Abstract

Political activation and apprenticeships are claimed to play an important role in the recruitment process of future politicians. Both the upbringing in a political family and political motivation can activate citizens towards politics, whilst citizens can also learn politics in their political networks. The paper comparatively describes these phases in the recruitment process of local councillors in Europe. In doing so it builds upon a large dataset that originated from a European comparative research project (MAELG). The empirical data are interpreted along the lines of the concept of professionalization, distinguishing between ideal-typical laymen and professional councillors.

Generally, layman-principles tend to prevail in the activation-phase: most local councillors in Europe have grown up in a non-political family, and engaged into politics on the base of citizen duty and/or interests in specific policy issues or a general interest in politics. In the phase of apprenticeships, however, professionalization seems to be the dominating principle. The majority of the European local councillors was a party member before competing for office, whilst also half of them has more than five years of experience in his mandate. Yet a considerable degree of variation between the countries emerged, with some of this variance being accounted for by the local government type in place.

Furthermore the paper addresses the relevance of both phases for the wider recruitment process. Activation and apprenticeships don’t seem to systematically relate to each other, albeit some items (especially motivations) do tend to accord. Furthermore, both seem to provide the opportunity to overcome certain social background effects whilst partly influencing the phase of gatekeeping and the political career also.

Keywords: activation, apprenticeship, political recruitment, local councillor, Europe
The Recruitment of Local Councillors in Europe through a Comparative Glass

It is widely acknowledged that citizens don’t drift naturally in politics, nor that some are predestined to do so. In their passage to power most politicians can rely on and benefit from a favourable social background, the upbringing in a political family, different motivations and/or political and associational networks with their inherent preferences (Prewitt, 1970; Budge & Farlie, 1975; Norris, 1997). These elements are all intertwined aspects of political recruitment, ‘the process by which citizens are mobilized into politics’ (Brady, Schlozman and Verba, 1999: 153), designed by the interplay of a supply of willing candidates and the demands of established actors (Eliassen & Pedersen, 1978; Meadowcroft, 2001).

In modern representative democracies the recruitment of political elites ‘constitutes a crucial link between citizens and politicians’ (Aars & Offerdal, 1998: 210). The importance of political recruitment is reflected in a substantial body of literature (Jacob, 1962; Levine & Hyde, 1977). Recruitment studies aim to offer an answer to the question ‘who enters politics, when, and how?’ (Patzelt, 1999: 239). However, most recruitment studies opt for a single-country approach, leading to a fragmented view on recruitment in Europe (Patzelt, 1999). The study of Cotta and Best (2000) met the need for systematic comparative research focussing on the recruitment of national MPs in several European countries based on a standardized method of data collection. In ‘The European Mayor’ (2006) Bäck and his colleagues addressed the local level, comparatively scrutinizing the recruitment of mayors in Europe. Yet, the local councillor level remained underexposed. This paper will try to fill (a part of) this gap by focussing on two specific elements in the recruitment process of local councillors in Europe: the activation and apprenticeships. Both elements fit within Norris’ integrative theory of political recruitment (1997) which will be used as the framework for analysing the data in the paper at hand. Whilst ‘activation’ refers to the more passive combination of motivation and primary socialization through family life, the ‘apprenticeships’ reflect the more active acquiescence of political skills in networks from political life.

In mapping out the activation and apprenticeships of local councillors in Europe, the paper will take both a descriptive and an explanatory approach. First it will present a general assessment of the matter in a comparative perspective, overcoming ‘the ‘patchwork approach’ that has marked so much of European recruitment research both geographically and conceptually’ (Patzelt, 1999: 265). Additionally, turning to the process-like nature of political recruitment, the paper will scrutinize the wider relevance and meaning of activation and apprenticeships (1) for each other and (2) for the recruitment process as a whole. First, we will wonder whether – and to what extent – activation and apprenticeships relate to each other. Second, we will seek to clarify the structural meaning of activation and apprenticeships for the process of political recruitment: to what extent do they relate to local councillors’ social background and the proceeding recruitment step in Norris’ model, the phase of gatekeeping, and the political career itself?
We will use the notion of professionalization as guiding concept to organize our data and findings, distinguishing an ideal-typical layman from a professionalized councillor. Since professionalization is claimed to occur in most Western societies across all political levels, it very much suits the comparative research design of the paper (Eliassen & Pedersen, 1978; Fox & Lawless, 2005). The concept of a ‘professional politician’ originates from Weber’s distinction between politics as an ‘avocation’ (the amateur who lives for politics) and politics as a ‘vocation’ (the professional who lives off politics) (Eliassen & Pedersen, 1978). The former notion served as the benchmark for traditional representative (local) democracies – with laymen acting on behalf of the people forming the base of democratic government (Mouritzen & Svara, 2002). However, due to evolutions in the context of local politics (e.g. local governance with its increasing complexity of decision-making) the classic principles of representative democracies (voluntarism, legal equality of all councillors and amateurism) have gradually been given up and the principle of professionalization increasingly gained ground (Guérin & Kerrouche, 2008). Professionalization implies both a social and a political component (Cotta & Best, 2000). On a social level, it refers to the growing selectivity of councillors in terms of education, profession and other social background characteristics. The political aspect relates to the growing impact of political parties in the recruitment process (Eliassen & Pedersen, 1978). Since it is almost impossible to present an exact definition of the concept, some concrete indicators and conditions must be proposed (Guérin & Kerrouche, 2008). This is why we will discern some concrete activation modes and apprenticeship paths that theoretically correspond to the ideal-type of the professional politician from others who will be grouped under the heading of the traditional layman or amateur. Hence, our main focus will be on political professionalization. Both the concepts of activation and apprenticeship, their function in the wider process of political recruitment and the implication of the professionalization process for both will be elucidated in the following theoretical section.

The data used in the paper were collected via a survey of the comparative European research project ‘Municipal Assemblies in European Local Governance’ (www.maelg.eu) which includes 16 European countries. Each country sent out a standard questionnaire to a representative selection of local councillors. Ultimately, a total response of 11,961 councillors was obtained. Although this huge sample allows to generalize much of the empirical findings and provides unique comparative material, some qualifications to the method have to be made. First, our survey exclusively addressed elected councillors. This narrows the scope of the recruitment study since candidates failing to take the ultimate step in the process are excluded from the analysis (Rallings et al., 2010). Similarly, focusing on the supply-side of the process excludes the opinions and motives of the established actors in the recruitment process as well. Second, the data represent auto-evaluations from the councillors. As such a degree of subjectivity, social desirability and other distortions (e.g. due to time or experience in office) can influence response. Third, the synchronic nature of our data permits to discuss and classify the activation and apprenticeships of our respondents in ideal-typical laymen
and/or professionals categories but does not allow to assess the trend or evolution in the professionalization of the local mandate.

**Delineating and Conceptualizing Activation and Apprenticeships**

Given its gradual and often perennial nature, political recruitment can be studied from different angles. However, one element most studies have in common is the process-like conception of political recruitment (Jacob, 1962; Prewitt, 1970; Budge & Farlie, 1975). The idea of several intertwined factors ultimately leading in a funnel-like process to political office became widely shared, whilst the combination of resources and motivations in it generated special attention (Aars & Offerdal, 1998). According to Patzelt (1999), the integrative power of Norris’ theoretical framework of ‘supply-and-demand’ makes it the most likely main paradigm for recruitment studies, especially those with a comparative design. The model of Norris (1997) consists of four basic steps, starting with the supply of candidates. Citizen’s social background and political capital provide them with the required resources as an eligible. When these resources graft upon the motivation to run for office, a supply of aspirants takes shape. Second, the aspirants have to meet the standards and criteria of those selecting them in order to figure on the ballot paper (the demand-side). The third step is taken when the voters choose which candidates will take the ultimate step to office. Finally, this process unfolds within a given political and party system (the structure of opportunities) which has considerable influence upon the recruitment process.

**Figure 1. The Process of Political Recruitment**

![Diagram](ResultantDiagram.png)

(Based on: Norris, 1997)
In this paper we will focus on the activation and apprenticeships of local councillors, two specific elements of the initial phase of the recruitment process that – intermingled with social background characteristics – can further or impinge on eligibles’ odds to develop into an aspirant politician. Both will be conceptualized in terms of the professionalization continuum which fluctuates between the ideal-types ‘layman’ and ‘professional’.

**Political Family**

First, acquiring political capital in early family life can serve as an important political resource in the recruitment process. It can compensate for or add up to the social background effect – with the latter disproportionally advantaging a certain group of people in the race for office. As such family life acts as the primary agent of political socialization (Eulau, 1964; Braud, 1996). Moreover, it also affects later stages of the recruitment process, facilitating and advancing the career of candidates from a politicized family (Van Lieffering & Steyvers, 2008). According to Fox and Lawless (2005: 653), ‘early political exposure generates lasting effects that are independent and cannot be entirely compensated for by being politically active as an adult’. Growing up in a political family is likely to activate citizens towards politics in a double way (Prewitt, 1970). First, mandates can (indirectly) be passed on from a political active family member to another, resulting in the so-called political dynasties. Besides, family also activates political capital by exposing people to political information and stimuli, inciting an interest in or passion for politics. In our design, coming from a ‘political family’\(^1\) will stand for the professional model of recruitment as it furthers the odds for people with a politicized background (partly) to the detriment of laymen who cannot profit from this steppingstone.

**Political Motivation**

Having a political family, however, isn’t the only way eligibles are activated towards politics. Norris (1997) pointed to the motivation underpinning the initial decision to run for office as an essential prerequisite in the recruitment process as well. Fox and Lawless (2005: 643) label this type of political motivation the ‘nascent ambition, the embryonic or potential interest in office seeking that precedes the actual decision to enter a specific political contest’. Eligibles may not only build upon a favourable social background and/or upbringing in a political environment, they have to be willing to engage in politics also. Surprisingly, an individual’s motivation prior to his actual recruitment has not often been studied in a systematic way (Black, 1972; Patzelt, 1999; Fox & Lawless, 2005; Maestas et al., 2006). Yet, it is an important aspect to consider in recruitment analyses, since ‘ambition lies at the heart of politics’ (Schlesinger, 1966: 1).

Traditionally, there are three ways to study political ambition or motivation (Meadowcroft, 2001). The first way is to follow into the footsteps of Schlesinger, the founding father of the

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\(^{1}\) Original question: ‘In the two last generations, were any of your close relatives elected for a political function? Yes/No’, (N=11.724).
ambition theory (Black, 1972; Levine & Hyde, 1977; Aars & Offerdal, 1998). He argued that potential candidates are rational ‘office seekers’ who adjust their actions to the changing circumstances of the recruitment pattern in order to seek personal benefits. Consequently, they gradually develop the ambition that matches the demands of the pursued political office. The second way is to apply the social psychology model developed by Laswell (1948). This model portrays the politician as a special kind of personality, the ‘homo politicus’, who is driven by the quest for power and status. Both approaches, however, have been criticized for their lack of empirical underpinning. Hence, a third way to study ambition came to life. The inductive or empirical school simply asked candidates in person to assess their nascent ambition. This allows to conceptualize ‘political motivation’ in an empirically measurable way. On the downside, this approach seems particularly prone to the distortions mentioned at the outset of the paper (e.g. social desirability, time effects). Still, Schlozman, Verba and Brady (1995) argue it is the most appropriate method if it is used carefully and accompanied by methodological elucidation.

Similar to the socialization in a political family, political motivation has a strong relation with the process of professionalization (Black, 1970). In order to conceptualize the motivations according to the layman-professional typology, we will apply some theoretical insights from the vast body of research from the empirical school. Four concrete motivations will be subsumed on the base of two broad distinctions found in the literature. First, Aars and Offerdal (1998: 224) discerned a general career motive from the metaphor of conscription. This categorization can be linked to the work of Eulau et al. (1961) who discerned the self-centered motives from their altruistic counterparts. Schlozman, Verba and Brady (1995: 7) affirmed this claim: ‘There is a significant difference between citizens whose activity is motivated by a desire to further their careers (...) and those whose gratification emanates from the feeling of having helped others or having made the community a better place to live.’ We phrased these motives as ‘citizen duty’ and ‘political career’, with the former referring to the layman-ideal and the latter representing the professional councillor. The second distinction contrasts instrumental motives from their ideological counterparts. Whereas some eligibles display an interest in a ‘specific policy issue’ and run for office just to influence this issue, others engage in politics based on a ‘general interest’ or ideological drive (Rosenzweig, 1957; Fox & Lawless, 2005). We argue that traditional laymen will rather engage with a specific policy issue in mind, whilst a general interest in politics corresponds to the professional councillor. We asked our respondents to indicate the initial importance of each motivation, resulting in a theoretical continuum of professionalization\(^2\). ‘Citizen duty’ then represents the layman ideal and ‘political career’ incorporates the ultimate professional ambition, with ‘specific issues’ and ‘general interest’ taking positions in between.

\(^2\) Original question: ‘When you first accepted to become a candidate, how important were the following reasons? It is a citizen duty to engage oneself in municipal affairs; As a councillor I have the opportunity to influence specific issues; General interest in politics; It is an opportunity to enter into a political career’; scores from 0 (not important at all) to 4 (of utmost importance), (N=11.644, 11.599, 11.685, 11.528).
Apprenticeships
People may be socialized in a political family or display a strong motivation to run for office, it still doesn’t make them the perfect candidates. Besides being activated towards politics, eligibles can actively acquire the necessary political capital on a deliberative base via political apprenticeships (Prewitt, 1970). ‘Apprenticeship’ in this context refers to the membership of associational life acting as secondary political socialization agents. Although there are no formal schools in which to learn politics, certain organizations can assume the role of informal training school (Kjaer, 2006). They complement or compensate for the political capital acquired in the family environment and steer the candidate to political office.

The learning mechanism of associational life works in a double way (Moyser & Parry, 1986). On the one hand, eligibles acquire organizational and communicative skills which are indispensable for a political mandate during their work in the associations. On the other hand, associations provide them the perfect opportunities to build or expand personal and political networks. Whereas social background, family and motivations pave the way to office, associations are claimed to be the highroads (Balme, 1989). Afterwards, associations keep playing an important role in the political life of councillors by acting as information channels of societal life and forming the electoral base for future elections (Moss & Parker, 1967).

One special channel of the associational life is the (national) political party, which increasingly takes a grasp on local politics as well (Copus, 2004). Membership of a political party is often considered to be the perfect steppingstone towards a political mandate (Prewitt, 1970; Moyser & Parry, 1986; Lazarus, 2007). Since professional councillors are often recruited amongst the party ranks (Meadowcroft, 2001), ‘party membership’ is the prominent conceptualisation of ‘apprenticeship’ in terms of professionalization. Besides, another important apprenticeship is ‘political experience’ gained during time in office. According to Lazarus (2007: 187) ‘experience challengers consistently do better when contesting elections than amateurs’. In terms of professionalization, laymen are competing for their first mandate, whilst professionals can benefit from their apprenticeship in preceding mandate(s).

Structure of Opportunities
In her model, Norris (1997) claimed that the process of political recruitment doesn’t develop in an institutional vacuum. On the contrary, the wider political context substantially impacts on recruitment. The comparative nature of our study allows us to select the country-type as an

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3 Dummy variable (N=11.038) constructed by the authors based on scores on the question ‘For how many years have you been a councillor in total?’ (N=11.619) abstracted from scores on the question ‘When did you first become a party member?’ (N=11.323), value 1: councillors who were member of a national party before their first mandate as a councillor, N=8895 or 80.6%. In further analyses, this item will be refined by adding the variable ‘experience in the party organization’ as indicator for professionalization through the party ranks.

4 Dummy variable based on the question: ‘For how many years have you been a councillor in total?’, value 1: > 5 years, N=5936 or 51.1%.
indicator for this structure of opportunities. In the literature, two dominating local government typologies come forward, each with its own focus and content. The first typology, constructed by Hesse and Sharpe (1991), reflects the vertical relation of local government vis-à-vis its central pendant(s) based on the former’s constitutional status, autonomy and underlying ethos. Hesse and Sharpe discerned a North and Middle European group (NM) from an Anglo (A) and Franco group (F). Further, a Central and East European group (CE) can be added to the typology (Heinelt & Hlepas, 2006). We could expect that especially local government’s underlying ethos might provide some explanatory value regarding recruitment (e.g. in Franco-countries, whose local governments are foremost the expression of a political community, layman-paths could prevail; in countries from the Anglo and North-Middle European group, where local governments rather act as service-providers, professional recruitment-patterns could prevail). The second typology (Mouritzen & Svara, 2002) has been built upon the horizontal relation between the layman rule, professionalism and political leadership in local governments. According to Mouritzen and Svara, we should distinguish between countries with a strong mayor form (SM), a collective form (C), a committee-leader form (CL) and a council-manager form (CM). We could expect that countries from the collective form (where the layman rule is the dominating principle) would tend towards layman recruitment-paths whilst especially countries from the council-manager form (with its prevailing professionalism) would tend towards professional recruitment patterns.

Each of these categories is represented by at least one country in our study: NM (Austria, Germany, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland) A (the UK), F (Belgium, France, Greece, Italy, Spain), CE (Czech Republic, Israel, Poland); SM (Austria, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Israel, Poland, Spain), C (Belgium, Czech Republic, the Netherlands, Switzerland, the UK and a part of Germany), CL (Sweden and a part of the UK), CM (Norway)\textsuperscript{5}.

A Comparative Account of the Activation and Apprenticeships of Local Councillors in Europe

Table 1 presents general scores for the indicators representing activation and apprenticeships, separate country figures and comparative accounts based on the two local government typologies.

\textsuperscript{5} For Croatia, we didn’t have a classification according to the typologies. In the categories ‘Anglo’ and ‘Council-Manager’, only one country is represented which may account for the results found. Data were weight in the analysis, so each country had an equal share of cases in the dataset.
Table 1. Comparative Table Activation and Apprenticeships

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*Cramer’s V>=0.10; **Cramer’s V>=0.20; ***Cramer’s V>=0.30

First, scores for ‘political family’ indicate that whereas almost one out of every three councilors has at least one political active family member, the vast majority of local councilors is still recruited from outside those families with a recent history of political mandates. At this point the path to office certainly seems open to traditional laymen. Still, considerable variance between countries occurs. Especially Scandinavian councilors (Norway, Sweden) appear to have grown up in a political family whilst this professionalization pattern is much more rare in Croatia, Spain, Greece, the UK and Israel. Furthermore, there seems to be some variation according to the local government typologies as well. Within the Hesse and Sharpe typology, especially councilors from the Anglo group are less socialized in a political family (Cramer’s V=0.14). Applying Mouritzen and Svara,
the percentage of councillors that are socialized within this pattern of professionalization is bigger in countries from the committee-leader and council-manager form (Cramer’s V=0.20).

With regard to political motivation, laymen principles generally tend to dominate over their professional pendants also. At the extremes, the layman motive clearly outweighs its professional counterpart. Citizen duty has been a motive for almost two out of every three councillors, whilst only 10% admits that the prospect of entering into a political career influenced their candidacy. Further, most councillors confirm that their candidacy was inspired by both an interest in specific policy issues and a general interest in politics. The variation between countries is remarkable again. Whilst citizen duty has been less of a motive for Belgian and Dutch councillors, it was very present in the minds of especially Greek and Israeli councillors. Surprisingly however, councillors of the latter countries seemed to be more inspired by the desire to enter a political career also. A general interest in politics rather inspired councillors from Austria and Sweden, whilst Croatian, Polish and Israeli councillors mentioned this motive substantially less than on average. Finally, influencing specific issues seemed more important for councillors in Germany, Israel and Poland and less important for councillors in Spain and especially Italy. Comparatively, some significant differences stand out. Citizen duty seems to be mentioned less by councillors from the collective-form governments (Cramer’s V=0.13). The ultimate professional motive, entering a political career, doesn’t tend to accord with any of the typologies in the analysis (Cramer’s V=0.03 and 0.07). Most variance is found in the centre of the continuum. Influencing specific issues was a less important motive for Anglo and especially Franco-type councillors (Cramer’s V=0.20), whilst councillors from the committee-leader and council-manager form attached significantly more importance to this motive (Cramer’s V=0.15). The percentage of councillors mentioning a general interest in politics as their initial motivation is lower in Anglo and Central-East European countries (Cramer’s V=0.18) and higher in countries from the committee-leader and council-manager form (Cramer’s V=0.16).

The results discussed above seem to suggest that laymen principles prevail in the political activation of our research population. However, the analysis of the political apprenticeships paints a very different picture. First, the vast majority of our respondents has gone through a process of apprenticeship in a political party. When contesting their first race to office, eight out of every ten councillors was a member of a national political party. In some countries (Croatia, the Netherlands, Sweden) this form of professionalization tends to take an almost absolutist form, whilst others (Czech Republic, France, Poland) seem to leave considerable room for the layman-route as well. Not surprisingly, comparative classifications account for some of the variance found. Councillors from the Franco and especially Central-East European group were less member of a national party before their first local mandate (Cramer’s V=0.21) whilst councillors from the council-manager and especially committee-leader form display significantly more party membership before their first election (Cramer’s V=0.17).
Finally, half of the current population of European local councillors has more than five years of experience in his mandate. Although this number may seem quite high, it still leaves considerable room for newcomers (the layman-category in this respect) to enter the political arena. Outliers in terms of political experience are Germany, where substantially more councillors have political experience, and Croatia, Israel and Poland, who seem to have a greater intake of new councillors. The country typologies, however, don’t seem to provide substantial explanatory value (Cramer’s V=0.04 for Hesse/Sharpe; Cramer’s V=0.07 for Mouritzen/Svara).

Summarized, local councillors in Europe seem to follow a mixed and diversified road to office. Whereas layman principles tend to dominate in the activation phase, apprenticeships predominantly reflect the professionalization pattern, especially in terms of party membership. Yet results also point to considerable intra and inter-country variances. In some countries (e.g. Israel, Poland, Greece, Croatia) there seems to be considerable room for laymen to enter local politics, albeit this amateurism is never exclusive (e.g. when it is combined with a professional motive or a high party membership). In others (Norway, Sweden) professionalization tends to be the prevailing principle but layman-motives underlie the candidacy as well. Local government typologies account for some of this variation, but since these relations are never very strong, other factors may provide some additional explanatory value. This brings us to the matter of interrelation between activation and apprenticeship: to what extent and in which direction do the different items impact on each other?

**Complementary, Compensatory or Independent Pathways to Office? The Relation between Activation and Apprenticeship**

In order to assess the matter of interrelation between the different items of activation and apprenticeships, table 2 sets out the association between the seven variables, recoded as dummy-variables6. Three possible relations could come forward. First, a complementary, path-dependent logic seems plausible. In this respect professionalized scores on indicators of activation would relate positively to each other and to professional indicators of apprenticeships. This would imply that the recruitment process gradually delineates a professionalized group of candidates from a group of traditional laymen. On the other hand, a compensatory pathway may emerge as well as some phases can compensate for others in terms of professionalization. Hence positive scores on some professional items should relate to negative scores on others. A third possibility then consists of complete independency. Here scores on activation and apprenticeship evolve independently from each other.

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6 Dummy-variables either take the score 1 (Political Family: yes; Citizen Duty, Specific Issues, General Interest, Political Career: value 3 and 4 on the original question; Political Party: yes; Political Experience: 5 years or more) or 0.
Table 2. Interrelation between Activation and Apprenticeships

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Political Family</th>
<th>Citizen Duty</th>
<th>Specific Issues</th>
<th>General Interest</th>
<th>Political Career</th>
<th>Political Party</th>
<th>Political Experience</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Citizen Duty</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>61.7</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>64.8</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Specific Issues</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>70.2</td>
<td>65.4*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>74.3</td>
<td>75.0*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Interest</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>75.6</td>
<td>73.4</td>
<td>67.8*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>82.7</td>
<td>80.5</td>
<td>81.8*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political Career</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>10.8</td>
<td>8.7</td>
<td>5.2*</td>
<td>4.4*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>11.1</td>
<td>12.1</td>
<td>13.1*</td>
<td>12.8*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political Party</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>79.6</td>
<td>80.3</td>
<td>77.3</td>
<td>62.6**</td>
<td>80.3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>82.6</td>
<td>81.1</td>
<td>82.3</td>
<td>85.9**</td>
<td>86.7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political Experience</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>50.2</td>
<td>48.3</td>
<td>48.0</td>
<td>45.9</td>
<td>52.0</td>
<td>50.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>53.2</td>
<td>52.8</td>
<td>52.2</td>
<td>52.7</td>
<td>42.6</td>
<td>51.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Cramer’s V>=0.10; **Cramer’s V>=0.20; ***Cramer’s V>=0.30

Results in the table suggest that the upbringing in a political family tends to generate more support on all four motivations, as well as it is associated with slightly higher professionalization figures in terms of party membership and political experience. However, none of these associations is strong enough to be of any real influence (Cramer’s V below 0.10) so we cannot link political family to a particular motivation or apprenticeship.

The different motivations do relate to each other in a significant manner. First, councillors who support one of the layman motives also tend to support the other. Positive scores on citizen duty thus correspond with positive scores on influencing specific issues (Cramer’s V=0.10). This pattern reoccurs in the analysis of professional motives: councillors who engaged in politics based on a general political interest also attached more important to the career motive (Cramer’s V=0.11). Furthermore, influencing specific issues seems to go hand in hand with a general interest in politics (Cramer’s V=0.15) and a career motive (Cramer’s V=0.12) too.

Most of these political motivations, however, are not significantly related to the apprenticeship paths (Cramer’s V below 0.10). Yet there is one exception. Councillors who engaged in politics on the base of a general political interest rather joined a national party before their first election compared to councillors who didn’t follow this motive (Cramer’s V=0.24). Finally, party membership before the first election is not associated with political experience gathered later on (Cramer’s V=0.01).

In conclusion, results at first sight don’t seem to reflect strong interrelations. Since a professional primary socialization does not particularly accord with professional motives or
apprenticeships and the majority of motivational scores evolve independently from apprenticeship figures also, the independent these can be confirmed to some extent. However, some evidence may support the these that activation and apprenticeships could complement each other as well. Political motivations tend to be related to each other, at both the layman and professional side of the continuum. Further, a general interest in politics is often related to membership of a political party prior to the first mandate. Still, layman motives accord with professional motives too. Therefore, detailed further analyses will be needed to elucidate on the specific interrelation between activation and apprenticeships.

Activation and Apprenticeship Related to the Process of Political Recruitment

Both the comparative and interrelated analysis of activation and apprenticeships have only accounted for some of the variation found in our data. With a considerable degree of explanatory value yet unexposed, we will turn to the preceding and/or underlying phase of recruitment to further clarify the meaning of activation and apprenticeship paths. In Norris’ model (1997), recruitment commences with the social background of eligibles. It is often argued that a favourable social background (being male, middle class and middle-aged) carves out a first ‘pool of potential candidates’ who have significantly better chances in the recruitment process later on (Levine & Hyde, 1977: 960; Meadowcroft, 2001; Steyvers & Reynaert, 2006). Moreover, the process of professionalization has added further importance to this social background. Intellectual and occupational professionalization, referring to the growing importance of an academic degree and brokerage professions facilitating a political career, have become two fundamental determinants of political recruitment (Eliassen & Pedersen, 1978; Norris & Lovenduski, 1993; Cotta & Best, 2000). However, the impact of social background can’t be considered to be of a strict deterministic nature since lots of people fitting in the picture never become political active (Budge & Farlie, 1975), whilst political socialization and mobilization can make up for or complement a (dis)favourable social background (Levine & Hyde, 1977; Steyvers & Reynaert, 2006).

Therefore we will scrutinize the impact of the social background characteristics ‘age’, ‘gender’, ‘education’, ‘profession’, ‘ethnicity’ and ‘local roots’ by means of a binary logistic regression analysis. As such we will be able to assess the extent to which a preferable social

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7 In this paper, relations are presented by associational scores. In further analysis, general path-models will be applied to offer a more encompassing view on the matter of interrelation.

8 All variables were recoded as dummies. ‘Age’ was constructed by the authors based on the scores from ‘For how many years have you been a councillor in total?’ abstracted from ‘How old are you?’ (value 1: the third of oldest councillors, i.e. > 47 years, N=3988 or 35.2%); ‘Are you male or female?’ (value 1: male, N=8333 or 70.7%); ‘What is your highest completed education?’ (value 1: university/college or equivalent, N=7137 or 60.6%); ‘To which occupational category did you belong before your first mandate as a councillor?’ (value 1: professional politician, civil servant, business manager, teacher, liberal profession, N=5363 or 55.2%); ‘Where were you and your parents born?’ (value 1: councillor, mother or father was born in another country, N=1380 or 11.9%); ‘Local roots’ constructed by the authors based on scores from ‘For how many years have you been a
background impacts upon councillors’ activation and apprenticeships later on. The results are presented in table 3.
Table 3. Impact Social Background on Activation and Apprenticeships

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Political Family</th>
<th>Citizen Duty</th>
<th>Specific Issues</th>
<th>General Interest</th>
<th>Political Career</th>
<th>Political Party</th>
<th>Political Experience</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age [older]</td>
<td>.84</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>1.27</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>.85</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>.69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender [male]</td>
<td>.75</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>1.08</td>
<td>.10</td>
<td>.79</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>1.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education [high]</td>
<td>1.15</td>
<td>.01</td>
<td>.93</td>
<td>.13</td>
<td>.99</td>
<td>.77</td>
<td>.82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Profession [broker]</td>
<td>.93</td>
<td>.11</td>
<td>1.15</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>1.03</td>
<td>.54</td>
<td>1.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethnicity [ethnic]</td>
<td>.64</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>1.06</td>
<td>.40</td>
<td>1.30</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>.86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local roots [long]</td>
<td>.90</td>
<td>.04</td>
<td>1.15</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>.90</td>
<td>.05</td>
<td>.71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NAGELKERKE R²</td>
<td>.02</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>.01</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>.01</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>.02</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
At first sight the indicators for activation and apprenticeships are only slightly determined by the interplay of councillors’ social background. This is reflected in the relatively low Nagelkerke $R^2$ scores. Nevertheless, the separate social background characteristics do determine our activation and apprenticeships in a significant way.

Regarding the primary political socialization, councillors with a higher education more often come from a political family. On the other hand, councillors with a strong local or ethnic roots, male councillors and councillors who started their career at an older age appear to come less from those families. For young and female councillors and councillors without a strong local roots, professionalization in a political family thus could compensate for the lack of a favourable social background. Ethnic councillors on the other hand may feel that the lack of a political family further limits their odds in the recruitment process.

The second path of political activation, the combination of motivations, equally relates to social background. The older a councillor is when entering his first mandate, the more his initial candidacy seems to be inspired by layman-motives and the less importance he attached to professional motives. This finding also applies to councillors without a strong local roots: they will candidate more on the base of professional motives and less based on citizen duty. Male councillors seem to be more inspired by a general interest in politics to the detriment of an interest in specific issues. Highly educated councillors also paid less importance to the general interest motive whilst councillors with an ethnic roots are rather driven by the desire to influence specific policy issues. Surprisingly, councillors who had a brokerage profession prior to their first mandate indicated that their political interest was rather aroused by the ultimate layman motive, a sense of citizen duty, than by the desire to enter into a political career – which represents the ultimate professional motive. Hence it comes clear that professional motivations could compensate for a lack of a professional background.

Do these characteristics likewise impact upon political apprenticeships? Older councillors tend to be more frequently members of a national party before their first mandate, whilst younger councillors learn politics through their experience in office. Male councillors have stronger political apprenticeships in both the political party and the mandate itself. This professionalization adds to the social background advantage they already have. Highly educated councillors, on the other hand, are less likely to be a national party member before their first mandate and have less political experience. This intellectual professionalization could be a prerequisite to counter the impact of political apprenticeships, or political apprenticeships could compensate for a lack of intellectual professionalization the other way around. The same holds true for councillors with a strong local roots, as they are less likely to be national party member at the start of their career. Finally, councillors with an ethnic background have less political experience, whereas councillors coming from brokerage professions acquire more experience.
In sum, older and female candidates (with the exception of respectively party membership and political family), as well as candidates with a strong local or ethnic roots generally correspond to the layman-ideal in terms of activation and apprenticeships. Besides, councillors’ calibre (the combination of education and profession) seems to (partly) outbalance the political professionalization also. In this respect a professionalized social background can be compensated for by professional activations and apprenticeships, and/or vice versa. We could conclude that whilst activation and apprenticeship don’t really seem to compensate for each other, they are strongly contingent upon the social background effect, allowing to compensate for a less favourable position in the latter.

The above analysis confirms that activation and apprenticeships are embedded in the wider process of political recruitment. Not only does the structure of opportunities affect both phases of recruitment and do they (partly) relate to each other, councillor’s activation and apprenticeship paths are also influenced by their social background characteristics. Taking these conclusion one step further, our final goal should be to scrutinize the impact of activation and apprenticeships upon subsequent phases in the recruitment process as well. In other words, do activation and apprenticeship matter for gatekeeping and – ultimately – political career?

In Norris’ recruitment model, candidates who have acquired the necessary resources and motivations still have to pass the system’s gatekeepers before they can stand for election. Whereas ideal-typical laymen will often propose themselves and figure as and independent candidate or on a local list, professionalization implies a strong influence of (national) political parties in the gatekeeping process. Seligman (1961: 85) labels these ideal-types ‘conscripts’ (professionals) and ‘self-recruiters’ (laymen). Political parties choose their candidates on the base of rational strategies, enforcing the initial phase of the recruitment process: ‘those who are, by dint of their desire and ability, more likely to take part are also more likely to be the targets of appeals for activity’ (Brady, Schlozman and Verba, 1999: 154). Furthermore, the influence of political parties extends beyond the phase of gatekeeping as they are the key reference point for developing a political career afterwards. As such we expect professionalized councillors to accumulate several political mandates at both the local level and/or other levels, reflecting a ‘political career’. Table 4 sets out the impact of both activation and apprenticeships on the ‘selection’, ‘electoral position’ and ‘political career’ of the councillors. The overall strength of the models tends to be higher, with Nagelkerke R² scores varying between 0.03 and 0.15.

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9 Variables were recoded as dummies based on the original questions: ‘How did you become a candidate the first time you were nominated?’ (value 1: I was asked by others, N=9999 or 85.4%), ‘Were you elected as a candidate…’ (value 1: of a list of a national party, N=9225 or 78.3%). The variable ‘political career’ was constructed by the authors based on the computed scores on the question ‘Do you presently hold any of the following elective or executive offices? Have you previously held any of these offices? Member of parliament, minister, mayor in another municipality, member of a regional (or provincial) executive board, member of board of council-owned joint stock company or foundation, president of a council committee, member of the executive
The primary political socialization in a candidate’s family appears to lead to higher chances of being a conscript on a national party list. As such professionalization tends to instigate further professionalization in the subsequent recruitment phase. However, political motivations may form a counterweight: whilst the ‘citizen duty’-motive leads to higher conscription, professional motives lead to higher levels of self-recruitment. Nevertheless, councillors with a ‘general interest’-motive still figure more on national party-lists. The relation between apprenticeships and gatekeeping also reflects the complementarity-these. Councillors who learned politics in political parties and through their experience in office will significantly figure more as conscripts on national party lists. Furthermore, this pattern reoccurs in the political career later. Political experience and a political career-motive lead significantly more to the accumulation of mandates in the political career, although layman-motives tend to predict accumulation as well –acting as a compensatory mechanism.

As such we can conclude that activation and apprenticeships definitely matter for the subsequent phase in the recruitment process and the political career. With professionalization in terms of the upbringing in a political family and the apprenticeship in the political sphere tends to come professionalization in the selection, electoral position and political career later on. Nonetheless, this complementarity follows far from an absolute pattern. Political motivation seems to be a compensatory mechanism since layman motives often lead to a professional political career whilst professional motives relate positively to self-recruitment.

**Conclusion**

Political activation and apprenticeships are claimed to play an important role in the recruitment process of politicians. In this paper we sought to map out both phases in the recruitment of local councillors in Europe through a comparative perspective. More
specifically, our aim was to look whether the primary political socialization, motivation and apprenticeships develop along the lines of professionalization – a trend which is said to increasingly dominate the recruitment process as a whole.

In terms of the upbringing in a political family and the motivations prior to the first candidacy (forming together the activation of councillors towards politics), the layman-principle seems to prevail, leaving considerable room for non-politicized citizens who basically aspire a political mandate in order to do a good job for their society. However, political apprenticeships do predominantly follow the professionalization pattern. Councillors are often member of a national party before their first election, and half of them builds upon considerable experience gained in office. The application of two local government typologies revealed that these results vary to some extent according to the horizontal and vertical local government tradition in the countries. However, they often cross-cut each other as some outliers may lie at the base of much of the variance found. Whilst several countries (e.g. Israel, Poland) seem particularly prone to layman-principles, others (Sweden, Norway) bear witness of a fundamental impact of political parties in the recruitment process.

The second aim of the paper then was to assess the relevance of activation and apprenticeships for the wider process of political recruitment. First, activation and apprenticeships don’t seem to compensate for each other. In stead they rather tend to follow their own logic, although some degree of complementarity may emerge as well. Second, activation and apprenticeships are significantly related to the social background of local councillors. Compensatory effects emerge when professionalization in terms of activation or apprenticeships makes up for a disadvantaged social background. As such female or younger councillors can especially rely on a professional activation, whilst councillors without a strong local roots can even add the advantage of a political apprenticeship in their race to office. Similarly, a lack of calibre, which is claimed to be of growing importance in the light of professionalization, can be compensated for through activation or apprenticeship. However, sometimes both phases in the process do reinforce each other as well. Ethnic councillors often lack the advantage of a primary political socialization or political experience and female councillors benefit from political apprenticeships to a substantial lesser degree. Third, activation and apprenticeships impact on their turn upon the phase of gatekeeping and the political career. Whilst a professionalized primary socialization and political apprenticeships lead to professionalized selections, electoral positions and political careers, motivations partly provide a compensatory mechanism since layman motives lead to a political career and higher figures of conscription.

Our study indicated that there is a strong degree of professionalization in the activation and apprenticeships of local councillors in Europe indeed, albeit this percentage varies according to the political system in place. However if we consider the relevance of both phases for the process of recruitment as a whole, there is ample evidence that there remains considerable room for laymen to enter into the political arena. To some extent, activation and
apprenticeships can even play a democratizing role as they can compensate for and determine the effects of preceding and subsequent phases of political recruitment.

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