

# **An Institutional Theory of Behaviour in the European Parliament**

Simon Hix, London School of Economics and Political Science

Tapio Raunio, University of Helsinki

Roger Scully, Brunel University

Paper prepared for presentation at the Biennial Conference of the European Community Studies Association, 3-6 June 1999, Pittsburgh.

## 1. Introduction

This paper constitutes one of the first collaborative efforts of the European Parliamentary Research Group (EPRG).<sup>1</sup> The EPRG is a multi-national team of researchers established with the aim of significantly advancing knowledge and understanding of the European Union's (EU) elected institution. The need to deepen our awareness of the European Parliament (EP) arises primarily from the growing importance of the chamber within the Union. More than a decade of treaty reforms have boosted the parliament's role in EU policy-making to the extent that aiming to understand the EU without understanding the EP is increasingly an unrealistic proposition.

Fortunately, building that understanding of the parliament does not require starting from a *tabula rasa*. Much of the initial 'mapping of the terrain' within the EP has already been conducted, and a detailed empirical literature has also developed within recent years. However, there is now an urgent need for a *theory* of political behaviour in the European Parliament - both to bring a coherence to our existing observations and also to stimulate and direct more detailed future research.

—Thus, in this paper we aim to begin the development of a theory of behaviour in the EP. We seek not to offer the final word in this regard but, drawing from extant literature on the EP and on theories of behaviour developed in other legislative institutions, to reflect upon and develop at least partial answers to three major questions:

- How can one seek to develop a coherent theory of political behaviour in the EP?
- What would one need to do to test this theory?; and
- What might be the practical and theoretical implications of what we might find?

The initial answers developed to these questions will serve as a sort of 'manifesto' for the

---

<sup>1</sup> This paper represents the individual views of the authors and not the collective views of the European Parliament Research Group. At the time of writing, the members of the EPRG are: Clifford Carrubba (State University of New York, at Stony Brook), David Farrell (University of Manchester), Matthew Gabel (University of Kentucky), Simon Hix (London School of Economics and Political Science), Catherine Hoskyns (Coventry University), Stephen Kehoe (Adamson Associates), Amie Kreppel (University of Florida), Christopher Lord (University of Leeds), Tapio Raunio (University of Helsinki), Roger Scully (Brunel University), Julie Smith (Cambridge University), and Martin Westlake (European Commission).

intensive collaborative study of the 1999-2004 EP which the EPRG will conduct. In section 5, as an illustration, one of the main hypotheses - about the impact of different national electoral systems on MEP behaviour - is developed and applied. Finally, the concluding section reflects upon the empirical and theoretical challenges ahead.

## **2. Literature Review: What we already know about Legislative Behaviour in General and in the European Parliament in Particular**

### **2.1. Behaviour in the US Congress**

The overarching theoretical and empirical requirements of political science are invariant as to country (Patterson 1989: 461).

By far the most empirically *and* theoretically developed literature on any legislative assembly is that devoted to the U.S. Congress. It is only natural, then, to look towards this literature for ideas and inspiration in seeking to develop a theory of behaviour in the European Parliament. This step is taken in full recognition that there is, of course, much that is different between the bi-cameral, two-party, single-nation Congress, and the uni-cameral, multi-party, multi-national EP. It is also undertaken in the realisation that the sheer bulk of published work on Congress makes it impossible to summarise in full (Mezey 1993). What is attempted here is relatively simple: to summarise the major recent research traditions, and their findings, in those areas of Congressional research which bear the clearest relevance to the EP.

This work is often summarised as having two principal concerns: in contemporary terminology, it seeks to understand both *institutional equilibrium* (the *effects* of organisational rules and practices which facilitate effective and clear decision-making) and *equilibrium institutions* (the *causes* of those rules and practices). These mirror-image concerns interweave in much of the most prominent recent research. The other principal common feature, and one which partly explains the concerns with institutional equilibria, is one very much in line with 'new-

institutionalist' work elsewhere (March & Olsen 1989): an attempt to move beyond the behaviouralist obsession with more and more detailed data gathering on increasingly narrow areas of political life, and to actually integrate empirical findings within an encompassing theoretical framework.

Research in the 1950s and 60s had produced a consensus among most analysts around what Mezey terms the 'textbook Congress', "characterised by a strong committee system, powerful committee chairs, a rigid adherence to the seniority system and to the other unwritten rules of the legislative game, and party leadership based for the most part on personality and persuasion rather than on sanctions and coercion" (1993: 335). This understanding had gradually emerged from the steady accumulation of increasingly behaviouralist research, encompassing both quantitative studies of matters like voting behaviour and more 'anthropological' close observations. This understanding would have been placed under some pressure during the 1970s and 80s in any case, purely because of internal Congressional change (Davidson 1992). But over the last twenty or so years, there have also been a number of more general and major theoretical challenges to the textbook interpretation of Congressional politics.

The first of these challenges was led by David Mayhew (1974). Mayhew's approach to the study of Congress was dominated by the theme of the 'electoral connection': i.e., the idea that the behaviour of individual legislators both inside and outside the chamber, as well as the major organisational features of Congress, could be understood as serving the re-selection concerns of Members of Congress (MCs). As Mezey summarises,

Members responded to the perceived needs and desires of their constituents, power was decentralised so that members could act independently of party leaders on behalf of these local interests, and policies that might well be inefficient in their use of resources were nonetheless enacted because they spread electoral advantages to as many members as possible (1993: 336).

This election-centred perspective on legislative behaviour led to several distinct strands of further research. Fiorina (1977) argued that legislators sought 'pork-barrel' policies which ensured benefits for their home districts. And, Fenno (1978) documented in copious detail how MCs

adopted different ‘home-styles’ outside of Congress, according to the needs of their re-selection constituency, in an effort to win votes, a line of work which has been further developed within both the American and British contexts (Cain et al 1987; Norton & Wood 1993).

The Mayhew approach, however, also provided clear antecedents for another line of methodological and theoretical development. The notion that loose party structures and strong committees provided the means by which legislators met local policy concerns was further developed in work led by Kenneth Shepsle which also did much to introduce the formalistic techniques of institutional micro-economics to Congressional scholarship. Simplifying greatly, one can identify two major themes within this work:

- Firstly, there is a clear concern with *institutional equilibrium*: with the impact of the rules surrounding the role of, in particular, Congressional committees. In a series of papers (Shepsle 1979; Shepsle & Weingast 1981, 1987), theoretical arguments surrounding the impact of committees on policy-making have been developed. Specifically, it has been argued that committees are powerful because: they have a ‘gate-keeping’ function (i.e., they can prevent virtually any bill from being presented to the plenary session of the chamber); because ‘germaneness’ rules on bills emerging from committees effectively reduce the policy-space to a single dimension, thus avoiding the danger of post-committee ‘cycling’ between different policy alternatives (c.f. McKelvey 1976) and generating a ‘structure-induced equilibrium’; and they exerted an ‘ex-post’ veto over bills once they left the chamber, through their dominant role on inter-chamber Conference committees.
- Second, in attempting to understand *equilibrium institutions*, there has been an attempt to explain *why* committees are allowed power. Essentially, this explanation has focused on the fact that committee specialisation and power allows for ‘gains from trade’ between MCs: that is, legislators generally serve on those committees most pertinent to the policy needs of their district (and, hence, most pertinent to their own re-selection chances) (Rohde & Shepsle 1973). By allowing these committees substantial policy leeway, legislators endorse a covert bargain with each other, to allow each much of what they want in the areas that matter most to them, in return for giving up influence over less salient policy areas (Shepsle 1978).

The Shepsle perspective became the 'received wisdom' for a new generation of Congressional scholars in the 1980s. But challenges to this position have, in turn, emerged. In several works, Keith Krehbiel has attacked both the specific idea that Congressional committees possess any *ex-post* vote (Krehbiel 1987) and the more general notion that the primary purpose of committee specialisation and power is to protect 'gains from trade'. A counter-explanation, which Krehbiel (1991) tests, and for which he finds impressive empirical support, views congressional organisation very differently. Instead of focusing on the *demands* of individual MCs, Krehbiel interprets the role of committees as being primarily about fulfilling the requirements of the chamber as a whole for the effective *supply* of scrutiny and policy expertise. While committees are given some prerogatives over policy - the minimum, Krehbiel implies, consistent with giving legislators the necessary incentives for building policy expertise - this interpretation generally views committees as being much more the *tool* of the chamber than the Shepsle perspective originally suggested.

More recently, other scholars have argued that Congressional organisation and behaviour requires a much greater attention to the role of *party* in order to be adequately explained (Cox and McCubbins 1991, 1993; Kiewiet and McCubbins 1991; see also Rohde 1991). The party-centred perspective sees partisanship as the fundamental organising principle in the legislature. Parties are seen as being a form of 'cartel', with individual legislators requiring a positive image of their party, including a strong policy record, to help them win re-selection, yet also being confronted with diverse incentives. While the long-term desire is for a strong record of achievement, something which can best be attained through party unity around a coherent policy programme, in the short-run individual members can gain popularity at home by dissenting from the party line in favour of particularistic local interests. The party leadership must therefore seek to enforce at least the minimum coherence upon behaviour in order to resolve this collective action dilemma. This includes party leaderships taking more control over committee assignments than has previously been acknowledged - something partly hidden from the view of empirical research by the 'anticipatory compliance' of potential rebels to the party line in order to avoid replacement on the committee - and a greater ability than is often suggested to mobilise legislators as a party voting bloc when the need arises (c.f. Krehbiel 1993).

This all-too-brief summary of recent Congressional research has only been able to offer an outline of some major works. Nonetheless, it should be clear that an understanding of the themes discussed above - the link between behaviour inside and outside the chamber, legislative organisation, and the role and impact of party ties within the chamber - all have great potential to inform research on the European Parliament.

## **2.2. Behaviour in the European Parliament**

The literature on the EP is increasingly vast, having expanded concomitantly with the developing powers of the institution. On political behaviour in the EP, there are three inter-related bodies of research: (1) studies of the general development and operation of the EP; (2) studies that focus on a particular aspect of internal politics in the EP (by far the largest body of research); and (3) studies of the role of the EP in inter-institutional bargaining between the Council, the Commission and the EP.

In the first area, the two recent *tours de force* are Corbett et al. (1995) and Westlake (1994c). Drawing on years of observation of, and participation in, the work of the chamber, these books contribute an enormous amount to our understanding of MEP interests, motivations and behaviour. In particular, they explain how the complex strategic and institutional environment in the EP forces MEPs to make 'rough choices'. As Corbett et al. (1995: 62) observe:

An active member of a committee or of a Political Group may well gain greater influence within the Parliament, with prestigious *rapporteurships*, and so on. On the other hand, a member can be extremely active within the Parliament and lose touch with his or her own political base at home, and risk not being re-elected. While the choice is not usually as stark as this ... a member must select an appropriate balance of priorities.

Westlake (1994c: 101-6) adds that variations in these pressures produce variations in MEP behaviour. First, each MEP comes from a different national setting: with different candidate

selection and electoral systems, some parties are in government while others are in opposition, some MEPs have dual mandates, and some MEPs are high-profile domestic figures while others are unknowns. Second, each MEP faces a different strategic situation once in the EP: whether they see the EP as the beginning or the end of their careers; how long they have been in the EP; how influential their national party is within their EP party group; and how powerful their EP party group vis-à-vis the other party groups, will all affect what they *seek* to do in the parliament and what they realistically *can* do.

The growing body of research on specific aspects of behaviour in the EP has confirmed and sharpened these general conclusions. For example, Scarrow (1997) finds that MEPs have three main 'career paths': exclusively at the European level; a seat in the EP as means to a position in domestic politics; or the last job at the end of a career. There is considerable variation between member states, but the proportion of 'European careerists' is gradually increasing relative to the other types. Scarrow consequently argues that MEPs are likely to become increasingly independent of domestic political considerations.

However, research on European elections and their impact on MEP behaviour finds that MEPs are firmly tied to domestic party demands. The successive European Elections Studies (EES) find that European elections are 'second-order national contests' (Reif & Schmitt 1980, van der Eijk & Franklin 1996, also Smith 1999). Because the main goal of domestic political parties is to win domestic governmental office, EP elections are fought on the performance of domestic governments rather than on the performance of the EP party groups or on competing agendas for European level action. As a result, MEPs depend on the success of their national parties to be re-elected.

In addition, in the 1994 EES survey of MEPs, Norris and Franklin (1997) found that the use of PR systems with single national lists in most member states allows domestic party leaderships to control the selection of MEPs. On the other hand, Bowler and Farrell's (1993) study revealed that MEPs in single-member constituency systems (the UK and Ireland) are more sensitive demands of their domestic constituents than those in PR-systems. In a different survey, Raunio (2000) found that regardless of the type of electoral system used, links between national parties and MEPs have increased, to enable MEPs to influence national party policy positions, but also to enable national party leaderships to monitor the behaviour of 'their' MEPs.



Nevertheless, once elected, MEPs are free to organise themselves and design institutions to co-ordinate their behaviour. The pre-eminent (and most researched) internal institutions in the EP are the transnational ‘party groups’. The party groups play a central role in all the main political processes in the EP: setting the political agenda, committee assignments, competing for leadership positions, allocating staff resources and speaking time, co-ordinating committee behaviour, and co-ordinating voting (e.g. van Oudenhove 1965, Fitzmaurice 1975, Claeys & Loeb-Mayer 1979, Pridham & Pridham 1979, 1981, Niedermayer 1983, Bardi 1992, 1994, Corbett et al. 1995: 64-95, Hix & Lord 1997: 111-39, Raunio 1997: 43-78). The party groups have ‘whip’ systems to attempt to force MEPs to follow party lines, and studies of roll-call votes show a higher level of party group cohesion in the EP than, for instance, in the US Congress (Attinà 1990, Quanjel & Wolters 1993, Brzinski 1995, Raunio 1997: 79-124). Nevertheless, EP party groups are unable to prevent whole national delegations from defecting from the EP party group lines if an issue is highly salient for the domestic party leadership (Hix & Lord 1995, Brzinski et al. 1998). While the EP and its party groups have been found to lack a set of ‘commonly accepted norms’ which guide MEPs’ behaviour, coalition formation within and between groups is largely based on extensive negotiations and the will to forge compromises. (Johansson 1997, Bowler and Farrell 1999)

‘Power index’ analyses show that in a policy-free environment, the two largest party groups - the Party of European Socialists (PES) and the European People’s Party (EPP) - are pivotal, particularly when ‘oversized majorities’ are needed to secure a majority (Lane et.al. 1995, Hosli 1997, Nurmi 1997). But, empirical studies show that party group coalitions tend to be formed along the left-right rather than pro-/anti-Europe dimension: something which gave considerable power to the PES to shape coalitions in the 1989-94 and 1994-99 parliaments (Hix & Lord 1997: 136-8, Raunio 1997: 101-6, Tsebelis & Kreppel 1999).

The second key internal institutions are the committees. MEPs are relatively free to choose which committees they join (Corbett et.al. 1995: 109-112). However, Bowler and Farrell (1995) find that both national/party interests (‘distribution’) and policy expertise (‘information’) are key determinants of committee membership in the EP. Committee chairs and vice-chairs are decided at the beginning and half-way through each EP term in a ‘two-level game’ between the national parties (within the EP party groups) and between the party groups (Westlake 1994c:

194-5, Corbett et.al. 1995: 112-118). Political parties also control decisions on *rappoteurships*, and MEP behaviour in the committees is controlled by the party group leaderships through the Group Co-ordinators in each committee.

The third main internal institutions are the Rules of Procedure. These are under-researched (c.f. Williams 1995). But, we know from the study of coalition behaviour that the 'absolute majority' requirement of most legislative procedures forces the PES and EPP to operate as a virtual 'grand coalition' (Attinà 1992: 148-65, Hix & Lord 1995: 158-65). To increase the possibility of alternative coalitions, however, in 1998 the PES and EPP leaderships forced an amendment of the rules of procedure to encourage higher turnout in EP votes (by not paying the expenses of MEPs who do not vote). Also, Bardi (1996) finds that whereas the 'national' character of EP elections leads to a party group fragmentation after each election, the internal EP rules facilitate coalescence into the large party groups during the term of each parliament.

Research has also been conducted into other forms of behaviour in the EP. Two large-scale empirical studies on individual MEP and party group behaviour from the first directly elected Parliament (1979-84) showed, among other things, that the representatives made an active use of various parliamentary instruments to influence Community events. (Kirchner 1984, Grabitz et al. 1988) Raunio's (1996, 1997: 125-80) extensive study of written questions (to the Commission and the Council) reveals that MEPs see themselves representing multiple interests: regional, sectoral, partisan, national, and pan-European. Scully (1997a) finds that MEP participation (in votes) is higher under the legislative procedures where the EP has more influence on outcomes (i.e. the co-operation and co-decision procedures). Also, a number of studies have looked at MEP's attitudes and whether they become 'socialised' as pro-Europeans (e.g. Kerr 1973, Bardi 1989, Bowler & Farrell 1992, Westlake 1994a). Most recently, the 1994-97 EES surveys reveal that national electoral and political settings determine how MEPs see their 'representational roles' (Wessels 1998), but also that the transnational partisan bonds that unite and divide MEPs are highly significant (Schmitt & Thomassen 1999). From the same study, Franklin and Scarrow (1999) find that national parliamentarians and MEPs share similar views about Europe, and hence conclude that MEPs are not socialised by their EP membership. Similarly, Scully (1998) finds that on political integration issues, the length of time as an MEP is a weaker determinant of MEP voting than either partisan or national affiliation.

Finally, on the third body of research, theoretical models of inter-institutional bargaining in the EU legislative procedures show that EP power over political outcomes has increased dramatically with the successive Treaty reforms. However, most of these models make two 'heroic assumptions' about the EP: first, that the main policy dimension is 'pro-/anti-European integration', and as a result the EP is at the opposite extreme of the spectrum to the status quo; and second, that the EP is a unitary actor (e.g. Tsebelis 1994, 1995, 1996, Steunenberg 1994, Garrett 1995, Crombez 1996, 1997, Garrett & Tsebelis 1996). However, if the policy issue is different (such as the left-right), or when EU legislation already exists, the EP is closer to the status quo and is hence more likely to veto Council positions (Scully 1997b, Hix 1999b). Similarly, if internal EP politics and institutions are taken into account, the EP is a much less predictable actor (Tsebelis 1998, c.f. Tsebelis 1995), but the national parties represented in the Council can try to enforce their positions on their MEPs (Gabel & Hix 1997, Carrubba & Gabel 1998).

Empirical studies confirm that the EP's legislative impact has increased (e.g. Judge & Earnshaw 1994, Judge et al. 1994, Kreppel 1997), tending to refute the Garrett/Tsebelis argument that EP power is lower under the co-decision than the co-operation procedure (e.g. Earnshaw & Judge 1997, Jacobs 1997, Garman & Hilditch 1998). Similarly, empirical studies confirm that the EP has used its powers of scrutiny, investiture and censure to influence the executive actions of the Commission (Westlake 1994b, 1998).

In sum, MEPs pursue their goals in a complex strategic and institutional environment. There are multiple avenues for MEP action: such as attending, voting, writing reports, asking questions, joining party groups, establishing new committees, changing the rules of procedure, or becoming a leader of a committee, a national delegation, a party group or of the EP itself. However, we have only just begun to understand why MEPs choose certain actions over others. Most existing research has drawn inductive conclusions, from studying one specific type of behaviour, and often using limited data. If we are to understand political behaviour in the EP in a more coherent way, we must develop a generalisable theory, and test this theory on multiple types of behaviour and with larger data sets.

### 3. An Institutional Theory of Behaviour in the European Parliament

#### 3.1. Divided Loyalties: Re-selection, Policy and Office Goals of MEPs

In the tradition of Mayhew (1974), and in line with most other approaches to the study of legislative behaviour, we assume that the primary goal of the vast majority of MEPs is to be *re-elected*. However, MEPs pursue three different strategies to achieve this goal:

- *re-selection* - to be *re-selected* as a candidate in European elections MEPs must pursue actions that promote the interests of the sections of their domestic party that control the re-selection process;<sup>2</sup>
- *policy* - to win the support of domestic constituents and support groups, MEPs must secure outputs from the EU policy process that promote these interests or the value orientations that these social groups hold; and
- *office* - to increase their personal profile in the EP and their ability to be a key agenda-setting in the chamber, MEPs must secure positions of authority and prestige *within* the EP, such as chair of an EP committee, *rapporteur* on a key piece of legislation, leader of an EP party group, leader of the national party delegation, or Vice-President or President of the EP.

Most theories of legislative behaviour assume that these strategies are inherently incompatible. For example, in the study of the US Congress, MCs are assumed *either* to pursue policy/constituency interests (e.g. Shepsle 1979, Cox & McCubbins 1993), information (e.g.

---

<sup>2</sup> Partial exceptions to our assumption that MEPs seek re-selection and election are those members not seeking to build any long-term career in the parliament. Westlake (1994a) discovered a number of such members in his study of British MEPs. However, even such 'European-stint' members will often be seeking to pursue political ambitions in other arenas, ambitions which will require the endorsement of their party just as much as would EP re-selection and election. Thus, many of these members might be regarded as operating under similar constraints as those who

Krehbeil 1991), or personal ideological preferences (e.g. Poole & Rosenthal 1997). Similarly, in the study of the EP, studies of the party groups have tended to assume that higher group cohesion indicates growing policy convergence on EU issues within the European party families (e.g. Hix & Lord 1997, Raunio, 1997). But, voting cohesion within a legislative faction might just as easily reflect common strategic interests in the process of re-selection rather than ideological similarity (e.g. Cox & McCubbins 1993). For example, on left-right economic issues, Socialist parties in northern Europe tend to be closer to Christian Democratic parties in southern Europe than their Socialist cousins in that part of the world. However, Socialists across Europe have a collective strategic incentive to coalesce at the European level, as they are all ‘to the left’ of their main opponents in national and European electoral competition (c.f. Hix 1999a).

However, it is not necessary to assume that legislators pursue only one goal and one goal alone. At different points in time, in response to different stimuli, and faced with different strategic choices, politicians may favour one set of goals over others. But it does not necessarily follow that the same choices will be made at *all* points in time, in response to *all* stimuli, and in *all* strategic situations. Strom (1990) elaborates on this insight by developing a general theory of party behaviour in domestic electoral competition in which different institutional environments determine whether parties are ‘vote seekers’, ‘office seekers’ or ‘policy seekers’. There is absolutely no inherent reason why we should regard legislators as being any different.

INSERT FIGURE 1 HERE

Using a similar approach, then the total set of potential MEP actions can be understood as existing within the three-dimensional space shown in Figure 1. In more formal terms:

$$B = w_1R + w_2P + w_3O$$

where

$B$  = position in the MEP behaviour space

$R$  = re-selection-seeking behaviour,

$P$  = policy-seeking behaviour,

$O$  = office-seeking behaviour, and

$w_1$ ,  $w_2$  and  $w_3$  are coefficients representing the weights of each form of behaviour.

Moreover, if  $w_1 + w_2 + w_3 = 1$  (and  $0 \leq w_1, w_2, w_3 \leq 1$ ), then the total feasible set of MEP goals is the triangle  $XYZ$ . In other words, a pure re-electing seeking MEP would be located at point  $Y$ , a pure policy-seeking MEP would be located at point  $X$ , and a pure office-seeking MEP would be located at point  $Z$ .

### **3.2. Institutional Variation and Variation in MEP Behaviour**

In some situations MEPs may not be forced to make any choice between rival goals. However, in many other situations they will have to make some sort of trade-off. For example, when voting a particular way on a piece of legislation, should an MEP choose to go with their personal ideological feelings, the position of their party group (that would increase their chances of promotion within the EP), or with their national party leadership (which would increase their chances of re-selection)? To state the question in such a form assumes a contradiction between at least two of these desires, a contradiction which may not always be manifest. On any one occasion, personal policy aims, the majority in the party group and the national party leadership may all point an MEP to vote or otherwise behave in a particular way. On other occasions, however, they may be pointing in different directions: a member may be ideologically attached to a piece of legislation, yet their national party leadership may be adamantly opposed to it, while, for whatever reason, the majority in the party group may have agreed to abstain in any vote.

In other words, the key question we need to answer is: *when forced to make a trade-off between re-selection, policy-oriented and office-seeking actions, how will an MEP act?* Our contention is that how MEPs make this choice can be explained by the institutional context of their decision when they are forced to make this trade-off. In particular, in line with the 'second generation' of rational choice scholars of the US Congress (such as Shepsle and Weingast), our

central assumption is that equilibria in the EP will be ‘structure-induced’ as a result of the domestic and supranational institutional structure.

There are two different types of institutional contexts facing MEPs:

(1) *domestic* - the variation in the situation of MEPs between member states and between national political parties within each member state; and

(2) *supranational* - the variation in the institutional situation of the EP, in its competition with the Council and the Commission, and the varying institutional and political context within the EP.

Variation within these contexts produces different incentives for MEPs, as follows:

#### DOMESTIC INSTITUTIONAL CONTEXT

- *Electoral system.* In EP elections, different electoral rules are used in each member state. These systems vary from systems where MEPs are independent from their national party leaderships (such as STV in Ireland and highly open-list PR in Finland) to systems where MEPs are dependent upon their national party leaderships to be re-selected (such as the national closed-list PR systems in the Netherlands and France). Where MEPs are independent from national leaderships, MEPs must be able to demonstrate their personal performance in the EP (either by increasing their personal profile or by securing outputs for their domestic constituents and supporting interest groups), whereas in systems where MEPs are not independent agents, MEPs need to remain ‘in favour’ with their national/regional party leaderships. This leads to the following hypothesis:
  - **Hypothesis 1: MEPs from electoral systems where there is a high level of independence from national party leaderships will tend to be *office-or policy-seeking*, whereas MEPs from electoral systems where there is a low level of independence from national party leaderships will tend to be *re-selection-seeking*.**

- *National election timetables.* National parliamentary elections are held at different times in each member state. If we assume that the main goal of domestic political parties is win these national elections, then we can expect domestic parties to care more about presenting a ‘united front’ to their electorates in the build-up to a national election than immediately after an election has been held or in a mid-term period. As a general election approaches, national parties can be expected to put pressure on their MEPs to ‘toe the party line’ in their behaviour at the European level. As a result:
  - **Hypothesis 2 (which is a sub-hypothesis of H1): in systems where national leaders control candidate selection, MEPs will become more *re-selection seeking* as the distance to their next national parliamentary (or Presidential, in France) election reduces.**
- *Party system.* Some member states have *competitive* two-party systems (UK, Greece and Spain) or two-bloc systems (France, Germany, and Italy in the late 1990s), whereas others have more *consensual* (or cross-class coalition) multi-party systems (the Benelux and Scandinavian states, Austria, Portugal and Ireland). National parties in competitive party systems will be more eager to see their MEPs ‘toe the party line’ (as the cost of defection is potentially higher) than parties in consensus party systems. This leads to the following hypothesis:
  - **Hypothesis 3: MEPs from *competitive* party systems will tend to be *re-selection-seeking*, whereas MEPs from *consensus* party systems will be predominantly *office- or policy-seeking*.**
- *Party policy location.* The centrist party families (e.g. Socialists, Christian Democrats, Conservatives and Liberals) are more likely to be able to form governing coalitions than parties on the ideological extremes (e.g. Greens, Radical Left, Extreme Right and Anti-Europeans). As a result, ‘core’ parties are more likely to trade-off policy goals for winning government office, whereas ‘peripheral’ or ‘single issue’ parties or are more likely to stick to their ideological positions. From this:
  - **Hypothesis 4a: MEPs from parties close to the centre of the left-right dimension (or**



other salient policy dimension) in their domestic party system will be *re-selection-seeking* and *office-seeking* rather than *policy-seeking*.

- **Hypothesis 4b:** MEPs from parties on the extremes of the left-right dimension (or other salient policy dimension) in their domestic party system, or single issue parties, will be *policy-seeking* rather than *re-selection-seeking* and *office-seeking*.
- *Government/opposition status.* Parties in government in the domestic arena are represented in the Council and hence have ‘vested interests’ in votes in the EP. Consequently, parties in government have more of an incentive to put pressure on ‘their’ MEPs to support the position of the domestic party leadership than parties in opposition. Nevertheless, parties in government will have a vested interest in seeing their MEPs promoted to positions of power in the EP, as this will reduce the likelihood of the EP taking a different position to the Council in EP-Council legislative bargaining. This leads to the following hypothesis:
  - **Hypothesis 5:** MEPs from parties in government will be *re-selection-seeking* more than *office-seeking*, but *office-seeking* more than *policy-seeking*.

## SUPRANATIONAL INSTITUTIONAL CONTEXT

- *EU legislative procedure.* The EP has a different degree of influence over legislative outcomes under each EU legislative procedure. The EP’s influence is weakest under the *consultation* procedure, stronger under the *co-operation* procedure, stronger still under the *co-decision* procedure. The incentive for external interests (such as domestic parties and governments) to influence MEPs increases as EP legislative power increases. In addition, as there is greater political significance (and media coverage) of the later stages of the *co-operation* and *co-decision* procedures, MEPs are likely to be under greater pressure from outside interests in the later stages of these two procedures. From this we can derive two hypotheses:
  - **Hypothesis 5a:** MEPs’ behaviour will be driven by *re-selection-seeking* most under those procedures where the EP has most influence over outcomes (i.e. *co-decision* > *co-operation* > *consultation*).

- **Hypothesis 5b: Within the co-operation and co-decision procedures, MEPs' behaviour will be driven more by *re-selection-seeking* in the Second Reading (and Third Reading of co-decision) of legislation than in the First Reading.**
- *Parties in the Commission.* Not all national parties are represented in the Commission. As a result, MEPs from parties who have Commissioners are more likely to be under pressure from domestic party leaderships to support the Commission than those from parties that are not represented in the Commission. As a result:
  - **Hypothesis 6: When dealing with the Commission (in questions or votes) MEPs from parties with representatives in the Commission will be more *re-selection-seeking*, whereas representatives from parties not represented in the Commission will be more *office-* or *policy-seeking*.**
- *European electoral timetable.* As European elections approach, MEPs are likely to be more concerned with getting re-elected, and hence seek to satisfy those who control their candidate selection or those that are pivotal in securing their re-election. As a result:
  - **Hypothesis 7 (related to H1): Depending on the national electoral system, as the distance to the next European election reduces, in party-centred systems MEPs will become more *re-selection-seeking*, and in candidate-centred systems MEPs will become more *policy-seeking*.**

### **3.3. Indicators of Re-selection-, Policy- and Office-Seeking Behaviour**

Having generated all of the hypotheses listed above, we have still to clarify exactly what kinds of MEP behaviour can be expected to follow from re-selection-seeking, policy-seeking and office-seeking motivations? There are six major forms of individual-level behaviour in the EP. Within each of these forms of behaviour, certain actions can be expected to reveal different MEP goals, in the following manner:

investiture/censure votes).

**Re-selection-seeking behaviour** - MEPs will vote with national party position against party group position (if the positions are in conflict).

**Policy-seeking behaviour** - on issues of particular significance to a party family, MEPs will vote against national party positions and with their European party group positions or the interests of their constituents and supporting interest groups (if the positions are in conflict).

**Office-seeking behaviour** - MEPs will vote with party group position or committee position against national party position (if the positions are in conflict).

- *Party group membership.*

**Re-selection-seeking behaviour** - MEPs/national delegations will join party groups that promote their national party interests or sit as a separate group (if they have enough seats).

**Policy-seeking behaviour** - MEPs/national delegations will join party groups that are the clearest representation of their 'party family' in the EP.

**Office-seeking behaviour** - MEPs/national delegations will join one of the two largest groups in the EP (the Party of European Socialists or the European People's Party), even if they are actually from another party family (e.g. 'liberal', 'conservative' or 'radical left').

- *Questions.*

**Re-selection-seeking behaviour** - MEPs will ask questions of the Commission or Council that raise particular issues of national/domestic salience.

**Policy-seeking behaviour** - MEPs will ask questions of the Commission or Council that promote the policy goals of their party group or interest group concerns.

**Office-seeking behaviour** - MEPs will ask questions of the Commission or Council that promote the position of their committee.

- *Committee membership.*

**Re-selection-seeking behaviour** - MEPs will seek to join committees that are useful for

**Re-selection-seeking behaviour** - MEPs will seek to join committees that are useful for their national parties or that will address issues of particular domestic salience.

**Policy-seeking behaviour** - MEPs will seek to join committees that address issues that are those their party family would like to promote (e.g. Greens and the environment committee) or that are relevant to their supporting interest groups.

**Office-seeking behaviour** - MEPs will seek to join the highest profile committees in the EP (e.g. Committee 1 on Foreign Relations).

- *Appointment to leadership positions.*

**Re-selection-seeking behaviour** - MEPs will seek to be appointed to national delegation positions rather than party group leadership or committee *rappporteurship*/leadership positions.

**Policy-seeking behaviour** - MEPs will seek to be appointed to party group leadership and committee chair/*rappporteurship* positions rather than national delegation positions.

**Office-seeking behaviour** - MEPs will seek to be appointed to EP leadership positions above party group and committee positions, and party group and committee chair positions above *rappporteurships* and national delegation positions.

- *Attendance (in plenary sessions and votes).*

**Re-selection-seeking behaviour** - MEPs will only attend sessions/votes when issues of national/domestic salience are being addressed, devoting much of their efforts/attention to maintaining a personal relationship with their domestic party.

**Policy-seeking behaviour** - MEPs will only attend sessions/votes when issues of importance to their party family or their supporting interest groups.

**Office-seeking behaviour** - MEPs will try to be in attendance at all times.

These hypotheses and secondary propositions will need to be developed into concrete (formal) predictions of the expected location of MEPs in the three-dimensional space. In the meantime, however, we shall discuss how this preliminary theoretical framework can be operationalised and

what we will need to do to test it.

#### **4. Operationalising and Testing the Theoretical Framework**

We shall test our ten hypotheses with a data set of the 1999-2004 EP. The period under analysis is thus the whole legislative term of five years. Our approach is both comprehensive and selective. Comprehensive as the data will cover most recorded actions of individual MEP behaviour, and selective as we will subject certain carefully selected samples, such as roll call votes and individual committees, to more detailed investigation. The compilation of a large, unified data set will greatly increase our understanding of MEP behaviour, as previous research has been of rather sporadic nature based on individual efforts with little co-ordination. Secondly, the most comprehensive empirical studies date from the pre-SEA early 1980s, a period when the EP was in effect still largely a 'talking shop'. Apart from information on national-level factors, such as the method of candidate selection and the nature of the domestic party system, seven types of data on MEP behaviour will be collected:

**1) Background characteristics.** Bibliographical information on the MEPs is published by national parties, EP party groups, and the Parliament, with all such data available electronically. Background factors to be used include: age, gender, profession, Member State from which the person was elected, national party and EP group affiliation, the size and socio-economic profile of the constituency, ties with interest groups, and special fields of interest.

**2) Roll call votes.** A complete data set of roll call votes will be collected. While the Parliament votes also by a show of hands, most important votes are nowadays taken by roll call, with individual voting positions recorded and published in the C-series of the *Official Journal*. There are approximately 3000 roll call votes during the five year legislative term, votes on amendments included. The votes will be categorised into legislative votes, with further subdivision according to the type of legislative procedure (consultation, co-operation, co-decision, assent, budgetary), non-legislative votes, such as votes on own-initiative reports and votes following topical and urgent debates, and other votes, including Commission investiture/censure votes. Re-selection-seeking MEPs are hypothesized to line with their national party against their party group

position (measured either as a the voting instruction indicated by the group whip, or as the stand of the majority of the group) in case of a conflict. Policy-seeking MEPs are expected to deviate from national party and party group positions on issues of personal ideological importance. Office-seeking MEPs are most likely to vote with party group position or committee position. We shall subject each year a number of significant 'key' votes to particular scrutiny, including budgetary decisions on structural funds, important and controversial legislative votes, resolutions on inter-institutional issues, and Commission investiture and potential censure votes.

**3) Parliamentary questions.** MEPs have the right to submit questions to the Commission and the Council. There are three types of questions: written questions, oral questions, and the question hour. Only the first is available to an individual representative, as oral questions and questions for the question hour can only be tabled by a party group, a committee, or at least 29 members. MEPs table on average around 3500-4000 questions per year, about 5-6 questions per representative. The questions and their answers are published in the C-series of the *Official Journal*, and have from 1997 onwards been available also at the EP's internet-pages. Questions can and do concern basically any topic. Members often submit questions that fall outside the EU's jurisdiction, particularly in order to inform the Commission of problems in their constituencies. The written questions will be categorized according to their issue area (with the categories mirroring EP committee structure) and their territorial focus (local or constituency, Member State, EU, other). We expect to see re-selection-seeking MEPs to focus on constituency matters, policy-seeking members to emphasize individual policies, and office-seeking representatives to table questions on behalf of their committee.

**4) Committee and leadership appointments.** The distribution of committee seats, committee chairmanships, and EP leadership positions (President and Vice-Presidents) is a complex bargaining process, based primarily on the party groups' share of seats in the chamber. Within party groups the process is replicated between the various national party delegations that make up the group. Similarly the various intra-group appointments are mainly based on the size of the national delegations. The distribution occurs at the beginning and mid-way through the legislative period. Party groups may try to trade seats in order to gain additional strength in their priority committees, and similarly national parties and individual MEPs may try to enter committees which are of particular importance to them or their constituents. Re-selection-seeking

MEPs are argued to seek places in committees that deal with domestically salient matters. Policy-seeking MEPs will try to join committees that are relevant to individual policy concerns. Office-seeking members will prioritise the most prestigious EP committees, such as the Foreign Affairs and Economic and Monetary Affairs Committees. Regarding leadership positions, re-selection-seeking MEPs will seek appointments within the national party structure, mainly in the national party delegation. Policy-seeking MEPs will emphasize party group leadership appointments, committee chairs, and particularly *rappoteurships*. Office-seeking MEPs will seek EP leadership positions above party group and committee positions, and party group and committee chair positions above *rappoteurships* and national delegation positions.

**5) Activity in committees.** As stated in the beginning of this paper, the European Parliament is often compared to the U.S. Congress. Weak parties, strong committees, and particularly the system of *rappoteurships* facilitate a division of labour where an individual representative can wield considerable influence. The MEPs' main individual channel of influence are *rappoteurships*. The Parliament produces a report basically on each Commission's legislative proposal, on top of which the committees are authorized by the Conference of Presidents to produce about 100-150 own-initiative reports per year. On important individual legislative proposals, such as the annual EU budget, or on significant non-legislative items, such as Intergovernmental Conferences, the Parliament often drafts several reports. The *rappoteurships* are again divided between the groups according to their share of seats in the chamber, with each group receiving a tally of points based on its seat share. The groups can then bid for the reports, with the price of a report depending on its importance for the groups. The major reports are often allocated already at the start of the legislative term. The system is rather flexible, however, and individual MEPs from the smaller groups may well receive prestigious *rappoteurships*, especially if the person is recognised for her or his policy expertise. The reports will be categorized by committee. We expect policy-seeking MEPs, and office-seeking members to a somewhat lesser extent, to seek and gain *rappoteurships* in order to influence EP's positions and to gain intra-committee prestige.

**6) Attendance records.** The attendance records are likewise published in the C-series of the *Official Journal*. Re-selection-seeking MEPs are the likeliest to be absent from plenary and committee sessions, attending them primarily when issues of domestic salience are being

addressed. This high level of absence is explained by their efforts to maintain close ties with their domestic party/constituency. Policy-seeking behaviour MEPs will primarily attend sessions/votes when issues of importance to their party family or their own policy goals are being addressed. Office-seeking MEPs will try to be in attendance at all times.

7) **Survey of MEPs.** The data will be complemented by a survey of all MEPs, together with face-to-face interviews of at least half of the members. This is essential in order to understand the representative foci of the MEPs, and to learn about intra-group and committee decision-making. MEPs have a variety of tools to use to further their objectives. Constituency concerns are probably handled most efficiently through contacts with the Commission and own government in the Council. Policy-seeking representatives, on the other hand, are likely to invest more resources in committee work and in securing important *rapporteurships*, as well as to develop contacts with the Commission. Office-seeking MEPs are expected to spend much energy in proving their worth in the party groups and in the committees. As much of such work occurs behind the scenes, it is essential to hear the MEPs' own opinions on their goals and on choosing the most effective strategies to achieve them.

## **5. Illustration: Impact of National Electoral Systems on MEP Behaviour**

By way of illustration we can flesh-out one of the core hypotheses: about the impact of the institutional design of the electoral systems used in the member states in EP elections on the behaviour of MEPs. Table 1 shows the electoral systems that were used in the 1994 EP elections, and the EP elections in 1995 and 1996 in the three new EU member states - Austria, Finland and Sweden.

INSERT TABLE 1 HERE

As the table shows, there is considerable variation in the design of electoral systems used in the EU member states. For the purposes of our theoretical framework, there are essentially



four main variables that are likely to have an impact on the ability of national party elites to influence the behaviour of ‘their’ MEPs:

- 1) **List-PR vs. Non-List-PR.** In list-proportional representation (PR) systems (Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Portugal, Spain, Sweden), a candidate’s chance of being re-elected is strongly affected by how far up the party list they are placed by their national party. If MEPs ‘misbehave’ during their term in office, party officials can threaten to remove the candidate from the list or to place them lower on the list, and hence reduce their chances of being elected. In contrast, in non-list PR systems, such as the single-transferable-vote (STV) (in Ireland and Northern Ireland) and the first-past-the-post (FPTP) system (used in mainland Britain until 1999), candidates owe their re-selection to local party elites and support amongst the local electorate. Consequently, MEPs from list-PR systems should be more beholden to domestic party elites, than MEPs from STV and FPTP systems.
- 2) **Regional vs. National Lists, within list-PR systems.** However, within list-PR systems, party lists can be drawn-up and presented to the electorate either at the regional level (as in Italy and Germany) or at the national level (as in the other list-PR systems). If lists are drawn-up at the regional level, by regional party leaderships, MEPs are more likely to be independent from their national party leaderships than if lists are drawn-up at the national level. (Note: Although the lists are presented regionally in Belgium, the *regional* parties in Belgium are the *national* governing elites, which makes Belgium equivalent to a ‘national’ list-PR system).
- 3) **Open vs. Closed Lists, within list-PR systems.** Also within list-PR systems, there is a difference between ‘open-list’ systems (as in Belgium, Denmark, Finland, Luxembourg, Italy, Netherlands and Sweden) and ‘closed-list’ systems (as in Austria, France, Germany, Greece, Spain and Portugal). In open-list systems voters can vote either for a party or an individual candidate and can consequently alter the position of the candidates on the party list. In closed-list systems, in contrast, voters must accept the order on the list as presented to them by the political parties. Consequently, because MEPs elected in open-list systems have the

possibility to appeal directly to the electorate to increase their chances of re-election, they are likely to have a higher degree of freedom from party officials than MEPs elected in closed-list systems.

- 4) **High vs. Low Level of ‘Openness’, within ‘open-list’-PR systems.** Nevertheless, within the category of open-list systems there is variation in the degree of ‘openness’ of the system. In some systems, votes for individual candidates have a significant impact on which candidates get elected (as in Finland), whereas in other systems, votes for individual candidates (which usually amount to less than 10 percent of all votes) have only a negligible impact on the final order on the list. As a result, in a system with ‘highly open’ lists, MEPs are more able to use their personal reputation to increase their chances of re-election, and are hence more independent from the party officials that draw-up the lists.

In other words, with respect to the independence of MEPs from national party leaderships, these institutional variations produce three different types of systems:

#### HIGH INDEPENDENCE SYSTEMS:

- A. non-list PR - Ireland, United Kingdom
- B. regional list-PR (either open or closed) - Germany, Italy
- C. national ‘highly open’-list-PR - Finland

#### MEDIUM INDEPENDENCE SYSTEMS:

- D. national ‘normal’ open-list-PR - Belgium, Denmark, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Sweden

#### LOW INDEPENDENCE SYSTEMS:

- E. national closed-list-PR - Austria, France, Greece, Portugal, Spain

We should expect MEPs elected in ‘high independence’ systems to have a weaker connection to their national party leaderships, and MEPs from ‘low independence’ systems to have more

connections with their national party leaderships, with MEPs from ‘medium independence’ systems somewhere between.

As a preliminary test of these propositions, we can use the results of a recent questionnaire of MEPs conducted by one of our team (Tapio Raunio), in which MEPs were asked about their connection and involvement with their national parties. In the questionnaire, two questions were asked relating to this issue:

- VOTING INSTRUCTIONS - Q: ‘how often are do you receive voting instructions from your national party leaders’, A: ‘regularly’ (coded 0), ‘only on issues of fundamental importance’/‘sometimes’ (coded 1), ‘never’ (coded 2).
- MEETINGS WITH PARTY LEADERSHIPS - Q: ‘how often do you meet with the executive organs of your party’, A: ‘once a week’ (coded 0), ‘once a month’ (coded 1), ‘1-4 times per year’ (coded 2), ‘no regular meetings’ (coded 3).

By summing the responses from the MEPs from each member state, we can obtain an average ‘score of independence’ - where a high score implies more independence and a low score implies less independence from the national party leadership. The results are reported in Table 2.

INSERT TABLE 2 HERE

According to the responses, contrary to our predictions, MEPs from Luxembourg are the most independent from their national party leaderships. However, Luxembourg is an outlier that can be explained easily: because there are so few MEPs from this member state, they are all senior figures in their domestic parties (and in some cases the domestic party leader) and so are unlikely to take instructions from their domestic party officials regardless of the electoral system used.

If Luxembourg is excluded, we can see that our hypotheses seem to be confirmed in this very preliminary analysis. First, MEPs from Finland, Germany, the United Kingdom (from ‘high independence’ systems) rarely receive instructions on how to vote from their domestic leaderships, whereas MEPs from Austria, France, Portugal and Spain (from ‘low independence’

systems) often receive instructions on how to vote. Second, MEPs from Italy, Finland, Germany and Ireland (from 'high independence' systems) rarely attend meetings of their domestic party leaderships, whereas MEPs from Austria and Portugal (from 'low independence' systems) often do. Overall, Finnish MEPs (elected through a system of highly-open-list-PR system) and German MEPs (elected through a system of 'regional' closed-list-PR) appear to be the most independent from their national parties, whereas Austrian and Portuguese MEPs (both elected through systems of 'national' closed-list-PR) appear to be the most dependent upon their national party leaderships. One unexplained issue, however, is that there seems to be a high level of variation amongst MEPs from 'medium independence' systems (with national 'normal' open-list PR) - where Dutch and Swedish MEPs seem relatively independent whereas Belgian and Danish MEPs seem to be relatively controlled by their national leaderships. There are clearly other forces at work, that could be controlled for in a more sophisticated analysis.

Overall, this is an initial foray into empirical analysis of the hypotheses with a very small and limited data-set. To take the project forward we need to develop the other hypotheses into testable propositions and test these propositions in a more systematic manner.

## **6. Instead of a Conclusion: What our Findings Might Mean, and Where Next?**

It is of course impossible to draw conclusions without further development of the theoretical assumptions, clarification and specification of the hypotheses, and substantial empirical testing. Nevertheless, at this stage, we can draw some tentative implications about how a general theory of MEP behaviour will improve our understanding of internal politics in the EP, the aggregate behaviour of the EP vis-à-vis the other EU institutions, and normative arguments about the design of EU institutions.

First, by understanding the trade-offs between office-, policy- and re-selection-seeking, we will be able to understand internal organisational development in the EP. Building on our understanding of individual MEP behaviour, we can start building explanations of the evolution of the EP party groups, the internal division of labour within the EP groups and between the party

groups and the EP leadership, the establishment and delegation of powers to the EP committees, and the design of the EP rules of procedure.

Second, and linked to this, by understanding how individual motivations and strategies are turned into aggregate behaviour - in the party groups, the committees and the EP as a whole - we hope to be able to make a major contribution to our theoretical and empirical understanding of EP bargaining with the Council and the Commission. For example, we can begin to understand why the EP has rejected certain pieces of legislation and not others, or tried to censure the Commission on some occasions and not others, and proposed certain legislative designs over others?

Third, by understanding how domestic and supranational institutions constrain and shape EP behaviour we hope to be able to make a significant contribution to normative debates about how to design institutions in the EU to improve the connection between public preferences and EU policy outcomes (the so-called 'democratic deficit'). For example, by understanding how different electoral systems in the member states produce different patterns of MEP behaviour, we will be able to make positive assertions about the likely implications of different proposals for a uniform electoral procedure for EP elections.

Nevertheless, in each of these areas we will need to go beyond our initial theory of the institutional determinants of MEP behaviour (structure-induced-equilibria), and develop theoretical explanations of 'institutional choice' (equilibrium institutions): in other words, why MEPs have chosen particular designs for the EP party groups/committees, the EU legislative procedures, and a uniform electoral procedure. But, in so doing, we hope to be able to unite the theoretical and empirical scholarship on the European Parliament to the general study of legislative behaviour and institutions.

## Bibliography

- Attinà, F. (1990) 'The Voting Behaviour of the European Parliament Members and the Problem of Europarties', *European Journal of Political Research*, Vol. 18, pp. 557-79.
- Attinà, F. (1992) *Il sistema politico della Comunità Europea*, Milan: Giuffrè.
- Bardi, L. (1989) *Il parlamento della Comunità Europea: Legittimità e riforma*, Bologna: Il Mulino.
- Bardi, L. (1992) 'Transnational Party Federations in the European Community', in R.S. Katz & P. Mair (eds) *Party Organizations: A Data Handbook on Party Organizations in Western Democracies, 1960-90*, London: Sage.
- Bardi, L. (1994) 'Transnational Party Federations, European Parliamentary Party Groups, and the Building of Europarties', in R.S. Katz & P. Mair (eds) *How Parties Organize: Change and Adaptation in Party Organizations in Western Democracies*, London: Sage.
- Bardi, L. (1996) 'Transnational Trends in European Parties and the 1994 Elections of the European Parliament', *Party Politics*, Vol. 2, pp. 99-114.
- Bowler, S. & Farrell, D. (1992) *MEPs, Voters and Interest Groups: Representation at the European Level*, Final Report to the Commission of the European Communities, DG for Information, Communication, Culture: Brussels: Commission of the European Communities.
- Bowler, S. & Farrell, D. (1993) 'Legislator Shirking and Voter Monitoring: Impact of European Parliament Electoral Systems upon Legislator-Voter Relationships', *Journal of Common Market Studies*, Vol. 31, pp. 45-69.
- Bowler, S. & Farrell, D. (1995) 'The Organizing of the European Parliament: Committees, Specialization and Coordination', *British Journal of Political Science*, Vol. 25, pp. 219-43.
- Bowler, S. & Farrell, D. (1999) 'Parties and Party Discipline within the European Parliament: A Norms-Based Approach', in S. Bowler, D.M. Farrell & R.S. Katz (eds.) *Party Discipline and Parliamentary Government*, Columbus: Ohio State University Press.
- Brzinski, J. Bay (1995) 'Political Group Cohesion in the European Parliament, 1989-1994', in C. Rhodes & S. Mazzy (eds) *The State of the European Union, Vol. 3*, London: Longman.
- Brzinski, J., Gunning, H., Haspel, M. & Saunders, K. (1998) 'Understanding Defection in the European Parliament', paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Political Science Association, September 1998, Boston.
- Cain, B., Ferejohn, J. & Fiorina, M. (1987) *The Personal Vote: Constituency Service and Electoral Independence*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Carrubba, C. & Gabel, M. (1998) 'National Politics by Other Means?: Voting Behaviour in the European Parliament in the Post-Reform Era', paper presented at the annual meeting of the Southern Political Science Association, October 1998, Atlanta.
- Claeys, P.-H. & Loeb-Mayer, N. (1979) 'Trans-European Party Groupings: Emergence of New and Alignment of Old Parties in Light of the Direct Elections to the European Parliament', *Government & Opposition*, Vol. 14, pp. 455-78.
- Corbett, R., Jacobs, F. & Shackleton, M. (1995) *The European Parliament*, 3rd edn, London: Catermill.
- Crombez, C. (1996) 'Legislative Procedures in the European Community', *British Journal of Political Science*, Vol. 26, pp. 199-218.
- Crombez, C. (1997) 'The Co-Decision Procedure in the European Union', *Legislative Studies Quarterly*, Vol. 22, pp. 97-119.
- Cox, G. & McCubbins, M. (1991) 'On the Decline of Party Voting in Congress', *Legislative Studies Quarterly*, Vol. 16, pp. 547-570.
- Cox, G. & McCubbins, M. (1993) *Legislative Leviathan: Party Government in the House*, Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.
- Davidson, R.H. (ed.) (1992) *The Post-Reform Congress*, New York, NY: St. Martin's Press.
- Earnshaw, D. & Judge, D. (1997) 'The Life and Times of the European Union's Co-operation Procedure', *Journal of Common Market Studies*, Vol. 35, pp. 543-64.
- Eijk, C. van der & Franklin, M. (eds) (1996) *Choosing Europe? The European Electorate and National Politics in the Face of Union*, Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press.
- Fenno, R.F. (1978) *Home-Style: House Members in their Districts*, Boston, MA: Little, Brown.
- Fiorina, M. (1977) *Congress: Keystone of the Washington Establishment*, New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.

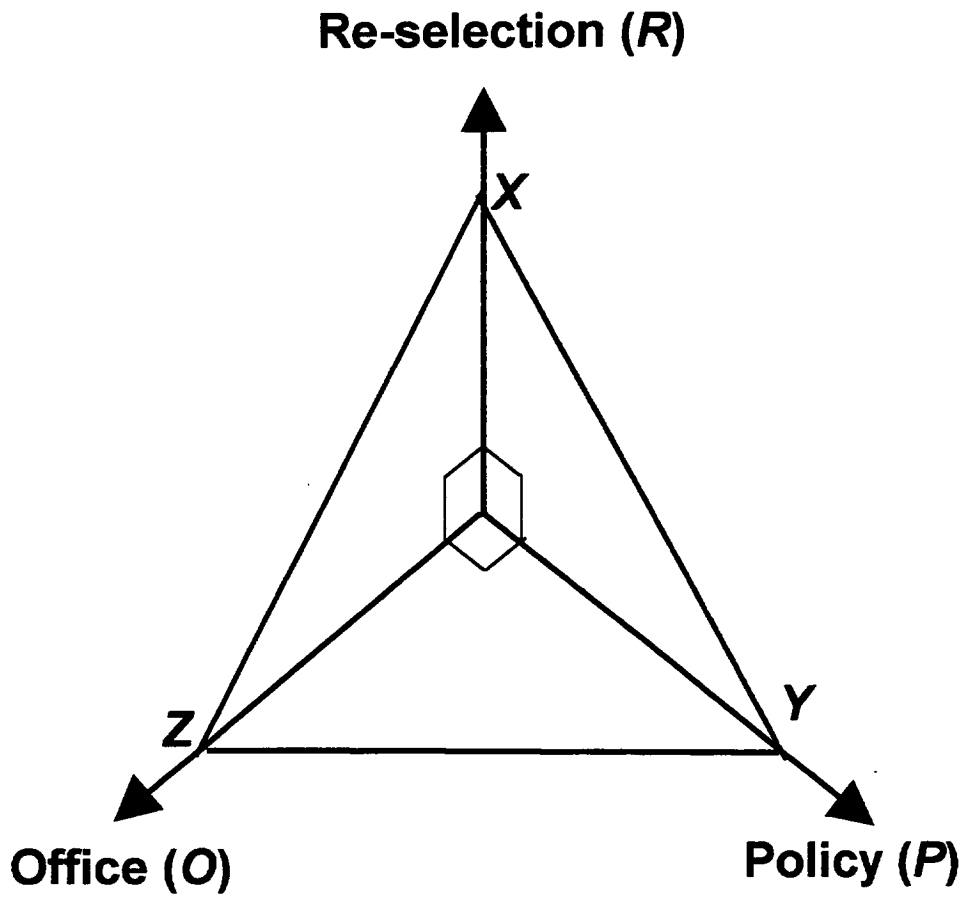
- Fitzmaurice, J. (1975) *The Party Groups in the European Parliament*, London: Saxon.
- Franklin, M. & Scarrow, S. (1999) 'Making Europeans? The Socializing Power of the European Parliament', in R.S. Katz & B. Wessels (eds) *The European Parliament, National Parliaments and European Integration*, forthcoming.
- Gabel, M. & Hix, S. (1997) 'The Ties that Bind: MEP Voting Behaviour and the Commission President Investiture Procedure', unpublished manuscript.
- Garman, J. & Hilditch, L. (1998) 'Behind the Scenes: An Examination of the Importance of Informal Processes at Work in Conciliation', *Journal of European Public Policy*, Vol. 5, pp. 271-84.
- Garrett, G. (1995b) 'From the Luxembourg Compromise to Codecision: Decision Making in the European Union', *Electoral Studies*, Vol. 14, pp. 289-308.
- Garrett, G. & Tsebelis, G. (1996) 'An Institutional Critique of Intergovernmentalism', *International Organization*, Vol. 50, pp. 269-99.
- Grabitz, E., Schmuck, O., Steppat, S. & Wessels, W. (eds.) (1988) *Direktwahl und Demokratisierung — Eine Funktionenbilanz des Europäischen Parlaments nach der ersten Wahlperiode*, Bonn: Europa Union Verlag.
- Hix, S. (1999a) 'Dimensions and Alignments in European Union Politics: Cognitive Constraints and Partisan Responses', *European Journal of Political Research*, Vol. 35, No. 1, pp. 69-106.
- Hix, S. (1999b) *The Political System of the European Union*, London: Macmillan.
- Hix, S. & Lord, C. (1995) 'The Making of a President: The European Parliament and the Confirmation of Jacques Santer as President of the Commission', *Government and Opposition*, Vol. 31, pp. 62-76.
- Hix, S. & Lord, C. (1997) *Political Parties in the European Union*, London: Macmillan.
- Hosli, M.O. (1997) 'Voting Strength in the European Parliament: The Influence of National and of Partisan Actors', *European Journal of Political Research*, Vol. 31, pp. 351-66.
- Jacobs, F. (1997) 'Legislative Co-Decision: A Real Step Forward?', Paper presented at the Fifth Biennial Conference of the European Community Studies Association, May-June 1997, Seattle.
- Johansson, K. M. (1997) 'Veränderte Bedeutung der politischen Fraktionen' in E. Kuper & U. Jun (eds.) *Nationales Interesse und integrative Politik in transnationalen parlamentarischen Versammlungen*, Opladen: Leske + Budrich.
- Judge, D. & Earnshaw, D. (1994) 'Weak European Parliament Influence? A Study of the Environment Committee of the EP', *Government and Opposition*, Vol. 29, pp. 262-76.
- Judge, D., Earnshaw, D. & Cowan, N. (1994) 'Ripples & Waves: The European Parliament in the European Community Policy Process', *Journal of European Public Policy*, Vol. 1, pp. 27-52.
- Kerr, H.H. Jr. (1973) 'Changing Attitudes through International Participation: European Parliamentarians and Integration', *International Organization*, Vol. 27, pp. 45-83.
- Kiewiet, D.R. & McCubbins, M. (1991) *The Logic of Delegation: Congressional Parties and the Delegations Process*, Chicago, IL: University of Illinois Press.
- Kirchner, E.J. (1984) *The European Parliament: Performance and Prospects*, Aldershot: Gower.
- Krebhiel, K. (1987) 'Why are Congressional Committees Powerful?', *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 81, pp. 929-935.
- Krebhiel, K. (1991) *Information and Legislative Organization*, Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press.
- Krebhiel, K. (1993) 'Where's the Party?', *British Journal of Political Science*, Vol. 23, pp. 235-266.
- Kreppel, A. (1997) 'The EP's Influence Over EU Policy Outcomes: Fantasy, Fallacy or Fact?', paper presented at the Fifth Biennial Conference of the European Community Studies Association, May-June 1997, Seattle.
- Lane, J.-E., Maeland, R. & Berg, S. (1995) 'Research Note: The EU Parliament: Seats, States and Political Parties', *Journal of Theoretical Politics*, Vol. 7, pp. 395-400.
- McKelvey, R.D. (1976) 'Intransitivities in Multidimensional Voting Models and Some Implications for Agenda Control', *Journal of Economic Theory*, Vol. 16, pp. 472-82.
- March, J.G. & Olsen, J.P. (1989) *Rediscovering Institutions: the Organizational Basis of Politics*, New York, NY: The Free Press
- Mayhew, D.R. (1974) *Congress: The Electoral Connection*, New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.
- Mezey, M. (1993) 'Legislatures: Individual Purpose and Institutional Performance', in A. Finifter (ed.) *Political Science: The State of the Discipline II*, Washington, DC: American Political Science Association.
- Niedermayer, O. (1983) *Europäische Parteien? Zur grenzüberschreitenden Interaktion politischer Parteien im Rahmen der Europäischen Gemeinschaft*, Frankfurt: Campus.
- Norris, P. & Franklin, M. (1997) 'Social Representation', in M. Marsh & P. Norris (eds) *Political Representation*

- in the European Parliament*, special issue of *European Journal of Political Research*, Vol. 32, No. 2.
- Norton, P. & Wood, D. (1993) *Back From Westminster: British Members of Parliament and their Constituents*, Lexington, KY: Kentucky University Press.
- Nurmi, H. (1997) 'The Representation of Voter Groups in the European Parliament: a Penrose-Banzhaf Index Analysis', *Electoral Studies*, Vol. 16, pp. 317-27.
- Oudenhove, G. van (1965) *The Political Parties in the European Parliament: The First Ten Years (September 1952 - September 1962)*, Leiden: A.W. Sijthoff.
- Patterson, S.C. (1989) 'Understanding the British Parliament', *Political Studies*, Vol. 37, pp. 449-462.
- Poole, K.T. & Rosenthal, H. (1997) *Congress: A Political-Economic History of Roll Call Voting*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Pridham, G. & Pridham, P. (1979) 'Transnational Parties in the European Community I: The Party Groups in the European Parliament', in S. Henig (ed.) *Political Parties in the European Community*, London: Allen & Unwin.
- Pridham, G. & Pridham, P. (1981) *Transnational Party Co-operation and European Integration: The Process Towards Direct Elections*, London: Allen & Unwin.
- Quanjel, M. & Wolters, M. (1993) 'Growing Cohesion in the European Parliament', paper presented at the Annual Joint Sessions of the European Consortium for Political Research, April 1993, Leiden.
- Raunio, T. (1996) 'Parliamentary Questions in the European Parliament: Representation, Information and Control', *Journal of Legislative Studies*, Vol. 2, pp. 356-82.
- Raunio, T. (1997) *The European Perspective: Transnational Party Groups in the 1989-1994 European Parliament*, London: Ashgate.
- Raunio, T. (2000) 'Losing Independence or Finally Gaining Recognition? Contacts Between MEPs and National Parties', *Party Politics*, Vol. 6, forthcoming.
- Reif, K. & Schmitt, H. (1980) 'Nine Second-Order National Elections: A Conceptual Framework for the Analysis of European Election Results', *European Journal of Political Research*, Vol. 8, pp. 3-45.
- Rohde, D. (1991) *Parties and Leaders in the Post-Reform House*, Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.
- Rohde, D. & Shepsle, K. (1973) 'Democratic Committee Assignments in the House of Representatives: Strategic Aspects of a Social Choice Process', *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 67, pp. 889-905.
- Scarrow, S.E. (1997) 'Political Career Paths and the European Parliament', *Legislative Studies Quarterly*, Vol. 22, pp. 253-62.
- Schmitt, H. & Thomassen, J. (1999) 'European Parliament Party Groups: An Emerging Party System?', in H. Schmitt & J. Thomassen (eds) *Political Representation and Legitimacy in the European Union*, forthcoming.
- Scully, R. (1997a) 'Policy Influence and Participation in the European Parliament', *Legislative Studies Quarterly*, Vol. 22, pp. 233-52.
- Scully, R.M. (1997b) 'The EP and the Co-Decision Procedure: A Reassessment', *Journal of Legislative Studies*, Vol. 3, pp. 58-73.
- Scully, R. (1998) 'MEPs and the Building of a "Parliamentary Europe"', *Journal of Legislative Studies*, Vol. 4, pp. 92-108.
- Shepsle, K. (1978) *The Giant Jigsaw Puzzle*, Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.
- Shepsle, K. (1979) 'Institutional Arrangements and Equilibrium in Multidimensional Voting Models', *American Journal of Political Science*, Vol. 23, pp. 27-60.
- Shepsle, K. & Weingast, B. (1981) 'Structure-Induced Equilibrium and Legislative Choice', *Public Choice*, Vol. 37, pp. 503-519.
- Shepsle, K. & Weingast, B. (1987) 'The Institutional Foundations of Committee Power', *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 81, pp. 85-104.
- Smith, J. (1999) *Europe's Elected Parliament*, Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press.
- Steunenberg, B. (1994) 'Decision-making under different institutional arrangements: Legislation by the European Community', *Journal of Institutional and Theoretical Economics*, Vol. 150, pp. 642-69.
- Strom, K. (1990) 'A Behavioural Theory of Competitive Political Parties', *American Journal of Political Science*, Vol. 34, pp. 565-98.
- Tsebelis, G. (1994) 'The Power of the European Parliament as a Conditional Agenda-Setter', *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 88, pp. 128-42.
- Tsebelis, G. (1995) 'Conditional Agenda-Setting and Decision-Making Inside the European Parliament', *Journal of Legislative Studies*, Vol. 1, pp. 65-93.



- Tsebelis, G. (1996) 'Maastricht and the Democratic Deficit', *Aussenwirtschaft*, Vol. 52, pp. 29-56.
- Tsebelis, G. (1998) 'Supermajorities and Legislative Procedures in the EU', paper presented at the conference on 'The European Parliament on the Move', July 1998, Enschede.
- Tsebelis, G. & Kreppel, A. (1999) 'Coalition Formation in the European Parliament', *Comparative Political Studies*, forthcoming.
- Wessels, B. (1998) 'Institutions Matter: National Settings, Electoral Mechanisms and Representational Roles of the Members of the European Parliament Compared', paper presented at the conference on 'The European Parliament on the Move', July 1998, Enschede.
- Westlake, M. (1994a) *Britain's Emerging Euro-Elite? The British in the Directly-Elected European Parliament, 1979-1992*, Dartmouth: Aldershot.
- Westlake, M. (1994b) *The Commission and the Parliament: Partners and Rivals in the European Policy-Making Process*, London: Butterworths.
- Westlake, M. (1994c) *A Modern Guide to the European Parliament*, London: Pinter.
- Westlake, M. (1998) 'The European Parliament's Emerging Powers of Appointment', *Journal of Common Market Studies*, Vol. 36, pp. 431-44.
- Williams, M. (1995) 'The European Parliament: Party Groups, Minority Rights and the "Rationalization" of Parliamentary Organisation: A Research Note', in H. Döring (ed.) *Parliaments and Majority Rule in Western Europe*, New York, NY: St. Martins Press.

**Figure 1. The MEP Behavioural Space**



**Table 1. The Electoral Systems used in the 1994-96 European Elections**

Member State	No. of MEPs	Type of System	What level are candidates presented?	What level are seats calculated? (number of constituencies)	Open or Closed list PR (high/low 'openness')?	Counting method	Threshold to win seats
Austria	21	List-PR	Nationally	Nationally (1)	Closed	D'Hondt	4%
Belgium	25	List-PR	Regionally <sup>1</sup>	Regionally (3)	Open (low)	D'Hondt	-
Denmark	16	List-PR	Nationally	Nationally (1)	Open (low)	D'Hondt	-
Finland	16	List-PR	Nationally	Nationally (1)	Open (high)	D'Hondt	-
France	87	List-PR	Nationally	Nationally (1)	Closed	Hare	5%
Germany	99	List-PR	Regionally	Nationally (1)	Closed	Hare-Niemeyer	5%
Greece	25	List-PR	Nationally	Nationally (1)	Closed	Hare	3%
Ireland	15	STV	Regionally	Regionally (4)	--	STV	-
Italy	87	List-PR	Regionally	Nationally (1)	Open (low)	Hare	-
Luxembourg	6	List-PR	Nationally	Nationally (1)	Open (low)	D'Hondt	-
Netherlands	31	List-PR	Nationally	Nationally (1)	Open (low)	D'Hondt	-
Portugal	25	List-PR	Nationally	Nationally (1)	Closed	D'Hondt	-
Spain	64	List-PR	Nationally	Nationally (1)	Closed	D'Hondt	-
Sweden	22	List-PR	Nationally	Nationally (1)	Open (low)	Modified Sainte-Laguë	4%
UK-Britain	84	FPTP	Locally	Locally (84)	--	Simple plurality	-
UK-N.Ireland	3	STV	Regionally	Regionally (1)	--	STV	-

Key: PR = proportional representation, FPTP = first-past-the-post, STV = single-transferable-vote.

Note: 1. Although Belgium is divided into for regions for the elections (Flanders, Wallonia, Brussels, and the German-speaking region), votes are counted in the three linguistic constituencies (Dutch-speaking, French-speaking, and German-speaking).

**Table 2. MEPs Relations with National Party Leaderships**

Member State	MEP Voting Instructions from Party Leaderships		MEP Meetings with Party Leaderships		Avge Rank
	Avge. Score	Rank	Avge. Score	Rank	
<b>EXPECTATION: HIGH INDEPENDENCE (higher score/higher rank)</b>					
Finland	1.83	3	1.83	5	2
Germany	1.67	4=	1.67	6	3=
Ireland	1.33	7=	1.50	7	7
Italy	1.00	11=	3.00	1	6
United Kingdom	1.67	4=	1.00	10=	8
<b>Average</b>	<b>1.50</b>		<b>1.80</b>		
<b>EXPECTATION: MEDIUM INDEPENDENCE (medium score/middle rank)</b>					
Belgium	1.29	9	0.88	12	12
Denmark	1.50	6	0.75	13	11
Luxembourg	2.00	1=	2.33	2	1
Netherlands	2.00	1=	1.17	9	3=
Sweden	1.33	7=	2.00	3=	5
<b>Average</b>	<b>1.62</b>		<b>1.43</b>		
<b>EXPECTATION: LOW INDEPENDENCE (lower score/lower rank)</b>					
Austria	1.00	11=	0.67	14	14
France	0.67	14	2.00	3=	9
Greece	n/a		n/a		
Portugal	1.00	11=	1.00	10=	13
Spain	1.17	10	1.33	8	10
<b>Average</b>	<b>1.21</b>		<b>1.25</b>		

Note: **VOTING INSTRUCTIONS** - Q: 'how often are do you receive voting instructions from your national party leaders', A: 'regularly' (coded 0), 'only on issues of fundamental importance'/'sometimes' (coded 1), 'never' (coded 2).

**MEETINGS WITH PARTY LEADERSHIPS** - Q: 'how often do you meet with the executive organs of your party', A: 'once a week' (coded 0), 'once a month' (coded 1), '1-4 times per year' (coded 2), 'no regular meetings' (coded 3).