# Survival of the ministers

## On ministerial durability in post-war Norway

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# Abstract

Over the last decade, the field of ministerial durability – exploring why some cabinet ministers are replaced and others not – has taken an empirical turn. Among others, Berlinski, Dewan and Dowding (2012) scrutinize the relationship between cabinet ministers and Prime Ministers in Britain, while Bucur (2013) analyze how ministers in semi-presidential systems are held accountable by presidents, parties, and prime ministers. However, ministers in multi-party parliamentary democracies have received little attention. In this thesis, I explore what determines ministerial durability in post-war Norway. By using an unmatched data set combination of Norwegian ministers and the resignation calls they received during their tenure, this thesis provides three main contributions. Firstly, I find that Norwegian ministers are held accountable by party leaders based on their performance, merits, and ambitions – not personal characteristics. Secondly, I uncover that newspapers have an alarming influence on the ministerial deselection process. Finally, I find that resignation calls – a measure for ministerial performance – bares with it both endogeneity and validity problems that should be taken into consideration by further studies on ministerial durability.

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Any remaining mistakes within this text are fully my own.

# Contents

# Acronyms

**Centre Party** *Senterpartiet.* 26, 27, 30, 47

**Christian People's Party** *Kristelig folkeparti.* 26, 27, 30, 46

**Conservatives** *Høyre.* 26, 27, 30, 84

**Cox PH** Cox Proportional Hazards. 6, 33–35, 42, 45, 55, 58, 67, 74, 76

**Labor Party** *Arbeiderpartiet.* 1, 14, 16, 18, 19, 25–27, 30, 45, 47, 80

**Liberal Party** *Venstre.* 26, 27, 30

**MP** member of parliament. 11, 14, 31, 46, 57

**NRK** Norwegian Brodcasting Corporation. 23, 28

**PM** prime minister. 11–15, 18, 24, 25, 28, 29, 34, 36, 52

**Progress Party** *Fremskrittspartiet.* 27, 30, 84

**Socialist Left Party** *Sosialistisk Venstreparti.* 1, 14, 26, 27, 29, 30, 46, 75

**VG** *Verdens Gang.* 19

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# 1 | Introduction

On March 5 2012, Audun Lysbakken of the *Sosialistisk Venstreparti* (Socialist Left Party) resigned from his post as head of the Ministry of Children, Equality and Social Inclusion. He stated the following:

> Let me be very clear: I *have* full responsibility for the errors that have been made, and I *take* full responsibility. I have therefore informed the Prime Minister that I have made the decision to resign as cabinet minister. (NRK 2012)

The issue Lysbakken resigned over was granting money to a women's defense club. The problem was in part that the competition over the grant had been almost non-existent, but also that Lysbakken himself had close ties to parts of the leadership, which led to questions on impartiality (Bordvik 2012).

Similarly, in 2007, the foreign minister Jonas Gahr Støre, a prominent figure in *Arbeiderpartiet* (Labor Party), took part in pressuring the Minister of Climate and Environment into a controversial decision by giving permission for oil-reloading in Bøkfjorden to the company Tschudi & Eitzen Shipping. One of the leading persons of Tschudi & Eitzen Shipping, Felix Tschudi, was revealed to have had continuous personal connections to Støre (Magnus 2012). Questions over impartiality were raised yet again, but, interestingly, this time the minister was not given the axe.

How can the differing outcomes of the Lysbakken and Støre case be explained when the circumstances are so similar? Does Støre benefit from being a part of the biggest party in a coalition, and Lysbakken punished because he is part of a smaller party? Is the political experience of Støre the reason for his survival as cabinet minister? Or was the media and opposition more hostile towards Lysbakken? More generally, this thesis will be focused on a broader question: what determines ministerial durability in Norwegian governments?[1] It is common to think of ministerial dismissals as equivalent to political

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[1]I will use the terms *cabinet* and *government* interchangeably, even though some argue there is a technical difference between the terms.

scandals – such as the Lysbakken case – but ministers might also go quietly. For example, the Minister of Finance in the immediate post-war period, Erik Brofoss, was offered the job as Central Bank Governor after more than eight years in cabinet. Few eyebrows were raised after his long service, and Brofoss himself claimed that he went "from the spotlight to the scene loft" (Lie 2009).

My task is to explore which factors make ministers more prone to dismissal, making this an empirical contribution to the ministerial deselection literature. By using a unique data set combining manually collected ministerial attributes and resignation calls, I focus on four types of characteristics that is thought to affect ministerial tenure: performance measured in resignation calls; political experience; cabinet specific characteristics such as parliamentary basis (majority/minority) and party composition (single-party/coalition); and personal characteristics such as age, gender, and education.

Parliamentary democracies are built on the idea of delegation and accountability; in the Norwegian political system, the electorate delegates power to the legislature, the legislature to the party leaders, the party leaders to ministers, and ministers to civil servants, whereas accountability runs in the opposite direction. The chain of delegation and accountability constitutes the main framework of the principal-agent theory, which is utilized in this thesis. More specifically, I investigate whether ministers are held accountable by their principal – the party leader. This is achieved by using *resignation calls* – a count of how many times political and non-political actors have urged the minister to resign publicly during her/his tenure – as a performance measure; ministers getting resignation calls are assumed to be performing badly.

The analyses show that resignation calls (pooled on all actors) have a strong effect on ministerial durability: the more resignation calls a minister gets, the more likely the minister is to be removed. Consequently, I argue that ministers are generally held accountable by their party leaders whenever they are perceived to perform badly. Furthermore, the results of an actor based resignation call model suggest that neither the opposition nor the minister's own party have any influence on tenure when they judge ministerial performance. Newspapers, however, are found to have influence on the deselection process, which means that newspapers have a more important monitoring function than the parties and the opposition do. Accordingly, I argue that this could pose some democratic problems; an unelected entity influences the accountability mechanism

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between party leaders and ministers more than elected officials do.

With regard to political experience, ministers who have previously occupied parliamentary seats are found to sit safer than ministers without such experience, while ministers with previous cabinet experience are more likely to be replaced than fresh ministers. The divergent findings with regard to political experience are, on the one hand, believed to be that previous cabinet experience makes ministers exposed to a *wear-and-tear* effect; party leaders replace ministers to keep the cabinet vigorous. On the other hand, parliament experience increases the durability of ministers because they have been left less exposed to the public, but still obtained enough political experience necessary to handle the pressure of being in cabinet position.

Interestingly, cabinet characteristics are not found to affect ministerial tenure. The analyses suggest that ministers in coalition cabinets are as likely to be dismissed as ministers in single-party cabinets, and ministers in majority cabinets neither more nor less likely to be dismissed than their minority colleagues. This indicates that party system and cabinet composition have little relevance as variables when it comes to dismissing ministers in Norway; party leaders act similarly between different kinds of cabinets. Furthermore, I argue that this finding could be a stepping-stone for comparative studies of other parliamentary democracies where more valid inferences can be made on whether institutional factors are relevant for ministerial durability.

Personal characteristics are also found to have a limited effect on ministerial tenure, with one exception; I use age as a measure of ambition, where younger ministers are assumed more ambitious than their older colleagues. The finding clearly indicates that older ministers are more prone to dismissal than their younger colleagues.

Finally, in a separate analysis, I also find that there is some noise in the resignation call measure; female ministers get more resignation calls than their male colleagues; ministers with higher education get more resignation calls than ministers with lower education; and ministers with long tenures get more resignation calls than ministers with more short-lived cabinet careers, raising concerns about endogeneity from the initial analysis. However, a robustness check, where resignation calls are replaced by *resignation calls per year*, shows that endogeneity is less problematic than firstly anticipated. Nevertheless, the remaining noise in the resignation call measure leads me to argue that some efforts should be made in further studies to improve the validity of resignation calls as a performance measure,

or even develop new indicators for performance.

## 1.1  The case of Norway

The motivation behind choosing Norway, apart from further closing the research gap in the ministerial deselection literature, is manifold. With a strong opposition, important role of parties, and high transparency, Norwegian ministers are in theory expected to be held accountable for irresponsible action.

Firstly, the recurrence of minority and coalition cabinets (and even minority coalitions) is expected to give parliament a strong position vis-à-vis the cabinet and its ministers (Strøm 1990: 207). The argument is that ministerial turnover should increase when the opposition is strong under periods with minority cabinets, or when policy tensions occur between parties within coalitions cabinets. This is grounded in the government survival literature, which has generally established that "single-party governments last longer than coalitions, and that majority governments last longer than minority governments" (Gallagher, Laver and Mair 2011: 446). In other words, when parliament is strong in relation to the government, they are more easily held accountable – a point that can be expanded to cabinet ministers: minority government ministers are given less room for error by their party leaders because cabinet survival depends on not losing support in parliament. The same goes for coalition governments: whenever multiple parties are involved in government, ministerial policy drift can be checked by coalition partners to prevent putting unfixable strains on the cooperation. In both scenarios, the solution of replacing a minister is expected to cost less than abandoning the party's place in cabinet. Furthermore, the Norwegian legislature arguably has even more power over cabinets because it has the right to displace the cabinet and individual ministers (Rasch 2004: 88), whereas cabinets have no power to dissolve parliament (Rasch 2004: 128). Consequently, ministers in minority cabinets sit on the mercy of non-cabinet parties in parliament, while ministers in coalition cabinets sit on the mercy of their coalition partners in parliament. In sum, it is expected that ministers under minority and coalition cabinets are more likely to be dismissed than ministers under majority and single-party cabinets.

Secondly, political parties are omnipresent in Norwegian politics (Heidar 2014: 162); they select candidates for parliamentary elections, collectively decide the policy preferences in yearly party conferences, control their elected members of parliament, and

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more (Narud and Strøm 2011: 242). In addition to acting as a gatekeeper for potential ministers (Müller 2000: 323), the strong position of political parties is expected to give less elbowroom for sitting ministers and increase the ministerial turnover for the ministers that give themselves liberties in policy development. Indeed, ministers often face conflicting interests between the party policy platform, and their own preferences (Müller 2000: 320). Breaking the party line is expensive, and could in some cases end in dismissal.

Thirdly, Norway is perceived to be one of the most effective and transparent countries in the world (see for example Kaufmann, Kraay and Mastruzzi (2009)). More transparency could give less room for ministers to get involved in dodgy affairs, give stronger reactions against drifting ministers, and better conditions for revealing these drifts. Furthermore, transparency could also lead to more polarization between political actors (Stasavage 2007: 59), which again could give the opposition more incentives to check misbehaving ministers and propose stronger reactions against them. The argument is not that Norwegian ministers drift more or less than ministers in other countries, but rather that these drifts are more easily revealed. When connecting transparency to ministerial performance, which has been closely associated with low ministerial durability in other studies (Berlinski et al. 2012; Bucur 2013), it can be expected that bad performance is more likely to be uncovered and sanctioned in Norway.

In sum, these three factors set the stage for holding ministers accountable in Norway; a strong opposition, influential parties, and high transparency should give little room for ministerial policy drift and strong reactions against the ministers that do drift.

## 1.2   The road ahead

The thesis is structured as follows. In Chapter 2, I start by introducing the principal-agent theory, describing how the chain of delegation and accountability works in parliamentary democracies and why I regard party leaders as minister's principal in the Norwegian case. Furthermore, I discuss possible types of agency loss that can occur between these party leaders and their ministers. In the second part of Chapter 2, I review some of the most central findings in previous literature on ministerial durability and media studies on Norwegian ministers. This discussion is divided into five categories: performance, political experience, cabinet specific attributes, personal characteristics, and reshuffles.

In Chapter 3, I present the main historical lines of cabinet development in post-war

Norway, before I discuss how the cabinet functions as a collective. I proceed by outlining who the cabinet leaders are and what power they have. Furthermore, I briefly list some of the roles cabinet members have as heads of departments. Finally, I discuss how parties help containing agency loss through selection, contract design, and screening.

Because the main analysis is based on event history analyses, I start Chapter 4 by shortly describing the basics of these statistical models with special focus on the pros and cons of the semi-parametric Cox Proportional Hazards (Cox PH) model. Secondly, as I collect most of the data manually, I also give a brief summary over how this was done. The data set used in this thesis consists of two separate bases: one for individual minister characteristics and one for resignation calls, where the latter was completely manually collected, and the first is a combination of other data sets and manually collected variables. In the final part of Chapter 4, I operationalize the variables used in the event history analyses and provide some basic descriptive statistics.

I proceed by analyzing two event history models in Chapter 5. Firstly, a pooled resignation call model – all resignation calls are bundled up in one measure – shows that underperforming minister are more at risk for losing their cabinet post than well-performing ministers. Secondly, I divide resignation calls into categories from which type of actor they came from: the opposition, the minister's own party, or newspapers. Surprisingly, only newspapers are found to have any effect on ministerial durability with the actor-based approach. Neither the minister's own party nor the opposition are found to have any influence over the deselection process.

To assess whether the pooled and actor-based resignation call models fit the data, I show that they predict fairly well and have few influential outliers in the start of Chapter 6. Also, I estimate a count model with resignation calls as the dependent variable to explore whether there is some noise in the measure. I find that there is both a certain amount of noise and some traces of endogeneity between resignation calls and ministerial tenure. Lastly, I show some alternative specifications of the models from Chapter 5. Most importantly, I introduce resignation calls per year as an explanatory variable to show that the endogeneity problem was not as problematic as anticipated.

Finally, in Chapter 7, I discuss the findings of the analyses more substantially and consider some of the limitations with my approach. At the end, I argue that the findings hardly can be generalized beyond post-war period of Norway, and discuss some possible

ways forward for studies in the field of ministerial durability, before I gather up the threads in Chapter 8.

# 2 | Building blocks

Even though the Norwegian political system is a constitutional monarchy, it has effectively been parliamentary throughout the period covered here, where the cabinet has worked independently from the King and under close monitoring from parliament. In the first part of this chapter, I introduce the principal-agent theory of parliamentary democracies, which states that these political systems build on a chain of delegation and accountability. Firstly, I go through the principal-agent framework in general terms, sketch out the *ideal type* based on it, and discuss some of the types of agency loss that can occur between principals and their agents. Secondly, I proceed with discussing who fires ministers in Norway specifically, and how agency loss occurs between ministers and their principal (the party leader).

The second part of this chapter includes discussions on previous literature in the field of ministerial durability, and hypothesis derived from this literature. Four main sets of factors are used: performance, political experience, cabinet specific attributes, and personal characteristics.

## 2.1 Principal-agent theory

All modern democracies, also parliamentary systems, rely on someone making decisions on behalf of others. A direct democracy in its ideal type, where each citizen has a direct vote in all matters, would arguably prove highly inefficient in modern states: everyone cannot be fully informed on all issues; an agreement will seldom be reached on preferred policies; and few people will ever be fully satisfied with any aspects of society. Hence, power is delegated to elected officials in modern democracies (Strøm 2003: 56-57).

In this thesis, I will consider parliamentary governments by a minimal definition, stating that this is:

> [...] a system of government in which the prime minister and his or her cabinet are

> accountable to any majority of the members of parliament and can be voted out of office
> by the latter, through an ordinary or constructive vote of no confidence. (Müller, Bergman
> and Strøm 2003: 13)

The basic idea is that the cabinet must be tolerated by parliament at any time, actively with an investiture, or through a confidence motion, but also passively as long as the cabinet does not lose a vote of no confidence. In Norway the cabinet can set forward confidence motions and parliament can vote the cabinet out of office, but there is no investiture (Narud and Strøm 2011: 223). This means that Norway fulfill the requirement of the minimal definition of parliamentary government.

Behind the definition of parliamentary governments lies the principal-agent theory. In short, the principal-agent theory is based on delegation and accountability: a task is delegated by a principal to an agent, and the agent then executes the task on behalf of the principal (Müller et al. 2003: 20). In the context of this thesis, the principal is the prime minister in single-party cabinets or the ministers' party leader in coalitions (this will be discussed below), while the agent is the minister. With delegation there also comes accountability; when a minister has executed a task, for example outlined a policy proposal, the principal will evaluate whether the proposal is what she[1] was looking for (Müller et al. 2003: 20). If the principal finds the policy proposal unsatisfying, there has occurred an agency problem or agency loss, which means that there is a divergence between the policy outcome preferred by the principal, and the outcome delivered by the agent (Lupia 2003: 35). The ultimate consequence of agency loss in this context is ministerial dismissal.

In section 2.1.2, I show that the principal-agent framework can differ between countries, and that Norway is a case where the ideal-type agency model does not fit entirely. Firstly, however, I will go deeper into the ideal-type of delegation and accountability, proceed by discussing some types of agency loss that can occur in these systems, and connect the agency model to the aims of my analysis and the Norwegian context.

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[1] In line with the standard in the literature, I will use the gender pronoun *she* for principals and *he* for agents.

### 2.1.1 A single chain of command

> Delegation models all simplify and distort reality. Yet that may be a price worth paying if
> such simplifications help us shed light on modern democratic constitutions. (Strøm 2003:
> 61)

Political science is full of models and ideal type classifications, mainly because the world is complex and we cannot explain every detail of it; one has to simplify to make general assessments (Landman 2008: 6-7), and simplifications should be thought of as representations rather than statements about reality (Clarke and Primo 2007: 742). As Strøm points out, this is also the case with the principal-agent framework and its ideal-type.

As mentioned, delegation happens when a principal relieves herself of a task by giving it to an agent. For example, voters delegate the task of running the country to members of parliament through elections; the voters are principals, while each member of parliament (MP) constitutes the agents. On the other hand, parliament is accountable to the voters at the next election, where they can have their say on parliamentary performance (Müller et al. 2003: 19-20). Delegation and accountability is the core of the principal-agent approach with regard to research on parliamentary democracy. But the story does not end with the voter-parliament relation. In what is described as a chain of delegation, the task of policymaking is delegated further to the prime minister (PM), who then delegates specific tasks to his selected ministers, who finally delegates to their department's civil servants (Narud and Valen 2007: 209). Predictably, the chain of accountability runs in the opposite direction. Based on Strøm (2003: 65), figure 2.1.1 gives a graphical illustration

Figure 2.1.1: Chain of delegation and accountability.
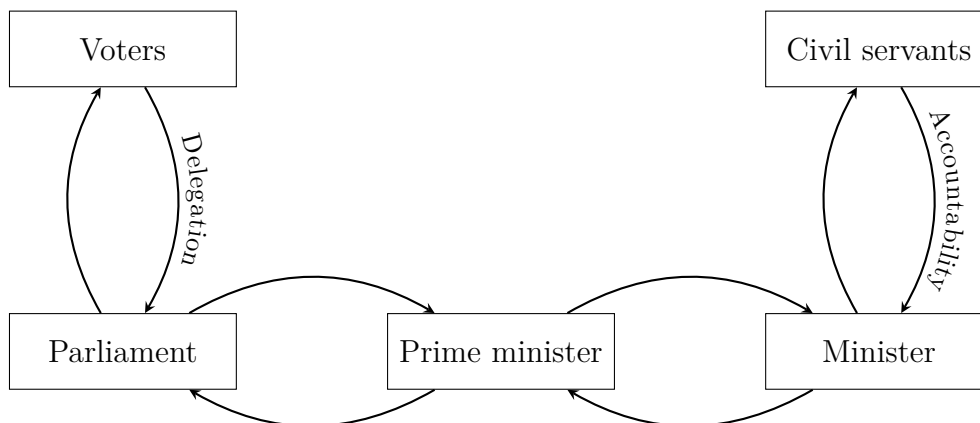
of this ideal-type of delegation and accountability. Most importantly, I will explore the accountability mechanics between ministers and their principal.

The discussion in section 2.1.2 will show that this picture seldom represent the actual situations in parliamentary democracies. For example, formal checks by parliaments and the introduction of political parties complicate the chain. First, however, I will discuss some of the problems that may arise when tasks are delegated.

**Agency loss**

In early June 1988, Minister of Government Administration, Anne-Lise Bakken, went out publicly with criticism of the Head of Personell, Nils R. Mugaas, after it was revealed that the new head of the Postal Bank had received a huge salary. Bakken was immediately met with disavowal of responsibility claims; she was the head of the department, and had the responsibility for its policy areas. In addition, she was believed to have taken a central part in the appointment (Helgesen and Reesen 1988). The situation worsened when she refused to apologize in a hearing at the Storting. Bakken was met with resignation calls from the opposition, newspapers, and even her own party (Versto 1988; Versto and Solberg 1988; Øverby and Solberg 1988). A couple of days later, Bakken was dismissed by the PM, Gro Harlem Brundland (Helgesen and Reesen 1988).

As is evident in the case of Bakken, whenever differences between what the minister delivers and what the principal wants there has occurred agency loss (Müller et al. 2003: 23), which ultimately can lead to dismissal. In situations where the agent is perfect, he would perform the delegated task in the exact same manner as the principal would have if the task was not delegated (Lupia 2003: 35), but this is, of course, uncommon. Hence, agency loss is a big part of everyday politics in parliamentary democracy.

Figure 2.1.2 sketches the different types of agency loss that can occur in principal-agent relationships. Firstly, there might be a difference in preference between the principal and the agent (Müller et al. 2003: 23); the principal and the agent might look differently on how to develop certain policies in the best way possible. Secondly, information problems arise when the principal does "not know enough about their potential agents to get the best possible deal from them" (Müller et al. 2003: 23). The information problem comes in two forms: adverse selection and moral hazard. On the one hand, adverse selection, or *hidden information*, refers to situations where the principal does not have full information

Figure 2.1.2: Types of agency loss.
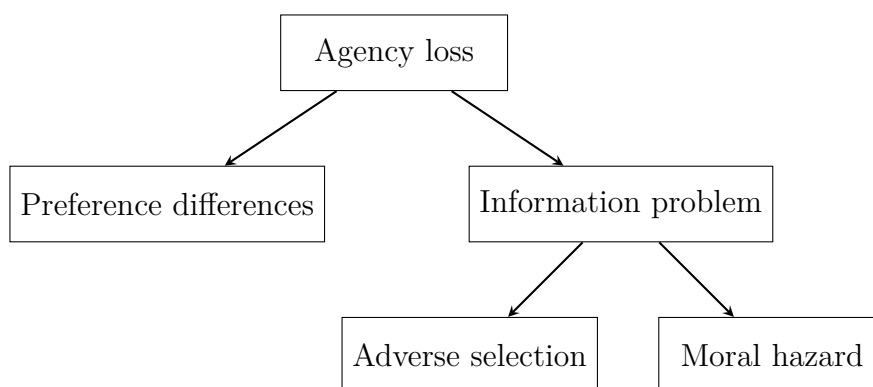


Based on description from Müller et al. (2003: 23).

on the competence or predilections of the agent, and/or exact information on the relevant task (Strøm 2000: 270). This means that the principal is always in danger of not selecting the best agent for the task. On the other hand, moral hazard, also referred to as *hidden action*, means that "the principals cannot fully observe the actions of their agents" (Strøm 2000: 270). Here, the agent might get incentives to perform unobservable action that crosses the principal's interests. The Bakken case is a good example of this.

If the agency loss is too big there will arise problems in the principal-agent relationship. Hence, the principal must find ways to contain agency loss. This can be done both before (*ex ante*) and after *(ex post)* the agent is hired. The literature usually give four methods of containing agency loss: contract design, screening and selection, monitoring and reporting, and institutional checks, where the two former are *ex ante* and the latter two *ex post* strategies (Strøm 2000: 271). In the case of this thesis, the *ex post* methods of containing agency loss is the most relevant, as I will not explore why some ministers are *hired*, and others not, but rather why some ministers are *fired* and others not.

Firstly, monitoring and reporting can be used to force the agent into reporting what he is doing. One example of this is parliamentary hearings, where the minister has to report to parliament what parliament wishes to know about the business of the minister's department. In the link between ministers and their principal, both personal meetings with the principal and cabinet meetings as a whole can be other examples of monitoring and reporting. Indeed, Norwegian PMs have formal rights to request information from her ministers (Strøm 1994: 42). Secondly, institutional checks "subject particularly critical agent decisions to the veto powers of other agents or a third party" (Strøm 2000: 271).

Institutional checks are most common in checks-and-balances systems, but votes of no confidence against ministers or the government as a whole are examples of institutional checks in parliamentary systems (Strøm 2003: 63). For Norway in particular, the PM and the King has an institutional check through their veto power on cabinet propositions for parliament.

### 2.1.2   Who fires ministers in Norway?

To appropriately tie the agency model to the Norwegian context, we need to know who the cabinet principal is, and there is no straightforward answer. Indeed, the Norwegian constitution does not give hiring or firing powers to any political actors, but rather to the King (Narud 2000: 170-172). However, in accordance to customary constitutional practice, the hiring process in single-party cabinets is realized through the PM working out a list of wanted cabinet members in consultancy with her party's leading members (Andenæs 1998: 144). But, in post-war Norway, 37% of the cabinets have been coalition cabinets, which gives a more complex cabinet composition process: here, the coalition partners are given more power over appointments from their own party, and hence, the PM has less power over the selection process (Andenæs 1998: 145). As for firing, which is the topic of this thesis, former MP, Guttorm Hansen (Labor Party), illustrated the inability of the PM in firing ministers from other parties within coalitions by stating the following:

> The PM can [in coalitions] presumably only by himself replace the ministers of his own party. The others are irremovable if their own party does not agree [to dismiss them]. The outcome is uncertain in a clash between the PM and, for example, the biggest party in the coalition over one of the ministers of the biggest party. (Hansen 1966)

Hansen clearly gives the PM dismissal powers over the ministers of his own party. However, he is also at a loss when it comes to who has the firing powers over the ministers of coalition partners. One possibility is that party leaders, which for the most part occupy posts in both single-party and coalition cabinets, has the final say over the ministers from their own party. Indeed, the parliamentary leader of the Socialist Left Party in 2007, Inge Ryan, argued that "it is up to Kristin [Halvorsen], as the party leader, to decide which ministers should represent SV. She is the one who must consider whether someone needs to be replaced" (Johnsen, Hegvik, Johansen, Haugan, Ertesvaag, Torvik and Ertzaas 2007).

Thus, I see the party leaders of the cabinet as principals; the party leader is "the one who has the prime responsibility for monitoring the other party officials" (Müller 2000: 325). However, some assumptions are necessary: firstly, party organizations themselves might have influence over ministerial deselection, and when the party pressure is sufficiently high, the principal might even dismiss ministers she wants to keep in their post. However, the assumption is that the party leader must concur and take the final decision. Secondly, the *Storting* can also dismiss ministers through a vote of no confidence. Nevertheless, as the Bakken-case (see section 2.1.1) and other confrontations between ministers and parliament shows, ministers that are expected to be dismissed by parliament are either sacked before it happens, or a vote of confidence over the cabinet is used as a counter-proposal to save the minister. The assumption is thus that party leaders will dismiss the minister before the Parliament can do it. Lastly, I assume that the PM is always the *de facto* party leader of her party. Indeed, as Strøm (1994: 50) maintains "[t]he prime minister is normally the effective leader of his or her party [in Norway], though the exact party office held can vary".

### 2.1.3   Agency loss between ministers and party leaders

The monitoring function of party organizations is important in Norway for reducing transaction costs and collective action problems on the governmental level; ministers are less likely to create moral hazard problems if they know that their own party will be on their neck when they diverge from the ideal party policies (Müller 2000: 313). Brehm and Gates (1997) sketch three moral hazard problems that can arise between parties and their agents: leisure-shirking, dissent-shirking, and political sabotage. Firstly, with regard to ministers, leisure-shirking refer to situations in which the ministers can not be bothered with doing what it takes to implement wanted party policies. For example, ministers will have to work harder on getting the party policy through when there are strong preferences within their department. Hence, it might be attractive for ministers to "subscribe to the conventional wisdom of their departments rather than work day and night to push through party goals" (Müller 2000: 321).

Secondly, situations of dissent-shirking arise when ministers do not do their best to implement party preferences because they have different preferences themselves. In most cases, this would lead to a policy *status quo*, as they do not work actively against the

party, but not actively for it either (Müller 2000: 321). Examples of dissent-shirking are hard to come by, because there seldom is a change in policy when it happens.

Finally, sabotage occurs when a minister does not agree with the party line, and chooses to act against it (Brehm and Gates 1997: 30). For example, when the Minister of Health, Anne-Grete Strøm-Erichsen (Labor Party), in 2010 withdrew the government's promise of building a hospital in Molde, some members of the Labor Party threatened with resigning from the party – and some actually did resign – because they could not be members of a party that acted against its own program (Viseth and Therkelsen 2010).

How does this relate to the minister's principals? I would argue that the same categories will apply here. Given that party leaders are the cabinet principals that dismiss ministers, they are the ones who has to act on behalf of the party in cases where ministers shirk or sabotage enough to be sanctioned or dismissed.

## 2.2 Ministerial durability

In section 1.1, I shortly outlined some of the expectation on ministerial durability in the Norwegian case. Here, I will handle some of the most relevant findings in the ministerial durability literature more thoroughly, and based on its findings deduct hypotheses for this thesis. The literature can be divided up in three parts: one empirical case-based part, situated in the field of comparative politics (for example Berlinski et al. (2012), Bucur (2013), Bucur (2015), Fischer, Kaiser and Rohlfing (2006)), one descriptive part on Norwegian ministers and cabinets (for example Strøm (1994), Eriksen (1997), Narud and Strøm (2011)), and media studies on ministerial resignations and scandals in Norway (for example Allern and Pollack (2009), Enli (2011), Brurås (2003)). In the following sections, I will look to these contributions in determining what to expect from the Norwegian case structured sectionally by ministerial performance, political experience, cabinet specific attributes, and personal characteristics.

### 2.2.1 Performance

In section 2.1, I presented how delegation always comes hand in hand with accountability in parliamentary democracies; politicians are "checked and controlled, and if necessary removed, if their behavior or performance in office is unsatisfactory" (Müller et al. 2003: 4). It is, however, not straightforward to know how well politicians perform, and even

less how to measure ministerial performance. Furthermore, few attempts have been made at defining a proper systematized concept for ministerial performance. Hence, I use the following definition as a basis:

*Ministerial performance is the level of (dis)satisfaction over how ministers execute their cabinet duties.*

In this thesis, I use resignation calls from political and non-political actors as a measure of ministerial performance, which is the main measure for exploring whether party leaders hold their ministers accountable for bad performance. This means that ministerial performance is bad whenever a political or non-political actor actively wants the minister removed, but good whenever all actors passively wants the minister to retain his post. Arguably, resignation calls capture the definition I use fairly well, but it should be noted that ministers not getting resignation calls are not automatically performing well (see Chapter 7), something my approach does not capture. The article by Fischer et al. (2006) on ministerial resignations in Germany was one of the first papers to utilize resignation calls empirically. They used resignation debates occurring in the first two pages of the *Frankfurter Allgemine Zeitung* as a measure of performance (Fischer et al. 2006: 713), and found that the Federal Chancellor and the minister's own party were the decisive actors in determining whether a minister should face dismissal or not (Fischer et al. 2006: 730).

In an approach closer to this thesis, Berlinski, Dewan and Dowding (2010: 559) introduce *resignation calls* as a performance measure. These are calls for resignation during the minister's tenure, as reported by the media. More specifically, when "someone in Parliament, media, or some nonpolitical organization suggest the minister should resign, then it is defined as a 'resignation call'" (Berlinski et al. 2010: 559). Their findings are clear; with regard to individual responsibility, the more resignation calls a minister gets, the more likely he is to be dismissed (Berlinski et al. 2012: 165-166). On the other hand, cumulative calls for resignation in the cabinet as a whole also increase the hazard for the individual ministers. This means that there is a strong sense of collective responsibility as well: some ministers will have to fall as a consequence of bad government performance (Berlinski et al. 2012: 166).

Finally, Bucur (2013) uses resignation calls, in a similar manner as Berlinski et al. (2012), as a performance measure on three semi-presidential systems: France, Portugal, and Romania. She finds that resignation calls is a strong predictor of "ministerial deselection under unified executive and cohabitation, but not under divided executive" (Bucur 2013: 247). In other words, on the one hand, performance matters when the President and the PM are representatives of the same party (unified executive) or when the president does not represents the government party (cohabitation) (Bucur 2013: 7). On the other hand, performance is less important when the president represents one of the governing parties, but the PM represents a different party (divided executive) (Bucur 2013: 7). Based on these three studies, the following hypothesis regarding performance (measured in resignation calls) is:

*__H1a:__ The more resignation calls a minister gets, the less durable will she/he be.*[2]

The approaches described above are mainly based on pooled resignation calls. That is, all resignation calls are equally weighted and bundled up in one measure. This might be misleading because resignation calls can come from different political and non-political actors. Hence, I will also test whether resignation calls uttered by the opposition, the ministers' own party, and newspapers increase the dismissal rate equally. Firstly, one would expect that the frequent occurrence of minority governments is a factor increasing parliamentary power; minority governments need support from non-governmental parties to implement policies, and might thus influence the policy outcomes. Indeed, Strøm (1990: 207) argues that "[m]inority governments strengthen the role of the Storting". Apart from the period where the Labor Party had a majority of the seats in parliament, no single-party majorities have held office in post-war Norway. Thus, the opposition is expected to hold the cabinet and its ministers accountable:

*__H1b:__ Ministers that are called to resign by the opposition are less durable than ministers not called to resign by the opposition.*

Secondly, parties are important in Norway (Strøm 1994: 50). Both because ministers that engage in shirking or sabotage decrease the parties' ability to move policies from status quo to the ideal position (Müller 2000: 320) and because ministers are easier to

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[2]All hypotheses are also accompanied by a null-hypothesis of no effect.

remove than MPs (Müller 2000: 326), it is expected that resignation calls from members of the ministers own party will have consequences for the minister in question:

**H1c:** *Resignation calls from a minister's own party decrease the durability of that minister.*

Finally, media studies on political scandals in Norwegian politics can provide a general outline on what to expect on the role of the media. These studies have mainly focused on one or two scandals resulting in dismissal, or the role of the media in these cases more generally. Enli (2011), for example, has delved into the scandal leading to Manuela Ramin-Osmundsen's (Labor Party) dismissal after hiring a friend as Children's Commissioner. The main argument is that the scandal was a product of both a fierce media hunt, and a consequence of Ramin-Osmundsen being not only the first ethnic minority minister in Norwegian history but also a woman. Another example came in the aftermath of the Tønne case, where the former Minister of Health, Tore Tønne, committed suicide after a chain of missteps were uncovered by the media (Brurås 2003: 6-8). Both Hippe (2003) and Brurås (2003) points at the media handling of the case, and concludes that the media applied a one-eyed approach in covering the case, which eventually saw the case spinning out of control (Brurås 2003: 82). Several more studies cover different cases in the same manner (see for example Midtfjeld (2005); Seland (2000); Stordalen (2001)).

More general approaches have also covered how media cover scandals in Norwegian politics. Allern and Pollack (2009), for example, base their study on seven political scandal hypotheses, and find some evidence for all of them in the Norwegian context. Most interestingly, small moral wrongdoings often lead to a boom in media attention; scandals are mostly focused on individuals, but might also entrain institutions as the case progresses; the leading newspapers set the agenda and follow the scandal simultaneously; in Norway, the newspaper *Verdens Gang* (VG) is seen as the main initiator of political scandals; different media actors weigh different scandals distinctively according to their political history and ideological profile; the tolerance of moral standards are lower for women than for men; and the story often evolves into good versus evil, where the scandalous politicians are demonized (Allern and Pollack 2009: 197-203).

Hence, Norwegian media studies clearly agree that media plays a big role in political scandals. My aim is not to uncover the causes of political scandals, but rather how they

can effect ministerial deselection. I will do this by utilizing newspaper based resignation calls as an explanatory variable in the analysis, with the following expectation:

**H1d:** *Resignation calls from newspapers decrease ministerial durability.*

**Testing resignation calls**

To test whether resignation calls really measure performance, I will also do a secondary analysis in section 6.2 with resignation calls as the dependent variable. Neither of the studies discussed above have investigated whether some ministers are more prone to getting resignation calls than others – but because resignation calls are used as a proxy for ministerial performance, it is important to uncover whether they also inherit other ministerial characteristics than ministerial performance. Hence, both as a consequence of scarce literature on what resignation calls really measure, and because they are assumed to be a performance measure, the hypothesis for this analysis is:

**H1e:** *No observable ministerial attributes have an effect on resignation calls.*

This means that any attributes having certain effects on resignation calls will serve blows to it as a performance measure. That is not to say that they are *not* measuring performance, but rather that there is noise within the measure that could lead to biased inferences when using them as independent variables. This will, of course, be discussed more thoroughly in section 6.2.

### 2.2.2 Experience

Previous political experience has been utilized through various sets of explanatory variables in several studies on ministerial durability. Here, I will consider three types of political experience: previous cabinet experience, parliamentary experience, and experience from the youth organization of the ministers' party.

Studies that account for previous cabinet experience have generally found that the more experience a minister has, the more prone she/he is to dismissal. On the one hand, cabinet experience in Britain is found to increase the likelihood of dismissal, something Berlinski et al. (2012: 85) explains as a consequence of low general experience in British cabinets: "being a minister is a stage in a career, rather than a career itself" (Berlinski

et al. 2012: 85). On the other hand, Bucur (2013; 2015) argues, based on similar findings in semi-presidential systems, that "inexperienced ministers are less likely to enter into conflict with their principals than cabinet members who have held such highly pressured jobs for a longer period of time" (Bucur 2013: 221). A third explanation from the government electoral performance literature, that could also apply to individual ministers, is the "wear-and-tear" effect of being in government (Narud and Valen 2001: 9). Every explanation, though different, points in the same direction:

**H2a:** *The longer experience ministers have from previous cabinets, the less durable the minister is in the current cabinet.*

A number of studies have also found that ministers sit safer when they have previous parliamentary experience: Bucur (2013: 125) finds that ministers with parliamentary experience are less prone to be dismissed, than those with no legislative experience in France; Bäck, Persson, Vernby and Wockelberg (2009) finds the same for Swedish ministers, though these results are based on descriptive statistics; and Fischer and Kaiser (2010: 209) finds that ministers with parliamentary experience sit considerably longer than those with regional experience. Fischer, Dowding and Dumont (2012: 515) argues that this is a consequence of ministers having worked their way through the party, and thus proven themselves worthy before entering office. Nevertheless, as Norwegian cabinets are particularly low on previous parliamentary experience (Saalfeld 2000: 135), the hypothesis is the following:

**H2b:** *Ministers with previous parliamentary experience are more durable than ministers without such experience.*

The last type of political experience considered here is party experience. Bucur (2013: 213) uses party executive status and whether the minister is a local party leader as party experience measures. She finds that neither has any explanatory power on ministerial durability. Furthermore, data on these attributes were unavailable for the purpose of this thesis. However, recent findings suggest that experience from the party's youth organization increase the chance of parliamentary politicians to assume cabinet posts (Eilertsen 2014: 53). If we accept this experience as a measure of climbing the ladder of the party, one could further expect that ministers with youth experience know the party

line especially well, and are thus less likely to shirk or sabotage the policy wishes of their party. Hence, the hypothesis with regard to youth party experience reads as follows:

**H2c:** *Ministers with experience from the youth organization (national or local) of their party are more durable than ministers without such experience*

### 2.2.3 Cabinet

I discussed how the opposition is expected to have more influence under minority cabinets above, but to further account for the effect of being in minority, I will also use the parliamentary basis (minority versus majority) of the cabinet as an explanatory variable. Indeed, Norwegian majority cabinets on average retain office about one year longer than minority cabinets – a pattern that is also found in most other parliamentary democracies (Gallagher et al. 2011: 447). Berlinski et al. (2012: 83) found no effect of being in majority on ministerial durability, but British cabinets treated in that study were mostly majority cabinets. Hence, I expect that:

**H3a:** *Ministers serving under minority cabinets are less durable than ministers serving under majority cabinets.*

A second cabinet attribute that is relevant in Norwegian politics is coalitions versus single-party cabinets. I assume ministerial shirking and sabotage to be more frequent in coalitions than in single-party cabinets because the policy positions diverge more in coalitions (Bergman, Müller, Strøm and Blomgren 2003: 128), but very few coalition cabinets terminate because of policy differences between parties (Bergman et al. 2003: 128). Hence, it is plausible to argue that coalition cabinets rather replace drifting ministers than the more costly option of terminating the cabinet. Thus, the hypothesis regarding cabinet composition reads as follows:

**H3b:** *Ministers serving under coalition cabinets are less durable than ministers serving under single-party cabinets.*

### 2.2.4   Personal characteristics

So far, I have covered performance, experience, and cabinet specific measures, but individual non-political characteristics might also have an effect on durability and will thus be controlled for.

Meserve, Pemstein and Bernhard (2009: 1030) use age as a proxy for career ambition, and finds that younger members of the European Parliament are more likely to return to national politics than their elder colleagues. Similarly, age can be used as a proxy for career ambition within cabinets. The assumption is that the eldest ministers are not as hungry as younger ministers, and therefore perform worse. Indeed, age has been found to increase the likelihood of dismissal in Britain (Berlinski et al. 2012: 79), even though it has been argued that there is no reason for age to have an effect on ministerial durability (Dewan and Dowding 2005: 48). The hypothesis of age, based on the above assumption, is straightforward:

> **H4a:** *Ministerial durability decrease with age.*

Berlinski et al. (2012: 79) finds that female ministers sit safer than their male counterparts, and Norwegian cabinets are "famous" for their high proportion of female ministers (Narud and Strøm 2011: 228). Furthermore, the recruitment pool of women has been, and still is, quite small in relation to men (Eilertsen 2014: 39-40), and women are expected to at least occupy some of the posts in cabinet. Hence, women should be expected to be more durable than men.

However, female ministers have often met more skepticism than men when entering cabinet, especially from the 1940s throughout the 1970s. An interview by the Norwegian Brodcasting Corporation (NRK) with the newly assigned Sissel Rønbeck in 1979 illustrates this latter point, when a hostile reporter asks her upon entering cabinet: "do you have any knowledge of what this department really does?"[3]. As mentioned, media studies on scandals in Norwegian politics have also hinted at women being more easily demonized than men. It could thus be hypothesized that:

> **H4b1:** *Female ministers are less durable than male ministers*

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[3]The interview can be retrieved from `http://tv.nrk.no/serie/tilbake-til-70-tallet#t=4m41s`

Elite theorist generally believe that privileged elites have greater access to political power (Berlinski et al. 2012: 84), and British ministers with degrees from Oxford or Cambridge are found to have safer positions within cabinets than ministers with lower education (Berlinski et al. 2012: 79). The assumption is that education "capture some inherent characteristics of the minister such as acquired skills, latent ability or access to social networks" (Berlinski et al. 2012: 79). As for education in Norway, the country ranks low among parliamentary democracies when it comes to education levels of cabinet ministers (Narud and Strøm 2011: 229), although it is still quite high (see Chapter 4). Based on the assumptions described above, the hypothesis reads as follows:

*H4c: Ministers with lower education are more likely to be dismissed than ministers with high education.*

### 2.2.5 Reshuffles

Finally, cabinet reshuffles are used by principals as a tool for containing agency loss. Kam and Indridason (2005: 354-355) finds that reshuffles are used as a strategic device by the PM to dampen intracabinet conflicts. Ministerial reshuffles are thus assumed to either be a promotion to a more prestigious position after performing well, or a demotion to a less important post because dismissal is unwanted by the minister's party leader. As one of few that has investigated the relationship between tenure and reshuffles, Bucur (2015: 119) finds evidence of reshuffles being used as an instrument of promotion in France. The hypothesis regarding reshuffles is thus:

*H5: Reshuffled ministers are less likely to be dismissed than ministers that remain in the same post over the whole tenure.*

# 3 | Norwegian cabinet anatomy

In this chapter, I will firstly discuss the history of the post-war period by focusing on how the party system has developed from being dominated by the Labor Party to the coalition based governments of the present. Secondly, I go more into depth on the the cabinet as a collective, before I consider how the King, PM and party leaders influence cabinet work. Thirdly, I discuss some structural rules for getting cabinet posts and some of the responsibilities cabinet ministers have. Finally, I go over the main political parties in post-war Norway and then elaborate on how ministerial work is affected by their parties.

Generally, it is important to stress that the constitutional role of Norwegian cabinets is quite vague, and most of the tasks, roles, and powers it has are developed through constitutional common law (Smith 2014: 121), making it difficult to point out general assessments on cabinet anatomy; some aspects vary between cabinets and we generally do not know which issues are discussed, how they are discussed, and how the outcome is decided inside the cabinet.

## 3.1 Norwegian cabinet history

In line with Rasch (2004: 41), I record a new cabinet whenever there has been an election, a change of parties in cabinet, or a change of PM. By using this counting method, there are 30 cabinets in the period covered here – the number of cabinets across all cabinet party compositions and parliamentary basis is shown in figure 3.1.1. The main picture is that most cabinets in post-war Norway have been lead by the Labor Party, and that minority and single-party cabinets are more frequent than majority and coalition cabinets. The first six cabinets, as the only cases of majority single party cabinets, were lead by the Labor Party. This is commonly labeled as the *One Party State* (*Ettpartistaten*), which lasted until the fall of 1961, when the Labor Party lost majority in parliament. However, the definite end of the era came when the Gerhardsen VI cabinet had to resign over its

Figure 3.1.1: Cabinet composition and parliamentary basis.
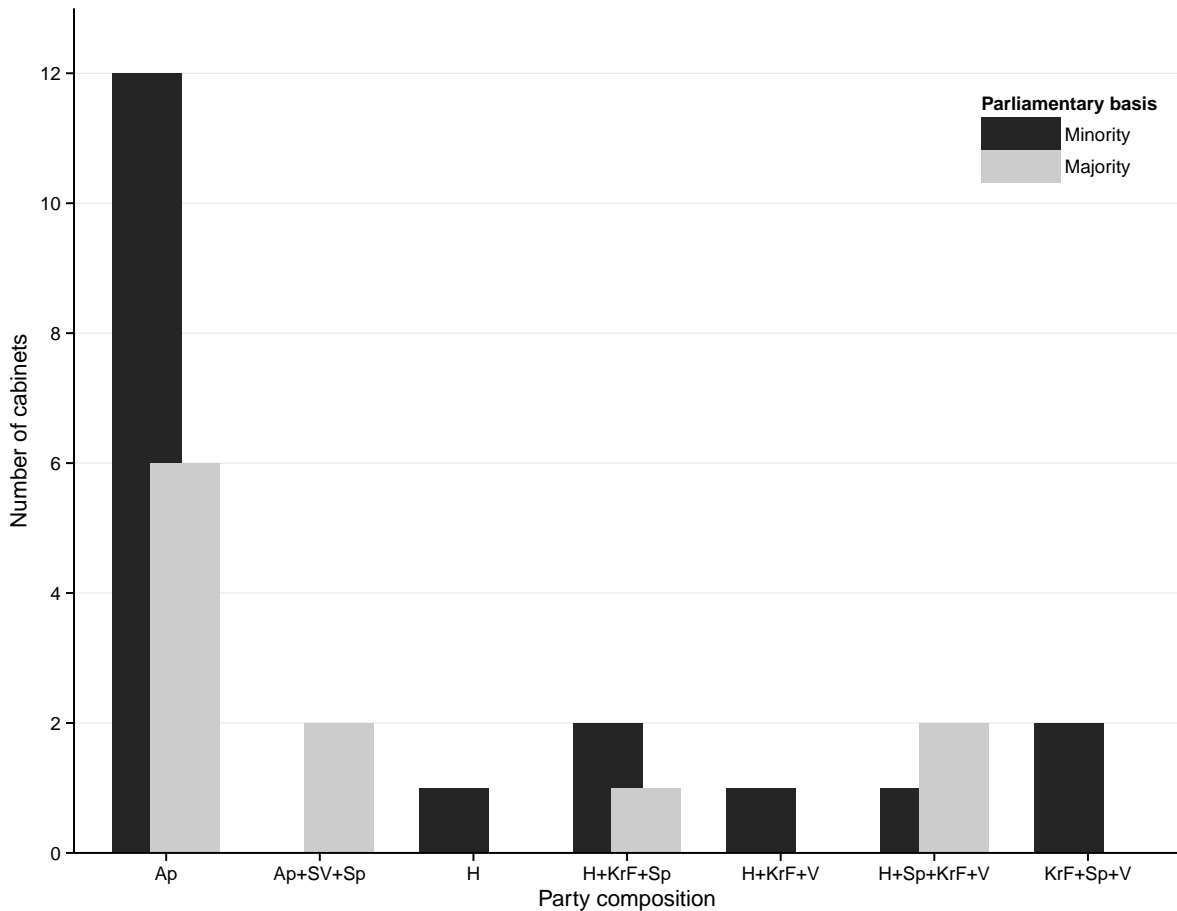


handling of a miner's accident in the Kings Bay mines on Svalbard (Rokkan 1966: 70). The newly formed Socialist People's Party (now called Socialist Left Party), who had two swing votes after the 1961 election, decided to vote in favor of a of a no-confidence motion, leading to the resignation of Gerhardsen's cabinet (Rokkan 1966: 71). Hence, a new era with moderate pluralism – a bipolar system where two blocks makes up the possible government formation alternatives – started (Sartori 1990: 336).

The transition to moderate pluralism also made way for coalition cabinets to form. When Gerhardsen's cabinet left office in 1963, the Lyng I cabinet was formed. This was the first post-war coalition; a center-right constellation including the *Høyre* (Conservatives), *Kristelig folkeparti* (Christian People's Party), *Venstre* (Liberal Party), and *Senterpartiet* (Centre Party). Though the Lyng I cabinet only lasted for 28 days, it was the start of a period lasting till 2005 where all cabinets were either minority Labor Party or centre-right coalitions (with exception of the Conservatives's single-party minority cabinet under the leadership of Kåre Willoch from 1981 to 1983). After the 2005 election, the Labor Party

went into its first coalition as they formed a cabinet that lasted for eight years together with the Socialist Left Party and Centre Party – a coalition popularly called the Red-Green coalition. Finally, after the 2013 election, the Red-Green coalition lost its majority, and the Conservatives went into negotiations with the Liberal Party, Christian People's Party, and the right wing *Fremskrittspartiet* (Progress Party). Eventually, a Blue-Blue coalition between the Conservatives and Progress Party sitting on the mercy of the centrist Liberal Party and Christian People's Party was formed. As interesting as it might have been to include this cabinet in the analysis, this latter cabinet falls out because it has not finished its period yet.

## 3.2   Cabinet as a collective

The cabinet is formally recognized through article 12 of the Constitution, which states that the *Council of State* should be a consist "of a prime minister and at least seven other members" (Strøm 1994: 41). More specifically, the executive leadership lies with the King, who is to take his decisions after hearing the advice of his Councilors (Eriksen 1997: 210). In practice, however, constitutional common law has made the King follow "the advice of the outgoing prime minister in designating a *formateur*" (Strøm 1994: 41), and he has not had any real influence over the formation process since 1905 (Rasch 2004: 101). As discussed in section 2.1.2, this means that the party leaders – consulted by other party members – decide who to appoint for cabinet duties.

Because coalitions are quite frequent in Norway, a note on how posts are distributed between the participating parties should be added. Narud (2000: 180-181) states that the *portfolio allocation* in Norwegian coalition cabinets in the post-war period has followed a universal pattern. The parties in the coalition gets a proportional amount of posts in the cabinet relative to the number of seats they occupy in parliament – a practice often referred to as Gamson's law (Warwick and Druckman 2006: 635-636). Indeed, this was clearly the case in the first three post-war coalition cabinets, where the posts were perfectly proportional to parliamentary seats. However, there has been an increasing tendency towards over-representing the small parties in the later governments. In the Stoltenberg II and III cabinets, the Labor Party got four and three posts less than they would have had with proportionality. Furthermore, the Conservatives fell one post short from perfect proportionality in the Willoch II, Willoch III, and the Bondevik II governments, while it

fell two posts short in the Syse I government. Overrepresentation of the smaller parties could mean that ministers from these parties sit safer because smaller parties are also expected to have fewer alternatives available in the recruitment pools (Saalfeld 2003: 353).

The cabinet convenes collectively in two different formats: cabinet meetings and King in Council. On Mondays and Thursdays, ministers meet in collective cabinet meetings where policy proposals are presented, discussed, and resolved (Strøm 1994: 41). The King in Council meetings on Fridays are mainly ritualistic, but this is also where Royal Resolutions (propositions for parliament) are formally signed by the King and PM (Strøm 1994: 41). Although disputes are resolved before the King in Council, the King can ask detailed questions on the proposals. This is illustrated in a documentary on Norwegian democracy from 1964, produced by NRK, where the Gerhardsen VII cabinet sits in the King in Council. The documentary shows the Minister of Local Government, Jens Haugland, nervously answering questions asked by the King on a compulsory arbitration proposition[1].

As the documentary exemplifies, ministers are responsible for the propositions developed under their jurisdiction, and usually present them both in cabinet meetings and King in Council. When several departments are involved in proposals, the relevant ministers meet to talk and resolve potential disputes before presenting the policy proposals (Strøm 1994: 45).

## 3.3 Cabinet leaders

In Chapter 2, I argued that party leaders can be seen as the main principal of cabinet ministers. At first glance however, the PM has a fair amount of formal power in Norway: the King and the PM has to sign all decisions by the King in Council, and the PM has an additional vote when the King is absent (Eriksen 1997: 219). This means that both the PM and the King has veto power on cabinet decisions, but in practice, this power has never been used by the PM (Strøm 1994: 42). Not using the power does, on the other hand, not mean that ministers do not have to position themselves according to it. The King has, for example, threatened to veto a proposition for removal of article 4 – stating that the King must have Christian faith – from the Constitution, which lead to

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[1]`http://tv.nrk.no/serie/norge-gjennom-150-aar/FOLA64002864/sesong-1/episode-5`

the withdrawal of the proposition (Lepperød 2008).

Furthermore, the PM has little formal power over her ministers and the Storting: she can "request information from any cabinet member, but cannot issue orders, change ministerial jurisdictions, dissolve Parliament, or, technically, dismiss ministers" (Strøm 1994: 42). The PM's strength has also varied somewhat between different personalities, depended on popularity, party strength, parliament basis, and powerful interest organizations (Eriksen 1997: 220). Einar Gerhardsen is regarded as one of the post-war PMs with a lot of influence over his cabinets, and was described as a tough, brutal and cynical leader when he did not get what he wanted (Borgen 1999: 291). Similarly, Kåre Willoch and Gro Harlem Brundland are believed to have been PMs with much power within their cabinets (Borgen 1999: 367, 387).

Despite the limited formal powers of the PM, she is still the head of the cabinet, and has the only constitutional described position (Eriksen 1997: 219). The department of the PM – the Office of the Prime Minister (*Statsministerens kontor*) – was established in 1956 and has remained quite small. Indeed, it was regular in pre-war cabinets to give the PM an additional department (Eriksen 1997: 219-220). This standard was long gone at the start of the period covered here, which means that the PM's single role is to be the head of the cabinet.

Literature on the role of party leaders in coalition cabinets is scarce, but they are rarely left out of coalitions and usually occupy the PM chair in single-party cabinets. Some exceptions do, however, occur. For example, after Audun Lysbakken resigned (see Chapter 1) from the Stoltenberg III cabinet, the Socialist Left Party did not have their party leader in a cabinet post. One particular attribute with coalition cabinets is the subcommittee or inner cabinet, usually consisting of the party leaders and the Minister of Finance (Strøm 1994: 50). The first inner cabinet was established in the Willoch II cabinet to resolve policy disputes between parties, and all coalitions since have made use of similar constructions (Kolltveit 2012: 32). However, Kolltveit (2012: 42) found, when examining the inner mechanics of the Bondevik II, Stoltenberg II, and Stoltenberg III cabinets, that there has been an increased concentration of power within coalition cabinets towards the inner cabinet. If anything, this strengthens the argument that party leaders can be regarded as the main principal of cabinet members from their party.

## 3.4 Cabinet members

In contrast to Britain, the qualification requirements for ministerial posts in Norway are fairly unrestricted. While British ministers must be elected to parliament to take up cabinet posts, their Norwegian colleagues do not need to meet such requirements. Instead, "it is considered much more desirable for cabinet members to have good interest-group ties than to have parliamentary experience" (Strøm 1994: 43). Indeed, cabinet members are constitutional restrained from holding cabinet office and occupy a seat in parliament at the same time (Rasch 2004: 88). About half of the ministers in the post-war period start in their post with no previous parliamentary experience, and the median number of parliamentary periods for all cabinet members is one. This makes Norway one of the parliamentary states with the least amount of experience with regard to previous parliamentary positions for sitting ministers (Saalfeld 2000: 359).

In terms of ministerial responsibilities, most cabinet members in post-war Norway have been head of their own departments, though there have also been a few ministers without portfolio and some with specific responsibilities within one or several departments. Eriksen (1997: 221) argues that ministers wear two hats: "they are members of the cabinet as well as departmental heads". But, ministers are believed to generally give more effort to their role as departmental leaders than the role as cabinet members (Eriksen 1997: 221). In some cases, and especially when heading particularly strong departments, the minister might "go native" – policy preferences get moulded by the institution (Andeweg 2000: 391) – and start leisure-shirking and/or dissent-shirking.

## 3.5 Political parties

Norwegian cabinets are party cabinets; all ministers in post-war Norway have been members of a party. At the end of the period treated in this thesis, there were seven parties in the Storting. From left to right on the ideological scale, these are: Socialist Left Party, Labor Party, Centre Party, Christian People's Party, Liberal Party, Conservatives, and Progress Party (Narud and Strøm 2011: 202) – all of whom have participated in cabinet (though the Progress Party first participated in cabinet after the period covered by this thesis). The cabinets have, as mentioned, mainly either been single-party Labor Party cabinets, or center-right coalitions (Strøm 1994: 39).

Normative studies on the existence of political parties are generally "overwhelmingly positive about political parties having a stake in democratic governance" (Müller 2000: 312). Jones and Hudson (1998: 176) argues that this is the case because parties increase efficiency (reduce transaction costs), meaning that they are more capable of making decisions than individual representatives would be: in democratic systems where each MP has to follow an *every man for himself* approach, bargaining would happen on an issue to issue basis, where few members agree on any of them (Strøm 2003: 57). Furthermore, Müller (2000: 314-316) argues that parties reduce collective action problems, because they "establish an institutional arrangement – party organization – which allows the monitoring of the other party members in order to ensure that they indeed contribute to the collective goal".

Even though party leaders are seen as principals of ministers, the political parties themselves also play a key role for the work of Norwegian ministers. However, it is often difficult to assess the role of parties in parliamentary systems because they are seldom mentioned explicitly in the constitution (Müller 2000: 310), but they play a pivotal role in the political life of parliamentary democracy. For example, in Norwegian general elections, voters vote on parties rather than individual politicians, and the parties themselves prepare the lists of representatives from each constituency. There are ways for voters to alter the lists by giving extra votes for candidates they like or rearrange the list to their preference, but this rarely leads to any significant alterations (Narud and Valen 2007: 64-66).

Parties also play an important role in containing agency loss within cabinets. Mostly this happens *ex-ante* through contract design, screening, and selection; the party organization can groom its members through party activities to limit the possibility for drifts, but also provide an arena for party members to prove themselves as loyal and capable politicians. Additionally, ministers are embedded in their party through local or national work, and hiring party members without long-standing positions within the party has usually been frowned upon (Strøm 1994: 50). As for containing agency loss *ex-post*, parties often rely on the party leader, who has better and more easily accessible information than the party organization, to monitor ministers (Müller 2000: 328-329).

# 4 | Methods and data

In this chapter, I start by going over some of the basics regarding event history analysis, and especially the upsides and downsides with using the semi-parametric Cox PH model, before I proceed by explaining how the data on ministers and resignation calls were collected.

In the remaining part of the chapter, I provide variable operationalizations and basic descriptive statistics for the variables used in the analysis. Furthermore, some bivariate measures are given to get a better picture of how these variables look over time and structural attributes. To match the structure from Chapter 2, I group these sections into five types of attributes: performance, experience, cabinet specific, personal characteristics, and reshuffles. Additionally, I add a short section on jurisdictions, which is used a frailty term in the analyses.

## 4.1 Event history analysis

Luckily, studies on ministerial durability came along late enough to dodge the debate on whether duration or dismissal is the most important thing to investigate, as happened in the government survival literature during the 1990s (Laver and Shepsle 1998: 30); event history analysis takes both into consideration. At the most general level, event history analysis (or survival analysis) is a method for estimating how variables affect duration and event[1]. One of the major benefits of event history analysis over more standard linear regression models is that it takes censoring and truncation into consideration. Censoring, which is especially relevant here, occurs when a unit survives until we stop recording it (Box-Steffensmeier and Jones 2004: 16). In line with the cabinet counting rules discussed in Chapter 3, I stop recording the minister's duration whenever he survives until an

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[1]In biostatistics, the event is often death and the duration is survival time (Box-Steffensmeier and Jones 2004: 7). Here, the event is ministerial dismissal, and duration ministerial tenure.

election, the PM is replaced, or the party composition of the cabinet changes. Hence, all ministers that retain their post until one of these events occur are right-censored – they are not observed as the same unit anymore, and if they remain in their position after the change, their duration is reset. There are two reasons for doing this. Firstly, individual ministerial dismissal is the only event type of interest in the thesis; ministers that fall together with the cabinet is a different and, in this case, uninteresting event type. Secondly, after one of the above described shifts, surviving ministers are seen as successful, and should not contribute to the failure rate[2]. Some ministers are replaced after these changes occur, and the reasons for such resignations could, among others, be other/better job offers (Erik Brofoss became central bank governor after leaving his cabinet post), retirement, or wanting to step down as politicians.

Furthermore, the Cox PH model is preferable to parametric models, such as the Weibull model, because parametric models depend on assumptions about the shape of the baseline hazard. That is, parametric survival models make different (dependent on the model) assumptions about when the units of analysis are more at risk. There is no sensible way of assuming when ministers are more at risk of being dismissed; they could be safe today and dismissed tomorrow if, for example, some hidden action suddenly is revealed. The Cox PH model dodges this prerequisite by leaving the baseline hazard undefined. Furthermore, as table 4.2.1 shows, only 16% (98 units) are dismissed, meaning that the remaining 527 ministers are right-censored. This puts even more restraints on the model choice; with a high level of right-censoring, parametric models gets an inflated intercept. Because the Cox PH model leaves the baseline hazard unspecified, also the intercept is left unspecified (Box-Steffensmeier and Jones 2004: 47). This marks one of the major drawbacks with the Cox PH model; there is no way of assessing and predicting time with the Cox PH model because the absence of the intercept makes all variable effects relative. However, as the main interest here is how different factors affect ministerial durability, not predicting duration, the Cox PH model is adequate.

The most important assumption in the Cox PH model is the proportional hazards

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[2]As Box-Steffensmeier and Jones (2004: 18) notes, it is evident that right-censored units does not contribute to the failure rate in the duality of the likelihood for the sampled observations in survival analysis, where $t_i$ is observed until $t_i*$ and then right-censored:

$$\mathcal{L} = \prod_{t_i \leq t^*} f(t_i) \prod_{t_i > t^*} S(t_i^*)$$

assumption, which assumes that the hazard ratio of all independent variables are fixed over the entire duration (Box-Steffensmeier and Jones 2004: 48). I will discuss the proportional hazard assumption in more practically terms when utilizing the Cox PH model in the next chapter.

Finally, I include a frailty term for jurisdiction (department). Frailty terms are used in event history analysis to account for groups that are more or less prone to "die" by including a random effects term in the hazard (Box-Steffensmeier and Jones 2004: 163) – an approach that is parallel to standard random effects models.

## 4.2 Data collection

### 4.2.1 Ministers

The data[3] used for the thesis can be split into two different sections: one for fixed ministerial characteristics upon entering cabinet, and one for resignation calls. I collected most of the fixed characteristics part of the data manually,[4] and supplemented with birthdays from the NSD-data on Norwegian ministers (Munkejord 2007). Previous parliamentary experience and youth party experience was gathered from the study by Eilertsen (2014), while cabinet level attributes, originally used in Rasch (2004), was kindly shared by Bjørn Erik Rasch. The resignation call collection will be described more thoroughly below, but descriptive statistics of the variables used in the thesis are provided in table 4.2.1.

An important note is that the first post-war Minister of Defense, Jens Christian Hauge, has been excluded from all analyses. The reason is simple; Hauge's inclusion in the model skewed the results heavily because he received eleven resignation calls in his first period – almost double of the second highest occurrence of six resignation calls. Hauge was met with much skepticism because he was young and had strong opinions on how to modernize the military after the war. Especially after a fallout with four generals, in what was coined the *Hauge-Helset* scandal (Verdens Gang 1948), Hauge received a bunch of resignation calls. With Hauge included in the model the proportional hazard assumption was always violated, and he was easily identified as an outlier. Additionally,

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[3]The data and documentation is available either through `https://github.com/martigso/ministersNor`, or for R-users by installing the package *martigso/ministersNor* directly from GitHub

[4]All the cabinets and their ministers can be easily accessed at `http://www.regjeringen.no`. Data on education and gender was gathered `https://www.stortinget.no/`

Table 4.2.1: Descriptive statistics

| Variable | Class | N | Mean | St.Dev | Min | Median | Max |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Duration | Numeric | 625 | 615.107 | 376.998 | 6 | 580 | 1527 |
| Event | Dichotomy | 625 | 0.157 | - | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Resignation calls (RC) | Count | 625 | 0.472 | 0.985 | 0 | 0 | 6 |
| Time (logged) | Numeric | 625 | 3.193 | 1.435 | -5.901 | 3.582 | 4.203 |
| RC opposition | Dichotomy | 625 | 0.126 | - | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| RC own party | Dichotomy | 625 | 0.077 | - | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| RC newspaper | Dichotomy | 625 | 0.117 | - | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Cabinet exp. | Numeric | 625 | 1.841 | 2.59 | 0 | 0.523 | 17.199 |
| Parl. exp | Dichotomy | 625 | 0.478 | - | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Youth exp. (central) | Dichotomy | 625 | 0.083 | - | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Youth exp. (local) | Dichotomy | 625 | 0.194 | - | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Cabinet type (majority) | Dichotomy | 625 | 0.371 | - | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Cabinet structure (coalition) | Dichotomy | 625 | 0.382 | - | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Age | Numeric | 625 | 49.035 | 8.098 | 29 | 49 | 73 |
| Gender (female) | Dichotomy | 625 | 0.267 | - | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Education (lower) | Dichotomy | 625 | 0.19 | - | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Reshuffle | Dichotomy | 625 | 0.067 | - | 0 | 0 | 1 |

PMs are excluded because they, as a consequence of recording new cabinets after a change of PM, only fall together with the cabinet, and never individually.

### 4.2.2 Resignation calls

Due to a lack of a detailed description on the resignation call collection in similar studies, the framework for the collection here is quite independent. A resignation call is, similar to Berlinski et al. (2012), seen as questions asked by any actor that a minister should resign, as reported in the newspaper *Verdens Gang.* This means that whenever an actor – both political and non-political – demands that a minister should resign, I record it as a resignation call against that minister. Furthermore, I record the resignation calls into categories for which actors they came from. Firstly, resignation calls from the opposition were recorded whenever a member of the opposition in parliament asked the minister to resign. Secondly, resignation calls from the minister's own party was recorded whenever a member of a cabinet party asked for the minister's dismissal. Finally, I record a resignation call as coming from the newspaper when an editorial or author of an article demands that a minister should be dismissed.

Ideally, more than one newspaper should have been used for cross-reference, but three main limitations contributed to only using *Verdens Gang* for collecting resignation calls: the paper has been political independent throughout the post-war period; it is the only

paper that is easily accessible with good search mechanics all the way back to 1945; and, it has been identified in media studies as the main initiator of political scandals (Allern and Pollack 2009: 200), which makes it especially suitable for the purpose at hand.

Luckily, compared to the resignation call studies discussed in Chapter 2, the newspaper I use is available digitally, through the well-functioning media search engine ATEKST provided by Retriever. A list of eighteen key words – found in appendix A – was developed before the collection was started. The search strings consist of the minister's surname combined with all of these key words one by one. Indeed, the whole resignation call collection involved reading over ten thousand articles, making this an important but very time consuming task. To make the collection as open as possible, I included a short description of each resignation call and links to the articles they occurred in as columns in a separate data set – though a license at Retriver is necessary for opening the links[5].

## 4.3   Variable operationalization

### 4.3.1   Duration and event

The dependent variable in this analysis is a combination of ministerial duration and ministerial dismissal. Ministerial duration is measured as the difference in days between start and stop of each minister from the start of the cabinet (see table 4.3.1). Table 4.2.1 shows that duration has a lot of variation – ranging from 6 days to 1 527 days, with a mean of 615 days. The event variable is dichotomous, where dismissed ministers are coded as 1 and right-censored ministers are coded as 0. As discussed, only 16% of the 625 units in the data lost their post due to dismissal.

Some special cases are also worth mentioning. Actual deaths are fairly straightforward to right-censor[6], because of their non-political nature, but leaves of absence pose a possible threat to the analysis: should these ministers be right-censored, or handled as dismissals that get a fresh start when they come back from a leave of absence? Or should their duration be summed up into one, excluding the period they were absent? I worked around this problem by recording two rows for these units with the cabinet start as origin, giving the data a (start, stop] structure (Box-Steffensmeier and Jones 2004: 100-101).  Two

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[5]These data are also available at `https://github.com/martigso/ministersNor`, or through the R-package *martigso/ministersNor* from GitHub.

[6]Five ministers are right censored because of death: Olav Bruvik (1962), Knut Frydenlund (1987), Sonja Ludvigsen (1974), Sven Oftedal (1948), Johan Jørgen Holst (1993)

examples from the data can illustrate the data structure:

Table 4.3.1: Extract of the data

|   | Last name | Start | End | Duration | Cabinet start | Cabinet end |
|---|-----------|-------|-----|----------|---------------|-------------|
| 1 | Fjeld | 1945-11-05 | 1947-12-06 | ( 0, 761+] | 1945-11-05 | 1950-01-10 |
| 2 | Fjeld | 1948-03-06 | 1950-01-10 | (852,1527+] | 1945-11-05 | 1950-01-10 |
| 3 | Storberget | 2009-10-21 | 2011-01-01 | ( 0, 437+] | 2009-10-21 | 2013-09-30 |
| 4 | Storberget | 2011-03-31 | 2011-11-11 | (526, 751] | 2009-10-21 | 2013-09-30 |

The first two rows of table 4.3.1 represents the Minister of Agriculture, Kristian Fjeld, in the first Gerhardsen cabinet after the war. Fjeld was reported to struggle both with bad health and getting his views taken seriously by the Minister of Finance, Brofoss (Verdens Gang 1947). The combination of these factors lead him to take a three months long leave of absence, before re-entering the cabinet and sitting throughout the period. The third and fourth row represents Knut Storberget's ministerial duties under the Stoltenberg III cabinet. Storberget went into a paternity leave at the start of 2011 that ended on the last day of March the same year. As Minister of Justice, Storberget was under heavy fire for the lack of emergency preparedness of the police after the July 22 terrorist attacks, and resigned in mid November. The most important thing to notice here is the duration variable: for the first record of both ministers the cabinet start date is identical with their individual start date, making the start of the duration variable 0. Both Fjeld and Storberget then took a leave of absence after 761 and 437 days, respectively, and the plus sign marks that the ministers are right censored. Hence, the two leaves of absence and Fjeld's second row (for sitting throughout the Gerhardsen II cabinet) are right-censored. Storberget did not survive the full cabinet time, and his dismissal is therefore recorded as an event (no plus sign). Consequently, row 1, 2, and 3 contribute only to the survival rate, while row 4 contributes to the failure rate as well.

With high requirements for dismissal, it is unsurprising that there are more right-censored units in the data than events. This is illustrated in figure 4.3.1, where the light cyan line shows that most cabinets have had between zero and nine resignations. One cabinet – Nordli II – stands out as an exception with 14 dismissals. This was in most part a consequence of Nordli wanting to position "his own people", rather than the previous members of the Bratteli II cabinet. It is also interesting that all cabinets with no ministerial dismissals are minority cabinets and mostly short lived (Lyng I, Bratteli

Figure 4.3.1: Number of forced exits and censored ministers across cabinets.
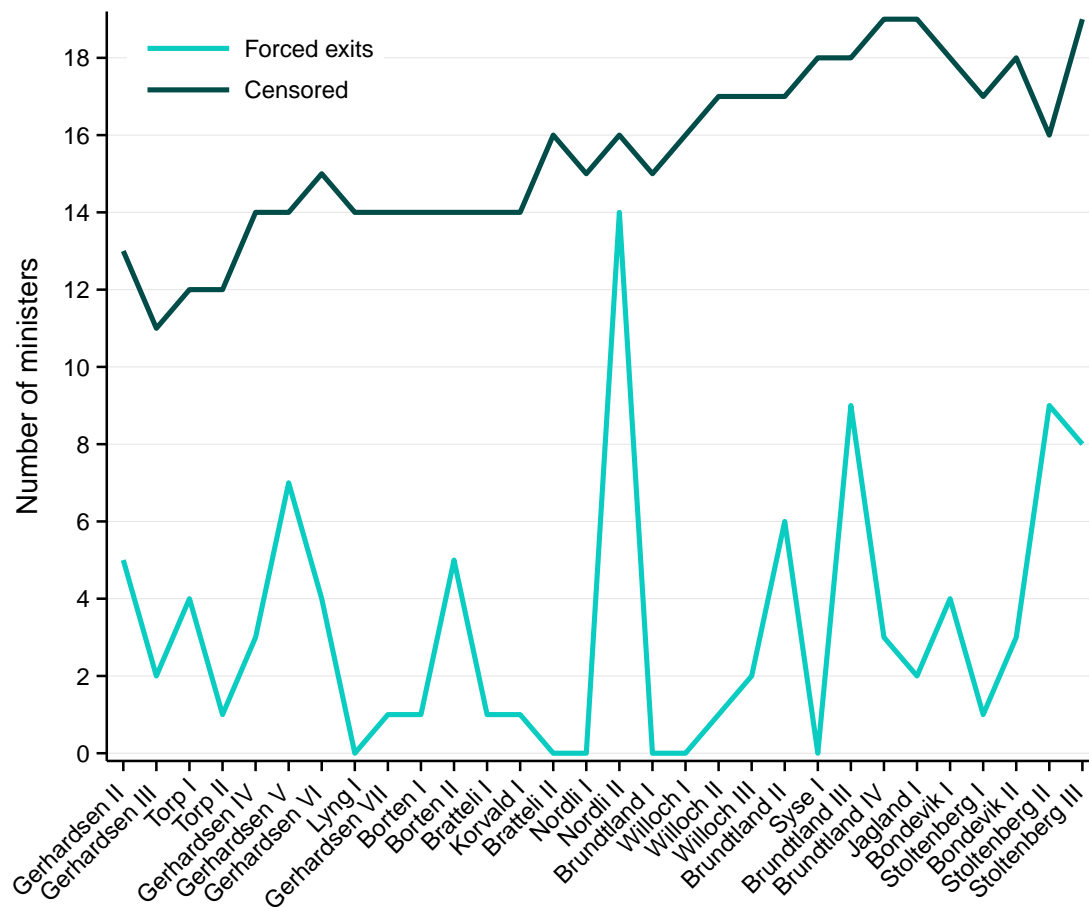


II, Nordli I, Brundland I, and Willoch I). The dark line of figure 4.3.1 also displays the amount of right-censored units in each cabinet, which gives a good picture of the small but steady increase in number of portfolios over the period.

### 4.3.2   Performance

Berlinski et al. (2010: 561) states that principals should reward or punish their agents according to their general performance; a minister not performing to the principal's expectations is likely to get the axe sooner, rather than later. But how can ministerial performance be measured?

As discussed, a common way to measure performance of ministers is through resignation calls; Berlinski et al. (2012: 2010), Bucur (2013: 2015), and Fischer et al. (2006) all use resignation calls for measuring performance, albeit in different ways. Firstly,

Berlinski et al. (2010) has a general approach, arguing that when "[...] someone in Parliament, media, or some nonpolitical organization suggests the minister should resign, then it is defined as a 'resignation call'" (Berlinski et al. 2010: 559). Secondly, Bucur (2013: 79-80) argues that there are four reasons to call for a minister's resignation: personal errors, departmental errors, policy disagreements, and breaches of collective responsibility by challenging a cabinet decision. However, pooled resignation calls are mainly used in the analyses. Lastly, Fischer et al. (2006: 713) use the term *resignation discussions* for resignation calls in their analysis of ministerial resignations in Germany. Their approach involves using a filtering mechanism of only considering the first two pages of the *Frankfurter Allgemine Zeitung.* The base for all these studies, however, is that someone questions whether the minister should continue in his post or not, and that this will tear on the principal's patience with the minister; ministers are found to be held accountable for not performing well. There is, of course, a difference between being criticized by any actor through the media and being sacked for bad performance – a minister might get several resignation calls, but the firing principal will still be the one to decide whether the infringement is big enough to sack the minister. However, as the inner mechanics of the cabinets are mostly hidden from the public, resignation calls can to some degree measure the minister's performance.

Particular for the resignation call measure is that it is an event variable: resignation calls are recorded during the tenure, whereas the other variables are observed when the minister is hired. The pooled resignation call measure has, as table 4.2.1 shows, a range between 0 and 6 resignation calls, and that the average minister gets just under a half resignation call during his tenure. However, the measure is skewed towards zero; 74% of the ministers have no resignation calls, and 89% have less than two resignation calls.

The points in figure 4.3.2 display the mean number of resignation calls for non-resignations and forced exits across all post-war cabinets, while the lines show the *loess smoothed* number of resignation calls over non-resignations and forced exits. Since this method will be used on several occasions, a brief explanation is necessary. The loess smoothing method adds a locally fitted regression line to the data by considering the values of $y_i$ and $x_i$ at several of the neighbors of $x_i$ on $x$ (Beck and Jackman 1998: 603),

Figure 4.3.2: Mean number of resignation calls across cabinets and forced exits.
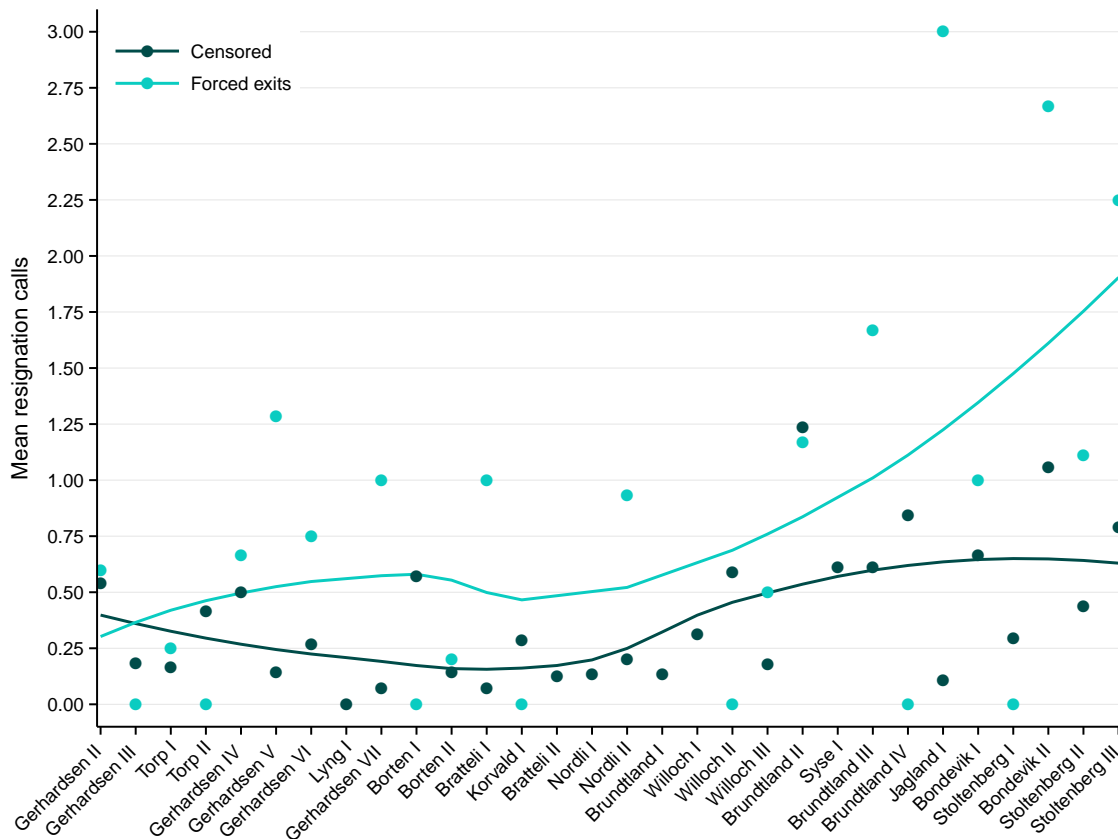


leading to a curved smooth line.[7]

The points of figure 4.3.2 shows that there is a lot of variation in the mean amount of resignation calls between cabinets. However, the loess curve shows that, in the immediate post-war period, the mean dismissed and censored ministers generally had under a half resignation call. Onwards, the censored ministers generally get less and less resignation calls until the Korvald I cabinet, while dismissed ministers get more resignation calls. From the last Willoch cabinet to the present, resignation calls for dismissed ministers have risen quite sharply, while the curve for surviving ministers flattens out at over a half resignation call. At the very end of the period, dismissed ministers generally have just under two resignation calls, while the surviving ministers generally receive well under one resignation call. It is quite interesting that there is both more divergence between resignation calls for ministers that are and are not dismissed, and that there are more

[7]How much the curve shifts depends on the amount of the neighbors are considered – how many neighbors on $x_{i \pm 1}$ that is taken into consideration on $x_i$. All plots used in this thesis applies a proportion of 0.75, allowing quite sharp turns in the curve.

resignation calls overall in the later cabinets. This will, of course, be discussed in the next chapter.

In extension of the pooled resignation call measure, I will explore whether the origin of the resignation call reveal more specific patters of when ministers are held accountable. The resignation calls are then divided up into groups according to who gave them: the opposition, newspapers, or the minister's own party. Resignation calls from the opposition are recorded whenever a member of one or more opposing parties in parliament demands a minister's resignation. Resignation calls that are found in editorials or speculations within newspaper articles constitute the newspaper category, while both calls for resignation by ones own party or a coalition partner are coded in the own party category. The pooled resignation call measure does, of course, include these resignation calls in addition to those from constituencies, experts, organizations, opinion polls, and more. However, these latter categories occurred too infrequently to handle as their own categories.

In figure 4.3.3, each minister is represented by one dot on each of the resignation call categories on the x-axis, while the y-axis shows boxes for the number of resignation calls in said categories. It is pretty clear that only pooled resignation calls have the necessary variation to be treated as a continuous variable here: the main bunch of ministers get no resignation calls, but a fair group also gets one and two during their tenure. Moving up the ladder, the points are more scarce, until the max of six resignation calls which were received by two ministers – Riis-Johansen in the Stoltenberg III cabinet, and Berget in the Brundtland IV cabinet.

The opposition, newspaper, and own party categories do not have the same amount of variation. Only 13% of the ministers have received resignation calls from the opposition, 8% from ones own party, and 12% from newspapers. There are a fair amount of ministers with one resignation call in each of them, but far less with two or more, compared to the pooled measure. Hence, to not violate the proportional hazards assumption in the Cox PH model, I recode these into dichotomous variables and interact them with the logged function of time for further analysis.[8] The time interaction variable is a bit unorthodox in survival analysis terms because it is the logged time difference between the date the minister started his cabinet duties and 1945. The reason for this approach is that I expect the opposition to have more influence after the *One Party State* and that newspapers give

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[8]I also ran models with these categories as continuous variables in separate analysis, but they did in fact violate the proportional hazards assumption.

Figure 4.3.3: Resignation calls from different actors.
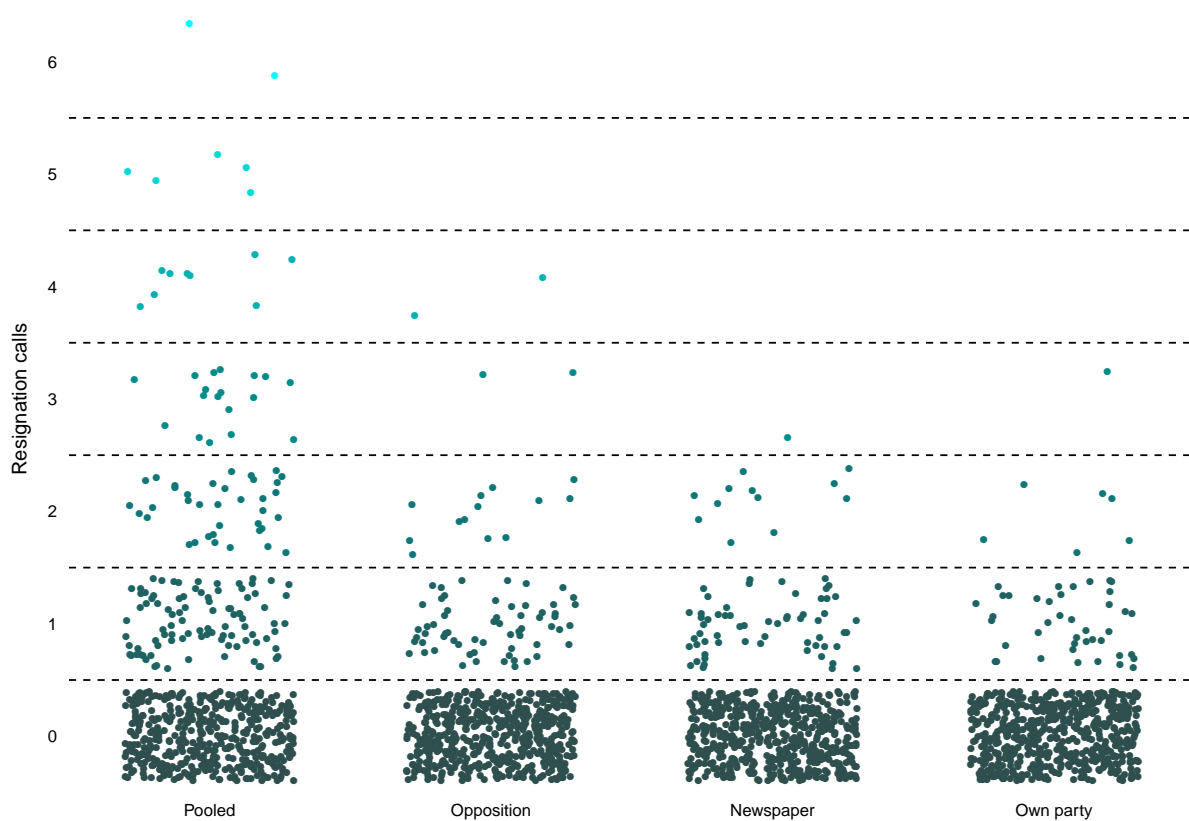


more resignation calls the closer to the present we go. Also, figure 4.3.2 gave the impression of resignation calls being more frequent in the latest part of the period.

Finally, there are some methodological problems associated with the use of resignation calls as a performance measure: they are at best proxies for performance, they vary in seriousness, their reliability can be low, and more. This will be discussed more thoroughly in the section 6.2 and Chapter 7.

### 4.3.3 Experience

As for political experience, both Berlinski et al. (2012) and Bucur (2013) control for previous cabinet experience, but use dummies to estimate this effect. There is no theoretical reason to argue that a minister with one year of experience will benefit as much from his experience as a minister with 10 years of cabinet duties on his back. Also, this variable is already latent in the data, and take no time to gather. Therefore, I measure cabinet experience in years by using the cumulative lagged duration of each minister. In other words, cabinet experience is the number of years a minister has been in previous cabinets upon entering the new cabinet. The variable has a range from zero to over 17

years, with a mean of 1.8 years. Because just over half of the ministers in the data have previous experience upon entering cabinet, the median is much lower – at about a half year.

As discussed in Chapter 2, cabinet experience could be expected to decrease the probability of getting fired at face value. However, I also discussed how ministers with cabinet experience are found to be more likely to leave office than minister with no experience in other studies. Figure 4.3.4 displays the mean and loess smoothed curve for previous cabinet experience of dismissed and censored ministers over the cabinets covered by the data. The experience is quite low in both categories for the first post-war Gerhardsen cabinet, which is natural considering new politicians were to a large degree entering national politics. The amount of experience raises quite sharply during the *One Party State*, indicating the cabinet stableness of the period; few ministers were replaced, and cabinet composition never changed. The curve is, however, somewhat lower because of the inexperienced Lyng I and Borten I cabinets. Experience is generally higher among the dismissed ministers (peaking at about 3.5 years in the early 1960s) than successful

Figure 4.3.4: Cabinet experience across cabinets and forced exits.
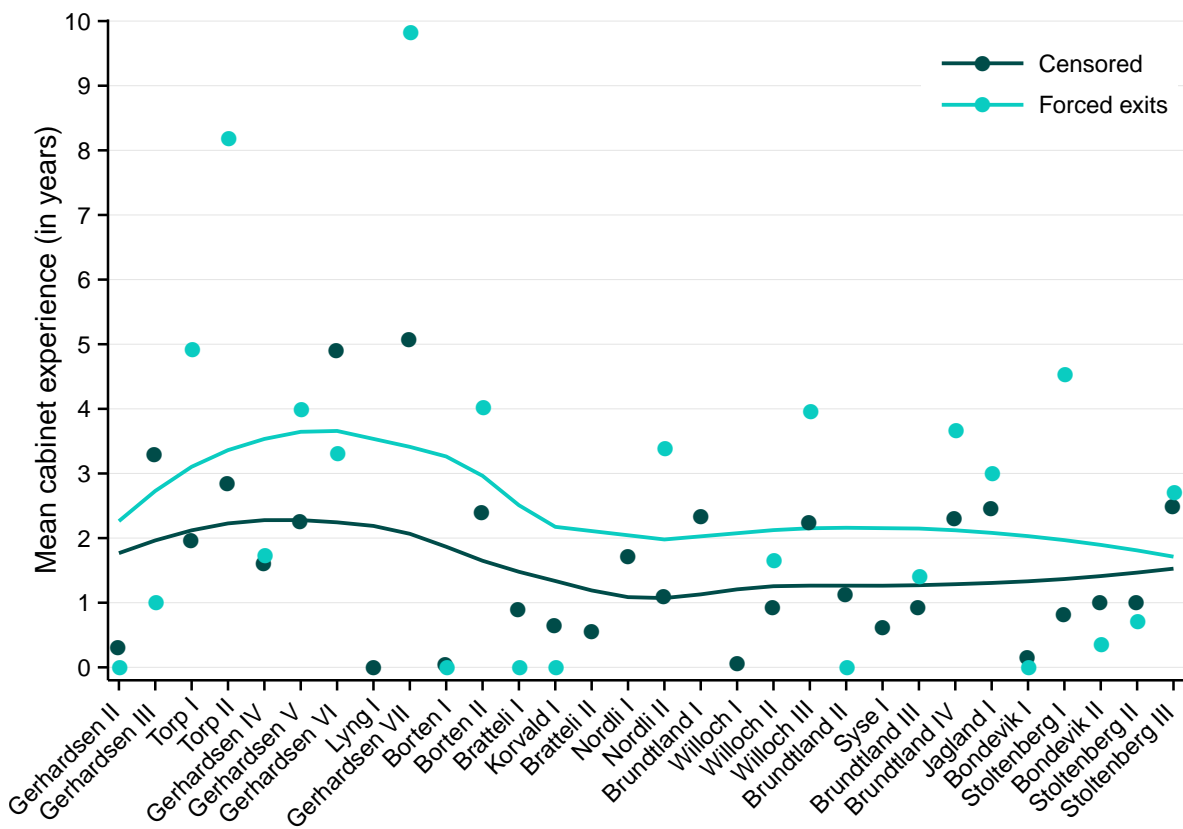
ministers (peaking at under 2 years in the late 1950s). Once the Lyng I coalition entered office, the shifts between Labor Party and non-socialist coalitions started, and experience naturally fell steadily as a consequence. Mean previous cabinet experience is remarkably stable from Korvald I to the end of the period, with only some low laying points (Willoch I, Brundtland II and Bondevik I) and a few high points, especially with regard to dismissed ministers (Nordli II, Willoch III, Brundland IV, and Stoltenberg I).

I also mentioned in section 2.2 that parliamentary experience was not included in the Berlinski et al. (2012) study and that Bucur (2013) finds some conflicting evidence of parliamentary experience having an effect on tenure. Here, parliamentary experience is coded as a dichotomous variable scoring 1 for ministers with parliamentary experience and 0 for ministers with no parliamentary experience. Recall that parliamentary experience among cabinet members is low in Norway. Indeed, as table 4.2.1 shows, just under 50% of the ministers have experience from parliament upon entering cabinet. Arguably, this variable could have been used as a continuous variable, similarly to the cabinet experience variable, but this method proved highly ineffective with regard to the proportional hazards assumption of the Cox PH model.

Figure 4.3.5 presents the number of ministers with and without parliamentary experience upon entering cabinet over forced exits and censored ministers, while the text indicates how many percent each bar represents relative to the total amount of

Figure 4.3.5: Parliamentary experience for censored ministers and forced exits.
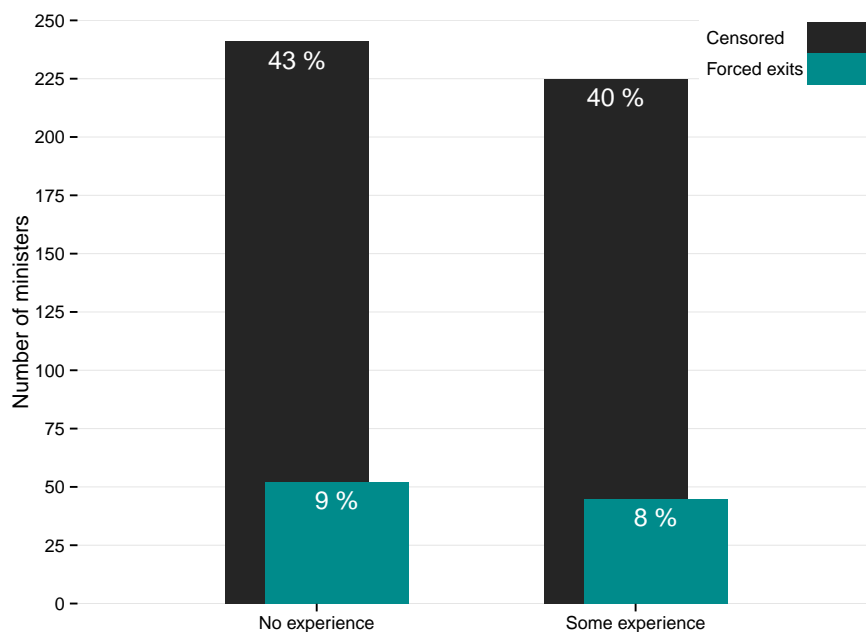
unique cabinet ministers in the data. It is evident that ministers with some parliamentary experience has about the same dismissal rate as their colleagues without experience, and that there is an approximate equal split in total between ministers with and without parliamentary experience.

The youth experience variable is a dichotomous measure, scoring one for experience (local or central/national) and zero for no experience. One issue with this variable is that the measure was only recorded for ministers with previous parliamentary experience. Hence, these are the hardcore party members that have been members since young age, risen through the party, eventually getting MP status, and finally getting a shot at cabinet duties.

Figure 4.3.6 displays the percent of youth party experience throughout the period within each party. The immediate thing to notice here is that the total (gray) and local (black) bars are at equal levels for all parties except for the Christian People's Party and Socialist Left Party. This means that, for the remaining parties, all cabinet members

Figure 4.3.6: Mean youth party experience across parties.



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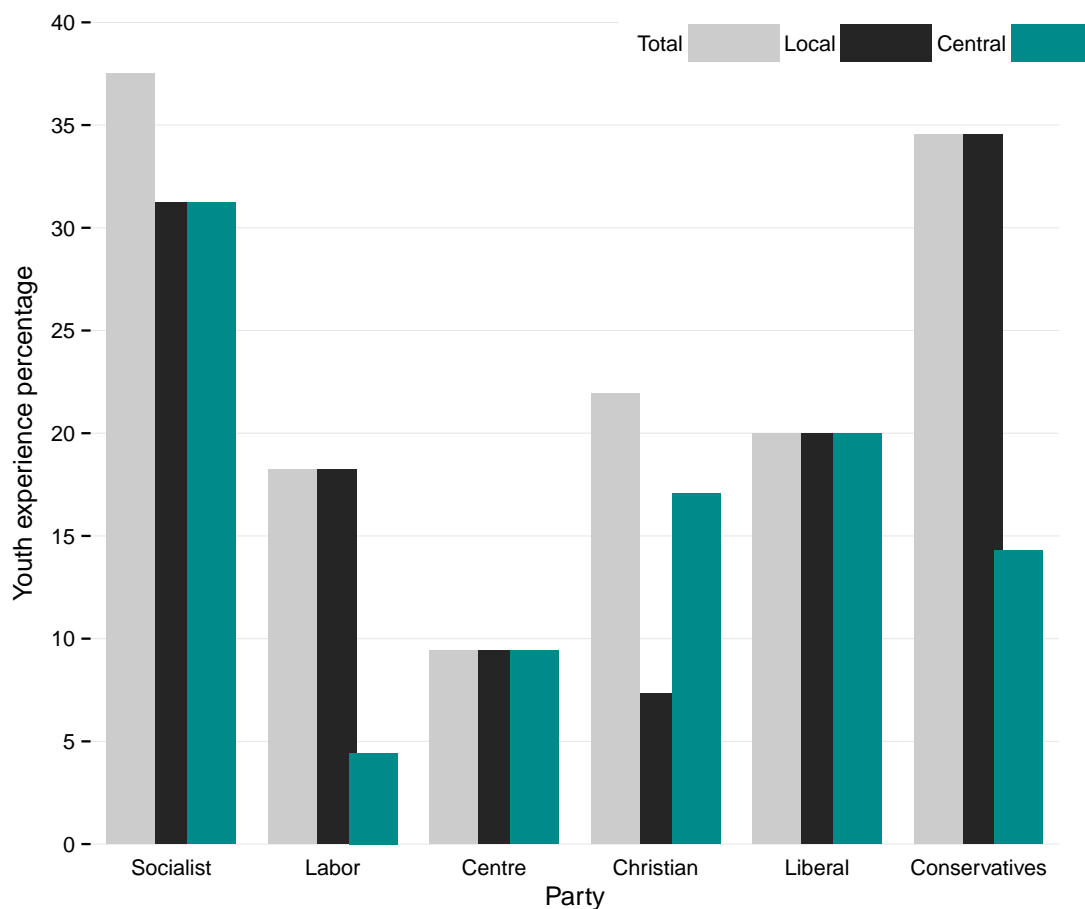
with youth experience have been members of a local youth organization, and that all ministers from these parties with experience from the central youth organization also have experience at the local level.

Furthermore, around 20% or more of the cabinet members in all parties (except the Centre Party) have had parliamentary and some youth party experience. The Labor Party has a surprisingly low proportion of cabinet members with central youth party experience (under 5%), which could mean that there is a high degree of power centralization among a small number of members, but this question goes beyond the scope of this thesis.
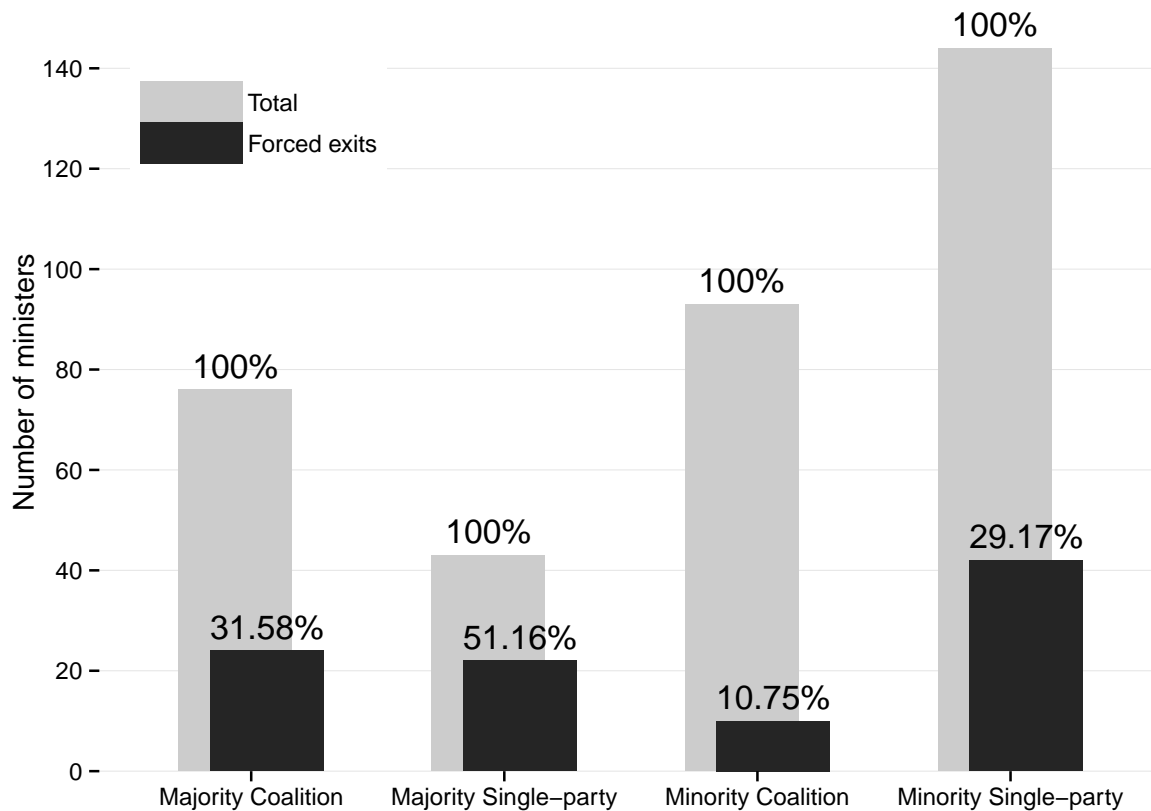
### 4.3.4 Cabinet characteristics

Even though all cabinets have the confidence of parliament as long as they are in position, parliamentary basis is likely to play a major role for cabinets and their ability to introduce wanted policies. In Chapter 2, I reviewed some of the findings in the cabinet survival literature, where evidence suggest that single-party and cabinets with majorities behind them in parliament are likely to survive longer than coalition and minority cabinets. Both the cabinet composition and parliamentary basis variables are dichotomous, where the cabinet type variable takes the value 1 for ministers in majority governments and 0 for those in minority governments. The cabinet structure variable is coded 1 for coalitions and 0 for single-party cabinets.

Figure 4.3.7 visualizes the number of ministers across the post-war period (gray bars) and number of dismissed ministers (black bar) over cabinet type and structure. Two patterns are interesting here. Firstly, majority cabinets have more dismissals per minister than minority cabinets. In single-party majority cabinets (the *One Party State*), over half of the ministers were fired, while 32% were dismissed in coalition majority cabinets. Secondly, minority coalitions have a substantially lower dismissal rate than all other compositions. This could, of course, be a consequence of coalitions being able to select only their best politicians. However, this does not explain minority single-party coalitions having a lower dismissal rate than majority coalitions. Cabinet duration, on the other hand, does provide a plausible explanation; minority coalition cabinets generally sit for a shorter amount of time than the other composition alternatives. Shorter cabinet duration means less time to engage in moral hazard, which in turn gives less time for dismissals.

Figure 4.3.7: Cabinet type over number of forced exits and total ministers.



### 4.3.5 Personal characteristics

**Age**

In Chapter 2, I justified controlling for age by arguing that it is a proxy for career ambition. However, using proxies can pose problems. Occupying a post in cabinet is a tiring task; ministers (mostly) have responsibility for an entire department, are under constant pressure from media, face demands from the population, and receive criticism from the opposition. It is sensible to argue that these stressful conditions could take its toll on any person, and older persons are more prone to getting sick than younger people. Indeed, a fair number of ministerial dismissals is caused by failing health. But, it is difficult to separate real health related dismissals from alleged health related dismissals.

Two examples might illustrate this point. For example, in May 1948, the Minister of Social Affairs, Sven Oftedal, went into a leave of absence after having health problems. A month later, he died of a heart attack only 43 years old (Johnsen 2009). Similarly, in mid June 2008, Åslaug Haga, the Minister of Petroleum and Energy, also took a leave of absence for health related issues, only to withdraw from her position six days after. In

the run-up to Haga's leave, a series of newspaper articles uncovered that she had illegally rented out a small storehouse. Whether the resignation came as a consequence of the leave or because of the "scandal" is impossible to know. Neither is it possible to certainly assert the differences between these two types of dismissals. Hence, inferences based on the age variable should be handled with caution – we are not totally sure that ambition is the only thing it measures.

Figure 4.3.8: Mean and loess smoothed age over cabinets.
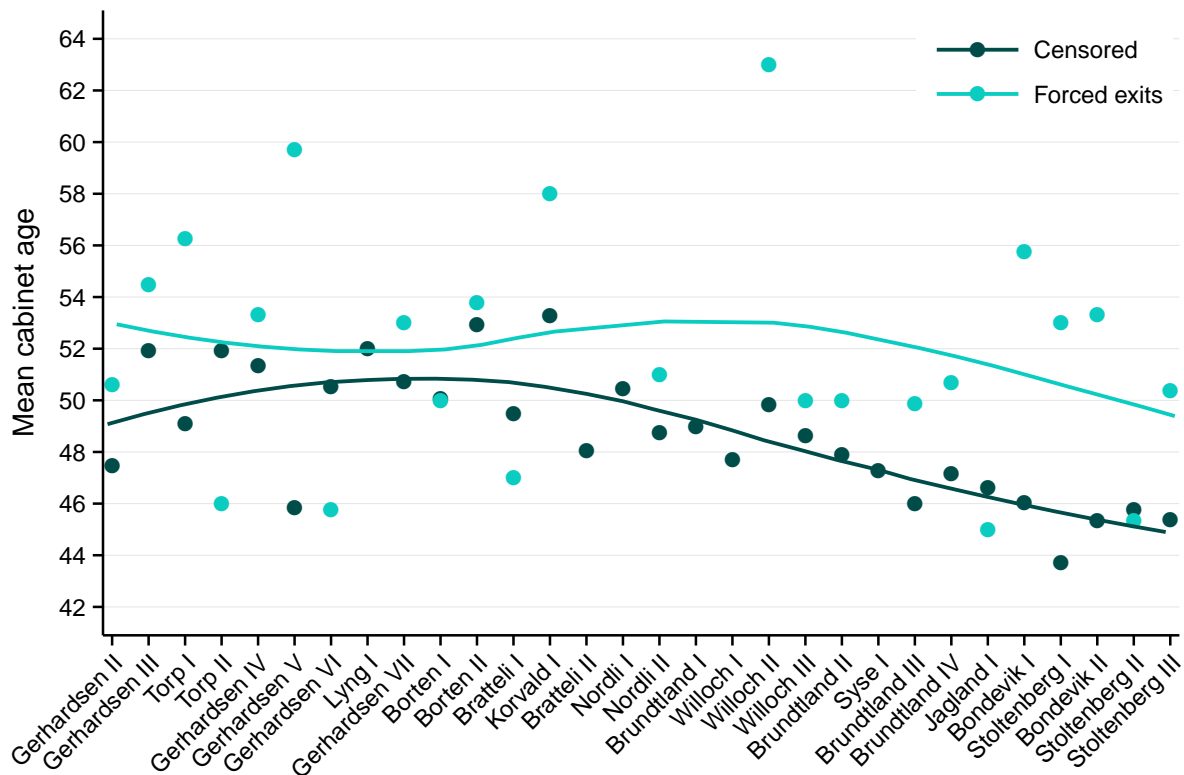


The age variable is recorded when the minister enters cabinet, has a mean of 49 years, and spans from the youngest minister, Hadia Tajik, 29 years old, to the oldest minister, Johan Ulrik Olsen at 73 years old. Figure 4.3.8 shows the mean age within each cabinet (points) and the loess smoothed trend curve for censored and dismissed ministers. It is clear from the plot that dismissed ministers generally are older than the surviving ministers. There is also some variation across time, with ministers in the first half of the period generally being older than those in the second half.

Figure 4.3.9: Percentage of female cabinet ministers in each cabinet.
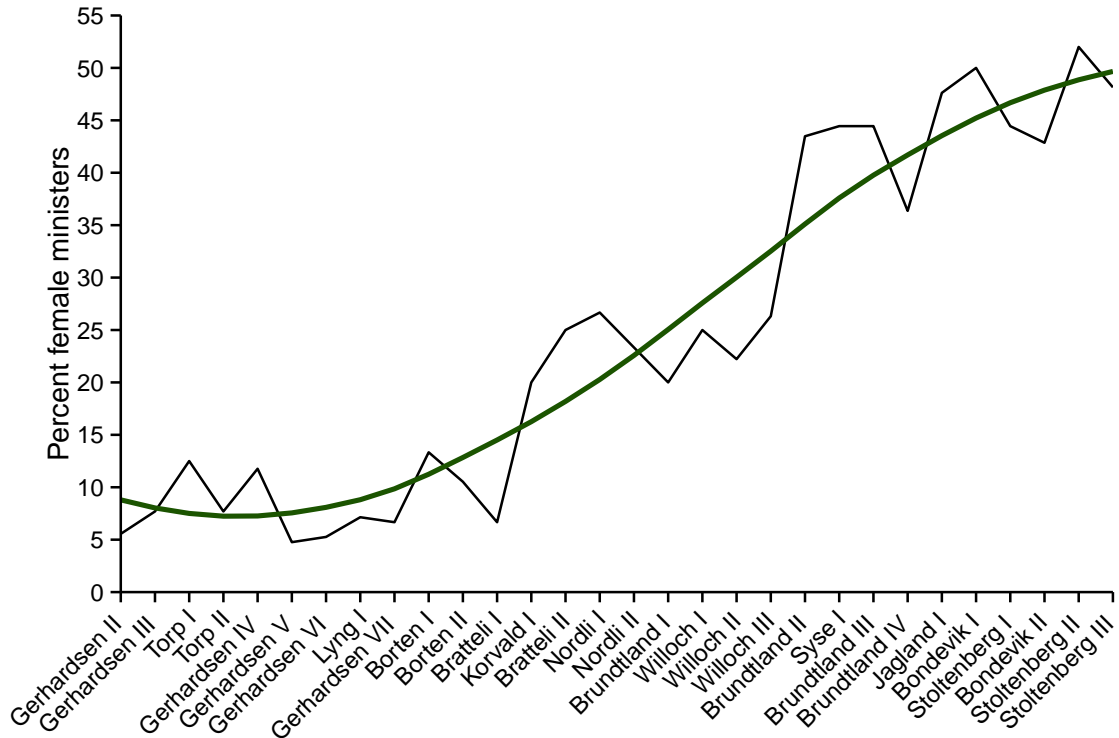


**Gender**

The dichotomous gender variable is coded with males as the reference category. Table 4.2.1 shows that 73% of the ministers in the post-war period are male, but that number does not reflect the whole story.

As figure 4.3.9 shows, the amount of women in each cabinet has risen throughout the period treated here, peaking at approximately 50% female ministers in the Stoltenberg II cabinet. However, in the earlier periods, women were severely underrepresented – occupying one or two posts in each cabinet until the Korvald I cabinet. As discussed in Chapter 2, women are expected to be more prone to dismissal. Hostility towards women (especially in early periods) could make their position less safe in cabinet.

**Education**

The education variable has is coded according to two levels: 0 for higher education, which is university degrees or higher, and 1 for lower education, which is less education than a university degree. The reason for the crude categorization is that the register on

`stortinget.no` has limited information on some of the ministers, but more exhaustive on other. The measure can, however, not be better than its weakest link.

The big majority of ministers in the period has higher education. As figure 4.3.10 shows, of the 597 unique cabinet ministers, 474 have higher education upon entering office, while only 123 have lower education. Typically, low education ministers have special sector experience that reflect the post they are occupy. For example, the Ministry of Fisheries has had a tradition of being lead by fishermen, such as Reidar Carlsen (1945-1951), Eivind Bolle (1973-1981), and Peter Angelsen (1997-2000).

The black bars in figure 4.3.10 represents the number of ministers with higher and lower education who were dismissed, with percentage of the total in text above the bar. 79 ministers with higher education resigned before the cabinet stopped, and only 21 of their colleagues with lower education met the same fate. However, the percentage of ministers dismissed as a product of the total amount of ministers with each education is virtually the same – roughly around 18%.

Figure 4.3.10: Number of ministers with higher and lower education.
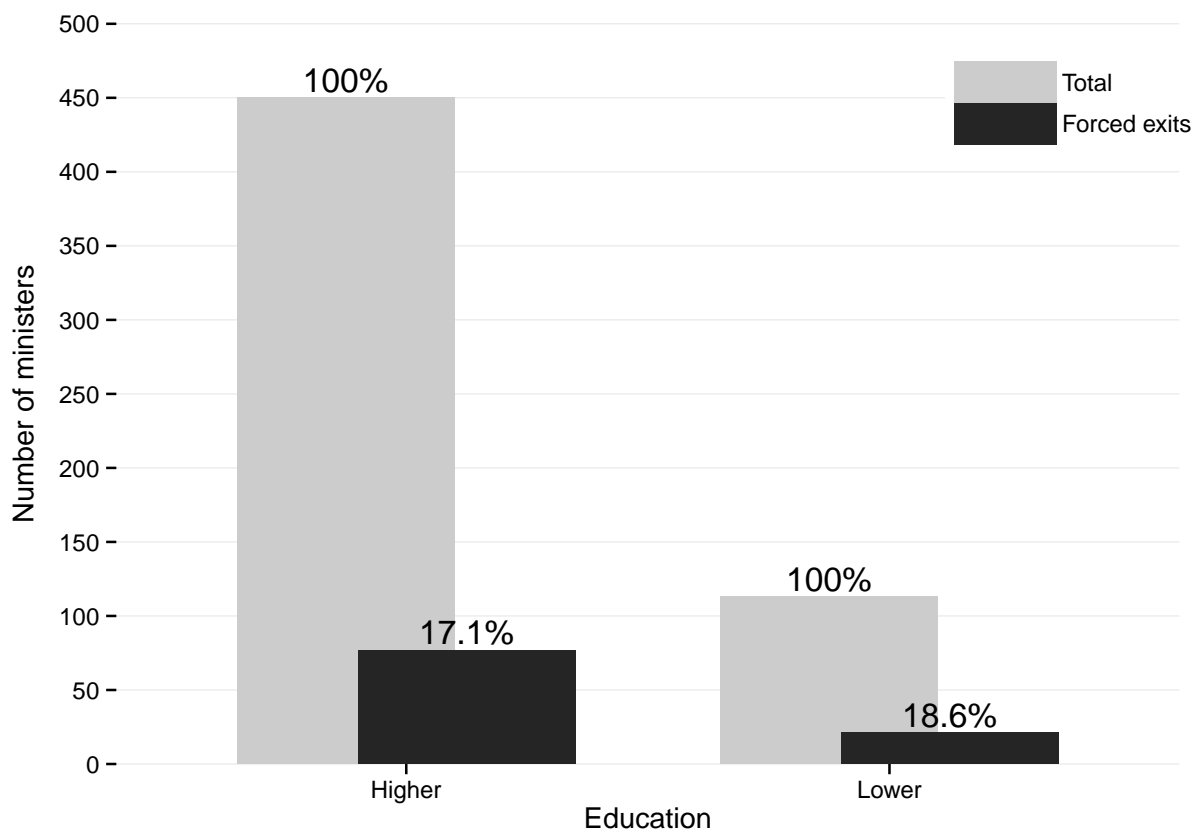
### 4.3.6 Reshuffles

In Chapter 2, I discussed how reshuffles can be expected to both increase and decrease the chance of dismissal. The variable is coded as 1 for ministers that have been reshuffled within the same cabinet as they hold their current post, and 0 otherwise. Table 4.2.1 shows that only 7% (42 ministers) have been reshuffled during the period.

Figure 4.3.11: Number of reshuffles across PMs and mean minister duration.
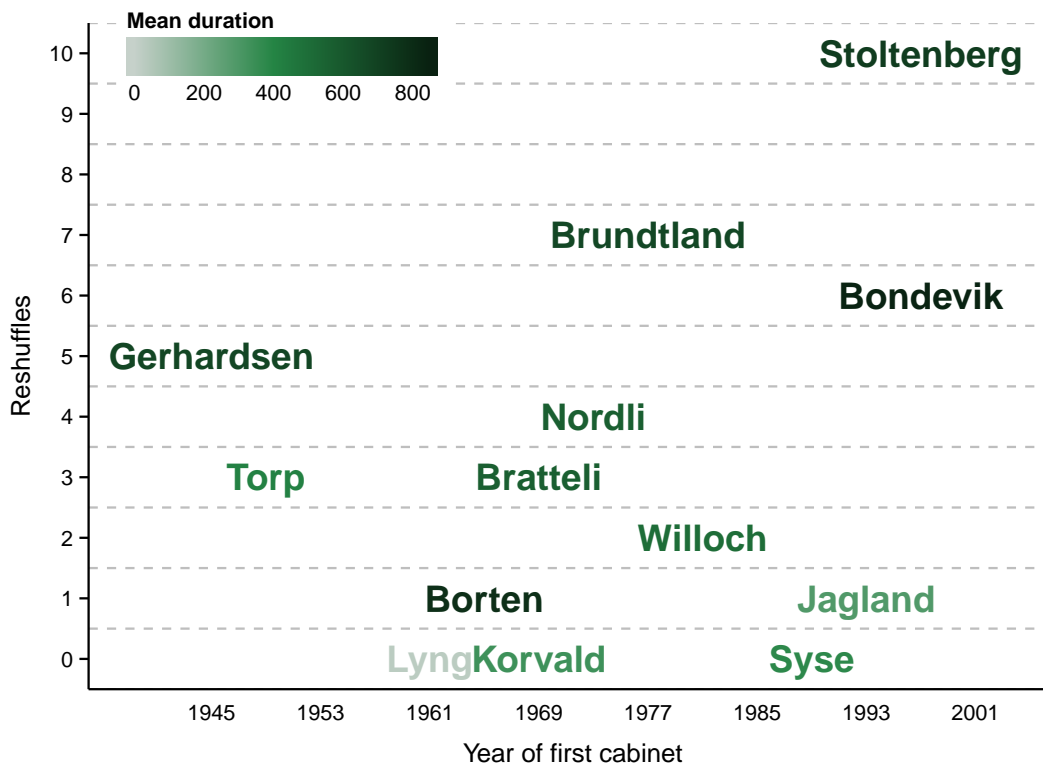


Figure 4.3.11 displays the number of reshuffles under different PMs and the mean minister duration represented by color tones where lighter colors are short durations and darker colors are longer durations. As could be expected, cabinets where ministers on average have long tenures also generally have more reshuffles. The short lived Lyng, Korvald, and Syse cabinets represent this trend perfectly with no reshuffles, whereas Bondevik is the only non-socialist PM with more than three reshuffles under his belt, having reshuffled six times over his two cabinets. Stoltenberg is the PM with most reshuffles, having replaced ten ministers across the three cabinets he lead. However, the most surprising thing to gather from figure 4.3.11 is that only one minister was reshuffled across the two Borten cabinets, because the average minister within these two cabinets sat for almost 800 days.

### 4.3.7  Jurisdiction

The last variable to consider is the minister's jurisdiction. The variable is, as mentioned, added as a shared frailty term to control for unobserved heterogeneity. More plainly, the idea is that some jurisdictions are more prone for dismissals than others. Because departments are restructured, discontinued, and established steadily across the period, I assign all department titles (37) to 16 categories (see table B.1 in the appendix). Assignment to each category was done by examining which departments succeeded those that were discontinued and by assessing their responsibilities.

# 5 | Ministerial durability analysis

In this chapter, I will show the results from two Cox PH models; one where resignation calls are pooled, and one where I divide resignation calls into categories for the actors in which they came from. I focus the first section on the pooled resignation call model, and the second section on the actor-based resignation call model. Both sections are structured as follows: I start by discussing the model as a whole by interpreting the point estimates, before I go through the most interesting findings in detail through visualizing the effects in hazard ratio plots.

The main focus will be on the uncertainty of the estimates in both analyses through confidence intervals, rather than exclusively on statistical significance. All the regression models are printed in coefficient plots, supplemented by tables in appendix C. It is important to remember throughout this chapter that the Cox PH model is relative; the main focus is to assess whether some characteristics make ministers more or less durable, not on tenure length.

## 5.1 Pooled performance

As I expect resignation calls to increase the likelihood of ministerial dismissal, the natural start of the analysis is to estimate the effect of the pooled resignation call measure. Figure 5.1.1 shows the hazard rate point estimates and their respective 95% confidence intervals for the pooled resignation call Cox PH model. The hazard rate is a conditional probability rate, which gives the rate at which units fail by a time $t$, given that the unit has survived until $t$ (Box-Steffensmeier and Jones 2004: 13-14). At a general level, positive coefficients indicate decreasing survival time and negative coefficients increasing survival time (Box-Steffensmeier and Jones 2004: 50). Notice, as discussed above, that there is no intercept in Cox PH models. The frailty variance of the jurisdiction variable is estimated at 0.153 (15.3%), meaning that some unobserved heterogeneity is accounted

## 5.1. Pooled performance

Figure 5.1.1: Pooled resignation call model.
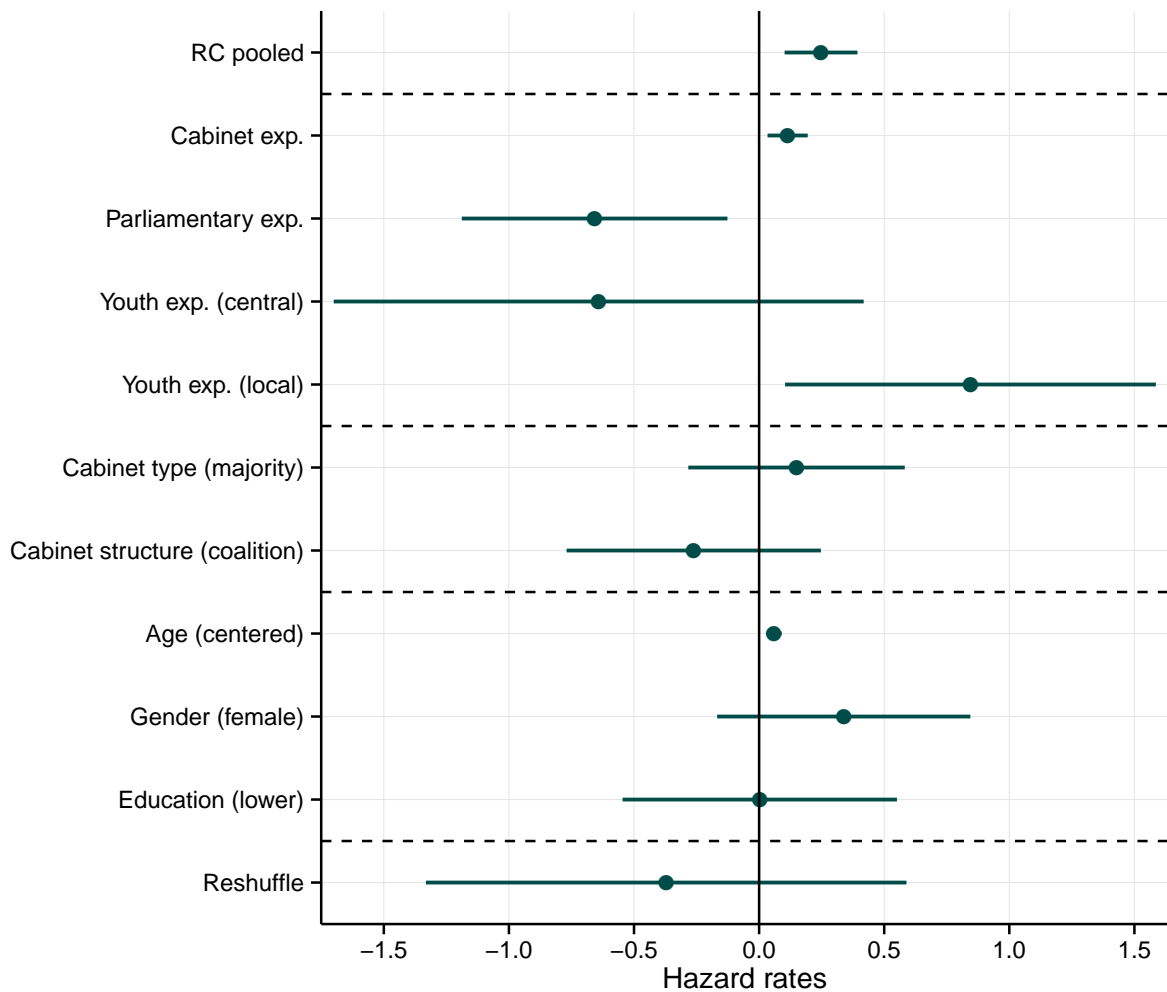


*Notes: Cox Proportional Hazards model. Point estimates are hazard rates, with 95% confidence intervals represented by the lines. The frailty variance for jurisdiction is 15.3%, and $p = 0.932$ for the global proportional hazard test.*

for, while the proportional hazard test is insignificant for all variables and gives a global p-value of 0.932. This means that we quite certainly can assess that there is no evidence of non-proportionality[1].

The pooled resignation call measure does, as expected, increase the hazard for ministerial dismissal, and its confidence interval is by some margin not crossing zero. This means that we are quite certain that the effect is indeed positive, and that ministers receiving resignation calls are more prone to dismissal. With a point estimate of 0.247, the hazard – probability to be dismissed at $t_{i+1}$ for the units that have survived until $t_i$ –

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[1]For proportional hazards test of all variables, see table D.1 in the appendix.

is expected to increase with 28.1%[2] for a minister with one resignation call relative to a minister with no resignation calls. Further, ministers that get two and three resignation calls have an increased hazard of 64.0% and 110.1% respectively, compared to ministers with no resignation calls. This gives quite clear support for *H1a* – ministers are generally held accountable by their party leader when they receive resignation calls – and the null-hypothesis can safely be disregarded.

Similarly, the estimate for previous cabinet experience increases the hazard for ministers, and has a confidence interval not crossing zero. With a point estimate of 0.14, the model predicts that a minister with one year of previous cabinet experience is 12.1% more likely to face dismissal than ministers with no previous cabinet experience. Additionally, a minister with experience from a full cabinet duration of four years is expected to have 57.8% higher hazard than ministers without cabinet experience. This is much in line with the findings of Berlinski et al. (2012) and *H2a*, described in Chapter 2.

The dummy for previous parliament experience – with no parliamentary experience as the reference category – has the opposite effect of cabinet experience, and a confidence interval that does not cross zero. Hence, *H2b* is supported in the data. The reasons for these results will be discussed below. For now it should be noted that the point hazard rate estimate (-0.658) for parliamentary experience suggest that these ministers are 48.2% less likely to be dismissed than ministers without parliamentary experience.

The last experience variables – youth party experience among previous MP members – are both associated with large uncertainties. Having experience from the central youth organization is expected to increase durability, but the uncertainties are way too large to be certain of the effect. Local experience, however, has a non-zero crossing confidence interval, with the effect indicating that such experience makes ministers more prone to dismissal. Nevertheless, from figure 4.3.6 in Chapter 4, we know that almost all ministers with central experience also have local experience. This means that the diverging effects between these variables are given by a small number of ministers. Also, the uncertainties of the local experience variable are very large, and the effect is (as will be shown in section 6.2) not stable across models. I therefore argue that the null-hypothesis regarding both variables should stand, and *H2c* rejected.

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[2]Formula for relative change in hazard: $100 * \left[\frac{exp^{\beta X_1} - exp^{\beta X_2}}{exp^{\beta X_2}}\right] = 100 * \left[\frac{exp^{0.247*0} - exp^{0.247*1}}{exp^{0.247*0}}\right] = 28.1\%$ (Box-Steffensmeier and Jones 2004: 60)

Both cabinet specific attributes estimates have confidence intervals crossing zero by a good margin, making the null-hypotheses stand for both variables. Minority and coalition cabinet ministers are, by the point estimate, expected to sit safer than those in majority and single-party cabinets, which is the opposite of the expectations of *H3a* and *H3b*. These are, however null-findings, and will be discussed thoroughly in Chapter 7.

Age, on the other hand, has one of the strongest and least uncertain effects. The coefficient for age is positively signed, meaning that the older a minister is, the more likely he is to face dismissal. A one point increase is estimated (0.059) to rise the hazard by 6.1%. This is not too impressive with a one unit increase, but recall that the age variable spans from 29 years old to 73 years old. Hence, a minister at age 45 when entering cabinet has a 81.1% higher hazard than a minister at age 35, which is a substantial increase in the chance of getting the axe.

Lastly, gender, education, and reshuffles have large confidence intervals crossing zero by a fair margin. Women are, with the point estimate, expected to sit less safe than men, ministers with higher education slightly shorter than those with lower education, and reshuffled ministers sit safer than ministers remaining in their post. However, the uncertainty connected to these estimates makes it impossible to draw valid inferences from them – the null-hypotheses stands for all of them.

In the next section, I will go more thoroughly through the most interesting findings of this section. Again, it is important to note that the Cox PH model is a relative risk model. There is no way of retrieving absolute risk or predicted duration based on it, but predicted relative risk – the predicted risk of termination in one group compared to another – is fully possible. I will focus the next section on plotting the effects in hazard ratios, which is the relative hazard between what in medical analyses is called *treatment group* compared to a *control group* – that is not to say that the approach is an experiment design, which is closely related to these terms, but rather a way of visualizing the results of Cox PH models.

By default (and unchangeable), all variables in the control group are set to their mean when using this method in R (Therneau 2015). This is reasonable for numeric variables, but for factors it means that the control group has values not found in reality (the variable means can be found in table 4.2.1). The problem is, however of minor importance as all the factors used here are either skewed towards 0 or 1 or are associated with large

uncertainties. Also, the main interest is to see how the hazard changes across values of one variable, when all other variables are held constant, not comparison between groups. For the *treatment group* – or what I call comparison group here – the most representative values are used as the basis (unless other specs are specified): an unshuffled 49 year old male with higher education, zero resignation calls, and no experience from either parliament, previous cabinets or youth organization, sitting in a minority single-party cabinet. The control group will always be represented by a horizontal dashed line across the hazard ratio 1, but this is, as mentioned, not too important as the main interest is the effect of the variable that is set to vary within the comparison group.

### 5.1.1   Resignation calls

Figure 5.1.2 shows the hazard ratios for the comparison group with a 0 to 5 variation on resignation calls, relative to the control group (dashed horizontal line).

Figure 5.1.2: Effect of resignation calls.
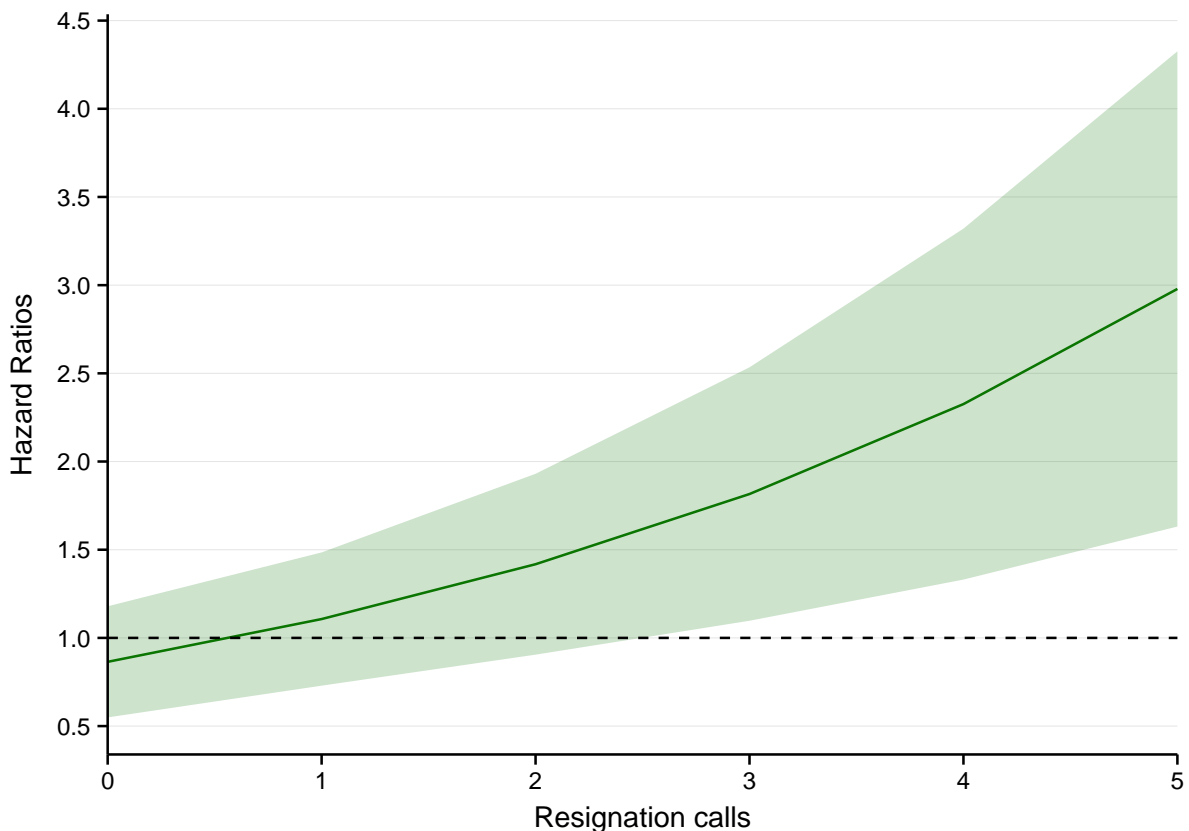


Most importantly, figure 5.1.2 tells that the more resignation calls one gets, the higher the hazard of ministerial dismissal is. The estimated hazard ratio with two resignation

calls lies around 1.5, indicating that the comparison minister surviving until any time $t_i$ with two resignation calls is approximately 50% more likely to be dismissed at $t_{i+1}$ than the control group minister. The hazard of three resignation calls is almost double that of the control group, and it peaks at five resignation calls where ministers are 3 times more likely to be dismissed.

The finding is clearly confirming the point estimate finding: with resignation calls as a performance measure, the underperforming ministers are more likely to be fired than the better performing ministers, and the effect is quite strong. The chain of accountability is working, which is good news for Norwegian parliamentarism.

### 5.1.2   Experience

In extension of the argument proposed by Narud and Valen (2001) that the longer a cabinet sits the more likely it is to lose support, I argue that ministers with long service time in previous cabinets are more likely to be dismissed. Indeed, as figure 5.1.3 shows, the longer experience a minister has from previous cabinet the higher is the likelihood of getting the axe.

Recall that the control group is the mean on all variables, and the mean of cabinet

Figure 5.1.3: Effect of previous cabinet experience.
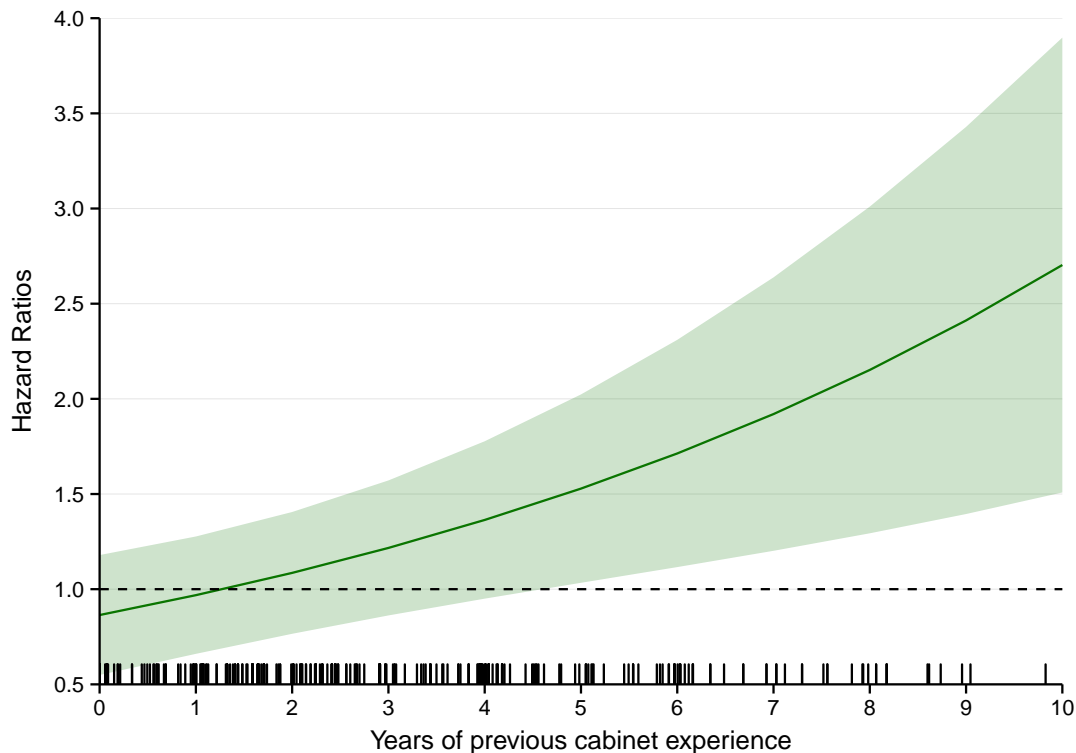
experience is just under 2 years. Hence, it is unsurprising that the hazard for ministers with no experience is lower than the control group here. However, as our comparison minister reaches 5 years, the hazard is 50% higher than the control group estimation, and ministers with 10 years experience just over 2.5 times higher hazard than the control group. However, it should also be noted that over 50% of the ministers have less than one year previous experience, which is also indicated by the sparse rug and ever expanding confidence bands at the higher values of experience (the reason for stopping at 10 years, even though the max is 17 years).

This is, as mentioned above, in line with the findings of Bucur (2013) and Berlinski et al. (2012): experience from previous cabinets does not decrease the likelihood of dismissal, rather the contrary.

Two things are interesting with regard to the effect of parliamentary experience, shown in figure 5.1.4. Firstly, ministers with parliamentary experience before entering cabinet are expected to be half as likely to be dismissed relative to the control group. Secondly, the hazard decreases sharply when going from the comparison minister with no experience to the comparison minister with some experience. The confidence bands are, however, quite large. Thus, the effect of parliamentary experience should be treated with caution;

Figure 5.1.4: Effect of parliamentary experience.
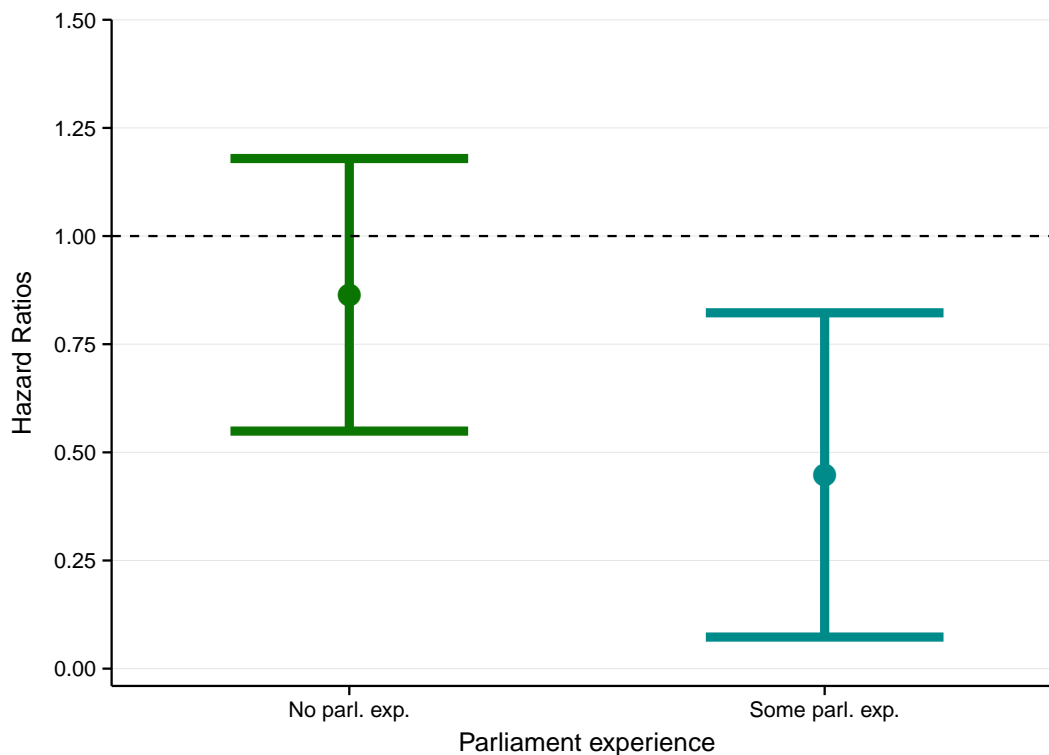
it is not very clear that ministers with one parliamentary period is less likely to be fired than those with no parliamentary experience when all other variables are held constant, because the confidence band for the comparison minister with no experience is crossed by the upper band of the comparison minister with experience.

## 5.2 Actor influence

The next step in the analysis is to go deeper into the nature of resignation calls; does it matter where they come from? Figure 5.2.1 lists the coefficients of both model 1, described and analyzed above, and model 2 where the pooled resignation call measure is replaced with the three most common sources of resignation calls: the opposition, the

Figure 5.2.1: Actor-based and pooled resignation call models.
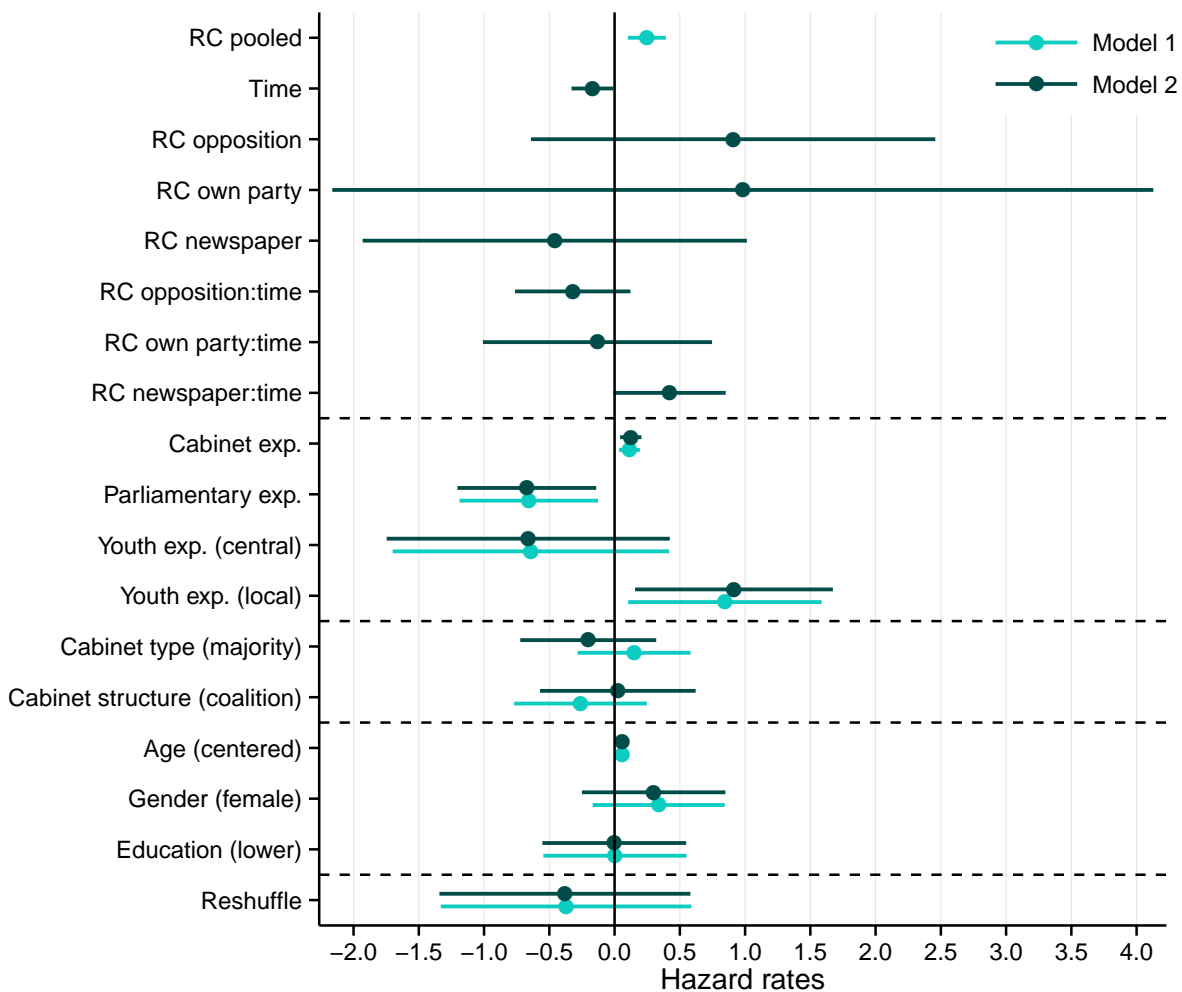


*Notes: Cox Proportional Hazards model. Point estimates are hazard rates, with 95% confidence intervals represented by the lines. The frailty variance for jurisdiction is 17.6%, and $p = 0.699$ for the global proportional hazard test.*

ministers own party, and newspapers, together with logged time interactions. The reason for interacting the actor-based resignation calls with time is that these variables proved non-proportional by themselves.

The first thing to notice is that the experience and personal characteristic variables are stable between the two models. The effect of cabinet type and structure have changed sign, but the uncertainty is still too big to make anything close to decisive inferences on these variables. The frailty term for jurisdiction is somewhat higher at 0.176 (17.6% variance), and the proportional hazards test is still not significant, though with a lower global value of 0.699[3]. I will thus focus on the model 2 exclusive variables in this section: the interactions between time and the three actor-based resignation call measures. Interactions are often misinterpreted as unconditional marginal effects and seldom calculated for substantial meaningful values (Brambor, Clark and Golder 2006: 71-77), and I will therefore focus on graphically plotting the results in a similar fashion as for the pooled model.

### 5.2.1 Opposition and own party

The interaction effect between time and the dichotomy for resignation calls from the opposition is shown by the upper panel of figure 5.2.2. The results are both surprising and possibly worrisome. Resignation calls from the opposition are estimated to have an increasing effect on ministerial hazard during the earlier periods of the data, but the uncertainty is very high, and the confidence band overlaps both the control group and the entire band the comparison group with no resignation calls from the opposition. Indeed, the confidence bands were too high to make a sensible plot including the periods before 1950 (which is why it starts at at 1950). The large uncertainties does in effect indicate that the opposition has no say over ministerial dismissals, and *H1b* can safely be rejected. In Chapter 7, I discuss whether this is a consequence of the opposition using resignation calls strategically, and not with the purpose of actually getting the minister in question dismissed.

Another frequently reoccurring type of resignation calls are those that come from the party (or coalition partner) of the minister in question. The uncertainty of the point estimate of resignation calls from ones own party is huge, and the lower panel of figure 5.2.2 confirms that this interaction is a null-finding; *H1c* can be rejected.

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[3]For proportional hazards test of all variables, see table D.2 in the appendix.

The hazard for dismissal is higher when a minister gets a resignation call from his own party, with a slightly decreasing curve over time, but similarly to resignation calls from the opposition, these resignation calls have large uncertainties associated with them, as indicated by the large green confidence bands. The results are not overly surprising because resignation calls from ones own party are quite diverse, ranging from those aimed at strengthening the parliamentary group to those aimed at dismissing perceived weak ministers. However, both are aimed at removing the minister from the cabinet, making these results at least a little bit strange. On the other hand, this is the least occurring

Figure 5.2.2: Hazard ratio plots of opposition and own party influence.



resignation call in the data with only 9% of all ministers receiving such calls, which could be the reason for the large uncertainties. I will discuss these findings more thoroughly in Chapter 7.

### 5.2.2 Newspapers

One of the most interesting findings in this thesis is displayed in figure 5.2.3, which confirms the expectation of *H1d*. Firstly, ministers that do not get resignation calls from papers can not be distinguished from the control group at any time. Indeed, the control group and the blue line plus band are quite similar in figure 5.2.3.

Secondly, and most importantly, the two lines of figure 5.2.3 represent the same minister with and without a resignation call from newspapers. Because the green band does not overlap the blue band after the early 1970s, this means that we are quite certain that ministers, otherwise equal, are more likely to be dismissed when receiving a resignation call from a newspaper than those that do not. Indeed, at the end of the period, we are *certain* (see the lower part of the green confidence band) that a resignation call

Figure 5.2.3: Effect of resignation calls from paper over time.
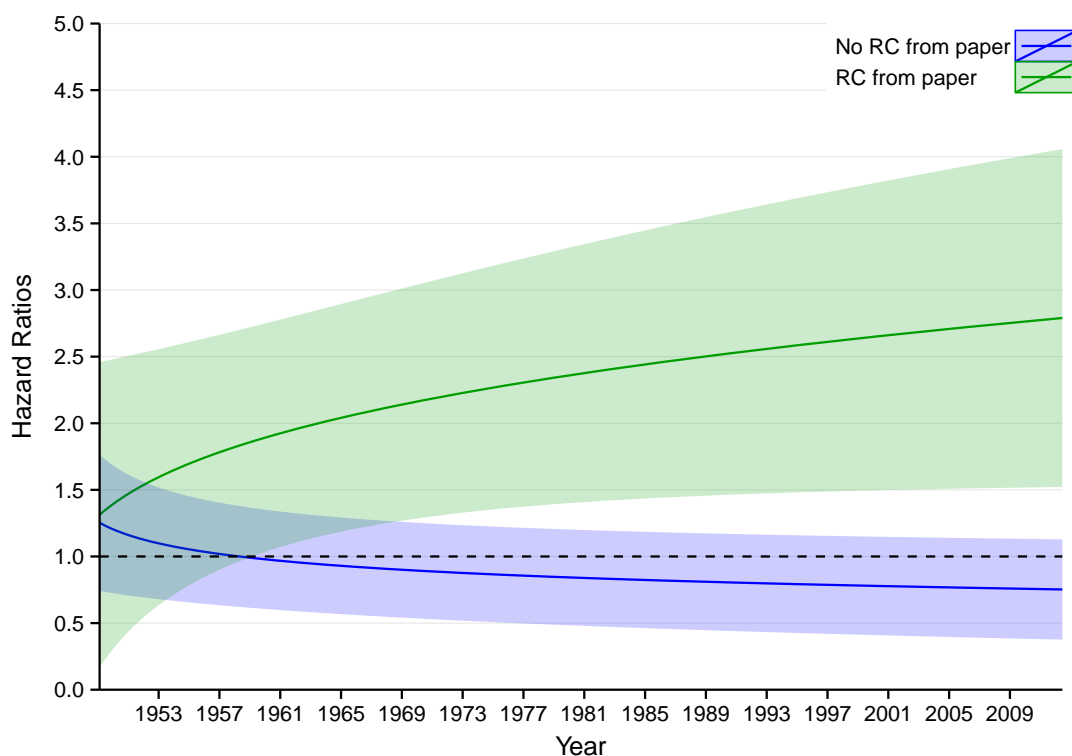


from a newspaper increases the hazard by over 50%, while the point estimated hazard is almost 3 times higher for these ministers. This means that newspapers have more influence on ministerial durability than both the opposition and the minister's own party. I will discuss why this could be a democratic problem more thoroughly in the following chapters.

## 5.3 Summary

To sum the results, ministers are found to be held accountable by their party leaders when they perform badly; resignation calls generally put ministers at risk of dismissal. Furthermore, resignation calls from the opposition or the minister's own party seem to not have an effect on tenure by themselves, while newspapers carry some influence. The adequateness of resignation calls measure as a performance indicator will be thoroughly handled in section 6.2 and Chapter 7.

Political experience also matters for ministerial durability; ministers with previous cabinet experience are less durable than fresh ministers, while parliamentary experience leads to longer tenure. These conflicting effects are interesting, and suggest, on the one hand, that the previous cabinet experience effect really is attributed to the *wear-and-tear*

mechanism. On the other hand, parliamentary experience is expected to increase tenure, which is parallel to findings of other studies (for example, Bucur (2013; 2015)). Hence, the argument of Fischer et al. (2012: 515) that these ministers have proven themselves by working their way through the party is supported by this thesis. The party elite measures, recording ministers with both parliamentary and of youth party experience, indicates that ministers with local youth party experience are less prone to dismissal than ministers without youth experience, whereas experience from the central youth party organization had the opposite effect. The conflicting effects combined with large uncertainties made me hesitant to make any certain assessment with regard to these variables.

Surprisingly, cabinet characteristics are not found to be relevant for how safe ministers are; it does not matter whether the cabinet has majority status in parliament or consist of several parties. Hence, this could be an indication that party system has little impact on ministerial durability, but more research on multi-party systems must be done before this claim can bear any weight.

Lastly, age is the only personal characteristic variable with certain effect on ministerial tenure; older ministers have shorter tenures than their younger counterparts. Consequently, if the assumption of age measuring career ambition holds, more ambitious ministers are less likely to be relieved from their position than less ambitious minister. However, the strong effect of age could indicate that it also measures some other characteristics, such as health problems – a point that will be discussed further in the next chapter. As for gender and education, there is no evidence in the data that these have any effect on ministerial durability. I will, nevertheless, show that female and higher education ministers are more prone to getting resignation calls in the next chapter, which might indicate that their effect in the durability analysis is underestimated.

# 6 | Model fit and robustness

The results discussed above are futile if the model does not fit the data properly. In this chapter, I will thus treat model fit and alternative specifications[1]. Firstly, I show how predicted risk based on the pooled and actor-based event models show that they predict higher risk for ministers that are dismissed than surviving ministers. Secondly, I show that no substantially influential outliers are found from the two event models.

Thirdly, I turn the tables by analyzing resignation calls as the dependent variable. The point of this secondary analysis is to explore whether resignation calls really are good for measuring performance. As will be shown, the analysis indicates that some concerns must be raised with regard to using resignation calls exclusively as a performance measure. Especially, ministerial tenure has a clear effect on how many resignation calls a minister gets; the longer ministers sit, the more vulnerable they are to getting resignation calls. This raises some concerns over endogeneity with regard to the survival models presented in Chapter 5.

Finally, I estimate alternative survival models for testing the robustness of the results. Most importantly, I introduce a model with resignation calls per year in cabinet to account for the endogeneity problems, which also proves to give a strong effect to the resignation call measure. Furthermore, I check the robustness of the age measure by adding a second-degree polynomial and adding age at first entry as independent variables. This does, all in all, confirm the age measure as a fairly good proxy for ambition.

## 6.1 Predictive fit and outliers

As discussed in Chapter 4, there is no estimation of the baseline hazard in the Cox PH model, which makes predicting duration impossible. Figure 6.1.1 rather shows the

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[1] As I do not show the full alternative models, these are provided in the documentation found at https://github.com/martigso/ministersNor

Figure 6.1.1: Predicted risk from actor-based and pooled resignation call models.
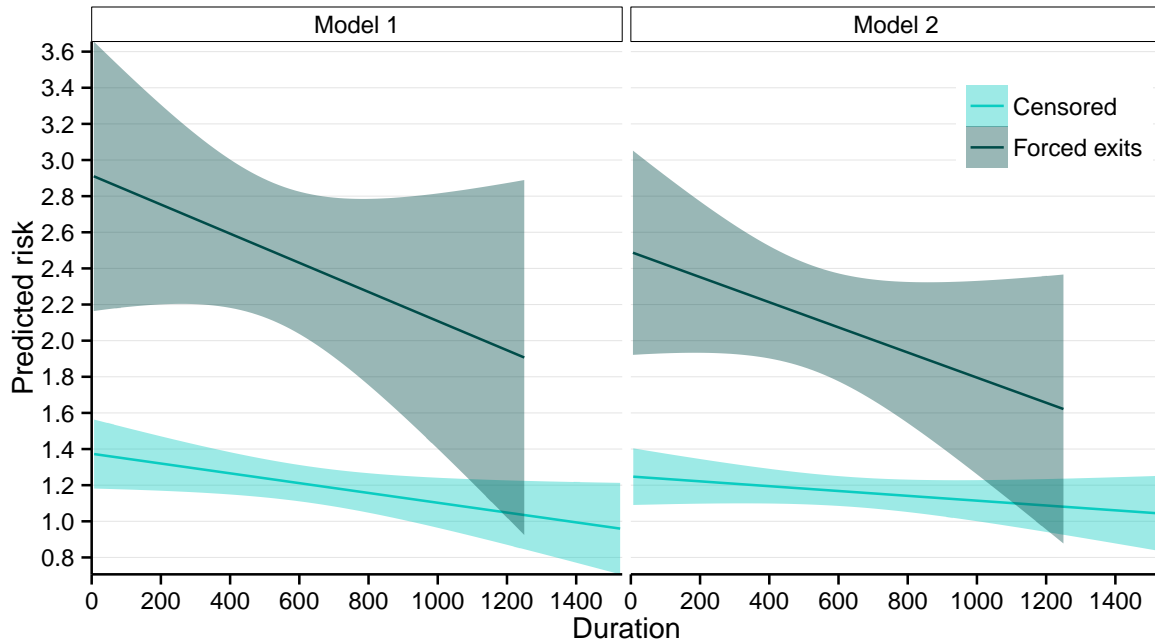


predicted in-sample *risk* with one panel for each of the two models. The lines represent the linear correlation between duration on the x-axis and predicted risk on the y-axis, where the dismissed ministers are shown by the dark cyan line and ribbon, and the surviving ministers by the light cyan line and ribbon. The ribbons represent 95% confidence intervals for the linear correlation.

Most importantly, dismissed ministers are generally predicted to have higher risk of termination than surviving ministers in both models. This indicates that the models manage to distinguish failing ministers from successful ministers fairly good. It should also be noted that the predicted risk of termination is decreasing over time and stops at under three years for dismissed ministers; the longer a minister sits, the lower is the predicted risk of termination, and no ministers have been fired after occupying a cabinet post for three and a half years. The reason for the crossing confidence bands at the highest levels of duration is a consequence of few units in the forced exits category and declining risk as duration increases. All in all, figure 6.1.1 gives a picture of models that fit the data in a fairly good manner.

To show how well the model predicts substantially, lets take a look at the Lysbakken and Støre example from the introduction. Lysbakken was at the time of entering cabinet 34 years old, had just over one year of cabinet experience, had parliamentary and youth

party experience, while Støre was 52 years old, had 7 years of cabinet experience, and no experience from parliament or youth organization. Recalling that Lysbakken resigned and Støre retained his position, it is interesting that Lysbakken got three resignation calls (newspaper, popular opinion, and his own party), while Støre got one (opposition). Indeed, the actor-based resignation call model predicts a hazard ratio of 1.2 for Lysbakken, and 0.6 for Støre. This means that the model expects Lysbakken, despite of his young age, to be more likely for dismissal than Støre.

However, it is also interesting to see how the effects would have changed if units were excluded from the analysis – a method for showing whether there are influential outliers or not. Figure 6.1.2 displays the change in effects for all ministers and variables of the pooled resignation call model. Each point in the figure represents a minister in the data, and the vertical lines from zero how much estimates in the model would have changed if

Figure 6.1.2: Influential case analysis – Pooled resignation call model.
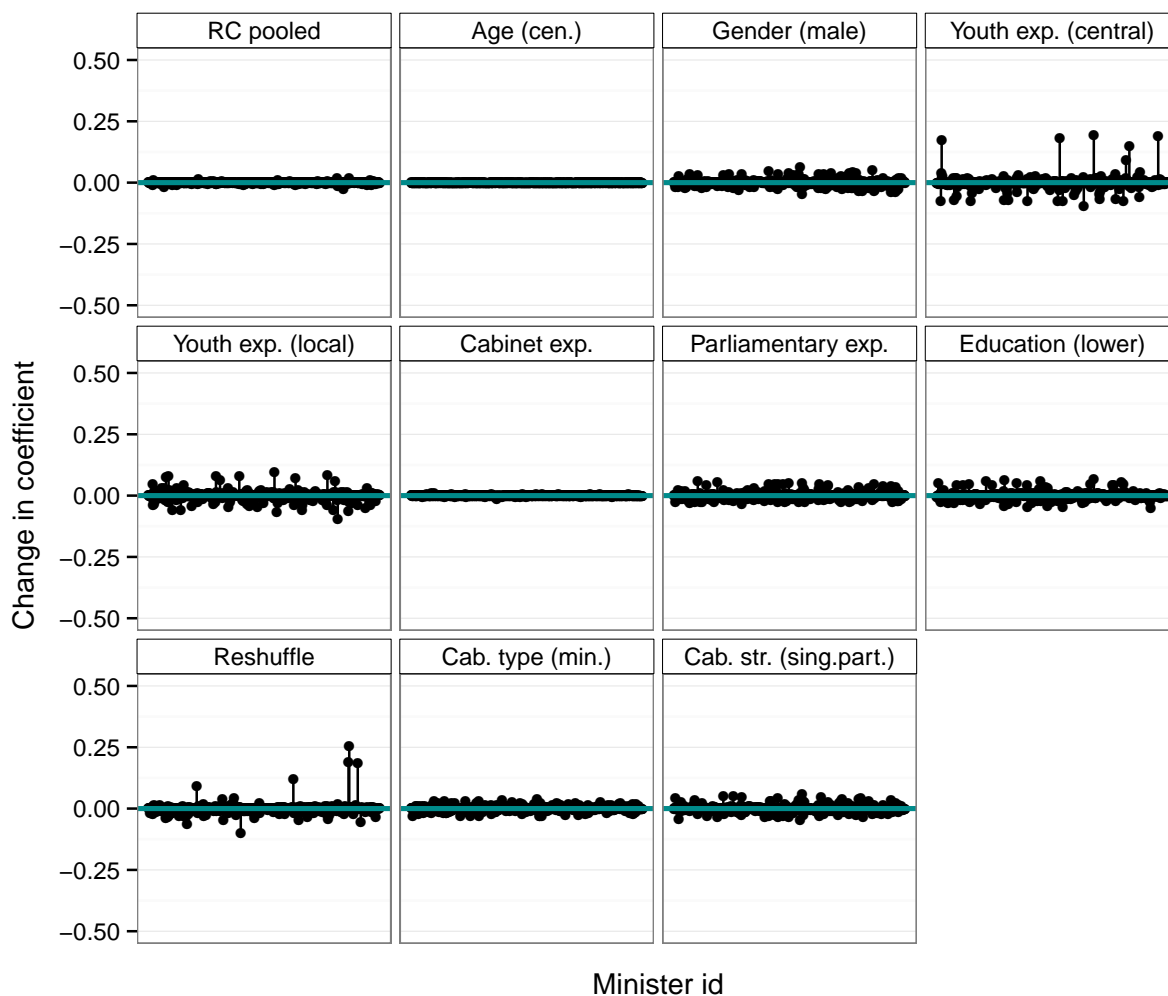
that particular unit was excluded from the analysis.

Three variables seem contain some influential units here: reshuffles and both youth experience variables. Five ministers would skew the reshuffle effect towards zero with a good margin if they were removed. This is not too problematic as the effect would go closer to zero, only giving a more certain null-finding. The same goes for the youth experience from central party organization; if the biggest outliers were removed, the results would only more certainly confirm the null-hypothesis. The outliers on the youth experience from local party organization are more troublesome; one of the ministers would influence the estimate by being excluded from the regression with a -0.1 adjustment. This means that the confidence interval of this effect would barely have a non-zero crossing effect, and my concerns regarding the uncertainty of effect are further confirmed: it should be treated as a null-finding.

Figure 6.1.3: Influential case analysis – Actor-based resignation call model.
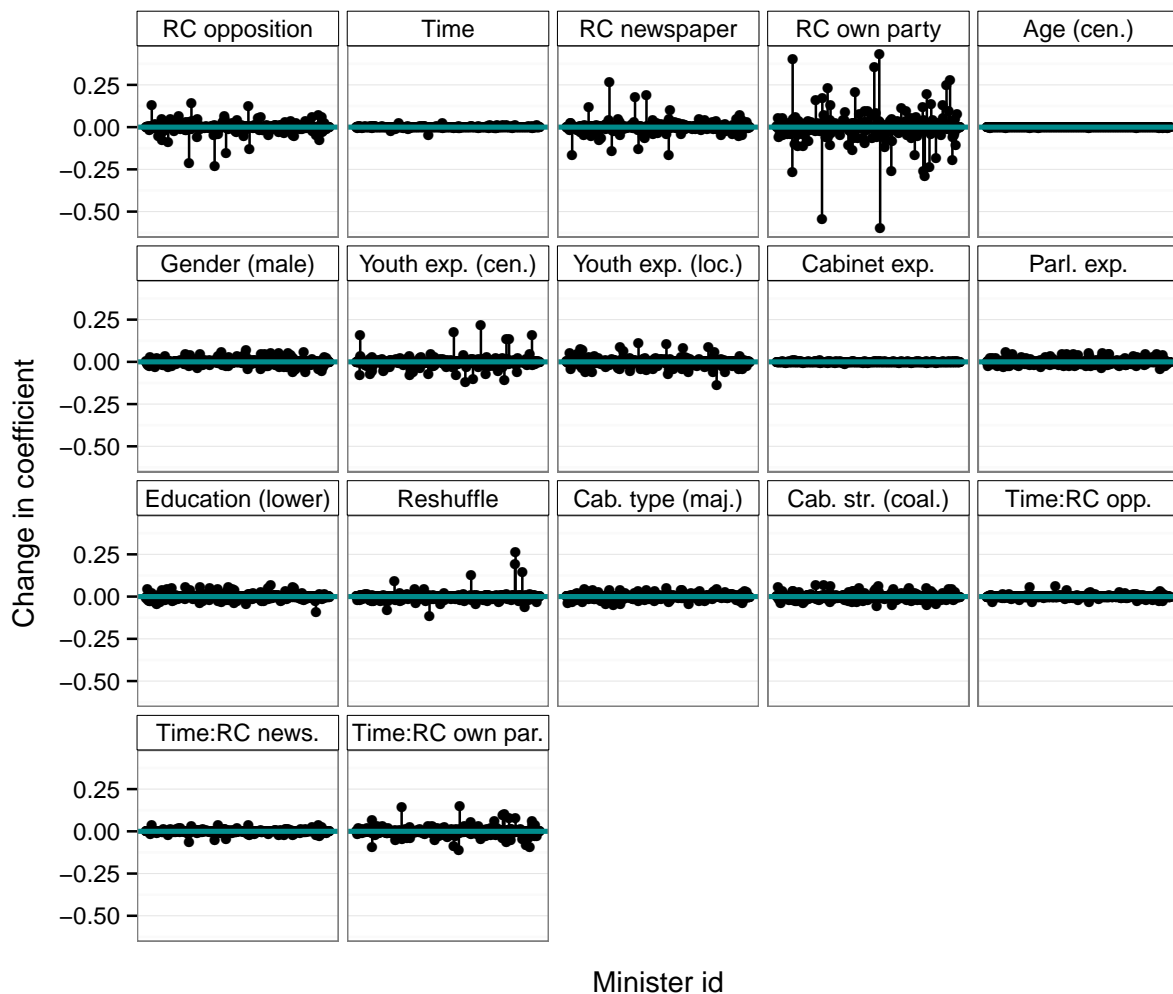
For the actor-based resignation call model, the same method for influential statistics as above is shown in figure 6.1.3. The results are quite similar as in model 1: reshuffles, and the youth party variables would be skewed towards zero if influential units were removed. Also, the variable for resignation calls from the opposition and the minister's own party have some highly influential observations, but these would not have any effect on the results if removed either. However, the newspaper resignation call measure outliers were somewhat more important, with estimate changes as high as $\pm 0.250$. To be sure this finding was robust enough, I ran a model without these outliers. As shown in figure 6.1.4, this model gave very similar results to those of model 2 (see figure 5.2.3), though with somewhat broader confidence bands and steeper curve for the comparison minister with resignation calls.

Figure 6.1.4: Effect of resignation calls from paper after excluding influential cases.
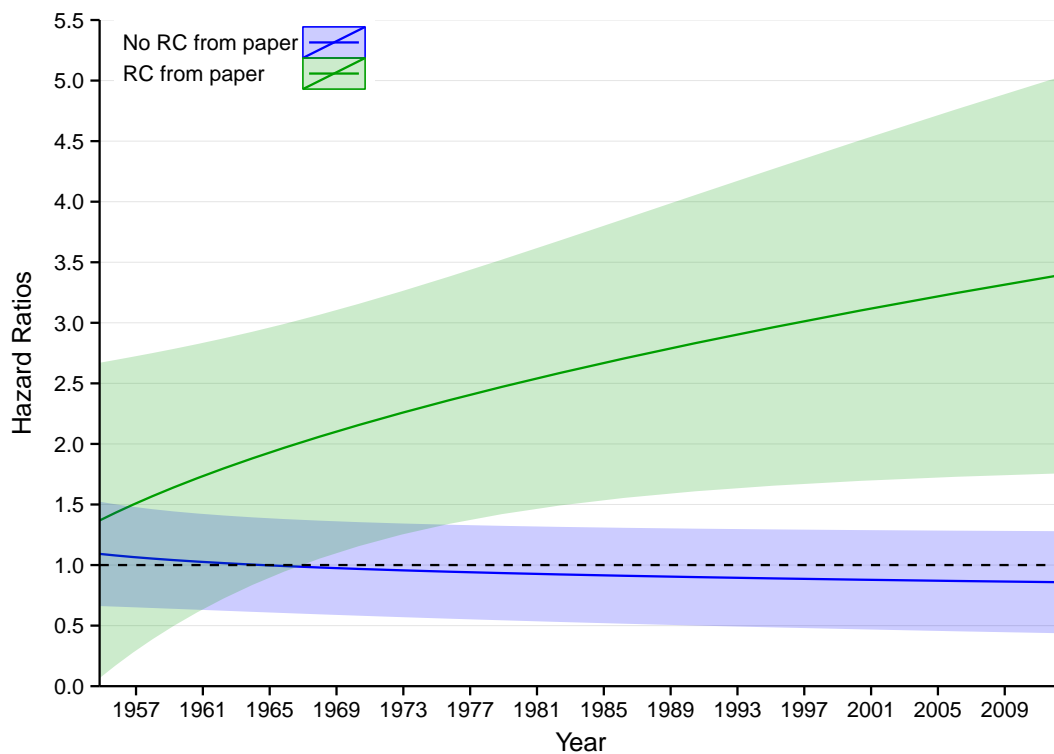


## 6.2 Resignation calls

Thus far, resignation calls have been treated as an independent variable affecting ministerial tenure, but what does resignation calls really measure? In this section, I will discuss some of the problems with using resignation calls as a performance measure

and analyze which ministerial attributes contributes to resignation calls through a count regression model. If resignation calls truly measure performance exclusively, none of the ministerial attributes used in the previous chapter should have a substantial effect on them. As the literature does not provide a clear guidance for what to expect, this analysis is to a large extent explorative. The main goal is to explore what kind of noise (what other factors the variable measures) is associated with the pooled resignation call measure. As will be shown, there is quite a lot of noise in the resignation call variable, which means that it might either *steal* some of the effect from other variables, or indicate that the effect of resignation calls on ministerial durability, found in the previous chapter, is an underestimation of the *true* effect.

### 6.2.1 Which ministers are asked to resign?

Because the resignation call variable is a count variable – the number of times something has happened – linear regression models are often inefficient, inconsistent, and biased (Long 1997: 217). This is especially the case whenever the variable have an overweight of zeroes, as is the case with the resignation call variable (see figure 4.3.3). Because the resignation call variable is also overdispersed (the variance is greater than the mean (Long 1997: 218)), I use the negative binomial regression model, which allows the variance of the dependent variable to exceed the mean (Long 1997: 230). In theory, a two part hurdle regression – estimating one set of binary (zero to one) coefficients and one set of coefficients for counts above one – would have been suitable because it assumes that it is harder (or easier) to receive resignation calls when a minister has no previous resignation calls, compared to ministers that have already gotten resignation calls. However, there is not enough variation in the counts above one for the resignation call variable to work with this model. Hence, the less data demanding negative binomial regression model will be used. The downside is that the model does not fit the data in a fully satisfying way; it underpredicts the zero and above one counts, in addition to overpredicting the one counts. However, it is sufficient for asserting whether there is any noise in the resignation call measure.

The count model, shown in figure 6.2.1 (also, see table C.2 in the appendix), mainly consist of variables used in the previous chapter, and two new variables to limit omitted variable bias. Firstly, cumulative resignation calls are also controlled for. This variable

counts all the resignation calls the minister has gotten in previous cabinets, and was included to assert whether ministers that has been into hard weather before are more likely to get in hard weather again. Secondly, duration is now introduced as an independent variable. The logic is simply that ministers sitting longer should have more time to make mistakes, and thus get more resignation calls.

The first thing to notice in figure 6.2.1 is that cabinet experience and age has next to no effect, while parliamentary experience and cabinet attributes by far has zero-crossing confidence intervals.  None of these variables show evidence of having an effect on resignation calls.  Cumulative resignation calls, however, increase the chance of new resignation calls with a confidence interval barely crossing zero. With a point estimate of 0.205, each cumulative resignation call is expected to increase the number of new

Figure 6.2.1: Negative binomial regression of resignation calls.
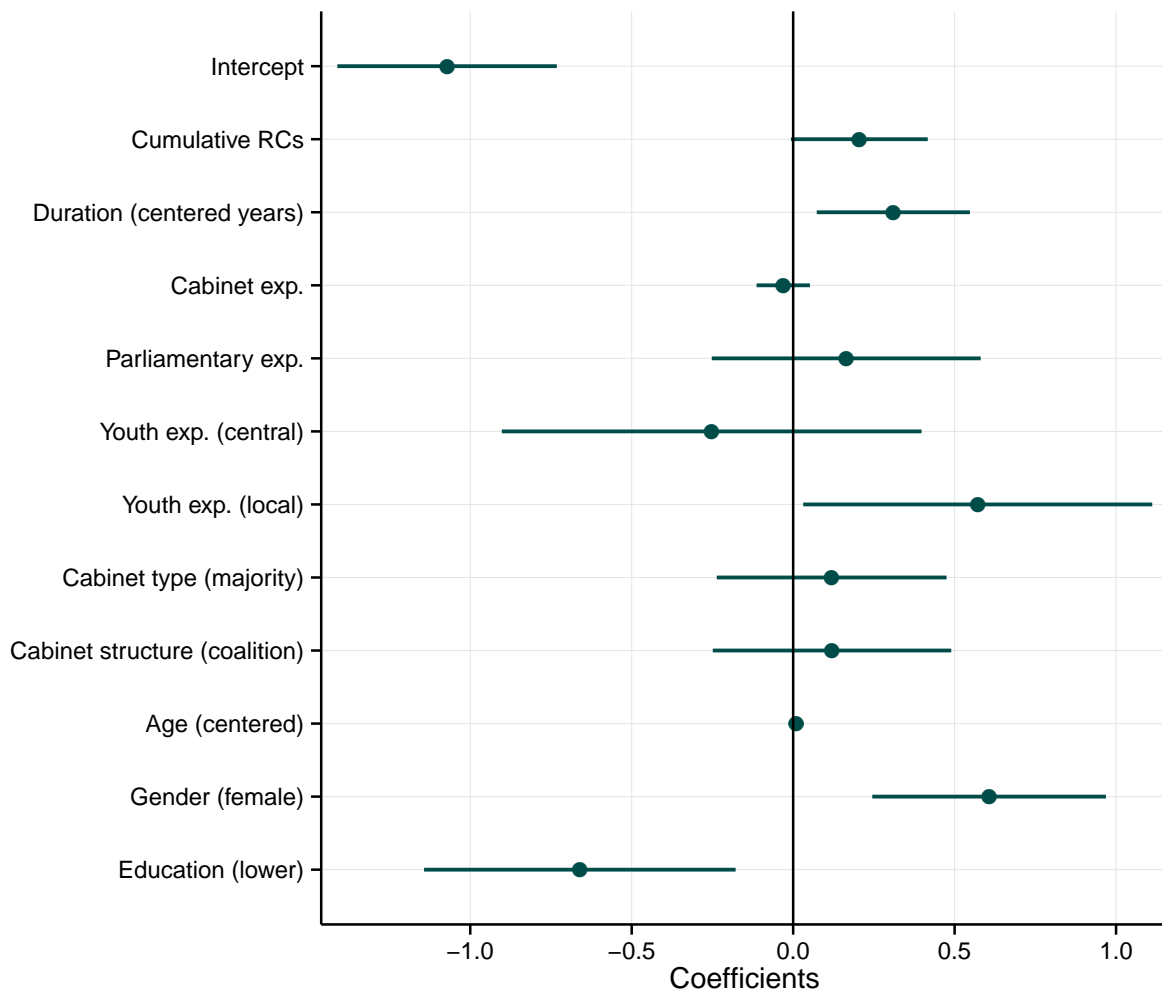


*Notes: Negative binomial regression model, where points represents coefficients and lines 95% confidence interval. N = 563, AIC = 1070.871.*

73

resignation calls by 22.8%. [2]

The minister's duration is also expected to increase the number of resignation calls; ministers sitting two years are estimated to receive 36.4% more resignation calls than ministers sitting one year. As the duration variable is centered at approximately one and a half years, a minister sitting a full period (4 years) is expected to get 117.2%[3] more resignation calls than average sitting ministers. This means that longer duration causes ministers to get more resignation calls, and we already know that resignation calls affect ministerial duration – indicating that there are some endogeneity problems with the ministerial durability analysis (Box-Steffensmeier and Jones 2004: 96). This is a problem because the Cox PH model assumes that variables on the right hand side of the equation are independent of the values of the dependent variable (Box-Steffensmeier and Jones 2004: 113). A solution to the endogeneity problem is set forward in the next section.

The youth experience variables behave much like they did in the survival analysis; central experience is estimated to decrease the chance of receiving resignation calls, local experience is expected to increase the amount of resignation calls, and both variables are associated with too high uncertainties to make any concluding inferences about effect strength.

Furthermore, the effects of cabinet type and structure indicate that ministers in majority and coalition cabinets get more resignation calls than those in minority and single-party cabinets. However, also this effect shows large uncertainties, with confidence intervals crossing zero by some distance.

More interestingly, women are more prone to receive resignation calls than men. Indeed, women are expected to receive 83.5% more resignation calls than men. We have already seen that resignation calls decrease, and that gender does neither increase or decrease ministerial durability. Hence, because women get more resignation calls, this could either mean that they are more resistant after getting resignation calls than men, or that some of the gender effect in the survival analysis is *stolen* by the resignation call measure. This will be discussed more thoroughly in the next chapter.

Finally, also education has a substantial effect on resignation calls. Ministers with lower education are expected to receive 48.3% less resignation calls than ministers with

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[2]Percentage increase/decrease is calculated by $100[exp(\beta_k * \delta) - 1]$, where $\beta_k$ is the coefficient and $\delta$ is the unit increase (Long 1997: 225): $100[exp(0.205 * 1) - 1] = 22.8\%$.

[3]$100[exp(0.310 * (4 - 1.5)) - 1] = 117.2\%$

higher education. The same logic as with gender applies here: either the higher education ministers tolerate more resignation calls, or the resignation call variable sucks up some of the effect of the education variable.

In sum, the resignation call measure is not independent of the other variables used in the survival analysis of Chapter 5. Consequently, this means that there is a lot of noise in the resignation call variable – it does not exclusively measure ministerial performance. The problems with resignation calls as a performance measure will be more thoroughly discussed in the next chapter, but in the following section, I show that the endogeneity problem is not big enough for *H1a* to be rejected.

## 6.3 Alternative durability models

### 6.3.1 Resignation calls per year

In light of the findings in section 6.2, I replaced the pooled resignation call measure of model 1 (see Chapter 5) with a measure for resignation calls per year in office to account for the endogeneity problem. That is, I divide the number of resignation calls a minister gets by the length of his tenure (in years). Notably, none of the other independent variables changed to a degree that the assessments of the initial analysis had to be revised (model 3 in table C.1 shows that local youth experience has a severely reduced effect, increasing the initial suspicions of how unstable the measure is).

I also excluded four ministers that received resignation calls in very short tenures (the limit was set at 5 resignation calls per year): Nils Langhelle spent 47 days as Minister of Transport in the Torp I cabinet, before taking over the Department of Defense. In that period, Langhelle received one resignation call from *Verdens Gang*, claiming he was a weak minister. Thus, Langhelle had over 7 resignation calls per year. Grete Faremo had the misfortune of surviving only 54 days under the Jagland I cabinet, receiving three resignation calls after it is uncovered that Berge Furre of the Socialist Left Party was surveilled during her tenure as Minister of Justice. Faremo was eventually sacked, and had over 20 resignation calls per year. A similar fate was given to Terje Rød-Larsen in the same cabinet, who was fired after only 14 days in the post as Minister of Administration, and also managing to get three resignation calls for failing to tax stock profits in the 1980s. Rød-Larsen was excluded because he had 78 resignation calls per year. Finally, Manuela Ramin-Osmundsen, who's dismissal was discussed in section 2.2, received three

resignation calls in her 120 days in office, giving 9 resignation calls per year.

Figure 6.3.1: Effect of resignation calls per year.
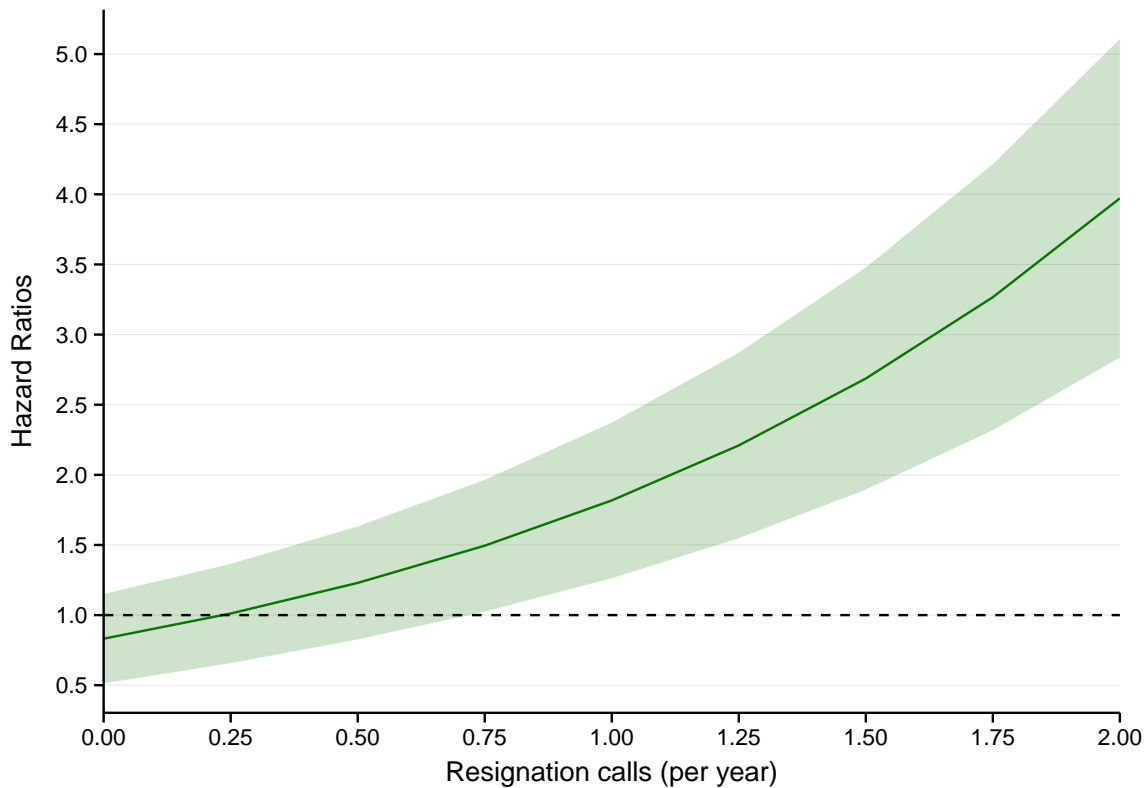


The new Cox PH model gives a point estimate of 0.790 for resignation calls per year, which means that a one unit increase in resignation calls per year is expected to raise the risk of termination by 120.4% (see model 3 of table C.1 in the appendix). Figure 6.3.1 displays the effect of the resignation calls per year variable. As can be seen, the effect is strong, but hard to compare in terms of relative strength with the initial pooled resignation calls measure because they are based on different scales. Getting one resignation call per year would implicate an expected risk increase of almost 100% compared to ministers with no resignation calls, and ministers getting around two resignation calls per year have four times the risk of termination than their uncontroversial colleagues. Indeed, 63 ministers in the data have over one resignation call per year, making this a common occurrence, rather than an extraordinary case.

All in all, these findings indicate that the endogeneity problems discovered through the count model above are not as severe as firstly anticipated. Indeed, the model using resignation calls per year is also a better fit to the data with an estimated AIC value of 1012 compared to 1068 for the initial pooled resignation call model. However, the initial

analysis should not be disregarded totally as some of the ministers are excluded from the secondary analysis. Neither does this fix all the problems of the resignation call measure; there is still a certain amount of noise associated with it. Some further improvement points will be suggested in Chapter 7.

### 6.3.2 Age as ambition measure?

A second proxy measure is the age measure. In this thesis, I use age as a measure for ambition, but I have also opened for the possibility that it measures things such as health, skill, and that the effect is not linear. On the one hand, health related issues are, as discussed, problematic to measure because it is hard to differentiate between actual and alleged health related issues.

The age as skill theory, on the other hand, is more easy to test; the upper panel of figure 6.3.2 presents the effect of age when only measured at the first cabinet entry of each minister, added to the pooled resignation call model. The thought behind this method is that ministers appointed to cabinet positions at an early

point in their life are more skillful than other ministers. As is evident from figure 6.3.2, this variable has no effect because the line is at almost the same hazard ratio for all ages at first entry and the confidence interval crosses the control group on all values of age.

The lower panel of figure 6.3.2 shows the hazard rate (not ratio) when age is added as a square term instead of age from the initial pooled regression model. This is done to control for whether the effect of age is curvilinear. As can be seen, the effect is not even close to being curvilinear here; it is a straight line. Both findings discussed here justifies using age as a continuous linear variable, as was done in in model

Figure 6.3.2: Alternative age measures.



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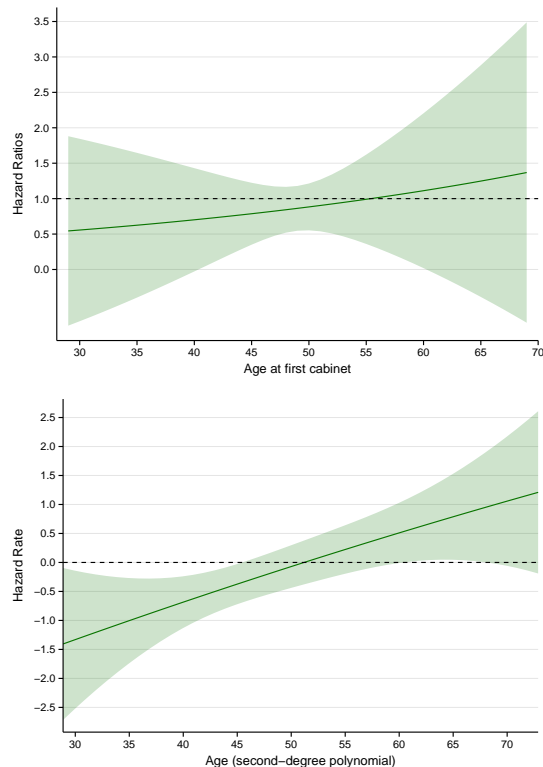
5.1.1.

Lastly, I ran models excluding the *One Party State* period and models excluding cabinets sitting shorter than one year. Neither of these gave any interesting changes in the effects of any variables, except for the fact that also here they effect of local youth experience proved to have weaker effect on durability, further confirming the unstableness of this measure. The full alternative models can, as mentioned, be found in the online documentation of the data.

# 7 | Implications and limitations

In this chapter, I start by discussing the implications and limitations of the results from the analyses, with special focus on what the resignation call effect means for the principal-agent relationship within Norwegian cabinets, why the validity of resignation calls as a performance measure is somewhat limited, and how this validity could be improved. Furthermore, I address what the implications of political experience having diverging effects are, why cabinet attributes are not found to have importance, and some of the problems with the personal characteristic factors.

In the end of the chapter, I deliberate on how generalizable the results are beyond post-war Norway, before I give some suggestions for improvements and possible paths for further studies.

## 7.1 Performance

Occupying a post in government is a prestigious political position with high stakes. To remain in cabinet, ministers have to deliver policy development that matters to the party leadership, the majority of parliament, and the voters. At least, that is what the results of the analyses in this thesis indicate. The pooled resignation call model from Chapter 5 showed that ministers getting resignation calls are more likely to be sacked than the ministers not receiving resignation calls, and the results are fairly robust. In principal-agent terms, this implies that party leaders hold ministers accountable when they are publicly perceived to perform badly.

Additionally, the actor-based resignation call model indicates that the opposition and the ministers own party (or coalition partners) have little influence on ministerial durability, while resignation calls from newspapers are found increase the likelihood of shorter ministerial tenure. This is interesting because it means that media performance evaluations play a more important role than other actors' performance evaluations. Thus,

ministers that want to remain in their post could possibly be more occupied with pleasing their party leaders through not getting bad publicity than actually implementing party policies under their jurisdiction. Newspapers give an important channel for uncovering misbehavior within the government, and the newspaper effect could come as a consequence of these. But, I argue that this could pose a problem for Norwegian democracy; if party leaders evaluate ministers on criticism by the media and not on their ability to carry out the policy preferences of their party, we have a situation where an unelected entity with no formal rights is able to influence the ministerial deselection process. Uncovering shirking and sabotage is an advantage, but what happens afterwards should be decided by the cabinet leaders, parliament, and parties. It might, however, also be the case that party leaders do not care what newspapers write, and the effect simply reflects that newspapers are well-informed on ministers and their status within the cabinet. Nevertheless, I maintain that elected officials should be the ones who evaluate ministerial performance.

The reasons for the lack of influence by opposition and parties are puzzling at face value, but it also highlights some of the flaws with using resignation calls as a measure of ministerial performance. On the one hand, the opposition can use resignation calls as strategical maneuvers, aiming at a policy nudge towards their own party's ideal point, instead of resignation calls as a tool for actually making the minister resign. Resignation calls from ones own party, on the other hand, are very diverse in nature, ranging from a resignation call against Harald Løbak (Labor Party – Gerhardsen V) for going against the majority of his own party in parliament, to resignation calls aiming at strengthening the party's position in parliament, as happened in 1964 when the Labor Party asked for Trygve Bratteli's removal from cabinet because they wanted him to lead their parliamentary group (Verdens Gang 1964).

But does resignation calls actually measure ministerial performance? The best answer I can give is "maybe". Resignation calls are different from most of the other variables used in this thesis, because they are not a direct observation of the systematized concept. The measure does a good job of measuring *public performance*, in that it is responsive to ministers being criticized publicly. What it does not account for, however, is *hidden performance* – how satisfied the minister's principal is with the performance of the minister behind closed doors. Indeed, we know little of how the inner principal-agent mechanics

in cabinets work, and even less how to measure it. Furthermore, I have shown that not only does resignation calls fail to measure the full range of ministerial performance, they are also noisy in that they correlate with other ministerial attributes such as gender and education. For the field of ministerial durability to move beyond applying the same framework in new case-studies, I argue that these problems should be addressed through validation.

Firstly, the content validity – how well the indicator represents the full meaning of the systematized concept (Adcock and Collier 2001: 537) – is low, because hidden performance is not caught by resignation calls. Secondly, criterion validity – whether scores of the indicator are correlated with other indicators measuring the same thing (Adcock and Collier 2001: 537) – is low, because there are no alternative measures to compare resignation calls with yet. However, the construct validity – the indicator is empirically associated with theoretical expectations of another variable (Adcock and Collier 2001: 537) – of resignation calls as ministerial performance measure has been increased by finding that it increases the risk of ministerial deselection.

The argument is that the resignation call measure needs to undergo some serious measurement validation: either through development of new indicators based on the same systematized concept that can be compared with resignation calls (convergent validation), or constructions of indicators based on different systematized concepts of ministerial performance to be compared with resignation calls (nomological validation).

Finally, there are some concerns with regard to reliability of the resignation call collection. Some resignation calls are not straightforward to code as resignation calls. For example, it is not given that other academics would regard the Bratteli case, described above, as a resignation call, and there is no guarantee that all resignation calls are identified when going through the newspapers. A possible improvement here is to get more people to go through the same material simultaneously, and compare the results. This is, however, a resource heavy task, unfeasible without funding.

## 7.2 Experience

The political experience measures do not meet the same validity and reliability problems as the resignation call measure. Cabinet, parliament and youth party experience are directly observable, have incontestable operationalizations, and are, with regard to reliability, only

exposed to random coding errors.

In Chapter 5, it was established that previous cabinet experience increased the probability, and parliamentary experience decreased the probability for ministerial dismissal. Although this is in line with both the hypotheses of this paper and the findings of other studies (Bucur 2013; Berlinski et al. 2012), the findings are puzzling at first glance. Both are measures of political experience, and the first expectation should be that they have similar effects on durability.

So why do party leaders prefer ministers with parliamentary experience, and not ministers with previous cabinet experience? On the one hand, I have argued that low durability among ministers with previous cabinet experience might be a consequence of a *"wear-and-tear"* effect, where ministers get exhausted by their responsibilities, and party leaders get tired of working with the same people over a long period of time. Additionally, new party leaders might want to find place in cabinet for party members they have close relationships with. For example, Odvar Nordli replaced half of his cabinet during his second term, where half of the dismissed ministers had previously occupied posts within the Bratteli II cabinet[1]. Party leaders might also replace long-sitting ministers because they simply want to keep the cabinet vital and fresh.

Parliamentary experience, on the other hand, might both increase ministerial durability because these ministers are more knowledgeable on how politics work and because parties want to reward loyalty with loyalty – politicians that work their way through the party should be better equipped to know the party line and act based on it. In terms of accountability, cabinet ministers are much more exposed to the public than parliamentary members. Bad performance in parliament is seldom noticed publicly, while cabinet ministers are susceptible to vultures circling over them in wait for a political scandal. Finally, the formal rule that ministers can not sit in parliament and cabinet at the same time could, especially for small parties, exhaust the pool of the best politicians whenever the party holds portfolios and parliamentary seats at the same time.

The results of previous experience from youth party organization is, as mentioned, more difficult to assess a substantial meaning to. Having experience from the national (central) organization clearly has to be treated as a null-finding, as the uncertainties are too large. As for previous membership in local youth party organization, the effect

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[1] The dismissed ministers that took part in both cabinets were: Leif Jørgen Aune, Gro Harlem Brundtland, Jens Evensen, Bjartmar Gjerde, Per Kleppe, Annemarie Lorentzen, and Inger Louise Valle.

proved very uncertain, and was argued to also be treated as a null-finding. Consequently, long service within ones party is not found to give any benefits for cabinet ministers. When ministers engage in shirking or sabotage, the results indicate that they do not get the benefit of the doubt because of party loyalty. A little note should be added here; the youth party experience measure can be replaced or supplemented by party executive measures, which has not yet been gathered for Norwegian parties in the whole post-war period.

## 7.3  Cabinet characteristics

The null-findings with regard to cabinet attributes are somewhat surprising and interesting. Minority cabinet ministers are not found to be more or less durable than their majority colleagues. In effect, this could mean that the parliamentary basis of cabinets has little relevance for ministerial durability. The same can be said about the cabinet structure variable; ministers in coalitions seems to be evaluated by similar criteria as ministers in single-party cabinets. Hence, the Norwegian case does not stand out from, for example, the British case, where most cabinets have majority status, based on these attributes alone.

Consequently, party leaders are able to judge ministers on performance and merits, rather than being forced to restructure the cabinet due to the political environment. Or, they might act strategically in allocating portfolios by taking into consideration whether party members will be tolerated by the majority of parliament before appointing them. Indeed, the absence of dissolution rights in Norway could contribute to this latter point; party leaders might be more reluctant to appoint controversial ministers susceptible to votes of no confidence, which could lead to situations where they must take a stance on whether to stand by their minister or put forward a confidence motion over the minister's destiny.

Furthermore, one could argue that these findings indicate that ministerial durability is not different between countries as a consequence of different political systems, but rather due to other country specific attributes. However, such conclusions should be treated with care because similar studies on other countries could prove that the cabinet attributes are important elsewhere.

## 7.4 Personal characteristics

Finally, gender and education was not found to have an effect on ministerial durability in the Norwegian case. This could put some strains on media studies finding that women are more easily demonized than men. However, the analysis with resignation calls as the dependent variable showed that women are more prone to getting resignation calls than men, which at least means that public hostility is greater towards women. It could also mean that women are more durable than men after receiving resignation calls, which possibly is a consequence of there being an expectation of having a certain amount of women in cabinet (depending on the time period) in combination with the seemingly shallow female recruitment pools in Norwegian political parties (Eilertsen 2014: 39-40).

Age, on the other hand, proves highly influential on ministerial durability. The age variable was included as an ambition measure because it is impossible to get stated ambition for the ministers in the data when they stretch as far back as they do here. If the assumption (that age is a measure for ambition) holds, this means that more ambitious ministers are preferred by party leaders over less ambitious ministers; a commonsensical finding at best, but I also argue that it is important to control for in the model – in both this study and other studies (Berlinski et al. 2012) – as it has a lot of explanatory power.

Lastly, ministers are not found to be more or less prone to be dismissed after being reshuffled. This is unsurprising as reshuffles can be used both as punishment and reward, and because it is hard to distinguish these two types of reshuffles in a measure.

## 7.5 Generalization

This study has given a good indication on what determines ministerial durability in post-war Norway, but can the findings be generalized to other populations? For example, consider the new *blue-blue* coalition (Solberg I) between the Conservatives and the Progress Party: we can expect that ministers from the Progress Party generally are safe because they have never participated in cabinets before (no previous cabinet experience); the mean age of 43 years is the lowest in the post-war period, and low age is found to make ministers more durable; the cabinet is heavy on parliamentary experience, also estimated to increase durability. Indeed, replacements have yet to occur in the Solberg I cabinet, after having remained in office for about one and a half years – only the Borten I and

Bondevik I cabinets dismissed their first minister later than the current cabinet length of the Solberg I cabinet.

The external validity beyond Norway is, however, relatively low. Other multi-party systems could prove to be completely different to Norway. Especially, the cabinet attributes having no effect in Norway does not mean that they will be unimportant in other countries. However, combined with other studies (see Chapter 2), we can be even more certain that resignation calls, previous cabinet experience, and age generally decrease ministerial durability, while the effect of education, gender, and reshuffles can be argued to have slightly more uncertain interpretations based on the results here.

## 7.6  Further studies

As we now have a good idea of how ministerial durability in Norway works, what is the natural step forward? Of course, case studies on other countries would always prove useful in pinning down general trends of what makes ministers survive longer. In the long run, however, cross-case studies looking into how different institutional factors, such as investiture rules, vote of (no) confidence, election system, and more, affects ministerial durability would be crucial.

As for measuring ministerial performance, which I argue is one of the main potential improvements within case-studies, I maintain that new measures should be developed to validate resignation calls. For example, hearings, interpellations, and questions in parliament could be the base of measuring how well a ministers perform; a minister that never gets called to parliament should be likely to perform well, while ministers that are frequently called to parliament should be likely to not perform well. There would, as with resignation calls, be some noise attached to such measures; policy disagreements between the minister and the opposition, could be an example of this.

In the Norwegian case, performance validation could be a natural starting point for improving the analyses of this thesis. Additionally, better party elite measures could shed new light on the relationship between political experience, parties, and ministerial durability. Furthermore, case studies on why individual ministers are sacked (mainly based on scandal studies) are plentiful; case studies on why individual ministers are *not* sacked after a scandal, personal error, or for other reasons, has not been as prominent in the literature. This is a problem of what King, Keohane and Verba (1994:

129) calls selection on the dependent variable (ministerial dismissal); deep cross-case analyses of individual ministers with similar situations and different outcomes could prove enlightening.

# 8 | Conclusion

The motivation for writing this thesis was to contribute to the fast growing ministerial durability literature by empirically exploring why some ministers in post-war Norway are fired and others not. I apply a slightly modified version of the principal-agent theory, where I argue that party leaders are the main principals of ministers, to scrutinize how ministers are held accountable. The general finding is that Norwegian ministers are judged on their performance, merits, and ambitions rather than on unchangeable personal attributes.

The most intriguing finding is that ministers performing poorly are less durable than well-performing ministers, where performance is measured through resignation calls. More specifically, this means that party leaders hold ministers accountable when they do not deliver what is expected from them; the accountability link between the cabinet principal and agents works in the Norwegian case. However, I also find that party leaders consider resignation calls from newspapers more seriously than those from parties and the opposition. Consequently, this could indicate that there is a democratic deficiency in what determines ministerial dismissals.

In addition, I have used quite a bit of space on assessing whether resignation calls should be accepted as a performance measure, finding that there are several problems with this approach. Based on a count model with resignation calls as the dependent variable, I found that female ministers and ministers with higher education are more susceptible to receiving resignation calls than male and lower education ministers – indicating that there is a fair amount of statistical noise in the measure. Moreover, I found that there are endogeneity problems in the resignation call measure, in that ministers with long tenures receive more resignation calls than ministers with short tenures. However, a model where resignation calls are replaced with *resignation calls per year* showed that this problem was not too severe, but further studies should at least test the resignation call measure

in a similar manner. I also argue that some effort should be made to construct different measures for ministerial performance as alternatives to resignation calls to increase the validity of the measure.

Furthermore, non-performance based characteristics are also found to affect ministerial durability in different ways: ministers with long service across cabinets are found to be more prone to dismissal than newly employed ministers, while parliamentary experience seems to increase durability. Because these two measures of political experience have diverging effects, I argue that the cabinet experience decrease ministerial durability as a consequence of a "wear-and-tear" effect; party leaders replace ministers that sit for a long period of time to keep the cabinet fresh. Parliamentary experience, however, has given ministers political experience in the shadows of the public, grooming the best politicians for an arguably higher post in the cabinet, which should decrease the chance of ministerial drift or bad performance.

The most important null-finding of this thesis is that both cabinet composition and parliamentary basis are not found to have little impact on ministerial durability. No matter whether the minister sits in a majority, minority, single-party, or coalition cabinet, the risk of dismissal is not found to differ. Consequently, this could indicate that party leaders do not replace ministers due to different political environments. In these results, paths for further studies are plentiful; cross-country studies exploring whether cabinet characteristics are irrelevant for ministerial durability would provide enriching insights for the literature.

With regard to personal characteristics, age has been unveiled as important for tenure – older ministers are more prone for dismissal than their younger counterparts. Because age is used as a proxy for ambition, this means that party leaders appreciate the more ambitious young party members over their older colleagues. However, I have also argued that this effect could be overestimated because older ministers could have more health related issues on a general basis, making them leave cabinet duties faster than youthful ministers.

Finally, I argue that the internal validity of the thesis is high, but also that deeper cross-case analyses of uncovered ministerial misbehavior leading to dismissal and *not* leading to dismissal could give more flesh to the bone for the Norwegian case in particular. However, I also maintain that the results of this thesis hardly can be generalized

beyond Norway; comparative studies of several multi-party systems (and other types of parliamentary democracies) would prove useful for discovering whether institutional factors such as cabinet composition or parliamentary basis are more important, and whether the same ministerial attributes affect durability similarly across countries.

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# Appendices

## A  Key words for resignation call collection

Table A.1: Key words for resignation call collection.

| Fixed string | Varying string |
|---|---|
| "Minister name" AND | "gå* av*" |
|  | "må* gå*" |
|  | "bør* gå*" |
|  | "burde* gå*" |
|  | "skulle* gå*" |
|  | "trekke* seg" |
|  | "avgang*" |
|  | "avskjed*" |
|  | "vurder* sin" |
|  | "vurder* stilling*" |
|  | "vurder* posisjon*" |
|  | "fratre*" |
|  | "takk* av" |
|  | "tre* tilb*" |
|  | "avsett*" |
|  | "avsatt" |
|  | "skift* ut" |
|  | "mistill*" |

# B    Jurisdiction categorization

Table B.1: Coding scheme for minister post to jurisdiction.

| Jurisdiction | Title (ENG) – Minister of... | Title (NOR) |
|---|---|---|
| **Administration** | Government Administration | Administrasjonsminister |
| | Labour and Government Administration | Arbeids- og administrasjonsminister |
| | Labour and Social Inclusion | Arbeids- og inkluderingsminister |
| | Consumption and Government Administration | Forbruker- og administrasjonsminister |
| | Supply and Reconstruction | Forsyning- og gjenreisningsminister |
| | Reform | Fornyingsminister |
| | Planning | Planleggingsminister |
| | Labour | Arbeidsminister |
| | Ministers without portfolio | |
| **Agriculture** | Agriculture | Landbruksminister |
| **Culture** | Culture | Kulturminister |
| **Defense** | Defense | Forsvarsminister |
| **Education** | Research and Higher Education | Forsknings- og høyere utdanningsminister |
| | Education and Church Affairs | Kirke- og undervisningsminister |
| | Education and Research | Kunnskapsminister |
| **Environment** | the Environment | Miljøvernminister |
| **Finance** | Finance | Finansminister |
| | Prices | Prisminister |
| **Foreign affairs** | International Development | Bistandsminister |
| | Human Rights | Menneskerettighetsminister |
| | Foreign Affairs | Utenriksminister |
| | International Development | Utviklingsminister |
| **Health** | Health | Helseminister |
| **Industry** | Industry | Industriminister |
| | Trade and Industry | Næringsminister |
| | Petroleum and Energy | Olje- og energiminister |
| **Justice** | Justice | Justisminister |
| **Regional** | Local Government | Kommunalminister |
| | Rebuilding Finnmark | Minister for gjenoppbygging av Finnmark |
| **Sea and fish** | Fisheries | Fiskeriminister |
| | Maritime Law | Havrettsminister |
| | Shipping | Skipsfartsminister |
| **Social** | Children and Family Affairs | Barne- og familieminister |
| | Family Affairs and Consumption | Familie- og forbruksminister |
| | Social Affairs | Sosialminister |
| **Trade** | Trade | Handelsminister |
| **Transport** | Transport and Communications | Samferdselsminister |

# C  Regression tables

Table C.1: Cox proportional hazard models

|  | Model 1 | Model 2 | Model 3 |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Performance** | | | |
| RC pooled | 0.247 (0.074)*** | | |
| RC per year | | | 0.782 (0.118)*** |
| Time | | −0.170 (0.082)* | |
| RC opposition | | 0.909 (0.790) | |
| RC own party | | 0.982 (1.605) | |
| RC newspaper | | −0.458 (0.751) | |
| Time:RC opposition | | −0.321 (0.226) | |
| Time:RC own party | | −0.131 (0.448) | |
| Time:RC newspaper | | 0.421 (0.219) | |
| **Experience** | | | |
| Cabinet exp. | 0.114 (0.041)** | 0.124 (0.042)** | 0.100 (0.041)* |
| Parliamentary exp. | −0.658 (0.271)* | −0.672 (0.271)* | −0.604 (0.268)* |
| Youth experience (central) | −0.641 (0.540) | −0.662 (0.553) | −0.498 (0.550) |
| Youth experience (local) | 0.845 (0.378)* | 0.915 (0.387)* | 0.724 (0.385) |
| **Cabinet** | | | |
| Cabinet type (majority) | 0.150 (0.221) | −0.202 (0.266) | 0.138 (0.224) |
| Cabinet structure (coalition) | −0.261 (0.259) | 0.025 (0.304) | −0.337 (0.262) |
| **Personal** | | | |
| Age (centered) | 0.059 (0.016)*** | 0.059 (0.016)*** | 0.068 (0.016)*** |
| Gender (female) | 0.338 (0.258) | 0.300 (0.280) | 0.370 (0.254) |
| Reshuffle | −0.371 (0.490) | −0.381 (0.491) | −0.812 (0.537) |
| Education (lower) | 0.003 (0.280) | −0.002 (0.281) | 0.075 (0.283) |
| AIC | 1068.091 | 1062.625 | 1013.365 |
| Num. events | 98 | 98 | 95 |
| Num. obs. | 625 | 625 | 621 |

***$p < 0.001$, **$p < 0.01$, *$p < 0.05$. Cox Proportion Hazards models where estimates are in hazard rates, and standard errors in parentheses.

Table C.2: Negative binomial regression model

|  | *Dependent variable:* |
| --- | --- |
|  | Resignation calls |
| Intercept | −1.072 |
|  | (−1.412, −0.732) |
| Cumulative RCs | 0.205 |
|  | (−0.007, 0.417) |
| Duration (centered years) | 0.310 |
|  | (0.073, 0.547) |
| Cabinet exp. | −0.031 |
|  | (−0.113, 0.052) |
| Parliamentary exp. | 0.164 |
|  | (−0.252, 0.581) |
| Youth experience (central) | −0.252 |
|  | (−0.902, 0.397) |
| Youth experience (local) | 0.572 |
|  | (0.031, 1.112) |
| Cabinet type (majority) | 0.119 |
|  | (−0.237, 0.475) |
| Cabinet structure (coalition) | 0.120 |
|  | (−0.249, 0.490) |
| Age (centered) | 0.009 |
|  | (−0.014, 0.033) |
| Gender (female) | 0.607 |
|  | (0.245, 0.969) |
| Education (lower) | −0.661 |
|  | (−1.143, −0.178) |
| Observations | 563 |
| $\theta$ | 0.566 (0.103) |
| Akaike Inf. Crit. | 1,070.871 |

*Note:* Estimates from negative binomial regression model with confidence intervals in parentheses.

# D Proportional hazards tests

Table D.1: Global proportional hazards test – Model 1

|  | rho | chisq | p |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| RC pooled | 0.092 | 0.759 | 0.384 |
| Age | 0.040 | 0.181 | 0.671 |
| Gender (male) | −0.001 | 0.0001 | 0.991 |
| Youth experience (central) | 0.123 | 1.495 | 0.221 |
| Youth experience (local) | −0.113 | 1.351 | 0.245 |
| Cabinet exp. | −0.091 | 0.720 | 0.396 |
| Parliamentary exp. | −0.005 | 0.003 | 0.958 |
| Education (lower) | 0.004 | 0.002 | 0.965 |
| Reshuffle | 0.098 | 0.961 | 0.327 |
| Cabinet type (majority) | 0.048 | 0.222 | 0.638 |
| Cabinet structure (coalition) | −0.0003 | 0.00001 | 0.997 |
| Global |  | 4.990 | 0.932 |

Table D.2: Global proportional hazards test – Model 2

|  | rho | chisq | p |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| RC opposition | 0.161 | 1.249 | 0.264 |
| Time | −0.035 | 0.157 | 0.692 |
| RC newspaper | −0.085 | 0.378 | 0.539 |
| RC own party | −0.054 | 0.292 | 0.589 |
| Age | 0.080 | 0.832 | 0.362 |
| Gender (male) | 0.002 | 0.001 | 0.977 |
| Youth experience (central) | 0.113 | 1.275 | 0.259 |
| Youth experience (local) | −0.124 | 1.696 | 0.193 |
| Cabinet exp. | −0.116 | 1.229 | 0.268 |
| Parliamentary exp. | −0.009 | 0.009 | 0.927 |
| Education (lower) | −0.010 | 0.012 | 0.914 |
| Reshuffle | 0.111 | 1.244 | 0.265 |
| Cabinet type (majority) | −0.042 | 0.177 | 0.674 |
| Cabinet structure (coalition) | −0.009 | 0.008 | 0.927 |
| Time:RC opposition | −0.132 | 0.952 | 0.329 |
| Time:RC newspaper | 0.026 | 0.039 | 0.844 |
| Time:RC own party | 0.093 | 0.926 | 0.336 |
| Global |  | 13.542 | 0.699 |

# E   Frailty terms

Table E.1: Frailty terms

|                | Model 1 | Model 2 |
|----------------|---------|---------|
| Administration | 0.519   | 0.584   |
| Agriculture    | −0.077  | −0.042  |
| Culture        | −0.278  | −0.284  |
| Defence        | −0.382  | −0.395  |
| Education      | −0.186  | −0.123  |
| Environment    | 0.109   | 0.140   |
| Finance        | −0.227  | −0.262  |
| Foreign affairs| −0.464  | −0.539  |
| Health         | −0.175  | −0.143  |
| Industry       | 0.447   | 0.486   |
| Justice        | −0.049  | −0.099  |
| Regional       | 0.128   | 0.087   |
| Sea and fish   | 0.074   | −0.015  |
| Social         | 0.041   | 0.075   |
| Trade          | 0.129   | 0.138   |
| Transport      | −0.182  | −0.308  |