Parliamentary party leadership in comparative perspective: searching for a common ground

Very first draft

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1. Introduction

Political parties are central to modern representative democracy (Dalton, Farrell, & McAllistar, 2011; Müller, 2000; Müller & Narud, 2013). Particularly in European countries, where they perform a wide array of democratic linkage functions (Fiers, 1998; Gunther & Diamond, 2001; King, 1969), parties are the basic unit of action for representation (Deschouwer & Depauw, 2014). Individual members of parliament (MPs) typically act cohesively and toe the party line, even if this means putting aside personal opinions and considerations (Van Vonno, Malka, Depauw, Hazan, & Andeweg, 2014), possibly allowing or hindering the representation of special group interests (Celis & Wauters, 2010).

Parties accordingly take centre stage in the day-to-day organisation of parliament. The 'parliamentary party groups' (PPGs) that consist of legislators that belong to the same party, are widely recognised as 'necessary instruments of parliamentary business (Heidar & Koole, 2000a, p. 1). They assist in preparing parliamentary activities, promote decisional efficiency and allow individual MPs to weigh on decision-making through the aggregation of policy preferences (Heidar & Koole, 2000c; Saalfeld & Strøm, 2014). Furthermore, from the perspective of representative democracy, the importance of PPGs can hardly be neglected. In parliamentary democracies, they constitute the linkage between voters, parties and parliaments and likewise contribute to a political system's stability, transparency, and the accountability and legitimacy of its leaders (Heidar, 2013; Heidar & Koole, 2000a).

Despite their importance, research on PPGs is scarce (Heidar, 2013). Scholars that do study PPGs mainly focus on normative issues regarding the role and purpose of parties in parliament and their possible alternatives (Katz, 1987; Strøm, 2000), cohesion within PPGs (Bowler, Farrell, & Katz, 1999; Depauw, 2005; Ḥazan, 2011), their strength and autonomy (e.g. Heidar & Koole, 2000b; Helms, 2000) and their organisation in terms of staffing, financing etc. (Heidar, 2013; Heidar & Koole, 2000c). One aspect of PPGs that particularly seems neglected, is their leadership. In many legislatures and party organisations alike, parliamentary party leaders are important actors that manage the parliamentary party, monitor its members' activities, coordinate intra-party deliberation, safeguard political unity, enforce discipline if necessary and serve as the party's main spokesperson in important debates. Nonetheless, cross-national varieties in the way PPG leadership is filled in exist, relating both to their formal status within the larger party organisation and their main duties as head of the PPG (Heidar & Koole, 2000c; Pilet & Cross, 2014; Saalfeld & Strøm, 2014). In some countries, they truly are *leaders* with considerable discretionary powers in determining the PPG's policy standpoints, whilst in others they rather act as *chairmen* with coordinating and mediating functions.

Our primary purpose is not to highlight the cross-national disparities in the functioning of parliamentary party leaders, which are largely determined by the specific institutional context in which they operate (Searing, 1991; Strøm, 1997). Instead, we aim to find a 'common ground'. Relying on the data provided by the PARTIREP MP Survey[1], we wish to uncover what 'binds' PPG leaders in Europe. We will, more

particularly, analyse their representative role orientations and characteristic behaviours, and compare these with those of other MPs. Since all PPG leaders, regardless of their formal position and authority, share certain common responsibilities that come with heading the party in parliament (e.g. securing voting unity, a crucial feature in any multi-party parliamentary democracy) we expect this to be reflected in the way they act and perceive their roles. Our results, however, show only little differences in attitudes and some differences in the behaviour of PPG leaders and other MPs. Our conclusion is that the 'common ground' of PPG leaders is rather limited (or at least: not differentiated from that of other MPs), which is an argument to study PPG leaders' roles inductively through in-depth country-specific analyses.

First, we will further illuminate the variations and similarities between formal PPG leadership positions in Europe and focus on concept of political roles. Then, we proceed to our empirical analysis.

2. Parliamentary party leadership

Parliamentary party groups are more than a gathering of like-minded legislators: "they are organised" (Heidar & Koole, 2000b, p. 253). Although PPGs vary in terms of size, voting unity, resources and other organisational aspects, they typically have two common structural features. First, PPGs are characterised by varying degrees of policy specialisation (*i.e. horizontal differentiation*). This becomes apparent from the division of labour in parliamentary committees and internal working groups, where individual MPs act as their party's main policy expert and generally enjoy some discretion in developing detailed policy proposals (Saalfeld & Strøm, 2014). Secondly, PPGs typically are structured hierarchically (*i.e. vertical differentiation*). At the top of the pecking order, they are headed by a single PPG leader or chairman. In larger PPGs, he or she is often assisted by an intermediary structure or level of 'middle management' (e.g. vice PPG chairmen, an executive board, (deputy) whips, working-group chairs) with the purpose of facilitating internal coordination and control (Heidar & Koole, 2000b; Saalfeld & Strøm, 2014).

Another common characteristic is the fact that PPGs (and their leaders) are not free-standing actors but are part of a broader, more complex party organisation. In line with the well-known trichotomy by Katz and Mair (1993), party organisations are commonly understood to consist of multiple interacting segments or 'faces', being: 'the party on the ground' (i.e. the party in relation to the population), 'the party in central office' (i.e. the party's central headquarters) and the 'party in public office' (i.e. the party in parliament and in government). In this regard, PPGs (and their leaders) differ in their formal position within the overall party organisation and in their relationship with the other party segments. In some countries, PPGs enjoy considerable autonomy in determining their policies (e.g. the Netherlands, the UK), while in others their actions are heavily constrained by other party actors (e.g. Belgium).

Heidar & Koole (2000a) categorise the variations of possible PPG positions within the party organisation based on the functional and personal division of power between the PPG, the extra-parliamentary party organisation (EPO) and the party-in-government. The categories they find range from '*autonomous PPGs*,' with little external pressure on internal decision-making, towards '*integrated PPGs*', with intrinsic functional and personal ties between the PPG, EPO and party-in-government. The latter category is

further subdivided according to the direction of influence: a PPG for instance is 'ruling' if it is dominant over the EPO and party-in-government or a 'voting machine' when it is dominated by these actors. In a similar vein, Helms (2000) focuses on the relationship between the PPG and the EPO and identifies five possible patterns: (1) '*parliamentary party dominance*' (the UK), (2) '*party organisation dominance*' (France), (3) '*integrative party leadership*' (Germany; overlapping PPG and EPO leadership), (5) '*functional autonomy'* (the US; i.e. the PPG and EPO act largely independently: the former are key agents in the legislative process, the latter mobilise the electorate), and (5) '*factiocracy*' (Japan; i.e. parties dominated by factions rather than by the EPO or PPG).

These typologies are relevant when examining PPG leadership positions, since the authority and main duties of parliamentary party leaders seem to be connected to their formal position within the broader party organisation. As noted in the introduction, in some countries PPG leaders predominantly have managerial tasks, primarily focused on coordinating parliamentary activities and liaising with extra-parliamentary party elites (e.g. 'party organisation dominance'), whereas in other countries they are considered the parties' main electoral and political frontrunners (e.g. 'parliamentary party dominance') with their office potentially coinciding with that of EPO chairman (e.g. 'integrative party leadership') (*see table 1*) (Helms, 2000; Pilet & Cross, 2014).

Table 1. PPG leadership, EPO chairmanship and party leadership in European democracies[2]

		Also party leader?	
		Yes	**No**
Also EPO chairman?	**Yes**	Spain[a], Germany[a], Austria[a]	-[3]
	No	Westminster democracies, the Netherlands[a], Hungary[b], Norway[b]	Belgium, Portugal

[a] *Unless the party leader becomes a member of government and resigns from parliament.*
[b] *Although in some cases the EPO chairman, and not the PPG leader, is the party leader.*

In Westminster democracies (e.g. the United Kingdom, Canada, Australia), the office of parliamentary party leader in the lower House of Parliament and that of the party's political leader generally coincide, likewise forming the 'center of party authority' (Cross & Blais, 2012; Pilet & Cross, 2014). Rooted on the doctrine of parliamentary sovereignty, whoever leads the parliamentary party is commonly understood to be the party's top candidate for Prime Minister and is therefore indisputably seen as the uncontested leader of his/her party. (Bale & Webb, 2014, p. 13). He/she is the public face of the party on a daily basis, defends or opposes government decisions and is the authorative voice of the party during campaigns (Gauja, 2014; Norton, 1994). The EPO chair, on the other hand, is a rather organisational function and is filled in by someone else who not necessarily is an elected politician (Bale & Webb, 2014). Similar is the situation in the Netherlands, where the PPG leader in the Lower Chamber, and not

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[2] Summary of J-B. Pilet & W. Cross (2012). *The selection of political party leaders in contemporary parliamentary democracies: a comparative study*. London: Routledge.
[3] To our knowledge, no examples of PPG leaders who chair the party, but are not the party leader, exist.

the EPO chairman, typically is the party leader, unless the former becomes a cabinet member and is obliged to resign from parliament[4] (Andeweg, 2000; Andeweg & Irwin, 2009; Koekkoek, 1978). Identifying the true party leader is less straightfoward in Hungary and Norway: in some parties the party is led by the PPG leader, in others by the EPO chairman, and in some case party leadership is 'shared'.

In other countries, the offices of EPO chairman and PPG leader are held by the same politician who thereby acts as the uncontested party leader. Parliamentary party leaders in the Spanish 'Congreso de los Diputados', for instance, often dominate the entire the party organisation and are widely regarded as the most powerful players in Spanish politics (Barberà, Rodrìguez-Teruel, Barrio, & Baras, 2014; Sànchez de Dios, 1999). In a similar vein, the EPO chairmen in Austria usually are their parties' main political leader. On that account, the most important public office available to the party - i.e. PPG leader, (vice-)chancellor - is usually reserved for him/her (Ennser-Jedenastik & Müller, 2014; Müller & Steiniger, 2000). Also in Germany the parliamentary and extra-parliamentary party largely overlap. The real party leader often is the EPO chairman. In traditional German parties these politicians typically also are prominent members of the 'party in public office' as the leader of the biggest party in the lower house usually becomes federal chancellor, the leader of the smaller coalition partner often becomes vice-chancellor and the leaders of opposition parties typically head the PPG (Detterbeck & Rohlfing, 2014).

In a few cases, PPG leaders neither are EPO chairman nor party leader but rather act as an intermediary between the central party elite and the parliamentary party. The indisputable leaders of Belgian parties, for instance, are the party presidents (i.e. the EPO chairman) (Fiers, 1998). These powerful actors have an important say in the selection of PPG leaders who thereafter – as leader of the PPG and a prominent statutory member of the party's central executive committee - functions as a 'linking pin' between the party elite and the backbenchers by communicating the decisions of the former to the latter and securing adherence to the party program. Also in Portugal, the central party leader appoints a PPG chairman who functions as the main communication channel between the PPG and the EPO (Lisi & Freire, 2014).

Due to the different formal positions of PPG leaders in the party organisation and the political system at large, some diversifications in their set of duties occur. Still, some responsibilities are inherent to the job and thus remain in common. Notwithstanding that PPG leaders in the first two categories probably enjoy more political autonomy than PPG leaders in the third category, and their tasks are probably more 'political' than 'managerial[5]', they too are responsible for coordinating and monitoring MPs' activities, securing party unity and liaising with other party segments, even though in these tasks they often are assisted by intermediate PPG leadership bodies, such as whips (e.g. Westminster democracies, Spain), vice-chairmen (e.g. the Netherlands) or working-group chairs (e.g. Germany). The question arises to what extent these common responsibilities influence the way PPG think about and act according to their roles as a representative. In the next sections, we therefore further elaborate the complex and multifaceted concept of 'roles'.

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[4] As opposed to the 'fused executive' in Westminster countries where the leader of the largest party becomes Prime Minister.
[5] However, also here we find variations. In Germany for example, due to the highly institutionalized structures of PPGs (Saalfeld, 2000) PPG leaders have important coordinating functions.

3. Members of parliament and their roles

How MPs, including PPG leaders, fill in their respective mandates can be understood using the concept of 'roles'. In line with the neo-institutional turn which proliferated a 'role revival' in legislative studies (Blomgren & Rozenberg, 2012; Müller & Saalfeld, 1997), roles can be described as '*composite patterns of goals, attitudes and behaviours characteristic of people in particular positions*' (Searing, 1994, p. 369) that should be seen as '*the application of a particular institution's 'logic of appropriateness' (March & Olsen, 1989) to the level of individual inmates of that institution* (Andeweg, 2000, p. 66). In the context of parliament, Blomgren and Rozenberg (2012) make a distinction between 'representative' and 'legislative' roles. **Representatives roles** centre around the question of *whom* legislators represent, mainly concentrating on MPs as 'agents' with multiple and potential adversarial 'principles' (e.g. Pitkin, 1967; Strøm, 2003). Roles here are often reconstructed deductively, through universal categories of predefined role sets (see below) that make cross-national comparison possible (Dudzinska, Poyet, Costa, & Weßels, 2014). **Legislative roles**, on the other hand, are more broad and focus on *how* MPs organise their activities and perceive their own roles. Researchers here often take an inductive stance, and avoid predefined role set as they believe that 'the best way to understand the role of politicians, is to understand them as they do' (Searing, 1994, p. 10). As legislative roles are commonly understood to be the result of an interplay between personal considerations (career-related and psychological incentives) and institutional factors (formal rules, informal norms, values and expectations) (Searing, 1994; Strøm, 1997), analysis often results in a rather diverse repertoire of roles that are highly specific to the parochial features of a given parliament. Exemplary is Searing (1994) who in the United Kingdom distinguishes between *'policy advocates', 'ministerial aspirants', 'constituency men'* and '*parliamentary men*', Jenny and Müller (2012) who in Austria identify '*workhorses', 'showhorses', 'rapporteurs'* and *'spectators',* Costa and Kerrouche (2009) who classify French deputies as *'leading voices, future ministers, technocrats, provincials, idealists, group advocates* and *ideologists,* or Navarro (2012) who finds '*specialists', 'animators' 'intermediaries'* and *'outsiders'* in the European Parliament.

Both approaches on roles have their merits and limitations (Blomgren & Rozenberg, 2012). However, given the nature of the data at hands and the fact that legislative roles are highly determined by the specific institutional modi operandi of a given parliament, making comparison difficult, we will foremost focus on the *representative* roles of parliamentary party leaders.

One of the most influential contributions to the field of *representative roles* comes from Eulau, Wahlke, Buchanan, and Ferguson (1959). Inspired by the historical speech of Edmund Burke to the electors of Bristol in 1774, these authors distinguish between the **'focus'** and **'style'** of representation. The former concentrates on whom MPs (should) represent: the entire electorate or a particular geographically or functionally defined part of it. The latter focuses on how MPs (should) come to their decisions: by following their own conscience (as 'trustees') or by following the instructions of a principal, most notably the voters (as 'delegates')[6]. Despite several recurrent normative (Pitkin, 1967; Rehfeld, 2009) and

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[6] A third category, that of 'politicos', concerns MPs for 'whom it depends'.

empirical critiques (Andeweg & Thomassen, 2005; Gauja, 2012; Searing, 1994), the work of Eulau et al. (1959) still inspires many empirical studies today (Blomgren & Rozenberg, 2012).

Perhaps one of the most pertinent empirical critiques is that the trustee-delegate model was designed in the context of representation in the United States with no reference to strong and disciplined political parties (Andeweg, 2014; Gauja, 2012). In their attempt to adapt the trustee-delegate model to representative government in France, Converse and Pierce (1979) split up the delegate role into two categories: instructed by the party caucus (e.g. 'party delegate') and instructed by local constituents (e.g. voter delegate). By doing so, Converse and Pierce make it possible to apply this typology to European politics, and to make comparisons between countries with strong or weak party organisations. Their model however does not account for the way in which parties structure the interactions *between* MPs and voters (Andeweg, 2014). In this respect, the 'responsible party model' stresses that parties - and not individual MPs - are the key actors in political representation. Political parties, which are sufficiently cohesive and disciplined, present different predefined policy packages to the voters who choose the party that best represents their policy preferences (Katz, 1987; Mair, 2008; Thomassen, 1994). Based on the outcome of the elections, parties receive a mandate for implementing their program within a given legislative term. Afterwards, voters judge these parties based on what they have (or have not) implemented. As a consequence, with strong parties, political representation will not *run from below* (i.e. bottom-up representation) but is likely to *run from above* (i.e. top-down representation) with a focus on *accountability* as opposed to voter *responsiveness* (Esaiasson & Holmberg, 1996). Combined with the control mechanisms voters (as 'principals') have in order to ensure that representatives (their 'agents') will not act in a way contrary to their demands, Andeweg and Thomassen (2005) propose four modes of representation: '*delegation*' (representation from below and ex ante control), '*responsiveness*' (representation from below and ex post control), '*authorisation*' (representation from above and ex ante; e.g. the responsible party model) and 'accountability' (representation from above and ex post control).

Although parties are central to political representation, some argue that the bond between individual representatives and their constituencies should not be underestimated. Although researchers often focus on roll call voting as the behavioural expression of role orientations, the closed setting of the PPG caucus rather than the parliamentary floor might be the place where legislators have the opportunity of expressing their views and bringing particular interests to the attention of their colleagues (Thomassen & Esaiasson, 2006). Still, legislative parties typically act as a unitary bloc. Party unity is a crucial feature in any parliamentary democracy: it constitutes an important condition for maintaining government stability and winning the parliamentary game (Bowler et al., 1999). Here, PPG leaders play a crucial role: when party unity is not achieved voluntarily (i.e. 'party cohesion'[7]) it might be achieved by the threat or actual use of sanctions or positive incentives (i.e. party discipline) (Van Vonno et al., 2014). Hence, when the degree of party cohesion is low (e.g. when MPs have opposing views based on their own or their voters' preferences) PPG leaders might coerce disciplinary measures in order to reach party unity.

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[7] Party cohesion can be reached both through *party agreement (*stemming from homogenous policy preferences among MPs*) or party loyalty* (legislators' adherence to the norm of party unity) (Van Vonno et al., 2014).

Since the seminal work of Eulau et al. (1959), many empirical studies on the representative roles of members of parliaments in Western democracies have been conducted. Most of these studies focus on a single country or political system (e.g. Andeweg, 2012; De Winter, 1997; Gross, 1978; Katz, 1997; Miller & Stokes, 1963), some provide us with comparative insights. Converse and Pierce (1979) already made some prudent cross-national comparisons based on representatives' 'style'. They find that the role of 'party delegate' is far more salient in France and The Netherlands than in the US Congress where legislators mostly perceive themselves as 'trustees'. Based on research in France, Portugal and Belgium, Brack, Costa, and Teixeira (2012) conclude that representational foci are not 'mutually exclusive': MPs may adopt multiple foci and serve several entities. Analysing how these foci are influenced by individual characteristics (e.g. seniority, party responsibilities, political goals) seems not straightforward, however. The same factor may have different effects based on the institutional and cultural features of a given political context, proving that the notion of representation is complex and multifaceted. In a more extensive study of MPs' representative roles in fifteen parliamentary democracies, Dudzinska et al. (2014) find that the 'party delegate' style (48 percent of all MPs) generally prevails over that of the 'trustee' (31 percent) and the 'voter delegate' (16 percent) and that legislators focus on the entire electorate, the party, their personal voters and the constituency rather than on specific group interests. Variations in focus and style can mainly be attributed to institutional factors, including a country's political system (e.g. MPs in unitary states tend to have a more universalistic focus and are more distinctly 'party delegates' than in multilevel states), the electoral system (e.g. in open-list PR systems focus and style tend to be localised), and party factors (the stronger the influence of parties over candidate selection processes, the more they push legislators towards a 'party focus' and the style of 'trustee'). To a lesser extent, also individual factors impact representative roles. Men, younger and less experienced MPs seem to adopt a more universalistic focus than others. In a similar vein, Weßels (1999) finds national patterns in the representational focus of Members of European Parliament (MEPs) and members of national assemblies (MNPs) that predominantly can be linked to institutional explanatory variables. The smaller the constituency size, and the more political competition is personalised, the narrower an MPs representational focus. In addition, MEPs from larger and older member states more frequently state to serve the needs of all European citizens. The impact of personal factors such as social background and political experience again seems rather limited.

Few scholars have analysed the specific representative roles of parliamentary party leaders, despite their central role in representative democracy (see above). In the United States there has been some scholarly attention to congressional party leadership (Strahan, 2011) but studies her tend to focus on the factors allowing or constraining the ability of party leaders to influence legislative outcomes (e.g. personal ambitions, the degree of preference homogeneity within the legislative caucus), rather than on their representative roles (Aldrich & Rohde, 2000; Cooper & Brady, 1981; Sinclair, 1999). In this paper, we will address this gap in the literature and study the representative role orientations and behaviours of parliamentary party leaders in Europe, where parties are highly influential actors mediating the relationship between voters and their representatives.

4. Data & methodology

In the following sections we explore (RQ1) how parliamentary party leaders in Europe perceive their representative roles and whether these role orientations differ from those of other MPs, and (RQ2) whether these possibly different role orientations are reflected by differences in political behaviour.

For our empirical analysis, we rely on the data provided by the PARTIREP MP Survey[8] (Deschouwer & Depauw, 2014). These were collected between 2009 and 2012 among 2,325 members of parliament (i.e. a response rate of about one in four MPs) in nine multilevel and six unitary states, in national as well as in a number of regional parliaments. The survey with a closed-ended question format examined legislators' attitudes and self-reported behaviours, through questions on the democratic system, role orientations and constituency definitions (Deschouwer, Depauw, & André, 2014).

Among the sample, 114 members of parliament declared being the leader of a parliamentary party. Two countries in which no parliamentary party leader was surveyed (i.e. Poland and Ireland) were excluded from the analysis. Table 2 shows the composition of our sample. Because of varying return rates, the data are weighted by parliamentary party in each parliament, and by country in order to correct (among other factors) the overrepresentation of Swiss cantonal parliaments (Deschouwer et al., 2014).

Table 2. Sample size (with and without weights)

	Parliamentary party leaders	*Other MPs*	*Total*
Austria	17 (17)	210 (210)	227 (227)
Belgium	15 (14)	148 (149)	163 (163)
France	3 (3)	87 (87)	90 (90)
Germany	5 (7)	274 (272)	279 (279)
Hungary	1 (1)	98 (98)	99 (99)
Ireland	1 (0)	33 (34)	34 (34)
Israel	4 (3)	35 (36)	39 (39)
Italy	14 (10)	114 (118)	128 (128)
The Netherlands	2 (1)	63 (64)	65 (65)
Norway	1 (1)	45 (45)	46 (46)
Poland	0 (0)	55 (55)	55 (55)
Portugal	8 (5)	109 (111)	117 (116)
Spain	5 (4)	267 (268)	272 (272)
Switzerland	36 (6)	568 (143)	604 (149)
United Kingdom	2 (1)	105 (106)	107 (107)
Total	114 (73)	2.211 (1796)	2.325 (1869)

Sample size after weighing in parentheses

The representative role orientations of PPG leaders are determined in two ways. Following the Eulau & Wahlke typology (1959), we first analyse their focus (i.e. do/should representatives represent the entire population or a geographically or functionally defined part of it?) and style of representation (i.e. should MPs act as a 'trustee' or rather as a 'party delegate' or 'voter delegate'. In accordance with the 'responsible party model' we will secondly analyse whether PPG leaders favour bottom-up representation (i.e. politicians should be responsive to voters' preferences and translate these into policy) or top-down representation (i.e. politicians should seek support for a predefined party program)

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[8] See www.partirep.eu

(Esaiasson & Holmberg, 1996) and whether they are more in favour of ex-ante (e.g. promissory representation) or ex-post voter control mechanisms (e.g. anticipatory representation) (Andeweg & Thomassen, 2005; Mansbridge, 2003).

Because parliamentary party leaders bear important responsibilities regarding the maintenance of a parliamentary majority, among other means by monitoring PPG members' activities, securing party unity and enforcing disciplinary measures, we expect that:

Hypothesis 1: Parliamentary party leaders are more likely to adopt a party focus or party voters' focus of representation than other MPs.

Hypothesis 2: Parliamentary party leaders more often adopt a 'party delegate' style of representation than other MPs.

Hypothesis 3: Parliamentary party leaders are more distinctly in favour of top-down representation and ex-post control mechanisms than other MPs.

Investigating how PPG leaders conceive their role as a representative is one thing. It is, however, also crucial to examine how they actually behave and if their role attitudes are translated into concrete parliamentary actions. One often heard critique on structural-functionalist views on roles (cf. Eulau et al., 1959) is their difficulty in linking role orientations to concrete parliamentary behaviour (Blomgren & Rozenberg, 2012; Müller & Saalfeld, 1997; Searing, 1994). Yet, many studies focus on roll-call voting as an indicator of representative role behaviour, which, according to some scholars, is too ambitious, especially in the context of politics in Europe where parties act cohesively and disciplined, thus leaving little leeway for personal considerations for deciding how to vote in parliament (Andeweg, 2012, p. 70).

We too aim to analyse whether we can find observable differences in characteristic behaviour between PPG leaders and other MPs (research question 2). These differences would stem from differences in representative role attitudes. We will, however, not focus on roll-call voting but on other types of parliamentary behaviour such as the allocation of their resources (time, money), their most important task as a member of parliament and the origin of their parliamentary initiatives. Again, we expect that parliamentary party leaders are less oriented towards local constituencies and more towards the political party organisation, and that the hypothesised role orientations described above are reflected as follows:

Hypothesis 4: Parliamentary party leaders spend less time in their constituencies and have less contacts with voters than other MPs.

Hypothesis 5: Parliamentary party leaders attach less importance to tasks such as looking after the needs of the local area and providing assistance to individual voters than other MPs.

Hypothesis 6: Parliamentary party leaders more often derive their parliamentary initiatives from within the party rather than from meetings with individual voters.

Hypothesis 7: In election campaigns, parliamentary party leaders spend more effort in obtaining the national party support than other MPs.

5. Research results

5.1. Representational role attitudes

We start with the focus of representation. Respondents were asked to indicate on a 7-point scale (ranging from 1: 'of no importance', to 7: 'of great importance') how important it was for them personally to promote the interests of the following geographically and functionally defined groups: all people in the country (or in the region for regional MPs), his/her personal voters, the party's voters, the party, the constituency and specific groups. Especially, the importance of party voters and of the party are relevant for our purposes. The results are shown in table 3.

Table 3. *Representational foci of PPG leaders vis-à-vis other MPs (mean scores)*

	Own voters	*Party voters*	*Constituency*	*Party*	*Specific group*	*All People*
PPG leaders	5.5 (1.6)	5.7 (1.2)	5.6 (1.3)	5.8 (1.2)	4.5 (1.7)	5.4 (1.7)
Other MPs	5.7 (1.4)	5.8 (1.2)	5.7 (1.4)	5.6 (1.2)	4.6 (1.7)	5.4 (1.6)
Total	5.7 (1.4)	5.8 (1.2)	5.7 (1.4)	5.6 (1.2)	4.6 (1.7)	5.4 (1.6)

*** $p < .001$; ** $p < .01$; * $p < .05$; SD in parentheses

As we can see, no significant differences between the representational foci of regular MPs and parliamentary party leaders are found. On the contrary, the mean importance of all selected foci are largely similar. Parliamentary party leaders and other MPs attach equal importance to representing the needs and interests of their constituency, personal and party voters, the entire population in the country (for national MPs[9]) and in the region (for regional MPs), the party and to a lesser extent specific groups in society (e.g. women, the elderly, ethnic majorities). These results suggest that leading a parliamentary party (or not) has no effect on the representational foci of elected members of parliament. Counter to our expectations, PPG leaders are not more oriented towards the party or the party's voters. With scores for party voters of 5.7 (versus 5.8) and for the party of 5.8 (versus 5.6), they do not differ systematically from other MPs. We therefore reject hypothesis 1.

Secondly, we distinguish between three possible styles of representation (e.g. Converse & Pierce, 1979). Parliamentary party leaders and MPs are categorised either as 'trustee', as 'voter delegate' or as 'party delegate' based on their answers on three standardised questions revolving around how MPs should vote in case there is a conflict between (a) their own opinion and the party' position, (b) their own opinion and the voters' position and (c) the voters' opinion and the party' position. Respondents that did not show a clear pattern on how to act in such situations are categorised as 'undecided' (see table 4).

Table 4. Representational style of PPG leaders vis-à-vis other MPs (in row percentages)

	Trustee	*Voters' delegate*	*Party delegate*	*Undecided*
PPG leaders	29.4	10.3	47.1	13.2
Other MPs	31.8	15.8	47.4	4.9
Total	31.7	15.6	47.4	5.3

Pearson Chi-Square value: 9.860; p = .020

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[9] And for regional MPs in Austria, Belgium and Switzerland.

Here we do find significant results in the representational styles of PPG leaders compared to those of other MPs. Only a small minority of both PPG leaders and MPs believe that when an MP encounters diverging standpoints between the electorate, the party and/or his or her own convictions, he or she should act as a 'voter delegate'. However, whereas the share of 'voter delegates' among regular MPs is 15.8 percent, the number of parliamentary party leaders who believe that an MP should prioritise the interests of the voters over others is noticeably lower (10.3 percent). The lower share of adherents to the voter delegate style of representation is, however, not reflected by an increase in the number of 'party delegates' or 'trustees'. Much like other MPs (47.4 percent), most PPG leaders (47,1 percent) are convinced that MPs should first and foremost act as a 'party delegate' and toe the party line, even if this implies ignoring personal considerations and/or voter interests. This seems to correspond with the factual importance of parties in representative democracy (Müller & Narud, 2013) and the high levels of voting unity in contemporary European parliaments (Deschouwer & Depauw, 2014); Van Vonno et al. (2014)). Furthermore, when asked whether party discipline should be more strict, less strict or whether it should remain as it is (not in table), only 14.9 percent of PPG leaders (versus 21.5 percent of regular MPs) believe it should be more strict. They rather believe that it should remain as it is (82.1 percent of PPG leaders versus 69.5 percent of other MPs)[10].

Nonetheless, about thirty percent of parliamentary party leaders believe that MPs should act as a 'trustee' and follow their own 'mature judgment' and 'unbiased opinion' (Burke, 1774), rather than following instructions from below (the voters) or above (the party). Again, this is comparable to the number of 'trustees' among other MPs. As PPG leaders do not emphasise the style of 'party delegate' any more than others do, we also reject hypotheses 2

Quite remarkably, the clearest point of difference concerns the 'undecided' category. No less than 13.2 percent of parliamentary party leaders do not propose a clear solution to the question how MPs should act when confronted with different voters', party and own opinions. Among other MPs this share is 4.5 percent. When analysing the three dilemmas described above separately (not in table), we find that parliamentary leaders more often than other MPs believe that MPs should follow (1) the party position rather than their own opinions (+ 8.6 percent), (2) their own opinions rather than the opinion of their voters (+ 4.3 percent) and (2) their voters' opinions rather than the party position (+ 3.2 percent). These differences however are not significant. Why so many PPG leaders fall into the undecided category is unclear. One possible explanation might be that PPG leaders simply do not experience as many 'conflicts' between diverging opinions as other members of parliament, as a result of which they could be less capable of assessing what MPs should do in such a situation. This thesis is supported by our findings that PPG leaders indeed rarely find themselves in the position that they have an opinion on a vote in parliament that differs from the party's position (see table 5). 60.8 percent of PPG leaders (almost) never find themselves in a situation where their view does not coincide with that of the party.

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[10] The differences between PPG leaders and MPs are even more distinct concerning their views on the degree of party discipline with respect to keeping internal party discussions confidential. Here, 52.1 % of MPs believe party discipline should be more strict, whereas 64.7 percent of the PPG leaders believe the degree of party discipline should remain as it is (X^2 value: 11.5, p = 0.003).

This number is significantly lower among other MPs (30.3 percent). This could be explained either by the fact that PPG leaders themselves can (partially) shape the party's view, by the selection procedure in which faithful and mainstream MPs are designated as PPG leader and/or by the longer parliamentary career of PPG leaders which makes that they have more intensively internalised the party's points of view.

Table 5. Number of times that the personal opinion on a vote differs from that of the party (row percentages)

	About once a month	About every three months	About once a year	(Almost) never
PPG leaders	1.4	17.6	20.3	60.8
Other MPs	8.2	26.7	33.8	31.3
Total	7.9	26.3	33.2	32.6

Pearson Chi-Square value: 29.295, p < 0.001

As noted above, some authors argue that the Eulau & Wahlke typology - even with the adaptions made by Converse and Pierce (1979), among others – is not properly suited for capturing how political parties in Western Europe interfere in the relationship between voters and their elected representatives (Andeweg, 2014; Andeweg & Thomassen, 2005). In line with the responsible party government model, Esaiasson and Holmberg (1996) in this respect suggest measuring whether MPs favour 'bottom-up representation', oriented towards being *responsive* to the wishes and grievances of voters, or 'top-down representation', focused on seeking the voters' *authorisation* for implementing the party program. Respondents in the PARTIREP survey were asked to indicate on a five-point scale ranging from '1': *politicians should aim to translate the political views of citizens into policy as accurately as possible',* towards '5': '*Politicians should stand clearly on their party's platform and aim to win citizen support for those views'*, what type of representation they favour.

Table 6. Opinions towards top-down versus bottom-up representation and ex-ante versus ex-post control mechanisms (mean scores between 1 and 5).

	Top down vs. bottom up representation	*Ex ante vs. ex post control mechanisms*
PPG leaders	3.00 (1.2)	3.27 (1.1)
Other MPs	3.05 (1.2)	3.21 (1.1)
Total	3.05 (1.2)	3.21 (1.1)

*** p < .001; ** p < .01; * p < .05; SD in parentheses.

As becomes apparent from table 6, the views of PPG leaders and other MPs on whether representation should 'run from below' (score of 1) or 'run from above' (score of 5) are highly similar. The mean score of both MPs and PPG leaders is close to 3, meaning that they do not demonstrate a clear opinion on what type of political representation members of parliament should value most. Also when we integrate the control mechanisms that voters (as principals) have at their disposal in order to ensure that their representatives (as agents) do not act contrary to their demands (Andeweg & Thomassen, 2005; Strøm, 2000), we see that both PPG leaders and other MPs slightly more prefer ex-ante control mechanisms (score of 5: '*in elections, politicians should put their plans for the future to the voters')* as opposed to ex-

post control mechanisms (score of 1: '*in elections, politicians should account to the voters for their actions in the past*'). Again, our hypothesis is rejected.

Based on these findings, we cannot conclude that PPG leaders have different representational role orientations than other MPs. Moreover, the only significant point of difference we do find, regarding their representational style, is not (entirely) in the expected direction.

5.2. Representational role behaviour

It is commonly agreed in the literature that observed political roles are rather meaningless unless they can be linked to characteristic behaviour (Searing, 1994). For that reason, we analyse several types of behaviour of PPG leaders that can be linked to their duties as a representative, compare our findings with other MPs, and assess the validity of the role categories uncovered above.

We start by analysing the time use of representatives. Respondents were asked to indicate how many working hours in a typical month the spend in their constituency. We expected PPG leaders to spend more time in parliament and in the national party at the expense of the local constituency.

Table 7. Average number of working hours in the local constituency in a typical month.

	Average number of hours
PPG leaders	115,27 (134,01)
Other MPs	98,67 (82,62)

t = -0.990 (ns), unequal variances ; SD in parentheses

The results from Table 7, however, show that rather the opposite applies: PPG leaders spend on average 115 working hours in their local constituency, while other MPs only come to 98 working hours. But we should note that these averages do not differ significantly between these two groups of MPs. Also for other local activities (including attending weddings and funerals in the local area, meeting local constituents in private and holding surgeries) no significant differences could be observed between PPG-leaders and other MPs (not in table). This leads to a rejection of hypothesis 4. PPG leaders do not spend less time in their local constituency.

In the next table, we dig deeper into the division of labour between national and local duties. Respondents were asked to pick their two most important tasks (out of a total of four). They could choose between influencing government policy, providing assistance to individual voters, looking after the needs of the local area, and finally acting as a liaison between PPG members and party membership and managing Parliament's business.

Table 8. Two most important tasks as an MP (percentages)

	Influencing government policy	*Providing assistance to individual voters*	*Looking after the needs of the local area*	*Liaising PPG-members and party leadership, and managing Parliament's business*
PPG leaders	70,3	28.4	45.2	40.5
Other MPs	67.2	29.5	63.4	22.1

Total	67.3	29.4	62.7	22.9
Pearson Chi²	0.305	0.040	9.958**	13.591***

*** p < .001; ** p < .01; * p < .05

A number of observations from Table 8 immediately strike the eyes. First of all, there are no significant differences concerning the provision of assistance to individual voters: about 29 % of both PPG leaders and of other MPs mention this as an important duty. This echoes the lack of significant differences in time spent in the local constituency, as shown in Table 7. Secondly, when it comes to work in Parliament, differences appear. PPG leaders attach, as expected, more importance to linking with the party leadership and the management of parliamentary business: 40 % of them estimates this to be important (versus 22 % for other MPs). Also for looking after the local needs, significant differences can be noted, but in the opposite direction: while 63 % of other MPs find this an important duty, only 45 % of PPG leaders do so. We would like to stress that this item is not about being active in the local constituency, but about work in parliament and raising local issues there. We could conclude that while PPG leaders pay attention to their local voters (especially in the constituency itself), they have in parliament other priorities than defending local issues.

This different focus in parliamentary behaviour also comes forward from the answers on a question about the number of topics an MP specialises in. While 72 % of the PPG leaders declare to specialise in a wide range of issues, only 46 % of the other MPs do so (not in table). PPG leaders are due to their formal function obliged to focus on a broad range of issues, which leaves less space for looking after the local needs in parliament. As such, hypothesis 5 can only be partially confirmed.

Then we move to the sources of inspiration for parliamentary work. We expect here, in line with the findings from the previous table, that PPG leaders are more than other MPs inspired by the party and less by individual citizens. Respondents were asked to indicate which proportion of their parliamentary initiatives was derived from the following sources of inspiration: media, interest and action groups, the party, individual citizens and personal experience.

Table 9. Average proportion of parliamentary initiatives derived from the following sources

	Derived from the media	Derived from interest and action groups	Derived from within the party	Derived from meeting with individual citizens	Derived from personal experience
PPG leaders	18.27	18.07	24.84	20.43	21.06
Other MPs	15.51	20.43	21.90	20.49	24.25

t-values are -1.339 (ns), 1.425 (ns), -1.147 (ns), 0.028 (ns), 1.173 (ns) ; *** p < .001; ** p < .01; * p < .05

Although there are (modest) differences in the average proportions, none of them proves to be significant. This means for instance that both PPG leaders and other MPs are almost equally inspired by the party for their parliamentary initiatives. Note that in the questionnaire a reference was made to the party in general, not to the party leader or party elite. For individual citizens as source of inspiration, the proportions are even almost identical (20,43 % versus 20,49 %). As such, we can reject hypothesis 6.

A final hypothesis was about the election campaign. Respondents were asked to assess whether they primarily seek support from the local party when envisaging re-election or from the national party. They could give a score from 1 (support of the national party[11]) to 5 (support from the local party).

Table 10. Average score on a dilemma between seeking support from the national party (1) versus seeking support from the local party (5)

	Average score (0-5)
PPG leaders	2,72 (1,00)
Other MPs	3,19 (1,06)

t = 3,593***, equal variances ; SD in parentheses

Table 10 shows significant differences between PPG leaders and other MPs: the former tend to lean much more towards the national party for securing their re-election (score of 2,72 versus 3,19)[12]. A score of 2,72 indicates that national party is more important for PPG leaders than the local party, but at the same time, it also means that the local party continues to play a certain role, even for PPG leaders (as 2,72 is close to the middle position of 3). Nevertheless, hypothesis 7 could be confirmed: PPG leaders indeed spend more effort in obtaining support from the national party.

6. Conclusions

The main goal of this paper was to investigate whether parliamentary party leaders in Europe, who have several common responsibilities, share a common ground by adopting particular representative role attitudes and behaviours that differ from those of other MPs.

With respect to their representative role orientations, our results suggest that parliamentary party leaders have been, and still are, members of parliament. Parliamentary party leaders and other MPs adopt strikingly similar foci of representation and largely have the same attitudes towards top-down versus bottom-up and ex-post versus ex-ante representation. Only with regard to representational style, we uncovered significant differences. These are, however, not (all) in the expected direction. Parliamentary party leaders less often favour a 'voter delegate' style, but this is not compensated by an increase in the number of 'trustees' or 'party delegates'.

Despite not finding relevant differences in role attitudes between PPG leaders and other MPs, we found some differences for concrete parliamentary behaviour. Although PPG leaders do not spend less time in their local constituency and do not attach less importance to providing assistance to local voters, their priorities in parliament are more directed towards linking the PPG and the party leadership and towards managing parliamentary business and less towards looking after the needs of the local area. Also when seeking re-election, significant differences appear: while support of the local party remains important,

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[11] Or regional party for regional MPs.

[12] These results remain significant even when adding 'district magnitude' (referring to the electoral system) as a control variable to our analysis.

PPG leaders more than other MPs seek support from the national party in order to obtain a good position on the candidate list. It seems that the differences in behaviour we have found, are not so much attributable to different role attitudes as measured by our standardised role sets, but are rather a consequence of the different formal duties a PPG leader has to perform.

In sum, differences in both the attitudes and the behaviour of PPG leaders are rather limited. We provide three explanations for the lack of straightforward differences, which at the same time also contain suggestions for future research on PPG leadership roles.

PPG leaders are (and remain) first and foremost MPs. Before becoming PPG leader, they were 'ordinary' MPs, who underwent a process of socialisation and have adopted particular attitudes and behaviour. These attitudes do not all of a sudden change when becoming leader of the parliamentary party. It appears that the secondary process of political socialisation into a parliamentary leadership position does not significantly affect the way they perceive their roles as a representative. Perhaps, this changes when PPG leaders remain in office for several legislative terms, but the number of observations in the dataset is too low to test this.

Secondly, several other studies concluded that representative roles are particularly shaped by institutional explanatory variables (e.g. the political system, the electoral system), while the impact of individual or micro-level factors, such as MP's social backgrounds, their political goals and party responsibilities, appears to be rather limited (e.g. Brack et al., 2012; Dudzinska et al., 2014; Weßels, 1999). The strong role that institutional variables play (and the differences in combinations of formal positions a PPG leader can take across countries) seem to suggest that single-country studies are more appropriate to gain insights in role attitudes of behaviour of parliamentary party leaders. Whereas predefined representative role sets are interesting when making cross-national comparisons and studying the institutional settings that influence normative and philosophical conceptions on representation (Blomgren & Rozenberg, 2012), they might not be sensitive enough in order to capture the complex interplay between individual factors and the (in)formal rules that are connected to each position within a given institutional framework. By broadening our scope, and shifting our focus away from 'representative roles' (studied deductively) towards 'legislative roles' (studied inductively) we might be in a better position to study how both institutional factors and personal characteristics, goals and motivations shape political roles. To put it bluntly: a common ground for PPG leaders across countries based on their representative role orientations seems to be lacking. How they see their role and how they behave, is to a large extent determined by the idiosyncratic features of each individual political and parliamentary system.

Thirdly, the fact that role attitudes cannot be linked to concrete and characteristic behaviour (or vice-versa in our case) could again indicate that rigid categories such as 'trustee' or 'delegate' might not be the best way to conceptualise political roles. This issue was already brought up by Searing (1994) who argued that these constructs exist in the minds of social scientists rather than in the minds of the people we are studying. His solution is straightforward: "by directing our concepts and measures towards roles

as politicians themselves conceive them, we will be in the best possible way to explain the behaviour that is inherent in such roles" (Searing, 1994, p. 14).

All this allows us to conclude that studies on parliamentary party leaders should adopt an open and inductive approach without using pre-defined categories, and that in-depth single-country studies appear to be the best way to study this phenomenon.

Finally, we reflect on what this tells us about the quality of representation. Representation could be understood as making present something or someone who is not literally present (Pitkin, 1967). It constitutes a relationship between a principal (i.e. the represented) on the one hand, and the agent (i.e. the representative) on the other hand. According to Strøm (2003) this implies a 'chain of delegation' from voters to those who govern: voters (i.e. the 'supreme' principals) delegate to elected MPs, who in turn delegate to cabinet members, who delegate to civil servants, etc. In political practice however, political parties may 'distort' this democratic chain of delegation, by making representatives more responsive to central party elites than to their voters (Strøm, 2003). Our results show, however, that even PPG leaders (who have formal duties including guaranteeing party discipline and managing parliamentary work) appear to take these voters into account, both in their attitudes and their behaviour. Despite our expectations that they would give more priority to the party, PPG leaders continue to take the represented seriously, which could be an indication of a 'good' representational process.

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