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The new member states' commitment to independent European Commissioners¹

Abstract: The European Union's Eastern Enlargement also affected the composition of the European Commission. The Commission is the EU's executive and Commissioners are selected by member states. This paper answers the question whether there are differences in the selection between old and new member states. Up to now there is no evidence about the effect of the Eastern Enlargement on the selection of Commissioners. Biographical data on the members of the College have been analysed to close this gap. The paper builds on theoretical considerations of the selection process combining two different logics. It argues that when selecting Commissioners old member states follow a principal-agent logic whereas new member states follow a credible commitment logic. Data confirms this by showing that Commissioners selected by the countries that have recently joined the European Union are rather technocratic and less politicized than their colleagues from the older member states.

Keywords: European Union, European Commission, Commissioners, Eastern Enlargement, selection, principal-agent, commitment.

JEL codes: D72, D73, F53, F55.

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Introduction

In 2004/2007 twelve mostly Central and Eastern European states joined the European Union (EU). Adding to the fifteen member states at that time the Eastern Enlargement significantly changed the politics of the EU. Especially incorporating persons from new member states into the institutions presented a great challenge.

The most prominent case in this regard is the College of European Commissioners. The Commission is the EU's executive and Commissioners consequently occupy a very powerful position. Up to that point the Commission had been composed of twenty members from the fifteen member states, bigger member states sending two persons. From 2004 onwards one person was nominated per country. Commissioners are supposed to serve the European interest regardless of their nationality. In reality, however, nationality plays a certain role. Member states struggle to achieve important positions in the Commission and carefully select the nominees. But who are those selected persons – and can differences be identified between Commissioners from old and new member states?

The aim of this paper is to analyse the consequences of the Eastern Enlargement for the composition of the European Commission. It answers the research question whether differences can be seen in the appointment of Commissioners between old and new member states. The paper hence provides a foundation for answering further research questions regarding the development of the Commission.

In doing so this paper contributes to the literature on the consequences of the Eastern Enlargement. The effects of the enlargement on the European Parliament [Hix & Noury 2009; Whitaker 2006] and on the Council [Zimmer, Schneider & Dobbins 2005] as well as the Commission's services [Ban 2013; Kassim et al. 2013] were studied – whereas the College has been mostly neglected to date. This gap in research will be closed by this paper.

We build our paper on literature which has found evidence about the selection mechanisms of Commissioners. Broadly we distinguish two schools of thought. Firstly Majone [2001] argues that member states aim at showing their commitment to the integration process by selecting the person best suited for the job as a Commissioner. In contrast, Wonka [2007] and Döring [2007] argue that member states follow a principal-agent logic. They do not select the Commissioner best suited for the job but maximise their own interest. We argue that both schools' arguments are not mutually exclusive but

might come into effect simultaneously. The logic of selection depends on the status of a member state. Whereas old member states maximise their national and governmental interests in the selection of Commissioners, new member states still need to prove their commitment to the EU. Hence we expect Commissioners from new member states to be more independent experts than those from old member states. To test the paper's hypotheses a data set of biographical data on the 266 Commissioners is used especially analysing their career and the party membership.

The paper is divided into four sections. In section 1 the analytical framework is outlined. We do so by displaying the appointment process in section 1.1, analysing the existing literature in section 1.2 and then developing the paper's hypotheses in section 1.3. Section 2 then tests these hypotheses based on the empirical data. Section 3 discusses the results and concludes.

1. Analytical framework: what strategy for choosing Commissioners?

1.1. Structure, responsibility and appointment process

Beginning with the High Authority of the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC) founded in 1951, up to today's Commission of the European Union, a supranational executive body was always part of European organisations. In the vision of Jean Monnet the Commission should be a largely free-standing organisation. Monnet's idea was opposed by the member state's governments who were not willing to give up all national control [MacMullen 1997, p. 31]. Its structure and composition can therefore be understood as a compromise between those two opposing opinions.

The European Economic Community, the European Communities and today's EU consists of thirteen different Commissions with eleven appointed Presidents. Today it has 27 Commissioners plus a President. Until the Eastern Enlargement in 2004/7 and the related increase of two-thirds in the number of its members, the larger member countries appointed two Commissioners. By 2014 the latest changes within the Treaty of Lisbon would decrease the number of portfolios to a smaller number than there are member states (Art. 17(5) TEU (Treaty on the European Union)). However the national governments agreed in 2008 that this regulation will not come into effect for now.

The College of Commissioners is the core executive of the EU. It should promote the general interest of the Union and has the responsibility to develop medium-term strategies for the Union, draft legislation and represent it in various negotiations (Art. 17(1) TEU). The number of portfolios grew with the increasing responsibilities of the Union and ranges from industry to environment and from external relations to regional policies.

Following article 17(3) TEU the members of the Commission should be chosen on the basis of their general competence and European commitment from persons who are independent of national governments. There are no additional formal criteria and until the end of the 1990's it was within the exclusive competence of the member states to appoint the college and distribute the portfolios. Therefore the criteria of competence and independence seem to have a high probability of being violated.

Until 1993 the process followed a pure intergovernmental logic. The selection of the Commissioners and the appointment of the President were informally agreed upon between the member states in the Council. The decisions made behind closed doors were then officially approved by a unanimous vote in the Council. Since the Treaty of Maastricht (1993) the European Parliament (EP) has had the right to express an opinion about the proposed candidates and vote for the Commission as a whole at the end of the process. The Treaty of Amsterdam [1998] even gives the EP the right to veto the President. Similarly since 1993 the designated President could express an opinion about the member states' proposals for the Commission posts. In the post-Amsterdam period he could actually oppose candidates. The Council voting rules were changed by the Treaty of Nice [2003]: Only a qualified majority was needed for both the vote on the president and the entire Commission. The Treaty of Lisbon [2009] includes changes to the appointment process. After the European elections the Council proposes a candidate for the EC Presidency considering the current majority situation in the EP. The designated President presents the candidates in accordance with the Council. The final vote on the entire College will be done by the EP as well as the Council. In addition to these official appointment regulations some critical remarks concerning the selection can be highlighted. Even though there is a formal vote of the Council "the important decisions have been taken informally over lengthy periods within and between various Member States" [MacMullen 1997, p. 31]. Furthermore national governments normally accept each other's proposed candidates [MacMullen 1997, p. 31f.]. Possible tension only arises when it comes to the office of the President. Prominent examples have been the French disagreement about a third term for Walter

Hallstein in 1967 and the British veto against Jean-Luc Dehaene in 1994. In addition, the EP plays an important role. While it never openly voted against the Commission as a whole it can, and has, threatened to do so. For instance, in 2004 the first Barroso Commission had to replace two nominations owing to the Parliament's reluctance to approve the College. As the designated President of the Commission is normally highly dependent on the good will of the member states and his veto will be even less likely against candidates than that of the EP's. Exceptions to this are limited to very influential presidents with a high reputation, as for example Jacques Delors.

1.2. Evidence from literature: commitment or benefit maximation?

This section describes the state of the art in the academic literature on the European Commission. It firstly analyses the classical pieces with regard to their contribution to the selection of Commissioners and secondly compares the considerations of the few analytical pieces on the selection process.

Section 1.1 showed that governments have a very significant role in the selection of Commissioners. The question of how governments select the person they send to the Commission was considered in literature on the European executive, but only recently have scholars focused analytical attention on the topic. Coombes [1970] does not explicitly consider the process of appointing European Commissioners. But for the first Commission he states that its members "were all considered good Europeans" [Coombes 1970, p. 253]. Donnelly and Ritchie [1994] sketch different logics of selecting Commissioners. For governments, they say, it is a way of rewarding or a way of safely removing an unwanted actor from the national scene. Furthermore, they introduce a distinction between smaller and larger member states, the former taking the nomination more seriously. This difference, however, is minimised with the EU's growing influence. The claims are only verified later by authors like Wonka [2007] and Döring [2007]. But the first authors to carefully analyse biographical details of the European Commissioners were Page [1997] and MacMullen [1997]. The latter only refers occasionally to political patronage as being the main reason for (re-)nomination of Commissioners in as contrast to policy reasons [MacMullen 1997, p. 35ff.]. One interesting empirical observation is that it is a common fact that membership negotiation personnel are recruited as Commissioners [MacMullen 1997, p. 44]. Page's general observations are similar [Page 1997, p. 116]. Although he considers party membership and the former occupations of Commissioners he does not analyse their

selection. Finally, Nugent's milestone textbook on the European Commission [Nugent 2001] describes the three stages of the nomination process in detail: the consultation with the Commission's President-Designate, the hearing in the EP and the confirmation by the Council. Nugent mentions that national preferences are core to understanding governments' selections [Nugent 2001, p. 93] and that governments want Commissioners to consider national interests [Nugent 2001, p. 114]. Again, a more precise analysis is not conducted.

All these pieces make important contributions to the study of the European Commission and their impact on academia must not be under-estimated. What is common to them, however, is that the selection dynamics of European Commissioners did not play a central role apart from the fact that they are recognised.

Majone [2001] offers, to the best of our knowledge, the first theoretical framework for delegation to the Commission. His two logics of delegation can fruitfully be applied to the selection of Commissioners. The first logic is derived from a classical principal-agent framework, aiming at a reduction of decision-making costs. The key problem for principals is bureaucratic drift, which is minimised by choosing agents with known and similar preferences. This is largely in line with the results of the classical pieces mentioned above. The second view is that delegation can show the credibility of commitments. These are constrained by different preferences concerning the short and the long term and changes in political power. By delegation to an independent agent with possibly different preferences than the principal's the commitment in a repeated game is shown. Majone's refers to delegation to central banks but also the selection of Commissioners could be justified in this way. In fact, this view is largely in line with Coombes' description of the first Commission. Majone concludes on Commissioners that the "most important factor in the appointment of Commissioners [is]: the desire of national governments to prove their commitment to European integration" [Majone 2001, p. 112].

For their analysis of European decision-making scenarios Tsebelis and Garrett [2000] assume a strong pro-integrationist bias amongst Commissioners. They add two arguments to Majone's. Firstly, "National delegates of real political power will likely prefer to stay in their country of origin" [Tsebelis & Garrett 2000, p. 16]. Furthermore, they argue that a pro-integrationist politician is rather more likely to be selected to serve in the Commission because of the member state's wish to have an important portfolio allocated to "its" member. This adds an interesting perspective to Majone's notion of showing commitment by sending a pro-European person. Tsebelis and Garrett reintroduce preferences and power interests since they implicitly assume that it

is better for a member state to have a Commissioner with a relevant portfolio irrespective of that Commissioner's position.

In contrast to Majone, Wonka [2007] applies a principal-agent framework in order to explain the selection mechanisms of European Commissioners. He refers to the perspectives of Tsebelis and Garrett and Majone as Commissioners being "technocratic and independent" [Wonka 2007, p. 175]. However, he doubts that governments' main aim is to show their long term commitment and hence select Commissioners who are best suited to the job in contrast to those who best represent governments' own preferences. Wonka introduces a different argument to explain the selection of Commissioners, namely a logic of selection pursuing a defensive and an offensive selection goal. The defensive goal aims at avoiding costs, the offensive goal aims at actively influencing the Commission. Both clearly aim at pursuing the governments' own preferences and hence governments select an agent who best shares the preferences as Commissioner [Wonka 2007, p. 173]. In order to avoid adverse selection Wonka then hypothesises that governments select Commissioners who are members of a government party and have a high "political visibility" [Wonka 2007, p. 176]. He further hypothesises that this is increasingly true with a growing influence of the EU. Wonka analyses biographical details of Commissioners and finds support for his hypotheses. He finds that a clear majority of Commissioners are government party members. Only few are independent experts [Wonka 2007, p. 178]. He also finds support for the argument that a growing relevance of the EU (then EC) tightens governments' need for avoiding an adverse selection by showing that this tendency grows after the Single European Act. This pattern especially applies in small member states. Wonka also finds a high visibility of Commission nominees, operationalised as having held a high-ranking post before being chosen as Commissioner. This tendency also increases with time.

Döring [2007] focuses his work on the influence of party membership arguing that appointing a fellow party member is a good proxy for shared preferences. Furthermore, he hypothesises that with the rising relevance of the EU this selection mechanism becomes increasingly important. Thirdly, he hypothesises that smaller member states are even stricter in their selection since due to their own limited administrative capabilities a Commission working in line with their interests matters more to them. Döring, like Wonka, clearly refers to a principal-agent framework having the alignment of preferences as his core theoretical argument. Overall, he finds empirical support for his hypotheses. Party membership has been found to be important, however it is not increasingly so, in contrast to what was hypothesised and to what Wonka has

found. The reputation of the former occupation has become more important, an increase is observed especially within large member states. As Donnelly and Ritchie [1994] observed smaller member states have always sent high-ranking politicians. Furthermore, Döring observes that when big member states were allowed two Commissioners they often chose one person from a government and one from an opposition party. He concludes that there are several logics of delegation, which the simple principal-agent framework cannot completely account for.

Literature thus offers different logics of selection, which apparently stand in contrast to each other. The following section will develop an analytical framework combining the two logics.

1.3. Analytical framework

Section 1.2 has shown that two different logics of selecting a Commissioner have been developed: firstly, a principal-agent logic for which empirical evidence has been found; and secondly, a credible commitment logic. Now what effects could the enlargement have on these selection logics in the European Commission?

So far, there is very little evidence of the effects of the Eastern Enlargement on Commissioners. In fact, Schimmelfennig and Sedelmeier [2002] identify this area as one of the topics that have been neglected by academia – and consciously neglect it themselves when presenting contributions to a special issue on European union enlargement [Schimmelfennig & Sedelmeier 2002, p. 507]. In their conclusion they call for “an enlargement of enlargement research” [Schimmelfennig & Sedelmeier 2002, p. 524] amongst other areas with respect to its institutional consequences.

Peterson [2005, p. 8] asks the questions:

Would accession state Commissioners effectively become national representatives of new, inexperienced, and vulnerable states in EU policy debates? Or would they take pains to be “true Europeans”? Would the new 10 engage in collective action to defend the interests of new, poorer, and (mostly) smaller states? Or not? Would they be able to stamp their authority on the Commission’s services? Or would the Directorates-General tend to defy their wills more often than those of EU-15 Commissioners?

But also here no answers are given. It is only a study by Kurpas, Gron, and Kaczynski [2008] which finds changes in the European Commission’s policy making. First of all the authors find that the College does not take votes an-

ymore [Kurpas, Gron & Kaczynski 2008, p. 23]. Furthermore they find that Commissioners have a stronger understanding as a national delegate, but rather less than of the Eastern Enlargement. They connect this to the fact that there is only one Commissioner per country [Kurpas, Gron & Kaczynski 2008, p. 23].

Kassim et al. [2013] also touched upon the issue of the Eastern Enlargement in their study of the European Commission. Explaining the selection of Commissioners, however, was not an explicit focus of research. Hence it is only theoretical work and empirical evidence about the Commission as a whole that we can build on when studying the selection of Commissioners of the new in contrast to that of the old member states.

We argue that both logics of selection outlined in section 1.2 apply to the enlarged European Commission. We introduce an important distinction between old and new member states which is that the new member states still need to prove their commitment to European integration. Those member states who have been a member for several years or decades don't have to do so, but will try to maximise their benefit when selecting a Commissioner.

H1a: Commissioners from EU15 member states are closer to the member states' governments. Commissioners from new member states are rather more independent and have less often a party affiliation.

H1b: Commissioners from old EU15 member states are high-ranking politicians. Commissioners from new member states have less prior political experience at governmental level.

Hypothesis 1 argues that Commissioners from old member states are selected the way Wonka and Döring expect in the principal-agent logic. To make sure the preferences are close to that of the government's, member states select Commissioners that are close to the government, either as former member or at least as a member of one of the government parties (H1a). Furthermore, to avoid adverse selection and to make sure the preferences are really known, member states select high-ranking politicians (H1b). This is in order to achieve a high visibility, as it was coined by Wonka [2007].

We argue that in contrast to these purely benefit maximising logics, the new member states follow the logic of selection outlined by Majone. He had argued that the "most important factor in the appointment of Commissioners [is]: the desire of national governments to prove their commitment to European integration" [Majone 2001, p. 112]. Whilst the older member states have done so during the time of their membership – by being a member, by participating in the decision-making and by implementing the decisions – the

new member states lack such convincing prove. Hence, different hypotheses are developed here:

H2: Commissioners from new member states are those states' EU experts and have more often experience in working on a European or international level.

Wonka summarised this conception of Commissioners as “technocratic and independent” and these are actually exactly the two characteristics which we hypothesise mark the selection of a Commissioner by new member states. Hypothesis 2 expects the new member states' Commissioners to be technocratic EU experts rather than topic-oriented politicians. In addition, Hypothesis 2 argues that they are more independent from their member states' governments than their colleagues from old member states since they have more often worked in international contexts.

2. Data, operationalisation and method

In order to find adequate answers to the hypotheses stated in section 1.3 this paper will use a dataset with biographic data of all Commissioners by Fietkau [2011]. The characteristics and experiences of the members of the College are coded with information given by online resources – above all the CVs of the Commissioners on the Commission homepage and the biographic data base of persons from the Munzinger publishing house. All Commissioners that served since 1958 are included in the dataset. As each term is treated separately, the database does not comprise 266 entries as there were Commissioners, but 365 as some Commissioners serve several terms of office and in different fields of responsibility.

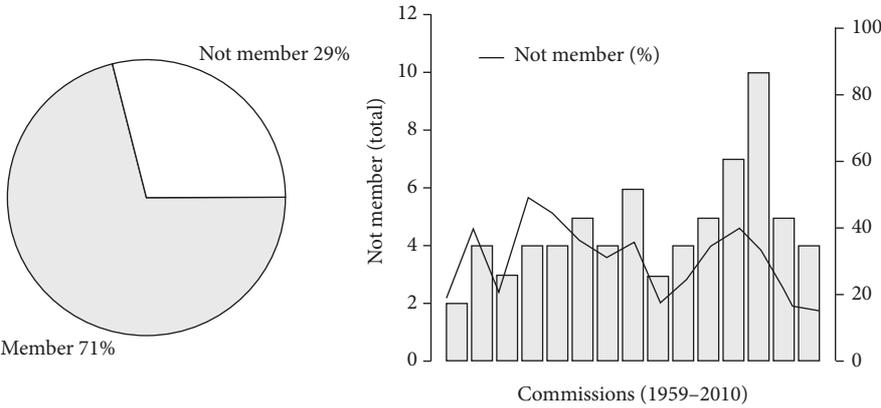
The data base includes ten different categories comprising the term in office, demographic features, portfolio, country of origin, party affiliation, education and former occupation as well as political and international experience. For Commissioners coming from one of the twelve countries that joined the EU in 2004/7 or from one of the five countries sending two Commissioners until 1999 dummy variables are created. For Hypothesis 1a two binary variables are included indicating if the Commissioners' party was part of the government three to five months prior to their assumption of office as well as whether he or she is an independent candidate without any official party affiliation. In order to test hypothesis 1b two dummies are generated: One of them indicat-

ing if the Commissioner was ever part of a national government on at least ministerial level, the other standing for their general experience as a politician and at least being elected into the national parliament.

The methodological procedure consists of two components. On the one hand, descriptive analyses will capture the relevant information and give a first overview. On the other hand, logistic regression analysis will be applied replicating and extending the findings of Döring [2007]. They will be displayed by the mean of predicated probabilities.

2.1. Analysis

The paper’s hypotheses were presented in section 1.3. Starting with hypothesis 1a, it will be tested if the Commissioners from the old member states are closer aligned to their national governments than their counterparts from the twelve states that joined the EU in 2004/7. Both Wonka [2007] and Döring [2007], revert to the rationalist explanations when theorising that governments as principals are more likely to send loyal party members as agents to Brussels. This holds true for 71 per cent of all cases, as can be seen in Figure. Over time there seems to be no stable trend as to whether the Commissioners are a member of the governing party or not, as Figure 1 shows. Whilst there is an all-time high under President Malfatti in 1970 a downward trend followed during the 1970’s and 1980’s. The ratio of opposition party members or non-affiliated candidates rose again to 40 per cent under President Prodi;



Party affiliation

Source: Own calculations

however, today it is at a lower level again. Therefore, the changes in the appointment process or the often cited politicisation of the Commission do not have a stable effect on the appointment of the College.

In a next step the results of Döring's multivariate analysis (see section 1.2) are replicated. The author showed that there are differences in the appointment process between larger and smaller states, however, finding no evidence that Commissioners are more likely to be members of governing parties over time. The first model in Table 1 supports the finding, stating that bigger countries send members of governing parties less often. It shows no further increase or decrease in the likelihood for the appointment of loyal governing party supporters over time. Moreover, a variable that covers the new EU member states after 2004 shows a significant negative effect. This means that the Eastern countries send members of the governing party to Brussels less often than their Western counterparts. Finally, Döring also highlighted that there are less independent candidates over time. This can be supported as well. The second model in Table 1 also shows a higher likelihood for the new member states to nominate independent candidates. Not displayed in Table 1

Table 1. Logistic regression for party affiliation

	Governing party	Npo party affiliation
(Intercept)	0.90*** (0.07)	0.02 (0.05)
Time in EC	-0.00† (0.00)	0.00** (0.00)
New country	-0.34*** (0.09)	0.29*** (0.06)
Big country	-0.16** (0.05)	-0.04 (0.04)
Term	0.02 (0.03)	-0.02 (0.02)
<i>N</i>	347	355
AIC	425.04	188.30
BIC	502.02	265.75
log <i>L</i>	-192.52	-74.15

Standard errors in parentheses: †significant at $p < .10$; * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$.

Source: Own calculations.

is a control for independent candidates in the Governing Party Model. When controlling for no party affiliation the effect for new countries will be cancelled out. This means that new member states are rather sending independent candidates than members of the opposition parties.

The predicted probability for old member states (.75 [.70; .81]) sending a government party member is nearly twice as high as for new members states (.41 [.26; .58]) though being surrounded by a rather wide confidence interval. Furthermore, there is almost no chance that an old member state (.08 [.05; .12]) sends a neutral candidate. For new member states (.37 [.26; .48]) the probability lies eight times higher, but once again with a high standard error.

Summing up the three analytical steps for the first hypothesis the assumptions that Commissioners from EU15 member states are closer to the member states' governments whilst Commissioners from new member states are rather independent finds certain confirmation. However, not at least due to small number of Commissioners from new member states the results are highly vulnerable to errors.

Hypothesis 1b stated that Commissioners from old EU15 member states are more often high-ranking politicians whilst Commissioners from new member states have less prior political experience at a governmental level. Generally speaking we must assume that the high number of Commissioners with party affiliation a great majority has political experience. 59 per cent held a senior ministerial office previously; even 63 per cent were members of the national parliament. Yet, 20 per cent had a seat on the EP and 3 per cent are former heads of government. Only 10 per cent have no political experience in the posts mentioned. This clearly corresponds to the ratio of 89 per cent of Commissioners being members of a political party. For all categories a trend towards politicisation of the Commission can be identified. The number of former domestic ministers even increased by one third.

When comparing this development over time a clear increase of former MPs and ministers can be observed. From the 1970's onwards, the amount rose to almost 70 per cent in the current Commission. Also the share of persons with no political experience shows the expected downward trend in the 2000's to currently a level of less than 20 per cent. Former MEPs had a high in the 1990's with the ratio significantly decreasing after the Eastern enlargement caused by the simple lack of Commissioners who could have the necessary experience. The tendencies described completely agree with the findings of MacMullen. More members in the College had political offices via-a-vis a simultaneous decrease of persons with no experience.

The regression models in Table 2 test in a first model for the prior experience of Commissioners as members of national governments. The new countries have less often government members whilst there is no general trend over time or for several terms. The bigger countries as well have less often government members most probably caused by the fact that from the two Commissioners sent one normally belonged to the government and the other to the opposition. Further, the new countries have more often Commissioners with no political experience, though once again with no general trend over time or for several terms.

Table 2. Logistic regression for political experience

	Member government	No political experience
(Intercept)	0.96*** (0.08)	-0.04 (0.05)
Time in EC	-0.01*** (0.00)	0.01*** (0.00)
New country	-0.15 [†] (0.09)	0.16** (0.06)
Big country	-0.22** (0.05)	0.01 (0.03)
Term	-0.03 (0.03)	-0.01 (0.02)
<i>N</i>	355	355
AIC	475.15	159.76
BIC	552.59	237.20
log <i>L</i>	-217.57	-59.88

Standard errors in parentheses: [†]significant at $p < .10$; * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$.

Source: Own calculations.

For old member states (.61 [.55, .66]) the predicted probabilities for having former government members is only slightly higher than for new member states (.45 [.29; .62]). As the standard error for the latter case is extremely high the strength of this finding is questionable. For political experience it is more than twice as probable that Commissioners from new member states (.24 [.14; .35]) have no political experience in contrast to the EU15 Commissioners (.09 [.05; .12]).

Taking these findings into consideration the second hypothesis also finds support in our data. Old member states' Commissioners are to a higher probability former high-ranking politicians whilst their counterparts from the new member states have on average less political experience at governmental level.

In a third step, hypothesis two will be tested. For the first assumption that Commissioners from new member states are those states' EU experts a qualitative analysis was applied: The last occupation of the Commissioners in the Barroso I Commission during the EU accession talks was analysed. For the first Commission with members from the new members all new Commissioners – with only two exceptions – were previously involved in the accession process of their countries. Most of them accompanied the process in Foreign Ministries or even an EU Ministry in high level positions. Even the only two exceptions were at that time Ministers of Finance and most probably also involved in the accession. For old member states only three were working in Foreign Ministries. Just the Finnish Commissioner Olli Rehn and his colleague

Table 3. Logistic regression for experience on European and international level

	Model 1
(Intercept)	0.02 (0.06)
Time in EC	0.01*** (0.00)
New country	0.22** (0.07)
Big country	-0.02 (0.04)
Term	-0.01 (0.02)
<i>N</i>	350
AIC	284.34
BIC	361.49
log <i>L</i>	-122.17

Standard errors in parentheses: †significant at $p < .10$; * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$.

Source: Own calculations.

from Italy Antonio Tajani can offer strong European biographies with prior experience in EU level. Most of the Commissioners from the old member states had a national political career before; two came from private industry.

For testing the second part of hypothesis 2 a regression model for European or international experience can be found in Table 3. Commissioners from new countries have significantly more experience in working at a European or international level. There is no general trend over time or for several terms and no effect for big countries. This means that in the converse argument old members rather send national politicians.

The predicted probability for the model in Table 3 shows that the probability for new member states' Commissioners (.13 [.09; .17]) having experience on European or international level is twice as high as for old member states (.36 [0.23; .48]) dealing again with a high standard error.

In short, evidence for hypothesis 2 can also be found. Commissioners from new member states are indeed those states' EU experts and have significantly more often experience in working at a European or international level. In contrast to this, Commissioners from the old member states are rather more often former domestic political actors.

3. Discussion and conclusions

This paper has argued that old and new member states act differently when appointing their Commission candidate since they follow different logics of selection. Whilst old member states follow a principal-agent logic, new member states need to prove their commitment to the European cause. Hence their choices of Commissioners differ, as outlined in section 1. The analysis of the Commissioners' biographical data in section 2 showed support for the paper's hypotheses closing the gap of research on the Eastern Enlargement's effect on the Commission.

We had hypothesised that Commissioners from the EU 15 member states are closer to their governments, whereas Commissioners from the new member states are independent. The data clearly showed that Commissioners from new member states are more often independent and not members of the national government's party. The selections of old member states follow the mechanisms expected by principal-agent theory.

We further hypothesised – again referring to principal-agent logic – that Commissioners from old member states are more often high-ranking politi-

cians, whereas those from new member states have less governmental experience. Here the data only partially supported our claims. Whilst it is true that Commissioners from old member states are rather more often former, high-ranking national politicians we were not able to show that Commissioners from the new member states are not – although there is some evidence in the data. Overall, we found a high and increasing politicisation of the College of Commissioners.

Finally, we had hypothesised that new member states send their EU experts with experience at a European and international level. The data clearly supported this hypothesis; nearly all members of the Commission selected by new member states were involved in the accession process and had highly international profiles. Their selection proves the underlying argument of the commitment logic when it comes to the selection of European Commissioners from new member states.

To summarise, there is clear evidence that old and new member states follow different logics of selecting Commissioners. Old member states maximise their benefit by selecting high profile candidates who are close to government. They follow a principal-agent logic. New member states, in contrast, rather aim at proving their commitment. Therefore, they rather select the person most suitable for the job which results more often in independent EU experts. One should have in mind, however, that due to the small number of Commissioners from new member states in comparison to the total sample size a high standard error was constantly reached in the quantitative parts of the analysis. This imposes significant constraints on the results.

By having a closer look at the different actors this paper could shed further light on the existing evidence on the selection of Commissioners. Due to its differentiated viewpoint it could remedy a supposed conflict between different schools of thought. Incorporating both into one analytical framework fostered our understanding of the selection of Commissioners.

There are several research opportunities which could further refine our understanding. Firstly, one could analyse whether these different logics were also applied in former enlargement rounds as the Mediterranean or post-Cold War enlargements. Secondly, the trends could be analysed after the next Commission assumes office being the third Commission after the 2004/7 enlargement. Thirdly, our analysis applied quantitative methods despite the small number of cases – profound qualitative analyses could also add to our understanding.

Research on the Commission can profit from this analysis asking subsequent research questions: What are the consequences of the enlargement for

the functioning of the Commission; are there difference in the work of old and new member states' Commissioners? To what extent do party politics play a role in the Commission's work?

Finally, the EU keeps academia busy thanks to its character as a moving target. There will be other watershed changes in its composition and its polity which will again affect the selection of Commissioners as well. Identifying those changes and analysing their consequences will always be an exciting task for scholars.

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