Government of the Few?

Descriptive representation amongst Norwegian Cabinet Members, State Secretaries and Members of Parliament, 1945-2015

Håkon Voldmo Kavli

Master thesis at the Department of Political Science
Faculty of Social Science
UNIVERSITY OF OSLO

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Abstract

This thesis tests «Putnams Law of increasing disproportion on Norwegian Cabinet Members and State secretaries, comparing them to Ministers of Parliament and Norwegian population. Using a descriptive focus, this thesis explores the differences and similarities between the groups over the ascribed characteristics gender and age, as well as the achieved characteristics of education, occupation backgrounds, sector backgrounds and wealth. These variables are explored using graphics to identify possible patterns and developments between the three types of politicians in question compared to the public, over time- and by regime-shifts. I conclude that representation in ascribed characteristics have become better over time, and that achieved characteristics have continued to separate cabinet members from MPs and the population.
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1 Introduction

1.1 Actualization

Europe has recently seen a resurgence of populism with extreme-right parties gaining seats in parliaments in near all countries. Pressures from globalization, economic recessions, and migration-crisis – and politicians’ alleged disability to deal with the problems posed by these developments – have again led do debates on the “crisis of democracy” (Krefting, 2016). Such talk of political representation in a state of crisis appear to be a recurrent phenomenon. It was also a hot topic after the late nineteenth century’s wave of parliamentization and the introduction of political parties (Manin, 1997, pp. 193-195). We expect democratic government to be representative. In Hannah Arendt’s words: «the age-old distinction between ruler and ruled which the [American and French] Revolution[s] had set out to abolish through the establishment of a republic that had asserted itself; once more, the people are not admitted to the public realm, once more the business of government has become the privilege of the few» (Arendt, 1963, pp. 273, 240). Time and again the same question seems to resurface: are there too large distances between electors and their representatives? Is this distance caused by different life experiences? Have politicians in western democracies again failed to address the issues that matters most for common folks?

Previous studies on the Norwegian political elites, I argue in this thesis, have overlooked the possible difference in social representation between the well-studied Ministers of Parliament (MPs hereafter), state secretaries and cabinet members. In Norway’s first study of all party strata combined, Allern, Heidar, and Karlsen (2016, pp. 75-76) demonstrate that Putnam’s law of disproportion applies to the organizations levels within Norwegian political parties. Here, MPs are the most socially exclusive group; more so than party delegates, that in turn are more socially exclusive than party members – compared to the voters that elected them. MPs in Norway are documented to be Considering both the aforementioned, recurring debates on the politicians representativeness, and the new findings on politicians representative capacity on the legislative level - it seems natural for me to have a closer look at the attributes of the Norwegian politicians in the executive, and how they compare along the same lines. Excluding political advisors working in the ministries, these are the cabinet members and their junior ministers – the state secretaries. Are they also, elites out of touch with the people that elected them? By assessing the backgrounds and descriptive characteristics of politicians, using
indicators such as gender, age, education, work-life experience, sector backgrounds – one is able to describe some of the aspects (but not all) about how the recruitment to the political elite works and some of their aspects (Kjær, Pedersen, & Magtudredningen, 2004, p. 17).

Our expectations for politicians take the form of a dual relationship. On one hand, politicians are expected to mirror the people at large, on the other, they are excepted to be the first among equals (Christiansen, Möller, Togeby, & Magtudredningen, 2001, p. 34). Time and time again, as will be discussed in Chapter 2, studies have shown that politicians differ systematically from the voters (Cotta & Best, 2004; Putnam, 1976). Of course, MPs represent their respective party groups, but they also represent their voters according to the parliamentary chain of delegation (Elklit & Grønnegård Christensen, 2013, p. 99). Voters expect their politicians to represent them. In Pippa Norris words (1996, p. 214) “there is a growing body of evidence that who gets in to political elites has a significant effect on what concerns are prioritized, what legislation is passed, and what style of politics predominates”. Since politicians make manifestos and not the other way around, studying the qualities politicians have and how they resemble the people that elected them – matters. This brings us to descriptive representation – and how to study it.

1.2 Descriptive representation

Pitkin (1967) differentiated the concept of political representation after four different views, namely formalistic representation, descriptive representation, symbolic representation, and substantive representation. These views highlight distinctive features of representation and different parameters to identify and evaluate representation (Dovi, 2015). When using a descriptive conception of political representation, as contrasted to the other three views, Pitkin (1967:61) argue that:

«...representation is not acting with authority, or acting before being held to account, rather it depends on the representative’s characteristics, on what he is or is like, on being something rather than doing something. The representative does not act for others, he “stands for” them, by virtue of a correspondence or connection between them, a resemblance or reflection»

Pitkin’s work “still stands in the center of theorizing about and studying the critical processes of democracy in terms of the represented, the representative, and democratic performance more broadly speaking” (Celis & Mazur, 2012). Indeed, most empirical investigations in to
descriptive representation cited in this thesis base their theoretical understanding on Pitkin’s seminal work. However, less attention is paid to how Pitkin warned us of how emphasizing descriptive representation may take the focus away from substantive representation. Pitkin worried about how «representation has supplemented democracy rather than serving it» - the way in which US Governors have become a self-perpetuating elite that administer passive masses of people (2004, p. 339). Now, the representatives act «not as agents of the people but instead of them» (Ibid.). Undergird (search Pitkin (2004) and elaborate

1.2 Research questions

Are the Norwegian top politicians this way as well, disconnected from the people they are supposed to represent? This study seeks to investigate whether and how Norwegian top politicians differ from the voters that elected them in to office in terms of descriptive representation. The literature review in chapter 0 will show that numerous studies over the year have demonstrated how MPs are different from the voters descriptively over the years, but much less work have been done on cabinet members and state secretaries, and no study, to my knowledge, has ever included all these three groups in one single empirical investigation. My primary research question is thus:

*How do Norwegian cabinet members and state secretaries compare to MPs and the population in over the attributes that constitute descriptive representation?*

Furthermore, following the lack of attention, we do not know if or how the eventual discrepancies between voters and representatives in these characteristics have evolved over time:

*How have the descriptive attributes for the three groups evolved over time?*

and whether they differ between the Norwegian political parties that takes turns forming cabinets:

*How does the attributes of cabinet members and state secretaries differ across different regime-types?*

In sum, these three question make up the knowledge gap (further explained Chapter 1.4.3) I seek to bridge. I will structure my thesis after these questions. I will leave out questions of representation of other nationalities or ethnicities, as there are for all practical purposes, no variation with e
1.3 The road ahead

The above-mentioned research question structure the next chapters of the thesis. First ahead is the Background chapter (Ch.2) where I briefly review relevant literature on the field, present key concepts and the Norwegian context. Next is a theory chapter with the analytical framework is presented. The methodology chapter Ch. 4 presents the research design and research process, I then move to analyze the data material (Ch.5) after six key variables, before the findings are discussed (Ch.6) and finally concluded on.
2 Background

2.1 Literature Review

Studies of political representation have long traditions in social science. Thoughts on how representatives should be or behave were central elements in the works of classic thinkers like Mill, Burke, Roseau, Madison and Adams. Over the years, efforts to study the political elites have split in two broad (Parry, 2005, p. 1). One way is concerned with illustrating the patterns of opportunities in a society and political action. This is done by examining the social attributes of the persons that acquire positions of political prominence in a society – i.e. the politicians; in analyzing characteristics like their age, gender, social background, education and career paths and how their attributes compare to those of the people at large. The other way “aim to establish to what extent the members of an elite act as an elite” by examining whether the elites across different segments of society share ideologies, act coordinated, and control their own social reproduction (Ibid.). This thesis follows the first route rather strictly with regard to the later empirical analysis of social attributes in chapter 5. I lean on Pitkin (1967) in referring to way this as ‘descriptive representation’.

Putnam’s (1976) seminal synthesis of 600 books, articles and documents on political representation revealed that in nearly all legislative bodies around the world, no matter what measures are used, positions of political prominence are held disproportionately by middle-aged men with university degrees and backgrounds from the middle- or upper class. In this field of research, Putnam wrote that there were “copious, but disparate findings” and an “unusual large gap between abstract general theories and masses of unorganized evidence” (Ibid.). Representation- and elite studies was reactualized with the third wave of democratization (Higley & Moore, 2001, p. 176). Cotta and Best (2004, p. 2) note that only recently, crucial steps to overcome the disadvantages of this “patchwork approach”1 which Putnam pointed out have been made by scholars such as Moore (1979); Czudnowski (1982) and Norris (1997). To this list I add Cotta and Bests own works (Cotta & Best, 2004, 2007), of which findings give important references to this study over the next chapters.

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1 A country by country approach, analyzing politicians over unstandardized variables
There are some recurring and prominent reasons that motivate studies of descriptive representation. Some hold simply that all major groups of citizens deserve to be included in the elected bodies to ensure equity and fairness (Mansbridge, 1999, 2003; Hanne Marthe Narud & Valen, 2000, p. 91; Phillips, 1994), or that underrepresentation of certain social groups may undermine the democratic legitimacy of parliaments (Norris, 1997, p. 230). A third motivation is the belief that life experiences shape the politicians values and priorities, and thus affect which issues they promote when elected to legislatures or executive office (Kjaer et al., 2004, p. 22). Cotta and Best (2004, p. 3) even conceptualize representation as "the ‘hinge’ between society and polity, through which social conflict and authority structures are translated into political action, but at the same time political actors guide, reshape, and reinterpret the demands of society". From all these perspectives, representation is important. Opinions, values or attitudes will not be studied empirically in this thesis, but the link between attitudes and descriptive representation is thoroughly discussed in Esaiasson and Holmberg (1996) and Skjeie and Teigen (2003). For practical purposes, Norris notes that social background matters not only symbolically, but also for the attitudes and behavior of representatives (1997, pp. 6-7). Class, generation, gender and education of elected members produce attitudinal differences within parties in Germany (Wessels, 1985, pp. 50-72) and in Sweden (Esaiasson & Holmberg, 1996, pp. 31-48). Gender differences between legislators are significant predictors of their attitudes in Britain (Norris & Lovenduski, 1995), Scandinavia (Karvonen & Selle, 1995) and in the United States (Thomas, 1994). For Norris, this suggest the need for the “development of a more diverse legislature may influence not just its legitimacy but also its dominant policy agenda, and perhaps its style of politics” (1997, p. 7). Surveys of Norwegian MP’s have demonstrated that social backgrounds affect their policy priorities and work in the Parliament (Hanne Marthe Narud, 2006; Hanne Marthe Narud & Valen, 2007, pp. 98-117). Young MPs in Norway are more likely to push forward interests of the young, private sector experienced MPs front business interests, and female MP’s identify more with issues of gender. Interestingly, women cooperate more across party line divisions for these issues than men do (Ibid.). Parliamentary representation of ethnic immigrants have been weak, and in interviews, interest groups for immigrant women report to experience limited responsiveness within the Party Politics context on their concerns on labor market questions as opposed to questions of forced marriage or sexualized violence (Skjeie & Teigen, 2003, pp. 56 -58, 70-77). Based on these

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2 This effect has been documented in several studies, also in the Nordic countries (Hanne Marthe Narud & Valen, 2000).
findings, we return to studies of descriptive representation assured that who the politicians are, matters for the politics they pursue.

### 2.1.1 Political representation in Norway and Scandinavia

There is an abundance of research into political representation of Norwegian MPs. Research into the political representativeness of Cabinets are sparser. Few studies have looked into the politicians in government, with the exception of the Norwegian Power and Democracy study that pooled together (Gulbrandsen et al., 2002; NOU2003:19, 2003). Until recently, the Norwegian State Secretaries had received no scholarly attention since Eliassen (1972). They remained, allegedly, the group with the most power in Norway that we knew the least about (Askim, Karlsen, & Kolltveit, 2014, 2016).

The last Norwegian Power- and Democracy study, by defining elites as after the position-method: concluded in its report on elites (across the sectors) that white-, middle aged men of middle- and upper class origin generally occupy the most prominent positions in the markets (NOU2003:19, 2003). Furthermore, almost none were ethnic minorities, most had an urban upbringing in Oslo or in a small number of other large cities, and few were from the periphery. Their educational level was higher, and salary levels were three times larger for the elites than the populace. Business leaders had on average four times higher salaries than leaders in public sector. The men within the elite study made twice as much as the women on average (Ibid.).

**Ministers of Parliament**

Ministers of Parliament “today are less similar than they used to be in terms of education, occupation and sector affiliation” (Allern et al., 2016, p. 122). An updated, brief review of previous research on social congruence in Norway is presented in Allern et al. (2016, pp. 74-76). The long tradition of studies on political recruitment and elites in Norway dates back to the works of Greve (1953); Valen (1954, 1958, 1966) and Eliassen and Sælen (1971). These studies focused mostly on the candidate selection process and on elected MP’s. The pioneer Stein Rokkan argued for the centrality of political elites and recruitment, because “changing compositions of elites reflects the processes of social and political mobilization, of societal integration, and the establishment of rules for access to positions and resources in a society” (Cotta & Best, 2004, p. 1; Rokkan & Lipset, 1967). Valen studied nominees from the
constituency of Stavanger in the parliamentary elections in 1957 (1966) to find mainly men, between the ages 40 and 65, with high socio-economic status. Previous studies also showed that Norwegian MPs differ from the population at large in terms of the key background variables (gender, age, education and occupation) along the same lines (Eliassen & Marino, 2004; Hellevik, 1969; Matthews & Valen, 1999; Hanne Marthe Narud & Valen, 2000; Valen, 1988). Although resembling a social elite, Norwegian MP’s have showed lower educational levels than most other European legislatures (Cotta & Best, 2004, pp. 497-498).

Studies have also demonstrated that social status matters within the Parliament. Hellevik (1969, p.72) demonstrated a clear tendency for MP’s with higher social status to more often get recruited to positions and committees of high rank than did representatives with lower social status and equal seniority. Within parties, Heidar and Saglie (Heidar, Saglie, & Makt- og, 2002)) showed the same tendency in how party delegates tended to have more exclusive social backgrounds than did party members. To Narud (2011:40-72) a striking new development at the Norwegian Parliament is the introduction of the «young, smart and professional» MP’s that have university degrees and no other professional experiences than «party work», i.e. politics at the local-level or work in the party organizations.

Allern et.al (2016) also note other interesting changes over time. Women have gone from being strongly underrepresented till acquiring fair representation, although there’s not yet gender balance. Middle-aged are still overrepresented, while younger and elderly voter groups are underrepresented. The once overrepresented groups of farmers and self-employed are now underrepresented. Public employees have switched places with the formerly overrepresented group of private sector employed. The main work-experience of MPs are now work for political parties, and their general educational level have risen. As such, «the overall development includes both increased congruence, more exclusiveness, and more changes wherein groups are over- and underrepresented» (Ibid., pp. 75). Their findings from 2016 will be presented and discussed in the discussion chapter.

In comparing the social representativeness of Nordic parliaments, Hanne Marthe Narud and Valen (2000, pp. 102 -105) conclude that the parliaments do not mirror their respective populations in terms of social and demographic composition, there is a clear tendency that the middle class is overrepresented, with corresponding underrepresentation of the lower strata.
In Denmark, MPs are no mirror of the people, but like the case of Norway they are the most resembling of all the elite groups (Christiansen et al., 2001, p. 34; Kjær et al., 2004, pp. 168-171).

**Politicians at the executive branch**

As noted earlier in Chapter 1.1, a study of the characteristics of Norwegian Ministers and State Secretaries was part of the last «Maktutredningen», as part of “political elite”. However, as this study made no distinction within the groups in their research design. We therefore know little more about the politicians in the executive branch other than that taken together with the broader category “political elites”, they are somewhat more representative and alike the population than the other groups of the study.

Narud and Strøm (2011, pp. 232) conclude that for the 15 years prior to 2008 compared to the post-war period – it is a clear trend for key cabinet officials in Norway to have increasingly parliamentary as well as youth party experience, at the expense of experience in subnational executive office and professional expertise. Because Norwegian cabinet members are not required to have any parliamentary experience or a current seat, only half of the cabinet members have had such experience since 1945 – one of the lowest proportions in Western Europe (Hanne Marthe Narud & Strøm, 2011, pp. 228-232). This does however vary some with portfolio saliency, with Prime Ministers, and Ministers of Foreign affairs typically awarded to candidates with extensive parliamentary experience. Ministers of Finance have had strong party credentials. The Minister of Justice have had less political experience at the party level, but more experience at elected office in the subnational level and professional life outside politics. Lighter portfolios are typically awarded younger candidates to project a youthful image. Until recently, in terms of social representation, the characteristics within the ranks of State secretaries – the second to highest ranking political authority in Norwegian ministries, remained unexplored. (Askim et al., 2014). Also for state secretaries, experience from party work seem increasingly important as a qualification. The rising financial support that parties receive from the state have enabled them to hire more people, which in turn extend their “pool of talent” (Hanne Marthe Narud, 2011, p. 868). This has likely affected recruitment on all three levels in this study.

**The warning of decreased accountability**
Pitkins warning of that in this view, increasing correspondence descriptively between voters and elected, could decrease accountability. This sparked a whole debate (Dovi, 2015), in which Mansbridge, Dovi and Phillips have been active participants. To Anne Phillips, Pitkin’s work was initially an inspiration because it “forced us to think more carefully about the meanings we attributed to underrepresentation”, and a foil, because it “seemed so discouragingly critical of descriptive representation” (2012, p. 513). Revisited, Phillips understood that Pitkin wished not to downplay the role of backgrounds, only to stress that substantive representation could not automatically follow from politicians mirroring the electorate.

2.1.2 Pitkin’s concept of political representation

To study descriptive representation, it is crucial to understand its superstructure political representation. I lean on Hanna Pitkin’s classical work «The concept of political representation» (1967) for this understanding. Here, political representation is defined as making present again, the act of making citizens voices, opinions and perspectives present in the public policy-making processes. Such representation happens when political actors speak, advocate, symbolize and act on behalf of others in the political arena. What makes representatives democratic - are that (a) they must be authorized to act; (b) they must act in a way that promotes the interests of the represented; (c) people must have the means to hold their representatives accountable for their actions. These are to Pitkin, the generic features of political representation in constitutional democracy (Urbinati & Warren, 2008, p. 393).

Descriptive representation was one of four central ways in which Pitkin viewed to political representation can be understood. In this way, political representation is understood to be judged after the way the elected compares to the people that voted for them in characteristics such as gender, age, class, educational background. Political representation, again, is for many inherently linked to democracy – but for Pitkin, it seem crucial to detach the two concepts from another to truly understand them (Pitkin, 2004). The democracies of Ancient Greece were participatory and restricted only to male citizens, in excluding women, slaves and barbarians from having a say in how the demos was to be governed. «Representation, at least as a political idea and practice, emerged only in the early modern period and had nothing to do with democracy» (Pitkin, 2004, p. 337). This representation evolved from the English King’s wish to collect additional taxes, for which as, with the Kings collection of taxes needed
This new invention, representative democracy – has proven “extremely resilient” from critique from elite theorists like Michels, Ostrogorski, Mosca and Scmitt and attacks from fascist and communist mass-mobilization between the two World Wars (Caramani, 2017, p. 55). In her critical assessment of representative democracy, Pitkin deems it a substitute, not enactment for popular self-government (pp 340). Pitkin (Ibid.) agree with Hanna Arendt, that “representative government has in fact become oligarchic government” because:

«the age-old distinction between ruler and ruled which the [American and French] Revolution[s] had set out to abolish through the establishment of a republic that had asserted itself; once more, the people are not admitted to the public realm, once more the business of government has become the privilege of the few» (Arendt, 1963, pp. 273, 240)

2.1.3 The relationship between voters and elected

Warren and Castiglione extend on Pitkin’s understanding of the democratic relationship between voters and elected and characterize the relationship in two steps (in Urbinati and Warren (2008, p. 396)):

1. Political representation involves representative X being authorized by constituency Y to act with regard to good Z. Authorization means that there is procedures through which Y selects or directs X with respect to Z. Ultimate responsibility of the actions or decisions of X rests with Y.

2. Political representation involves representative X being held accountable to constituency Y with regard to good Z. Accountability means that X provides, or could provide, an account of his or her decisions or actions to Y with respect to Z, and that Y has a sanction over X with regard to Z.

2.1.4 Legislative recruitment

More countries today than ever before are governed through the principle of representative democracy, that is, governments are drawn from the votes of the people and responsible or accountable to them (Saward, 2010). Legislative recruitment is understood as “the critical step as individuals move from lower levels into parliamentary careers” (Norris, 1997, p. 1). This recruitment process can be analyzed at the following four levels in Norris’ view:

the political system, which structure candidate opportunities in the political-marketplace; the recruitment process, the degree of internal democracy within party organizations and the rules governing the candidate-selection; the supply of candidates willing to pursue elected office, due to their motivation and political capital; and partly, the
demands of gatekeepers (whether voters, party members, financial supporters or political leaders) who select some from the pool of aspirants.

which

For this thesis, I extend Norris’ understanding of recruitment to also include the critical step as individuals move from other occupations in to executive government careers, with or without previous experience from the legislature. Alternative pathways in to political power include the military, bureaucracy and media, but “the experience of elected office remains the most common route in most democracies” (Blondel, 1987, 1995; Norris, 1997, p. 3).

2.1.5 Elites

At the turn of the 20th century, social scientists like Mosca, Pareto, Mischels and Ostrogorski worked under the assumption that the elites were dominating the society.³ (SOU1990:94, 1990, p. 301). Mosca suggested that all societies were divided by a small, ruling elite and the broader masses that lacked any real influence on politics. Michels studied the political parties and found even them to be dominated by a small elite. His iron law of oligarchy states that every organization will inevitability develop into an oligarchy. In more recent times, Robert Dahl and C. Wright Mills have had large, competing influences on our understanding of how political elites are made up and how they act. For C. Wright Mills, the power elite was a cohesive group (Mills, 1971). Dahls study of politics at the local level in New Haven concluded that political power was pluralistically dispersed. No social class or interest group dominated the political sector on any issues. It was easy for political active citizens to penetrate the political stratum. Politicians competing for office would thus be responsive to citizens for electoral payoff. Domhoff are explicit in his critique of Dahl and points to weak research design and wrong conclusions in Dahls work. To Domhoff, the Power Elite did rule New Haven in unisonSOU 1990:44 (1990:355) concludes that there are two camps of the power elite in Sweden – divided between their affiliations to either social or civic/bourgeoisie organization. Denmark: three isolated power elites, with numerous smaller groups that serves to bridge the gaps between them. These elites have gradually become more fragmented in recent years (Christiansen et al., 2001).

³ A comprehensive overview of this literature is given by Gerraint Perry in his book Political Elites (Parry, 2005)
2.2 The Norwegian Context

2.2.1 Institutions, elections, party competition

We expect studies of political representation to differ between electoral systems. Norway is a parliamentary democracy characterized by separation of power in a triangular system. Power is shared by the legislature, the executive government and the judiciary. This thesis is concerned with the MPs of the Parliament as well as the politicians in the executive government, selected to lead the Norwegian Ministries as either cabinet members (Statsråder) or state secretaries\(^4\) (Statssektretærer). The Norwegian Parliamentary Elections takes place every fourth year in a PR-system using a modified Sainte Lagües Method to count mandates. This system produces outcomes in which the two major parties Labour (Arbeiderpartiet) and the Conservative Party (Høyre) alternate in power supported either by formal coalition partners or supporting parties, coalition-governments. Labour enjoyed a long, continuous period of majority governments after the Second World War (WW2) until

The Norwegian Electoral system is characterized by

(Aardal, 2011)

The political-administrative system of Norway is sharply decentralized and rooted in a strong tradition of local government that evolved over several centuries (Hanne Marthe Narud, 2011, p. 847). Nominations in political parties are also highly decentralized, but takes place in a closed list system (Hanne Marthe Narud & Strøm, 2011, p. 212). The only major party that employ a centralized local patronage structure for legislative recruitment is the Progress Party (Fremskrittspartiet). Other parties rely on their local party organizations in each constituency (Fylke/Kommune) to decide themselves on a list of nominees in the election. Partied on the left side of the political spectrum have been eager to implement quotas and other formal techniques to balancing gender, whereas parties on the right have been more reluctant to do this (Hanne Marthe Narud, 2011, p. 847).

2.2.2 The Welfare-state and homogeneity of the populace

\(^4\) State secretaries in Norway are comparable to Junior Ministers in Westminster systems
Some conditions make Norway an unlikely case for finding great discrepancies between voters and elected. The strong legacy of the prolonged Labour Party rule after WW2 continue to uphold a socioeconomic system in Norway characterized by a strong welfare-state and small differences between people. Great redistribution of wealth supports the welfare state through high taxes on income (average) and commodities (15 percent on foods, 25 percent on misc today) as well as for companies combined with huge incomes from the petroleum and gas industries starting from the 1970s.

Economical differences were held in check by the centrally organized annual tariff negations that takes place between unions for workers and unions for employers

Near all of the population finish both secondary and tertiary education in a public educational system. Entering higher education, people have the same chances to enroll in the public university- and university college system regardless of family background that cover of the Norway has no aristocracy
3 Theory and Analytical Framework

Why should we expect increasing disproportion? How can we study this empirically? I will address these two questions in the following chapter. Here, I will lay out the analytical framework for my thesis. The aim of this chapter is to place my contribution within the broader tradition of the discipline, as well as to ground my research questions to what we currently know and what remains unexplained (Ringdal, 2007, p. 446). According to Higley and Moore (2001, p. 177), theorizing on political elites has not kept up with more diversified research and that the absence of a general theory that drives the field is the main challenge that political elite studies confront. In the absence of a general theory, this thesis will test if Putnam’s “law of increasing disproportion” apply to the three levels of top politicians in general. This will be done by testing hypotheses for the each of the following accounts that makes up descriptive representation to Pitkin (1967): gender, age, education, place of origin, work experience, following the lead of previous studies of (Hanne Marthe Narud, 2006, 2011; Hanne Marthe Narud, Heidar, Grønlie, & Svinningen, 2014; Hanne Marthe Narud & Strøm, 2011; Hanne Marthe Narud & Valen, 2000) A key challenge in writing this chapter has been to bridge an updated conception of descriptive representation from recent works in political theory with models and theory on political representation from earlier scholarships that engaged in it with now-outdated democratic theory. Norris evaluate the long-standing criticism that the legislative recruitment process produces socially unrepresentative parliamentary elites. This recruitment process «influence the distribution of power within party organizations, determines the social composition of parliaments, and shapes the pool of leaders eligible for government office» (Norris, 1997, p. 184). Through this recruitment some are mobilized in, and some groups are mobilized out of politics.

3.1 Putnams law of increasing disproportion

Robert D. Putnams seminal synthesis of political elite studies laid out an important finding. When surveying available studies from countries all over the world, Putnam noted that positions of political prominence were held disproportionally by male, educated, high status elite recruits, and that their advantage seemed to increase when moving upwards in the political stratification system (Putnam, 1976, p. 33):
“This law of increasing disproportion seems to apply to nearly every political system; no matter how we measure political and social status, the higher the level of political authority, the greater the representation of high-status social groups”

He observed this phenomenon over various contexts. In the United States Dahl noted how governors tend to come from higher social backgrounds than state legislators – senators higher than the congressmen, and presidents highest of all (Matthews 1954:30, in Putnam 1976:34). In Great Britain – graduates from the elite universities Oxford and Cambridge increased in the same manner, from a less than 1 percent average for the population, by 37 percent for MP’s to 100 percent average for Prime Ministers. Furthermore,

This is the agglutination model, people that share features uncommon in society as a whole, in contrast to an independence model in which citizens have the same odds of entering the elite and thereby reproduce the structure of society (Putnam, 1976, p. 22).

It is, however, not obvious that Putnam’s Law of increasing disproportion will be found in this study in present day Norway. Drawing on comparative studies from Norway and 10 other European countries, Cotta and Best (2004, p. 502) conclude that high status have ceased to be a crucial resource for a political career in Europe and that demands for direct representation by the disadvantaged classes have declined. Putnam find five motivations to study the characteristics of the elites. (Putnam, 1976, pp. 41-44)

According to the parliamentary chain of delegation, MP’s are the principals and Cabinet Members and their Junior Ministers Agents.

With this, I deduct the following hypotheses

H1:  *The Norwegian Cabinet Members will be the most social exclusive, State Secretaries will be more exclusive then MP’s – all differing from the attributes of their electors.*

The degree of divergence varies with ideology: “The more conservative party or regime – the greater the overrepresentation of upper-status social groups” (Putnam, 1976, p. 37). I
therefore expect the social discrepancy to be larger between conservative and leftist governments.

H2a: *Non-socialist cabinets and parliamentary majorities will show more social exclusiveness then will leftist ones.*

### 3.2 Hypotheses

- following Putnam: State secretaries will be more disproportional in terms of social congruence versus the voters than the MP’s. Having even higher positions of political office, Ministers will be most disproportional of all three groups.
- Many State secretaries bypass the regular party channel before recruited, are specialists and will be even more social exclusive than MP’s which most commonly

#### 3.2.1 Gender

In her study of recruitment to the European Parliament, Norris concluded that lack of resources, in particular time, might be the most important explanatory factor for why few women enter politics (1997, p. 230). With the demands of ‘dual careers’ at home and at work, the additional burden of politics might produce «triple carrers» that might prove too much. Like in other Nordic countries, many Norwegian Parties have voluntarily employed gender quotas in efforts to bring more women in to politics. All major parties except for the Conservative Party and the Progress Party operate with these quotas, so we may therefore expect slightly less women recruited to top politics from these parties

#### 3.2.2 Education

Investigating what schools the Elites went to has become standard feature of the national studies of power, and is in particular a key variable in the Power Elite studies of Domhoff. The assumption is that shared experiences from the same school or same studies builds comradeships and networks that the students enjoy later in their careers and in turn affect their opportunities of acquiring leading positions (Gulbrandsen et al., 2002, p. 56). We know that higher education has become more accessible for the public in Norway. Universities are open
to the public, tuition-free. One major business school, BI is private, but the Norwegian State provided cover the tuition as a loan through the Lånekassen-system.

Peculiar to Norway is also “Høgskoler” – College Universities that provide both university level courses and more technical-oriented training. Norway’s education system is not characterized by elite schools such as the case of the France or Britain where elite schools make up important recruitment arenas to business elites (Bauer & Bertin-Mourot, 1999)

**3.2.3 Wealth**

Norway has no traditional aristocracy as Sweden or in the UK. Our Royal Family was «imported» from Denmark in 1905. There are, however some wealthy families descending from successful entrepreneurs within industries such as shipping-, tobacco-, coffee among others. Also, newly superrich include families that control large super-market chains and fisheries. In general – Norway is characterized as land of high equality.

I will try to operationalize the Putnam’s class level through the analysis of wealth as is appear publicly in the Norwegian tax returns. This approach has several weaknesses, that I briefly present below and discuss later. 1. The tax data display funds that are available – If one has more in loans, mortgages, or other deductibles then the wealth is set to zero. Rewards for High Public Office (RHPO) are known to be modest in Norway. Negotiations between civil service unions and the state as an employer determined the salaries of Norwegian top civil servants until 1990 (Lægreid & Roness, 2012, p. 158). This system was characterized by «an egalitarian wage policy, central control, standardization, permanent positions, and standardized salaries» (Ibid.). Among 10 other OECD countries survived in 1991, Norway had the lowest salary level for top civil servants (Lægreid & Roness, 2012; Peters & Hood, 1994). At this point in time, the Norwegian had one of the worlds most contracted salary systems. Introduction of reforms inspired by New Public Management gave devolution and partly privatization of large governmental agencies like Telenor, Statoil, Hydro and Posten.

**3.2.4 Work experience**

A growing body of evidence document that MP’s in Norway increasingly is recruited with party work as their main experience (Hanne Marthe Narud, 2006, 2011)

This trend is evident also for State secretaries (Askim et al., 2014, pp. 242-244) albeit to a lesser degree than for MP’s.
4 Methodology

4.1 On the sample

The positional method determined the sample. Data on all cabinet members, state secretaries, MPs and corresponding population data was gathered for the period from 1945 to 2017 if available. Cabinet members are observed in all cabinet periods across all variables used. MPs likewise, but stop in 2013 before the incumbent Solberg I cabinet. This data stems from Narud Hanne Marthe Narud (2006, 2011); Hanne Marthe Narud et al. (2014); Hanne M Narud and Valen (2008) and Allern et al. (2016) long efforts, and was kindly shared by Rune Karlsen. State secretaries have all observations for gender and age but have not had other biographical data recorded for them. I have therefore supplemented with education variables from the recent survey of political appointed in three cabinets by Askim et al. (2014, 2016). The corresponding population data was accessed through the Statistics Norway webpages (2017) . The data on ascribed characteristics was retrieved from table “10211”, education data from table “09429” and tax data from table 10942 for tax data.

4.1.1 Biographical data

I used “Statsrådsarkivet” and “Statssekretærarkivet” as provided by NSD and Vidar Rolland. I used these two sets as the chassis and later added the needed variables from the “Politikerarkivet” so to enable a comparative analysis with the MPs data. I was sent the entire archive (including information of MPs) by Rolland, but find it easier to access the cabinet members’ entries in this archive through the Parliaments publicly open search engine5. Coding this archive material manually was challenging, and especially for the occupation variables. My initial thought were to code all with their respective work at time of taking office only: If previously cabinet member it would still count as cabinet member if the candidate returned to parliament or vocation outside politics during the gap years. Likewise, cabinet members that were state secretaries or MPs earlier on, but either spent some gap years in other vocations would count as a state secretaries or MPs. This configuration left me with nearly no variation as discussed later, so I added occupation variables in three steps the second time recoding the

5 stortinget.no (Page sin Norwegian)
entire material: one for highest political work experience, one for occupation before taking full-time political office and one for work experiences during formative years.

Appendix (1) reveals that the number of cabinet positions filled by candidates appointed for the first time (N=320) departs from the full number of cabinet positions filled in the period. Table 4.4.2 display actual the appointment rates of cabinet members in Norway (N=691). This far in the history of post-war Norway, it is most common to serve in three or two different cabinet positions if first appointed as a cabinet member. Less than one out of five serve in one position only. In fact, the share of candidates that has held four to ten different cabinet positions taken together - is greater than the proportion of those that held only one position.

Table 4.4.2 Appointment rates of individual cabinet members (n=320) in Norway (1945 -2017)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Times appointed to cabinet</th>
<th>Rate of appointments</th>
<th>Number of CMs appointed</th>
<th>Share of appointment rate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>136</td>
<td>136</td>
<td>19.7 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>164</td>
<td>23.7 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>177</td>
<td>25.6 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>12.7 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>7.2 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>5.2 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>3.0 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>1.3 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>1.4 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sum</td>
<td>320</td>
<td>691</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The appointment and reappointment is therefore important to keep in mind when interpreting the data in the next chapter.

In the next chapter detailed

### 4.1.2 Tax data

I have also gathered tax information on all Norwegian cabinet members, State Secretaries and MP’s incumbent in 2015. Norwegian Tax lists are published annually during the autumn after the processing of all tax settlements has been completed. They are available at skatteetaten.no
as a database for public scrutiny for one year after they are published. The tax lists contain information on the taxpayers name, postcode, birth year, net capital, net income and calculated tax. The tax lists does not contain information on anyone with a blocked address pursuant to the National Registry Act, anyone where the inclusion of information could reveal a client relationship, anyone aged 17 or under at the end of the income year, information on anyone without a permanent residence, or information on deceased people ("Skatteforvaltningsloven," 2016). Other than for these exceptions, it’s not possible to opt out of the lists.

I collected the data in the following way: I first retrieved a list of the names and years of birth for each of the Cabinet members and State Secretaries listed as incumbent in 2015 from the NSD archives. I did not include the ones starting in December 2015 after a reshuffle. I later supplemented the list with names of Norwegian PM’s from the National Assembly’s webpage over current attendees. I then made searches through the portal

Most subjects in the study has unique combinations of given- and family names. In the few instances where subjects shared identical names with two or more others, I could simply identify the right person after their year of birth as reported in the archives. In three instances, subjects had namesakes born in the same year. For two female MP’s, their respective namesakes were registered with residencies in other places, whereas the ones I chose were registered with residency within the counties they represent in the Norwegian Parliament. Most challenging was deciding on which of the namesakes of a state secretary to pick, when both candidates shared birth year and resided in Oslo and the neighboring commune of Oslo respectively. I then turned to a Norwegian search engine of companies (proff.no), upon which a quick search of the name in question identified the Bærum-resident as an owner of an auto dealership and decreased his probability of being the rightful State Secretary over the Oslo resident. One State Secretary proved particularly difficult to find in the tax list database. Only after a google search on his name combined with his birth year revealed his second family-name the person never use.

4.2 Validity

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6 One need to log in with a Norwegian National ID number to enable searching. You may search on a maximum of 500 names each month. Everyone that log in may also see a log of who has retrieved your own personal tax list information.
4.2.1 The biographical data

NSD (2017) hold the biographical data on MPs and cabinet ministers to be of high quality. In this way, two possible sources of errors come in. One is related to manual coding per se, the other is related to the possibility of different interpretations of the given data in the coding process. For the first problem, errors may occur when coding or “punching” the data. The other is more severe, and comes to play whenever two researchers make different interpretations of the same phenomenon. After my first round of coding the biographical material, I revisited Narud et.als codebook and found out they had coded subjects with backgrounds as journalist students under the “Humanities” education field, whereas I had categorized them under the “Other” category. Also, I had coded. Also, deciding on whether to code functionaries “white-collar high” or “white-collar medium” was challenging. Narud et. Al draw the line after responsibilities, in which provided examples on white-collar mediums were nurses, teachers. Equally for white-collar highs were superiors in middle- to large scale public or private units.

4.3 Variables used

4.3.1 Biographical material

Table 4.6.1 Cabinet members 1945 - 2017

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statistic</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>St. Dev.</th>
<th>Min</th>
<th>Max</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Election year</td>
<td>691</td>
<td>1979</td>
<td>19.3</td>
<td>1945</td>
<td>2013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Birth</td>
<td>691</td>
<td>1932</td>
<td>22.4</td>
<td>1885</td>
<td>1984</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Start year</td>
<td>691</td>
<td>1981</td>
<td>19.2</td>
<td>1945</td>
<td>2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>691</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>8.1</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education level</td>
<td>691</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education degree</td>
<td>687</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education field</td>
<td>515</td>
<td>5.9</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Occupation at time of taking office</td>
<td>691</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Formative occupation</td>
<td>691</td>
<td>5.6</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sector at time of taking office</td>
<td>667</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Formative sector</td>
<td>662</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Party work experience</td>
<td>691</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local politics experience</td>
<td>691</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Parliamentary experience 691 0.6 0.5 0 1
Cabinet experience 691 0.5 0.5 0 1
State secretary 691 0.2 0.4 0 1
Political advisor 691 0.1 0.3 0 1

4.3.2 Tax data

The gender and age variables are not used in the later wealth analysis. I included them here as I used the numbers for MPs for those variables to extend the MPs biographical data to include the current Parliament. In Table 4.6.3 below are the descriptive variables. All these variables were gathered simultaneously through the manual process described in Ch.4.4.2.

Table 4.6.3 Descriptives for the tax data

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statistic</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>St. Dev.</th>
<th>Min</th>
<th>Max</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Income</td>
<td>244</td>
<td>866 648</td>
<td>1 001 026</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>15 337 737</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wealth</td>
<td>244</td>
<td>2 899 974</td>
<td>22 694 826</td>
<td>475 193</td>
<td>341 920 670</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tax</td>
<td>244</td>
<td>384 940</td>
<td>640 069</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>7 189 199</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>244</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>244</td>
<td>47.3</td>
<td>10.8</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5 Empirical analyses

All the sampled data is analyzed using the statistical package R [version 3.3.3] (R Core Team, 2017). All graphics are computed with Wickham’s ggplot2 package (2009). The following chapter is structured the three research question I laid out in Chapter 1.2. This chapter will thus focus on group differences (1), differences over time (2) and party-differences (3). Norwegian cabinets chiefly come in three forms, sole Labour-cabinets, coalition-governments by two or three centre-right or right parties or Labour led coalitions (starting with Stoltenberg II (1) in 2005). For practical purposes I operationalize party differences on an aggregated cabinet-level, with regimes as either “socialist” (if it is a Labour- or Labour led cabinet) or “non-socialist” if the cabinets are constituted by other parties than Labour. It is also important to note that the varying sources for the data produce different lengths of the observations, as discussed briefly in chapter 4.1.

5.1 Gender congruence

Norwegian women were severely underrepresented in Norwegian politics for a long time. Fig. 5.1.1 below displays cabinet variations in female representation amongst MPs, state secretaries and cabinet members. It also shows how the gender balance in the respective groups have evolved over time, namely towards greater representation of females. The population column was excluded from the figure due to little variation, with its female share hovering around 51 percent on average, moving from 51.4 percent in 1945 to 50.1 percent today. The leftmost lines in Figure 5.1.1 show how women have steadily gained higher percentages of the seats in Parliament from 1945 to this day. In some cases, the points and accompanied percentages are equal to the preceding ones, which most commonly indicate that there has been recorded new governments within the same parliamentary period. With few exceptions, the line moves to the left and indicate ever higher female representation. Somewhat larger movements are found in the middle lines of state secretaries and the rightmost line of cabinet members. For politicians in the executive, the dashed lines run across their respective smoothed lines at a higher pace, and with larger distances traveled relative to the MPs.
Figure 5.1.1 Gender congruence 1945 – 2017: the proportion of women amongst MPs, state secretaries and cabinet members

Are these movements back and forth for politicians in the executive related to regime changes between socialist and non-socialist cabinets? The regime-type gender differences is displayed in Fig. 5.1.2. First, the figure reveals that efforts to include more females in executive government came later in time for state secretaries than it did for cabinet ministers. No female candidates were named state secretary until the Bratteli I cabinet in 1971. In all preceding cabinets at least one female cabinet member were appointed, but starting from the early 70’s, the share of female cabinet members began to stabilize on 20 percent. Both female shares doubled with the Brundtland II cabinet, which sat a new standard for female representation. Socialist cabinets have since had female shares in the area between 40 percent up to 45 percent

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8 The dashed line runs through the observed shares at times of a new recorded cabinet. The middle, smoothed line runs in between the observations and indicate the aggregated, general trend over time.
for state secretaries and from 41 to 49 for percent for cabinet members. For non-socialist cabinets, the female shares of cabinet members have been close to socialist cabinets, but lower in the Bondevik II cabinet with only 36 percent. Non-socialist female shares lagged somewhat behind for state secretaries initially, but have risen from 16 percent to 32 percent under the current Solberg administration.

![Gender shares (n)](image)

Figure 5.1.2 Gender congruence 1945 – 2017: Gender distribution amongst all appointed state secretaries and cabinet ministers in cabinet periods, after cabinet periods and regime type.

### 5.2 Age congruence

I have split the different groups in to three age groups that makes up three relatively equal shares of the adult population, after the standard provided by Cotta and Best (2004). Figure 5.2.1 below display how the age strata are distributed between the four groups. The young adults of 18 to 30 year olds constitute a sizable portion of the general population, but were seldom recruited to political office, at least in the first half of the recorded cabinet periods. The youngest group are present in a meager four cabinets as cabinet ministers, 15 as state secretaries, while just barely represented in the Parliament. The youngest have had 2 to 4 percent of the seats in Parliament since Borten I (1), but the age group reached a new high in the 1989 and 1993 elections with 8 and 10 percent of the seats. After one parliamentary period with four
percent, the youth share have stabilized in the area of 7 to 10 percent in the last four elections. As the shares of the youngest group have been in steady decline amongst the population since 1981, the age congruence in the MPs have seen an dramatic

At the second glance, state secretaries stand out as the least balanced of the four groups in terms of age groups proportions. Notice how the middle group have continuously squeezed both the younger and elder age groups out of the frame throughout the period. Compared to the three other groups, state secretaries boast fewer of the oldest age group, and near half of the shares of the population in all cabinet periods. For MPs the tide shifted from a majority of the older groups to a majority of the middle age group starting with the Borten II cabinet. Interestingly, this majority of parliament seats was reclaimed by the oldest age group in 2013 with the Solberg- and non-socialist election win.

![Figure 5.2.1](image)

Figure 5.2.1 Age congruence 1945 - 2017: Distribution in different age groups amongst the population, MPs, state secretaries and cabinet ministers after cabinet periods.

These general patterns are traceable also between regimes in Fig. 5.2.2 below. Like by the MPs, the oldest age group have lost the early majority share to the middle age group in the case of cabinet members. Ever since Willoch II (1) have the middle age group been in majority also amongst the MPs. There are somewhat higher shares of the oldest age group in non-socialist
cabinets, but this does not apply for state secretaries to the same extent as for cabinet members. The four cases of young cabinet member recruits are found only in socialist cabinets. Rise in recruitment of the youngest state secretaries and cabinet members seems therefore to happen relatively unattached from periods of high recruitment of MPs. As most seats in Parliament, and most political positions in the executive seem to be reserved for more experienced politicians, we will investigate what type of education-, occupation- and sector backgrounds they have over the next sections.

Figure 5.2.2 Age congruence 1945 - 2017: Percentage shares of different age groups amongst the state secretaries and cabinet members, after regime type.

## 5.3 Education congruence

### 5.3.1 Education level
Since the early 1970’s, the proportion of Norwegian citizens with completed secondary education or with at least some higher education have surpassed the former majority of adults with compulsory schooling as their highest education-level. This trend has since continued, with near two-thirds of the population boasting secondary or higher education under the current Solberg cabinet. In the same period, the shares of low-educated amongst MPs and cabinet members have steadily faded. Figure 5.3.1.1 show that cabinet members have been dominated by highly educated recruits throughout the period, and to a higher degree than that of MPs. There are only three data points for the state secretaries, but these are higher educated than their corresponding cabinet member in two instances, even though they come in larger numbers, and this gives reason to believe that the share of highly educated would be high in previous cabinet periods as well.

Figure 5.3.1.1 Education congruence 1945 – 2017: The education levels of the three classes of politicians and the general population, after cabinet periods.

The differences between MPs and cabinet members are highlighted in Fig. 5.3.1.2 below. All cabinets show shares of highly-educated well above the equivalent shares of MP’s in the same timeframes. The only exception here is the Brundtland II cabinet, which is at par at 50 percent with their contemporary MPs. Repeated numbers by MPs indicate in most instances that there are several recorded cabinets within the same parliamentary period.
Figure 5.3.1.2. Highly-educated MPs and cabinet members 1945 – 2017: Percentage shares of MPs and cabinet members with higher education after cabinet periods.

There are also stark differences between regime-types. As figure 5.3.1.2 shows, of the two regime-types, non-socialist cabinets have been the more dominated by highly educated members throughout the period. Apart from the Bondevik I cabinet, non-socialist cabinets have had more highly educated members than both the preceding- and the later socialist cabinets as a rule. The non-socialist cabinets have mostly had higher education shares above 80 percent since its first turn with Lyng I in 1963, at a time when less than 10 percent of the population had higher education. The two lowest shares at 75 percent came with Korvald I and Bondevik II, notably the two only two non-socialist cabinets recorded without the Conservative Party as a coalition member.
### 5.3.2 Completed degrees

With higher education as a new standard feature amongst top politicians, it is interesting to investigate the length of their studies. Fig. 5.3.2 display recorded degrees amongst the cabinet members with higher education. Most highly educated cabinet members throughout the period have completed a Master’s degree or equivalent (E.g. Cand.Phil.). The Nordli I (2) and Brundtland I cabinets are the only cabinets in which the majority of highly educated cabinet members stand without a completed degree. At least one cabinet member with a Ph.D.-degree (including Mag.art degrees) is present in 9 of the 11 non-socialist cabinets, and 14 of the 20 socialist cabinets recorded. Bachelor degrees or other three year-long studies have risen in importance over the period. This development took a higher pace with the Brundtland II cabinets, at the expense of both non-completed- and Masters degrees. Non-socialist cabinets have not only had larger shares of highly educated, they have also had somewhat longer educated candidates. Except for the Solberg I cabinet, all non-socialist cabinets have had less candidates without completed degrees than both preceding and later socialist governments. The

![Figure 5.3.2. The education levels of cabinet members 1945 – 2017: Levels of education after cabinet period and regime-type.](image)

**5.3.1.2.** The education levels of cabinet members 1945 – 2017: Levels of education after cabinet period and regime-type.
shares of master degrees have generally been larger by the non-socialist cabinets, but this is only true in cabinets after 1981.

Figure 5.3.2 Degrees of highly educated cabinet members 1945 – 2017: shares of acquired degree types, after cabinet period and regime type.

### 5.3.3 Higher education backgrounds

The various types of higher education which the politicians acquire have also varied across time. In this matter, there are important differences between the population and the politicians in the executive, as well as between MPs and politicians in the executive. Comparing Fig.5.3.3 below with Appendix 2, it is evident that educations as law and economics appear in disproportionately high numbers by cabinet members (and MPs) than what is through for the population in the same timeframe. Most notably by the cabinet members is the shift in importance of law, economics and humanities in the early period, towards a later domination of social sciences and teaching studies from 1989 and onwards. Law and economics have remained somewhat stable at a lower level, whereas humanities have nearly disappeared in this later period. Teaching studies have been disproportionately popular by the MPs, such candidates were first introduced with Brundtland II in greater numbers (4). The high number of agriculture students by some non-socialist governments are comes mainly from the Centre-
party candidates, and business (and administration) studies have become increasingly popular over the last period, in particular by non-socialist cabinets.

5.4 Work experience

What are the work experiences cabinet members bring in to office? Allern et al. (2016) noted that their operationalization of occupational backgrounds as the position held at the first time of appointment to the Parliament, may have discriminated against important vocations the
politicians held at earlier stages in their careers. To circumvent this, I measure cabinet members work experiences in three ways: at time of appointment to their first full-time political office; the highest full-time political vocation they held prior to appointment as cabinet members; and lastly, the occupation they held during formative years of their careers.

Fig. 5.4.1 show the occupations of MPs and cabinet members at time of taking office.

Figure 5.4.1 Occupational backgrounds of MP’s and Cabinet Members 1945 – 2017: at time of taking office, after cabinet periods and regime-type.

There are however important limitations to this approach above. In the majority of cases, cabinet members had spent up to several years in between their recorded occupation at the time of appointment (as recorded above) and to their recorded appointment, pursuing a full-time professional career in politics. Fig. 5.4.2 display the highest recorded professional political
work the candidates had been pursuing upon being appointed as cabinet members. The six types of professional political work are arranged on a scale from the least, to the most relevant experience for becoming a cabinet member – from no prior paid political work to have had an actual previous experience as a cabinet member. These six levels work as funnel. In this way, candidates might qualify for several of the categories, but only the highest form of political office is counted. In example, prior state secretaries that later become cabinet members are only recorded as state secretaries in their first appointment, the eventual second time around, they are recorded as prior cabinet members. Candidates that have not previously been state secretaries or cabinet members but MPs, are recorded as MPs, and so forth. A total of 70 percent of the cabinet members have in fact backgrounds from local politics, and 50 percent of have been elected to Parliament, as Appendix 1 show.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>No political work</th>
<th>Elected official on kommunal county level</th>
<th>Party organization at local/regional/national level</th>
<th>State secretaries</th>
<th>MPs</th>
<th>Cabinet members</th>
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<td></td>
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<td>32(7)</td>
<td>23(5)</td>
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<td>Gerhardsen II (2)</td>
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<td>94(15)</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teo (1)</td>
<td>15(3)</td>
<td>15(3)</td>
<td>6(1)</td>
<td>53(13)</td>
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<tr>
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<td>6(1)</td>
<td>94(15)</td>
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<td>11(2)</td>
<td>43(10)</td>
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<td>13(8)</td>
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<td>19(3)</td>
<td></td>
<td>35(8)</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
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<td>18(6)</td>
<td></td>
<td>62(10)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Norwegian Cabinets (1905—2017)</td>
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<td>23(5)</td>
<td></td>
<td>47(9)</td>
<td></td>
<td>12(2)</td>
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<td>Willoch I</td>
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<td></td>
<td>58(11)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td></td>
<td>58(11)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Breim I</td>
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<td>14(3)</td>
<td></td>
<td>10(2)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Breim II</td>
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<td>14(3)</td>
<td></td>
<td>10(2)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Srikel I</td>
<td>11(2)</td>
<td>21(4)</td>
<td></td>
<td>11(2)</td>
<td></td>
<td>21(4)</td>
</tr>
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<td>21(4)</td>
<td></td>
<td>11(2)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stoltenberg I</td>
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<td></td>
<td>47(14)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stoltenberg II</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>27(8)</td>
<td></td>
<td>47(14)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Paid political work shares
In this way, Fig. 5.4.2 give important corrections to an impression from Fig. 5.4.1 that cabinet members are commonly drawn straight from the ranks of lesser tier white-collar occupations. In half of the cases, as discussed briefly above and in chapter 4.1, cabinet members were previously working as MPs members. Rather unsurprisingly; this effect is largest in sequential cabinets, evident in new cabinets that are somewhat close in time to a previous cabinet in the same regime\(^9\) and lowest in cabinets that follow cabinets of a different regime-type. In cases of new cabinets breaking a prolonged period of governance by the adverse regime-type, MP’s overtakes cabinet members as the majority picks\(^10\) - but this effect is smaller for socialist cabinets (only two cases, Bratteli I and Brundtland II). After the same pattern, other political occupation backgrounds as experience from the different party organization levels and elected officials on communal or county level rise in importance in cabinets under new regimes.

Least frequent of the categories are the politically inexperienced, those that have not pursued politics full-time in the above-mentioned manner. They appear in 15 of the cabinets, of which the Jagland I cabinet lead the statistic with 17 percent and 4 members – and are gone in all sequential cabinets except for Gerhardsen III (2). Finally, 20 percent of the 321 individual cabinet members were state secretaries prior to their appointment. This trend has increased steadily over the years, and is likely to continue growing.

\(^9\) Eg. Gerhardsen III (1), Gerhardsen IV, Borten I (1), Nordli I (1), Brundtland I, Jagland I

\(^10\) Eg. Lyng I, Willoch I, Bondevik I, Solberg I
I also sat out to find what cabinet members had been doing in their formative years before their appointment. Fig. 5.4.3 display cabinet members occupation backgrounds measured both at time of appointment to political office and in formative years of their career. Measured this way, white-collar highs lose out dramatically compared to the more recent occupation at the left in the figure. Most cabinet members start their careers in more modest occupation as either white-collar mediums or –lower (lesser tier). In the formative years of their career, a higher share of cabinet members have had their main occupations as manual workers or within the primary industries (fishing, farming and forestry). This effect is evident in all cabinets but seven, of which five are non-socialist. This stronger presence of primary industries and manual workers is highest in the five first cabinets after the 1945, but stable after that. The Progress party boasts a lot of formative primary industry-candidates to the Solberg I cabinet. Had it not been for this, would there also been an evident effect somewhat similar to that of education, in which configurations of cabinets including the Conservative Party give lower shares of primary industry and manual workers, than do other non-socialist cabinets. The general and relative decline in primary industries and manual labor reflect the developments in the broader society,
in which efficiency gains combined with economic restructuring has taken away most of these jobs.

5.5 Sector

Are cabinet members only recruited from public sector? If measured on actual time of appointment, including political office as shown in Fig. 5.4.2 above, the answer is yes. The corresponding sector background to occupation before political appointments and formative years are discussed in this section. Sector backgrounds for MPs and cabinet ministers at time of appointment is shown in the Fig. 5.5.2 below. The public-sector share is greatest of the three for cabinet members in most of the cabinet periods, and for all MPs after the Willoch II (2) cabinet. Before 1985, private sector recruits made up the majority of MPs in all through all periods. Initially, Private sector recruits were only in majority by cabinet member in the Lyng I and the two Borten cabinets – but have reclaimed the majority position in the four latest cabinets. Organization shares have steadily risen for MPs, from only around 5 percent in the first five post WW2 Parliaments, via 10-12 percent until 1989 and finally 21 to the sitting 29 percent today. The organization-sector recruits by the cabinet members have moved at a higher pace. With relatively high numbers until the Borten cabinets, this group rose in importance with Brundtland II and consecutive cabinets, with a slight dip in Bondevik II and Stoltenberg II cabinets.
It is also interesting to investigate if there are possible variations for cabinet members between the two recorded sector variables and between regime-types. Sector background for cabinet minister in the formative years as shown in both figures (above and below), and compared in Fig. 5.5.2 below. Organization background are more present at time of appointment, but not in the Gerhardsen- and III and IV cabinets, the two Borten cabinets as well as the Bondevik II cabinet. Public and private sector shares seems to move without any particular patterns in both figures.
Wealth

By now, we know that politicians are better educated. As an alternative way to operationalize high status, I introduce an empirical investigation of wealth. In table 6.1 below the mean values for the tax data is displayed. Cabinet ministers have unsurprisingly the highest mean salary, but have rather interestingly the lowest mean reported wealth of the three groups of politicians. Why is it so?

Table 6.1. Mean values

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Cabinet members</th>
<th>State secretaries</th>
<th>MPs</th>
<th>Population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Income (NOK)</td>
<td>1 109 193</td>
<td>775 885</td>
<td>729 702,3</td>
<td>370 740</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 5.5.2. Sector backgrounds of cabinet members 1945 – 2017: Formative sector backgrounds of cabinet member (position held longest before taking office)
<p>| | | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wealth (NOK)</td>
<td>411 887</td>
<td>1 733 540</td>
<td>1 053 922 9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tax (NOK)</td>
<td>450 593.6</td>
<td>371 681</td>
<td>284 201.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>54.2</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>56.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Females (%)</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>n</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>165</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4 059 909</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Boxplots are helpful for mapping distributions of data. A boxplot split the observed values in four equal shares or quartiles. The middle line shows the median, and the two quartiles closest to the median. Since the data is censored for all groups but the population, the boxes of politicians show their median and bottom two quartiles at 0, as most observed politicians report 0 in wealth after deductions. Visible in the left pane are the dots of the richest quartiles. The small boxes here are the same as the ones in the left column, only displayed in a scale that fits all observations. The reason for the large distances between the outliers and the bulk of the observations are the disproportionate wealth of the richest. The topmost observation of MPs is recorded with almost 320 000 000 NOK. Excluding this observation only, the mean wealth of MPs drop with 135 000 NOK. This approach therefore has two important weaknesses, high inflation hazard of observations and the earlier mentioned censoring problem.

Nevertheless, the right pane show that the 75 percent quartile (upper box) of state secretaries reaches the highest of the four groups, up to just under 1 500 000 NOK. As there are 45 state secretaries recorded in total, this points to the fact that the 11 richest state secretaries have more wealth than 1.5 million NOK, and the second richest state secretaries (12 to 23 in order) place between 0 and 1.5 million. Likewise, the richest 41 MPs place from around 800 000 NOK up to the largest outlier of 320 million. The 4 richest cabinet members are traceable with dots also in the right pane, placing from around 250 000 to 2 million NOK.
Figure 5.6.1 Wealth congruence 2015: distribution of wealth amongst the population, MPs, state secretaries and cabinet ministers (in Norwegian Kroner). Left: complete observations, right: 95 percent of the recorded values.

Fig. 5.6.2 display two boxplots for income in the same fashion. Here, cabinet ministers are visible only from the median and down in the right pane. Except for seven outliers (or whiskers) by the MPs and one by the state secretaries, all cabinet member earns well above the other groups. The population is out of the picture in the right pane, but visible in the left at around 400 000 NOK. These are computed averages of all the adult age groups above 25.
Figure 5.6.2 Income congruence 2015: distribution of income amongst the population, MPs, state secretaries and cabinet ministers (in Norwegian Kroner). Left: complete observations, right: 95 percent of the recorded values.
6 Discussion and conclusion

In this chapter I will discuss my findings considering theory and considering empirical investigations conducted in other places.

6.1 Representation of ascribed characteristics: Gender and age

Ascribed, or given characteristics, are often highly visible and thus easily detectable for the observer. It should not come as a surprise for most people interested in politics that politicians are more often male than female, more often middle-aged than young or old, even in the case of Norway. How these characteristics vary between groups, over time, and between parties are however not detectable at the blink of an eye. Here I discuss the findings considering prescribed theory and comparable findings from the literature.

First, females makes up half of the adult population but are not equally represented in executive government. Although the long-time trend shows a dramatic rise towards equal representation – men are still overrepresented by points in the last three cabinets and points for state secretaries. Secondly, young adults under 31 are almost not to be found in the analysis of gender showed interesting finding that stat. This trend has been visible and acknowledged by the public. It is however interesting to document how female representation lagged the other groups so long for state secretaries. Today, there are little differences between the three groups of politicians in their female shares, and between cabinet times. This finding falsifies the hypothesis. The analysis of age congruence demonstrated a clear overrepresentation of middle-aged groups for all groups over all cabinet periods, but also a somewhat increased youth share in the recent 30 years at the expense of the two older age strata, except for by cabinet members. There have been large variations between regimes, but these are not substantial in the last cabinets.

6.2 Representation of achieved characteristics

Narud et.al (2014) conclusion in their survey of descriptive representation by MPs was that representation has become better over time, whereas representation for ascribed characteristics have worsened. Shares of higher education have risen steadily throughout the whole period, but
at a higher pace by top politicians. Politicians in the executive also graduate with higher degrees in larger shares than do MPs and the population. Elite education backgrounds like law and economics have been much more visible amongst cabinet ministers than by MPs and the population. Also, the high number of cabinet members with agrarian study backgrounds reflect the traditional and strong position of Norwegian farmers in Norwegian politics.

In terms of occupation backgrounds, this thesis disprove the popular conception that all politicians are “broilers” (Hanne M Narud & Valen, 2008) most have made their early work experiences working alongside regular people in normal jobs. Later, however, most cabinet members acquire leading white-collar jobs in the all sectors, and many become state secretaries supplemented for the majority with elected to political council on the local level before starting their professional political career at the national level. For primary industries, the strong organized interests around agriculture and fisheries in Norway have mobilized disproportionate numbers of farmers and fishermen compared to European parliaments (Eliassen & Marino, 2004, p. 324; Hanne Marthe Narud, 2011, p. 857). This is evident also for cabinet members.

Until 1952 all Cabinet members were obliged to live in their constituencies. Eliassen and Marino (Eliassen & Marino, 2004) (2004) hold this as an important explanation factor for Norway’s high share of MPs with experiences from local politics. As background from local politics have become a new standard for politicians, in light of Mill (Christophersen, 1969, pp. 38-43) – they all now seemingly move through “the party school” - which fits with his thoughts that politicians ought to be trained specialists to dealt with politics.

6.2.1 Geographical representation

One of the most important properties of political representation that this thesis has left untouched, is geographical representation. Narud (2001, pp.161) notes that geographical tensions is one of the few legitimate reasons for representatives in the Storting to deviate from their party lines on particular matters (see Bjurulf & Glans, 1976; Rommetvedt, 1991; Schaffer, 1998). Examples on such cases can be questions of particular interest to the periphery in Norway, like the recent. On the executive level, the Minister of Fisheries most commonly originate the West or North of Norway where the bulk of fishing takes place.
From the formation of the Constituent Assembly in 1814 and the following establishment of Norway’s own Parliament 1814-1815, efforts were made to create and sustain a balance between urban and rural parts of Norway in strengthening the local elites and maintaining a strong cleavage between towns and the countryside (Eliassen, Pedersen, & Kjær, 2004, p. 341). Two institutional arrangements became instrumental in this, namely the “Farmer’s Clause” (Bondeparagrafen) that required the ratio between city- and rural representatives to be 1:2, and the residency requirement (Bostadsbånd) that allowed nominations for candidates living in the respective constituencies. Both these laws were abolished in 1952. The lifting of the residency requirement of Norway in 1952 enabled prospective candidates to be nominated in constituencies they had little or no connection to but perceived higher chances of winning a seat (Eliassen et al., 2004). In the international literature, this phenomenon is termed “parachutage” (Kjær et al., 2004, p. 54). This conflicts the wish of geographically dispersed representation and makes it harder for peripheral candidates to get nominated. Future research should also investigate if geography matters also on the executive level. There are good reasons to investigate if State secretaries are drawn “proportionally” from all parts of the country or are dominated by candidates that are born and raised in the largest cities or around the capital of Oslo.

6.3 Outliers and influential cases

Brundtland II cabinet have been an influential case over several variables. As it were the first cabinet to include a high share of females, this likely turned down the education share – as females (at the time) lagged males in higher education. The wealth analysis was particularly prone to influential cases. As all variation equally for this variable, it was not possible to exclude outliers. Two possible solutions that could have potentially mediated this problem would be to weigh groups after number of valid (>0) observation or access uncensored data that allowed for debt as well, like by the population.

6.4 Conclusion

The aim of this thesis was to map the characteristics of politicians in the executive government and compare them to those of MPs and the general population. The following answers are given to the research question: Cabinet members and state secretaries are
-These findings harmonize with other national and international findings to a certain degree. By the standard account, after Putnam’s Law of increasing disproportion, cabinet members are excepted to be of be more elitist than their subordinates, the state secretaries. This account is not supported for the ascribed characteristics, but somewhat present for acquired characteristics.

As this study include all appointed cabinet members after 1945, thus the whole population of cabinet members, it is possible to generalize these findings also for future Norwegian cabinet members. The theoretical assumptions, Putnam’s Law of increasing disproportion seem less relevant today, but still apply in how top politicians acquire top educations. This is in line with Putnams “Law of increasing disproportion” but maybe counter to popular belief both domestically in Norway and abroad. Although Norway are, by international standards, with long traditions for it - highly egalitarian and democratic, our rulers have clear elitist characteristics.

In sum, the differences between the variations between the groups – and the explanations for these patterns might seem to point back at the respective recruitment structures. Of the three groups, MPs are subject to the most open recruitment process. The selection of cabinet members take place in a closed process, but the outfall off the process is subject to public scrutiny. State secretaries are also recruited behind closed doors, but with little public scrutiny. Therefore, there are likely to be other considerations than balancing gender and age groups when selecting these. More likely is consideration like completing the respective cabinet members’ strengths and weaknesses, technical or political – related competencies and so forth.
Litterature


Skatteforsvantsloven, (2016).


Appendix 1

Descriptive statistics for first-time appointed cabinet members

<table>
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<th>Statistic</th>
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<th>Max</th>
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<td>NA</td>
<td>1945</td>
<td>2013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year of birth</td>
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<td>1935</td>
<td>22.5</td>
<td>1885</td>
<td>1984</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Start year</td>
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<td>1982.9</td>
<td>19.3</td>
<td>1945</td>
<td>2016</td>
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<tr>
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<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parliament exp.</td>
<td>321</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>0.5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cabinet exp.</td>
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<tr>
<td>State secretary</td>
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</tr>
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</table>
Figure 5.3.1.2 Education congruence 1945 – 2017: Majors amongst highly educated in the population, MPs, state secretaries and cabinet members, after cabinets and regime type. **Important note:** Law is combined with social science for the population column, and the “Humanities” and “Other” categories lack for the MPs.