



# **Power Sharing in Legislatures: Mega-Seats in Twelve European Parliamentary Democracies**

**Jorge M. Fernandes**

**Ph.D. thesis defence on 17 September 2013**

## **Abstract**

Recent contributions in legislative studies field have coined the term *mega-seats* to denote committee systems and leadership bodies. The significance of viewing the internal bodies of legislatures as mega-seats is that they are conceived as part of the democratic delegation chain. Consequently, such an approach adds a political bargaining dimension to the allocation of mega-seats. During the internal organization process of the legislature, plenary legislators become principals, who delegate power to internal bodies, mainly to enhance labor division, tackle information asymmetries, and channel party demands. This thesis examines the process of payoff distribution in legislatures, using an original dataset containing 350 parties, in 12 Western European parliamentary democracies. The analysis is carried out at the party level as well as at the legislature level. Moreover, I conduct two case studies – Portugal and the United Kingdom – to further disentangle the causal mechanisms used to explain mega-seats allocation in parliamentary democracies. The empirical analysis starts with an examination of whether the division of payoffs (*i.e.*, mega-seats) follows a proportionality logic. The proportionality assumption is borrowed from coalition studies, which have long established that institutional payoffs are distributed in a 1:1 proportionality.



**Jury:**

Prof Kaare Strøm (University of California, San Diego, External Supervisor), Jorge M. Fernandes (candidate), Prof Stefano Bartolini (EUI, Supervisor), Prof Shane Martin (University of Leicester), Prof Mark Franklin (MIT/formerly EUI, by videoconference)

**Bio**

Jorge M. Fernandes holds an MPhil in Comparative Politics from the Institute of Social Sciences, University of Lisbon and an MRes in Political and Social Sciences from the European University Institute. His research interests include legislatures, political parties, and comparative institutions. During his PhD, Fernandes worked as research assistant at the RSCAS and held a visiting position at UC San Diego.