCS) and the Comparative Study of Electoral Studies (CSES). First, I hypothesize whether the phenomenon of young careerists rises across political parties and countries. Assuming, second, whether young careerist politicians concerning for their career advancement -achieving higher offices in the national parliament- are in line with voters' ideological self-positions. Third, I hypothesize that young careerists' incentives do not remain constant throughout their political career.

These findings provide support for broad theories of professionalisation (Alexiadou, 2016; Benedetto & Hix, 2007; King, 1981; McAllister, 2007; O'Grady, 2019). The evidence of this paper suggests that politicians with a strong background of political experiences evaluate a lot their status. Young careerists move their parties closer to the ideological centre considering electoral incentives. This behaviour indicates that young careerists are the ones that might easier abandon the core values of their party on the altar of votes and political ambitions.

The evidence of this chapter suggests that young careerists affect ideological congruence differently at various stages of their life. Younger and middle-aged "careerists" thinking of their political survival align their ideological position closely with voters' positions, whereas older candidates adopt positions further away from the mean voter position. At the dusk of their political career, young careerists might strategically cultivate a personal vote (Zittel, 2017) being either loyal to their party's ideological position or committed to support demands and policies of their constituents. Thus, further evidence is necessary to examine candidate-voter congruence at a local level to investigate whether candidates are closer to voters in their constituency.

Additionally, this study will be beneficial to broad theories of personalisation of politics and representation (McAllister, 2007). In contemporary democracies, parties are the source of candidates assisting in delegation and accountability (Dalton et al., 2012; Przeworski et al., 1999; Strøm et al., 2003). Since parties, however, have lost their 'glamour' and attractiveness (Dalton & Wattenberg, 2002) candidates' representational role has been increased. In this case, where parties strategically nominate (Rahat & Kenig, 2018; Tromborg, 2019) candidates with or without previous political career experiences might affect not only candidate-voter congruence but also party cohesiveness (Kam, 2009; Sieberer, 2006). For that reason, the pre-parliamentary career paths of candidates are influential on examining the quality of representation.

Overall, considering the limitations of this study, the non-availability of some individual candidate factors, such as candidates' professional career background (e.g. occupation, employment status, income), limits my research capacity. Additionally, the data allow me to examine congruence at a national level, not taking into account the constituency element. In other words, candidates may be incongruent with both their party and mean voter positions being closer to the priorities and needs of their constituents. Along these lines, further research should be undertaken to investigate the effect of career paths on congruence. For instance, the focus on one case study may provide the advantage of using a complete national study with all the available information. A country with a distinctive role in the constituency level could be an ideal example, as it may add aspects of the relation of candidates not only with party supporters but also with constituents. In this way, would be fully examined whether candidates are in line with voters at national or constituency level.

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Chapter 2

The Party Soldier, the Young Careerist, And the Outsider: How Distinctive Career Paths Affect Party Dissent

Introduction

Can a politician's past career shape the unity of the party? Scholars of political professionalization reveal that as politicians advance within their parties, they may develop motives centred on winning votes, gaining office, or pursuing specific policies, which can conflict with party priorities and strain ideological bonds (Alexiadou, 2016; O'Grady, 2019; Strøm, 1990). When politicians' views diverge sharply from party ideology, they may fuel internal divisions that threaten the party's cohesion (Köln & Polk 2024). While parties aim to recruit competent candidates who will maximize party's electoral share and implement policy goals, they still aim for ideological unity (e.g. Vandeleene, 2024). This balance often involves bringing in candidates from distinct career paths, yet such diversity may lead some to challenge the party line.

Parties draw from a diverse pool of election candidates, with unique career trajectories prior to their mandates. One of the most common career trajectories involves strong local ties and a lengthy career in local politics. For instance, Antonio Costa[17] in Portugal served many years as the Mayor of Lisbon before becoming Prime Minster. Another emerging career route is exemplified by David Cameron[18] who, immediately after graduation, worked for the Conservative Research Department for five years and then served as special adviser before being approved for the PPC list of the Conservatives. While there is also the career route of newcomer politicians who might just join the

[17]Political bio of António Costa, available at: https://www.portugal.gov.pt/en/gc23/prime-minister [accessed 19 January 2025]

[18]Political bio of David Cameron, available at: https://www.gov.uk/government/history/past-prime-ministers/david-cameron [accessed 19 January 2025]

party in their 40s or 50s after building professional careers outside politics, such as Ukraine's President, Volodymyr Zelenskyy[19], a former entrepreneur. There is no ideal political career path; all routes can potentially lead to a successful parliamentary career, yet some may challenge party unity more than others. Therefore, the logical question that follows is who "rebels"?

In the first place, May (1973) and Strøm (1990) have identified diverse ideological positionings between hierarchical groups of politicians. For instance, in the Special Law of Curvilinear Disparity Theorem, May (1973) suggested that party elites ("upper elites") adopt moderate views, whereas core party members ("middle-elites") adopt ideologically extreme views in relation to the traditional stance of their party. According to Strøm (1990), politicians living from politics are primarily motivated by office benefits, whereas party activists and members, who live for politics, are more likely to promote extreme ideological positions. Other scholars touch upon the issue of representation style (Önnudóttir 2014; Pedrazzani & Segatti, 2022) connecting "partisans" to party congruence. However, one cannot readily accept that the style of representation is an inert philosophical position adopted by candidates from the very beginning. Instead, it is more likely a result of how they position themselves in relation to their party. These findings notwithstanding, the relationship between career trajectories and party unity remains a puzzle. How do diverse political careers shape party unity? Are politicians really dissent from their parties?

Recent discourse on careers highlights career trajectories as a factor influencing party congruence. For instance, Alexiadou (2016) links the policy goals of ministers to their professional backgrounds, categorizing them as loyalists, partisans or ideologues based on career aspirations. Similarly, German MPs have been classified into roles like "party animals" or "local heroes", with career paths reflecting parliamentary success and career incentives (Ohmura et al., 2018). In the UK, O'Grady (2019) found that "career politicians" are more inclined to pursue policies for

[19] Political bio of Volodymyr Zelenskyy, available at: https://www.president.gov.ua/en/president/biografiya [accessed 19 January 2025]

strategic political reasons, whereas working-class politicians are more likely to represent interests of working-class voters. Additionally, Binderkrantz et al. (2019) identified pre-parliamentary career paths in the Danish parliament, noting that "party locals" are more likely to diverge from party positions. Despite some theoretical efforts, it is notable that the academic literature on this subject often relies on single-country empirical analyses, and predominantly on MP data.

Unlike previous studies, however, that focus on MPs' attitudes as a provider of information about parties, I posit election candidates as the main scope of analyses. Candidates represent a broader sample of politicians with distinctive career paths and incentives offering a clear perspective of actual ideological disagreement from party line. The ideal dataset to examine candidates' attitudes is the Comparative Candidates Survey (2016) that is a joint multi-national project with the goal of collecting data on candidates running for national parliamentary elections in different countries. To assess the ideological stances of parties, I rely on the self-positioning of candidates concerning their party's ideological position, derived from the CCS. Additionally, as a robustness check, I have incorporated data from the Chapel Hill Expert Survey (CHES). The analysis suggests that party unity may be influenced by candidates' prior career experiences.

The results of this study shed light on two lines of research. First, the results bear upon the debate between careers trajectories and party dissent behaviour. Young careerists, who have pursued a dedicated career path solely within politics, act similar to "homo economicus"; they are significantly less inclined to adhere to the party line compared to party soldiers, who are perceived as "defenders" of the party ideology. Second, the study reveals that when young careerists do choose to dissent, they are more likely to adopt moderate stances rather than extreme views, suggesting a strategic approach driven by electoral aspirations. The results also suggest that dissent behaviour is influenced by politicians' electoral prospects. Electoral success and the pursuit of ideological alignment with the average voter position prompt candidates to deviate from the party line.

These findings make an important contribution to the field of professionalization of politics (McAllister, 2007), intra-party behaviour (Campbell et al., 2019; Strøm, 1990; Sieberer, 2006), and theories on spatial analyses (May, 1973). In an era of parties without partisans (Dalton & Wattenberg, 2002), parties need to work harder to convince the electorate to vote for them. Politicians' weighty role is to deliver preferable policies to voters, achieve electoral success, while another primary target is the maintenance of party unity. Understanding, therefore, of how career experiences tend to influence candidates' spatial positioning will better inform parties on candidates' electoral incentives. I return to these implications in the concluding section of the chapter.

Party Unity or Internal Division Among Candidates?

According to the Responsible Party Model of representation (APSA, 1950; Thomassen, 1994) parties offer policies and voters decide based on their preferences. Unity or appearing united has a positive effect on the stability of political system and representation (Dalton 1985; Greene & Haber, 2015; Sartori, 1976). Many political studies refer to "party cohesion", "party unity" and "party discipline" as being the same thing (Andeweg & Thomassen, 2011), while the concept of party unity is mainly associated to the voting behaviour of MPs inside the legislature. In this chapter, I investigate party dissent behaviour -that is the opposite of what previous scholars called party unity- although focusing on the ideological positioning among candidates.

The first scholars who attempt to examine party unity had extensively given attention to the electoral system design and party organisation characteristics. Both single-country and comparative research, suggest that the structure of electoral systems influences party unity by shaping politicians' incentives to either align or diverge from the party position (Cain et al., 1987; Carey, 2007; Carey & Shugart, 1995; Depauw & Martin, 2008; Sieberer, 2006). In candidate-centered systems, where individuals have more control over their electoral campaigning and voter relationships, politicians are more likely to dissent cultivating a

personal vote (Carey & Shugart, 1995) which can weak party cohesion. Contrarily, party-centered systems, particularly those with closed-lists, tend to promote higher unity, as politicians rely more on party support and party leader. Likewise, Hix's (2004) work on European Parliaments found that party-centred electoral systems may enforce party loyalty. In addition to that, a party's organisational structure plays crucial role in maintaining unity. In a comprehensive review, Borz and Janda (2020) highlight several advancements in the literature emphasizing the growing interest and need to explore further party organisation and its implication for intra-party politics. Centralized parties with strong hierarchical control tend to enforce more disciplined voting patterns among their members (see Borz & De Miguel, 2019; Hazan & Rahat, 2010; Tavits, 2012). For instance, if the candidate selection process or party financial resources are dependent on the national party leadership, then, this increases party unity between politicians. To put it differently, in decentralized parties, politicians may feel better to dissent pursuing policy positions on behalf of their career aspirations. Especially, an analysis in Central Eastern Europe reveals that party centralization has a stronger influence in party unity than party homogeneity, ideology, or incumbency status (Borz, 2006).

Examining, then, career incentives, scholars focus on the important role of "party socialization" within the party that affects party unity. For instance, Mai and Wenzelburger (2024) using longitudinal data from the German Bundestag identified the crucial role of regional and local socialization in fostering party loyalty. Similarly, Rehmert (2022) found that long-term membership and the age at which MPs joined the party contribute to lower rates of party dissent in the German Bundestag. In a comparative study using data from Germany, Netherlands and Spain, Marx and Schumacher (2013) recognized the strong influence of party activists on the core of the party prioritising policies that align with ideological party objectives. However, party unity is not always assured. Whiteley and Seyd (2002) suggest that backbenchers may strategically oppose party leadership to retain the support of local activists,

especially when the party is divided on specific issues. Characteristically, they mention the case of the UK Conservatives over European issues. In recent years, more and more parties have increasingly acted as non-unitary entities. While politicians strive to balance the triadic relationship between parties, themselves, and voters by adopting policies and ideological views that align with both their party and party supporters, politicians often prioritise career advancement, electoral success, or the pursuit of their own policy aspirations (Alexiadou, 2016; O'Grady, 2019; Strøm, 1990). If these ambitions clash with the party's strategic agenda, politicians may "rebel" distinguishing themselves from the party line.

In parliamentary settings, party dissent is easier to detect and control, as parties can employ sanctions, such as withdrawal of resources, exclusion from committees (Andeweg & Thomassen, 2011) and other disciplinary strategies e.g. carrots and sticks (Benedetto & Hix, 2007) to discourage party rebellion. However, comparing party dissent between MPs and candidates' results may reveal potential differences. When MPs' preferences diverge, the party leadership can "discipline" MPs for their attitudes (Andeweg & Thomassen, 2011). Moreover, MPs may be hesitant to publicly express extreme positions. For instance, in the US, repeated voting against the party line can result in sanctions (Cox & McCubbins, 2005). Even for politicians who have previously served as ministers or who believe they have chances of being promoted, there are social or psychological costs to dissenting from the party (Benedetto & Hix, 2007). By using candidate data someone can identify party dissent considering a diverse array of politicians who represent the party. In other words, the perceived party disagreement of candidates may better reflect actual disagreement, as MPs face potential penalties from both voters and parties for public displays of dissent (Andeweg & Thomassen, 2011).

Indeed, the act of dissent behaviour among politicians can carry significant consequences. On the one hand, voters tend to favour parties that behave as unitary actors (Greene & Haber, 2015; Harbridge & Malhorta, 2011), making "party rebellion" potentially risky. For instance,

an increased intra-party heterogeneity among party elites can enhance voters' misperceptions on the position of parties (Imre, 2023). In this case, voters are unable to distinguish between political agendas. According to a conjoint experiment in a probability-based survey of the German population (Lehrer et al., 2024), the ideological distance between parties and respondents is the strongest predictor of vote choice. The more united a party appears, the more likely to be voted by potential party voters. This result confirms the predominant role of party unity shaping voting decisions. On the other hand, nevertheless, there are instances where party dissent behaviour can be punished by voters. For example, in the US, there are occasions that voters can punish politicians electorally, if they fail to differentiate themselves from party's position (Carson et al., 2010; Harbridge & Malhorta, 2011). As UK studies have shown, a rebellious attitude is paradoxically a sign of perceived competence that can shape positively the personal image of politicians (Campbell et al., 2019; Vivyan & Wagner, 2012). In a competitive pool of candidates, those willing to take risks may thrive. When voters decide between politicians for office, they not only consider policy or ideology but also value positively valence attributes (Stone & Simas, 2010). Given the ambiguous political risks associated with party dissent, previous research endeavored to systematically identify factors influencing dissent behaviour.

However, investigating intra-party politics is not a straightforward process. Specifically, intra-party factions may add to this complexity. Ideological factions within parties have been characterized as "black box of intra-party politics" (Greene & Haber, 2015; Köln & Polk 2024). Strøm (1990) argues that factions arise from different priorities within the party with some politicians being more ideologically driven, while others focusing on office-seeking aspirations. This divide may lead to hierarchical factions (e.g. party activists vs party elites), especially when parties face electoral pressure. Greene & Haber (2015) highlight that intra-party factionalism can harm party cohesion and public image, as internal divisions may lead

voters to perceive the party as fragmented. However, some parties may strategically embrace some factional diversity in order to maximize their voting share. For example, this strategy is common in "catch-all" parties. In addition to that, Kitschelt (1988) suggests that politicians in movement-based organisations, such as the Green parties parties, may sometimes shift ideological position increasing party dissent, as these parties often face internal battles from a focus on "constituency representation" toward a focus on party competition. In contrast, for parties primarily driven by vote maximization, electoral incentives are the key factor in defining ideological positioning.

Broadly, theoretical and empirical studies have systematically examined the determinants of politicians' dissent behaviour. Much of this research has focused on analysing the dissent behaviour of Members of Parliament (Greene & Haber, 2015; Vivyan & Wagner, 2012), with previous studies primarily relying on data from the UK and US contexts (Campbell et al., 2019; Carson et al., 2010; Cowley, 2012). Additionally, former studies have focused on explanations at the macro- and meso-level, such as the influences of electoral design (Carey & Shugart, 1995) and party structure (Sieberer, 2006; Tavits, 2012). Bringing in a different range of theories from literature on careerism, representation, and intra-party politics, I aim to expand this scholarly discourse. In the next section, I show how distinctive careers paths may affect party dissent.

Theoretical Rationale

Prominent traditional theories on professionalisation of politics (McAllister, 2007; Weber, 1991 [1919]) have first emphasized the role of political careers in shaping politicians' motivations. In addition to that, contemporary theories on political careers have suggested that politicians are driven by incentives related to votes, obtaining offices or shaping policies (Alexiadou, 2016; O'Grady, 2019; Strøm, 1990). Complementing these indications, spatial

analyses of parties' positions have revealed that parties are not unified entities (May, 1973; Schlesinger, 1966). Therefore, party unity may be challenged by politicians who use dissent strategically to advance their careers. Does a specific type of politicians' career trajectories increase party dissent? In this chapter, I first aim to explore how dissenting behaviours are motivated by different career trajectories, and second, I focus on the direction of ideological shifts within parties.

In the first place, many politicians start their political careers by running for local office before transitioning to national-level politics. Previous research highlights the importance of establishing a strong grassroots presence for Members of Parliament to achieve electoral success (Kam, 2009; Tavits, 2009). In the UK, for instance, new candidates often devote considerable time and energy to campaigning for local seats. Similarly, German politicians usually acquire delegation experience at the local party level. These candidates, which I refer to as *party soldiers,* have been socialized into the structures of their party (see Mai & Wenzelburger, 2024) before deciding to run as national parliamentary candidates. That means party soldiers could be more likely to show loyalty to their party, as they are closely associated with the party grassroots at a very young age. Research on voting behaviour in the German Bundestag from 1953 to 2013 (Rehmert, 2022) shows that longer party membership and an earlier age of joining the party can strengthen party unity. All the above patterns enhance a level of commitment to the party's ideological line. Specifically, local associated candidates differentiate themselves from others who are "parachuted" into being selected as candidates from the top i.e. by working for the national party or MPs, or by having family connections. This career trajectory entails a parliamentary career path that is neither easy nor at once. Party soldiers typically begin as party members and activists engaging themselves in local work activities. Afterwards, they are selected as party candidates and -if are popular enough- elected

as Members of Parliament. Thus, I would expect party soldiers to increase party unity remaining closely to the ideological core of the party.

Hypothesis 1a. Party soldiers are less likely to disagree with their party's ideological position.

Next, recent political discourse highlights an emerging type of politicians, that I refer to as *young careerists*, characterized by their early entry into politics. Young careerists start their political careers straight out of the university, often without prior experience in 'real-life' professions, either by working for the national party or as special advisors to MPs at national or regional level. This type of politicians is predominantly observed in the British political landscape (see Allen, 2013; Cowley, 2012), although this phenomenon is universal (see previous chapter). The "professional politicians" of McAllister (2007) or the "career politicians" of King (1981), who were typically individuals with backgrounds in middle-class white-collar professions (see also O'Grady, 2019), differ significantly from this new emerging type of politicians lacking skills acquired outside the political arena. Other scholars, who have also recognized an "only-politics" career path among politicians, have given the term of "party animals" (Ohmura et al., 2018). Young careerists can be highly ambitious individuals focusing relentless on their career development (Black, 1972; Borchert, 2011; Schlesinger, 1966), as politics is their only profession. Therefore, they aspire to climb the political ladder as politicians, often reaching to higher offices faster than any other type of candidate. Notably, some young careerists maintain prominent position within their party, and few of them become themselves leaders of their party. However, they can abandon their own beliefs to achieve their career ambitions either showing loyalty to the party leadership (Benedetto & Hix, 2007; O'Grady, 2019) or dissenting from the party to boost their electoral appeal (Strøm, 1990). For instance, they may defect if their party loses appeal (e.g. Somer-Topcu, 2015), as the party is

simply a vehicle for their career. But even if their party is in governing position, young careerists may have strong electoral incentives to dissent in order to build their own reputation (see Campbell et al., 2019; Riddell, 1995). There have been plenty of occasions where careerist Members of Parliament have behaved more "rebellious" (Heuwieser, 2018) than their "non-careerist" peers distinguishing themselves from the party line. Therefore, I would expect young careerists to increase party dissent motivated by career incentives and electoral strategies.

Hypothesis 1b. Young careerists are more likely to disagree with their party's ideological position.

In contrast, the following type of politicians that I refer to as outsiders are newcomers to the political arena who enter politics later in life, often with limited or no prior political experiences within their party. As a result, outsiders may exhibit lower party loyalty, lacking the strong socialization into party structures that long-standing members experience (Mai & Wenzelburger, 2024). Many outsiders turn to politics primarily for policy reasons. Unlike younger careerists, who may follow the party line considering their career elevation (Benedetto & Hix, 2007), outsiders, often established professionals, may dissent as they can always return to their previous careers. On the other hand, one possible source of outsiders becoming politicians arises from parties actively seeking out prominent individuals, such as actors, athletes, or social media influencers that the party needs them to boost its electoral appeal. In these exceptional cases, outsiders might align closely with the party's ideological stance. However, since the vast majority of outsiders have got nothing to lose, I would expect this category of politicians to position themselves further away from their party.

Hypothesis 1c. Outsiders are more likely to disagree with their party's ideological position.

Subsequently, a significant aspect to consider is the direction of this dissent behaviour. Where does party dissent manifest? Do specific career trajectories foster more ideologically extreme or centrist positions? The positional shift could be different for politicians of differing parties. Several parties are essentially tied to political movements e.g. labour movement, ecological movement, fascist/neo-nazi movement, while centre right or conservative parties are more about the preservation of the status quo. For example, Kitschelt (1988) argues that green parties, as movement-based organisations, must shift from the logic of "constituency representation" (movement orientation) to embrace the logic of party competition. Contrarily, for parties that are vote and power oriented, the effect of party positioning on electoral success has become the main vehicle to define what is the electoral interest of the party. From candidates' perspective, in the Special Law of Curvilinear Disparity theorem, May (1973) argued contrasting motivations for being politically active lead different strata of politicians to move on the ideological space. May suggested that party elites adopt moderate views appealing to the median voter position for vote maximization, whereas party activists adopt more extreme views compared to their party leadership and voters. While curvilinear disparity is typically associated with the Anglo-American political experience, it can theoretically occur within any party system (Bäckersten, 2022; Belchior, 2013). Likewise, Strøm's (1990) analysis on trade-offs among office-seeking, vote-seeking, and policy-seeking strategies argues that individuals who rely their livelihood solely on politics are mainly driven by the anticipated benefits of holding office. In contrast, party activists are motivated by policies and ideological commitment to their party (Strøm 1990). Consequently, I would expect party soldiers to

maintain party unity or advocate for radical views that align closely with the core ideology of their party, whereas young careerists to move strategically towards the ideological centre.

Hypothesis 2a: Young careerists who disagree with their party are more likely to adopt centrist positions.

Hypothesis 2b: Party soldiers who disagree with their party are more likely to move toward the ideological extremes.

Furthermore, political careers are closely tied to electoral performance. Party unity is often depending on the strength and resources of the parliamentary party group (e.g. Sieberer, 2006), electoral system characteristics, such as party-centred electoral systems (e.g. Carey and Shugart 1995) or centralized candidate selection processes (Rahat & Hazan 2001). However, comparing elected and non-elected candidates reveals notable differences in their incentives toward party dissent behaviours. In addition to that, incentives may change frequently and can be a result of the electoral prospects of politicians that can define their remaining time in politics (Hain, 1974; Schlesinger, 1966). Non-elected candidates, particularly those coming from non-political professional backgrounds, may feel less constrained by the demands of party loyalty. Since, most of the times they can return to their profession, they may be more prone to dissent. Such outsiders often enter to politics driven by personal passion or commitment to specific issues, making them more likely to prioritise advocacy for personally meaningful causes over strict party loyalty. On the other hand, young careerists are expected to act similar to homo economicus in their strategic decision-making. Understanding that career costs of dissent, especially when their career survival is dependent on the party brand and party leader, young careerists are less inclined to deviate from the ideological party line. However, in cases where their electoral success is independent of the party organisation, then party dissent may

be an effective way for young careerists to stand out from the party. For example, high-profile young careerists tend to receive more media coverage, which can amplify their dissent, as voters may perceive dissent behaviour positively (Campbell et al., 2019). Similarly, party soldiers, if they do not succeed at the national level, they can always take advantage of their strong local ties and run for local elections. For instance, previous research on MPs in Denmark has shown individuals with strong local roots may diverge from the national party's position (Binderkrantz et al., 2019). However, party soldiers are not rebels per se; they are strongly interested in defending the core ideology of the party instead. They tend to prioritise the traditional core values of their party rather than adopting more centrist views of the national party. Therefore, I would expect young careerists and outsiders to disagree with their party when their chances of being elected are higher, when they have nothing to lose from the party.

Hypothesis 3a: Candidates with higher chances of electoral success are more likely to disagree with their party either taking a more radical or moderate position than their party.

Hypothesis 3b: Specifically, young careerists and outsiders with higher chances of electoral success are more likely to disagree with their party's ideological views.

This study departs from the existing literature in several significant respects. First, I bring in a different range of theories from the careerism, representation, and party congruence literature to explain party dissent behaviour. Secondly, I measure party dissent using comparative candidate data instead of MPs data. Doing so, I explore career incentives taking into account the diverse pool of potential politicians running for national elections. Third, instead of measuring solely the degree of party dissent I explore the direction of dissent behaviour to see whether politicians do "rebel" towards the centre for electoral purposes. The next section describes the research design in more detail.

Data and Methodology

In this paper, I posit three key arguments. First, I argue that distinctive career trajectories affect party dissent. Second, I explore not only dissent behaviour but also its direction, assessing whether candidates are more radical or moderate than their party. Third, I connect candidates' career path and electoral success in politics to examine any causal links that explain dissent behaviour.

To assess these hypotheses, I employ the 2005-2013 Wave I of the Comparative Candidates Survey (2016)[20], encompassing data on candidates' previous career experiences and self-reported left-right positions for both candidates and parties during the same period. The CCS project is based on post-election surveys and is carried out to the universe population of candidates[21]. Responses related to career traits, however, are available on 13 countries-election: Czech Republic 2006, Finland 2011, Germany 2009, Germany 2005, Greece 2007, Greece 2009, Greece 2012, Italy 2013, Netherlands 2006, Norway 2009, Portugal 2009, Sweden 2010, United Kingdom 2010. Thus, the CCS survey share common procedures and questions allowing us to analyse the pooled data as one entity. The CCS dataset includes individual-level data about party identification, party campaigning, representation, socio-economic background

[20] To validate my results, I run additional analyses (see Appendix C section) using the 2006, 2010 and 2014 Waves of the Chapel Hill Expert Survey (Bakker et al., 2015; Hooghe et al., 2010; Polk et al., 2017).

[21] The response rate varies across countries: Norway 2009 has the highest number of respondents 51.5% and Czech Republic 2006 has the lowest 16.2%. Non-response bias is difficult to assess since for obvious reasons, I lack substantial information about the candidates who choose not to participate. The data and technical report documentation can be accessed and downloaded via the Swiss Center of Expertise in the Social Sciences (SWISSUbase): https://www.swissubase.ch/en/ [accessed 16 January 2025].

as well as policy preferences and ideological positioning, but also aggregate data to facilitate multi-level analysis.

To empirically examine my hypotheses, I utilise data pertaining to candidates' past experiences in the political sphere. Past research has traditionally determined the categorization of career types among politicians by considering factors such as socioeconomic background and education (Best & Cotta, 2000; Norris, 1997), as well as occupation (Binderkrantz et al., 2019; Cairney, 2007; O'Grady, 2019; Ohmura et al., 2018; Riddell, 1995). The prevailing method for evaluating the career dimension primarily relies on binary categorisation, typically distinguishing politicians who are considered professionals. For instance, within the realm of these studies, there have been discussions about full-time politicians (Riddell, 1995), distinctions between "careerists" versus working-class politicians (O'Grady, 2019), or comparisons of career politicians versus "parachutes" (Narud & Valen, 2008). In addition to those approaches, Borchert and Zeiss (2003) explore the idea of a political class, characterised by professional politicians who are devoted themselves to full-time political careers, often progressing through institutional pathways such as party organizations, local politics, or youth wings. Nevertheless, their approach mixes prior political experiences at the national and local level. Cairney (2007) attempts to discuss a new professional career path, such as becoming an MP assistant or political councillor, but this approach does not fully clearly define the phenomenon of young careerists. O'Grady (2019) defined the "careerists" as those who have spent all or most of their professional careers working in national politics but this approach does not take into account the other types of politicians, such as those with prior local experiences. In contrast, Ohmura et al. (2018) and Binderkrantz et al. (2019) address this by using sequence analysis to define career paths; focusing on pre-parliamentary career types and the duration at its career stage. The first study (Ohmura et al. 2018) identifies several categories, categorising politicians to career changers, high flyers, land legislators, late

bloomers, local heroes, and party animals, while the other (Binderkrantz et al., 2019) identifies three distinct career types, the party locals, party civilians and party functionaries.

Within this framework, I focus on three distinct career paths: the *young careerist*, the *party soldier* and the *outsider* based on their prior involvement in politics before deciding to run as national election candidates. Analytically, young careerists are candidates who start early their political journey, often commencing shortly after completing their university studies (see also Chapter 1). The CCS data, however, lack precise information on when candidates started working for their party or MPs or the duration of employment, making challenging to detect this career path using traditional criteria. To address this, therefore, I employ an alternative approach using the candidates' age at the time of survey as proxy to identify young careerists[22]. This category includes candidates under the age of 41[23] who have prior experience working directly for their party or in roles within MPs' or ministerial offices. The chosen age cut-off point is based on the statistical analysis called 'mixture' analysis. By using this method, I can capture the potential age groups of candidates in a probabilistic way and their distribution within the data (Fraley & Raftery, 2002; Pearson 1894). Party soldiers, by contrast, are those characterized by their prior working experience at the local level. This group includes individuals who have served as local Councillors or worked in local party offices; they have no experience working directly for the party at national level, although they may have worked for the party at local level, and they have not worked for an MP and/or ministers' offices at national or regional level. Outsiders are candidates with no prior political experiences of any kind. They are newcomers in politics. It is, also, important to mention that I explicitly exclude independent candidates and candidates from parties that have no instances of "young careerist" politicians. This exclusion is based on an attempt to ensure a fairer comparison

[22] I have run a series of robustness checks to operationalize the definition of young careerists, all of which are documented in Appendix C.

[23] Additional analyses exploring different thresholds (e.g. 35-year, 46-year) are provided in Appendix C.

of the behaviour of candidates from parties that feature all types of candidates. Table 2.1. presents an overview of the measurement of party soldiers, young careerists, and outsiders.

Table 2.1: Overview of the measurement of party soldiers, young careerists, and outsiders.

Career Trajectory	Measurement
Young Careerists	candidates (under 41) with no involvement in local politics, who were employed by the national party and/or by MPs and/or government departments at national or regional level
Party Soldiers	candidates with no prior working experience within party or MPs' offices, no working experiences in national party offices, but with a career background in local politics, such as serving as local councillors and/or working in local party offices
Outsiders	newcomers in politics, no experience at either national or local party offices, and never worked for MPs at national or regional level, or government departments at national or regional level.

Notes: Data on candidates' experience at EU level are largely unavailable for data protection reasons. The age threshold (under 41) is derived from a probabilistic approach and reflects a cutoff point based on the analysed data. However, threshold values may vary depending on the specific country-election studies and datasets used.

In Figures 2.1-2, I present the distribution of career trajectories per country-election and party family[24]. The data in Figure 2.1 highlight the prevalence of party soldiers in all country-elections. In the majority of cases, party soldiers constitute over 60% of the political landscape. The elections in Greece in 2009 and Italy in 2013 follow closely behind with 58.9% and 48.3% respectively. The highest proportion of party soldiers is shown in 2009 Norwegian elections justifying a recent research which suggests most political careers in Norway start at the local level (Cirone et al., 2021). Noteworthy, the lowest proportion of party soldiers found in the Greek elections of 2012 at 47.9%, where outsiders emerge as the predominant force compared to the rest country-elections at 29.9%. Additionally, Figure 2.1 confirms the phenomenon of young careerists in the UK and

[24] The remaining candidates who do not meet any of the above criteria may follow a 'mixed' career path.

reveals us the emerging trend across Europe. In the Dutch elections of 2006, Belgian elections in 2010, Greek elections in 2009, and Italian elections in 2013 an increased number of candidates emerged as young careerists (ranging from 7.9% to 5.1%), while in the German elections in 2005, the Czech elections in 2006, the Greek elections in 2009 and the Norwegian elections in 2009 recorded at around 4.3-4.6%. This outcome aligns with earlier comparative research (Best & Cotta, 2000), suggesting an increase in professionalization. Interestingly, a previous study in 2007 (Fiers & Secker, 2007) indicated fewer career politicians in Italy, but the data shows a rise in 2013. On the contrary, the Finnish Elections in 2011 and the elections in Germany in 2009 have the lowest percentages of young careerists, with approximately 1.7% and 2.9% respectively. Notably, previous research in Finland (Ruostetsaari, 2000) has shown support for the idea to diminish professionalization justifying this result. Meanwhile, in Greece, spanning three time points, there is a marginal reduction of young careerists between 2009 and 2012 Greek elections, likely influenced by the economic crisis and populist party rhetoric condemning political elites. Overall, it is important to note that the phenomenon of young careerists transcends electoral systems, indicating its expansion irrespective of the type of electoral system in place. Obviously, survey data across additional time points would provide a clearer picture on whether this emerging trend is increasing over time.

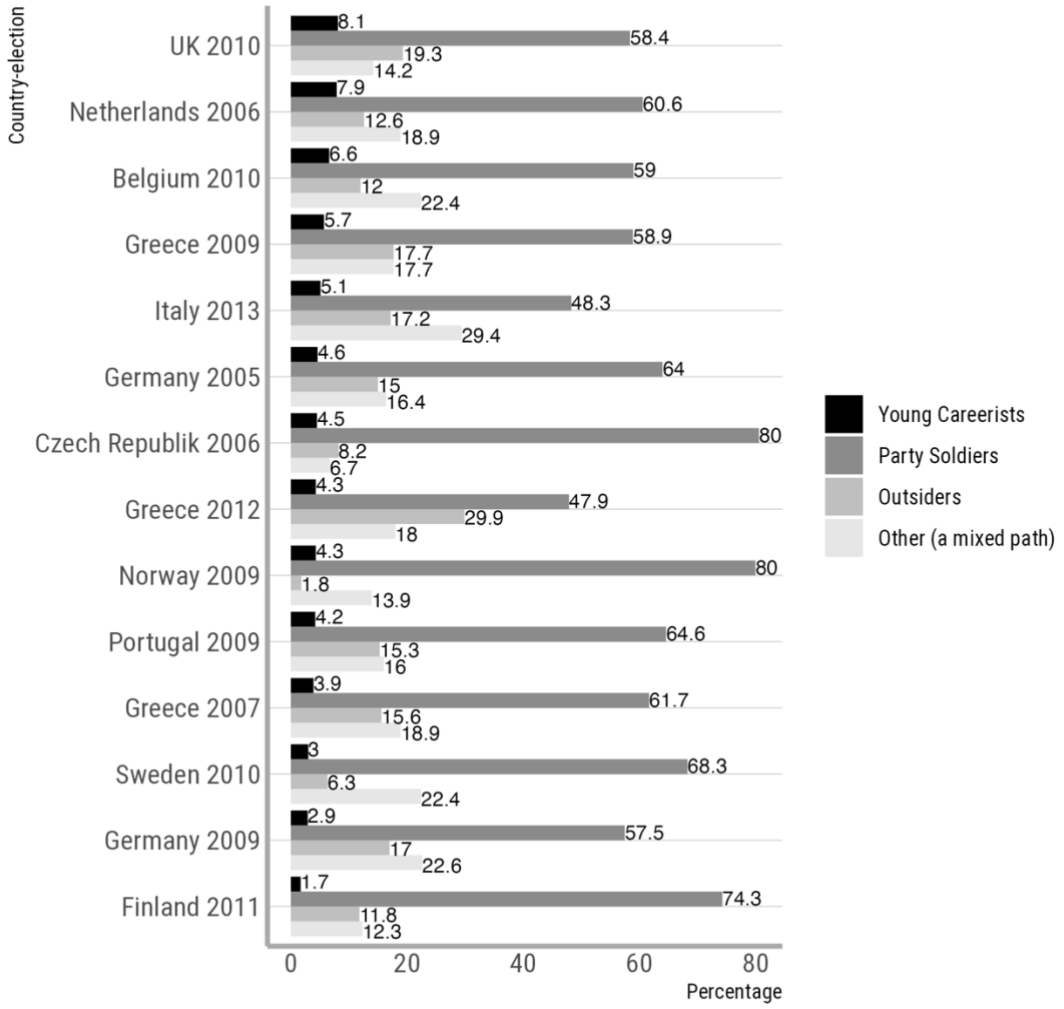

Figure 2.1: Distribution of career paths per country-election.

To continue with, Figure 2.2 illustrates the distribution of career paths within each political party family, shedding light on whether certain types of political careers are more prevalent within specific party families or represent a growing phenomenon across diverse political groups. For example, parties that positioned closer to the ideological centre may be more inclined to attract young careerist candidates. Characteristically, the results indicate that the Liberal party family and Conservative party family have a higher proportion of young careerists compared to the rest categories. Indeed, historically, Liberal and Conservative parties, tend to attract candidates with

prior political experience within parties (Ruostetsaari, 2007; Cromwell & Verzichelli, 2007). At the lower end are the Extreme Right-wing parties with 1.4%, and Radical Left parties with 3.4% respectively, aligning with findings of previous research on the career development of politicians of Extreme Right and Radical Left families (Ilonszki, 2007; Linz et al., 2007). The findings suggest that several parties essentially tied to political movements (e.g. labour movement, ecological movement, fascist/neo-nazi movement) may attract fewer young careerists candidates that embrace the logic of party competition and more individuals that may represent the ideology of the party (Kitschelt, 1988; Przeworski & Sprague, 1986). Another significant observation is that party soldiers comprise over 60% in all party family categories (ranging from 60.3% to 69.2%), suggesting that parties commonly rely on politicians with strong ties to local politics. As for outsiders, radical left and extreme right-wing parties include a high proportion of newcomer politicians at 17.3% and 14% respectively, whereas Conservatives attract the fewest outsiders with 10%. However, this could signify that parties with fewer politicians holding parliamentary seats may attract fewer young careerists and party soldiers inevitably.

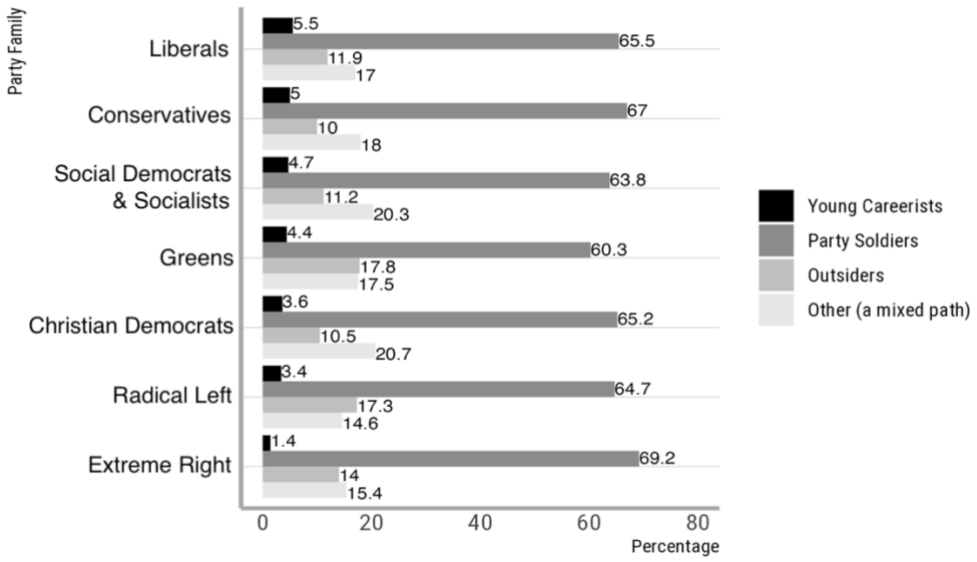

Figure 2.2: Distribution of career paths per party family.

To explore the ideological position of candidates compared to their party's ideological score, I adopt a candidate-centered approach. My primary objective is to ascertain the ideological alignment of candidates with their respective parties, and to explore whether they tend to dissent by moving towards the center or by adopting extreme positions on the left or right of the ideological spectrum. To accomplish this, I use two questions of the CCS survey that prompt candidates to evaluate both themselves and their parties on a scale from 0 to 10, representing positions on the 'left' and 'right'[25]. To construct the first dependent variable on party dissent, I compare the position of candidates on the left-right scale with the position selected for their party on the same scale. If a politician selects the same position for themselves and their party, this indicates a perceived agreement with their party. Conversely, if the politician selects a different position for themselves compared to their party, it suggests a perceived disagreement with the party. I use the term 'perceived' because the disagreement may arise regardless of whether there are genuine policy disparities motivating it. For instance, candidates who position themselves differently from their party aim to convey a perception of disagreement, although this may not necessarily stem from actual policy differences. What matters is whether, based on their own experiences, they perceive disagreement with the party.

In addition to that, my theoretical interest is the direction of disagreement rather than the degree of disagreement. The majority of candidates position themselves within one point difference of their party's placement, while only a small number position themselves more than two points away. For the second dependent variable, if a politician selects a position more to the left or right compared to their party's self-positioning, this indicates a *radical* position. Similarly, for

[25] The wording of the CCS question: *In Politics, people sometimes talk about the 'left' and the 'right'.Where would you place your own/party views on a scale from 0 to 10, where 0 means the most left and 10 means the most right?*

the third dependent variable, if a politician selects a position closer to the middle point than their party's position, this indicates a *moderate* position. As robustness check, I have conducted the same analyses using a) a dummy dependent variable of 1-point distance and 2-point distance measuring the ideological distance between candidates and parties, as the difference between the absolute distance of a candidate's self-location and the average self-location of candidates of the respective party in each country-election b) I have also used a continuous variable variation using both candidate survey data (CCS) and expert survey data (CHES). In this occasion, I construct the dependent variable of party dissent as the absolute distance between a candidate's self-location and the average party's ideological position based on candidates' or experts' opinion. All these approaches lead to similar results. Figure 2.3 reveals the distribution of dependent variables by career trajectory.

In measuring party dissent, however, I prefer candidate survey data because it is a more valid and reliable source than its alternative methods. For example, while experts may possess extensive experience into party dynamics, identifying the precise positions of individual politicians within a party can be challenging. On the other hand, roll-call data derived from legislative voting records is another option, although it has limitations. MPs may face repercussions for openly dissenting from their party. Furthermore, relying solely on roll-call data restricts analysis to parliamentary party unity, neglecting the broader spectrum of views held by the entire pool of candidates, which may better reflect the party's overall opinion structure.

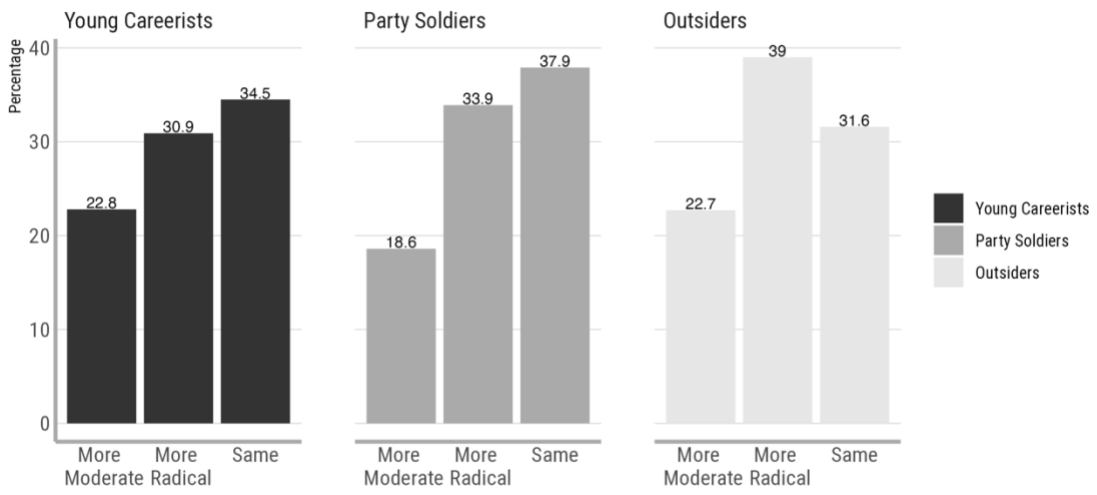

Figure 2.3: Distribution of dependent variable by career path.

To test my hypotheses, I use both individual level and aggregate level variables in my analysis. At the individual level, the main variable of interest is the 'career' variable, that is a three-level categorical variable indicating the previous pre-parliamentary career experience of candidates. Furthermore, I include the continuous variable 'perceived chances of being elected'[26] measured based on candidates' perception of their likelihood of (re-)election (a five-point scale, ranging from 0 Very unlikely to 4 Very likely). To account for demographic factors, I include control variables for gender, age and education of candidates.

At the aggregate level, I would expect candidates from different party families due to diverge ideologies and motivations (Kitschelt, 1988; Przeworski & Sprague, 1986) to affect party dissent differently. Therefore, with the help of the Party Facts Database[27], I categorise parties into

[26] Due to the availability of data -instead of candidates' electoral status-, I include a variable from the CCS questionnaire that measures candidates' perceived chances of (re-)election. Additional analysis using other candidates' characteristics is provided in Appendix.

[27] See https://partyfacts.herokuapp.com [accessed 16 January 2025].

7 party-families: Conservatives, Christian Democrats, Social Democrats and Socialists, Liberals, Greens, Radical Left and Extreme Right. Besides, the behaviour of candidates may be influenced by the diverse institutional environments of different countries (Carey, 2007; Carey & Shugart, 1995; Cox et al., 2000; Hix, 2004; Samuels, 2003). According to career theories, I would expect politicians to make decisions based on potential electoral benefits. This implies that a greater opportunity for voter choice articulation results in higher incentives for politicians to cultivate a personal vote. Carey and Shugart (1995) have outlined three criteria determining the openness for voter choice: ballot control, vote pooling, and types of votes, assigning scores ranging from 0 (most restrictive) to 2 (most open). Following the approach of Trumm and Sudulich, these three characteristics are aggregated, resulting in a scale from 0 (closed) to 5 (open) that defines the 'incentive index of personal vote[28]' and actually measures the strength of incentives for cultivating the personal vote (Trumm & Sudulich, 2014). The scores are derived from the dataset "Electoral Systems and the Personal Vote" (Johnson & Wallack, 2012).

In what follows, I examine the effect of politicians' pre-parliamentary career paths in more detail. I first explore the effects of distinctive career paths arguing that young careerists are more likely to increase party dissent compared to party soldiers. Next, I investigate the hypothesis that reflects to the direction of party dissent exploring that "rebels" tend to move towards the centre rather than the ideological extremes. Finally, I test how electoral success on different career types influence party dissent.

Results

In this section, I describe the results from a series of multilevel models with 5471 individual

[28] Electoral incentives across countries in the analyses: Portugal, Iceland are categorized 0, Czech Republic and Norway are assigned a value of 1, Finland and the Netherlands 2, Germany 3, Italy 4, and the UK 5.

candidates clustered within 13 country-elections exploring the party dissent among candidates. This specification accounts for the country-elections' (2nd level) effects that may uniquely affect the distance between candidates and parties in each election. Analytically, I conduct three logistic regressions, one analysing disagreement (first dependent variable) and two analysing taking more moderate and more radical positions (second and third dependent variables) respectively, using 'no disagreement' as the reference category in all cases.

$$Pr(Y) = career + success + \text{electoral system} + \text{party family} + controls + constant \quad (1)$$

A key focus of the analysis is the comparison of the predictors of various types of politicians' careers. In order to compare the coefficients and fit of different models, I need to run the models based on the same sample (N = 5471). Therefore, I use complete cases to base the analysis only on cases on which I have data for all dependent and independent variables. As part of robustness checks (see Appendix C), I run a series of models employing alternative measures of ideological (in)congruence between candidates and parties and additional independent variables that can potentially affect the results. However, due to a dramatic reduction in the number of cases, they were excluded from the main analyses. The results reported in Appendix C are very similar to the main analyses I present in this section.

How do careers shape candidates' ideological stances?

I start by analysing the direct effects of careers on the three dependent variables. The first hypothesis (H1a-c) predicts that different career paths motivate candidates to disagree with their party's ideological position. The results in Table 2.2 provide evidence consistent with the initial assumption that young careerists increase party disagreement. I find that the coefficient of young careerists has a large, significant and positive effect. Party soldiers, by contrast, exhibit higher levels of party loyalty,

as they are significantly less likely to disagree with their party. Outsiders slightly increase party disagreement, although results fail to reach standard levels of statistical significance.

The next hypotheses (H2a-H2b) predict that diverse career trajectories influence politicians' inclination towards either a more radical or a more moderate stance compared to their party. The first predicts that young careerists diverge from their party's position, tending towards a more moderate stance (H2a). The findings from both the 'radical' and 'moderate' models support this hypothesis. Specifically, in the 'moderate' model, the coefficient for young careerists produces positive and statistically significant relationship, indicating that young careerists diverge from their party's ideological stance, they tend to shift towards the centre. Remarkably, a similar trend is observed among outsiders, who display a notably high likelihood of adopting moderate positions. The second hypothesis (H2b) predicts that party soldiers are more likely to move towards the ideological extremes. Conversely, the 'radical' model suggests that politicians, regardless of their career trajectory, do not experience significant differences. In general, these results suggest that career incentives, particularly for young careerists and outsiders, may encourage the adoption of moderate positions diverging from the party's line. In contrast, party soldiers are loyal to the party (more so than any other career), indicating a reluctance to move towards the centre and risk undermining party's ideological identity.

Table 2.2: Predicting party disagreement, more moderate and more radical positions.

	Multilevel Logistic Regression		
	DV: Party disagreement (Yes=1)	**DV: Radical position (Yes=1)**	**DV: Moderate position (Yes=1)**
Main predictors			
Career trajectories (ref. category: Other)			
Young careerist	0.217*	0.194	0.181*
	(0.112)	(0.134)	(0.156)
Party soldier	-0.010*	0.018	-0.161**
	(0.06)	(0.06)	(0.07)
Outsider	0.051	−0.066	0.201*
	(0.09)	(0.089)	(0.098)
Perceived chance of being elected	0.049*	−0.066*	0.050*
	(0.029)	(0.029)	(0.033)
Control variables			
Gender (female)	−0.212***	−0.254***	−0.023
	(0.065)	(0.067)	(0.080)
Age	−0.006	−0.004	−0.004
	(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.003)
University degree	−0.104	−0.088	−0.035
	(0.069)	(0.070)	(0.084)
Party family (ref. category: Christian Democrats)			
Conservatives	-0.192	−0.442***	0.248*
	(0.111)	(0.117)	(0.129)
Extreme Right	−0.354	0.010	−0.919**
	(0.221)	(0.227)	(0.305)
Greens	0.021	0.301***	−0.360**
	(0.130)	(0.134)	(0.155)
Liberals	−0.161	-0.066	−0.154
	(0.113)	(0.115)	(0.133)
Social Democrats & Socialists	0.327**	0.531***	−0.467***
	(0.119)	(0.112)	(0.136)
Radical Left	−0.354**	−0.290**	−0.338*
	(0.112)	(0.146)	(0.181)
Incentive index personal vote	0.096*	−0.024	0.141*
	(0.057)	(0.058)	(0.061)
Constant	0.834***	0.227	−1.279***
	(0.235)	(0.236)	(0.247)
N candidates (level 1)	5471	5471	5471
N country-elections (level 2)	13	13	13
Log Likelihood	-2856.4	-2810.6	-2164.0
AIC	5850.4	5677.8	4322.2
BIC	5942.4	5776.2	4487.6

*Notes: Estimates are based on a two-level multilevel model, with candidates (level 1) nested within country-election units (level 2). All predictors are included at Level 1. Significance Codes: *** p<.001, ** p<.01, * p<.05.*

Regarding the control variables and aggregate-level variables across models 1–3, there appears several noteworthy results. Female candidates, and those with higher levels of education are significantly more likely to agree with their party, and significantly less likely to 'rebel' - move themselves either on the centre or the left/right extremes of the ideological spectrum. At the aggregate level, candidates, driven by incentives for personal votes, are likely to disagree with their party. While there is an unconfirmed tendency that personal vote behaviour may reduce radical disagreement, there is clear evidence that it encourages a moderate shift in ideological positioning. Interestingly, the party affiliation significantly affects party dissent. For instance, parties that represent a strong ideological cause, such as radical left factions, are significantly less likely to disagree with their party. Conversely, parties that represent the status quo, such as the Conservatives, move towards the centre, potentially pursuing more votes.

The third hypothesis (H3a-b) examines the link between candidates' careers and perceived electoral success. The results indicate that candidates with higher chances of being elected tend to diverge significantly from their party's ideological stances. When candidates decide to dissent, they are less inclined to adhere to radical ideological views, instead, they are more inclined to move towards the ideological centre, which may resonate with the preferences of the median voter. This finding supports the assumption outlined in H3a hypothesis.

To evaluate whether the effect of disagreement is more or less pronounced for perceived elected politicians compared to perceived non-elected ones, I re-ran the regression analyses reported in Table 2.2 on a subset including only (perceived) elected candidates and a subset including only (perceived) non-elected individuals (for the results of all regression see Appendix C). Figure 2.4 reports the predicted probabilities and the 95% confidence interval of these re-analyses. I find that when young careerists have higher chances of being elected, they are more likely to disagree with their party's ideological views. In line with H3b, therefore, young careerists with higher chances of electoral success are more likely to disagree with their party moving towards more moderate

positions compared to party soldiers. This means that young careerists may generally disagree with their party due to considerations related to their career advancement and electoral incentives. In contrary, outsiders with higher chances of being elected are less likely to disagree with their party or adopt radical positions. Therefore, outsiders are generally less inclined to challenge party lines, especially if they rely on the party brand name for visibility. On the other hand, I find no significant differences among non-elected candidates, except for outsiders that are more likely to shift toward the centre when their chances of being elected are low.

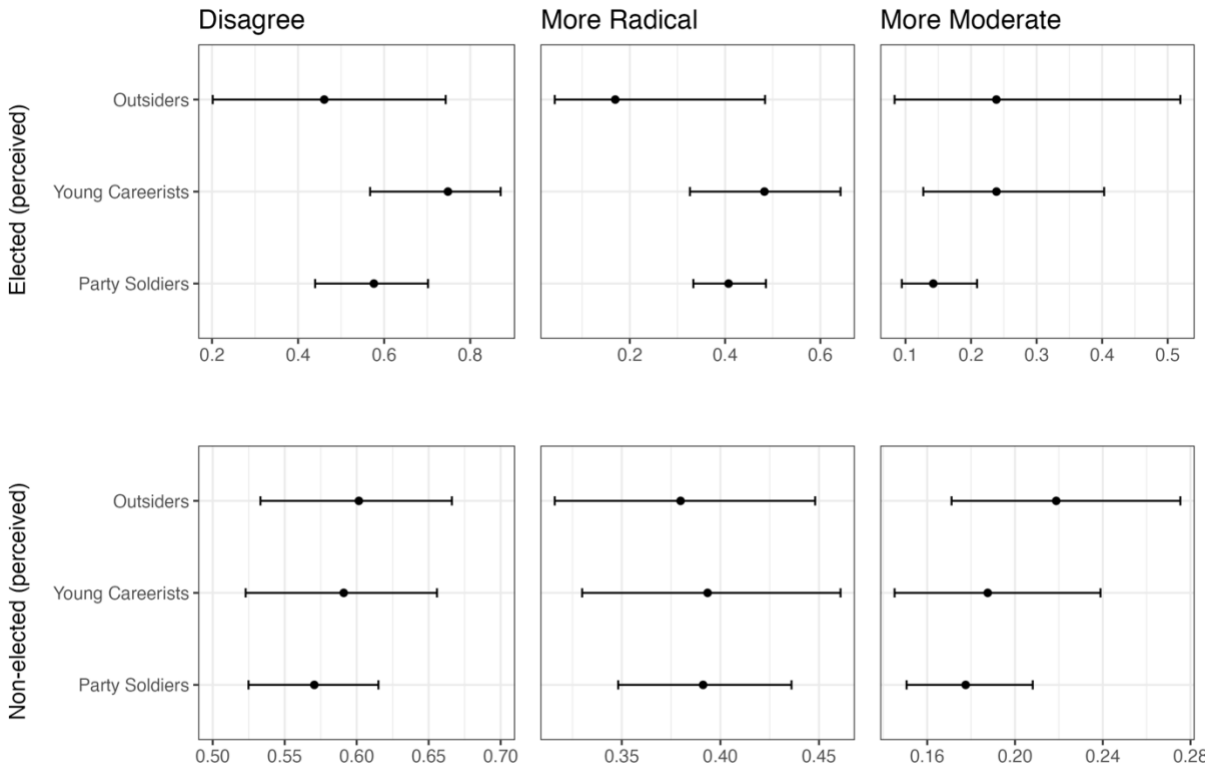

Figure 2.4: Predicted probabilities for perceived elected and non-elected candidates

Discussion

In accordance with the rational theory of economic voting (Downs, 1957) that theorized parties move position on the ideological space to maximize their voters, May (1973) formulates his theory of Special Law of Curvilinear Disparity, namely the idea that party elites are concerned for their (re-)election, moderating their ideological stance, while party activists can be more radical in their political positions than party leadership and party voters, moving towards to the ideological extremes. Although various empirical analyses since then have largely confirmed this hypothesis, a still pending question refers to the specification of those factors that relate to the career profiles of politicians whose effects are vaguely attributed to the increase of party dissent behaviour. This article provides a clear answer on this research question using comparative candidate data from the Comparative Candidates Survey (2016). Three distinct categories of politicians prevail: the party soldiers, the young careerists, and the outsiders. The results reveal that there is a significant association between party dissent behaviour and the preceding career trajectories of politicians, particularly the young careerists. This finding has important implications that merit some elaboration.

The first implication relates to theories of professionalization (Alexiadou, 2016; Benedetto & Hix, 2007; King, 1981; O'Grady, 2019) and spatial analysis (Downs, 1957; May, 1973). The evidence of this article suggests that the "politics only" career path may lead to significantly higher levels of party dissent. Given the limited professional experiences from working in jobs unrelated to politics, young careerists seem to evaluate a lot their status and political survival, disagreeing with their party's ideological stance. This behaviour indicates that young careerists are the ones that may easier abandon the core values of the party on the altar of their political ambitions. Indeed, when they "rebel", they are more likely to move towards to the centre rather than following more radical positions. In contrast to this, party soldiers serve as the ideological backbone of the party significantly enhancing party cohesion. For that reason, a less secured

national political career may strengthen party soldiers' commitment to follow their local political network. This obviously might become a problem for the national party leadership as most candidates would come from this 'middle level' body of activists who may be bound to be more radical. For outsiders, however, party disagreement may not always be the case, despite their tendency to adopt moderate positions on the ideological center. Having experiences that closely resonate with voters due to their professional background can certainly be advantageous, explaining their occasional inclination to move towards the center. However, in most countries, outsiders can be prominent figures such as actors, musicians, or former athletes, who are recruited by the party to boost its electoral appeal through their popularity. Consequently, they are more inclined to align with the party's views.

The second implication concerns the role of electoral success in shaping career incentives. Young careerists often strive for a successful career in politics by cultivating a personal vote (Zittel, 2017) closer to the mean voter to attract more votes. While previous research suggests that if their (re-)election and political elevation are tied to the party leader, they may show loyalty to the party brand (Alexiadou, 2016; Benedetto & Hix, 2007), additional analyses in this study do not confirm this assumption. Contrary to this logic, party soldiers play a pivotal role in shaping the core ideological position of their party. On the other hand, for outsiders, who enter politics in their 60s after a professional career outside of politics, their motives typically align with the party they align with. However, for outsiders with limited electoral prospects -and likely not the widely recognized and famous figures- a viable strategy entails shifting towards the center adopting more moderate positions.

Third, this study may also benefit broad theories of personalization of politics and representation (McAllister, 2007). In contemporary democracies, parties are the source of candidates assisting in delegation and accountability (Dalton et al., 2012; Przeworski et al., 1999; Strøm et al., 2003). These days, however, that parties have lost their 'glamour' and

attractiveness (Dalton & Wattenberg, 2002; Katz & Mair, 1995) candidates' representational role has been increased. In this case, where parties strategically nominate (Rahat & Kenig, 2018; Tromborg, 2019) politicians with or without previous political career experiences might affect not only party cohesiveness (Kam, 2009; Sieberer, 2006) but also candidate-voter congruence. Consequently, individual characteristics are influential on examining the quality of representation. For instance, one notable finding is that women are significantly less likely to be party rebels. This underscores the need for further research to investigate these dynamics in more detail.

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Chapter 3

The Impact of Candidates' Career Experiences on Priority Congruence with Voters

Introduction

Do politicians truly represent the priorities of their voters? Parties' responsiveness to voter demands is crucial for effective political representation (Pitkin, 1967). However, there is a growing perception that politicians have become "out of touch" with their electorate (Dalton, 2004). This disconnect has led to the rise of populism (Kriesi, 2014), dissatisfaction with democracy (Ezrow & Xezonakis, 2011) and increased voter apathy (Reher, 2014). In an era characterized by parties without partisans (Dalton & Wattenberg, 2002) parties need to work harder to convince the electorate to vote for them. As party agents, candidates are expected to deliver preferable policies to voters, maintain their parties' goals, focusing also on their (re)-election. Thus, their career trajectory may be characterised by a mix of vote-, policy- or office-seeking incentives (O'Grady, 2019; Strøm, 1990) and play crucial role in shaping congruence with voters influencing representation positively. Yet few studies consider the importance of politicians' career experiences in explaining issue priority congruence.

This oversight is particularly important as the increasing professionalisation of politics has contributed to the alienation of politicians from the electorate. Most politicians used to start their career in politics after spending some years working in unrelated jobs. Recently, a new career path has become more common, where individuals enter politics directly after university, often as advisors to MPs or ministers. As a result, parties might recruit more election candidates from the pool of special advisers or other political "insiders". Therefore, this politics only career path may lead to a decrease in candidates with skills acquired outside of the political arena. Does this new career trajectory moving into politics directly from university exacerbate the perception that major parties are 'out of touch' with the electorate? How, therefore,

politicians position themselves on issue priorities dimension? Are they congruent with public opinion?

This issue is intertwined with the broader dynamics of party positioning. Spatial modelling theory suggests that parties gravitate towards centrist positions to maximize votes (Downs, 1957). As the policy positions of mainstream parties converge and become more similar, voters may search for alternatives that better represent their priorities (Kitschelt, 1995). For example, left-wing parties such as Podemos in Spain, Five Star Movement in Italy, SYRIZA in Greece, or right-wing parties such as the UKIP party in the United Kingdom, Vox in Spain or AfD in Germany have increased popularity by addressing issues neglected by mainstream parties. Is the phenomenon of incongruence more pronounced in major parties compared to niche parties? Additionally, which electoral systems create the most suitable circumstances for an effective representation?

The rise of new parties has introduced issues that cannot be answered by the traditional left-right dimension (Fuchs & Klingemann, 1990; Van Der Brug & Van Spanje, 2009). In Western Europe, evolving attitudes towards environmentalism, immigration, crime and other issues have led to new political dimensions. Inglehart (1997) labelled this dimension as postmaterialist/materialist, Heath et al. (1994) identified a new axis distinguishing parties according to libertarian/authoritarian values, and Dalton (2009) examined differences between two dimensions, the left/right and environmentalism. In addition to those studies, a new issue dimension has been emerged, the GAL-TAN dimension (Hooghe et al., 2010; Kriesi et al.,2008; Marks et al., 2006), distinguishing green, alternative, libertarian issues from traditional, authoritarian, nationalist positions. Other scholars (Teperoglou & Tsatsanis, 2011; 2012) referred to a "nationalism-postnationalism" axis to explore attitudes towards the politicization of European integration and globalization.

While the left-right scale is a commonly used tool for measuring positions (Golder & Stramski, 2010; Powell, 2004), alternative approaches allow us to examine whether politicians and voters are congruent on specific issues or prioritise the same concerns. Prior research has mainly focused on the link between policy priorities of citizens and government policy (Bevan & Jennings, 2014; Hobolt & Klemmensen, 2008; Jennings & John, 2009; Jones & Baumgartner, 2004; Wlezien, 1995; Stimson et al., 1995). Some studies suggest a positive relationship (Adams et al., 2004), while others find no evidence of party responsiveness to the electorate (O'Grady & Abou-Chadi, 2019). While many studies have analysed congruence in different political systems for various policy areas (Andeweg, 2011; Bafumi & Herron, 2010; Belchior, 2013; Costello et al., 2012; Freire et al., 2014; Önnudóttir, 2014; Spoon & Kluver, 2014; Teperoglou et al., 2014), previous empirical studies testing these theories have some limitations. Most studies have focused on ideological and policy (dis)similarities between parties and voters, while few relied on candidate survey data (Freire et al., 2014; Önnudóttir, 2014; Reher, 2015, 2016; Teperoglou et al., 2014; Thomassen & Schmitt, 1997; von Schoultz & Wass, 2016).

Despite significant research on left-right and policy congruence, however, previous studies have demonstrated that varying types of congruence may lead to different outcomes. For instance, Freire and Belchior (2013) in their analysis of left-right and issue congruence between elites and voters in Portugal have found that voters and MPs are fairly close on left-right issues but for GAL-TAN issues, voters are less pro-libertarian than left-wing parties. Also, a more recent study (Kolltveit & Karlsen, 2025) highlights the importance to explore alternative measures of congruence beyond the ideological spectrum, examining congruence on left-right and attitudes towards specific issues, such as immigration and climate change attitudes, among youth party elites, their parties and voters. Similarly, previous research by Pinggera (2021)

indicates high issue positional congruence but conflicts over issue prioritisation, highlighting the complex dynamic nature of priority congruence.

Additionally, few studies explore the impact of politicians' career paths on issue priority congruence. Previous studies on priority congruence (Clayton et al., 2019; Giger & Lefkofridi, 2014; Reher, 2015; Walczak & Van der Brug, 2012; Walgrave & Lefevere, 2013) has largely overlooked the effect of candidates' career traits on the level of congruence. On the other hand, recent studies examining career traits on representative behaviour (Binderkrantz et al., 2019; Keena & Knight-Finley, 2018; O'Grady, 2019; Ohmura et al., 2018), use MPs' data without considering priorities. These gaps in the literature highlight critical questions regarding the impact of career trajectories on priority congruence.

Empirical studies on issue priorities and policy congruence have relied on fixed survey questions (Hooghe et al., 2002; Bakker et al., 2015) or manifesto data (Spoon & Klüver, 2014; Klüver & Spoon, 2016), rather than using direct measures of voter priorities. The Most Important Problem (MIP) question, which originated with the Gallup Poll in the 1930s, has received scarce research attention. One reason is the weight respondents assign to the question, whether it reflects societal relevance or measures personal importance, leaving the meaning open to respondents interpretation (Wlezien, 2005); another reason is voters' actual willingness to stay informed about lots of issues, as they often rely on a few salient issues, such as economic evaluations which significantly influence party choice during elections (Johns, 2010). Despite these criticisms, however, the MIP question allows for a direct assessment of congruence between urgent needs of citizens and elites that have important effects on democracy (Reher, 2014, 2016). The ideal dataset to examine candidates' priorities is the Comparative Candidates Survey (2016) that is a joint multi-national project with the goal of collecting data on candidates running for national parliamentary elections in different countries. To measure voters' priorities, I use data from the Comparative Study of Electoral Systems (2015, 2018).

The findings of this study shed light on three lines of research. Firstly, the results contribute to the debate on whether "careerist" politicians or those with diverse backgrounds better represent voter priorities. Young careerists apart from ideological proximity to voters (as shown in the first empirical chapter), prioritise issues closer to the average voter and party voters. Secondly, the results highlight the methodological importance of examining congruence on issue priorities that may produce different outcomes compared to left-right ideological congruence. Third, political careers are not independent but rather appear to be dependent to electoral opportunities, party dynamics and institutional settings.

These results hold implications for theories of political representation (Pitkin, 1967). Considering that politicians should act as representatives on behalf of voters' demands, the study highlights the importance of issue salience on voting (Bélanger & Meguid, 2008; Green & Hobolt, 2008). Another implication pertains to the career incentives and intra-party advancement of candidates who may develop vote- and office-seeking rather than policy-seeking incentives (Strøm, 1990; O'Grady, 2019). Parties might strategically nominate certain types of candidates to attract swing voters or reclaim traditional voters. Therefore, parties can manipulate not only issue positions but also issue importance to gain electoral advantages (Meguid, 2005). I return to these implications in the concluding section. In the following section, I introduce the theoretical rationale of the article.

Theoretical Rationale

In representative democracies, the alignment between politicians and their voters is a key indicator of political representation. According to the responsible party model (Adams, 2001) parties are expected to offer divergent policies to provide voters with clear electoral choices (Dalton, 1985), maintain stable platforms reflecting their ideological core stance (Tavits, 2007), and select candidates who address voters' concerns (APSA, 1950). When congruence

between representatives' priorities and voters' needs is low, this suggests that citizens' issues are not adequately represented in the political system (Walgrave & Lafavere, 2013).

The question of how congruence is shaped remains contested. Some argue that voters' preferences primarily drive issue priorities (bottom-up), while others, such as Esaiasson and Holmberg (2017), argue for a top-down model, where elected representatives shape public opinion by emphasizing certain issues. My research contributes to this debate by focusing on how candidates' career backgrounds influence their ability to align with voters' issue priorities, a topic that has received little attention in the literature on political representation.

While much of the literature has focused on policy congruence (see Shim & Gherghina, 2020) —the degree to which candidates and voters share the same positions on issues— I shift the f*ocus to priority congruence.* Priority congruence refers to the alignment of issues that candidates and voters consider most salient, independent of their stance on those issues (see Jones & Baumgartner, 2004; Klüver & Spoon, 2016; Reher, 2016). However, the paradox of issue salience lies in the fact that salience does not indicate a shared position. For example, two voters might both prioritise the issue of taxes, yet one advocates for a tax decrease while the other supports a tax increase. Conversely, two voters might share the same position on an issue, but for one, it is the top priority, while for the other, it is considered second or third priority. Therefore, priorities are dynamic and may change more easily compared to positions. Party activists are less likely to change their stance on an issue that clearly defines the party; however, they may shift priorities. This may suggest that the level of congruence between party activists and voters may be more fluid when it comes to issue priorities, but their alignment with the left-right ideological spectrum could remain more rigid.

In addition to that, priority congruence is crucial where parties compete on multiple unrelated issue dimensions. Voters may agree with a party on some issues while disagreeing on others, making it difficult for them to find a party that represents their views consistently

across the full spectrum of policy issues. This complexity may become deeper when considering the concept of issue ownership. Based on this, parties and politicians aim to mobilize voters by focusing on issues where they have a reputation for competence. Studies from the US and the UK have developed the theory of "issue ownership" (Bélanger & Meguid, 2008; Budge & Farlie, 1983; Van der Brug, 2004) where parties emphasize issues they "own" to appear credible. For example, in the UK, the Labour Party is associated with expertise in healthcare and education, while the Conservative Party is seen as strong on defence and immigration issues. In the US, the Democratic Party is linked to civil rights, whereas the Republican Party is associated with foreign affairs. Despite this, parties may choose to alter their issue priorities. Thus, the salience of an issue can be changed more easily, leading some parties to shift their focus to appeal to the median voter to maximize their voting share (Downs, 1957). Conversely, parties may also opt to maintain their distinctive issue positions to differentiate themselves from competitors (Kitschelt, 1994). This strategy is particularly effective for smaller parties that adopt extreme positions (Wagner, 2012).

One of the most common tool for measuring policy positions is the left-right scale that is frequently used in comparative studies of elite-voter policy congruence (Blais & Bodet, 2006; Golder & Stramski, 2010). However, the growing complexity of voter concerns makes it difficult to capture voter-party congruence solely through this scale. One key reason for this disconnect is the lack of voter awareness regarding party positions (Walgrave & Lefevere, 2013). As a result, scholars have proposed assessing congruence across multiple issue dimensions or focusing on priority congruence (Klüver & Spoon, 2016; Reher, 2015).

Why is it important to explore priority congruence between voters and representatives? Previous studies have shown that the effects of priority congruence are crucial. For instance, Reher (2015) found that priority congruence may positively influence satisfaction with democracy, linking candidate survey data and data from the 2009 European Election Study.

Reher (2016) further demonstrated that voters are more satisfied with democracy when their issue concerns are shared by party candidates and reflected in media campaign coverage. In another study, using data from the 2009 German federal elections, Reher (2014) revealed that voter turnout increases when candidates address voters' concerns. Similarly, Von Schoultz and Wass (2016), relying on Finnish election data from 2011, showed that while candidates and voters often share preferences, factors like socioeconomic status, and ideological orientation can influence their priorities differently. These findings underline the importance of issue salience in shaping voter-party alignment.

In this context, Spoon and Klüver (2014) examined voters' issue priorities, using the Most Important Problem (MIP) question as their main independent variable. Drawing on saliency and issue ownership theories, they argued that parties respond to voters by emphasizing policy issues that align with the priorities expressed by citizens. Their analysis utilises data from the Comparative Manifesto and Euromanifesto projects, along with voter data from European Election Studies (EES) and the Comparative Study of Electoral Systems. In a follow-up study, Klüver and Spoon (2016) investigate how parties respond to voters' issue priorities, going beyond policy positions. Analysing data from 1972 to 2011, they find that while large, mainstream parties are more likely to address broad voter concerns, niche parties tend to focus on issues important to their core supporters. Additionally, opposition parties demonstrate greater responsiveness compared to governing parties, as they are less constrained by past policy decisions. These studies provide a comprehensive understanding of party responsiveness, emphasizing the differing ways in which mainstream and niche parties engage with voter preferences.

However, the question that remains unanswered is how previous career experiences impact on priority congruence with voters. Candidates have distinct starting points in their career. The route towards professionalization has led to a decreasing number of candidates with skills

acquired outside of the political arena and at the same time resulting in a sharp increase of those with prior pre-parliamentary occupations (e.g. Cairney, 2007). Even more future candidates start at an early age their political career after the completion of their education without any experiences of the 'real-life' jobs. This phenomenon involves the high risk of the rise of prospect politicians that are 'out of touch' with voters. This perception derives from the fact that politicians who have previously held positions related to politics are more likely to be elected at a younger age (Norris & Lovenduski, 1995) compared to those who have spent time in other professional occupations before entering parliament (Best & Cotta, 2000), and thus, more likely to be alienated with voters' everyday needs. However, these politicians often focus on their career development (Black, 1972; Schlesinger, 1966), prioritising office and vote incentives. Young careerists act as rational actors, they can even deflect from their own party in order to achieve their career aspirations.

Similarly, outsiders may align more closely with the average voter's priorities. First, outsiders, having worked in jobs outside politics that are closely related to the electorate, may better understand voters' beliefs and needs. This background gives them policy-seeking incentives rather than office- and vote-seeking ones. Additionally, they often have a successful career before entering politics e.g. academics, doctors, lawyers etc., which can be advantageous in their political role due to their experience in addressing societal issues (Heuwieser, 2018; Hyytinen et al., 2018). Even if their political career is unsuccessful, they can return to their previous professions. Their association with social, cultural, and religious organisations, and other interest groups can position them closer to the electorate. An exception may be the group of outsiders who, despite being newcomers to politics, are famous in society and are recruited by parties to increase their voting share (Street, 2004).

In contrast, many politicians begin their career in local politics where they establish strong grassroots connections, a critical foundation for electoral success (Kam, 2009). Unlike

candidates who are "parachuted" into the party from the top -through national party connections or family ties- this type of politicians rise in politics and act similar to party activists, like party soldiers. This gradual career progression demands extensive commitment to the party's ideological core and often entails years of effort before reaching national politics. They may prioritise social issues on the extremes that can be sometimes more liberal, or more traditional than their party. Therefore, I would expect young careerists to prioritise issue priorities of voters due to career incentives, outsiders to align closely with voters because they enter politics to pursue specific policies, and party soldiers to be committed on the identity of their party.

Hypothesis 1a. Young careerists are more likely to be closer to the average voter's issue priorities.

Hypothesis 1b. Party soldiers are less likely to be closer to the average voter's issue priorities.

Hypothesis 1c. Outsiders are more likely to be closer to the average voter's issue priorities.

Additionally, young careerists may have a potentially longer political career ahead of them, which could influence their career concerns (see Schlesinger, 1966; Hain, 1974). Some may start working for the party, either as paid employees or volunteers, or in MPs' offices before deciding to run for office themselves. This close association with the party from a young age might limit their professional achievements outside politics, making them more eager to build a successful career within the party. Consequently, they may highly value promotion and be genuinely loyal to the party leadership, if their candidacy depends on the leader's support. Therefore, younger careerists, prioritising their future in politics, may distance themselves from the mean voter position, even abandoning their own beliefs to demonstrate loyalty to their party

leader (Benedetto & Hix, 2007; O'Grady, 2019). Such behaviour may suggest they are more likely to be office-seekers rather than policy-seekers. However, when their career survival relies on voter support, they may be closer to voters in general. Thus, I would expect electoral successful candidates to be closer to voters' concerns. Specifically, young careerists with higher prospects of being elected may be more likely to prioritise the average voter's issue priorities.

Hypothesis 2a. Candidates with higher chances of being (re-)elected are more likely to prioritise issues closer to voters' needs.

Hypothesis 2b. Young careerists, considering their electoral survival, are particularly inclined to align their priorities with voters' issue priorities.

Crucially, the degree to which candidates align with voters' issue priorities may be party dependent. Recent research has identified that voter loyalty, but also electoral opportunities may influence the parties' policy priorities, with parties either emphasizing issue salience or adapting to emerging issues accordingly (Habersack, 2024). Mainstream parties tend to respond to policy shifts toward the mean voter (Ezrow et al., 2011) to appeal to a diverse electorate. At the same time, however, they would also respond to their partisan supporters (Ibenskas & Polk, 2022). A common strategy among these parties is to implement the so called 'bridge policies'—policies widely supported by both the party base and other swing voters to increase their voting share (De Sio & Weber, 2014). For instance, Belchior and Freire (2013) find that policy congruence is higher for "catch-all" parties than for ideological parties.

On the other hand, niche parties would more likely adhere to their core values, maintaining a unique policy agenda (Meguid, 2005). For niche parties, the spatial literature (Ezrow, 2008; Giger & Lefkofridi, 2014) suggests that they would benefit from distancing themselves more

to the left or right rather than converging on the centre. Thus, candidates from niche parties, who tend to prioritise distinct policies, might align more closely with core voters' priorities of the party. However, Ezrow (2008) thesis applies only in the early phase of niche party development - once a party matures, apparently the electoral benefit of remaining more on the extremes may be disappeared (see Zons, 2016). As the focus of the analyses are parliamentary parties, some of the niche parties included in the dataset may have governing experiences. For example, Green parties in some countries where there was an opportunity to join government coalitions decided to take moderate position, although the main motivation in that context was not electoral benefit but increasing the probability of being able to join government. All of these parties, to some extent, have an ideological debate between the more moderate wing and the more extreme left or right wing. Even though, niche parties have fewer young careerists, they have quite a lot of party soldiers. Based on this, I would expect:

Hypothesis 3a. Niche parties are less likely to prioritise voters' concerns compared to mainstream parties.

Hypothesis 3b. Young careerists within mainstream parties are more likely to prioritise issues closely aligned with voters' priorities, while party soldiers within niche parties are more likely to prioritise issues closely aligned with voters' priorities.

Moving forward, scholarly research has demonstrated that the type of electoral system affects the quality of representation (Huber & Powell, 1994). For instance, Walczak and van der Brug (2012) found that voters are better represented in open and ordered ballot systems. Indeed, in open electoral systems, politicians may have a greater incentive to cultivate personal votes to differentiate themselves from other candidates (Carey & Shugart, 1995), whereas politicians in closed-list electoral systems do not favour such candidate behaviour, resulting in

more party-focused electoral campaigns. Similarly, in majoritarian systems, politicians often rely more directly to personal support to win a majority. For that reason, young careerists are likely to take advantage of these personal electoral incentives (voting-seekers) by prioritising issues that closely align with voters' priorities. In the meanwhile, I would expect party soldiers and outsiders, who are more policy-driven, to prioritise less voters' needs.

Hypothesis 4. Electoral incentives affect priority congruence. Institutions that create stronger incentives for a personal vote are more likely to encourage young careerists to position themselves closer to the average voters' priorities.

Broadly, theoretical and empirical studies have systematically analysed the effect of careers, party characteristics and institutional settings. Scholars have also conducted research on the issue position and issue salience, while other studies have done research on the effects of congruence on representation, satisfaction with democracy or voter turnout. Most studies have addressed the ideological incongruence or policy congruence based on left-right positioning of parties and voters, yet they do not predict the actual priority (in)congruence between candidates and voters. I expand this literature, and I test the factor of career experiences on priority congruence offering an answer into this question. In the following section, I present the data and research design of the article.

Data and Methodology

In this chapter, I argue that careers of politicians, electoral characteristics and party dynamics may influence priority congruence between candidates and voters. To evaluate these hypotheses, I require information on the issue priorities of candidates and voters during the same election period. The project relies on two datasets, the Comparative Candidates Survey[29] (2016) and the Comparative Study of Electoral Systems[30] (2015; 2018). The CCS questionnaire is carried out to the universe population of candidates[31]. However, due to the availability of data in both datasets, I examine 3034 candidates from 11 country-elections from the 'Wave I' CCS dataset: Czech Republic 2006, Finland 2011, Germany 2005, Germany 2009, Iceland 2009, Italy 2013, Netherlands 2006, Norway 2009, Portugal 2009, Portugal 2011, and the United Kingdom 2010. This broadly matches the data from the CSES Module 3[32]: 2006-2011 and CSES Module 4: 2011-2016. The CCS and CSES datasets provide individual-level data on recalled voting behaviour, party identification, socio-economic background, ideological positioning, and issue preferences.

[29] See http://www.comparativecandidates.org [accessed 16 January 2025].

[30] See http://www.cses.org [accessed 16 January 2025].

[31] The national response rates vary across countries with two thirds of Icelandic candidates responding (Iceland 2009), compared to one of six Czech Republic's candidates (Czech Republic 2006). The data and technical report documentation can be accessed and downloaded via the Swiss Center of Expertise in the Social Sciences (SWISSUbase): https://www.swissubase.ch/en/ [accessed 16 January 2025].

[32] The UK dataset was not included in CSES Module 3. The British Election Study (BES), under the direction of Principal Investigators Harold D. Clarke, David Sanders, Marianne C. Stewart, and Paul Whiteley, included the CSES Module 3 questionnaire in an Internet survey run by YouGov after the 2010 election in Great Britain. A total of 927 interviews were collected. As of publication time, the dataset was publicly available from the BES website http://bes2009-10.org/ [retrieved 8 Feb 2018]; however, it is no longer accessible. The BES survey that included CSES Module 3 drew respondents from a panel built using a non-probability sample and thus the study was not included in the CSES Module 3 Full Release.

Research on issue congruence has been assessed by measuring the distance between parties and voters or politicians and voters using Likert scale survey questions on policy issues (Giger & Lefkofridi, 2014; von Schoultz & Wass, 2016, Walczack & Van der Brug, 2012; Walgrave & Lefevere, 2013). Additionally, previous comparative studies have employed expert surveys to locate parties on dimensions, such as the GAL-TAN dimension (Bakker et al., 2015; Hooghe et al., 2002; Marks et al., 2006; Vachudova & Hooghe, 2009; Van der Brug & Van Spanje, 2009; Wheatley, 2012), whereas Louwerse (2020) derived issue position estimates by applying Wordfish scores.

A smaller body or research has explored priority congruence by analysing the survey question of the most important problem facing the country (Clayton et al., 2019; Jones & Baumgartner, 2004; Klüver & Spoon, 2016; Reher, 2014, 2015, 2016; Spoon & Klüver, 2014). Some of these studies have treated priorities as independent variables, while others as dependent variables. For instance, Reher examined the effect of priority congruence in voter turnout (2014) and levels of satisfaction with democracy (2015; 2016). Specifically, Reher (2016) used a weighted scoring system to measure the salience of issues for candidates and voters, deriving a priority congruence score for each voter, based on the alignment between their priorities and the proportion of candidates addressing those priorities. Clayton et al. (2019) explored priority congruence by examining how well the most important issues prioritised by women and men MPs align with those of women and men citizens, using the difference in response percentages between the groups. In addition, Klüver and Spoon (2016) measure party attention to specific issue areas by summing the percentage of party manifestos devoted to each issue. Also, Spoon and Klüver, 2014 have examined party issue responsiveness by comparing the policy issues voters prioritised in the previous elections with the those emphasized by parties in the current election. In contrast, Jones and Baumgartner (2004)

applied a novel method of multi-dimensional scaling to study the alignment of priorities between the Congress and public.

To investigate priority incongruence, I use responses to the open-ended question: "In your opinion, what is the most important problem (MIP) facing the country today?" provided by both candidates and voters. Using the most important problem (MIP) question to measure candidates' and voters' priorities is highly effective due to its focus on capturing the singular issue that dominates respondents' minds. Cognitive limitations make it unlikely that voters will process or prioritise many issues simultaneously (Lupia et al., 2000). Instead, individuals often rely on one or two key issues that shape their voting decisions, even if they are not fully aware of this. Asking for multiple issue responses can lead to misleading answers, as respondents may mistakenly believe that more issues influenced their decisions than actually did. The MIP question cuts through this by eliciting the issue that voters see as most relevant, which may reflect both their personal priorities and the national agenda, influenced by the media coverage or elite debate. For candidates, the MIP responses may reflect party priorities or personal disagreements with their party, making it a robust tool to analyse priority congruence in elections. Moreover, this open-ended format allows for a wide range of responses, providing thoughtful insights into what voters and candidates view as the most important issues at a given moment.

In the CCS dataset, most candidates' responses are provided in English, with the exception of answers from the Netherlands and the Czech Republic. To maintain consistency across the dataset, I manually translated the non-English responses into English. Respondents in CCS and CSES datasets typically respond with brief, one- or two-word answers that highlight key issues, without elaborating on their stance. In Figure 3.1, I examine the key issues that concern both voters and candidates. I begin by examining which issues are prioritised by each group and analysing their frequencies. Unemployment is highlighted as the most critical issue for both

candidates (22.1%) and voters (28%). Economic issues such as the Economic Growth and Economic Crisis, and Welfare follow on the list. Specifically, politicians highlight the term "growth" over "crisis", maintaining a more positive tone. Notable differences are observed for Governance and Public Administration (18% versus 6.2%) and Health issues (5% versus 0.6%) where voters assign much greater importance compared to candidates. Immigration is also a prominent issue for voters, especially in the Netherlands and the UK (see Appendix D). Candidates emphasize more the Welfare issues (15.9% versus 6.5%) and Climate Change (6.2% versus 3.6%) than voters do, indicating a mismatch in issue salience. Conversely, issues such as Agriculture, Religion, and Energy were less frequently highlighted, indicating lower prioritisation for candidates and voters.

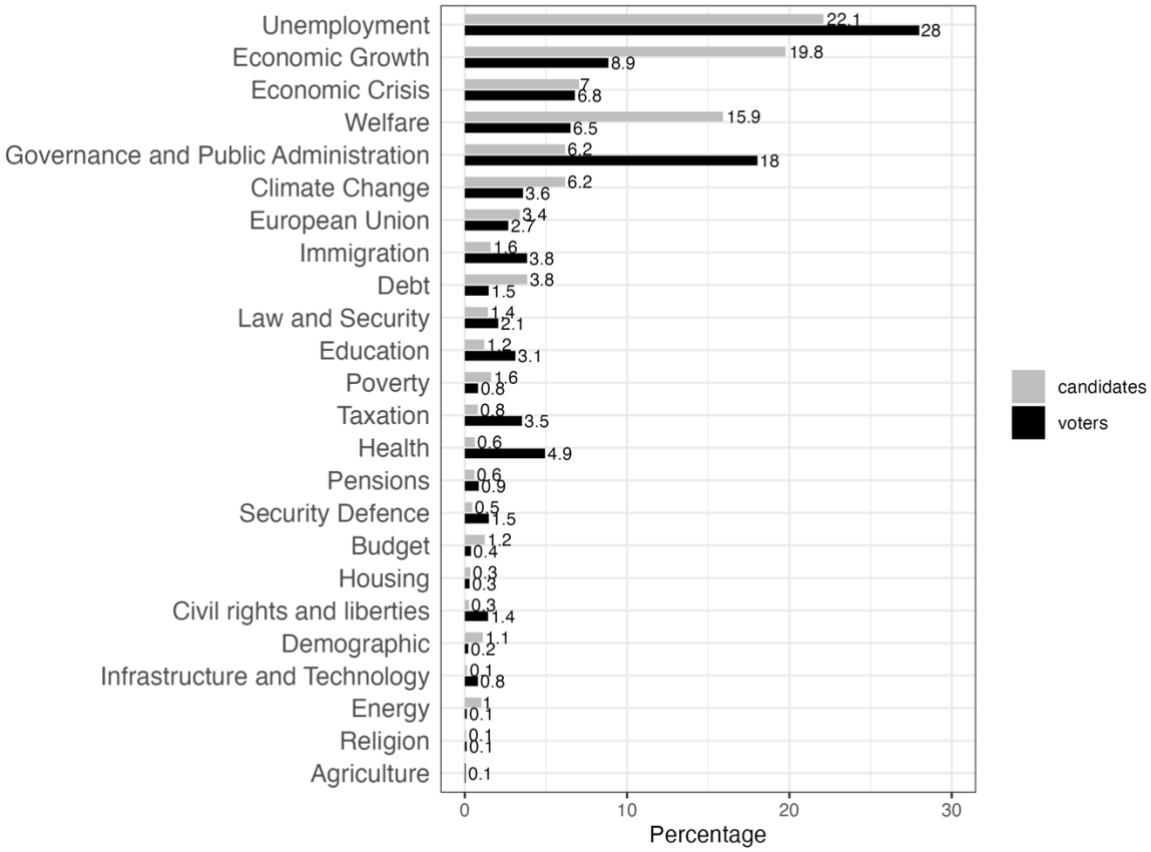

Figure 3.1. Percentage share of the most important issues prioritised by candidates and voters.

To analyse these issue priorities, I employ a non-metric multidimensional scaling (NMDS) analysis to uncover the spatial structure of priorities among candidates and voters (Johnson & Wichern, 2007). Following the approach of Jones and Baumgartner (2004), who used NMDS to compare public issue priorities from Gallup polls with Congressional agendas, I apply this technique to visualise the priorities of candidates relative to voters' priorities. Specifically, NMDS is an ideal method as it may reveal underlying patterns of issue salience between the two groups. To measure, then, congruence between candidates and voters, I construct the dependent variable, *priority incongruence*, as the Euclidean distance between a candidate's NMDS position and the mean NMDS position of voters in their country. While this approach does not allow for isolating differences on specific issues, such as the environment, economy, or immigration, as seen in other research (see Spoon & Klüver, 2014), its strength lies in capturing the overall congruence between candidates and voters on a broader scale (see Reher, 2015). Therefore, this method provides a more comprehensive view of how well candidates represent the general priorities of the electorate.

To empirically examine my hypotheses[33], I utilise data on candidates' prior political experiences focusing on three distinct career paths: the young careerist, the outsider, and the party soldier (see also Chapter 2). Young careerists are candidates under the age of 39[34] who have no prior experience in local politics e.g. serving as Local Councillors, have built their careers within the party being employed by their national party or gaining experience through positions in MPs' or ministerial offices at national or regional level. Young careerists make up approximately 5% of the candidates. Outsiders, who comprise 15% of the candidates, are political newcomers, with no prior political experience before deciding to run for national

[33] Descriptive statistics for all variables are provided in the Appendix D, Table D1.

[34] The 39-year cut-off threshold is based on the data cases using the statistical method of mixture analysis (Fraley & Raftery 2002; Pearson, 1984). As robustness checks, additional analyses with thresholds at 35 years and 30 years are provided in the Appendix D, Table D5.

elections. Party soldiers, the most common category at 33%, lack experience working directly for the party or in MPs' offices; instead, their political background comes from local politics, such as serving as Local Councillors or working in local party offices.

Furthermore, as control variables, I include a range of individual-level variables. I incorporate the continuous variable 'electoral success' which is measured on a five-point scale ranging from 1 (very unlikely) to 5 (very likely), based on candidates' self-assessed likelihood of (re-)election. Next, I assess the variable of ideological incongruence (dependent variable used in Chapter 1) to test whether ideologically congruent candidates are also congruent on issue priorities with voters, inspired by previous research highlighting differences across types of congruence (see Freire & Belchior 2013). I also test whether those who diverge from their party's views bridge the priority gap between themselves and voters (dependent variable used in Chapter 2). Last, include the sex (female/male) and age (measured in numbers) of candidates.

For aggregate-level variables, I include the party's status, whether party is in government or opposition, as governing parties may be more responsive to voters. I also consider whether the party is mainstream or niche, as I would expect larger and mainstream parties to be more responsive to voters' priorities (Spoon & Klüver 2014). However, the behaviour of candidates can also be influenced by different institutional environments (Hix, 2004). Carey and Shugart (1995) identify three criteria for voter choice openness: ballot control, vote pooling, and vote types. Following Trumm and Sudulich, these characteristics are aggregated into a scale from 0 (closed) to 6 (open) to measure the strength of personal vote incentives (Trumm & Sudulich, 2014). These scores are derived from the "Electoral Systems and the Personal Vote" dataset (Johnson & Wallack, 2012).

In the following section, I analyse the differences in priorities between candidates and voters through the application of multidimensional scaling, and then, I employ a multilevel modelling approach to investigate the main argument of this chapter – how candidates' career

experiences affect priority congruence with voters. The exact wording of all questions used in the analyses is documented in the Appendix D.

Results

This section begins with a discussion of the results of the non-metric MDS analyses. The section concludes with a presentation of the regression analyses on priority incongruence between candidates and voters. Figure 3.2 presents the issues that are prioritised by voters. The distance between points represents the dissimilarity between them. Issues that are closer together are more similar in terms of prioritization, while those further apart are more dissimilar. For voters, the economic crisis issue stands out as a highly prioritized issue, distinct from other issues. On the other hand, issues such as governance and public administration, budget, European Union, security defence, law and security, welfare, and civil rights and liberties are clustered near the centre, indicating these issues have a moderate and relatively consistent level of prioritization among voters. Debt is somewhat outlier compared to most of the rest issues. Agriculture, religion, poverty, housing, and demographic are grouped, suggesting these are similarly prioritized and distinct from other categories, whereas climate change, energy, health, and education indicate a similar prioritization among these issues.

In Figure 3.3, candidates' issues of welfare, economic growth, infrastructure and technology, and health are clustered near the center. This indicates that these issues are moderately prioritized across candidates without extreme polarization. Agriculture and religion are located far from other issues, indicating that are uniquely prioritized or considered differently compared to other issues. Governance and public administration, unemployment, budget, and taxation are grouped together, suggesting a similar level of prioritization among them. Issues like Energy, Climate Change, and Housing are grouped, indicating they are similarly prioritized and distinct from the issues on the right side. Economic Crisis, Debt, and

Taxation are grouped on the bottom-right quadrant, suggesting candidates prioritize these economic issues similarly but distinctly from other categories. Finally, social issues such as civil rights and liberties, education, and demographic issues are close together, indicating they are similarly prioritized by the candidates.

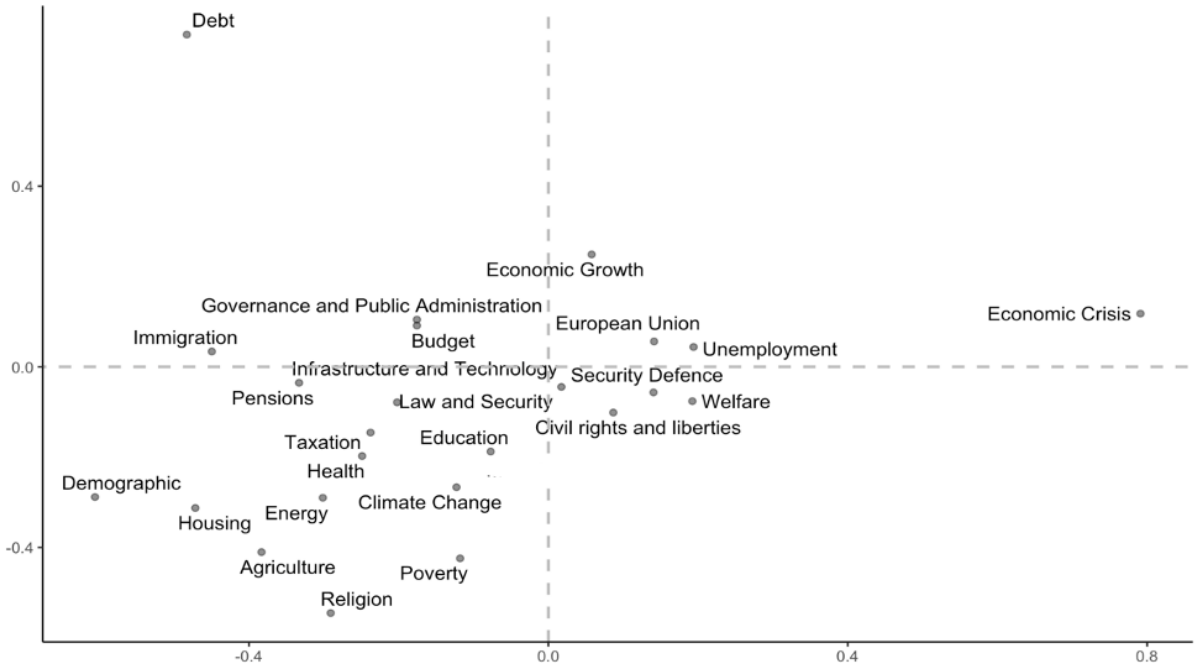

Figure 3.2. Non-metric multidimensional results of voters' issue priorities.

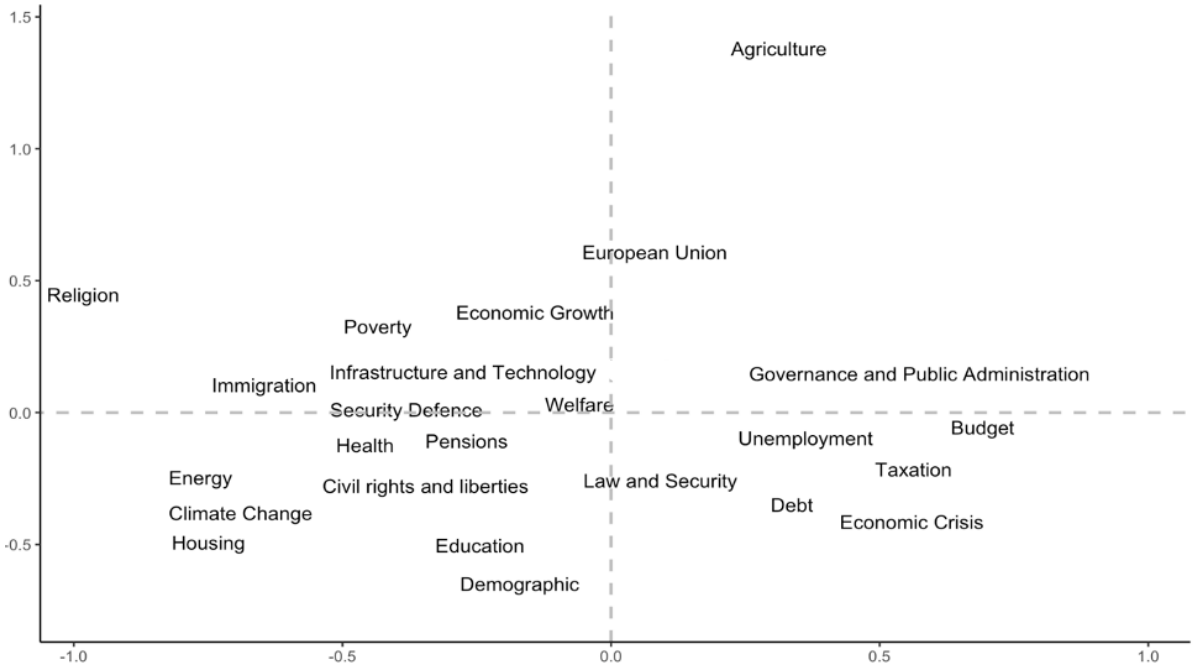

Figure 3.3. Non-metric multidimensional results of candidates' issue priorities.

Overall, these results reveal distinct patterns of issue prioritization. Candidates' prioritization is more dispersed, with some issues like agriculture and religion being uniquely prioritized. In contrast, voters have a clearer focus on certain issues, with Economic Crisis standing out as a highly prioritized issue, indicating a strong concern about economic stability. Both groups share some central issues, but the specific topics and their prioritization differ, reflecting the different perspectives and concerns of candidates and voters.

Are candidates and voters congruent on priorities?

In this section, I describe the results from a series of multilevel models with individual candidates (N=3034) nested into 11 country-elections predicting the priority congruence between candidates and voters. This specification accounts for the country-election (2nd level) effects that may affect uniquely the distance between candidates and voters in each election. Importantly, the dependent variable measures the levels of *congruence.* That means a positive sign indicates a lower distance between candidates and voters. The results shown in Table 3.1 provide evidence consistent with the initial assumption that candidates' careers affect priority congruence.

The first hypothesis (H1a) predicts that young careerist politicians, who have strong career concerns, are more inclined to prioritise issues closer to the voters' issue priorities. Across all models the coefficient for young careerists remains consistently positive and statistically significant, indicating substantial effect on priority congruence between candidates and the average voter, supporting the initial hypothesis. The next hypothesis (H1b) predicts that party soldiers may be further away from the average voter. The findings, nevertheless, suggests that party soldiers do prioritise average voter's priorities, failing to support the initial assumption. In contrast, the coefficient for outsiders is insignificant and negative suggesting that outsider candidates show lower priority congruence compared to their counterparts, failing also to

support the initial assumption (H1c). These results may suggest that young careerists knowing politics from the inside can be helpful to prioritise voters' priorities. After all, politics is their only profession and representing well voters' views is also priority for them. On the other hand, outsiders appear to be "novices" on the political game. They may have less financial and political resources compared to party soldiers and young careerists that are "long runners". For party soldiers, the results suggest that the level of priority congruence may be more fluid when it comes to issue priorities, possibly adjusting themselves to issues of the current political climate. However, as "soldiers" of the party their ideological position appears to be fixed, as highlighted in Chapter 1.

The second hypothesis (H2) predicts that candidates with higher chances of being (re-)elected are more likely to prioritise issues closer to the voters' needs. For instance, young careerists, considering their career electoral survival, may be more inclined to prioritise issues closer to the voters' issue priorities. Table 3.1 reveals that the variable of electoral success consistently shows a significant positive effect on priority congruence, implying that (perceived) successful candidates are more aligned with voter priorities. Interestingly, the interaction between careers and electoral success shows a significant negative effect for party soldiers, indicating that party soldiers might strategically cultivate a personal vote closer to their constituents (Zittel, 2017). Priority congruence slightly increases for outsiders when electoral chances are getting higher.

Table 3.1. Priority congruence between candidates and the average voter

	DV: Priority Congruence (continuous)			
	Model (1)	**Model (2)**	**Model (3)**	**Model (4)**
Main predictors				
Career trajectories (ref. category: Other)				
Party Soldier	0.068**	0.066**	0.65*	0.062*
	(0.029)	(0.062)	(0.064)	(0.032)
Young Careerist	0.076***	0.073**	0.60*	0.079**
	(0.040)	(0.040)	(0.045)	(0.039)
Outsider	-0.044	-0.044	-0.042	-0.039
	(0.032)	(0.067)	(0.073)	(0.038)
Electoral Success (higher chances)	0.014**	0.043*	0.014**	0.015**
	(0.005)	(0.020)	(0.005)	(0.005)
Niche Party	-0.090***	-0.089***	-0.101***	-0.088**
	(0.015)	(0.015)	(0.015)	(0.075)
Electoral Incentives	0.017	0.017	0.034	0.017
	(0.034)	(0.034)	(0.038)	(0.034)
Control variables				
Female	-0.003	-0.003	-0.003	-0.006
	(0.012)	(0.012)	(0.012)	(0.012)
Age (in numbers)	-0.001	-0.001	-0.001	-0.001
	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)
Ideological incongruent with voters	-0.011**	-0.011**	-0.011**	-0.011**
	(0.004)	(0.004)	(0.004)	(0.004)
Party Rebel (ideological)	0.007	0.005	0.005	0.003
	(0.012)	(0.012)	(0.012)	(0.012)
Party in Government	0.015	0.016	0.014	0.016
	(0.015)	(0.015)	(0.015)	(0.015)
Interactions				
Electoral Success x Party Soldier		-0.034*		
		(0.020)		
Electoral Success x Young Careerist		-0.020		
		(0.023)		
Electoral Success x Outsider		0.007		
		(0.025)		
Electoral Incentives x Party Soldier				0.008
				(0.09)
Electoral Incentives x Young Careerist				0.012
				(0.018)
Electoral Incentives x Outsider				0.036
				(0.024)
Niche x Party Soldier			0.056*	
			(0.075)	
Niche x Young Careerist			0.064	
			(0.046)	
Niche x Outsider			-0.024	
			(0.076)	
Constant	-0.324***	-0.345***	-0.328***	-0.367***
	(0.087)	(0.114)	(0.121)	(0.076)
N candidates (level 1)	3034	3034	3034	3034
N country-elections (level 2)	11	11	11	11
Log Likelihood	−2436.604	−2428.846	−2146.660	-2246.442
AIC	1645.9	1676.8	1652.0	1649.2
BIC	1691.2	1697.0	1688.4	1667.2

*Notes: Estimates are based on a two-level multilevel model, with candidates (level 1) nested within country-election units (level 2). All predictors are included at Level 1. Significance Codes: *** p<.001, ** p<.01, * p<.05.*

The following hypothesis (H3a) predicts that niche parties are less responsive to voters' priorities, compared to mainstream parties, as candidates may prioritise specific issues of the political agenda of the niche party. In Table 3.1, the coefficient reveals that findings are consistent with the initial assumption, as candidates of niche parties appear to be significantly incongruent with the average voter priorities. In other words, mainstream party candidates demonstrate higher congruence with the average voter and party voters, suggesting that mainstream parties -acting as catch-all parties- are more attuned to voter priorities.

Moving forward to the interactions between career trajectories and the party type, I receive interesting results. The next hypothesis (H3b) predicts that young careerists within mainstream parties are more likely to prioritise issues closely aligned with voters' priorities (vote-seeking), while party soldiers within niche parties are more likely to prioritise issues closely aligned with voters' priorities (policy-seeking). Notably, both young careerists and party soldiers within niche parties may increase the levels of priority congruence. These findings suggest that young careerists and party soldiers may moderate their party's position, fostering greater alignment with broader voters' priorities. Therefore, as niche party matures, apparently the electoral benefit of remaining more on the extremes disappears (Zons, 2016), encouraging a shift toward more centrist priorities. This evolution underscores the dynamic nature of parties.

The fourth hypothesis (H4) predicts that candidates competing in electoral systems which tend to focus on securing personal votes are more likely to be closer to the average voter. Therefore, I would expect especially young careerists to prioritise issues closer to voters' issues, while outsiders to be further away with voters' priorities. Results show that the effects of electoral incentives on priority congruence -although positive- are not statistically significant indicating limited impact on priority congruence. From the interactions between career trajectories and electoral incentives, findings suggest that all career types by fostering a

personal vote are slightly more likely to align with the average voter's positions; however, this effect is minor.

Overall, the results highlight that young careerists, party soldiers and those with higher prospects for electoral success tend to increase priority congruence, aligning more closely with voters' issue priorities. In contrast, outsiders are further away from voters' needs. The model interactions reveal that young careerists are office- and vote-seeking, as they benefit more from electoral success and personal vote incentives, whereas outsiders appear to be less experienced. Also, the consistent effects of party types and party's ideological motivations underscore the importance of party dynamics in shaping candidate-voter priority congruence. These findings provide a nuanced understanding of how different factors influence candidates' alignment with voters' priorities, impacting on parties' electoral strategies and candidates' positioning.

Discussion

Scholars have long theorized that substantive representation is important in democracies (Huber & Powell, 1994). However, how well do politicians' priorities align with those of the people they serve? Ideologically, politicians may align closely with voters, but in practice, their attention to issues can be much more distant. In this article, I have argued that political career experiences in association with party dynamics and electoral system effects may shape differently the levels of priority congruence. I provide an answer to this argument using comparative data from the Comparative Candidates Survey (2016) and the Comparative Study of Electoral Systems (2015; 2018). The results suggest that young careerist candidates who have spent their professional lives working for political parties or advising MPs prioritise better the voters' needs compared to outsiders who have career experiences outside the political arena.

Additionally, the findings provide support for meso- and macro-level characteristics on affecting priority congruence. Overall, mainstream parties align better with the average voters' and party voters' needs compared to niche parties. Nevertheless, as the policy positions of mainstream political parties converge and become more similar, voters may search for alternatives that better represent their priorities (Kitschelt, 1995). Niche parties as part of coalition governments can close the gap among their party supporters showing similar characteristics to mainstream parties (e.g. Zons, 2016). Regarding electoral system characteristics, electoral systems that allow candidates to cultivate a personal vote through more personalized campaigns, which appeal to the median voter (Carey & Shugart, 1995), tend to better align candidates and voters. Specifically, voters' preferences are better represented in open and ordered ballot systems (see also Walczak & van der Brug, 2012).

The evidence of this article suggests that distinctive career experiences of politicians affect priority congruence. Young careerists thinking of their political elevation might often show loyalty to the party brand and party leader (Alexiadou, 2016; Benedetto & Hix, 2007, O'Grady, 2019) but they also appear responsible for emphasizing similar priorities to voters' priorities. For prospect and less successful politicians, the locality may still matter, as they have either just started their national political career or they have not secured their national party career, being committed to a local political network. Thus, further evidence is necessary to examine candidate-voter congruence at a local level to investigate whether candidates are closer to voters in their constituency.

Additionally, this study will benefit broad theories of personalisation of politics and representation (McAllister, 2007). In contemporary democracies, parties are the source of candidates assisting in delegation and accountability (Dalton et al, 2012; Przeworski et al, 1999; Strøm et al, 2003). These days, however, that parties have lost their 'glamour' and attractiveness (Dalton & Wattenberg, 2002; Katz & Mair, 1995) candidates' representational

role has been increased. In this case, the strategic nomination of politicians -whether they have previous political career experience or not- might affect not only the ideological congruence between candidates and voters but also their alignment on priorities. After all, citizens might be more encouraged to vote (Reher, 2014) and increase the levels of satisfaction with democracy (Reher, 2015, 2016). Therefore, the career backgrounds of politicians may play a crucial role in assessing the quality of representation.

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Conclusion

In this dissertation, I explored the growing phenomenon of a new type of "careerists" politicians and its implications for political representation and congruence between politicians and voters. A key concern in modern democracies is the perception that politicians are increasingly "out of touch" with the electorate. One factor contributing to this perception is the rise of politicians who enter politics directly after university without gaining substantial professional work experience outside of politics. This has led to the development of a specific category of politicians that I refer to them as "young careerists". These politicians usually follow a professional path that prioritise career advancement and electoral survival, raising critical questions about whether this phenomenon is contributing to the widening gap between political elites and the public. Are politicians out of touch with voters? Is the rise of young careerists responsible for this growing disconnect? Are certain types of politicians more aligned with voters, while others are more closely tied to party interests? To address these questions, I employed a comparative approach using national-level data mainly from the Comparative Candidates Study (CCS) and the Comparative Study of Electoral Systems (CSES). The three preceding chapters sought both to theoretically study and empirically test the effects of pre-parliamentary career backgrounds on congruence with voters and party. While in Chapter 1 and Chapter 2, I examined the ideological congruence between candidates, voters and parties, in Chapter 3, I narrowed down the scope of analysis by exploring priority congruence with voters.

In Chapter 1, I started with the hypothesis that the phenomenon of young careerist politicians has become more prevalent across parties and countries. The main findings provided evidence that young careerists are not solely a UK phenomenon but also an issue appeared in many European countries, with approximately 1 out of 10 politicians considered to belong to this category. More importantly, this growing trend, as I described, reflects the situation across

diverse political families. Drawing on the rational theory of economic voting (Downs, 1957), next, I hypothesized that young careerists are more likely to moderate their ideological stance to appeal to a broader electorate, increasing, therefore, ideological congruence with voters. The results suggest that young careerists are significantly more likely to abandon the core values of their party on the altar of their political ambitions. However, young careerists at the dusk of their political career, are less influenced by career incentives and significantly less likely to align with voters' ideological position, as results reveal in Chapter 1. Additionally, I found evidence that institutions offering incentives to cultivate a personal vote, assist with the increase of ideological congruence between young careerists and voters. On the other hand, the interaction between young careerists and party families has shown a kind of mixed results. This category of politicians may indeed shift parties toward the ideological centre, but the extent of this shift depends on the ideological motives of the party.

In what follows, Chapter 2 changed the point of view and focused on how distinctive career routes affect ideological congruence within parties. In line with Downs' (1957) rational theory of economic voting, which posits that parties adjust their ideological position to maximize voter support, Chapter 2 has built on May's (1973) theory of Special Law of Curvilinear Disparity. May's theory suggests that party elites tend to moderate their ideological stances, while party activists are often more radical, drifting toward ideological extremes. I theoretically developed and empirically tested a new approach in which I argued that politicians' career trajectories influence party dissent behaviour. First, I proposed three distinctive career routes: the young careerists, political elites started their career in politics at a very young age usually working first for the party or at MPs' offices before deciding to run as election candidates; the outsiders, individuals coming from an established professional career background with zero political experiences; and the party soldiers, those candidates acquiring strong roots at local-level politics. Second, I put forward that party soldiers are more likely to promote party unity

compared to young careerists and outsiders. The results of Chapter 2 suggest that young careerists are more likely to dissent moving the party to the ideological centre. Furthermore, looking separately at perceived elected and non-elected politicians, I found evidence that young careerists with greater electoral prospects are significantly more likely to disagree with their party either holding more radical or more moderate positions.

An intriguing question that springs from the previous chapters is actually how well politicians represent voters' needs. Politicians may align ideologically with the electorate, but in practice, their attention to issues can be much more distant. In other words, elites may have the same beliefs with the public, but they prioritise in a different manner. In Chapter 3, I argued that political career experiences in association with party dynamics and institutional effects have a distinct impact on the levels of priority congruence. Indeed, the main results have shown that young careerists, candidates with pre-parliamentary career experiences from jobs inside the political arena, are significantly more likely to prioritise voters' issues compared to party soldiers and outsiders. More importantly, however, the findings revealed that candidates align with voters' priorities when they have high electoral prospects. Additionally, the findings provided support for meso- and macro-level effects on explaining priority congruence. While candidates from niche parties decrease priority congruence, young careerists from these parties tend to better align with voters' priorities. In contrast, institutional effects have a limited overall impact on priority congruence, though young careerists are more attuned to voters' needs in majoritarian electoral systems.

In the remainder of this concluding chapter, I first discuss what this dissertation adds to the academic debate and what kind of policy implications can be drawn from the findings. Second, research can make progress via a lively academic debate. Hence, the theoretical arguments and research designs as outlined above represent just one possible approach out of many. Consequently, I reflect on the limitations of this study, addressing areas where alternative

methods or approaches could have been applied. Finally, while the concluding sections in each empirical chapter offered specific suggestions for further research, I summarise these avenues and highlight the most prominent opportunities for future investigation.

Academic Contribution and Policy Implications

The main findings as summarised above are novel, rest on newly developed arguments in the theoretical literature and, hence, each specific chapter contributes to our understanding of the effects of careers on ideological and priority congruence. In the first place, the original contribution to knowledge lies in its systematic investigation of career trajectories, especially the emerging trend of a new type of politicians, the young careerist, and their impact on ideological and priority congruence between parties and voters. Compared to the previous literature on careerism and professionalisation that has understudied or provide scarce evidence of this phenomenon, I provided comparative empirical evidence merging national data from the Comparative Candidates Survey (CCS) and the Comparative Study of Electoral Systems (CSES).

From a broad point of view, previous research has extensively examined the transition of politicians from amateurs to professionals (Weber, 1991 [1919]; King, 1981; McAllister, 2007), with recent attention focusing on the emergence of a new distinctive type of politicians (Allen, 2013; Cowley, 2012). In Chapter 1, I aimed to fill this gap and shed light on two lines of research. Using comparative data, first, I addressed whether this phenomenon where individuals entering politics directly after university serving as party and MPs advisors with limited or no real-life career experiences outside the realm of politics is solely a British issue. Second, and most importantly, I built on the current debate and ongoing discussions that "careerists" are perceived out of touch with their voters, and I provided evidence that regardless of societal impressions, young careerists are close to the electorate.

Another important aspect to consider is the role of careers on party dissent behaviour, as examined in Chapter 2. The theoretical rationale lied in the argumentation regarding the existence of three categories of politicians: the young careerist, the party soldiers, and the outsiders, that is based on their career choices before their decision to run as national election candidates. In addition to that, although previous studies on party congruence (Önnudóttir, 2014; Pedrazzani & Segatti, 2022) explored the impact of candidates' representation styles, I have shown first how career effects impact party dissent and second the direction of dissent behaviour. This idea stems from the notion that certain politicians can strategically shift their position on the ideological spectrum, either toward the left-right or to the centre but for some parties, these shifts may be viewed as either maintaining ideological cohesion or as acts of "rebellion", depending on the party's ideological cause. Hence, I offer an answer on these complex relationships. Methodologically, unlike previous studies that focus on MPs' attitudes as a provider of information about parties, I posit election candidates as the main scope of analyses. Candidates represent a broader sample of politicians with distinctive career paths and incentives.

In the same vein, recent research to my knowledge has given less attention on the survey question "what is the most important issue facing your country" on examining priorities. This survey question, though part of most voter and candidate studies, has received scarce research attention. Most of the previous literature focuses on the ideological congruence between parties and voters (e.g. Powell, 2004) or policy congruence between government and citizens (e.g. Hobolt & Klemmensen, 2008) but few studies have examined the complex and dynamic nature priority congruence. Thus, in Chapter 3, I aimed to fill this literature gap. In addition to this, previous empirical studies on priority congruence relied on manifesto data (Spoon & Klüver, 2014) rather than using direct measures of politicians' and voters' priorities. On the one hand, the MIP responses may reflect party priorities or personal disagreements with their party,

making it a robust tool to analyse priority congruence in elections. Moreover, this open-ended format allows for a wide range of responses, providing thoughtful insights into what voters and candidates view as the most important issues at a given moment.

With respect to the policy implications of this dissertation, several key recommendations emerge. First, parties should prioritise the promotion and selection of candidates with diverse career backgrounds. The main findings suggest that outsiders tend to be more policy-driven, though both young careerists and party soldiers can prioritise voters' needs under certain circumstances. Therefore, parties should implement candidate selection rules or electoral incentives that favour individuals from a diverse pool of career backgrounds. This is particularly important, as this approach would increase ideological diversity within the party and potentially improve representativeness. Additionally, by adopting nomination strategies that incorporate a mix of young careerists, party soldiers and outsiders, parties would be able to find balance between maintaining party loyalty to party leadership and ensuring effective voter representation.

The second implication relates to the role of political elites with their constituents. Although this has not been empirically tested due to limited data at the sub-national level, parties should consider developing internal party mechanisms allowing more autonomy to local branches in candidate selection. This will reduce the risk of party dissent behaviour by young careerists, who usually dominate the central candidate selection. The results indicate that young careerists are more likely to "rebel" disagreeing with their party because they are less ideologically attached with the core ideology of the party. For young careerists, the party is simply a "vehicle" that assists with developing their professional political career. On the other hand, party soldiers, who act as party activists, they are loyal to the ideological core of their party. By strengthening local representation with measures such as constituency-based evaluations of politicians, this would enhance the ability of parties to respond to local issues.

The third implication concerns the role of parties on policy implementation. According to Sören Holmberg's (2011) analysis of 'dynamic representation', elites take the lead followed by voters resulting in a "top-down process" of agenda setting. The public's declining participation in political activities, therefore, should be addressed through deliberate actions by parties aimed at the re-engaging the electorate. For instance, policy makers should not only promote policies that reflect voter's needs and priorities, but also policies that promote voter education about candidates and their policy preferences. This approach will significantly assist with increasing congruence between parties and voters. More importantly, however, to address the perception that politicians are out of touch with voters, parties should also focus educating their politicians. For example, while young careerists appear to have fewer professional experiences outside the political arena, governments or parties could promote specific programmes to encourage ambitious politicians to gain some further professional experience or participate in courses that would enhance their experience on fields such as economics, law, business, and social services. By addressing these issues, policymakers will ensure that parties are more representative and congruent to voter priorities.

Discussion of Research

Despite the significant findings that both contribute to the academic debate and compromise a set of important policy implications, the approach in this dissertation and research designs of the empirical chapters presented only one possible way out of many. Firstly, the operationalisation of career measurement may deviate from traditional approaches. Secondly, there are differing scholarly views on the methods and data utilised to assess political congruence. Thirdly, the study has faced certain limitations, particularly due to the lack of available data. For instance, missing responses from candidates and the absence of specific survey questions across country-elections studies prevented the full testing of some theoretical

hypotheses. Consequently, I have explored a range of additional analyses as robustness checks in the provided Appendices.

More specifically, in the main analyses, I used a variety of independent variables on previous career experiences to construct the three proposed career trajectories, including the variable of age. Age is particularly crucial to capture the emerging trend of politicians who begin their career in politics immediately after university, as opposed to those who shift career paths later in life. Therefore, the term "young careerists" does reflect the decision of candidates to start at a young age their career in politics. As robustness check, I have provided a range of extra models by incorporating various age cut-off points or even excluding age entirely from the conceptualisation of young careerists, as detailed in the Appendix of Chapter 1.

Interestingly, some scholars advocate using expert survey data, such as the Chapel Hill Expert Survey (CHES) to measure party positions (e.g. Marks et al., 2006; Hooghe et al., 2010). However, I preferred candidate survey data, as they offer a more valid and reliable measure of party dissent. Experts may understand party dynamics, but identifying individual candidates' positions is challenging, particularly candidates representing a wide spectrum of ideological views ranging from the party's ideology to a more centrist position aimed at attracting broader electorate support. Roll-call data was another option, but they focus on parliamentary unity, failing to capture the broader views of all candidates, which better reflect the party's overall opinion structure. Therefore, I considered the Comparative Candidate Survey (CCS) the ideal dataset to investigate actual and perceived party congruence, solely defined by candidates. I described in detail the data and measurements I employed and presented reasons why I prefer these over the others.

Moving forward, the limited data on representation style resulted in omitting this variable from the main analyses and hypotheses. Previous research by Önnudóttir (2014) and Pedrazzani and Segatti (2022) explored the impact of candidates' representation styles on

congruence between parties and voters. Although, it is difficult to assert that representation style is an inherent position that candidates adopt at the start of their careers, I took it into account as robustness checks. As shown in the appendix of Chapter 1, representation style did not yield significant results. My analysis went even further showing that the interaction between career paths and representation styles is not statistically significant, suggesting that representation depends on candidates' evolving roles within their parties. These findings underline the importance of career paths in shaping political congruence.

Avenues for Future Research

As presented in the introduction and literature reviews of each chapter, the research on careers has enhanced our understanding of their impact on congruence between voters and parties. This dissertation sought to contribute to the ongoing debate regarding "careerist" politicians, who are usually perceived as being disconnected from their electorate. Throughout this work, I have found empirical support for most of my hypotheses; however, there remain several promising avenues for further research.

Frist, the empirical chapters focused on national-level congruence, as sub-national level analysis was not feasible due to the lack of constituency-level data. Future studies could explore a case study where constituency-level dynamics play a distinctive role, as it may reveal how candidates' relationships with both party supporters and constituents influence congruence. Second, in this dissertation, I utilised data from the complete dataset of the Comparative Candidates Survey (CCS) Wave I (2006-2013). The recent availability of the CCS Wave II dataset -and eventually CCS Wave III- presents a valuable opportunity to analyse careers longitudinally and examine their effects on congruence over time. However, it is important to acknowledge any changes made to the wording of the survey questions, especially those related to party and MP work between waves (see Snagovsky et al., 2023). Third, while

this study offers strong theoretical and empirical insights into careers patterns, there is potential to examine additional variables related to candidates' prior employment, particularly those candidates that have previously established a professional career outside politics. Currently, there is a limitation due to data non-availability on previous employment of candidates. Future research may therefore seek to collect data on pre-parliamentary career experiences. For instance, Alexiadou (2016) categorizes ministers based on their occupations into partisans, ideologues, loyalists. Although this was not the focus of the present dissertation, future research could unveil how different occupational backgrounds influence policy responsiveness.

Overall, each of these suggestions represents important avenues for further research for scholars interested in explaining political congruence using candidate data. Therefore, by expanding the scope of research to include sub-national level analyses, longitudinal data, and additional variables on careers, future studies could offer a comprehensive understanding of the factors that shape political representation in modern democracies.

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Appendix A – Introduction

Data

Table A1. Matching Election Studies from the Comparative Candidate Survey (CCS) and the Comparative Study of Electoral Systems (CSES)

CCS Wave I	CSES Module 3	CSES Module 4
Australia 2007	Australia 2007	-
Australia 2010	-	-
Austria 2008	Austria 2008	-
Belgium 2007	-	-
Belgium 2010	-	-
Denmark 2011	-	-
Finland 2007	Finland 2007	-
Finland 2011	Finland 2011	-
Germany 2005	Germany 2005	-
Germany 2009	Germany 2009	-
Greece 2007	-	-
Greece 2009	Greece 2009	-
Greece 2012	-	Greece 2012
Iceland 2009	Iceland 2009	-
Ireland 2007	Ireland 2007	-
Netherlands 2006	Netherlands 2006	-
Norway 2009	Norway 2009	-
Portugal 2009	Portugal 2009	-
Portugal 2011	-	-
Sweden 2010	-	-
Switzerland 2007	Switzerland 2007	-
Switzerland 2011	-	Switzerland 2011
Canada 2008	Canada 2008	-
Czech Republic 2006	Czech Republic 2006	-
Estonia 2011	Estonia 2011	-
Hungary 2010	-	-
Italy 2013	-	-
Romania 2012	-	Romania 2012
UK 2010	-	-

Table A2. Comparison of question wording between CCS Wave I and CCS Wave II

CCS Wave I	CCS Wave II
Before becoming a candidate for the national parliament,	Regarding your political experience, have you ever
…were you ever employed in State or Federal MPs or minister's office.	…worked as unpaid party/campaign volunteer.
If yes: for how many years?	
…have you ever been working as a paid employee for this party?	…worked as paid party/campaign worker or MP employee.
If yes: for how many years?	

Table A3. Reported professional career experiences

Professional Careers	Valid (%)	Missing (%)
Current/ previous position	37.9%	62.1%

Table A4. Available data on candidates' career experiences (and data on age) per country-election study

Election study	Age	Party work	Party work (duration)	MP work	MP work (duration)	Mayor	Local Gov.	Regional Gov.	National Gov.	Local Assembly	Regional Assembly	National Parl.	EU Parl.
Australia 2007	Yes	Yes	**NO**	Yes	**NO**	**NO**	Yes	Yes	Yes	**NO**	Yes	Yes	**NO**
Australia 2010	Yes	Yes	**NO**	Yes	**NO**	**NO**	**NO**	**NO**	**NO**	**NO**	**NO**	**NO**	**NO**
Austria 2008	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	**NO**	**NO**	**NO**	**NO**	**NO**	**NO**	**NO**	**NO**
Belgium 2007	**NO**	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	**NO**	**NO**	**NO**	Yes	Yes
Belgium 2010	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

Election study	Age	Party work	Party work (duration)	MP work	MP work (duration)	Mayor	Local Gov.	Regional Gov.	National Gov.	Local Assembly	Regional Assembly	National Parl.	EU Parl.
Denmark 2011	Yes	Yes	Yes	**NO**	**NO**	Yes	**NO**	**NO**	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Finland 2007	Yes	**NO**	**NO**	Yes	**NO**	**NO**	**NO**	**NO**	**NO**	**NO**	**NO**	**NO**	**NO**
Finland 2011	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	**NO**	Yes	**NO**	Yes	Yes	**NO**	Yes	Yes
Germany 2005	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	**NO**	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	**NO**	Yes
Germany 2009	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	**NO**	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Greece 2007	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	**NO**	**NO**	**NO**	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Greece	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

Election study	Age	Party work	Party work (duration)	MP work	MP work (duration)	Mayor	Local Gov.	Regional Gov.	National Gov.	Local Assembly	Regional Assembly	National Parl.	EU Parl.
2009 Greece	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
2012 Iceland	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	**NO**	Yes	**NO**	**NO**	**NO**	**NO**	**NO**	**NO**
2009 Ireland	Yes	**NO**	**NO**	**NO**	**NO**	Yes	**NO**	**NO**	Yes	Yes	**NO**	Yes	**NO**
2007 Netherlands	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
2006 Norway	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	**NO**
2009 Portugal	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
2009													

Election study	Age	Party work	Party work (duration)	MP work	MP work (duration)	Mayor	Local Gov.	Regional Gov.	National Gov.	Local Assembly	Regional Assembly	National Parl.	EU Parl.
Portugal 2011	**NO**	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Sweden 2010	Yes	Yes	**NO**	Yes	**NO**	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Switzerland 2007	Yes	**NO**	**NO**	**NO**	**NO**	Yes	Yes	Yes	**NO**	Yes	Yes	**NO**	**NO**
Switzerland 2011	Yes	**NO**	**NO**	**NO**	**NO**	Yes	Yes	Yes	**NO**	**NO**	Yes	**NO**	**NO**
Canada 2008	**NO**	Yes	Yes	**NO**	**NO**	Yes	**NO**	Yes	**NO**	Yes	Yes	Yes	**NO**
Czech Rep. 2006	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	**NO**	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	**NO**	Yes
Estonia	**NO**	**NO**	**NO**	**NO**	**NO**	**NO**	Yes	**NO**	Yes	Yes	**NO**	Yes	Yes

Election study	Age	Party work	Party work (duration)	MP work	MP work (duration)	Mayor	Local Gov.	Regional Gov.	National Gov.	Local Assembly	Regional Assembly	National Parl.	EU Parl.
2011 Hungary	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	**NO**	**NO**	**NO**	**NO**	**NO**
2010 Italy	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
2013 Romania	Yes	Yes	Yes	**NO**	**NO**	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	**NO**	Yes	Yes	Yes
2012 UK 2010	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	**NO**	**NO**	Yes	Yes	Yes	**NO**

Descriptive Statistics

Table A5. Political experience: MP's or minister's office employee

Election study	Yes (%)	No (%)
Australia 2007	14.1	85.9
Australia 2010	19.5	80.5
Austria 2008	15.9	84.1
Belgium 2007	13.5	86.5
Belgium 2010	22.4	77.6
Czech Republic 2006	6.8	93.2
Finland 2007	5.0	95.0
Finland 2011	4.6	95.4
Germany 2005	13.2	86.8
Germany 2009	16.5	83.5
Greece 2007	19.5	80.5
Greece 2009	14.9	85.1
Greece 2012	15.5	84.5
Hungary 2010	5.7	94.3
Iceland 2009	4.9	95.1
Italy 2013	13.5	86.5
Netherlands 2006	10.7	89.3
Norway 2009	42.1	57.9
Portugal 2009	9.6	90.4
Portugal 2011	9.5	90.5
Sweden 2010	13.9	86.1
UK 2010	8.5	91.5
Total	12.8	87.2

Table A6. Political experience: Party employee

Election study	Yes (%)	No (%)
Australia 2007	4.7	95.3
Australia 2010	5.3	94.7
Austria 2008	12.2	87.8
Belgium 2007	12.0	88.0
Belgium 2010	11.8	88.2
Canada 2008	14.2	85.8
Czech Republic 2006	7.3	92.7
Denmark 2011	13.1	86.9
Finland 2011	9.8	90.2
Germany 2005	9.1	90.9
Germany 2009	7.7	92.3
Greece 2007	1.3	98.8
Greece 2009	1.5	98.5
Greece 2012	2.2	97.8
Hungary 2010	8.5	91.5
Iceland 2009	7.0	93.0
Italy 2013	14.8	85.2
Netherlands 2006	11.9	88.1
Norway 2009	20.1	79.9
Portugal 2009	3.5	96.5
Portugal 2011	6.3	93.7
Romania 2012	4.9	95.1
Sweden 2010	21.9	78.1
UK 2010	8.7	91.3
Total	11.4	88.6

Table A7. Political experience: Mayor

Election study	Yes (%)	Never (%)
Belgium 2007	13.6	86.4
Belgium 2010	15.5	84.5
Canada 2008	4.7	95.3
Czech Republic 2006	32.3	67.7
Denmark 2011	5.9	94.1
Germany 2005	6.4	93.6
Germany 2009	4.5	95.5
Greece 2007	3.8	96.2
Greece 2009	3.7	96.3
Greece 2012	4.3	95.7
Hungary 2010	12.7	87.3
Ireland 2007	24.0	76.0
Italy 2013	14.0	86.0
Netherlands 2006	1.2	98.8
Norway 2009	18.0	82.0
Portugal 2009	3.0	97.0
Portugal 2011	1.6	98.4
Romania 2012	8.8	91.2
Sweden 2010	6.5	93.5
Switzerland 2007	7.5	92.5
Switzerland 2011	6.4	93.6
UK 2010	3.3	96.7
Total	8.4	91.6

Table A8. Political experience: Member of local government

Election study	Yes (%)	Never (%)
Australia 2007	9.4	90.6
Belgium 2007	55.4	44.6
Belgium 2010	57.0	43.0
Estonia 2011	52.6	47.4
Finland 2011	23.4	76.6
Greece 2009	7.3	92.7
Greece 2012	6.5	93.5
Hungary 2010	40.4	59.6
Iceland 2009	28.9	71.1
Italy 2013	25.6	74.4
Netherlands 2006	13.6	86.4
Norway 2009	56.8	43.2
Portugal 2009	21.3	78.7
Portugal 2011	20.5	79.5
Romania 2012	31.4	68.6
Sweden 2010	58.1	41.9
Switzerland 2007	19.1	80.9
Switzerland 2011	8.5	81.5
UK 2010	4.5	95.5
Total	29.6	70.4

Table A9. Political experience: Member of regional government

Election study	Yes (%)	Never (%)
Australia 2007	1.9	98.1
Belgium 2007	3.3	96.7
Belgium 2010	3.4	96.6
Canada 2008	2.4	97.6
Czech Republic 2006	17.4	82.6
Germany 2005	2.4	97.6
Germany 2009	1.7	98.3
Greece 2009	14.1	85.9
Greece 2012	4.0	96.0
Hungary 2010	26.5	73.5
Italy 2013	2.7	97.3
Netherlands 2006	1.2	98.8
Norway 2009	16.5	83.5
Portugal 2009	2.5	97.5
Portugal 2011	0.4	99.6
Romania 2012	10.1	89.9
Sweden 2010	10.8	89.2
Switzerland 2007	1.8	98.2
Switzerland 2011	1.2	98.8
Total	5.9	94.1

Table A10. Political experience: Member of national government

Election study	Yes (%)	Never (%)
Australia 2007	10.6	89.4
Belgium 2010	4.3	95.7
Czech Republic 2006	0.7	99.3
Denmark 2011	5.8	94.2
Estonia 2011	11.6	88.4
Finland 2011	2.1	97.9
Germany 2005	2.9	97.1
Germany 2009	1.8	98.2
Greece 2009	6.8	93.2
Greece 2012	0.7	99.3
Ireland 2007	19.9	80.1
Italy 2013	1.6	98.4
Netherlands 2006	0	100
Norway 2009	2.8	97.2
Portugal 2009	7.9	92.1
Portugal 2011	9.7	90.3
Romania 2012	9.3	90.7
Sweden 2010	1.2	98.8
Total	4	96

Table A11. Political experience: Member of local parliament

Election study	Yes (%)	Never (%)
Belgium 2010	63.0	37.0
Canada 2008	11.8	88.2
Czech Republic 2006	68.4	31.6
Denmark 2011	56.8	43.2
Estonia 2011	68.0	32.0
Finland 2011	47.9	52.1
Germany 2005	62.8	37.2
Germany 2009	54.7	45.3
Greece 2007	33.9	66.1
Greece 2009	28.6	71.4
Greece 2012	23.6	76.4
Ireland 2007	65.3	34.7
Italy 2013	43.7	56.3
Netherlands 2006	49.7	50.3
Norway 2009	83.3	16.7
Portugal 2009	51.0	49.0
Portugal 2011	63.5	36.5
Sweden 2010	77.4	22.6
Switzerland 2007	29.6	70.4
UK 2010	12.9	87.1
Total	51.5	48.5

Table A12. Political experience: Member of regional parliament

Election study	Yes (%)	Never (%)
Australia 2007	2.7	97.3
Belgium 2010	11.4	88.6
Canada 2008	5.3	94.7
Czech Republic 2006	29.5	70.5
Denmark 2011	26.4	73.6
Germany 2005	14.4	85.6
Germany 2009	8.3	91.7
Greece 2007	32.6	67.4
Greece 2009	25.5	74.5
Greece 2012	14.1	85.9
Italy 2013	6.6	93.4
Netherlands 2006	14.8	85.2
Norway 2009	33.5	66.5
Portugal 2009	4.0	96
Portugal 2011	1.6	98.4
Romania 2012	26.3	73.7
Sweden 2010	28.2	71.8
Switzerland 2007	31.9	68.1
Switzerland 2011	29.6	70.4
UK 2010	3.5	96.5
Total	20.3	79.7

Table A13. Political experience: Member of national parliament

Election study	Yes (%)	Never (%)
Australia 2007	15.2	84.8
Belgium 2007	4.5	95.5
Belgium 2010	20.9	79.1
Canada 2008	10.9	89.1
Denmark 2011	33.9	66.1
Estonia 2011	33.7	66.3
Finland 2011	8.5	91.5
Germany 2009	15.8	84.2
Greece 2007	29.4	70.6
Greece 2009	21.6	78.4
Greece 2012	6.2	93.8
Ireland 2007	46.3	53.7
Italy 2013	14.5	85.5
Netherlands 2006	12.4	87.6
Norway 2009	18.5	81.5
Portugal 2009	17.3	82.7
Portugal 2011	37.9	62.1
Romania 2012	22.4	77.6
Sweden 2010	23.8	76.2
UK 2010	8.2	91.8
Total	6.6	83.4

Table A14. Political experience: Member of EU parliament

Election study	Yes (%)	Never (%)
Belgium 2007	8.3	91.7
Belgium 2010	1.7	98.3
Czech Republic 2006	0.9	99.1
Denmark 2011	4.0	96.0
Estonia 2011	0.7	99.3
Finland 2011	0.3	99.7
Germany 2005	0.5	99.5
Germany 2009	0.0	100
Greece 2007	0.9	99.1
Greece 2009	1.1	98.9
Greece 2012	0.4	99.6
Italy 2013	1.0	99.0
Netherlands 2006	0	100
Portugal 2009	2.5	97.5
Portugal 2011	2.0	98.0
Romania 2012	0.2	99.8
Sweden 2010	0.4	99.6
Total	1.1	98.9

Appendix B – Chapter 1

Survey Questionnaire Wording

Questionnaire Comparative Candidate Study: Wave I

In politics, people sometimes talk about the 'left' and the 'right'. Where would you place your own views on a scale from 0 to 10, where 0 means the most left and, 10 means the most right?

Left = 0 ; Right = 10

Before becoming a candidate for the [national parliament], were you ever employed in a State or Federal MPs or minister's office?

No = 1; Yes = 2 (recoded to No = 0 ; Yes = 1)

Have you ever been working as a payed employee for this party?

No = 1; Yes = 2 (recoded to No = 0 ; Yes = 1)

Years served as member of a local assembly?

measured in years (recoded to No = 0; Yes = 1)

In the beginning of the campaign, how did you evaluate your chances to win the mandate?

...I thought I could not win = 1

... I thought I could hardly win = 2

... I thought it was an open race = 3

... I thought I could hardly lose = 4

...I thought I could not lose = 5

Are you...

male = 0; female = 1

In what year were you born?

(measured in number years)

Level of education

Incomplete primary = 1

Primary completed = 2

Incomplete secondary = 3

Secondary completed = 4

Post secondary trade/vocational school = 5 University incomplete = 6

University completed = 7

(recoded to No degree = 0; University degree = 1)

Questionnaire Comparative Study of Electoral Systems: Module I and Module II

In politics people sometimes talk of left and right. Where would you place yourself on a scale from 0 to 10 where 0 means the left and 10 means the right?

LEFT = 0 ; RIGHT = 10

Descriptive Statistics

Table B1: Average candidate–voter ideological incongruence in Europe, by election

Country-Election year	Mean	SD	N	SE	CI (lower)	CI (upper)
Norway 2009	2.52	1.47	135	0.13	2.27	2.77
Finland 2011	2.28	1.54	567	0.06	2.15	2.41
Belgium 2010	2.16	1.28	461	0.06	2.04	2.28
Czech Republic 2006	2.16	1.35	118	0.12	1.91	2.41
Portugal 2009	2.10	1.27	122	0.11	1.87	2.32
Netherlands 2006	2.09	1.16	137	0.10	1.89	2.28
Greece 2012	2.06	1.47	232	0.10	1.87	2.25
Germany 2009	2.05	1.26	531	0.05	1.94	2.16
Greece 2009	2.00	1.35	139	0.11	1.77	2.22
UK 2010	1.95	1.09	737	0.04	1.87	2.03
Germany 2005	1.92	1.23	565	0.05	1.82	2.02
Sweden 2010	1.87	1.19	587	0.05	1.77	1.96
Greece 2007	1.86	1.27	172	0.10	1.67	2.05
Italy 2013	1.75	1.13	309	0.06	1.62	1.88

Table B2. Descriptive statistics for dependent and independent variables

Variable	Mean	St. Dev.	Min	Max
Incongruence	2.03	1.29	0	5.5
Young careerist	0.05	0.20	0	1
Perceived chance of being elected	2.02	1.23	1	5
Age	48	13.06	18	98
Gender	0.35	0.48	0	1
Education	0.49	0.50	0	1
Incentive index personal vote	2.60	1.26	0	5
Party family	4.15	1.97	1	7
Country-election	8.34	4.43	1	14

Additional Analyses – Robustness Checks

Analysis for young careerists' age cut-off point

To define young careerists, I use the age of candidates at the time of the survey as proxy. In order to avoid an arbitrary cut-off decision, I ran a mixture analysis, a probabilistic method, to identify natural groupings within the population of candidates (N=6205). Considering the theoretical perspective for the role and career progression of "careerists" a meaningful cut-off point according to the data could be 41 years old (Table B3). The 41-year threshold ensures the categorization is both statistically valid and conceptually supported. However, I have presented a series of analyses using different age cut-off points (e.g. 35, 41, 46) as part of robustness checks (see below).

Table B3. Mixture analysis to determine age cut-off points

Age Class	Min age	Max age	Count
1	18	26	251
2	27	35	1139
3	36	41	666
4	42	46	712
5	47	47	150
6	48	54	1431
7	55	60	845
8	61	67	502
9	68	98	509

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Table B4. Robustness check: Comparison of the main results using different age cut-off points to operationalize young careerists

	DV: Ideological Incongruence (continuous)		
	Model 1	**Model 2**	**Model 3**
	< 35 years	**< 41 years**	**< 46 years**
Main predictors			
Young Careerist *(ref. category: Non-careerist)*	-0.157*	-0.167**	-0.176***
	(0.083)	(0.071)	(0.065)
Age (in numbers)	0.001	0.001	0.001
	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)
Incentive Index of personal vote	-0.040	-0.040	-0.039
	(0.057)	(0.057)	(0.057)
Party family (ref. category: Christian Democrats)			
Conservatives	0.754***	0.755***	0.754***
	(0.053)	(0.053)	(0.053)
Extreme Right	0.265*	0.265*	0.264*
	(0.106)	(0.106)	(0.106)
Greens	0.386***	0.386***	0.387***
	(0.058)	(0.058)	(0.058)
Liberals	-0.246***	-0.245***	-0.246***
	(0.052)	(0.052)	(0.052)
Social Democrats & Socialists	0.783***	0.784***	0.783***
	(0.051)	(0.051)	(0.051)
Radical Left	2.033***	2.034***	2.032***
	(0.064)	(0.064)	(0.064)
Control variables			
Female	0.044*	0.044*	0.044*
	(0.030)	(0.030)	(0.030)
University (degree)	-0.073*	-0.073*	-0.074*
	(0.034)	(0.034)	(0.034)
Perceived chance of being elected	-0.030*	-0.030*	-0.030*
	(0.012)	(0.012)	(0.012)
Constant	1.578***	1.587***	1.591***
	(0.165)	(0.165)	(0.164)
N candidates (level 1)	6205	6205	6205
N country-elections (level 2)	14	14	14
Log Likelihood	−9540.1	−9539.1	-9533.2
AIC	19174.0	19172.4	19160.8
BIC	19275.0	19273.4	19261.8

*Notes: Estimates are based on a two-level multilevel model, with candidates (level 1) nested within country-election units (level 2). All predictors are included at Level 1. Significance Codes: *** p<.001, ** p<.01, * p<.05.*

Alternative operationalization for young careerists

The results of the main analysis clearly demonstrate that young careerists are more likely to move their parties closer to the ideological centre. However, critical scholars may argue that these findings may be driven by the operationalisation of the independent variable of "young careerist". To validate my findings, I present additional analyses (Table B5-B7) as robustness checks. In Table B5 and Table B6, I replicate the original analyses from Chapter 1 using as main independent variable the young careerists, but now defined as those candidates who have working experiences from their party and/or MPs' offices, have no record of serving in local parliament, and joined the party before the age of 25. The results remain robust across all models. Then, in Table B7, Model 1, I apply a different measurement approach to evaluate the "careerist" variable. The distinction lies in the fact that the "careerists" are candidates with previous political work experience, specifically having been employed by their party or MPs offices, with no record of serving in local parliament, regardless of their age. The findings remain robust showing that candidates that had started their political involvement either at an early age or later are more likely to move their parties closer to the ideological centre. In Table B7 and Model 2, I add the original variables that were utilised in constructing the young careerist variable. Candidates with prior experience working within the party and those who have served in an MP's office are more inclined to align closely with the average ideological position of voters. These results, in general, suggest that candidates' previous political career experience can play a key role, despite the electoral system and other institutional factors thus far contemplated in the literature.

Table B5: Robustness check: The effect of young careerists on candidate-voter ideological incongruence

	DV: Ideological Incongruence (continuous)	
	Model 1	**Model 2**
Main predictors		
Young Careerist (*ref. category: Non-careerist*)	−0.142***	−0.131***
	(0.045)	(0.041)
Age (in numbers)	0.003***	0.002**
	(0.002)	(0.002)
Incentive Index of personal vote		−0.058
		(0.051)
Party family (ref. category: Christian Democrats)		
Conservatives		0.391***
		(0.065)
Extreme Right		0.136
		(0.118)
Greens		0.320***
		(0.066)
Liberals		−0.327***
		(0.064)
Social Democrats & Socialists		0.619***
		(0.060)
Radical Left		1.931***
		(0.077)
Control variables		
Female	0.126***	0.074**
	(0.039)	(0.036)
University (degree)	−0.114**	−0.054
	(0.045)	(0.041)
Perceived chance of being elected	−0.027*	−0.014
	(0.015)	(0.014)
Constant	1.882***	1.675***
	(0.114)	(0.167)
N candidates (level 1)	4812	4812
N country-elections (level 2)	14	14
Log Likelihood	−7992.007	−7499.701
AIC	16000.010	15029.400
BIC	16051.840	15126.580

*Notes: Estimates are based on a two-level multilevel model, with candidates (level 1) nested within country-election units (level 2). All predictors are included at Level 1. Significance Codes: *** p<.001, ** p<.01, * p<.05.*

Table B6: Robustness check: Interactions between young careerists and election- and party-level predictors

	DV: Ideological Incongruence (continuous)		
	Model 1	**Model 2**	**Model 3**
Main predictors			
Young Careerist (joined the party before age 25)	−0.114***	−0.121***	−0.161***
	(0.159)	(0.109)	(0.106)
Age (in numbers)	0.003***	0.002**	0.002**
	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.002)
Incentive Index of personal vote	−0.057	−0.058	−0.057
	(0.050)	(0.051)	(0.050)
Party family (ref. category: Christian Democrats)			
Conservatives	0.390***	0.391***	0.300***
	(0.065)	(0.065)	(0.074)
Extreme Right	0.133	0.136	0.079
	(0.118)	(0.118)	(0.128)
Greens	0.320***	0.320***	0.366***
	(0.066)	(0.066)	(0.074)
Liberals	−0.327***	−0.327***	−0.333***
	(0.064)	(0.064)	(0.072)
Social Democrats	0.619***	0.619***	0.631***
	(0.060)	(0.060)	(0.069)
Radical Left	1.931***	1.931***	1.915***
	(0.077)	(0.077)	(0.087)
Control variables			
Female	0.075**	0.074**	0.077**
	(0.036)	(0.036)	(0.036)
University (degree)	−0.054	−0.054	−0.053
	(0.041)	(0.041)	(0.041)
Perceived chance of being elected	−0.014	−0.014	−0.014
	(0.014)	(0.014)	(0.014)
Interactions			
Young Careerist x Age	−0.005		
	(0.003)		
Young Careerist x Incentive Index of Personal Vote		−0.084**	
		(0.035)	
Young Careerist x Conservatives			0.357**
			(0.141)
Young Careerist x Extreme Right			0.380
			(0.304)
Young Careerist x Greens			−0.245
			(0.150)
Young Careerist x Liberals			0.030
			(0.139)
Young Careerist x Social Democrats & Socialists			−0.044
			(0.130)
Young Careerist x Radical Left			0.089
			(0.177)
Constant	1.610***	1.673***	1.668***
	(0.171)	(0.169)	(0.166)
N candidates (level 1)	4812	4812	4812
N country-elections (level 2)	14	14	14
Log Likelihood	−7498.423	−7499.696	−7489.004
AIC	15028.850	15031.390	15020.010
BIC	15132.510	15135.050	15156.060

*Notes: Estimates are based on a two-level multilevel model, with candidates (level 1) nested within country-election units (level 2). All predictors are included at Level 1. Significance Codes: *** p<.001, ** p<.01, * p<.05.*

Table B7: Robustness check: Alternative career measurement

	DV: Ideological Incongruence (continuous)	
	Model 1	**Model 2**
Main predictors		
"Careerist"	−0.125***	
	(0.044)	
Career experience: previous party work		−0.159***
		(0.055)
Career experience: previous work MP's office		−0.078***
		(0.048)
Age (in numbers)	0.001	0.002
	(0.002)	(0.001)
Incentive index of personal vote	−0.059	−0.061
	(0.051)	(0.053)
Party family (ref. category: Christian Democrats)		
Conservatives	0.395***	0.392***
	(0.065)	(0.065)
Extreme Right	0.127	0.128
	(0.118)	(0.118)
Greens	0.337***	0.340***
	(0.065)	(0.065)
Liberals	−0.317***	−0.319***
	(0.063)	(0.063)
Social Democrats & Socialists	0.626***	0.624***
	(0.060)	(0.060)
Radical Left	1.945***	1.949***
	(0.077)	(0.077)
Control variables		
Female	0.035**	0.034**
	(0.036)	(0.036)
University (degree)	−0.054	−0.053
	(0.042)	(0.042)
Perceived chance of being elected	−0.014	−0.014
	(0.014)	(0.014)
Constant	1.754***	1.767***
	(0.159)	(0.163)
N candidates (level 1)	4812	4812
N country-elections (level 2)	14	14
Log Likelihood	- 7503.854	- 7500.822
AIC	15033.710	15029.640
BIC	15117.930	15120.350

*Notes: Estimates are based on a two-level multilevel model, with candidates (level 1) nested within country-election units (level 2). All predictors are included at Level 1. Significance Codes: *** p<.001, ** p<.01, * p<.05.*

Additional analyses to test the effects of candidate status, representation style, and candidate selection.

Furthermore, due to the lack of available data (e.g. a combination of candidates' missing answers, specific questions on candidates' status that are not asked in all country-elections) some of potential theoretical hypotheses cannot be fully tested. Therefore, I present a series of supplementary models to examine additional effects of 'careerists' candidates. In Table B8, I include the dummy variable 'elected' to incorporate the candidates' status in the analysis. Elected candidates may decrease incongruence between them and voters on the ideological dimension although results are not significant. On the other hand, elected 'careerists' show a higher likelihood of incongruence with the average ideological position of voters, although the results remain statistically insignificant. Therefore, more research should be done to test whether elected careerists may be closer to both the party's stance and the ideological position of their party voters (or voters of their electoral district).

Moving forward, in Table B9, I introduce the representation style variable to assess the impact of candidates' representation approaches on their careers and congruence with voters. Earlier research by Önnudóttir (2014) and Pedrazzani and Segatti (2022) incorporated the effect of candidates' representation approaches on congruence between parties and voters. However, it may be challenging to readily accept that the representation style is an inherent philosophical position adopted by candidates right from the beginning of their careers. Instead, it is more likely a consequence of how they position themselves in relation to their party. In my analysis, I classify representation styles as follows: "partisans" are those aligning with the party's views, "trustees" are those following their own views, and "delegates" are candidates aligning with voters' opinions. The results, with "partisans" as the reference category, indicate no significant difference in the levels of incongruence between candidates and voters. Going a step further, the interaction of 'careerists' and representation styles does not show statistically

significant results. These findings may suggest that my initial assumption, stating that representation depends on candidates' positions within the party, holds merit.

Another individual-level trait relevant to candidates' careers, potentially influencing congruence with voters, is the mode of candidate selection. In Table B10, I include a categorical variable that captures candidates' selection, encompassing four distinct categories representing a spectrum from openness to centralization: voters at large, voters of my party, members of my party, and party leadership. Remarkably, the results reveal that candidates selected by voters at large are significantly more likely to align with the average ideological position of voters. This suggests that candidates chosen by the party leadership are more inclined to be in proximity to the party leader and adhere to the party's ideological stance. Additionally, the interaction between careers and candidates' selection indicates that 'careerists' selected by party members are more likely to exhibit incongruence with the mean ideological position, potentially aligning with the ideological position of their parties, given that their selection is influenced by party members. Overall, the results may suggest the key role of candidate selection in determining candidates' congruence with voters.

Table B8: Robustness check: Additional predictor of candidate status

	DV: Ideological Incongruence (continuous)	
	Model 1	**Model 2**
Main predictors		
Young Careerist (ref. category: Non-careerist)	−0.173***	−0.216***
	(0.047)	(0.054)
Candidate status: Elected (in recent elections)	−0.024	−0.071
	(0.052)	(0.060)
Age (in numbers)	0.002	0.002
	(0.002)	(0.002)
Incentive index of personal vote	−0.066	−0.067
	(0.074)	(0.074)
Party family (ref. category: Christian Democrats)		
Conservatives	0.391***	0.393***
	(0.084)	(0.084)
Extreme Right	0.067	0.068
	(0.125)	(0.125)
Greens	0.385***	0.383***
	(0.076)	(0.076)
Liberals	−0.350***	−0.350***
	(0.074)	(0.074)
Social Democrats & Socialists	0.451***	0.452***
	(0.071)	(0.071)
Radical Left	1.860***	1.855***
	(0.085)	(0.085)
Control variables		
Female	0.035**	0.034**
	(0.036)	(0.036)
University (degree)	−0.003	0.0001
	(0.050)	(0.050)
Interactions		
Young Careerist x Elected		0.174
		(0.109)
Constant	1.830***	1.839***
	(0.252)	(0.252)
N candidates (level 1)	3539	3539
N country-elections (level 2)	8	8
Log Likelihood	- 5476.643	- 5475.355
AIC	10981.290	10980.710
BIC	11067.690	11073.280

*Notes: Estimates are based on a two-level multilevel model, with candidates (level 1) nested within country-election units (level 2). All predictors are included at Level 1. Significance Codes: *** p<.001, ** p<.01, * p<.05.*

Table B9: Robustness check: Additional predictor of representation style

	DV: Ideological Incongruence (continuous)	
	Model 1	**Model 2**
Main predictors		
Young Careerist	−0.124**	−0.178**
	(0.048)	(0.079)
Representation style (ref. category: Partisan)		
Representation style: Trustee	0.020	−0.003
	(0.048)	(0.055)
Representation style: Delegate	−0.031	−0.051
	(0.059)	(0.066)
Age (in numbers)	0.002	0.002
	(0.002)	(0.002)
Incentive index of personal vote	−0.036	−0.037
	(0.057)	(0.057)
Party family (ref. category: Christian Democrats)		
Conservatives	0.451***	0.452***
	(0.076)	(0.076)
Extreme Right	0.203	0.207
	(0.128)	(0.128)
Greens	0.465***	0.469***
	(0.079)	(0.079)
Liberals	−0.240***	−0.240***
	(0.076)	(0.076)
Social Democrats & Socialists	0.774***	0.777***
	(0.072)	(0.072)
Radical Left	1.943***	1.945***
	(0.092)	(0.092)
Control variables		
Female	0.035**	0.034**
	(0.036)	(0.036)
University (degree)	−0.085*	−0.085*
	(0.049)	(0.049)
Interactions		
Young Careerist x Representation Style: Trustee (own opinion)		0.083
		(0.101)
Young Careerist x Representation Style: Delegate (voters' opinion)		0.081
		(0.147)
Constant	1.613***	1.633***
	(0.184)	(0.187)
N candidates (level 1)	3649	3649
N country-elections (level 2)	12	12
Log Likelihood	- 5751.069	- 5750.702
AIC	11532.140	11535.400
BIC	11625.170	11640.840

*Notes: Estimates are based on a two-level multilevel model, with candidates (level 1) nested within country-election units (level 2). All predictors are included at Level 1. Significance Codes: *** p<.001, ** p<.01, * p<.05.*

Table B10: Robustness check: Additional predictor of candidate selection

	DV: Ideological Incongruence (continuous)	
	Model 1	**Model 2**
Main predictors		
Young Careerist	−0.165***	−0.247***
	(0.053)	(0.090)
Candidate Selection (ref. category Party Leadership)		
Candidate Selection: Voters at large	−0.616***	−0.658***
	(0.107)	(0.121)
Candidate Selection: Voters of my party	0.057	0.060
	(0.065)	(0.070)
Candidate Selection: Members of my party	0.008	−0.063
	(0.074)	(0.080)
Age (in numbers)	−0.0001	−0.0002
	(0.002)	(0.002)
Incentive index of personal vote	−0.071	−0.061
	(0.067)	(0.064)
Party family (ref. category: Christian Democrats)		
Conservatives	0.520***	0.513***
	(0.080)	(0.080)
Extreme Right	0.198	0.201
	(0.134)	(0.134)
Greens	0.312***	0.308***
	(0.086)	(0.086)
Liberals	−0.286***	−0.280***
	(0.081)	(0.081)
Social Democrats & Socialists	0.861***	0.853***
	(0.075)	(0.075)
Radical Left	2.021***	2.017***
	(0.093)	(0.093)
Control variables		
Female	0.035**	0.034**
	(0.036)	(0.036)
University (degree)	−0.103*	−0.110**
	(0.055)	(0.055)
Interactions		
Young Careerist x Candidate Selection: Voters at large		0.155
		(0.208)
Young Careerist x Candidate Selection: Voters of my party		−0.016
		(0.129)
Careerist x Candidate Selection: Members of my party		0.275**
		(0.132)
Constant	1.762***	1.764***
	(0.196)	(0.190)
N candidates (level 1)	3070	3070
N country-elections (level 2)	11	11
Log Likelihood	- 4864.749	- 4861.583
AIC	9761.498	9761.166
BIC	9857.969	9875.725

*Notes: Estimates are based on a two-level multilevel model, with candidates (level 1) nested within country-election units (level 2). All predictors are included at Level 1. Significance Codes: *** p<.001, ** p<.01, * p<.05.*

Appendix C – Chapter 2

Survey Questionnaire Wording

Questionnaire Comparative Candidate Study: Wave I

In politics, people sometimes talk about the 'left' and the 'right'. Where would you place your own views on a scale from 0 to 10, where 0 means the most left and, 10 means the most right?

Left = 0 ; Right = 10

Before becoming a candidate for the [national parliament], were you ever employed in a State or Federal MPs or minister's office?

No = 1; Yes = 2 (recoded to No = 0 ; Yes = 1)

Have you ever been working as a payed employee for this party?

No = 1; Yes = 2 (recoded to No = 0 ; Yes = 1)

Years served as member of a local assembly?

measured in years (recoded to No = 0; Yes = 1)

In the beginning of the campaign, how did you evaluate your chances to win the mandate?

… I thought I could not win = 1

… I thought I could hardly win = 2

… I thought it was an open race = 3

… I thought I could hardly lose = 4

… I thought I could not lose = 5

Are you. . .

male = 0; female = 1

In what year were you born?

(measured in number years)

Level of education

Incomplete primary = 1

Primary completed = 2

Incomplete secondary = 3

Secondary completed = 4

Post-secondary trade/

vocational school = 5

University incomplete = 6

University completed = 7

(recoded to No degree = 0; University degree = 1)

Codebook - Chapel Hill Expert Survey

LRGEN = position of the party in YEAR in terms of its overall ideological stance.

Extreme left =0; Extreme right = 10

Descriptive Statistics

Table C1. Descriptive statistics for dependent and independent variables

Variable	Mean	St. Dev.	Min	Max
Disagreement	0.60	0.49	0	1
More moderate	0.23	0.42	0	1
More radical	0.38	0.49	0	1
Career trajectory	1.56	0.77	1	4
Perceived chance of being elected	2.02	1.23	1	5
Age	45.31	11.49	18	72
Gender	0.35	0.48	0	1
Education	0.55	0.50	0	1
Incentive index personal vote	2.83	1.28	0	5
Party family	4.14	1.93	1	7
Country-election	7.20	4.34	1	13

Additional Analyses – Robustness Checks

Analysis for young careerists' age cut-off points

To define young careerists, I use the age of candidates at the time of the survey as proxy. To avoid making an arbitrary decision about the cut-off point, I employed a mixture analysis, that is a probabilistic method, to identify latent groupings within the population of candidates (N=6205). Based on the data a potential age cut-off point could be at 26, 35 or 41 years old. Considering, also, the role and career progression of "careerists" that may spend 10 to 15 years as staffers, a meaningful cut-off point according to the data could be 41 years old (Table C2). The 41-year threshold ensures the categorization is both statistically valid and conceptually supported. However, I present a series of analyses using different age cut-off points (e.g. 35, or 46) as part of robustness checks (see below).

Table C2. Mixture analysis to determine age cut-off points

Age Class	Min age	Max age	Count
1	18	26	251
2	27	35	1139
3	36	41	666
4	42	46	712
5	47	47	150
6	48	54	1431
7	55	60	845
8	61	67	502
9	68	98	509

Table C3: Robustness check: Predicting party disagreement, more moderate and more radical positions (young careerists: 35-year cut-off point)

	DV: Party disagreement (Yes=1)	DV: Radical position (Yes=1)	DV: Moderate position (Yes=1)
Main predictors			
Career trajectory (ref. category: Other)			
Young careerist	0.201*	0.190	0.170*
	(0.107)	(0.129)	(0.156)
Party soldier	-0.010*	0.018	-0.159**
	(0.06)	(0.06)	(0.07)
Outsider	0.051	−0.066	0.204*
	(0.09)	(0.089)	(0.098)
Perceived chance of being elected	0.049*	−0.066*	0.050*
	(0.029)	(0.029)	(0.033)
Control variables			
Gender (female)	−0.212***	−0.254***	−0.023
	(0.065)	(0.067)	(0.080)
Age	−0.006	−0.004	−0.004
	(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.003)
University degree	−0.104	−0.088	−0.035
	(0.069)	(0.070)	(0.084)
Party family (ref. category: Christian Democrats)			
Conservatives	-0.192	−0.442***	0.248*
	(0.111)	(0.117)	(0.129)
Extreme Right	−0.354	0.010	−0.919**
	(0.221)	(0.227)	(0.305)
Greens	0.021	0.301***	−0.360**
	(0.130)	(0.134)	(0.155)
Liberals	−0.161	-0.066	−0.154
	(0.113)	(0.115)	(0.133)
Social Democrats & Socialists	0.327**	0.531***	−0.467***
	(0.119)	(0.112)	(0.136)
Radical Left	−0.354**	−0.290**	−0.338*
	(0.112)	(0.146)	(0.181)
Incentive index personal vote	0.096*	−0.024	0.141*
	(0.057)	(0.058)	(0.061)
Constant	0.919***	0.227	−1.389***
	(0.235)	(0.236)	(0.247)
N candidates (level 1)	5471	5471	5471
N country-elections (level 2)	13	13	13
Log Likelihood	-2940.4	-2904.2	-2221.0
AIC	5935.4	5664.2	4354.2
BIC	5978.0	5700.5	4376.9

*Notes: Estimates are based on a two-level multilevel model, with candidates (level 1) nested within country-election units (level 2). All predictors are included at Level 1. Significance Codes: *** p<.001, ** p<.01, * p<.05.*

Table C4: Robustness check: Predicting party disagreement, more moderate and more radical positions (young careerists: 46-year cut-off point)

	DV: Party disagreement (Yes=1)	DV: Radical position (Yes=1)	DV: Moderate position (Yes=1)
Main predictors			
Career trajectory (ref. category: Other)			
Young careerist	0.239**	0.174	0.208*
	(0.107)	(0.118)	(0.140)
Party soldier	-0.010*	0.018	-0.157**
	(0.06)	(0.06)	(0.08)
Outsider	0.056	−0.063	0.206*
	(0.10)	(0.090)	(0.099)
Perceived chance of being elected	0.049*	−0.066*	0.050*
	(0.029)	(0.029)	(0.033)
Control variables			
Gender (female)	−0.212***	−0.254***	−0.023
	(0.065)	(0.067)	(0.080)
Age	−0.006	−0.004	−0.004
	(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.003)
University degree	−0.104	−0.088	−0.035
	(0.069)	(0.070)	(0.084)
Party family (ref. category: Christian Democrats)			
Conservatives	-0.192	−0.442***	0.248*
	(0.111)	(0.117)	(0.129)
Extreme Right	−0.354	0.010	−0.919**
	(0.221)	(0.227)	(0.305)
Greens	0.021	0.301***	−0.360**
	(0.130)	(0.134)	(0.155)
Liberals	−0.161	-0.066	−0.154
	(0.113)	(0.115)	(0.133)
Social Democrats & Socialists	0.327**	0.531***	−0.467***
	(0.119)	(0.112)	(0.136)
Radical Left	−0.352**	−0.290**	−0.338*
	(0.112)	(0.146)	(0.181)
Incentive index personal vote	0.096*	−0.024	0.141*
	(0.057)	(0.058)	(0.061)
Constant	0.894***	0.227	−1.409***
	(0.205)	(0.236)	(0.247)
N candidates (level 1)	5471	5471	5471
N country-elections (level 2)	13	13	13
Log Likelihood	-2678.6	-2945.7	-2243.8
AIC	5925.0	5644.2	4344.0
BIC	5966.2	56780.1	4355.5

*Notes: Estimates are based on a two-level multilevel model, with candidates (level 1) nested within country-election units (level 2). All predictors are included at Level 1. Significance Codes: *** p<.001, ** p<.01, * p<.05.*

Comparison between Comparative Candidate Survey & Chapel Hill Expert Survey data

In this section, I report a number of additional analyses that evaluate the robustness of the main findings. I test differences between the data from the Chapel Hill Expert Survey (CHES) and the Comparative Candidate Survey (CCS), including measurement variations on the dependent variables. Furthermore, I incorporate additional independent variables into the analysis. Despite encountering a reduction in the number of cases for analysis, these comparisons may shed light on crucial theoretical aspects of the research.

First, I start with the comparison between Candidate and Expert survey data on measuring party dissent behaviour among candidates. Using the CHES and the CCS data, Figures C1 and Figures C2, depict the differences of party-candidate incongruence per country- election and party family. Using the CCS data, in figure C1, I obtain nearly identical results among the two distinct measurements of (in)congruence. However, what stands out is the substantial disparity between the CHES data and the CCS data, indicating a notable variance between estimations derived from expert surveys and candidate surveys. Specifically, in the cases of the UK in 2010, Germany in 2005 and 2009, there exists a significant difference in the mean scores of incongruence. Conversely, for the election years of Greece in 2007, 2009, and 2012, the CHES data closely mirror the perceived incongruence results of the CCS data, albeit diverging in terms of mean incongruence. This finding suggests that institutions that may prioritise individuals' personal attributes and efforts to secure re-election, might encounter challenges in aligning the assessments of experts with those of candidates. In Figure C2, once again, I find substantial variations when comparing the CHES and CCS data. Specifically, the CHES data indicate higher levels of incongruence for Liberal, Social Democratic and Socialists, and Radical Left parties. This finding indicates that it may be challenging for expert surveys to position parties, which may encompass candidates representing a wide spectrum of ideological views ranging from the party's ideology to a more centrist position aimed at attracting votes.

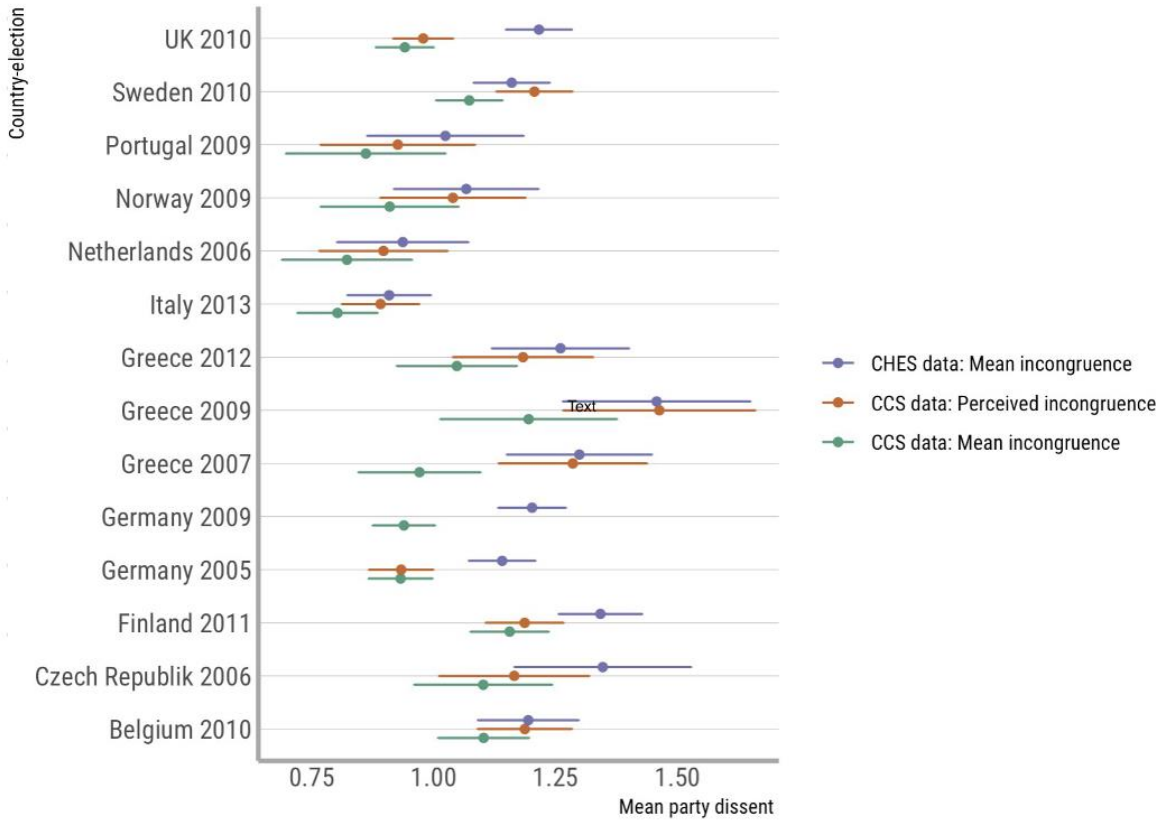

Figure C1: Comparison of CHES and CCS datasets on party dissent per country-election

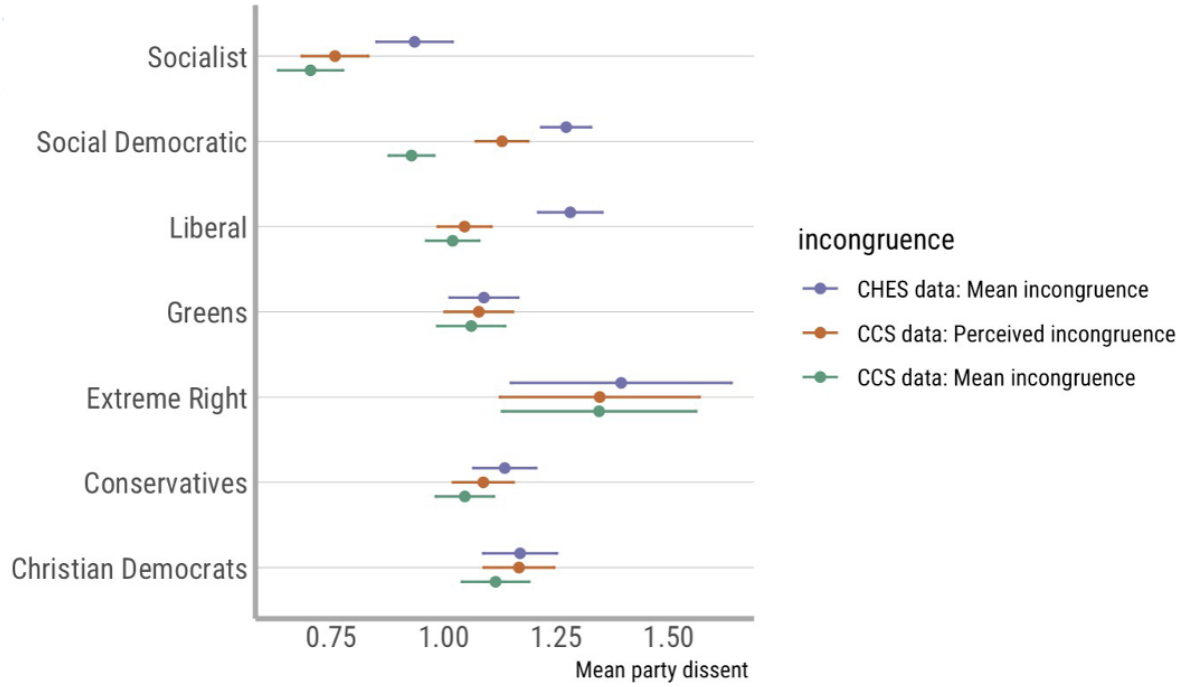

Figure C2: Comparison of CHES and CCS datasets on party dissent per party family

Moving forward, I present the effects of careers on party dissent using alternative dependent variables. First, I examine the perceived ideological incongruence between candidates and their party, as derived from the CCS data. Secondly, I explore the party ideological incongruence, which is derived from both the CHES data (parties' ideological position) and the CCS data (candidates' positioning). Following the findings of the main model of analysis, Table C5 shows that young careerists are significantly more likely to increase party dissent compared to party soldiers. The effect is even stronger for candidates coming from 'outside' politics. This result strengthens the validity of the main analyses' results, reaffirming that party soldiers are the individuals who maintain closer ideological ties with their respective parties. Regarding the CHES data, Table C6 indicates that career trajectories do not have a significant impact, as the results remaining non-significant.

Table C5: Robustness check: DV Ideological Congruence (perceived) as continuous variable

	DV: Perceived Congruence (continuous)
Main predictors	
Career trajectory (ref. category: Other)	
Young Careerist	0.082*
	(0.045)
Party soldier	0.032
	(0.039)
Outsider	0.140**
	(0.048)
Perceived chance of being elected	−0.035**
	(0.013)
Control variables	
Female	−0.117***
	(0.030)
Age	−0.000
	(0.002)
University (degree)	−0.054
	(0.041)
Party family (ref. category: Christian Democrats)	
Conservatives	−0.104*
	(0.066)
Extreme Right	−0.113
	(0.122)
Greens	−0.041
	(0.071)
Liberals	−0.044+
	(0.067)
Social Democrats & Socialists	0.207***
	(0.052)
Radical Left	−0.227***
	(0.066)
Incentive index personal vote	0.020
	(0.031)
Constant	1.177***
	(0.126)
N candidates (level 1)	5471
N country-elections (level 2)	13
Log Likelihood	−5908.330
AIC	16307.15
BIC	16419.47

*Notes: Estimates are based on a two-level multilevel model, with candidates (level 1) nested within country-election units (level 2). All predictors are included at Level 1. Significance Codes: *** p<.001, ** p<.01, * p<.05.*

Table C6: Robustness check: Alternative DV using CHES data

	DV: Party Incongruence (continuous)
Main predictors	
Career trajectory (ref. category: Other)	
Young Careerist	−0.074
	(0.062)
Party soldier	0.030
	(0.031)
Outsider	−0.051
	(0.043)
Perceived chance of being elected	-0.006
	(0.010)
Control variables	
Gender (female)	0.033
	(0.024)
Age	0.002**
	(0.001)
University degree	-0.039
	(0.027)
Party family (ref. category: Christian Democrats)	
Conservatives	-0.113***
	(0.043)
Extreme Right	0.275***
	(0.084)
Greens	-0.071
	(0.046)
Liberals	0.096***
	(0.042)
Social Democrats & Socialists	0.087**
	(0.040)
Radical Left	− 0.272***
	(0.051)
Incentive index personal vote	-0.009
	(0.033)
Constant	− 1.065***
	(0.114)
N candidates (level 1)	6106
N country-elections (level 2)	13
Log Likelihood	− 7996.255
AIC	16026.510
BIC	16140.700

*Notes: Estimates are based on a two-level multilevel model, with candidates (level 1) nested within country-election units (level 2). All predictors are included at Level 1. Significance Codes: *** p<.001, ** p<.01, * p<.05.*

Additional analyses exploring theoretical perspectives related to candidate selection and style of representation.

Furthermore, due to the lack of available data (e.g. a combination of candidates' missing answers, specific questions on candidates' attributes that are not asked in all country- elections) some of potential theoretical hypotheses cannot be fully tested. Therefore, I present a series of supplementary models to examine additional career effects. An individual- level trait relevant to candidates' careers, potentially influencing party dissent, is the mode of candidate selection. In Table C7, I include a categorical variable that captures candidates' selection, encompassing four distinct categories representing a spectrum from openness to centralization: voters at large, voters of my party, members of my party, and party leadership. Remarkably, the results reveal that candidate selection criteria do not have an impact on the level of party dissent. Therefore, more research should be done to explore the potential impact of candidate selection on candidate-voter congruence.

In addition to the beforementioned findings, in Table C8, I introduce the representation style variable to assess the impact of candidates' representation approaches on party congruence. Earlier research by Önnudóttir (2014) and Pedrazzani and Segatti (2022) incorporated the effect of candidates' representation approaches on congruence between parties and voters. However, it may be challenging to readily accept that the representation style is an inherent philosophical position adopted by candidates right from the beginning of their careers. Instead, it is more likely a reaction of how they position themselves in relation to their party. In my analysis, I classify representation styles as follows: "partisans" are those aligning with the party's views, "trustees" are those following their own views, and "delegates" are candidates aligning with voters' opinions. The results, with "partisans" as the reference category, indicate that "trustees" significantly increase the levels of incongruence between candidates and their party. Specifically, this effect holds -and it is slightly stronger-, with

"trustees" being more likely to adopt moderate views. Interestingly, candidate considered as "delegates" by taking more moderate views significantly increase the levels of party dissent. These findings may suggest that my initial assumption, stating that representation depends on candidates' positions within the party, holds merit. For example, politicians may prioritise representing the interests of their constituents or advancing issues they are passionate about, leading them to diverge from their party's stance on specific policy matters.

Overall, the findings from both the main and additional models underscore the importance of candidates' career trajectories. Party soldiers are closer to their party's ideological position, while young careerists and outsiders are more inclined to differentiate themselves, either leaning towards extreme positions or adopting more centrist stances. Interestingly, while the selection rules of candidates show no significant impact on party dissent, representation goals can influence their position within the party. Specifically, candidates who represent their own views and those of their constituents tend to diverge further from the party's ideological position, likely due to electoral incentives.

Table C7: Robustness check: Additional variable 'candidate selection' as predictor on explaining party dissent

	DV: Party disagreement (Yes=1)	DV: Radical position (Yes=1)	DV: Moderate position (Yes=1)
Main predictors			
Career trajectory (ref. category: Other)			
Young Careerist	0.351*	0.194	0.803**
	(0.143)	(0.134)	(0.257)
Party soldier	-0.244**	0.018	-0.339**
	(0.064)	(0.066)	(0.107)
Outsider	0.043	−0.102	-0.086
	(0.120)	(0.124)	(0.141)
Perceived chance of being elected	−0.049	−0.054	−0.001
	(0.037)	(0.038)	(0.045)
Candidate Selection: Voters at large	−0.281	−0.209	−0.244
	(0.219)	(0.219)	(0.236)
Candidate Selection: Voters of my party	−0.182	−0.052	−0.336
	(0.229)	(0.233)	(0.253)
Candidate Selection: Members of my party	−0.021	0.110	−0.311
	(0.201)	(0.206)	(0.233)
Control variables			
Gender (female)	−0.252***	−0.320***	0.057
	(0.090)	(0.093)	(0.108)
Age	−0.010***	−0.011***	0.001
	(0.004)	(0.004)	(0.005)
University degree	−0.179*	−0.130	−0.074
	(0.096)	(0.103)	(0.108)
Party family (ref. category: Christian Democrats)			
Conservatives	0.134	−0.056	0.186
	(0.149)	(0.158)	(0.164)
Extreme Right	−0.347	0.093	−0.928***
	(0.250)	(0.262)	(0.354)
Greens	0.172	0.403**	−0.375*
	(0.184)	(0.186)	(0.218)
Liberals	0.119	−0.093	0.245
	(0.167)	(0.174)	(0.182)
Social Democrats & Socialists	0.343**	0.941***	−0.934***
	(0.149)	(0.156)	(0.177)
Radical Left	−0.434**	−0.234	−0.518**
	(0.089)	(0.090)	(0.106)
Incentive index personal vote	0.028	0.011	0.014
	(0.067)	(0.091)	(0.065)
Constant	1.358***	0.362	−0.768**
	(0.288)	(0.416)	(0.337)
N candidates (level 1)	3684	3684	3684
N country-elections (level 2)	10	10	10
Log Likelihood	− 2470.1	−1505.074	-1775.9
AIC	4978.2	3046.148	3589.8
BIC	5096.2	3149.767	3707.9

*Notes: Estimates are based on a two-level multilevel model, with candidates (level 1) nested within country-election units (level 2). All predictors are included at Level 1. Significance Codes: *** p<.001, ** p<.01, * p<.05.*

Table C8: Robustness check: Additional variable 'style of representation' as predictor on explaining party dissent

	DV: Party disagreement (Yes=1)	DV: Radical position (Yes=1)	DV: Moderate position (Yes=1)
Main predictors			
Career trajectory (ref. category: Other)			
Young Careerist	0.309***	0.231	0.178*
	(0.107)	(0.172)	(0.196)
Party soldier	-0.168+	0.019	-0.223*
	(0.09)	(0.09)	(0.100)
Outsider	-0.041	0.001	0.006
Perceived chance of being elected	−0.007	−0.055	−0.001
	(0.034)	(0.034)	(0.045)
	(0.121)	(0.124)	(0.136)
Representation style: Trustee (own opinion)	0.181**	-0.103	0.190*
	(0.084)	(0.157)	(0.112)
Representation style: Delegate (voters' opinion)	0.129	−0.168	0.266**
	(0.112)	(0.088)	(0.140)
Control variables			
Gender (female)	−0.252***	−0.221***	−0.098
	(0.082)	(0.083)	(0.095)
Age	−0.010***	−0.004	−0.008*
	(0.004)	(0.004)	(0.004)
University degree	−0.158*	−0.179**	0.008
	(0.198)	(0.221)	(0.245)
Party family (ref. category: Christian Democrats)			
Conservatives	0.183	−0.104	0.280*
	(0.146)	(0.153)	(0.159)
Extreme Right	−0.391	0.136	−0.979***
	(0.240)	(0.253)	(0.335)
Greens	0.130	0.451***	−0.549***
	(0.166)	(0.167)	(0.190)
Liberals	0.058	0.241	−0.263
	(0.154)	(0.158)	(0.172)
Social Democrats & Socialists	0.296**	0.726***	−0.622***
	(0.147)	(0.146)	(0.166)
Radical Left	−0.477**	−0.372*	−0.339
	(0.089)	(0.090)	(0.106)
Incentive index personal vote	0.074**	−0.025	0.137**
	(0.036)	(0.052)	(0.058)
Constant	1.070***	−0.211	−0.790***
	(0.245)	(0.496)	(0.297)
N candidates (level 1)	4232	4232	4232
N country-elections (level 2)	11	11	11
Log Likelihood	-2812.2	−1871.866	-2181.3
AIC	5658.4	5556.8	4396.6
BIC	5766.3	5665.2	4504.5

*Notes: Estimates are based on a two-level multilevel model, with candidates (level 1) nested within country-election units (level 2). All predictors are included at Level 1. Significance Codes: *** p<.001, ** p<.01, * p<.05.*

Interaction models comparing perceived elected and non-elected candidates.

Table C9. Effects of career trajectories on party dissent behaviour among perceived elected candidates

	DV: Party disagreement (Yes=1)	DV: Radical position (Yes=1)	DV: Moderate position (Yes=1)
Main predictors			
Career trajectory (ref. category (Other)			
Young Careerist	0.688*	0.699	0.122*
	(0.508)	(0.449)	(0.344)
Party soldier	-0.135*	-0.018	-0.166*
	(0.173)	(0.176)	(0.206)
Outsider	-0.178	-0.242	0.046
	(0.343)	(0.777)	(0.393)
Control variables			
Female	-0.035	-0.238	0.191
	(0.206)	(0.215)	(0.251)
Age	0.002	0.005	-0.005
	(0.009)	(0.009)	(0.011)
University	0.034	0.126	-0.197
	(0.194)	(0.200)	(0.242)
Party family (ref. category: Christian Democrats)			
Conservatives	-0.109	-0.779*	0.759*
	(0.323)	(0.327)	(0.345)
Extreme Right	-0.563	-0.296	-0.525
	(0.536)	(0.554)	(0.869)
Greens	-0.142	-0.468	0.686
	(0.522)	(0.536)	(0.615)
Liberals	0.081	0.037	0.270
	(0.392)	(0.384)	(0.505)
Social Democrats & Socialists	-0.036	-0.200	0.292
	(0.318)	(0.313)	(0.428)
Radical Left	-0.341	-0.141	-0.284
	(0.527)	(0.533)	(0.752)
Index of personal vote	0.098	-0.159**	0.221**
	(0.068)	(0.070)	(0.091)
Constant	0.451	-0.023	-1624**
	(0.505)	(0.503)	(0.636)
N candidates (level 1)	727	727	727
N country-elections (level 2)	13	13	13
Log Likelihood	-2212.2	−1721.4	-1961.3
AIC	1006.0	977.5	787.4
BIC	1074.8	1046.7	856.3

*Notes: Estimates are based on a two-level multilevel model, with candidates (level 1) nested within country-election units (level 2). All predictors are included at Level 1. Significance Codes: *** p<.001, ** p<.01, * p<.05.*

Table C10. Effects of career trajectories on party dissent behaviour among perceived non-elected candidates.

	DV: Party disagreement (Yes=1)	DV: Radical position (Yes=1)	DV: Moderate position (Yes=1)
Main predictors			
Career trajectory (ref. category Other)			
Young Careerist	0.145	0.198	0.067
	(0.163)	(0.162)	(0.138)
Party soldier	-0.054	0.082	-0.151
	(0.09)	(0.09)	(0.099)
Outsider	0.049	-0.048	0.204*
	(0.113)	(0.128)	(0.129)
Control variables			
Female	-0.234***	-0.240***	-0.052
	(0.069)	(0.071)	(0.084)
Age	-0.007**	-0.005*	-0.004
	(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.003)
University	-0.117	-0.113	-0.016
	(0.074)	(0.075)	(0.089)
Party family (ref. category: Christian Democrats)			
Conservatives	-0.135	-0.371***	0.198
	(0.107)	(0.125)	(0.124)
Extreme Right	-0.285	0.038	-0.980**
	(0.214)	(0.249)	(0.317)
Greens	0.035	0.328**	-0.429**
	(0.120)	(0.134)	(0.142)
Liberal	-0.129	-0.056	-0.147
	(0.108)	(0.121)	(0.140)
Social Democrats & Socialists	0.329**	0.625***	-0.465***
	(0.132)	(0.120)	(0.130)
Radical Left	-0.366**	-0.260+	-0.313*
	(0.144)	(0.152)	(0.167)
Index of personal vote	0.104	-0.009	0.138*
	(0.064)	(0.064)	(0.059)
Constant	0.914***	-0.078	-1.113***
	(0.230)	(0.442)	(0.265)
N candidates (level 1)	4744	4744	4744
N country-elections (level 2)	13	13	13
Log Likelihood	-2123.2	−1616.2	-1878.6
AIC	6348.1	6210.0	4911.5
BIC	6445.1	6307.2	5008.5

*Notes: Estimates are based on a two-level multilevel model, with candidates (level 1) nested within country-election units (level 2). All predictors are included at Level 1. Significance Codes: *** p<.001, ** p<.01, * p<.05.*

Robustness checks: Alternative approaches to operationalize young careerists.

Here, I re-run the regression models, redefining young careerists as those candidates who joined the party before the age of 25, have prior career experiences being employed by their party or gaining experiences working in MPs' offices, and lack working experience at local level. The results of these models are consistent with the main results.

Table C11: Robustness check: The effect of young careerists on party dissent using alternative measurement (joined the party before age 25)

	DV: Party disagreement (Yes=1)	DV: Radical position (Yes=1)	DV: Moderate position (Yes=1)
Main predictors			
Young Careerist	0.221***	0.072	0.131*
	(0.089)	(0.089)	(0.102)
Perceived chance of being elected	0.026*	−0.064***	0.053**
	(0.029)	(0.030)	(0.033)
Control variables			
Gender (female)	−0.265***	−0.242***	−0.091
	(0.071)	(0.072)	(0.083)
Age	−0.008**	−0.004*	−0.005*
	(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.004)
University degree	−0.148**	−0.152*	−0.041
	(0.075)	(0.078)	(0.090)
Party family (ref. cat.: Christian Democrats)			
Conservatives	0.041	−0.313**	0.329**
	(0.124)	(0.129)	(0.139)
Extreme Right	−0.422*	0.090	−0.990***
	(0.225)	(0.232)	(0.325)
Greens	0.042	0.301**	−0.388**
	(0.134)	(0.134)	(0.157)
Liberals	−0.105	0.103	−0.283*
	(0.126)	(0.129)	(0.147)
Social Democrats & Socialists	0.253**	0.510***	−0.383***
	(0.119)	(0.120)	(0.139)
Radical Left	−0.631***	−0.540***	−0.335*
	(0.162)	(0.179)	(0.200)
Incentive index personal vote	0.076*	−0.062	0.182***
	(0.042)	(0.052)	(0.056)
Constant	0.993***	0.347	−1.411***
	(0.228)	(0.244)	(0.278)
N candidates (level 1)	3906	3906	3906
N country-elections (level 2)	13	13	13
Log Likelihood	−2579.905	−2540.856	−2058.772
AIC	5189.810	5111.711	4147.544
BIC	5283.864	5205.765	4241.598

*Notes: Estimates are based on a two-level multilevel model, with candidates (level 1) nested within country-election units (level 2). All predictors are included at Level 1. Significance Codes: *** p<.001, ** p<.01, * p<.05.*

Latent Class Analysis (LCA) to construct career trajectories.

In this section, as a further robustness test, I adopt a novel approach in identifying career experiences using a method that first applied in social sciences by Lazersfeld (1950)[35] and Goodman (1974)[36]. Unlike previous methodological approaches, I classify candidates based on their pre-parliamentary experiences employing a Latent Class Analysis (LCA). The LCA reduces the complexity of the data by explaining not only the association between the observed variables but also measuring the interrelationships between the variable's items. In practice, it is a multinomial logistic regression method that classifies the results into categories (factors). Thus, it is a highly suitable technique to identify the relationship between candidates' career experiences identifying specific response patterns (Bandeen-Roche, et al., 1997)[37].

The Latent Class Analysis yields a probabilistic clustering approach meaning that each item belongs to one class, however there is always the uncertainty to belong to another one. For that reason, I run models using 3000 number of iterations and 10 times of repetition to guarantee less precarious results. In Table C12, the results show that a three-class model is the most accurate model (lowest AIC and BIC criteria). Analytically, the findings reveal three latent classes with the following prevailing characteristics: employment within party and MPs' offices; a strong local involvement through membership in local parliament and local party office work; and lack of prior political experiences. While this statistical technique appears promising, the validity is limited by negative degrees of freedom due to insufficient number of predictors for the latent class analysis cases. Consequently, the results cannot be fully relied

[35] Lazarsfeld, P. F. (1950). The logical and mathematical foundation of latent structure analysis. *Studies in Social Psychology in World War II Vol. IV: Measurement and Prediction*, 362-412.

[36] Goodman, L. A. (1974). The Analysis of Systems of Qualitative Variables When Some of the Variables Are Unobservable. Part I: A Modified Latent Structure Approach. *American Journal of Sociology*, 79:1179–259.

[37] Bandeen-Roche, K., Miglioretti, D. L., Zeger, S. L., & Rathouz, P. J. (1997). Latent variable regression for multiple discrete outcomes. *Journal of the American Statistical Association*, 92(440), 1375-1386.

upon for regression analysis. Therefore, I stick with the classification presented in the main results of the Chapter 2.

Table C12. Robustness check: LCA analysis exploring latent profiles of career trajectories

	Fit for 2 latent classes	**Fit for 3 latent classes**	**Fit for 4 latent classes**
Number of observations	6205	6205	6205
Number of estimated parameters	7	11	15
Residual degrees of freedom	0	-4	-8
Maximumlog-likelihood	-8885.685	-8876.866	-8876.866
AIC	17785.37	17775.73	17783.73
BIC	17832.5	17829.8	17884.73
Conditional item response probabilities, by outcome variable, for each class (row)			
	MP work		
	0	1	
class 1:	0.5386	0.4614	
class 2:	0.9904	0. 0096	
class 3:	0.9231	0.0769	
	Party work		
	0	1	
class 1:	0.5240	0.4760	
class 2:	0. 9659	0.0341	
class 3:	0. 9972	0. 0028	
	Local parliament		
	0	1	
class 1:	0.5646	0.4354	
class 2:	0.8467	0.1533	
class 3:	0.2563	0.7437	
	Local office		
	0	1	
class 1:	0.6089	0.3911	
class 2:	0.9470	0.0536	
class 3:	0.1237	0.8763	

Appendix D – Chapter 3

Survey Questionnaire Wording

Questionnaire Comparative Candidate Study: Wave I

In your opinion, what are the most important political problems facing [country] today? (Please write in)

The most important problem is [open answer]

In politics, people sometimes talk about the 'left' and the 'right'. Where would you place your own views on a scale from 0 to 10, where 0 means the most left and, 10 means the most right?

Left = 0 ; Right = 10

Before becoming a candidate for the [national parliament], were you ever employed in a State or Federal MPs or minister's office?

No = 1; Yes = 2 (recoded to No = 0 ; Yes = 1)

Have you ever been working as a payed employee for this party?

No = 1; Yes = 2 (recoded to No = 0 ; Yes = 1)

Years served as member of a local assembly?

measured in years (recoded to No = 0; Yes = 1)

In the beginning of the campaign, how did you evaluate your chances to win the mandate? ...

...I thought I could not win = 1
... I thought I could hardly win = 2
... I thought it was an open race = 3
... I thought I could hardly lose = 4 ... I thought I could not lose = 5
(recoded 0 Very unlikely to 4 Very likely)

Are you...

male = 0; female = 1

In what year were you born?

(measured in number years)

Level of education

Incomplete primary = 1

Primary completed = 2

Incomplete secondary = 3

Secondary completed = 4

Post secondary trade/vocational school = 5 University incomplete = 6

University completed = 7

(recoded to No degree = 0; University degree = 1)

Codebook Comparative Study of Electoral Systems (CSES)

Most Important Problem-Sociotropic – *first mention [open answer]*

Descriptive Statistics

Table D1. Descriptive statistics for dependent and independent variables

Variable	Mean	St. Dev.	Min	Max
Priority congruence (average voter)	-0.51	0.42	-1.49	0
Career trajectory	1.56	0.77	1	4
Electoral success (perceived chance of being elected)	2.02	1.24	1	5
Ideological incongruent with voters	2.18	1.42	0	7.9
Party rebel (ideological incongruent with party)	0.58	0.46	0	1
Female	45.31	11.49	0	1
Age	47	12.29	18	98
Party in government	0.39	0.48	0	1
Niche party	0.31	0.46	0	1
Electoral incentives (incentive index personal vote)	3.09	1.57	0	5
Country-election	6.40	3.63	1	11

Table D2. Voters' Priorities (%) by Country Election (CSES Data)

	Czech Republic 2006	Finland 2011	Germany 2005	Germany 2009	Iceland 2009	Italy 2013	Netherlands 2006	Norway 2009	Portugal 2009	Portugal 2011	UK 2010
Agriculture	0.28	0.66	0	0	0	0	0.2	0.5	0.16	0	0
Budget	2.75	0	1.97	0	0	0	0	0	0.26	0.86	0
Civil rights and liberties	2.03	2.6	0	5.19	0.62	0.79	1.38	0.22	3.89	0	0
Climate Change	0.6	0.85	0.68	1.75	0	0.18	2.21	22.31	0.42	0	0.73
Economic Crisis	0.84	0	0	11.96	38	7.91	0	1.15	0.11	13.34	0
Economic Growth	3.47	1.18	8.74	16.85	10.77	12.81	5.23	3.34	4.46	8.62	42.48
Education	0.64	7.7	2.68	4.29	0	1.22	3.06	7.79	14.08	2.1	0.61
European Union	1.47	0.24	1.35	0	13.61	0	10.24	1.98	0	0	0.97
Governance and Public Administration	55.38	7.93	21.95	2.11	3.65	15.32	20.54	2.87	12.87	4.25	13.35
Health	7.97	22.9	2.89	0	0	4.03	10.04	6.25	5.93	8.15	0.36
Housing	0.32	2.22	0.18	0	0	0	2.67	0.07	0.37	0	0
Immigration	0.84	2.31	1.17	0	0	0.83	14.12	10.67	0	0	12.5
Infrastructure and Technology	0.4	0.28	0	0.94	0.19	4.28	1.42	4.53	0	0	0.36
Law and Security	7.25	5	0.49	2.45	0	0.61	4.97	1.04	12.66	1.11	1.33

Miscellaneous	0.08	0.57	0.37	0.03	0	1.58	3.23	4.81	0.21	5.1	0
Pensions	2.79	4.2	3.6	0	0	0	0.82	0.25	0	2.62	0.85
Security Defence	0.56	2.12	0.65	2.39	5.51	0.18	2.73	4.27	1.47	0	0.85
Taxation	1.63	26.49	2.71	0	0	7.59	0.36	0.61	0.74	2.96	0.24
Unemployment	7.97	3.78	41.84	31.82	12.87	41.29	2.3	9.45	33.61	36.02	2.91
Welfare	2.75	7.37	6.93	20.23	14.79	1.37	8.99	14.51	7.72	9.95	1.33
Energy	0	1.09	1.79	0	0	0	0.03	0.47	0	0	0
Poverty	0	0.52	0	0	0	0	2.86	2.23	0.21	3	0
Demographic	0	0	0	0	0	0	1.91	0	0	0	0
Religion	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.59	0.68	0	0	0
Debt	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.84	1.93	21.12
Total	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**

Table D3. Candidates' Priorities (%) by Country Election (CCS Data)

United Kingdom 2010

	Labour Party	**Conservative Party**	**Liberal Democrats**	**Green Party**	**UKIP**	**SNP**	**Plaid Cymru**	**BNP**	**English Democrats**	**TUSC**	**Scottish Green Party**
Civil rights and liberties	0.00	0.34	1.22	0.00	0.52	0.00	0.00	0.88	0.00	0.00	0.00
Health	3.50	3.06	2.09	0.32	0.26	0.00	0.00	0.88	1.67	0.00	0.00
Education	4.67	6.12	5.75	0.64	0.00	1.92	5.26	1.75	1.67	0.00	0.00
Climate Change	7.01	1.70	9.58	36.22	0.26	1.92	15.79	0.88	1.67	0.00	50.00
Energy	0.47	0.00	0.52	4.81	0.00	1.92	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	5.00
Welfare	13.79	14.29	11.67	23.08	4.91	9.62	21.05	4.39	6.67	18.18	15.00
Security Defence	1.40	3.74	1.92	1.60	3.10	3.85	0.00	3.51	1.67	4.55	0.00

Infrastructure and Technology	0.23	0.34	0.87	0.32	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Pensions	0.47	0.68	0.52	0.00	0.00	1.92	2.63	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Governance and Public Administration	3.97	3.74	9.23	4.81	6.98	21.15	0.00	1.75	18.33	13.64	5.00
Immigration	2.57	6.46	2.44	0.00	19.90	0.00	0.00	44.74	16.67	0.00	0.00
Economic Growth	37.62	37.76	37.11	15.71	17.05	28.85	28.95	7.89	20.00	27.27	20.00
Unemployment	12.85	4.42	4.88	3.21	1.55	9.62	13.16	2.63	1.67	9.09	0.00
Poverty	1.87	0.68	0.87	1.60	0.00	3.85	0.00	0.00	0.00	13.64	5.00
Miscellaneous	1.87	0.34	1.57	2.24	2.58	1.92	5.26	5.26	10.00	9.09	0.00
Economic Crisis	0.70	0.34	1.74	1.28	0.78	1.92	2.63	0.00	0.00	4.55	0.00
Budget	0.47	2.38	3.31	0.32	2.33	3.85	2.63	0.88	0.00	0.00	0.00
Debt	0.70	6.46	1.57	1.92	4.91	7.69	0.00	2.63	0.00	0.00	0.00
Law and Security	1.87	4.42	0.35	0.00	2.07	0.00	0.00	4.39	1.67	0.00	0.00
European Union	0.23	1.70	0.00	0.00	31.52	0.00	0.00	17.54	13.33	0.00	0.00
Demographic	0.47	0.00	0.17	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.67	0.00	0.00
Taxation	0.00	0.68	1.39	0.64	1.29	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.67	0.00	0.00
Housing	3.27	0.34	1.22	1.28	0.00	0.00	2.63	0.00	1.67	0.00	0.00
Agriculture	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Religion	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Total	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**

Czech Republic 2006

	CSSD	KDU	KSCM	ODS	SZ
Civil rights and liberties	0.00	0.81	2.94	1.61	0.00
Health	7.69	4.03	5.88	4.84	2.33
Education	3.85	2.42	0.00	0.00	0.00
Climate Change	0.00	0.81	2.94	0.00	9.30
Energy	0.00	0.81	2.94	0.00	2.33
Welfare	19.23	27.42	26.47	25.81	41.86
Security Defence	0.00	0.81	5.88	0.00	2.33
Infrastructure and Technology	3.85	1.61	0.00	3.23	6.98
Pensions	3.85	3.23	2.94	8.06	0.00
Governance and Public Administration	19.23	19.35	5.88	14.52	11.63
Immigration	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	4.65
Economic Growth	11.54	6.45	2.94	6.45	2.33
Unemployment	11.54	8.06	5.88	3.23	2.33
Poverty	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Miscellaneous	3.85	2.42	2.94	4.84	6.98
Economic Crisis	0.00	0.00	2.94	0.00	0.00
Budget	3.85	2.42	2.94	3.23	2.33

Debt	0.00	4.03	2.94	11.29	2.33
Law and Security	11.54	9.68	17.65	3.23	0.00
European Union	0.00	1.61	2.94	1.61	2.33
Demographic	0.00	1.61	0.00	0.00	0.00
Taxation	0.00	0.81	0.00	8.06	0.00
Housing	0.00	0.81	2.94	0.00	0.00
Agriculture	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Religion	0.00	0.81	0.00	0.00	0.00
Total	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**

Portugal 2009

	BE	**CDS-PP**	**CDU**	**PSD**	**PS**
Civil rights and liberties	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Health	2.47	0.93	0.00	0.00	0.00
Education	4.94	6.54	4.00	7.14	5.36
Climate Change	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Energy	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Welfare	40.74	25.23	34.00	18.37	14.29
Security Defence	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Infrastructure and Technology	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Pensions	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Governance and Public	8.64	22.43	10.00	22.45	14.29

Administration					
Immigration	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Economic Growth	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Unemployment	27.16	8.41	20.00	12.24	32.14
Poverty	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Miscellaneous	4.94	5.61	8.00	2.04	5.36
Economic Crisis	11.11	20.56	20.00	22.45	26.79
Budget	0.00	3.74	2.00	5.10	0.00
Debt	0.00	3.74	2.00	8.16	1.79
Law and Security	0.00	2.80	0.00	2.04	0.00
European Union	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Demographic	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Taxation	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Housing	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Agriculture	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Religion	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Total	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**

Portugal 2011

	BE	**CDS-PP**	**PEV**	**PCP**	**PSD**	**PS**
Civil rights and liberties	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Health	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.94	1.22
Education	2.00	4.10	0.00	1.47	0.94	6.10

Climate Change	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Energy	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Welfare	25.00	22.13	18.18	30.88	17.92	13.41
Security Defence	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Infrastructure and Technology	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.94	0.00
Pensions	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Governance and Public Administration	9.00	18.03	18.18	7.35	9.43	8.54
Immigration	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Economic Growth	7.00	4.10	0.00	8.82	5.66	13.41
Unemployment	26.00	11.48	18.18	27.94	25.47	31.71
Poverty	10.00	2.46	0.00	4.41	1.89	4.88
Miscellaneous	6.00	7.38	9.09	8.82	12.26	3.66
Economic Crisis	6.00	9.02	18.18	7.35	1.89	12.20
Budget	3.00	13.11	9.09	2.94	16.98	2.44
Debt	5.00	6.56	9.09	0.00	4.72	2.44
Law and Security	0.00	0.82	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
European Union	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Demographic	0.00	0.82	0.00	0.00	0.94	0.00

Taxation	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Housing	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Agriculture	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Religion	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Total	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**

Norway 2009

	SV	**V**	**Sp**	**Ap**	**Hoyre**	**KrF**	**FrP**
Civil rights and liberties	4.05	0.79	1.80	2.11	0.80	1.17	1.87
Health	2.36	1.19	4.68	4.58	4.82	5.84	11.94
Education	8.78	16.67	4.68	7.04	12.05	4.28	7.46
Climate Change	35.47	34.92	21.22	19.72	6.02	23.35	1.49
Energy	5.41	7.94	8.99	3.17	12.45	7.00	4.85
Welfare	18.58	15.08	22.30	16.90	21.29	29.57	18.66
Security Defence	2.36	1.19	1.08	0.35	3.21	1.95	2.61
Infrastructure and Technology	2.03	1.59	2.52	0.70	4.02	1.56	4.85
Pensions	2.36	3.17	6.12	5.99	9.24	5.06	10.82
Governance and Public Administration	1.69	1.59	5.40	0.70	1.61	1.17	0.75
Immigration	5.07	3.97	1.80	2.82	3.61	1.56	17.16
Economic Growth	3.72	4.37	6.12	13.38	7.23	4.67	8.21
Unemployment	2.03	3.17	6.47	18.31	5.62	4.67	3.36

Poverty	5.07	0.40	1.08	3.17	0.40	4.67	0.75
Miscellaneous	1.01	3.17	4.32	1.06	6.02	3.50	2.99
Economic Crisis	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Budget	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Debt	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Law and Security	0.00	0.40	0.36	0.00	1.61	0.00	2.24
European Union	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Demographic	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Taxation	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Housing	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Agriculture	0.00	0.40	1.08	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Religion	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Total	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**

Iceland 2009

	Social Democratic Alliance	**Progressive Party**	**Independence Party**	**Left Green Movement**	**Liberal Party**	**Civic Movement**
Civil rights and liberties	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Health	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Education	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Climate Change	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Energy	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Welfare	11.11	6.25	7.32	24.78	8.82	10.58

Security Defence	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Infrastructure and Technology	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Pensions	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Governance and Public Administration	10.32	8.93	2.44	12.39	2.94	33.65
Immigration	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Economic Growth	33.33	40.18	45.12	32.74	26.47	29.81
Unemployment	14.29	20.54	24.39	5.31	8.82	2.88
Poverty	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Miscellaneous	11.11	12.50	9.76	16.81	29.41	16.35
Economic Crisis	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Budget	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Debt	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Law and Security	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
European Union	17.46	9.82	8.54	5.31	8.82	4.81
Demographic	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Taxation	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Housing	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Agriculture	2.38	1.79	2.44	2.65	14.71	1.92
Religion	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

Total	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**

Germany 2005

	SPD	CDU	CSU	FDP	Die Grünen	Die Linke	WASG
Civil rights and liberties	0.57	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.51	0.00	0.00
Health	2.01	1.16	3.57	1.49	0.77	0.36	0.79
Education	4.31	2.03	0.00	4.48	5.13	3.20	0.79
Climate Change	1.15	0.00	0.00	0.00	11.28	0.71	1.59
Energy	0.57	0.00	0.00	0.00	5.38	0.00	0.00
Welfare	5.17	2.03	0.00	0.75	7.95	21.35	24.60
Security Defence	0.57	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.26	3.56	2.38
Infrastructure and Technology	0.57	0.29	0.00	0.00	0.26	0.00	0.00
Pensions	1.44	0.29	0.00	1.49	0.77	0.71	0.79
Governance and Public Administration	1.15	0.58	0.00	1.00	0.51	1.42	1.59
Immigration	0.00	0.29	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.71	0.00
Economic Growth	8.05	13.95	16.07	11.44	5.64	5.34	8.73
Unemployment	40.52	42.73	46.43	40.05	34.10	37.72	36.51
Poverty	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Miscellaneous	6.90	4.36	1.79	3.73	6.92	11.39	3.97

Economic Crisis	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Budget	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Debt	10.34	15.70	19.64	13.43	5.13	2.85	3.17
Law and Security	10.06	9.59	8.93	13.93	8.72	6.05	11.90
European Union	0.00	0.29	0.00	0.25	0.00	0.36	0.00
Demographic	6.03	4.65	3.57	2.74	5.64	1.07	0.79
Taxation	0.57	2.03	0.00	4.23	1.03	3.20	2.38
Housing	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Agriculture	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Religion	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Total	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**

Germany 2009

	SPD	**CDU**	**CSU**	**FDP**	**Die Grünen**	**Die Linke**
Civil rights and liberties	0.32	0.00	0.00	1.43	0.67	0.35
Health	1.95	2.88	0.00	3.93	0.67	0.35
Education	9.09	3.96	4.35	8.93	7.67	4.90
Climate Change	5.52	3.60	4.35	0.71	30.00	5.94
Energy	3.57	0.72	0.00	0.36	5.33	1.05
Welfare	14.29	9.71	8.70	8.93	13.67	28.67
Security Defence	0.32	0.72	2.17	1.07	0.67	9.44
Infrastructure and Technology	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Pensions	0.65	0.72	0.00	0.36	0.00	0.70

Governance and Public Administration	2.27	1.80	2.17	2.14	1.33	2.45
Immigration	0.65	0.72	2.17	1.07	0.00	0.35
Economic Growth	6.49	10.43	15.22	14.64	5.67	1.40
Unemployment	21.10	15.47	17.39	13.21	7.00	18.53
Poverty	1.30	0.36	0.00	0.36	2.33	6.99
Miscellaneous	1.62	0.36	4.35	1.79	2.33	1.75
Economic Crisis	21.43	28.42	17.39	20.36	13.00	14.34
Budget	0.00	0.36	0.00	0.36	0.33	0.00
Debt	2.92	5.40	8.70	5.71	5.33	1.05
Law and Security	2.92	2.16	2.17	4.29	1.00	0.70
European Union	0.00	0.36	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Demographic	2.92	6.83	6.52	5.00	2.33	0.35
Taxation	0.32	1.44	2.17	4.29	0.33	0.35
Housing	0.32	3.60	2.17	1.07	0.33	0.35
Agriculture	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Religion	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Total	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**

Netherlands 2006

	CDA	**PvdA**	**SP**	**VVD**	**Groen Links**	**Christen Unie**	**D66**	**SGP**	**Pvd Dieren**
Civil rights and liberties	0.00	2.33	0.00	0.00	4.17	0.00	0.00	4.17	0.00

Health	1.75	2.33	11.11	0.00	4.17	5.56	2.78	0.00	0.00
Education	5.26	9.30	6.67	4.00	8.33	0.00	25.00	4.17	8.33
Climate Change	12.28	9.30	2.22	2.00	29.17	16.67	11.11	0.00	29.17
Energy	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	16.67
Welfare	29.82	27.91	51.11	18.00	37.50	61.11	5.56	50.00	20.83
Security Defence	0.00	0.00	0.00	2.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	4.17
Infrastructure and Technology	0.00	0.00	2.22	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Pensions	0.00	2.33	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Governance and Public Administration	5.26	4.65	0.00	8.00	0.00	0.00	8.33	0.00	0.00
Immigration	15.79	20.93	6.67	14.00	8.33	0.00	22.22	4.17	8.33
Economic Growth	8.77	0.00	0.00	8.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	8.33	4.17
Unemployment	1.75	4.65	0.00	4.00	0.00	0.00	2.78	0.00	0.00
Poverty	1.75	2.33	15.56	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Miscellaneous	5.26	4.65	0.00	8.00	0.00	5.56	5.56	12.50	0.00
Economic Crisis	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Budget	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Debt	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Law and Security	7.02	2.33	0.00	22.00	4.17	0.00	5.56	4.17	4.17

European Union	1.75	4.65	0.00	2.00	0.00	0.00	5.56	0.00	0.00
Demographic	3.51	2.33	0.00	2.00	4.17	5.56	2.78	0.00	4.17
Taxation	0.00	0.00	0.00	2.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Housing	0.00	0.00	4.44	2.00	0.00	5.56	2.78	0.00	0.00
Agriculture	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Religion	0.00	0.00	0.00	2.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	12.50	0.00
Total	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**

Italy 2013

	CENTRO DEMOCRATICO	**FRATELLI DITALIA**	**IL POPOLO DELLA LIBERTA**	**LEGA NORD**	**MOVIMENTO 5 STELLE**	**PARTITO DEMOCRATICO**	**RIVOLUZIONE CIVILE**	**SCELTA CIVICA**	**SINISTRA ECOLOGIA LIBERTA**	**SVP**	**UNIONE DI CENTRO**
Civil rights and liberties	0.00	1.67	0.00	0.00	1.96	0.35	2.22	0.00	3.01	0.00	0.00
Health	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Education	7.04	1.67	0.00	0.00	3.53	4.55	4.44	3.01	6.02	0.00	7.04
Climate Change	1.41	0.00	1.42	0.00	4.71	3.85	12.22	0.75	12.78	0.00	2.82
Energy	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Welfare	14.08	10.00	4.96	9.38	22.75	13.64	22.22	15.04	12.78	16.67	8.45
Security Defence	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.75	0.00	0.00
Infrastructure and Technology	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Pensions	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

Governance and Public Administration	14.08	11.67	17.02	21.88	20.00	11.54	7.78	15.04	8.27	0.00	15.49
Immigration	0.00	1.67	1.42	4.69	0.39	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Economic Growth	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Unemployment	32.39	35.00	34.04	28.13	18.04	40.21	35.56	23.31	36.84	33.33	33.80
Poverty	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Miscellaneous	4.23	3.33	3.55	0.00	1.96	3.15	2.22	7.52	0.00	0.00	1.41
Economic Crisis	12.68	11.67	16.31	7.81	7.06	10.49	3.33	12.03	7.52	0.00	12.68
Budget	2.82	1.67	2.13	1.56	1.18	0.70	0.00	5.26	0.00	16.67	1.41
Debt	2.82	0.00	1.42	0.00	1.57	1.40	2.22	2.26	0.75	0.00	2.82
Law and Security	5.63	1.67	2.84	7.81	7.45	5.94	4.44	3.01	9.77	0.00	7.04
European Union	0.00	8.33	1.42	3.13	4.71	1.40	0.00	1.50	0.00	0.00	1.41
Demographic	0.00	1.67	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.41
Taxation	2.82	10.00	13.48	15.63	4.71	2.80	3.33	11.28	1.50	33.33	4.23
Housing	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Agriculture	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Religion	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Total	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**

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	Independence Party	Liberty Party	National Coalition Party	Pirate Party of Finland	Social Democratic Party	Swedish Peoples Party in Finland	Communist Party of Finland	Finns Party	Left Alliance	Workers party
Civil rights and liberties	0.00	0.00	0.00	5.06	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Health	0.00	5.71	1.72	2.53	1.80	2.63	0.83	2.15	3.05	0.00
Education	0.00	2.86	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.32	0.00	0.00	0.51	0.00
Climate Change	0.00	0.00	3.45	3.80	0.00	5.26	1.67	1.08	3.55	0.00
Energy	0.00	0.00	1.72	2.53	0.60	0.00	1.67	0.54	0.00	3.13
Welfare	32.81	11.43	19.83	35.44	38.92	17.11	49.17	23.66	47.72	25.00
Security Defence	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	3.33	1.61	0.00	3.13
Infrastructure and Technology	1.56	0.00	0.86	2.53	0.60	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Pensions	0.00	0.00	0.86	0.00	2.40	1.32	1.67	2.15	1.52	6.25
Governance and Public Administration	17.19	17.14	10.34	10.13	5.39	1.32	8.33	10.22	1.52	9.38
Immigration	0.00	17.14	0.00	1.27	0.60	5.26	0.00	5.38	0.00	0.00
Economic Growth	6.25	8.57	31.03	5.06	13.17	35.53	3.33	5.91	8.12	15.63
Unemployment	3.13	11.43	8.62	3.80	19.76	15.79	9.17	13.44	11.68	9.38
Poverty	0.00	2.86	0.86	1.27	4.19	0.00	10.83	5.91	7.61	12.50
Miscellaneous	10.94	8.57	8.62	13.92	4.19	2.63	5.83	6.99	5.58	6.25

Economic Crisis	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.27	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.08	0.00	0.00
Budget	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.32	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Debt	4.69	0.00	1.72	2.53	4.19	3.95	0.00	3.76	0.51	0.00
Law and Security	3.13	2.86	0.86	2.53	0.60	2.63	0.00	1.61	1.52	3.13
European Union	20.31	8.57	2.59	2.53	0.00	0.00	2.50	12.90	2.03	3.13
Demographic	0.00	0.00	4.31	1.27	0.60	3.95	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Taxation	0.00	2.86	2.59	2.53	2.99	0.00	1.67	1.61	5.08	3.13
Housing	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Agriculture	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Religion	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Total	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**

Additional Analyses – Robustness Checks

Analysis for young careerists' age cut-off point

To define young careerists, I use the age of candidates at the time of the survey as proxy. In order to avoid an arbitrary cut-off decision, I ran a mixture analysis, a probabilistic method, to identify natural groupings within the population of candidates. The results reveal two age classes among candidates ranging from 18 to 39 and 40 to 98 respectively. Based on the analysis, a meaningful age cut-off point could be 39 years old (Table D4). Also, considering the career span of careerists, that spend approximately 10 to 15 years as "staffers", before transitioning to candidacy, this is a conceptually accepted threshold. However, I have presented a series of analyses using different age cut-off points (e.g. 30, 35) as part of robustness checks (see below).

Table D4. Mixture analysis to determine age cut-off points

Age Class	Min age	Max age	Count
1	18	39	1027
2	40	98	2480

Table D5. Robustness check: Priority congruence between candidates and the average voter using a 30-year cut-off point for young careerists

	DV: Priority Congruence (continuous)			
	Model (1)	**Model (2)**	**Model (3)**	**Model (4)**
Main predictors				
Career trajectories (ref. category: Other)				
Party Soldier	0.073**	0.138*	0.121	0.046
	(0.028)	(0.060)	(0.063)	(0.032)
Young Careerist	0.072*	0.092*	0.152**	0.052
	(0.041)	(0.077)	(0.081)	(0.046)
Outsider	-0.098**	-0.102	0.093	-0.035
	(0.032)	(0.065)	(0.072)	(0.038)
Electoral Success (higher chances)	0.014**	0.034	0.014**	0.015**
	(0.005)	(0.020)	(0.005)	(0.005)
Niche Party	-0.094***	-0.093***	-0.091***	-0.202**
	(0.015)	(0.015)	(0.015)	(0.069)
Electoral Incentives	0.017	0.018	0.038	0.017
	(0.034)	(0.034)	(0.037)	(0.034)
Control variables				
Female	-0.002	-0.003	-0.003	-0.005
	(0.012)	(0.012)	(0.012)	(0.012)
Age (in numbers)	-0.001	-0.001	-0.001	-0.001
	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)
Ideological incongruent with voters	-0.011**	-0.011**	-0.011**	-0.011**
	(0.004)	(0.004)	(0.004)	(0.004)
Party Rebel (ideological)	0.007	0.005	0.005	0.002
	(0.012)	(0.012)	(0.012)	(0.012)
Party in Government	0.015	0.016	0.014	0.016
	(0.015)	(0.015)	(0.015)	(0.015)
Movement	0.015	0.016	0.012	0.017
	(0.016)	(0.016)	(0.016)	(0.016)
Interactions				
Electoral Success x Party Soldier		-0.026*		
		(0.020)		
Electoral Success x Young Careerist		-0.011		
		(0.046)		
Electoral Success x Outsider		0.016		
		(0.025)		
Electoral Incentives x Party Soldier			0.015	
			(0.017)	
Electoral Incentives x Y. Careerist			0.026	
			(0.023)	
Electoral Incentives x Outsider			0.025	
			(0.019)	
Niche x Party Soldier				0.147*
				(0.069)
Niche x Young Careerist				0.135
				(0.092)
Niche x Outsider				-0.046
				(0.074)
Constant	-0.454***	-0.508***	-0.519***	-0.438***
	(0.098)	(0.110)	(0.111)	(0.098)
N candidates (level 1)	3034	3034	3034	3034
N country-elections (level 2)	11	11	11	11
Log Likelihood	−2289.342	−2494.624	−2329.678	-2246.642
AIC	1537.0	1551.8	1544.7	1514.9
BIC	1627.0	1659.8	1652.7	1622.9

*Notes: Estimates are based on a two-level multilevel model, with candidates (level 1) nested within country-election units (level 2). All predictors are included at Level 1. Significance Codes: *** p<.001, ** p<.01, * p<.05.*

Table D6. Priority congruence between candidates and the average voter using a 35-year cut-off point for young careerists

	DV: Priority Congruence (continuous)			
	Model (1)	**Model (2)**	**Model (3)**	**Model (4)**
Main predictors				
Career trajectories (ref. category: Other)				
Party Soldier	0.086**	0.162**	0.122	0.058
	(0.029)	(0.061)	(0.064)	(0.032)
Young Careerist	0.092**	0.152***	0.094**	0.090**
	(0.035)	(0.061)	(0.068)	(0.038)
Outsider	-0.083**	-0.075	0.094	-0.020
	(0.032)	(0.067)	(0.073)	(0.038)
Electoral Success (higher chances)	0.014**	0.034+	0.014**	0.015**
	(0.005)	(0.020)	(0.005)	(0.005)
Niche Party	-0.093***	-0.092***	-0.090***	-0.198**
	(0.015)	(0.015)	(0.015)	(0.069)
Electoral Incentives	0.017	0.018	0.038	0.017
	(0.034)	(0.034)	(0.037)	(0.034)
Control variables				
Female	-0.002	-0.003	-0.003	-0.005
	(0.012)	(0.012)	(0.012)	(0.012)
Age (in numbers)	-0.001	-0.001	-0.001	-0.001
	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)
Ideological incongruent with voters	-0.011**	-0.011**	-0.011**	-0.011**
	(0.004)	(0.004)	(0.004)	(0.004)
Party Rebel (ideological)	0.007	0.005	0.005	0.002
	(0.012)	(0.012)	(0.012)	(0.012)
Party in Government	0.015	0.016	0.014	0.016
	(0.015)	(0.015)	(0.015)	(0.015)
Movement	0.015	0.016	0.012	0.017
	(0.016)	(0.016)	(0.016)	(0.016)
Interactions				
Electoral Success x Party Soldier		-0.030*		
		(0.020)		
Electoral Success x Young Careerist		-0.033		
		(0.030)		
Electoral Success x Outsider		0.016		
		(0.025)		
Electoral Incentives x Party Soldier			0.011	
			(0.018)	
Electoral Incentives x Y. Careerist			0.026	
			(0.023)	
Electoral Incentives x Outsider			0.026	
			(0.020)	
Niche x Party Soldier				0.145*
				(0.072)
Niche x Young Careerist				0.066
				(0.082)
Niche x Outsider				-0.049
				(0.077)
Constant	-0.477***	-0.544***	-0.529***	-0.462***
	(0.098)	(0.111)	(0.112)	(0.099)
N candidates (level 1)	3034	3034	3034	3034
N country-elections (level 2)	11	11	11	11
Log Likelihood	−23467.406	−2367.728	−2258.680	-2148.324
AIC	1530.4	1544.9	1540.3	1509.5
BIC	1620.4	1652.8	1648.2	1617.4

*Notes: Estimates are based on a two-level multilevel model, with candidates (level 1) nested within country-election units (level 2). All predictors are included at Level 1. Significance Codes: *** p<.001, ** p<.01, * p<.05.*

Alternative measurement approach to operationalise young careerists

In this section, I re-run the regression models, redefining young careerists as those who joined the party before the age of 25, have pre-parliamentary career experiences being employed by their party and/or MPs' offices, and lack any record of political involvement at the local level. The results of these models are largely consistent with the main results.

Table D7. Robustness check: Priority Congruence between Candidates and the Average Voter using alternative career measurement

	DV: Priority Congruence (continuous)			
	Model (1)	**Model (2)**	**Model (3)**	**Model (4)**
Main predictors				
Career trajectories (ref. category: Other)				
Party Soldier	0.076**	0.102***	0.025	0.008
	(0.016)	(0.031)	(0.035)	(0.019)
Young Careerist	0.050**	0.106**	0.006	0.029
	(0.025)	(0.045)	(0.053)	(0.027)
Outsider	-0.008	-0.020	0.081	0.002
	(0.021)	(0.039)	(0.049)	(0.028)
Electoral Success (higher chances)	0.016**	0.032***	0.016**	0.017**
	(0.006)	(0.009)	(0.006)	(0.006)
Niche Party	-0.199***	-0.198***	-0.196***	-0.227***
	(0.018)	(0.018)	(0.018)	(0.024)
Electoral Incentives	0.012	0.012	0.012	0.012
	(0.038)	(0.038)	(0.038)	(0.038)
Control variables				
Female	-0.002	-0.003	-0.003	-0.003
	(0.015)	(0.015)	(0.015)	(0.015)
Age (in numbers)	-0.001	-0.001	-0.001	-0.001
	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)
Ideological incongruent with voters	-0.012*	-0.012*	-0.012*	-0.013**
	(0.005)	(0.005)	(0.005)	(0.005)
Party Rebel (ideological)	-0.002	-0.002	-0.002	-0.003
	(0.015)	(0.015)	(0.015)	(0.015)
Party in Government	0.022	0.022	0.020	0.019
	(0.017)	(0.017)	(0.017)	(0.017)
Movement	0.022	0.022	0.019	0.022
	(0.018)	(0.018)	(0.019)	(0.018)
Interactions				
Electoral Success x Party Soldier		-0.035*		
		(0.012)		
Electoral Success x Young Careerist		-0.027		
		(0.017)		
Electoral Success x Outsider		0.011		
		(0.020)		
Electoral Incentives x Party Soldier			0.001	
			(0.010)	
Electoral Incentives x Young Careerist			0.015	
			(0.015)	
Electoral Incentives x Outsider			0.025	
			(0.013)	
Niche x Party Soldier				0.073*
				(0.036)
Niche x Young Careerist				0.112
				(0.059)
Niche x Outsider				-0.009
				(0.041)
Constant	-0.482***	-0.512***	-0.483***	-0.476***
	(0.103)	(0.104)	(0.104)	(0.102)
N candidates (level 1)	3034	3034	3034	3034
N country-elections (level 2)	11	11	11	11
Log Likelihood	−2456.356	−2467.624	−2324.678	-2234.892
AIC	2658.4	2673.0	2679.2	2670.1
BIC	2748.7	2781.3	2787.5	2778.4

*Notes: Estimates are based on a two-level multilevel model, with candidates (level 1) nested within country-election units (level 2). All predictors are included at Level 1. Significance Codes: *** p<.001, ** p<.01, * p<.05.*