

Report Allocation in the European Parliament

Selection Criteria of Key-Legislators in EU's Directly Elected Assembly

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In memory of my aunt, Wenche Lyder (1958-2010)

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IV

Abstract

Using an original dataset, the study sets out to model report allocation in the European Parliament (EP). Putting aside the debate on the relative importance of national delegations, the review takes into account another specificity which has largely been ignored in previous empirical research: Only parts of the elected members are inclined to invest in European legislative work.

Once the free-riders are filtered out, it appears the EP has developed much of the organizational aspects needed to assert its powers. The study adapts American theories of legislative organization to the European context, and finds transnational political groups to be central players in a largely consensual arrangement. Expertise is of increasing importance, and is put to use for the common good. Legislative drafts are objects of an informational two-level game between the floor majority and caucuses. As Parliament matters more, report allocation becomes more competitive; thereby enhancing the traditional organizational features predicted by theory.

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Before plunging my reader into the complexities of European legislative organization, I would like to direct my warmest gratitude to Bjørn Høyland who presented this subject to me. His endless repertoire of books, manuals and articles on any topic – ranging from latest events in European empirical studies to statistics – would nonetheless have been of little help without his assiduous guidance. His patience and good advice in the face of my complete ignorance of R programming have been indispensable for the present study. Last, but not least, without his generous sharing of data, no study would have come about at all.

Any deficiencies in the following are however of my own doing.

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Silje Synnøve Lyder Hermansen, Oslo 24th of April 2010.

Contents

1	Introduction: Seeking power	1
1.1	Legitimacy and power	1
1.2	Specialization as a Strategy to Power.....	2
1.3	Unequal Legislative Participation	3
2	Theory and Hypotheses	6
2.1	Theories on Legislative Organization.....	6
2.1.1	Distributive Theory	6
2.1.2	Informational Theory	8
2.1.3	Partisan Theory	10
2.2	Hypotheses.....	12
2.2.1	Hypotheses Derived From the Distributive Approach.....	13
2.2.2	Hypotheses Derived From the Informational Approach.....	13
2.2.3	Hypotheses Derived From the Partisan Approach.....	14
2.3	Data from the Last 30 Years.....	15
3	Studying the European Parliament	17
3.1	State of the art.....	17
3.1.1	A European Career?	17
3.1.2	An Informational Game with European Policy Experts.....	19
3.1.3	Difficult Measures of Preferences.....	21
3.2	Legislative Organization of the EP – Rules and Procedures	23
3.2.1	Committee Power vis-à-vis the Parent Chamber	23
3.2.2	Group Power vis-à-vis Committee Members.....	25
4	Face Value – A Consensual Organization.....	30
4.1	Mediation of Preferences	30
4.1.1	Preferences in the American Literature.....	30
4.1.2	European Preferences	31
4.2	Bivariate preliminaries – Consensual Distribution.....	33
4.2.1	Political Groups – Informational View with a European Twist.....	33
4.2.2	Member States – Leaders and Laggards	39
5	Operationalizations – Adopting A European View.....	45
5.1	What to Model?	45

5.1.1	Theoretical Outline – An Ordinary Assembly?.....	45
5.1.2	The Response Variable – Measuring Influence	47
5.1.3	Choice of Statistical Model	50
5.2	Explanatory variables – How to Capture a European Organization?.....	51
5.2.1	Indicators of an Informational Two-Level Game	51
5.2.2	Partisan Expectations – Hypothesis _{c1-c2}	54
5.2.3	Distinguishing Workers from Free-Riders	58
6	The Statistical Model – Criteria for Influence	60
6.1	Number of Reports	60
6.1.1	Presence of an Informational Two Level Game.....	60
6.1.2	European Specificities.....	69
6.2	Salient Reports – Pushing the Selection Further	71
6.2.1	The Increased Necessity of an Agile Rapporteur.....	71
6.2.2	Hierarchy Among Rapporteurs	73
7	Does the Model Fit?	78
7.1	Valid Predictions – Fitted Values vs. True Values.....	78
7.1.1	The Competition for Reports – Changing Importance of the Dependent Variables.....	78
7.1.2	Further Competition for Salient Reports – Predictors Lacking?.....	81
7.2	Outliers and Missing Values.....	83
7.2.1	Exceptionally Few Missing Values.....	83
7.2.2	Few Influential Outliers	84
7.3	Alternative Models – Robustness to Different Manipulations	85
7.3.1	Model Description – Accounting for High Levels of Zeros	85
7.3.2	Alternative Models Yield About the Same Results	86
8	Conclusion.....	95
	Literature	101

Figures:

Figure 1: Relative Distribution of Reports among Parliamentarians 4

Figure 3: Reelection to the European Parliament Since 1979..... 19

Figure 4.1: Relative Over/Under-Representation by Political Group 37

Figure 4.2: Transition of MEPs Between Conservative Groups:..... 38

Figure 4.3 Representation of Independent MEPs: 39

Figure 4.4: RelativeOver/Under-Representation of the Original 9 Member States from 1979-1991..... 41

Figure 4.5: Relative Over/Under-Representation of New Member States..... 43

Figure 6.1: First Fit – What Determines the Number of Reports MEPs Write? 62

Figure 6.2: Final Fit – What Determines the Number of Reports MEPs Write? 63

Figure 6.3: What Determines the Number of Salient Reports MEPs Write?..... 74

Figure 7.1: Fitted Values vs. Observed Values – General Report Allocation 81

Figure 7.2: Fitted Values vs. True Values – Model of *Salient* Report Allocation..... 83

Figure 7.3: Hurdle Model of General Report Allocation 88

Figure 7.4: Zero-inflated Model for General Report Allocation..... 88

Figure 7.5: Hurdle Model for Salient Reports..... 90

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1 Introduction: Seeking power

1.1 Legitimacy and power

The European Coal and Steel Community started off as a peace keeping project between former enemies. But as the powers of the Community have been continuously extended since its beginning in the 1950-ies, former patterns of cooperation may not provide the sufficient democratic legitimacy to the organization.

Despite the long legalistic and bureaucratic tradition of the European Community (EC), the ever increasing delegations of power to the supranational level have spurred a debate around its perceived “democratic deficit”. Democratizing the European Union (EU) has become a project of linking European institutions to its citizens without the mediation of national-states. Hence political scientists, politicians and political commentators alike tend to hold forth the need to revalorize the European Parliament (EP) as a means to bridge the gap between democracy and power. The democratic legitimacy of the EU is therefore closely linked to the capacity of Parliament to organize its work effectively.

From this point of view, it was a major breakthrough in 1979 to become directly elected. Being representative to the EP became from this date a full-time occupation, allowing for a professionalized European political class. The institution has subsequently distinguished itself by the efforts spent to increase its powers to fit its elected legitimacy (Corbett, 1998).

The formal powers of the EP have been considerably enhanced the last few decades. The Single European Act (1986) introduced the assent- and the cooperation procedures. The Maastricht Treaty (1992) introduced the co-decision procedure which has been extended and reinforced both in Amsterdam (1997) and Nice (2001). Much of the scholarly debate on EP powers has been concentrated on a formal, legalistic analysis of the relative power Parliament has won during these treaty revisions (e.g. Crombez 1996, 2001; Moser 1996; Rittberger 2000; Steunenberg 1994; Tsebelis 1994, 2000, 2001, 2002). But, as another Europeanist, Pierre Hausemer, points out: « The solution to the so-called democratic deficit does not lie solely in the institutional set-up of the European Union (...). Rather, it is the

legislative participation of individual Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) that determines whose opinions are represented » (Hausemer 2006: 506).

Whereas the abovementioned studies have considered the EP as a single block, this is of course not the case. EP currently consists of seven party groups representing national parties from 27 states. And even among these groupings, individual legislative participation is highly unequal. Some MEPs yield more power than others.

Who are these key-legislators in the EP? And do their characteristics change with the improvement of Parliament's position?

1.2 Specialization as a Strategy to Power.

As of July 2009 the European Parliament consisted of 736 members. Quite naturally most of the legislative work is not done in plenary, but prepared beforehand. This "passage of legislation through the Parliament illustrates the central role of committees in forming the EP's positions" (Mamadouh and Raunio, 2003: 341).

Committees exist in order to make parliamentary work more efficient. They offer arenas for specialization where MEPs may acquire the competences needed to challenge the executive and influence policy-making. "The key aspect is information: investment in committee work makes members of Parliament (MPs) better informed and reduces the informational advantage of the executive" (Mamadouh and Raunio, 2003: 334). A Parliament with active and well-organized committees is potentially a powerful assembly.

"Structural features of legislatures 'matter greatly in the production of political outcomes' and in the viability of the political system" (Polsby quoted in Krehbiel, 1991: 1). This is why the present study will examine *how the European legislature is organized and why*. American scholars of legislative organization have insisted upon the central role of committees in the preparation of legislation. This, they agree, is where policies are developed and where individual legislators may have an impact (e.g. Krehbiel, 1991, 1993; Cox and McCubbins, 1993, 1994; Shepsle and Weingast, 1994). Yet, because these theories use hypotheses which have mainly been drawn from and tested on the US Congress, their implications will have to be adapted to a European context.

Most of Parliament's deliberations are done on the basis of conclusions of one of its committees. These conclusions are given in a report drawn up by one or several MEPs, called

“rapporteurs”. Rapporteurs have the responsibility to collect the information needed to consider propositions from Commission or Council, they suggest amendments and negotiate an acceptable deal between European party groups. If the amendments cause a conflict between the EP and other institutions, it is also the custom that the rapporteur participates in these negotiations (Bowler and Farrell, 1995).

Even though the rapporteur is the single most important legislator within the EP for any individual piece of legislation, Hausemer stresses that “little is known about the legislative participation of individual MEPs outside roll-call voting sessions” (2006: 506). A number of authors have sought to mend to the situation by different analyses of report allocation in the EP (Mamadouh and Raunio, 2003; Benedetto, 2004; Kaeding, 2005; Hausemer, 2006; Høyland, 2006).

Whereas previous studies have included only a selection of reports on shorter periods of time, the present study will make use of an original dataset which includes all data from the 1979 elections to the end of the 6th legislature in 2009. Information concerning the legislative procedure under which reports have been allocated has been collected manually. The data allows an unprecedented examination of the organizational characteristics of report allocation, and how these traits change both over time and across procedures.

1.3 Unequal Legislative Participation

Rapporteurships are not distributed evenly between MEPs. Since the first direct elections, between 26% and 60% of all MEPs never drew any reports at all during their term. In the same period the average number of reports by parliamentarian ranged between 1,3 and 3,7; allowing in principle for a rather equal participation. Almost half of the reports were, nonetheless, captured by a small minority of parliamentarians. The discrepancy reaches a peak during the 6th period during which 48% of the legislative drafts were written by only 5% of the members of Parliament.

As is shown from the distributions in figure 1, Parliament has developed an elite of MEPs who capture more than their share of legislative drafts. What are the determinants of such a discrepancy? Considering rapporteurs to be key legislators, the present study asks *on what criteria are rapporteurships distributed in the European Parliament?*

Relative Distribution of Reports among Parliamentarians												
Legislative Period	EP1 (1979-84)		EP2 (1984-89)		EP3 (1989-94)		EP4 (1994-99)		EP5 (1999-04)		EP6 (2004-09)	
N. of Seats	410		434		518		567		626		732	
N. of Reports	Report	MEP	Report	MEP	Report	MEP	Report	MEP	Report	MEP	Report	MEP
0	-	36 %	-	37 %	-	29 %	-	28 %	-	26 %	-	60 %
1-2	19 %	31 %	19 %	32 %	10 %	25 %	17 %	31 %	14 %	28 %	28 %	27 %
3-5	32 %	20 %	30 %	19 %	31 %	27 %	51 %	33 %	33 %	27 %	24 %	8 %
6-max	49 %	13 %	52 %	13 %	59 %	19 %	33 %	9 %	53 %	19 %	48 %	5 %
Abs. Count	1293	542	1520	632	2214	602	1958	729	2205	699	1254	943
Average rep.	2,4		2,4		3,7		2,7		2,5		1,3	

Figure 1: Relative Distribution of Reports among Parliamentarians

The figure expresses the frequency of reports written by any individual MEP, the relative amount of reports in the given category and the relative number of MEPs who have taken on as many reports during each legislative period.

As is seen from the figure, between 28% and 60% of the parliamentarians never wrote any reports during their term, whereas almost half of all reports were captured by a small minority of MEPs.

American scholars are divided as to the nature of the legislative organization of the US Congress. Whereas the some authors deem the system to be organized in order to accommodate the individual interests of its members (Shepsle and Weingast, 1994), others reckon legislative work is structured by the collective interests of the assembly (Krehbiel, 1991, 1993) and/or its political groups (Cox and McCubbins, 1993, 1994). The present study will adapt and combine these views from observations done previously in the Europeanist literature.

We will find that legislative organization in the EP follows an informational rationale in which committee work, as expressed by the drawing of reports, is structured in a consensual manner by the floor, and further organized by transnational party groups. The expertise which is acquired by individual MEPs is thereby used to further the collective interests of both the chamber and its caucuses. As a consequence, individuals compete for influence through the accumulation of draft legislation within a consensual structure. As Parliament gains more power, competition becomes harsher.

All three theories assume MPs to be careerist politicians who seek reelection through legislative work. Because of the unique nature of the European Parliament, this does not necessarily hold true. Quite a number of parliamentarians do not engage in legislative tasks, and have no ambitions for further influence in the EP. The theoretical grounds of this study encompass mainly the organizational characteristics of careerist MEPs, yet to test their relevance free-riders have to be distinguished from the analysis.

From this method, we will find that the EP has developed a core of key-legislators which in many respects reflects the organizational characteristics of national legislatures. The EP has throughout the period developed the organizational capacities required to make use of its formal powers.

In the following the relevant theories on the subject will be reviewed and general hypotheses will be derived from their postulates (Chapter 2). The study will secondly go through the existing literature on the subject as well as the formal organization of the EP (Chapter 3) in order to adapt and operationalize the hypotheses (Chapter 5). The approach being quantitative, the discussion is followed up with a first evaluation through a bivariate analysis of the general trends in the distribution of reports (Chapter 4). Two models of report allocation will then be fitted by the depicted theories (Chapter 6). After a brief discussion of the adequacy of the models (chapter 7) the study will proceed to conclude whether the EP has developed some of the organizational characteristics of an ordinary assembly (chapter 8).

2 Theory and Hypotheses

The review of the American literature (2.1) is needed to draw the outline of a unified theory of the European legislative organization. Rather than testing their general applicability their general postulates (2.2) will be adapted to the European reality in order to assess how the workings of the EP are best described. The enterprise is much helped by the extensive data on report allocation at hand. (2.3)

2.1 Theories on Legislative Organization

Theorizing legislative organization supposes a common origin both for political institutions and the politics they yield. In short, players have to accept the structure within which they are playing; hence the central question in the theoretical debates of how to accommodate individual preferences with collective interests.

2.1.1 Distributive Theory

The first generation of distributive theories tends to be individualistic, implying no notion of common good. MPs are rational, utility-maximizing players seeking to capture gains from trade. They engage in a zero-sum game in which the essential question is who gains what, and at whose expense (Krehbiel, 1991: 3, 24-26, 30; Shepsle and Weingast, 1994: 150-153).

In the seminal work of David Mayhew (1974) legislators have one preference only: To be reelected. Legislative activity revolves around maximizing chances for reelection by giving the electorate what it expects (quoted in Shepsle and Weingast, 1994: 154). As most positive legislative theories have been developed from American studies of the single ballot majority system, the electoral connection is often operationalized to be geographical. Thus, legislative work is a question of providing benefits for one specific geographical constituency while dispersing the costs (Krehbiel, 1991: 25-26).

Second generation authors like Kenneth Shepsle and Barry Weingast keep the rational approach, but allow legislators' preferences to be both heterogeneous and complex: "Their purposes derive in part from the electoral connection, in part from personal notions of good public policy, in part from institutional ambition, and in part from the influence of

others.” This makes for a constellation of unique, individual preferences in which each MP starts out in a potential conflict of one against all (1994: 154).

Majoritarianism requires any decision – whether procedural or political – to be done by the majority of the assembly. As the number of policy dimensions is only limited by the number of possible majorities, there may never be equilibrium. Alternative winning coalitions will always exist which may profit from overturning the present consensus. The first generation of rational legislative theories modeled an inherently unstable system that is not warranted in empirical studies (Shepsle and Weingast, 1994: 154; Krehbiel, 1991: 16, 28).

This discord is partially due to the fact that early theories did not model important features in the legislative institutions and processes such as committee structures and parliamentary procedures. In order to prevent defection, formal theorists like Kenneth Shepsle (1986a; 1986b) and Weingast and Marshall (1988) incorporate institutions capable of constraining the number of outcomes. This, they argue, is because “heterogeneous tastes make the exchange of support both necessary and attractive: The value a legislator places on his or her own projects often will exceed the burdens he or she must bear in supporting the projects of other legislators” (Shepsle and Weingast, 1994: 154). This is the reason why a system of policy-field specific committees has developed where members of different committees in effect exchange influence and support.

An institutional equilibrium is induced by the delegation of decisional power to a subset of legislators (i.e. committees) who detain “gatekeeping powers” and profit from “closed rules” preventing the main chamber from amending committee drafts (Krehbiel, 1991: 32, 37). For this institutional arrangement to work, it is important that committee members are able to self-select to the committees which interest them the most. Committees have to retain an extraordinary influence over the policy area in question, and committee jurisdictions have to be updated at all time in order to prevent conflict. By this system MPs trade their support across issues in order to gain majority for their own causes.

As a result of the self-selection, committees are composed of those whose demands in this specific policy area are higher than the median in the chamber (Krehbiel, 1991: 43). This leads Krehbiel to wonder why a legislature would choose to organize itself in such a way that the work done does not reflect the majority point of view? Structures might induce

equilibria, but without explaining institutions themselves, distributive theories tend towards functionalism (1991: 16, 28).

David Baron and John Ferejohn (1989) go around the enforcement problem by introducing impatience among players. Keeping to a simple game of dividing the dollar, they assume the dollar to shrink every time the final decision is delayed by alternative winning coalitions. They thereby create an incentive among legislators to adhere to institutional arrangements which allow for closed rules and a swift settlement (Krehbiel, 1991: 40-41).

This solution is much more palatable to Krehbiel who indeed expects procedural rights within distributive theories to favor standing committees – especially those whose policy space are highly particularistic – rather than the parent chamber. This, concludes Krehbiel, is one of the reasons why a legislature confers benefits to those who do not reflect the majority point of view (1991: 43-44).

2.1.2 Informational Theory

Distributive theories have gone a long way in understanding the workings of the US Congress, but it does – in Keith Krehbiel's view – suffer from obvious shortcomings. These he exposes in *Information and Legislative Organization* (1993) along with his informational approach to legislative organization. Keeping the game of conflict, he also assumes players to be rational utility-maximizers. However, any legislative organization is subject to two restrictions. First, he expects consequences of the majoritarian principle to be more straightforward than what distributive theorists have construed. By this he introduces a notion of common good (as expressed by the majority) which is completely absent from previous generations of legislative theories. Second, whereas in the first generation of distributive theories what a legislator sees is what he gets, in the informational view no policy maker can be sure of the actual effects of decisions. There will always be a discrepancy between the intent of policies and their outcomes. Yet, legislators' chances for reelection depend upon the outcome of their politics (Krehbiel, 1991: 15-20, 62-63, 66-67).

Legislators always prefer policies whose consequences are known to those who are not. The best way to reduce the rift is to acquire information. Acquisition of expertise is costly, but it is potentially beneficial for the entire chamber. Yet, as information is not equally distributed, it may be used strategically to further individual preferences. Abandoning the

zero-sum game for a positive one, Krehbiel consequently expects institutions to create incentives for committee members both to specialize and to share information with peers (Krehbiel, 1991: 62-69, 73-74).

MPs reflect their electorate both by having different preferences and different skills. An effective legislative organization makes use of both aspects (Krehbiel, 1991: 77-78): In order to create incentives for specialization among the most skilled MPs, Krehbiel models restrictive rules which occasionally give committee members a distributional advantage compared to the floor. Yet, according to the majoritarian principle the chamber decides upon the rights delegated to committees. Therefore, restrictive rules alternate with open rules in order to prevent preference outliers to gain a legislative monopoly.

In the words of Krehbiel “the subservient nature of committees in informational theories cannot be overemphasized.” (1991: 80) It is the legislature which chooses the most skilled among its members, and no self-selection to committees takes place. The greatest incentive of informational honesty is when specialists’ and non-specialists’ preferences coincide (1991: 81-82). Committee members’ preferences are therefore heterogeneous, reflecting the political composition of the chamber in such a way that every floor member may find a reliable informant within the committee (1991: 96). Consequently the efficiency of informational circulation requires committees to avoid preference outliers – unless these high demanders have been able to specialize at a lower cost than moderate MPs (1991: 95-96).

At the institutional level, Krehbiel formulates two expectations: Restrictive rules will be positively associated with committee specialization, non-outlying and heterogeneous committees. Similarly, gains from trade are side-effects, and not institutionalized, as such an arrangement would yield distributional loss and informational inefficiency (1991: 97-98).

Both Shepsle and Weingast welcome the efforts done to model the informational game of committee specialization and deem it to be an important contribution to legislative theory. Yet, they point out that (mainly for reasons of simplicity) Krehbiel assumes the policy space to be unidimensional and committee preferences to reflect the median voter in the mother chamber. But preferences in only one dimension do not allow for exchanges across issues, nor do you find median voters across multidimensional spaces. “In a one-good world, an individual can only trade apples for apples, one for one.” Trading of committee seats

would be futile if everyone had the same vested interests in all policy domains. “Only in a multi-good world, can individuals with different preferences exchange apples in return for oranges.” (1994: 168) Krehbiel thereby removes the distributional explanation of committees with separate jurisdictions reflecting separate interests, and stumbles once again into majority cycling on an institutional level. But if the defendant of the informational theory could accept the conditions for the trade-offs to be institutionalized (i.e. multidimensional), the perspective might be merged with the distributive one. “In a world of multiple political issues, the two approaches are mutually reinforcing.” (1994: 168-169)

Both approaches formulate a game in which the only structure-induced equilibrium emanates from the committees (1994: 168-169). The partisan approach, presented in *Legislative Leviathan: Party Government in the House* by Cox and McCubbins (1993), introduces another equilibrium-enforcing institution: Political parties.

2.1.3 Partisan Theory

In the partisan rationale, the strain is resolved by the introduction of political parties. Both nomination for reelection and assignment to committees (and other parliamentary offices) are controlled by the party. Unruly party members risk exclusion from the group – and thereby losing the benefits conferred to them by the caucus. Discipline is ensured as long as the costs of defection exceed its’ benefits (Cox and McCubbins, 1994: 217-218).

“One example is the investment of time on a committee, which endows the member with human capital – contacts, knowledge, lists of contributors – whose value would decline were the member transferred to another committee. It also endows a member with seniority on the committee. (...) Neither committee specific human capital nor committee-specific seniority is readily transferable to other uses should the member be expelled from the party and from party-contingent committee assignments.” (Cox and McCubbins, 1994: 218)

This applies especially to majority party members whose options either would be to apply for membership in a less influential party with less extensive resources (staff etc.), or continue the work as non-affiliated members. The consequences of exclusion are even direr

when the candidate has to run for reelection without the support of a party (Cox and McCubbins, 1994: 219-220).

On his part Krehbiel considers committee selection by party groups to be contrary to the majoritarian principle. As all suggestions are ratified in the end by the floor as a whole, any political coalition may be overturned by another majority, irrespective of party affiliation (1991: 17). Political parties may well be a nice indicator of policy interests, but when preferences diverge, party groups have no constraining power. Caucuses have just as much to lose from renouncing its experts, as do the experts themselves. How then can the threat of exclusion be credible?

More than simply sharing common preferences, MPs share – in the partisan perspective – a political reputation with their fellow party members. If one member's actions tarnish their collective reputation, and assuming that "caucus members are purely office-seekers, the loyalists will in fact have a credible threat; it will be in their own immediate electoral interests to vote against reinstatement (or to vote for exclusion)." (Cox and McCubbins, 1994: 225)

Yet, it is not as much the sticks as it is the carrots which explain the continuous existence of political parties. "It may be that the caucus rules are efficacious not so much because they are credibly enforced but rather because they serve an informational role." (Cox and McCubbins, 1994: 225) This applies both for the confidence between committees and the floor, and party group members and the caucus. The authors point out that "in Congress, committees frequently have their handiwork amended, or even undone, on the floor." (1994: 225) But as long as this is an exceptional behavior, the incentive to specialize remains guiding, and the system is perpetrated purely by shared interests (Cox and McCubbins, 1994: 225-226).

Krehbiel expects rational legislators to choose according to the ultimate consequences of their actions. This is why he concentrates his discussion on the credibility of an exclusion from the group. Cox and McCubbins insist on their part on the intermediate stages. They do not only envisage exclusion, but also a variety of other less drastic (and therefore more convincing) consequences. The most obvious among these would of course be the invalidation by the caucus – through the floor vote – of committee propositions from disloyal comrades. This makes for a span of disciplinary tools for the party whips.

Even though Krehbiel has opposed the notion of constraining party politics (1991: 101-102; 1993), the informational and partisan view are to a certain extent compatible: In the informational approach floor members are expected to take advice from committee members with similar preferences.

“In response to the need of members for more guidance than the committee system provides, an informal system of expertise appears to have been developed alongside, and overlapping, it. Trusted member who are believed to have superior knowledge of certain subjects achieve recognition as specialists. They guarantee to their fellows the feasibility of certain proposals, challenge others. They process and digest raw facts and communicate them in the form of “do” or “don’t” recommendations. (...) In recompense for their efforts they are given the confidence of their fellows – their bills go through, they shape policy – they have power.” (Buchanan et al., 1970, 650 quoted in Krehbiel, 1991: 75)

Party members have common policy objectives (i.e. preferences), and therefore take cues from each other. Just as Krehbiel points out, information may be used strategically to induce fellow MPs to vote in a particular direction. The best guarantee against manipulation is when both share the same interests. As a preemptive disciplinary measure, authors therefore expect committees to be staffed by loyal representatives of party groups, “irrespective of whether they are interest- or information driven” (Yordanova, 2009: 264). The partisan view is therefore supplementary rather than in competition with the informational and distributional theories (Yordanova, 2009: 264-265).

The three approaches have different and partially competing empirical implications which allow for an assessment of their relevance for the European Parliament.

2.2 Hypotheses

Whereas all three theories originally have been formulated and tested essentially on committee assignments, the study assumes hypotheses to be readily transferable to the group of European rapporteurs.

2.2.1 Hypotheses Derived From the Distributive Approach.

Distributive theories rely on the idea of individual MEPs seeking power in order to ensure reelection. All positions of power are expected to be instrumentalized in order to further individual preferences on the expense of the majority. This results in a high degree of self-selection to important tasks such as rapporteurships.

Institutionalized trade-offs give way to unrepresentative committees composed of preference outliers (Krehbiel, 1991: 43). Distributive theory thereby expects the preferences of the group of rapporteurs to differ significantly from the preferences of non-rapporteurs.

H_{a1}: Because of the logic of self-selection, the measured preferences of the group of rapporteurs deviate significantly from the measured preferences of non-rapporteurs.

This hypothesis stands in contradiction to Krehbiel's expectations derived from the majority principle which states that because rapporteurs are selected by the floor "legislative committees will *not*, as a matter of practice, be composed predominantly of high demanders or preference outliers" (Krehbiel, 1991: 96).

2.2.2 Hypotheses Derived From the Informational Approach.

In the informational view policy-makers are chosen by their peers on two criteria: Their preferences and their competences.

The strict definition of the majority principle in the informational approach requires committees to be microcosms of the mother chamber (Krehbiel, 1991: 96). Transposing this expectation to the case of European rapporteurs, one should find legislators whose preferences represent both sides of the policy spectrum as defined by the composition of the floor.

H_{b1}: Because key legislators are chosen by the chamber majority, the measured preferences of the group of rapporteurs reflect the measured preferences of the floor.

Hypothesis_{b1} stands by way of consequence in opposition to hypothesis_{a1} as presented in the previous section, and is alternative to the latter.

As being a member of the European Parliament has become a career path for a core of MEPs (Scarrow, 1997; Corbett, 1998), legislators should acquire some of their experience within the EP itself. What is more, in order to be recognized as expert, it is important to be renown by the rest of the assembly; hence the importance of incumbency as a criterion of selection among MEPs. Staying in office is a means of acquiring expertise and reputation, and should thus garner more reports. In the informational view the length of tenure is positively correlated to the acquisition of reports.

H_{b2}: The group of rapporteurs has on average stayed longer in Parliament than non-rapporteurs.

The confirmation of specialization corroborates the informational approach on this specific matter. It is, nonetheless, compatible with both the distributive and partisan approach, and may be combined into one, single model.

2.2.3 Hypotheses Derived From the Partisan Approach.

According to the partisan view party groups have a key role in the organization of legislative work. The caucus chooses policy-makers who are susceptible to formulate and further the party view during legislation. The designated rapporteur should be known to the group.

If the partisan perspective holds, the group of rapporteurs should therefore not consist in policy-outliers compared to their group of origin, but have preferences much in line with what is generally expressed in the caucus:

H_{c1}: Because key legislators are selected by the caucus, the measured preferences of the group of rapporteurs reflect the measured preferences of the party group.

The confirmation of hypothesis_{c1} does not necessarily reject the informational approach, as rapporteurs representative to their parties also represent both sides of the policy spectrum as is otherwise expected by Krehbiel (1991: 96). The following study will explore how well the informational and partisan perspectives work together, as informational criteria should be determinant both in negotiations *between* groups and selection *within* groups.

If caucuses are significant players during the distribution of reports, affiliation to a political group should be an advantage, whereas non-affiliated members have a drawback when reports are distributed. The null hypothesis follows Krehbiel's argument that political groups are simple expressions of preferences: Every MEP has an equal chance for obtaining a report independent of group membership.

H_{c2}: Independent members are under-represented among rapporteurs.

If the hypothesis is rejected – that is, if the caucus is not able to ensure its members more reports than non-affiliated members – political groups in the EP are superfluous organizations and the partisan perspective has to be discarded.

The general formulations of these hypotheses will later have to be operationalized in order to fit the European setting. What is new in the present study is the extent of the data – it encompasses all reports drawn in a period of 30 years.

2.3 Data from the Last 30 Years

Previous studies of the European Parliament have included either a small period of time (e.g. the 4th and 5th parliament in Mamadouh and Raunio, 2003; or the first half on the 5th parliament in Hausemer, 2006), only parts of the legislature (e.g. the Environmental committee in the 4th parliament in Keading, 2005) or only certain reports (e.g. reports assigned under the co-decision procedure in Høyland, 2006).

The present dataset include all six legislative periods from the first members of the European Parliament were directly elected in 1979 until the 2009 elections. It contains all reports written with an assigned rapporteur, the subject matter, the procedure under which it has been written, the date of the assignment, the name of the rapporteur(s) and the committee in question. I have furthermore collected manually all procedural data prior to 1999 from the minutes present in the *Official Journal of the European Communities*, whereas data for the two remaining legislatures have been collected automatically (Høyland et al., 2009).

Bjørn Høyland's automated database also contains information on all MEPs within this same period, their nationality, their date of birth, the committees, national parties and

European party groups on which they have been, as well as their position and the entry and exit dates. (www.folk.uio.no)

Several variables have been derived from the NOMINATE scores calculated by Simon Hix, Abdul Noury and Gérard Roland from roll-call votes in Parliament from the 1st to the 5th parliament included. (data available at <http://personal.lse.ac.uk/HIX/>) Computation of NOMINATE scores from the last period are a courtesy of Bjørn Høyland.

The NOMINATE scaling method of individual voting decisions is developed by Poole and Rosenthal and have successfully been applied to the US Congress (1997, 233-51 quoted in Hix et al., 2006). Roll-call votes are one of three possible voting methods in the EP, but it is the only one which registers individual votes. As even a small number of MEPs may request a roll-call vote, and as MEPs may behave differently when voting in public, this selection may be somewhat biased. “Nevertheless, there is no evidence to suggest that roll-call votes are called disproportionately on particular policy issues, or by particular political groups or under particular legislative procedures” (McElroy, 2006: 19). These are the best data available, and have contributed to new insight into the European policy space.

Two different data sets have been used: One consists in a list of all reports presented to the plenary. This list is used for the preliminary examination of report allocation, and to develop variables in the second data set. The main data set is ordered straightforwardly from the list of members in each legislature. One observation equals one MEP. As quite a number of MEPs do not stay in office the whole term, the number of observations in these studies is larger than the number of seats in Parliament. When the relative sizes of national delegations or party groups are discussed, however, this is done according to the number of seats, not the total number of parliamentarians.

There has to this date not been published any study of report allocation using this span of data over such a large period. This makes it possible to reveal general trends which previously have only been tested on partial data.

3 Studying the European Parliament

Theories of legislative organization have been developed – and tested – mainly on American legislatures. But how do they fit the European reality?

A number of political scientists have already gone to efforts to analyze the legislative organization of the European Parliament (3.1). There is no simple way of recycling the empirical operationalizations used in American studies. Rather, to pinpoint the characteristics of key-legislators, a translation has to be done in view of the organizational rules and procedures of the European Parliament (3.2).

3.1 State of the Art

The implicit assumption that MEPs are office-seekers has rarely been questioned in empirical research on legislative work in the EP. On the other hand, most studies deem Parliament's legislative organization to be information-driven, though the exact operationalization of preferences and specialization has proven difficult.

3.1.1 A European Career?

In order for any of the theories to apply, members of the European Parliament have to actually seek reelection.

The 1979 elections created for the first time the basis for a group of full-time parliamentarians on a European level. Richard Corbett points nevertheless out three possible obstacles to the development of an autonomous European class of politicians: Are European politics considered as a career in its own right, or is a mandate in the EP simply a stepping-stone for younger legislators to obtain national offices? The EP has also been said to house a number of "ageing party horses put out to grass" by their national party groups (Burgess quoted in Corbett, 1998: 67). How concerned would retired politicians be in the well-being of their exile? In any case, a constantly high turnover rate would endanger the institutional memory (Corbett, 1998: 66-67).

MEPs aiming at a European career have vested interests in increasing the position of the institution. This is, according to Susan Scarrow, increasingly the case, as the institution

has developed a core of MEPs with a long-term commitment to the European Parliament (Scarrows, 1997). Her conclusions are corroborated by the experience of Richard Corbett who emphasizes the informational advantage of an experienced core of legislators:

”Despite the hard turnover there has, of course, remained a hard core of members remaining in the Parliament for years who, together with the secretariat and the officials, constitute the ‘memory’ of the Parliament and ensure that lack of experience of new MEPs does not imply that Parliament’s work is constantly starting from scratch.” (Corbett, 1998: 68)

Logically, a legislature which has reached maturity would make use of the experience acquired by long-termers, forming its own political class. In the frame of the present study, it seems likely that we a number of incumbent European parliamentarians should be found among Parliament’s key-legislators.

Scarrows points out that “the maximum length of elected service is still dictated by the 1979 initiation of direct elections” (1997: 256). Hence she chooses to study the three electoral periods spanning from 1979 to the 1994 election. She finds that 64% of the MEPs were short-termers (they stayed for less than 1,5 electoral term) against 36% who remained in office for more than 7 years (Scarrows, 1997: 256-57).

Her work encompasses only four member states, insisting upon national differences in incumbency. The present study extends the data to all countries during all six periods following the 1979 election. How global are the tendencies?

From what is seen in figure 3, the trend detected by Scarrows seems to be rather constant. Measuring for each legislative period the number of MEPs who were also present in the previous legislature, between 56% and 65% of all MEPs are freshmen. This number may be somewhat inflated by the arrival of parliamentarians from new member states during the 2nd, 4th and 6th legislature. Nonetheless, this still allows for an experienced core of legislators perpetrating institutional memory – especially because parliamentary work is organized by party groups within which information should circulate quite freely (Høyland, 2006: 45). 1% of the MEPs whose mandate expired in 2009 had actually served 30 consecutive years on the EP.

Reelection to the European Paliament since 1979										
Legislative Period	EP2		EP3		EP4		EP5		EP6	
Consecutive terms	Abs.	%	Abs.	%	Abs.	%	Abs.	%	Abs.	%
0	377	60 %	312	52 %	457	63 %	390	56 %	609	65 %
1	255	40 %	170	28 %	127	17 %	198	28 %	183	19 %
2	-	-	120	20 %	96	13 %	60	9 %	103	11 %
3	-	-	-	-	49	7 %	31	4 %	25	3 %
4	-	-	-	-	-	-	20	3 %	15	2 %
5	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	8	1 %
Freshmen	377	60 %	312	52 %	457	63 %	390	56 %	609	65 %
Incumbent	255	40 %	290	48 %	272	37 %	309	44 %	334	35 %
Sum	632	100 %	602	100 %	729	100 %	699	100 %	943	100 %

Figure 3: Reelection to the European Parliament Since 1979

The table expresses the absolute and relative distribution of *consecutive* terms served by MEPs. Because the present table includes all MEPs who have passed through Parliament, including representatives from new member states, the figures of freshmen should be expected to be slightly inflated during the 2nd, 4th and 6th legislature. As it stands, the proportion between newcomers and incumbent MEPs remains rather stable throughout the period.

The assumption that MEPs will invest time in committee work because of careerist ambitions is bald, yet not wholly unreasonable. Bearing in mind Corbett's concern, it is likely that European politicians pursue quite different career paths. Part of any predictive model of European legislative organization will therefore have to distinguish the workers from the free-riders, as only the first have incentives to invest in committee duties.

As it is, there seems to be an initial stage of self-selection in the EP. Yet, the possibility to opt out can hardly by itself justify a distributive logic, as the latter also entails preference outliers. Most studies of legislative organization in the EP insist on the contrary on the informational game which takes place during legislation.

3.1.2 An Informational Game with European Policy Experts

Deeming the legislative process to be a game of asymmetric information, Giacomo Benedetto, points out that given that Council meetings are secret, the European Parliament

bargains information-blind. Personal links to officials in other institutions may compensate for this disadvantage and give precious cues as to which strategies should be adopted by the EP (Benedetto, 2005: 70-71).

The observations done by Bjørn Høyland (2006) go a long way in confirming these allegations, finding members of national parties which are also represented in the Council to be overrepresented among rapporteurs within the co-decision procedure (which implies an extended contact with the Council). Policy experts who are able to specialize at a lower cost should, indeed, gain more reports than those who are not.

Similarly Corbett explains from his experience as an MEP that certain parliamentarians become part of policy networks at the meso-level of the three institutions (Commission, Parliament and Council). As these networks are on a subject basis, such experts “know who to see, when and about what.” He further states that “the participation of MEPs in such networks is as important a means of influence as their formal powers.” (Corbett, 1998: 86)

Shaun Bowler and David M. Farrell study questions asked in plenary as well as committee assignments, and conclude that the EP has indeed developed the specializations required for a legislature to challenge the executive power (1995: 235). To all authors this expertise enhances EP influence, thereby confirming Krehbiel’s assumption of a positive-sum game (Corbett, 1998; Bowler and Farrel, 1995; Benedetto, 2005; McElroy, 2006; Høyland, 2006).

In the European Parliament the role of policy expert is held by the rapporteurs who write recommendations (i.e. “reports”) to the chamber on behalf of the committee. Rapporteurs build the sufficient political consensus for the bill to pass at the floor level, and they represent Parliament during inter-institutional negotiations. The more agile negotiators rapporteurs prove to be, the more the EP increases its influence (Benedetto, 2005: 85). In the European context it is therefore natural to extend the conventional study on committee assignment to the procedure of report allocation (Keading, 2004; Benedetto, 2005; Hausemer, 2006, Høyland, 2006; Yordanova, 2009). Once the criteria of selection have been established, it is interesting to see to what extent the literature on committee assignments match the provision of reports. How consistent are the organizational trends in the EP?

3.1.3 Difficult Measures of Preferences

The driving force behind legislative work is MEPs' preferences. The distributive and the informational perspectives have quite different predictions, however, on the subject matter. As special preferences tend to imply a certain amount of specialization, it has proven quite difficult to distinguish the two in empirical studies (Yordanova, 2009: 261; quite in opposition to the claims of Krehbiel, 1991: 7).

It is common practice to assume nationality and party group affiliation to be indications of MEP preferences. In line with the informational view, national and political representation among both committee members and rapporteurs is roughly proportional to the composition of the floor (Bowler and Farrell, 1995; Mamadouh and Raunio, 2003; Benedetto, 2005; McElroy, 2006).

Measuring preferences within specific policy domains, on the other hand, has not given any conclusive empirical results. Bowler and Farrell (1995) try without much luck to distinguish which of the distributional or informational views determine European organization of committees. (1995: 241). Their chosen indicators of policy preferences – relations to interest groups and previous occupational attachments – do not distinguish well preference outliers from specialized MEPs. By and large one may wonder whether such links indicate competitive specialization (informational hypothesis) or extreme preferences (distributive hypothesis). Moreover, Krehbiel's expectation of the selection of low-cost high-demanders hardly lends itself to univocal operationalizations. Politicians with a previous national career have indeed political experience, but won't they also have special interests in the stance of their national party? Links to pressure groups provide MEPs with more information, but doesn't it reflect a special interest? The authors find certain committees to reflect heterogeneous preferences, whereas other committees reflect the homogenous composition of high demanders.

Michael Kaeding (2004), on his part, opts for a qualitative evaluation of political preferences on one specific policy domain in his study of the Environmental committee during the 4th period (1995-99). He finds the group of rapporteurs to be biased, but proposes subsequent studies to combine the two concepts of demanding and informative committees.

Nicoleta Yordanova (2009) takes this into account and distinguishes in advance which committees she expects to be informative (i.e. heterogeneous and representative) and which committees she expects to be distributional (i.e. homogeneous and extreme). Quite obviously this is a step away from the predictive ambitions of Krehbiel, but the categorization opens for a merger of the distributive and informative view.

Responding to Kaeding's suggestion that within the consensual frame of European organization players adopt different political strategies for legislative participation, Pierre Husemer expects "MEPs to spend their time on policy areas that matter to their constituents." (2006: 520, 516) His dependent variable is therefore a measure of report salience deduced from Budge et al.'s analysis of national party manifestos (2001). His conclusion is that whereas parliamentarians compete for the reports which are the most salient to their electorate, rapporteurs are chosen by the party group and are thus not preference outliers. (2006: 524)

At last, Gail McElroy (2006) chooses roll-call votes in plenary sessions as a means of measuring policy preference. In contrast to Bowler and Farrell she simply labels occupational background and ties to interest groups as "specializations". In order to distinguish the distributive approach from the informational, she adds a variable of ideology based on first dimension NOMINATE scores as developed by Simon Hix et al. (2005). She finds committees to be highly specialized, yet committee members' scores do not deviate significantly from the ideological composition of the floor, thus corroborating the informational approach.

NOMINATE scores is a relative measure as they express to what degree individual MEPs vote in line with other representatives during the same legislature. In the same logic, Richard Whitaker (2005) chooses MAD scores developed by Cox and McCubbins (1993) and concludes from roll-call votes that committee members also vote in line with their national party delegations. Furthermore, national delegations maintain higher levels of representativeness on committees endowed with legislative powers (i.e. committees where EP powers are the most extended). The underlying argument is that as the European Parliament matters more, competition for committee seats will be crisper, and thus, the representativeness of committees will increase.

As we have seen, the earlier contributions to this literature aim to distinguish the distributive and informational approaches by validating competitive hypotheses (Bowler and

Farrell, 1995; McElroy, 2006). Quite an important part of the literature emphasizes the informational advantage of specialized MEPs. (Mamadouh and Raunio, 2003; Whitaker, 2005; Benedetto, 2005; Høyland, 2006) Yet, recent studies tend to combine concepts from both theories, taking the informational bargain for granted, as well as including aspects of the partisan approach (Kaeding, 2004; Yordanova, 2009).

From the review of relevant literature, the distributive approach seems to have been abandoned in favor of the informational approach, occasionally complemented by a partisan view of European parliamentary groups. None of the above mentioned studies take into account the differing ambitions among MEPs and their consequences on report distribution.

The present study will consequently venture to explain the assignment of rapporteurs by a combination of these theories; expecting the informational approach to hold true, and testing for signs of partisan considerations. The predictive value of theories depends however, on the personal ambitions of MEPs, and will have to be accounted for.

3.2 Legislative Organization of the EP – Rules and Procedures

According to Krehbiel, “to understand legislative organization is to understand legislative institutions, that is, rules and precedents that act as binding constraints on legislators’ behavior.” (1991: 14) In the European literature, Virginie Mamadouh and Tapio Raunio assess separately the formal powers of committees (3.2.1) before discussing the relationship between committees and party groups (3.2.2.) (2003: 334-335).

The intent of this evaluation is to distinguish possible operationalizations of the previously defined hypotheses, as well as to formulate expectations about the empirical characteristics of rapporteurs.

3.2.1 Committee Power vis-à-vis the Parent Chamber

The US Congress is, in the authors’ opinion, a “prime example” of a committee-based legislature. The bulk of parliamentary work is done in committees, just as it is done in the European Parliament. (Mamadouh and Raunio, 2003: 334-335; Corbett, 2007: 126)

Even though they compare the workings of the European Parliament to that of the US Congress, Mamadouh and Raunio curiously engage in a comparison between the formal powers of committees in the EP and the 15 national parliaments in EU Member States (as of 1999) (2003: 334-337). Their choice is probably justified by the system of proportional ballots and the multiple parties of the EP which should make it more like any European system than the rather singular American two-party system.

The authors select 6 indicators of committee power in relation to the plenary based on data from Herbert Döring's comparative work (Döring, 1995):

In their exercise of control of the executive EP committees may *request documents* from the Commission. The Commission has no formal obligation to comply with the inquiry, but the parliamentary right for the assembly to sack the Commission should certainly make the latter more obliging. This is somewhat weaker than the average parliamentary system: Seven out of 15 national committees have the formal right to request documents from their government. Furthermore, most national committees may not *compel witnesses*. This is also the case for the European Parliament which may invite, but not force witnesses to appear before its committees (Mamadouh and Raunio, 2003: 337).

Turning to legislative work, the influence of European committees is weakly improved. Committee meetings in the European Parliament take place *before the plenary*. This is certainly an advantage. As plenary deliberations are mainly based on committee reports, European committee work has presumably a greater importance than in those four member states where bills are already voted upon when reaching the committee stage. On the other hand, *the agenda* of EP committees is set by the parent chamber, and not by the committee itself. In addition, the time-table is mostly occupied by Commission proposals which are referred to the appropriate committee by the Directorate General for the Presidency (Corbett, 2007: 135). This lack of control is the case for most national committees as well (Mamadouh and Raunio, 2003: 335-37).

As for the contents of parliamentary work, committees in the European Parliament have as much freedom as elsewhere in Europe. Only in three out of 15 member states is it possible for committees to *initiate legislation*. In the case of EP committees, "own initiative reports have always been subject to prior approval" (Corbett, 2007: 137). Yet, committees may propose *amendments* to Commission proposals that are so substantial that they in fact

constitute a new text (Mamadouh and Raunio, 2003: 337). This is all the more important that the right of legislative initiative in the EU-system is with the Commission, and not the Parliament.

The study of the formal rights of EP committees leads Mamadouh and Raunio to conclude that European committees are “no stronger” – especially when it comes to informational rights – than those of the parliamentary Member States of the EU (2003: 341). EP committees hardly yielding more formal power than their European homologues, it is *a fortiori* difficult to claim the EP to be a committee-based legislative in the American sense. Yet, declare Bowler and Farrell, “the fact that the EP does have a developed committee system is, by some European experiences, an innovation”, whatever their power seem to be (1995: 227).

The lay-out of the European legislative organization certainly expresses an intention of using committees as a forum for informational bargains, yet at the same time let the floor majority keep in control.

Committee propositions are generally voted over in plenary under open rules (Corbett, 2007: 176-77). This, as well as the committee dependency upon the floor in its own agenda-setting, indicates a firm grip by the chamber. The system of open rules is contrary to the distributional requirement of closed rules as an incentive for committee members to participate in legislative chores. The relative liberal rules of committee amendments, and the very fact that meetings are prior to the plenary in order to prepare winning coalitions, should, however, give incentives to invest in committee work. There are, furthermore, no indications of majority cycling in the EP which should point to the presence of another equilibrium-inducing institution.

Mamadouh and Raunio turn to scrutinize the second criterion of a committee-based legislature: weak party groups.

3.2.2 Group Power vis-à-vis Committee Members

The authors affirm that “apart from formal rules, the strength of committees depends on parties.” The underlying argument is that heterogeneous political groups are unable to command members’ loyalties. The lack of party discipline therefore makes it more difficult for political groups to dominate the workings of the assembly. Decisions are no longer taken

within the groups, but by the official organs of the parliament. Thus, “when parties are heterogeneous, the legislature probably becomes more committee oriented.” (Mamadouh and Raunio, 2003: 334)

It is precisely the deficient party discipline which has prevented the American system of strict separation of powers from an institutional impasse. Even when the majority in Congress and the President come from the same party, the executive is never guaranteed majority approval, as caucus members may well defect from the party line. Negotiations take thereby place in committees, and not within the caucus.

Parliamentary committees in the EP give a central role to individual members, not the least by its system of rapporteurs, who are in charge of negotiating a majority for his draft (Corbett, 2007: 126). How is the role of EP parliamentary groups in this system?

Mamadouh and Raunio identify three means for party groups to affirm themselves – and by consequence reducing committee autonomy: This can be done in the appointment process where either the preferences of the MEPs themselves may prevail, or the preferences of the group leadership. Second, the degree to which group leaderships may constrain members’ committee work. And, third, what means of sanction the leadership disposes of (Damgaard, 1995 quoted in Mamadouh and Raunio, 2003: 338).

Selecting individuals

As for the *appointment process* to committees, this is done by the political groups and in such a way as to reflect the overall political balance between caucuses (rule 152 quoted in Mamadoh and Raunio, 2003: 338; Corbett, 2007: 128). The same goes for committee chair and vice-chairs, which are allocated following the proportional d’Hont system (Corbett, 2007: 130). The system reflects the informational view, and is empirically confirmed for the first half of the 3rd legislative period (1989-92): “The composition of committees generally reflects the national and ideological composition of the chamber” (Bowler and Farrel, 1995: 227-28).

The appointment of rapporteurs follows the same pattern: The distribution is not regulated in the Rules of Procedure, but an officious system of allocation has been developed: At the beginning of each period the political groups receive a quota of points according to their size. Whenever a report is to be drawn, group coordinators set a prize and

then start bidding for the dossier on behalf of their group. The victorious caucus then names the rapporteur of their choice (Corbett, 2007: 140). Even though no MEP is forced to write a report (Mamadouh and Raunio, 2003: 343), there is no doubt that political parties are determinant in the selection of individual legislators; first in the selection of committee members, then in the selection of rapporteurs among committee members.

A fair representation of ideological differences is important. Yet, from his experience as an MEP Richard Corbett explains that during the “auction” for reports it may lower the “prize” if a group coordinator is able to name a rapporteur who is recognized as a specialist on the issue. This is especially true when the report is of a technical nature, rather than political. Reports on certain subjects are therefore “referred to the same specialist again and again, often for very few points” (Corbett, 2007: 140 (quoted); Benedetto, 2005: 71). This confirms Krehbiel’s expectations stating that a small amount of reports may be allocated to recognized policy experts.

Within the group, national parties are in a predominant role – both in the selection of committee members and of rapporteurs – and they should be expected to defend their position in the allocation procedures. This is why, explain Mamadouh and Raunio, once the political groups have done their first distribution of positions, a second round of proportional allocation is initiated according to the size of national delegations within a group (Kreppel, 2002: 190). Their analysis of the formal appointment, however, leads Mamadouh and Raunio to conclude that “partisan interests drive the allocation process” (2003: 344).

Controlling individuals

Once the appointment has been done, what are the means for group leadership to constrain committee members? Party discipline implies means for the caucus to persuade MEPs to act in a way they otherwise would not have done. As Cox and McCubbins already have called to attention, discipline may include both sticks and carrots.

The carrots are essentially to be found in the appointment process which is controlled mainly by political groups. MEPs out of favor run the risk of not being appointed to new positions. Mamadouh and Raunio quote the *MEP Survey* from 2000 in which a large majority (65%) of the respondents considered most attractive positions controlled by caucuses, namely the chair of committee and EP President. Only 18% considered the leader

of the national party contingent to be the most attractive position. Last, 16% deemed the chair of the political group to be most attractive (2003: 339-40).

In their evaluation, the authors hang on to how most MEPs prefer official roles in the Parliament. This, they argue, points to the relative lack of power of the parliamentary groups. Moreover, the sticks belong to the national delegations and not to the group presidents: As is the case in ten out of 15 member states, party leaders may *not* remove MEPs from their committee, nor strip them of their committee tasks. Conversely, national parties are in absolute control over the lists allowing for reelection of MEPs to the Parliament.

Mamadouh and Raunio hold that national delegations restrict the power of party groups inside the European Parliament (2003: 340-41). The “impressive levels of group unity during voting” is, in their view, insignificant compared to party groups’ relative lack of “ability to sanction and to reward representatives” (2003: 341). This leads them to argue that “in the EP committees, members are fairly autonomous of their party groups, but not necessarily of their national party delegations” (2003: 338). The heterogeneity of European caucuses imply, in their view, a committee based legislature.

Nonetheless, most MEPs court positions for which they need the favors of the group. By these allocations, group leaders have quite a disciplinary tool – especially in the designation of rapporteurs. Reports are voted over in plenary under open rules, effectively giving the opportunity for the caucus to vote down propositions from unruly committee members (Hausemer, 2006: 513). This is in line with Cox’ and McCubbins’ conditions for partisan discipline. Mamadouh and Raunio consider, nevertheless, the caucus’ rights to be insufficient claiming the prevention of re-nomination would require the approval of the national delegation (2003: 340).

The subsequent study sees report allocation as a repetitive game in which parliamentary groups are able to impose credible sanctions on unruly group rapporteurs. As Simon Hix et al. point out:

“Party organization constitutes a division-of-labor contract where “back-bench” MEPs provide labor and capital (working out the position of the party and gathering information on the issues on which they become specialized), and European party

group “leaders” distribute committee and party offices, communicate party positions, and enforce the terms of the party organization contract.” (2006: 496)

Whereas committee assignments are done only twice per term, the assignment of reports is done all along the 5 years period. Draft allocations may therefore be considered a series of repeated games. If MEPs defect from the group contract during the first round, there is no reason for group leaders to give new reports in subsequent games. If aspirants to rapporteurships also aim for more reports after his reelection (by the blessings of the national party, certainly), the game is in fact indefinite.

In the respects of this particular study of report allocation, the caucus *does* have quite important disciplinary tools and should be expected to use them to improve party group position.

As revealed from this chapter, the EP has developed a small core of long-term parliamentarians. Despite high rates of turnover, previous literature generally assumes MEPs to seek reelection through committee work. The majority of authors also deem EP legislative organization to be set up to hold informational bargains. Most of the parliamentary work is indeed done in committees.

Yet, the formal organization of legislative tasks revolves around caucuses equipped with the disciplinary tools to keep control of policy making. This does not imply, however, that within the framework of EP legislative organization other interests are not accommodated. Rather, legislative work is distributed in a consensual manner.

4 Face Value – A Consensual Organization

Committee work is considered by all theories to be a means of reelection. To what degree, and in which policy domain MPs choose to engage are determined by his or her preferences as expressed through the ballot. How scholars choose to operationalize these interests vary nonetheless (4.1). Early studies of European legislative organization have tended to do descriptive analyses of the effects of geography and ideology, with only random references to theories of legislative organization. The results support a consensual view of report allocation (4.2).

4.1 Mediation of Preferences

Two empirical origins of preferences are distinguished in the American literature: The geographical and the party political. To what degree do they fit the situation on the Old Continent?

4.1.1 Preferences in the American Literature

A number of American scholars tend to presume legislators' preferences to be geographically based. The operationalization makes sense in the American federal system where legislators are closely linked to their constituency.

When Shepsle and Weingast furthermore assume as many policy dimensions (and thus policy preferences) as there are subjects to discuss, this gives no clues for empirical operationalizations. The partisan approach takes this one step further: Legislators may well group into common political parties on the account of common (exogenous) interests in a restricted number of policy dimensions, but when it comes to specific policy choices, their preferences may diverge. This is why caucuses delegate policy making on specific topics to a limited number of members who will defend the party line (Hausemer, 2006: 515). The informational game within the caucus – in combination with party discipline – ensures that once they have been elected, party members' interests are endogenous (i.e. defined within the caucus). In this view, party discipline replaces the closed rules favored by Krehbiel to

avoid majority cycling. Informational theories on their part deem preferences to be fixed and exogenous in one single policy dimension. This is why Krehbiel refuses to consider political parties as a significant level of organization (1991: 101-102). Why bother with parties when you can study individual interests directly?

Distributional and informational approaches are extensions of the American tradition of policy-blind theories, whereas the European literature assumes a limited number of policy-dimensions on which political parties are funded (Laver and Schofield, 1990).

All theories rely on the assumption that members of the European Parliament actually seek reelection, and that they consider committee work to be a suitable means to this end. As we have already seen this is a somewhat bald assumption in the EP. How close are MEPs to their constituency?

4.1.2 European Preferences

The electoral connection is noticeably weaker in the European Union than what is the case in the States. Herman Schmitt qualifies European elections as second-order, arguing that “when democracies rest on a stable, consolidated party system, elections are all but independent events” (2005: 650). The public debate is vivid all through the legislative period. The result is an electoral cycle: In the first part of the period in office, government surfs on a wave of optimism, then its popularity tends to decrease before it improves once more towards the end of the mandate. This is not the case in the European Parliament. The public does not generally keep informed of the whereabouts of Parliament, and elections tend to reveal a logic of government-opposition on the national level. (Schmitt, 2005: 650-652). How, then, will the electorate know if the MEP has procured them with the benefits they may reasonably expect? Do European legislators invest in committee work on these premises?

In a system of proportional representation and with large constituencies such as the European Parliament, the direct link to voters is considerably diluted: In the 2004 election 19 out of 25 member states had national constituencies. This is a natural corollary to the *raison d'être* of the European Parliament which is not to form a stable government majority, but rather to represent major currents of opinion within the Community. Since the last recalcitrant states (i.e. the UK and Ireland) abandoned the “first past the post” system in

1999, all member states have opted for a more or less proportional ballot (Corbett, 2007: 16-20).

Even though legislative work in the EP is structured by transnational groups, reelection is controlled by *national* parties running for election. The party decides which candidates are to head the lists, and the focus on individual politicians tends to be somewhat lower. The electoral campaign is directed nationally, and national parties decide which European political group their MEPs will be joining. (Hix et al., 2006: 496) National delegations are all the more important as European elections are second-order, meaning national policies are better known than whatever goods MEPs may have provided for their constituents. As their direct link with the constituency weakens, MEPs' dependency on national delegations increases. This should incite European parliamentarians to adopt the national party line.

Yet, transnational caucuses are quite present in Parliament: Much of the legislative work is organized to fit political groups. Groups are decisive to the choice of President, Vice-Presidents, and committee chairs. They choose rapporteurs, and organize the agenda and individual speaking time. MEPs are thus encouraged to "form themselves into groups according to their political affinities" (Rule 29). The criterion has been challenged in the past by the formation of a technical group of non-attached members. This was condemned by the Court, and although a new version of Rule 29-1 considers political affinity to be implicit in the act of formation, most groups do share a common ideological basis. (Corbett, 2007: 70-71)

This puts an extra strain on MEPs preferences. One has to satisfy a national party in order to be reelected, yet the arguments for reelections (i.e. the policies produced by the MEP) are provided within a system of transnational political groups.

"All this shows that an individual MEP is faced with tough choices. An active member may well gain greater influence within the Parliament, with prestigious rapporteurships, and so on, but lose touch with his or her own political base at home, and risk not being re-elected." (Corbett, 2007: 58)

From this discussion, it is evident that the geographical link assumed in the American literature coincides with the national provenance of MEPs, and thereby with their affiliation

to a national party. The second-order nature of EP elections makes MEPs more dependent on their national delegations and less inclined to invest in committee work in view of reelection. Legislative work is, on the other hand, organized by transnational caucuses who are formed along a policy dimension which does not necessarily concur with national concerns. How does the EP solve the tension between ideological representation and the geographical requirements of a supranational parliament in the making?

4.2 Bivariate preliminaries – Consensual Distribution

Previous research has shown the group of rapporteurs is roughly proportional to both the national and ideological composition of the chamber. (Bowler and Farrell, 1995; Mamadouh and Raunio, 2003; Benedetto, 2005; McElroy, 2006) This substantiates a European multiparty model in which rapporteurs are co-opted by their pairs in a highly consensual manner. Preliminary results thus agree with the general view that EP legislative organization follows an informational rationale (H_{b1}), although with a specific European twist.

4.2.1 Political Groups – Informational View with a European Twist

One of the fundamental prerequisites for the informational rationale is that key-legislators are chosen in a majority vote. Political questions take place in an essentially unidimensional space in which the median voter has a quasi-dictatorial decisional power. Two or more dimensions would, argues Krehbiel, lead to majority cycling.

According to William Riker (1962) alliances should be “minimal winning” majorities which satisfy two conditions: The coalition has absolute majority and it involves a minimal number of coalition partners. Subsequent theorists have added a third condition in which coalition partners also should share similar preferences so that coalitions are “minimal *connected* winning” majorities (Axelrod, 1970). The assumption is reasonable for the American two-party system in which one party detains more than half the seats, and therefore reaps highly disproportional benefits from its position.

In the European context researchers have expected a similar grand coalition between the only two parties who are able to muster more than 50% of the chamber votes (PES and

PPE). Along with this literature, high majority thresholds have prevented the usual left-right cleavage of party politics. Instead, the main policy dimension is assumed to be institutional. A “grand coalition” should therefore be formed in order for the EP to assert its position against the Council and the Commission (Bardi, 1994; Hix and Lord, 1997; Hix and Kreppel, 2003, Benedetto, 2005 quoted in Hausemer, 2006: 513).

Subsequent research has to some extent revalorized the traditional left-right politics in the EU. In their study of voting patterns of the European Parliament since the 1979 election, Hix, Noury and Roland identify two dimensions predicting roughly 90% of all votes in the assembly. The first dimension they classify as a left-right cleavage, whereas the second dimension corresponds more or less to a pro-anti European attitude. (Hix et al., 2006: 498-99). In this case, an alliance between socialists and conservatives along the main policy cleavage is unlikely.

In the European literature politics tend to be policy-driven, insisting more on the need for representation of different interests rather than accumulation of power. In the presence of several policy dimensions, majorities tend to change according to the policy issue at hand (Laver and Schofield, 1990). Patterns of recurrent cooperation will tend to form along the main political cleavage in the chamber. Yet, Parliament’s initial representative role does not require the discipline of a stable coalition. In its absence, no party group should reap highly disproportional benefits across allocations.

Report allocation in the EP is done on a subject basis. Policy space is limited to two major dimensions, and political groups are sufficiently disciplined and limited in number to avoid majority cycling during the adoption of drafts. The system of open rules satisfies the majoritarian prerequisite, yet the MEP responsible for the draft is allowed to negotiate deals with the partners of his own choice. As the game is repetitive, caucuses have little incentives to defect from their agreement. The proportional system of points which governs the allocation process can in fact be seen as an institutionalized response to limit lengthy discussions of who will handle dossiers. The process allows European caucuses to bid on policy issues which are salient to them (Hausemer, 2006); in effect, exchanging apples for oranges. Party group discipline and exchanges across policy areas replace Krehbiel’s expectation of closed rules.

The multiparty system may be seen as a permanent grand coalition which includes all groups. The cooperative mood facilitates the formation of over-sized majorities in institutional questions where MEPs all share interests. In case of conflict MEPs meet with national party colleagues in Council. Majorities which includes all political caucuses and nationalities give thereby an extra leverage to the institution. As the debate turns towards ideological questions, coalitions tend to become smaller.

In the multiparty context of the European Parliament the informational hypothesis_{b1} should thereby imply a proportional distribution of legislative drafts. From the data on reports drawn during the last 30 years, these expectations are largely corroborated. Correlation between party group size and representation among rapporteurs is, indeed, extremely high: Between 96% and 99% of the variation in the distribution of reports can be explained by the size of the caucus.

In their study of the 3rd and 4th elective period (1989-99) Mamadouh and Raunio also observe a high degree of correlation between group size and the acquired number of reports, though somewhat lower than this. Yet, they argue, “in general, the larger groups were over-represented (especially EPP) while the smaller ones were under-represented” (2003: 246). This is hardly the case in the extended study.

The EPP and the PES detain between 54% and 66% of the seats during all six periods. Yet, whereas the EPP is indeed significantly over-represented from the 3rd period on, the socialists are only once. The bivariate distribution of reports does not reflect any grand coalition. The allotment seems to the contrary to be essentially consensual.

Figure 4.1 shows the smaller party groups are indeed under-represented. No wonder, Hausemer remarks, as the smaller parties are to be found in the extremes of the left-right political spectrum (2006: 519). He thereby adopts a narrow conception of the informational hypothesis in which trusted legislators should not deviate much from the median voter at the floor.

Figure 4.1:

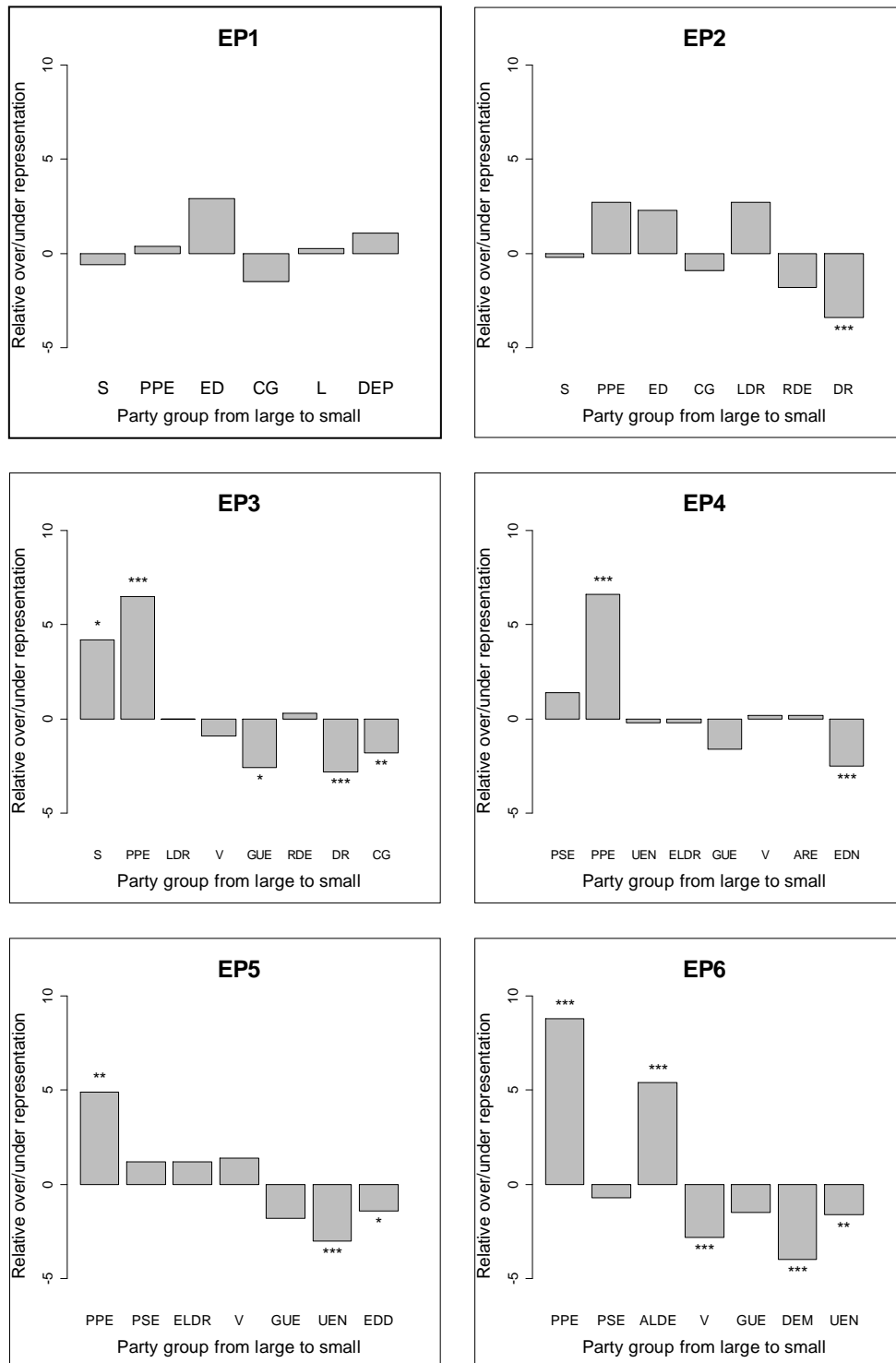


Figure 4.1: Relative Over/Under-Representation by Political Group

Zero units on the y-axis expresses perfect correlation between group size and reports allocated to the caucus. Political groups are ranged by size. If large parties had been over-represented and smaller parties had been under-represented, the bars would have followed a decreasing line.

Significance level: * 90%; ** 95%; *** 98%.

According to Hix, the left-right alliance did in fact peak in the 3rd parliament and has since diminished in impact. "There has been growing competition between the centre-left and the centre-right in the last few European Parliaments (Hix, 2009: 1-2). Hausemer (2006) thereby expects coalitions rather to form along the left-right axis in the EP. In his study of the first half of the 5th period, he finds that the PPE and ELDR groups obtain more than their share of salient reports. The tendency shown in figure 4.1 is similar and even more pronounced during the 6th legislature. These two groups, explains Hausemer, are politically close and should be expected to cooperate.

Without disentangling alternative coalition-formations in Parliament, it is evident from the bivariate distribution that differences in participation among groups have become more pronounced during the period. Whereas no single caucus obtained an over-representation of five points or more during the 1st and the 2nd parliaments, differences are quite pronounced during the 6th legislature, with a marked advantage of the centre-right. The discrepancies in representation witness differences in the strategies across party groups. The trend has moreover become more pronounced from the 3rd parliament on. This can be cut down to differences in individual strategies.

In the present distribution there is indeed an over-representation of the centre-right during the period, including the PPE and two medium sized liberal groups. The groups are politically close, and have had overlaps in memberships. In 1992 PPE merged with the European Democrats (ED). Up to this date there had been written 1035 reports, 26% of which were drawn by members of the EPP. Yet, their relative over-representation did not obtain statistical significance before the merger. On the other hand, ED members had written 9,5% of the total number of reports, making for a significant 2,9% over-representation of ED members.

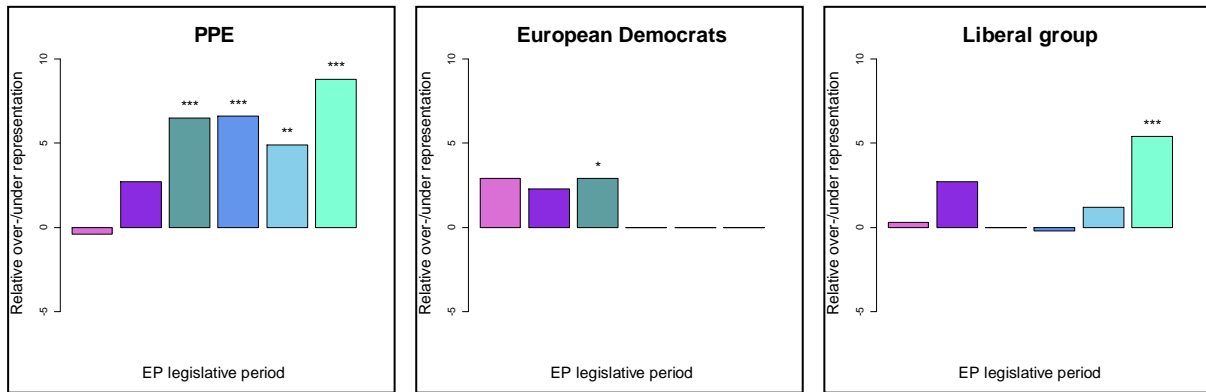


Figure 4.2: Transition of MEPs Between Conservative Groups:

The figure shows the relative over/under-representation of party groups among rapporteurs during the six legislative periods under consideration.

The PPE merged with the European Democrats on the 1st of May 1992, during the 3rd legislature. Similarly, the ALDE group of the 6th legislature (here represented in the ELDR barplot) was formed by MEPs from the previous ELDR group and a number of members of the PPE.

Significance level: * 90%; ** 95%; *** 98%.

A similar phenomenon takes place when the ALDE group is formed in 2004 from the previous ELDR and certain members from the EPP. It is interesting to note that rapporteurships from the liberal group are significantly over-represented only *after* this fusion.

Some individuals obtain more reports than others. Legislative representation of the group much depends on its capacity to put these members to use. The overall pattern of the data corroborates the informational predictions of hypothesis_{b1}. The group of key-legislators reflects the preferences of the chamber in such a way that the floor majority can approve of it.

What is more, as the procedures of appointment already indicated, MEPs non-affiliated to any political group have no group leader to defend their interests. They are not, it seems, included in the organizational consensus. Figure 4.3 shows how independent members are constantly under-represented among rapporteurs. Quite along the expectations of the partisan view; caucuses are central players in European parliamentary politics.

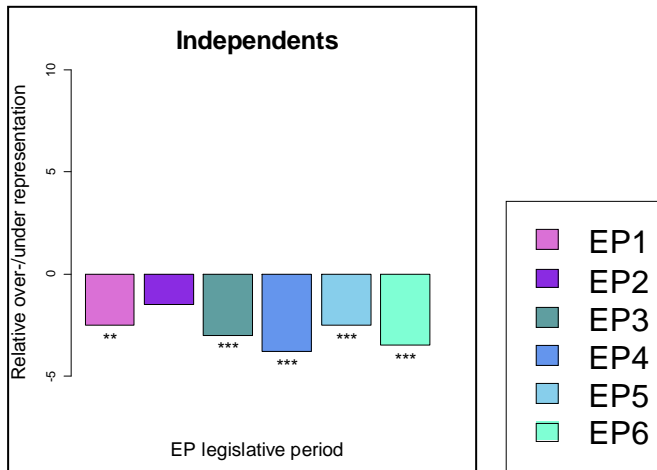


Figure 4.3 Representation of Independent MEPs:

The figure shows the relative over- and under-representation of MEPs who are independent of any groups during the six legislative periods under consideration. This includes non-attached members as well as members of technical groups.

Significance level: * 90%; ** 95%; *** 98%.

4.2.2 Member States – Leaders and Laggards

Even though the intergovernmental composition of the Council has justified comparisons with the upper house of a federal system (e.g. First Council President Konrad Adenauer quoted in Corbett, 2007: 204; Lijphart, 1999), observers have commented on the importance of a good spread in national representation also in Parliament, thus combining national concerns with the ideological representation of political groups (Corbett, 2007: 25-29).

From what is seen in previous research the distribution of reports should reflect a parallel power structure of national delegations. Mamadouh and Raunio find that “again, the shares of reports were broadly proportional to seat distribution.” This is sufficient for the researchers to conclude that “the principles guiding committee work are thus really no different from the internal work of the party groups, with the accommodation of national interests crucial in building group positions” (Mamadouh and Raunio, 2003: 347, 349).

Yet, the correlation is somewhat lower than for political groups. During the two periods studied by Mamadouh and Raunio 78% and 79% of the variation in nationality is explained by the size of the national delegation. The correlation is stronger in the beginning

and the end of the 30 years period considered here. During the 1st legislature 96% of the variation could be explained by the size of the national groups, reaching a low during the 1990-ies. But by 2004 the figure had increased back up to 93%.

This time, Mamadouh and Raunio do not expect the larger national groups to coordinate in such a way as to receive a greater amount of reports than their due. This is indeed not the case; Germany – holding the largest amount of seats – is over-represented. But this is hardly the case for the United Kingdom, France and Italy. To explain the residue, the authors decide rather to engage in a series of ad-hoc explanations (2003: 346-48).

Figure 4.4 represents the relative under- and over-representation of member states among rapporteurs. Certain states distinguish themselves clearly from the proportional prediction. France and Italy are largely under-represented, even though this changed during the 2004-09 period. Mamadouh and Raunio suggest three explanations for this deviance. There are fewer French and Italian MEPs in the larger groups than what their number of seats should indicate. As members of smaller groups or independents, it is not surprising French and Italian rapporteurs are rare (2003: 347).

The researchers then put forward two cultural factors for the low level of activity. First, they deem proficiency in English to be of importance. Relying on common prejudices, they explain the under-representation of Italian, French, Greek and Portuguese MEPs by their supposed communication problems. Conversely, the United Kingdom, Ireland and Netherlands are quoted as over-represented and proficient in English. (2003: 347) Considering the whole period of 30 years, this does not hold true. Neither the UK nor Ireland are over-represented over a longer period; remains only the least proficient of the three. Netherlands are generally and significantly more prone to write reports than what its size should indicate.

The third reason which advanced for the French and Italian idleness is a more academic one. Both countries have a long tradition of holding several offices simultaneously at the local, regional or national level (2003: 348). Previous to the 1979 election this was quite common among nominated MEPs (Corbett, 1998: 66). According to a study done by Dewoghélaëre et al., in 2003 43,7% of all French MEPs held at least one local office. Yet Italy (19,5%) ranges only fifth after Luxembourg (33,3%), Belgium (20%) and Ireland (20%), and

just before Austria, Finland and Sweden. None of these nationalities distinguish themselves as less inclined to write reports.

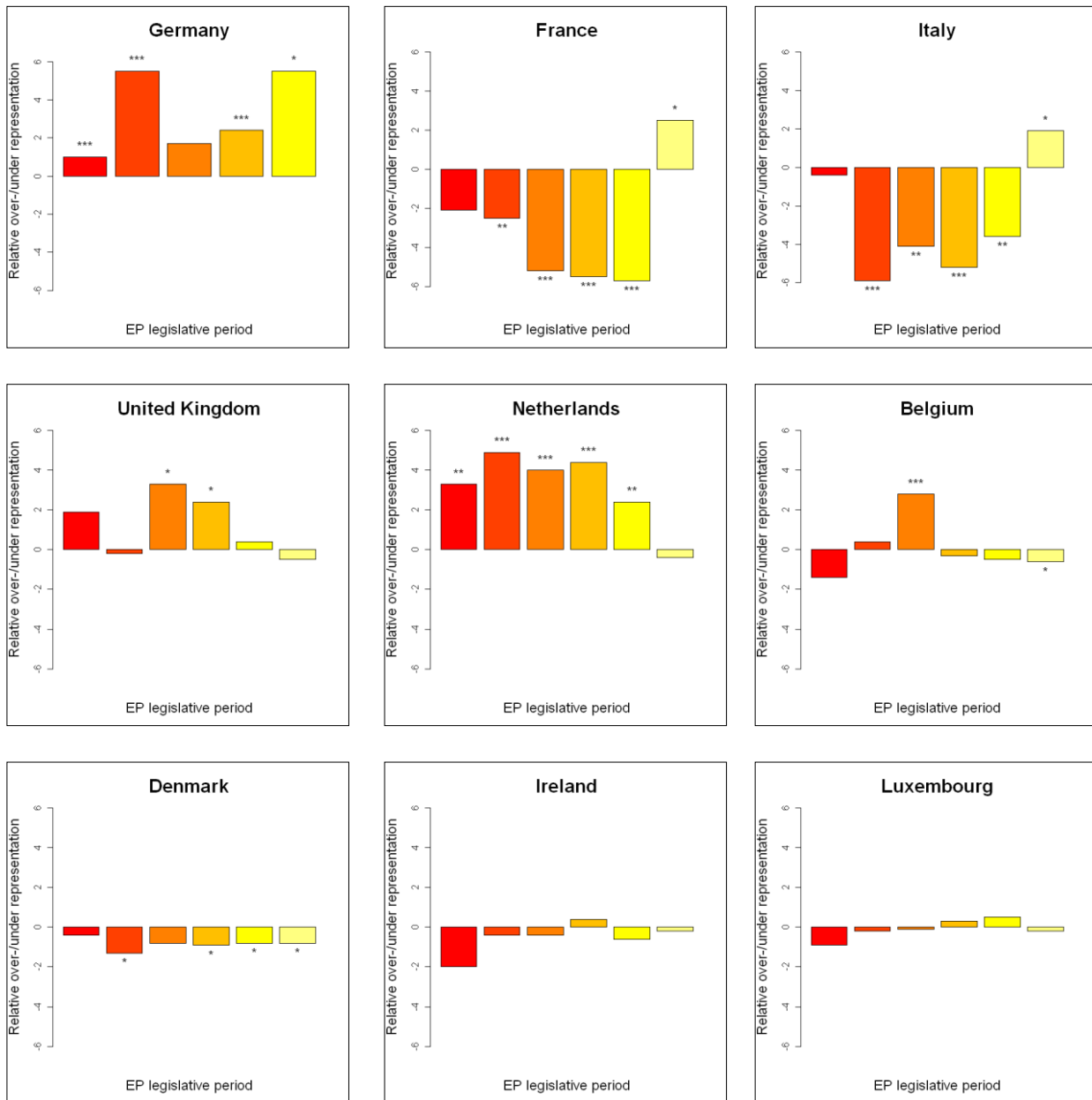


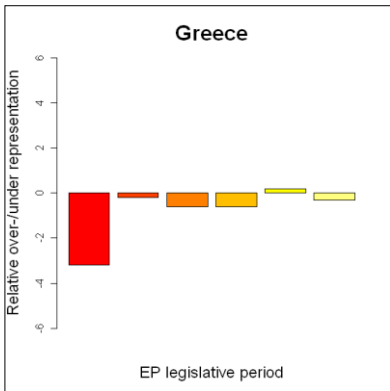
Figure 4.4: RelativeOver/Under-Representation of the Original 9 Member States from 1979

The figure shows a chronological presentation of relative over- or under-representation among rapporteurs during the six legislative periods in question. The 0 on the y-axis expresses perfect representation according to the size of the national delegation.

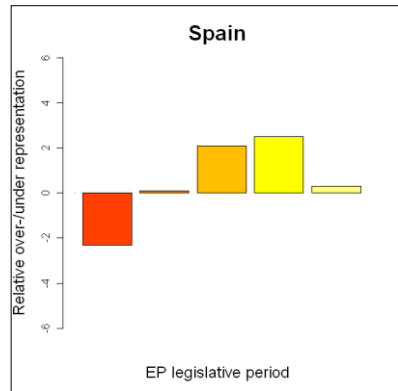
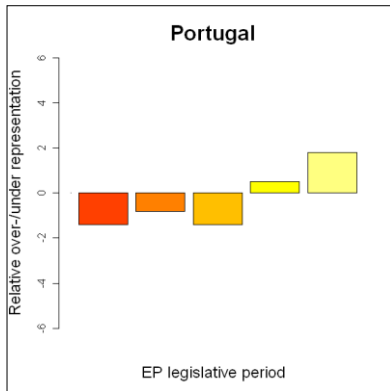
Significance level: * 90%; ** 95%; *** 98%.



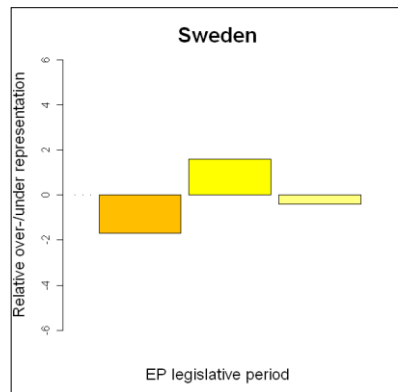
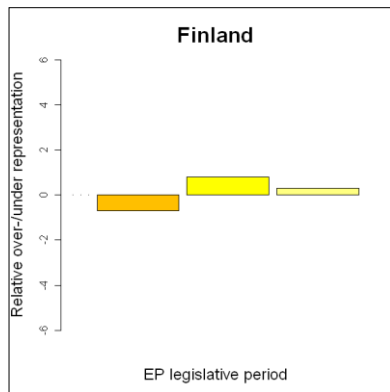
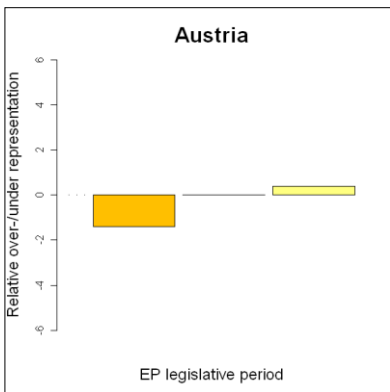
EP1:



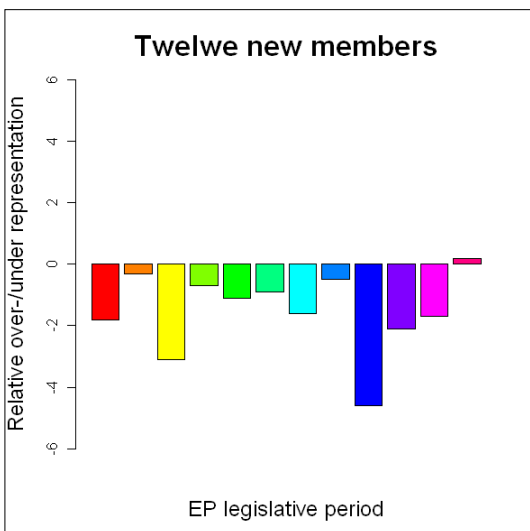
EP2:



EP4:



EP6:



- Bulgaria
- Cyprus
- Czech Republic
- Estonia
- Hungary
- Latvia
- Lithuania
- Malta
- Poland
- Romania
- Slovakia
- Slovenia

- EP1
- EP2
- EP3
- EP4
- EP5
- EP6

Figure 4.5: Relative Over/Under-Representation of New Member States

The figure shows a chronological representation of relative over- or under-representation among rapporteurs. Most nationalities start their membership under the bar of perfect representation.

Most new members entered the EP during a legislative period. The present figure expresses the proportion of reports presented *after* the accession of new member states.

Significance level: * 90%; ** 95%; *** 98%.

New member states tend to be less represented among key-legislators than what the size of their national contingent should imply. Considering figure 4.5, all of the 18 new national arrivals since the 1979 election (with the exception of Slovenia) start their first period below the bar of perfect proportionality. Is this really a question of nationality, or do all freshmen find it just as hard to acquire reports?

More generally, figures 4.4 and 4.5 indicate differences in strategies, just as was observed among transnational groups. The distributions certainly give weight to Mamadouh and Raunio's claim that national parties are important players in the EP system.

MEPs' direct link with their constituency is largely supplemented by national party delegations. These delegations are organized in transnational caucuses according to their common ideological preferences. Similarly, the two main policy dimensions in Parliament reflect concerns on the left-right axis and the national-supranational dynamic. In case of conflict MEPs are faced with hard choices which cannot be clearly predicted by theory.

Yet, instead of entering the stalemate where Mamadouh and Raunio have found themselves, I will in the following explore to what extent the European Parliament has organized itself according to general predictions of legislative theories; without deciding which of the transnational and national groups are the strongest. In most cases, preferences overlap; just as the majority of votes reflect the left-right dimension.

Preliminary results show legislative preparations are organized on an institutional level to accommodate not only a simple majority of the chamber, but all players. The ensuing report allocations are done by majority votes, however, and may be more competitive in nature. Their informational organization will be more thoroughly tested later. The informational hypothesis_{b1} is corroborated at the expense of the distributional approach

(H_{a1}); although with some modifications inspired both from the latter and the partisan approach.

The subsequent statistical analyses will further explore which strategies of selection are used during report allocations.

5 Operationalizations – Adopting A European View

Have the careful mediation between national delegations and caucuses prevented the EP from organizing itself in an effective manner? To what extent does a traditional model of legislative organization fit to the European reality?

To answer these questions I will trace the outlines of a theory on European legislative organization (5.1). To test the theory, I will then adapt previously defined hypotheses to the empirical requirements so as to distinguish indicators for the explanatory variables defined by theory (5.2).

5.1 What to Model?

5.1.1 Theoretical Outline – An Ordinary Assembly?

NOMINATE scores are constructed from voting patterns (“yes”/”no”/”abstain”) and have no immediate substantial meaning. To find one, Hix et al regress the distinguished policy dimensions on several political indicators.

They find that “the main observed dimension of voting in the European Parliament is the same as the main dimension of domestic politics in Europe.” What is more, “EU policies of national parties and national party participation in government are only significant *without* the European party group dummies. This means that once one controls for European party group positions these variables are not relevant explanatory factors on the first dimension.” This is also the case for member state dummies. (Hix et al., 2006: 502) Voting coherence in the EP among party groups, the authors claim, is actually stronger than in the US Congress.

Are Hix’ observations on voting patterns reflected in the legislative work prior to voting? If the EP has developed in the direction of an ordinary assembly, preparations of bills should be predictable by other variables than nationality. This is why the following study will concentrate on tendencies which are observed across party groups and national delegations.

Yet, as the preliminary discussion around career paths have already revealed, some European specificities have remained: Incentives to legislative work may only apply to parts of the MEPs.

The fundamental assumption in all three theories reviewed in this study implies that parliamentarians are eager to engage in committee work in order to ensure reelection. This might not hold true – both because some MEPs do not seek reelection and because their reelection does not necessarily depend upon the benefits provided in Parliament. Corbett (1998: 66-67), Scarrow (1997: 253-55) and Mamadouh and Raunio (2003: 346-48) have several suggestions as to why some MEPs do not engage in committee work. Yet, because this study set out to discern theoretical criteria for *rapporteur* selection, the two groups will be distinguished without actually seeking to do a complete theoretical analysis as to why some MEPs choose to opt out. Subsequent research would much enrich the perspective with a more thorough analysis of the characteristics of non-rapporteurs. Its approach would be the inverse of what is done presently and could readily be merged with the theory at hand.

As the review of existing literature on the subject has already revealed, most authors consider the EP to be the scene of an informational game. Notwithstanding the influence of national delegations, party groups are able to provide benefits for their members and organize their work effectively to defend their shared reputation. This results in an informational two-level game. The informational game will therefore be tested on two planes; both in the negotiations *between* groups and in the organization *within* groups:

The strict interpretation of the majority rule implies that the majority of the floor selects their representatives in committees. Bargains between caucuses should in the European context lead the group of rapporteurs to reflect the political composition of the floor; without a particularly favorable distribution for the chamber majority and at least some representation of all currents of thoughts. The informational game within party groups is subject to much the same underlying principles. Caucuses select their representatives on the account of the group, and wish therefore rapporteurs to act according to group recommendations. Expertise is crucial at both levels, and can at least to some extent be traded against representativeness. As Corbett has already pointed out, this is also true for exchanges across levels; recognized specialists may be valuable arguments during negotiations between party groups.

As the impact of Parliament increases, the criteria of rapporteur selection defined by the informational and partisan approaches should become harsher. The relative insistence on each criterion may however change according to the special demands of the task at hand. The theoretical outline should therefore become more pronounced throughout the 30 years under study. Similarly will the elite among rapporteurs be trusted with more reports in legislative procedures which grant increased influence of the chamber.

Through this outline, four elements will be operationalized and tested: Some indicators are chosen so as to measure the general *activity* of individual MEPs, considering this to be the best way to filter out Parliament's free-riders. The adverse informational and distributive expectations of *representativeness* of the floor (H_{a1-b1}) will be further tested. Third, are there signs of legislative *specialization* as predicted by the informational approach (H_{b2})? And last, do transnational party groups corroborate the *partisan* perspective?

Whereas previous researchers have been forced to draw general conclusions from small selections of data (e.g. Bowler and Farrell, 1995; Mamadouh and Raunio, 2003), the present study is limited by the validity of the chosen indicators rather than selection bias. Falsifying the study requires not a new selection of observations from the same period of time, but a new selection of variables. This is why following analyses will experiment with several alternative indicators.

5.1.2 The Response Variable – Measuring Influence

With the exception of potential free-riders, MEPs are expected to engage in a competition for increased influence. Whereas Hausemer (2006) expects the degree of salience of reports to be a function of the policy domain which allows MEPs to procure benefits for their particular electorate, this study models legislators who maximize influence by the accumulation of legislative drafts. The two approaches are potentially compatible.

The theoretical outline will be tested on two different response variables corresponding to two different measures of influence.

The Quantitative Accumulation of Draft Legislation

Draft legislation in the EP is most of the time expressed in reports. Legislative work – and thereby legislative influence – is much contained in the drawing and the adoption of reports. The simplest reasoning implies that the more reports you write the more influence you gain.

The 1st analysis will thereby concentrate on the quanta of reports acquired by MEPs during each legislature, considering all reports to be of equal value. The variable is deduced from an initial list of all reports presented during the legislature as well as the identity of the rapporteur. The response variable in the first statistical models expresses thus the number of reports written by each MEP during his period.

Increased Competition for the More Salient Reports

The powers of the European Parliament have changed over the years, and its influence varies greatly among policy domains. Certain procedures (related to given policy areas) give Parliament more leverage in relations with both the Council and the Commission than others. Such reports yield more power to the rapporteur and should thereby be more attractive. The second analysis thereby tests the same theoretical model on the distribution of reports considered to be salient. The response variable in the second analysis expresses the number of reports acquired under the most salient procedures available during the legislature.

Exactly what procedures are the most attractive vary as the EP has gained in influence: As is typical for any parliamentarian assembly, the EP has a reinforced position during budget proceedings. This has been the case during the entire period under study (Corbett, 2007: 248). The 1980 Isoglucose act also recognized a delaying veto to the EP during consultation. This was at the time a major break-through in the quest for parliamentarian influence (Corbett, 2007: 204-211). In the first legislature budget and consultation procedures are thereby considered salient compared to other reports.

The Single European Act (1986) improved Parliament's position further by introducing a second reading to consultation. The treaty also established the assent procedure in which the Council needs the consent of Parliament to proceed with legislation. (Corbett, 2007: 213, 230-32). In the second period reports allocated before July 1987 are considered salient if they are of a budgetary or consultational nature (as during the first period). For all reports allocated after July 1987 assent and cooperation procedures (as well

as budget resolutions, but not consultations) imply more parliamentary influence than usual.

From the third legislature on, reports allocated under assent, budget, cooperation and co-decision procedures are considered salient. The Maastricht Treaty (1992) introduced a third reading through the first version of the co-decision procedure. The following 10 years of academic studies were much concerned with the actual impact of this reform as well as its subsequent revisions. The possibility for the Council to over-rule Parliament and the requirement of qualified majorities in the final stage of a conflict were considered to be an obstacle to the authority of the elected body. (e.g. Crombez 1996, 2001; Moser 1996; Rittberger 2000; Steunenberg 1994; Tsebelis 1994, 2000, 2001, 2002) Yet, in Richard Corbett's opinion the status as a junior partner has not prevented Parliament from becoming a co-legislator to the Council:

“However, the impact of Parliament is not just a question of whether or not legislation is finally adopted. Both in quantitative and in qualitative terms, Parliament has made a significant difference to the shape of Community legislation, a difference that goes well beyond what could have been achieved under either the consultation or cooperation procedures. Co-decision has created a new dynamic within the legislative arena of the European Union.” (Corbett, 2007: 225-26)

The procedure has been revised several times since to improve Parliament's position and has with time largely supplemented the cooperation procedure. Its exact impact is not crucial, as the primary interest in the present is the *relative* power of the assembly in particular procedures. Yet, as the institution's position strengthens, the competition for reports should become crisper. Differences among rapporteurs should therefore become more pronounced from the 3rd period on.

From this definition, the distribution of salient reports among rapporteurs is quite similar to the general trend in report allocation. As was already seen in the introduction to this study, between 29% and 60% of all MEPs never drew any reports at all during the legislature (figure 1). Likewise, among those who acquired reports during the period, some 29% to 58% never prepared legislation which fell under the more important procedures.

5.1.3 Choice of Statistical Model

The selection of observations is as broad as it can get. Some studies of committee assignments have done a separate analysis of each committee in question, arguing that the jurisdiction and criteria of selection are too different to allow for any global trends to appear in an overall study. (McElroy, 2006; Yordanova, 2009) McElroy also chooses to do separate examination of the two large party groups, much for the same reasons. Opposing trends may mask each other and leave the researcher in confusion as to the actual principles of organization.

The present study expects there are general patterns of organization which may be explained by existing theories. Trends are sought *across* all party groups and committees, supposing some expectations are generally applicable. The data consequently include all MEPs. Subsequent research may then enlarge the perspective by more qualitative studies of the differences in committee organizations (in line with Yordanova, 2009) or differential strategies in legislative participation among party groups (as in Hausemer, 2006) or member states (as done by Mamadouh and Raunio, 2003).

The very point of this study is to distinguish what the elite of rapporteurs has in common. As an illustration, 60% of the MEPs in the 6th legislature wrote no reports at all, whereas 2% of the members accumulated 11 or more drafts. By consequence, data should be naturally overdispersed with a variance much greater than the mean frequency of reports.

Because the response variable in the following models is the number of reports written by each MEP, data points do not have any natural (upward) limit, and it is not based on a number of independent trials. An MEP who has once been deemed fit for the job is likely to be selected once again later on. Specialization increases for every report written. In these cases it is custom to use the Poisson regression model or one of its overdispersed generalizations such as negative binomial models (Gelman and Hill, 2007: 112).

The primary choice of model in this study is thus a negative binomial model with loglink. The negative binomial distribution expresses the discrete distribution of successes (non-acquisition of reports) obtained in a sequence of Bernoulli trials before a specified

number of failures (acquisition of reports) occurs. The model supplement ordinary count models when Poisson estimation is inappropriate due to overdispersion. Estimates in these cases would be over-confident. Standard errors are biased downward causing spuriously large z-values.

The robustness of the results in this rather simple model will then be tested against alternative models developed much for the same type of data distributions.

5.2 Explanatory variables – How to Capture a European Organization?

To draw a portrait of the EP as an ordinary assembly (and not as a supranational ad hoc construction), a number of indicators are derived and operationalized from the theoretical outline of European legislative organization.

5.2.1 Indicators of an Informational Two-Level Game

Whereas both the distributional and the informational approaches expect MEPs to specialize (hypothesis_{b2}), the informational theory requires the floor to keep control of legislative assignments so that expertise is acquired for the benefit of the chamber as a whole. The co-optation among colleagues implied in hypothesis_{b1} was already put to the test during the preliminary study of chapter 4: Report allocation is mainly dictated by a consensual view. In the present hypothesis_{b1} will be tested once more by an indicator of rapporteurs' distance from the floor median voter on the main policy dimension.

The same goes for the informational implications of a partisan perspective in which the caucus ensures party group representatives are loyal. Three indicators will then test hypothesis_{c1} which expresses the capacity of transnational groups to organize a second selection within the caucus to meet informational demands. Their existence is only justified if this provides more benefits for their members than what is the case for non-affiliated MEPs (hypothesis_{c2}).

Do MEPs Specialize? – Hypothesis_{b2}

Previous Terms Served – A Propriate Indicator of Expertise?

MEPs are expected to specialize in order to gain influence in the policy area of their choice.

The informational approach expects acknowledged policy experts to be selected by their pairs. This requires some familiarity with the European institution, both in order to obtain expertise, and to be known for having what is required. However, the relationship may not be linear: The longer you have stayed in Parliament may not imply more reports.

Incumbency is a means of measuring experience with the political craft as it is done in the EP. The “terms in the EP” variable measures how many *consecutive* periods the MEP has served in office since the 1979 election. 0 means the parliamentarian is a freshman, 1 indicates that he or she served at least some time in the previous period, and so on. In the primary fit the variable is factorized in order to assess the linearity of the relationship, putting 0 as a baseline for every other category to be compared to. For obvious reasons, the variable is not included in the analysis of the 1st period.

If there is a positive relationship between incumbency and amount of reports, the informational hypothesis_{b2} is upheld.

Incumbency in Committees – A Better Indicator of Specialization?

As national parties are in charge of the re-nomination of incumbent MEPs, the work done in committees may not necessarily be a major argument in the selection of candidates. French and Italian accumulation of mandates also indicates how national delegates are selected for considerations *outside* Parliament (i.e. their position in national politics). Staying in Parliament year in and year out might simply be a comfortable leisure which does not imply any ambitions within the EP.

Committees have defined jurisdictions and their number and type tend to be rather constant across periods. Specialization within specific policy domains may therefore be acquired through committee work. A second variable is thus included which expresses whether the MEP stayed on at least one of the same committees across two periods. The second fit will control committee incumbency against the continuous reelection to Parliament in order to assess both the degree and the nature of professionalization among the European elite.

The model on salient reports includes only rapporteurs. The definition of incumbency has therefore been further restricted to committee incumbent rapporteurs who wrote *at*

least one report during the last legislature. Non-rapporteurs from the previous legislature are not considered incumbent. The indicator therefore includes both an element of policy expertise and previous experience with the drawing of reports.

If committee incumbency is positively correlated to the accumulation of reports, the informational hypotheses_{b2} is further corroborated.

Whereas the first indicator of specialization simply expresses experience with the political game proper to the EP, committee incumbency also implies a certain specialization in a policy field. In view of the increasingly detailed nature of European legislation, policy specific expertise is more valuable to the institution than any random familiarity with the European political life. In a rational selection of rapporteurs committee experience should prevail over simple long-termers.

Are Rapporteurs Representative of Floor Preferences? – The Alternative Hypotheses_{a1-b1}

As the preliminary bivariate analysis has already shown, floor selection is done in two stages: At the institutional stage, political groups have agreed to a system of proportional representation. During the second stage report allocation becomes competitive; groups are free to exchange influence in an auction-like manner. In view of the system of open rules under which reports are voted at the floor level, the group of rapporteurs should reflect the political preferences of the median voter in Parliament.

Hix' NOMINATE scores on the first dimension measure individual preferences as expressed by voting patterns. The scores will be used to test the alternative hypothesis a_1 and b_1 . The original scale ranges from -1 to 1, with 0 as a central measure in the chamber and -1 and 1 as measures of voting extremists on the left-wing and right-wing respectively. In the present analyses the scale is recoded to absolute values so that distance is calculated from the floor median with 1 as the outer limit of political outliers when the floor median is set at 0.

If the floor majority has kept control over draft legislation (H_{b1}), the correlation between number of reports written and political preferences should be negative. If self-selection by outliers turns out to be dominant (H_{a1}), the relationship should turn out to be positive.

5.2.2 Partisan Expectations – Hypothesis_{c1-c2}

Three indicators test the efficacious informational organization of transnational parties (H_{c1}). Then, a particular variable on party group affiliation is constructed to test both the presence of a grand coalition across the main ideological cleavage and the importance of party group affiliation (H_{c2}).

Does Shared Reputation Lead to Division of Labor? – Hypothesis_{c1}

Are Rapporteurs Representative for the Voting Preferences of their Group?

In order for the informational and the partisan approach to be compatible, the faction of key legislators has to reflect not only the central tendency of the chamber, but also the central tendency of the group preferences. In the distributive rationale, self-selection among preference outliers in one party would provoke other parties to stack their quota with preference outliers in the other direction in order to pull the political consensus to a favorable outcome. The result would still be a group of key-legislators who reflect the floor median voter (Krehbiel, 1993: 243-245). The partisan perspective requires on the other hand party representatives to have preferences close to their caucus.

In order to test the partisan hypothesis_{c1}, the median NOMINATE score on the first dimension is calculated for each party group. Then the absolute distance between each MEPs individual score and the party group median is expressed. If the partisan hypothesis_{c1} holds and party group officials where to prefer loyal group members, the correlation should be negative. The further away the parliamentarians' voting scores are from the group mean, the smaller is the number of reports written.

Non-affiliated members are considered to be independent of all party political groups in this particular study. In the case of independent MEPs it makes no sense to speak of the distance from the group median. Their scores are therefore simply replaced by the mean score distance in all groups and have no substantial meaning.

There have been arguments that party group discipline prevents MEPs from expressing their true preferences during voting (e.g. McElroy, 2006: 19). This debate is interesting, yet it has been disregarded in the present, as selection should be done according to the loyalty observed by MEP behavior rather than their unexpressed opinions on the matter.

Considering the high turnover rates in the EP, political groups may have little information about the loyalty of new members. But, since report allocation is done throughout the entire period, the assumption that group leaders consider voting patterns when appointing their rapporteurs is somewhat less of an anachronism than what Yordanova had to assume for her study of committee assignments at the beginning of the 6th legislature. (Yordanova, 2009: 267)

Division of Labor in View of Expertise

As Hix, Noury and Roland already have pointed out; parliamentary groups are formed according to an idea of division of labor between group leaders and rank-and-file members. It is not necessarily the work provided by any *individual* MEP which is determinant for his or her electoral success. If selected rapporteurs are lithe negotiators and agile experts within their policy field they improve the collective gains of the group. Group leaders have thereby strong incentives to delegate tasks to the most competent members rather than using their position to acquire the most drafts themselves.

The variable “Group Leader” has simple rank and file members as a reference level, whereas the chair and vice-chair in each caucus are considered to be group leaders. If the group solidarity is sufficient for its members to consider a common (electoral) destiny, group leaders should in any case not write more reports than others.

New Member States – A Spurious Relationship?

MEPs from new member states are a special case of inexperienced rapporteurs. They do, *a fortiori*, start out with a handicap, as they have had less time to obtain European expertise. What is more, the successive enlargements of the EU have been done disregarding the EP electoral calendar so that MEPs from new member states have less time to acquire and write reports¹. When controlling for the previous experience of each individual MEP as well as the length of each mandate, do parliamentarians from new member states still obtain fewer drafts?

Since MEPs are organized in transnational groups rather than by national delegations, freshmen should in principle have the same possibilities to acquire information whatever

¹ The bivariate analysis did in fact control for this limited time, yet found new member states to be under-represented anyhow. What is new in the multivariate regression is the control for previous experience.

their national origin. Organization by national delegation would *a contrario* perpetrate the national handicap. Including a dummy for new member states is therefore a good test of caucuses' capacity to integrate MEPs into the transnational system.

The analysis of the 1st, 2nd, 4th and 6th periods include a binary variable coded as 1 if the individual comes from a member state which has joined the EC during the period, and otherwise coded as 0.²

Engaging in committee work requires time. The longer you stay in Parliament, the more reports you are able to write. As more MEPs pass through the European Parliament than in ordinary legislatures, it is necessary to control for length of tenure. All MEPs who have stayed less than three months in parliament are excluded from the regressions, assuming that the time is insufficient to acquire, write and present a report. A factorized variable "Years in Term" expresses furthermore the time measured in years during which the MEP have been in Parliament in the present legislature. The reference level consists of those who have stayed less than one year in office. Logically, the correlation of this control variable should be linear and positive.

If – after examination of all the above mentioned indicators – hypotheses_{b1} and _{c1} are corroborated, the expectation of a two-level informational game is substantiated.

What Group Affiliation Is Important? – Hypothesis_{c2}

By all accounts, politics in the EP are consensual, and as already seen, parliamentary group size matters greatly in the allocation of reports.

It is not the intention here to undertake an exhaustive analysis of coalition formations in the EP. The following statistical models do not include separate dummies for party groups as it has been done both in the study of committee assignments (Yordanova, 2009) and report allocation (Hausemer, 2006). Instead, a nominal variable has been constructed which expresses the type of party group to which the MEP is affiliated. The construction allows further testing of the results found during the bivariate analysis.

The position of the EP within the EC system depends on its capacity to distinguish exceptional circumstances in which it has to affirm its position as an institution, and the

² The 10 new member states which adhered to the union in May 2004 at the end of the 5th legislature are excluded from the analysis of this period.

more trivial situations in which ideological debates should prevail. The increased parliamentary leverage would be irrelevant if representation of the European electorate did not reflect the left-right concerns which dominate the bulk of political debates elsewhere. A grand coalition between PES and PPE would quell the ideological debate within the EP.

Another aspect of the same debate is the position of system-critics in the EP. Krehbiel emphasizes that “theories of legislative organization have distinctly different empirical implications at each of two observable levels of legislative choice: the *policies* enacted by legislatures and the *institutions* developed and employed by legislatures.” (Krehbiel, 1991: 7) Any legislative organization requires the support of its members. In the EP there is a current of system-critical representatives. Representatives from eurosceptic groups are scarcely likely to represent the institutional interests of most members of the floor. Does this hold even in a parliamentary debate which according to Hix is essentially encompassed by the left-right dimension? In a representative system which has come to maturity system-critics are mostly absorbed by, and expressed within, the system itself. As the main debate concerns policy rather than institutional questions, refusing to participate is equivalent to losing influence. Is this the case in the European Parliament?

Both the status of system-critics and the presence of a grand-coalition in the day-to-day workings of the assembly are in fact tests of the capacity of the EP to function as a hybrid.

Instead of constructing a variable with group affiliation as such, MEPs may in this analysis belong to one out of four categories: Large party groups (PES or PPE), medium sized party groups, independent members (technical groups included) or eurosceptic groups (including national conservatives and anti-European caucuses). Medium sized party groups are taken as the reference level in such a way that all other groups medium sized caucuses.

Yordanova did a similar test in her study of committee assignments, leading her to conclude that affiliation with a big party group does not affect committee assignments disproportionately” (2009: 274). In the present model, the test is somewhat stricter. Whereas Yordanova created dummies for PPE-ED and PES, the group variable has extracted the less active non-affiliated members and eurosceptic groups from the reference level. If

the theory of a grand coalition between PES and PPE holds, there should be a positive correlation between membership of a large party group and the number of reports acquired.

In the case of a Parliament still mainly occupied by its institutional position, eurosceptic groups should acquire fewer reports than medium sized caucuses. Last, the partisan perspective requires parliamentarian groups to “organize the legislature in a way that place its members in strategically advantageous positions”. (Krehbiel, 1993: 235) Independent members should therefore acquire fewer reports than medium sized groups (H_{c2}). If the correlation between independent MEPs and report allocation on the other hand proves to be negative, the partisan perspective must be rejected.

5.2.3 Distinguishing Workers from Free-Riders

As the preliminary study of reelection and career paths has already revealed, any study of the EP will have to distinguish who have decided to opt out of the competition for reports. Three indicators have been chosen to do the separation. Two of them are chosen for their empirical aptitude to capture the inclination to engage in legislative work. The third is more theoretically founded, and measures how MEPs without ambitions for a European career are less prone to take on extra work.

Other MEPs are, conversely, obliged to take on the chores no one else are willing to do.

Participation During Voting Sessions

The European Parliament has been plagued with a high degree of absenteeism. Votes are personal in the EP; there is no possibility of delegating this task to fellow parliamentarians. Common voting sessions are furthermore organized separately from debates. (Corbett, 2007: 174) Participation during voting is therefore relatively swift insofar as the debates are already closed. Considering voting to be a cost-effective investment in legislative work compared to the drawing of reports, it is hardly likely MEPs who find voting sessions tiresome should take on reports.

The variable “Participation” expresses participation rates during the same roll-call votes as the ideological NOMINATE scores are deduced from. The higher the score, the more

often the MEP has partaken in voting. The correlation between participation during roll-calls and further investment in legislative work should by way of consequence be highly positive.

The control variable already presented which expresses the years in office also give an indication of the short-term intentions of MEPs. The longer an MEP stays in office, the more should he be interested in gaining influence.

A Country Club for the Elders?

Remembering Corbett's claim that the EP sometimes work as a comfortable retirement home for national politicians (1998: 67), there might be a negative relationship between age and legislative activity. This does not imply, however, that younger MEPs necessarily pursue a European career. Whereas seniority in the committees of Parliament should be an advantage, age is not.

The variable "Aged 60+" expresses whether an MEP is 60 years or older (as of June the year of the election of the legislature). If the assembly is populated by retirees, there should be a negative correlation between the group of 60+ and the number of reports written.

Getting the Work Done – Committee Chairmen as the Default Rapporteur

The committee chair writes reports which are not wanted by any of the caucuses. Committee chairmen are representatives for the chamber as a whole, and can therefore be counted as reliable negotiators. The office as committee chair should as a result be positively related to acquisition of reports.

The variable "Committee Chair" uses simple rank-and-file members as a base-line. Any MEP who was a chairman or a vice-chairman some time during the legislature is coded as such.

The operationalizations done do not capture all the substantial characteristics of non-rapporteurs. They should be sufficient, however, to filter out noise masking true organizational trends.

6 The Statistical Model – Criteria for Influence

Once the indicators of a unified model are labeled, two models of report allocation will be fitted. The main model considers all reports to be of equal value, its response variable being the number of reports acquired during the legislature. (6.1.) A second model will then be fitted among only rapporteurs. Is the hierarchy continued for distribution of the most salient reports? (6.2.)

6.1 Number of Reports

Some of the variables defined above overlap, and may obscure true tendencies. Two fits with alternative indicators will therefore be done. A first model includes MEPs' distance from the floor and a dummy marking new member states as separate indicators, but contrary to the second fit it keeps large party groups (PES and PPE) in its reference level with medium sized groups. Similarly, this first fit only includes the number of consecutive periods in the EP, not their committee incumbency.

The final descriptive model includes committee incumbency as well as the type of party group MEPs belong to using only medium sized caucuses as a reference level, thereby testing for the presence of a grand coalition.

6.1.1 Presence of an Informational Two Level Game

From what is seen in these two models rapporteurs have some of the expertise typical for a professional political class. Majority rules and party group discipline ensure furthermore that this expertise is put to use for collective benefits, rather than the individual preferences of a few policy-outliers.

The EP Forms its own Elite – Hypothesis_{b2}

If the EP has the self confidence of a traditional legislature, it should trust its capacity to form and select its own elite of prime legislators. This should be reflected in the selection of rapporteurs with previous experience in the EP.

The group of long serving MEPs, however, does not seem to be more active than freshmen unless they also served on the same committee during the last legislature. The first fit of the model suggests an increasingly parabolic shaped correlation between the number of reelections to Parliament and report allocations, with a top point at the 2nd or 3rd term in office. However, when committee incumbency is controlled for, the impact of several terms in Parliament becomes insignificant. It is not the case that the longer you stay in the EP, the more reports you acquire.

Previous studies have been divided as to the importance of incumbency in the organization of legislative work: From their studies of reelection rates and committee incumbency both the studies of Bowler and Farrell (1995: 240) and Hausemer (2006: 522, 524) express their doubts of a European equivalent to the seniority rule in the US Congress.

In their studies of committee assignments in the 5th parliament and report allocation in the 6th parliament, MacElroy and Yordanova choose committee incumbency, rather than reelection to Parliament, as an indicator of specialization. In line with the present results both find a strong, significant and positive tendency (MacElroy, 2006: 16-17; Yordanova, 2009: 271). MacElroy also controls committee incumbency against years served in parliament and finds the years previously served in the EP to be *negatively* correlated to committee assignments. Committees have a quite distinguishable preference for specialized MEPs to simple EP veterans.

Keeping in mind the second order nature of European elections, results indicate how some MEPs stay in Parliament although they have no ambitions. Using reelection rates to indicate a core of long-term legislators is a blunt tool to assess the careerist ambitions of MEPs.

All in all; the most recent studies have revealed the importance of specialized experience in the EP. The present findings confirm this trend, and extend its conclusions to the allocation of reports. There are signs of an elite formed within the institution, and not simply imported elsewhere from for a short period of time.

Results from the regressions corroborate the informational hypothesis_{b2} that key-legislators tend to specialize in given policy domains in order to gain more influence. This is not to say, however, that the chamber allows for self-selection of policy-outliers (H_{a1}).

What Determines the Number of Reports MEPs Write?						
<i>Negative Binomial Model with Loglink</i>						
	EP1	EP2	EP3	EP4	EP5	EP6
(Intercept)	-2,513 ***	-1,770 **	-2,586 ***	-1,910 **	-4,133 ***	-2,634 ***
<i>Specialization:</i>						
1 Period in EP		0,109	0,114	0,140 †	0,173 †	0,390 **
2 Periods in EP			0,123	0,175	0,297 **	0,214
3 Periods in EP				0,154	0,160	0,739 **
4 Periods in EP					-0,191	0,369
5 Periods in EP						-0,713
New Member State	-0,975 *	0,145		-30,358		-0,502 **
<i>System Critics:</i>						
Distance from Floor	-0,736 **	-0,451 *	0,221	-0,037	-0,137	-1,818 *
Euroscptic	0,834 ***	-0,465 *	-0,169	0,376 **	-0,517 **	-0,652 *
<i>Partisan Expectations:</i>						
Non-affiliated	0,134	0,107	-0,241	-0,811 ***	-0,706 ***	-1,141 ***
Distance from Group	0,428	-0,273	-1,176 †	0,337	-0,644	-2,605
Group Leader	-0,378 ***	-0,303 *	-0,164	-0,176 †	-0,158	-0,681 *
<i>European Specificities:</i>						
Aged 60+	-0,243 †	-0,190	-0,399 ***	-0,288 **	-0,346 **	-0,076
Committee Chair	0,637 ***	0,913 ***	0,881 ***	0,511 ***	1,375 ***	2,333 ***
Committee Vice-Chair	0,218	0,477 ***	0,186	0,249 *	0,295 ***	1,093 ***
<i>Activity:</i>						
Participation	2,398 ***	2,153 ***	2,093 ***	1,497 ***	2,062 ***	1,318 **
1-2 Years in Term	1,762 ***	0,718	1,936 **	0,523	3,216 **	0,393
2-3 Years in Term	2,840 ***	1,592 **	2,301 ***	1,435 *	3,797 ***	0,995 †
3-4 Years in Term	2,248 ***	1,636 **	2,480 ***	1,853 **	3,777 ***	1,316 *
4-5 Years in Term	2,688 ***	1,914 ***	2,936 ***	2,134 ***	3,777 ***	1,905 ***
N. Observations	531	628	593	692	695	929
2x log-likelihood	-1880	-2251	-2560	-2379	-2776	-2194

Figure 6.1: First Fit – What Determines the Number of Reports MEPs Write?

The first fit includes a dummy expressing the presence of a new member state and a measure of ideological preferences.

The dependent variable is the number of legislative drafts obtained by MEPs during their stay in Parliament.

Significance level: † 90%; * 95%; ** 99%; *** 99,9%.

What Determines the Number of Reports MEPs Write?						
<i>Negative Binomial Model with Loglink</i>						
	EP1	EP2	EP3	EP4	EP5	EP6
(Intercept)	-2,577 ***	-1,626 **	-2,267 ***	-2,450 ***	-4,222 ***	-3,089 ***
<i>Specialization:</i>						
Periods in EP		-0,701	0,066	0,077	-0,052	-0,035
Incumbent Committee		0,786	0,106	0,224 †	0,299 **	0,585 ***
<i>System Critics:</i>						
Eurosceptic	0,834 ***	-0,465 *	-0,169	0,376 **	-0,517 **	-0,652 *
<i>Partisan Expectations:</i>						
Non-affiliated	-0,270	-0,297	-0,424 †	-0,920 ***	-1,306 ***	-1,042 **
Distance from Group	-1,405 †	-0,919 †	-1,549 *	-0,312	-0,621	-3,911 *
Group Leader	-0,605 ***	-0,329 *	-0,266 *	-0,239 *	-0,178	-0,650 *
<i>European Specificities:</i>						
Grand Coalition	-0,193 †	-0,414 ***	-0,384 **	-0,097	-0,030	0,159
Aged 60+	-0,195 †	-0,259 *	-0,401 ***	-0,354 **	-0,304 **	-0,065
Committee Chair	0,682 ***	0,996 ***	0,864 ***	0,525 ***	1,398 ***	2,284 ***
Committee Vice-Chair	0,078	0,462 ***	0,176	0,230 *	0,301 **	1,107 ***
<i>Activity:</i>						
Participation	2,183 ***	2,275 ***	2,376 ***	1,523 ***	2,186 ***	0,989 *
1-2 Years in Term	1,840 ***	0,796	1,922 **	0,054	3,248 **	0,526
2-3 Years in Term	2,641 ***	1,599 **	2,216 ***	1,614 **	3,774 ***	1,077 †
3-4 Years in Term	2,397 ***	1,668 **	2,426 ***	1,426 *	3,756 ***	1,648 **
4-5 Years in Term	2,858 ***	1,880 ***	2,855 ***	2,613 ***	3,694 ***	2,142 ***
N. Observations	532	628	593	692	696	929
2x log-likelihood	-1902	-2240	-2550	-2540	-2792	-2207

Figure 6.2: Final Fit – What Determines the Number of Reports MEPs Write?

The second model includes a variable expressing the type of caucus to which MEPs belong. The reference level is set to rank-and-file members of medium sized groups who are freshmen.

The dependent variable is the number of legislative drafts obtained by MEPs during their stay in Parliament.

Significance level: † 90%; * 95%; ** 99%; *** 99,9%

Rapporteurs are Selected by the Floor – Hypothesis_{a1-b1}

Implications derived from the majoritarian postulate are tested by three further indicators: As key-legislators are selected by the floor, the likelihood of obtaining legislative drafts decreases as the MEP moves away from the median voter of the assembly. The consensual distribution of reports excludes furthermore both grand coalitions and system-critics.

Rapporteurs are Representative of the Floor Preferences

NOMINATE estimations are done from data on votes without consideration of party group identities. Hix, Noury and Roland are nonetheless surprised by the coherence among political groups. To avoid interference from group measures, the first model keeps all caucuses in its reference level with the exception of non-affiliated members and eurosceptics.

Figure 6.1 shows how the likelihood of obtaining reports decreases as an MEP's preferences become more extreme. The tendency holds in five out of six parliamentary periods, attaining statistical significance thrice. The correlation is particularly strong during the last legislature, though it is impossible to tell whether this is the beginning of a more pronounced trend or simply circumstantial.

Previous studies of the EP have indicated that even though committee key legislators are not general preference outliers, they may have deviating preferences in the domains in which they choose to specialize (Keading, 2004). Gail McElroy's study of PPE and PES committee assignments finds nonetheless committees to be representative of the floor both in their general voting patterns as well as on issues falling under MEPs specific committee jurisdiction (McElroy, 2006: 18-25).

Present results show that rapporteurs are not general preference outliers on the main policy dimension. The distributive hypothesis_{a1} is rejected, indicating that the floor majority has kept control over the rapporteur selection. MEP's position in questions opposing the left to the right is relevant to his or her influence in Parliament.

A Consensual Distribution does not Allow for a Grand Coalition

The model shown in figure 6.2 bluntly rejects the expectation of a day-to-day grand coalition between the socialists and conservatives. The correlation is in fact constantly *negative* up to

the 2004 elections, with the three first periods attaining statistical significance. Mamadouh and Raunio's claim that there was such an alliance during the 3rd and the 4th periods finds no support in the present study (2003: 246); quite to the contrary.

As neither the center-left nor the centre-right have ever held more than 50% of the EP seats, there is little hope for the extremely disproportional results some American authors expect from the majority. Yet, subsequent studies of coalitions is central to conclude to what extent the EP does function as an ordinary political assembly.

The rejection of a grand coalition does however support Benedetto's (2005) claim that the allotment of reports is consensual, set out to accommodate the entire legislature, and not only the majority. Results from the first half of the periods even imply that large caucuses yield influence to smaller groups in order to accommodate their needs. The evolution from the 4th parliament to the present suggests a progress towards less cooperative organization, paralleling Hix et al.'s suggestion of an increased competition for reports on the left-right axis.

System Critics are Less Active, Yet not Banned

The majority principle also entails a certain notion of common preferences on an institutional level. In an established parliamentary system, however, the general debate is centered on policy rather than institutional questions. System-critical parliamentarians tend to be fewer and are confronted with the option of losing influence or participate in an organization they do not recognize, and thereby reinforcing its position.

Figure 6.2 reveals eurosceptic groups are under-represented among rapporteurs in four parliaments – and significantly so in two cases. In the 1st and 4th legislatures, on the other hand, euroscepticism is in fact *positively* and significantly correlated with the acquisition of reports.

As the general debate moves away from the institutional setting, eurosceptic participation within the EP should heighten – given that these groups wish to participate. There is no sign of such an evolution in table 6.2.

The second voting dimension which is associated with the degree of euroenthusiasm is cross-cutting the first axis. This implies that there is not necessarily a correlation between an MEP's preference on one dimension and his voting patterns on another dimension. Does

this mean that the EP strategically selects their rapporteurs in view of the policy dimension in question? Subsequent studies should test whether eurosceptics receive reports related to integrationist subjects as well, or if eurosceptics have chosen to eschew legislative work all together.

Generally speaking, eurosceptics are however less active than other groups during legislation. Just as institutional questions constitute the second most important dimension in Parliament, there is still a fraction of system critics within the EP who have not been integrated into the legislative process; either because its members have chosen to opt out or because their pairs do not trust them with the responsibility.

Caucuses Organize Expertise for their Common Good - Hypothesis_{c1}

Party Groups Prefer Loyal Members

Because information may be used strategically, European parliamentary groups should choose representatives who are loyal to the party political view.

Figure 6.2 indicates unruly group members obtain fewer reports than their more docile colleagues. The correlation between voting patterns and acquisition of reports is negative in all six periods and significantly so in five out of six legislatures. The results are in line with the partisan hypothesis that party leaders choose representatives who are likely to work on behalf of the caucus. In the particular case of the European Parliament, this certainly gives an indicator as to how well transnational political groups are able to filter out unmanageable members. The result stands in stark contrast to Mamadouh and Raunio's claim that European caucuses lack of disciplinary tools (2003: 341).

The propensity of group leaders to select loyal representatives might be more general than simply during report allocation: In her analysis of committee allotments McElroy also finds indications that "party representatives on a committee are not ideologically different from their co-partisans" (2006: 18). Hausemer also finds similar results in his study of report salience (2006: 523).

The strong results revealed in figure 6.2 corroborate the partisan hypothesis_{c1}, indicating the presence of a two-level informational game between transnational party groups and the chamber. Both are able to discard policy-outliers from the competition for reports.

Division of Labor Between Group Leaders and Rapporteurs

According to Cox and McCubbins party group members share a common reputation, and if transnational caucuses have developed a sense of mutual trust, legislative work should be done by division of labor. Group leaders should not profit from their position of power to obtain more tasks than they can handle, but rather delegate responsibilities to the most competent group members.

As observed in figure 6.2, the correlation between group leadership and report allocation is negative in all periods under consideration, and significantly so in five out of six cases. During the 30 years following the first direct elections to the EP, group chairmen and vice-chairmen wrote fewer reports than simple rank-and-file group members. The results do indeed corroborate the partisan expectations of an effectively organized system of caucuses equipped with disciplinary tools within the EP.

This conclusion stands in contrast with the ones drawn by Yordanova in her 2009 study of committee assignments: “Partisan loyalty and seniority do not increase the likelihood of assignment to powerful committee (...). Combined with the lack of overrepresentation of big party groups of national party delegations on powerful committees, it is hard to find any evidence for the partisan rationale. (Yordanova, 2009: 269, 274). The diverging conclusions are the result of different understandings of partisan expectations and hence its operationalizations. On one hand, Yordanova considers national party delegations and transnational party groups to be measures of the same phenomenon (i.e. political parties in general). It is hardly a good test to use national delegations to verify whether the *European* legislative organization follows the partisan rationale. On the other hand she expects large parties (whether national or European) to reap disproportional benefits *irrespective of their relative size* in Parliament. This is highly improbable – especially in a system of open rules.

Integration is Mainly done Through Transnational Groups

In his analysis of report allocation during the second half of the 4th legislature, Benedetto wanders if the deficient experience of the Finns and the Swedes who had only just become EU members may explain their lack of codecision reports. (2005: 82-84) His question is

relevant: Are members of national delegations from new member states less privileged than freshmen from other member states?

In the case of the 1995 enlargement, Benedetto might have been right. Whereas the bivariate study of report allocation indicated that all but one of the 18 states which have joined the EC since 1979 were under-represented among rapporteurs during their first term, this is not the case when controlling for lack of experience and the time spent in the EP. Nationality remains significant and negative in the 1st and the 6th period, while the remaining two periods lack completely of both tendency and significance. Only Greece joined the EC during the 1st period, and as already observed from figure 3.5, the Greek nation has not distinguished itself as ardent rapporteurs at any time during the last 28 years since its accession. As the number of terms previously served in the EP is calculated from the 1979 election in which the number of MEPs more than doubled, the 1st period does not contain any controls for the many freshmen. The 1st legislature is in this sense quite exceptional.

On the other hand, it is hardly surprising that the accession of 12 new members to the EU during the 6th period should have some impact. The massive arrival of new MEPs in the 6th parliament must have heightened the pressure on incumbent group members. Figure 6.2 expresses an increased importance of committee experience and high rates of reports distributed by default (i.e. by committee chairs and vice-chairs). New nationalities are an appropriate test for the capacity of caucuses to absorb and integrate new members. From the 5th to the 6th period rapporteur characteristics became more pronounced, despite the high correlation between new nationalities and report allocation.

Yet, the diminished impact of new member states across all periods illustrates the integrationist role of transnational party groups. Only when the number of new arrivals becomes too important does nationality reappear. There is no doubt as to the differences existing among nationalities in their inclination to invest in legislative work. Yet, national determinants are less obvious than what previous literature has indicated (e.g. Mamadouh and Raunio, 2003).

Non-Affiliated Members are Second Class Rapporteurs – Hypothesis_{c2}

The choice to submit to party group discipline would be hard to explain if the adherence to a group did not bring more advantages than what an individual MP could expect if he were on his own.

Some MEPs do however choose to stay independent of any caucus. This fraction writes fewer reports than their group affiliated comrades. The tendency was already observed in the bivariate analysis, and it holds throughout the multivariable analysis. As figure 6.2 indicates there is a general and negative correlation between group independence and reports written, attaining statistical significance during the last four periods. The trend has increased in force for the last 15 years; much in line with Hix et al.'s claim that the impact of institutional questions has dropped since the beginning of the 1990's. As the need for qualified majorities decreases, party politics along ideological lines may resume.

Technical groups were created in order to mend the disadvantage of independent members, as most of Parliament's work is organized by caucuses. Yet, the inclusion of such groups in the measure of non-affiliated members does not prevent a negative correlation. This further illustrates the informational role of transnational *political* groups and substantiates the central role of caucuses.

6.1.2 European Specificities

Quite a number of MEPs stay in Parliament without showing interest in its legislation. The amplitude of the indicators on activity illustrates how important the phenomenon is. Unattractive tasks have therefore to be assumed by other MEPs.

Participation

The participation indicator captures well the stark differences between those who contribute to EU legislation and European free-riders. The positive and constantly significant correlation between participation in roll-calls and preparing bills is indeed impressive. Adding this variable during model fitting caused the plots of predicted values against observed values to go from badly fitted bell-shaped barplots to well-behaved diagrams, thus emphasizing the predictive value of activity rates.

As the factorization of the "Years in Term" variable in both figure 6.1 and 6.2 indicates, there is indeed a linear and positive correlation between reports written and

length of tenure. This is hardly surprising, yet it is important to remember that most MEPs sit through their entire mandate. This control further articulates the difference among short-termers and those with medium-term incentives to engage in legislative chores.

The measure of legislative activity reveals the chasm between those among the MEPs who do not seek influence to build a European career, and those who do. The remaining group of parliamentarians fits rather well into the hypotheses derived from classic theories on legislative organization.

The Green Fields of Grassing Party Horses – On Its Way Out?

MEPs older than 60 years write fewer reports than their younger counterparts. This tendency has been surprisingly constant throughout the years and is statistically significant in all but the last legislature.

The result is quite in contrast with previous studies of committee assignments: Neither Bowler and Farrell (1995: 232, 238) nor McElroy (2006: 16) find a correlation between age and committee seats. Both analyses express the age in years, expecting a linear relationship. Yordanova, on the other hand, has chosen a more sophisticated measure, but finds no significant correlation between MEPs aged in the top quartile and committee seats. Her findings are quite in line with the present results for the 6th legislature.

The results in figure 6.2 give, contrary to previous research, credit to Burgess' allegation that to some the EP is a final station for fading political careers. The question is whether the disappearance of the trend in the 6th Parliament marks the end of a tradition?

Increasing Competition?

The default rapporteur is the committee chairman. He or she has to assume the responsibility for the preparation of any proposition unwanted by the party groups. Hausemer has already found that both committee chairs and vice-chairs receive reports which are less salient to them than to their parliamentary colleagues (2006: 523).

Looking at figure 6.2, it is evident that this solution has been used throughout the whole period. The position of committee chair is strongly, positively and significantly correlated with the acquisition of reports during all six periods. Vice-chairs also obtain more reports than their due, and their over-representation is statistically significant from 1984 and

on. Both tendencies reach a peak during the last legislature; probably due to the massive arrival of inexperienced MEPs.

From the general distribution of reports it is apparent that a number of MEPs do not compete for reports; their behavior is not predictable by theory. On the other hand, MEPs with legislative ambitions show patterns recognizable by traditional theories: They tend to specialize, and their activities are monitored by both the majority in the chamber and transnational caucuses.

As new powers have been admitted to the European Parliament through the introduction of new legislative procedures, the difference in salience between reports has become more pronounced. Does the competition increase when stakes are high?

6.2 Salient Reports – Pushing the Selection Further

Parliament's weight varies across policy areas, although the exact impact of procedures has been subject for debate. The following study considers individual MEPs to maximize influence through the most influential procedures. In order for a competitive allocation to take place, it is necessary that MEPs *perceive* certain procedures to be more salient, and are thus willing to strive to obtain them. The best way to account for this may be the experience of Richard Corbett, himself a long-term MEP.

6.2.1 The Increased Necessity of an Agile Rapporteur

The extension of Parliament's role by new procedures has implied a significant increase in the possible stages of legislative work. By 2004 co-decision was considered to be the default procedure covering more than half of the European legislation, each draft implying 3 possible readings. This has called for a rationalization in Parliament's legislative work:

“The sheer volume of co-decision procedures after Amsterdam means that both institutions have an important interest in not allowing all disagreements to spill over into the conciliation process. This realization has led to much more intensive contact between the institutions earlier in the procedure.” (Corbett, 2007: 216)

The economy of an early agreement was also the primary goal when the Amsterdam treaty made it possible to reach an agreement already after the first reading. In the 5th parliament only 22% of all drafts went to conciliation. The first half of the 6th parliament showed the trend to be increasing; only 6% of all dossiers were concluded in conciliation (Corbett, 2007: 216).

Conciliation casts, in the words of Corbett, “a backward shadow over the whole legislative procedure”. This was also the reason why the first version of the co-decision procedure was criticized. As Parliament’s possibility to overturn Council propositions improves, the latter should become more cooperative. To Corbett this process started early: “Even in the early years of co-decision, some highly sensitive issues did not reach conciliation but the Parliament was still able to have an impact” (2007: 227). From these accounts, the improved authority of a parliamentary veto should reflect upon the rapporteur who leads negotiations. Some legislative drafts should thereby be more salient than others. The present study has extended this logic to the evaluation of all procedures.

Contact between institutions has become frequent and more informal. The rapporteur frequently becomes a spokesman for Parliament even before the formalities for conciliation are met. “Trialogues are taking place at all stages of the procedure, and often even before the Parliament’s rapporteur or the Council Presidency have any formal mandate” (Corbett, 2007: 228).

Parliament has in time won self-confidence and left its oppositional role to become more cooperative. In Corbett’s experience, when conciliation becomes unavoidable, both parties are ready to make concessions, but to a prize which is not set before negotiations start (2007: 229). In order to issue threats and gain leverage with Council, the rapporteur needs extensive knowledge of his support in Parliament. What are his possibilities of obtaining the required majorities in case of conflict?

This support has furthermore to be known to the Council so that both his threats and his promises are credible. Any lack of confidence may result in a higher price paid by Parliament, or worse, no agreement at all. Corbett quotes several examples where Parliament has succeeded in winning over the sufficient number of Council delegates by allowing for side-deals on less central demands (2007: 229). This is only possible for a

parliamentarian delegation with detailed knowledge of the specific policy area in question, as well as known to have the confidence of the floor.

When the rapporteur returns to the plenary with the outlines of an accord, he will need the confidence of the assembly that he has obtained the best possible deal. Starting a trialogue without any formal mandate requires *a fortiori* a commendable reputation as a choice policy expert.

MEPs should thus obtain salient reports only after a harsh selection. A hierarchy among rapporteurs should form in which the criteria distinguished in the previous analysis are further sharpened. Rapporteurs of salient reports should be more experienced than their counterparts. Because of the high stakes, Parliament would rather confide sensitive dossiers to well-known political craftsmen than to new-comers. This should imply a continuous use of committee chairmen in cases where no other reliable option is at hand. They should be representative of the floor preferences, as well as their own caucus.

In short, rapporteurs to salient procedures should be careerist European politicians who are well-known by their pairs and are more active than most during legislative preparations.

6.2.2 Hierarchy Among Rapporteurs

The statistical analysis in figure 6.3 is done among MEPs who have obtained at least one report during their mandate. Some of the criteria distinguished during the selection of rapporteurs are further sharpened in the choices for the more influential procedures. Because of the lower number of observations, some of the control variables have been removed. Their colinearity would have masked true tendencies.

Different Informational Priorities

The selection still follows the informational repertoire of specialization and representativeness. When the more influent rapporteurs are picked out, their degree of specialization is higher than for other drafts. Their degree of loyalty remains, however, much the same as for all key-legislators.

What Determines the Number of Salient Reports MEPs Write?						
<i>Negative Binomial Model with Loglink</i>						
	EP1	EP2	EP3	EP4	EP5	EP6
(Intercept)	-0,109	-0,469 †	-0,219	-0,781 *	-1,413 ***	-0,185
<i>Specialization:</i>						
Incumbent Committee	-	0,020	0,475 *	0,563 ***	0,269 †	0,536 ***
<i>Representativeness</i>						
Distance from Floor	-0,389	-0,152	-0,321	0,809 †	0,310	-1,379 †
<i>Partisan Expectations:</i>						
Distance from Group	0,828	-1,740	-4,767 †	1,082	-0,598	0,175
Group Leader	0,160	-0,408	-0,535 †	-0,169	-0,008	-0,604 †
<i>Activity:</i>						
Committee Chair	0,443 †	0,720 *	1,205 ***	-0,336	1,287 ***	1,210 ***
Committee Vice-Chair	0,211	0,159	0,016	-0,026	0,378 †	0,098
Participation	1,658 ***	1,788 ***	1,304 **	0,440	1,674 ***	0,372
N. Observations	336	395	424	471	514	371

Figure 6.3: What Determines the Number of Salient Reports MEPs Write?

The model includes all MEPs who have obtained at least one legislative draft during their term. The response variable expresses the number of *salient* reports accumulated by rapporteurs. The table shows how some rapporteur characteristics become more pronounced as the stakes increase.

Committee incumbency indicates in this table MEPs who wrote at least one report in the same committee during last legislature.

Significance level: † 90%; * 95%; ** 99%; *** 99,9%

Higher Degree of Specialization for Salient Reports – Hypothesis_{b2}

Specialization as measured by committee incumbency is positively correlated to acquisitions of salient reports in all legislatures, and significantly so from the 3rd period on. This is much similar to the trends found in the general selection of key-legislators (during which committee incumbency becomes significant from the 4th period), and may simply correspond to the progressive formation of an EP political class after 1979.

Yet, the neat tendencies also match the introduction of the co-decision procedure. Those responsible for the more consequential reports have on average stayed longer on the

committee in question than most rapporteurs. They have thereby acquired more knowledge both of the policy domain and its recent history in the EP than what is generally the case even among rapporteurs. Because of the detailed negotiations in which the rapporteur risks to find himself, policy expertise is all the more important than what is needed in less salient procedures. Committee incumbent rapporteurs have experience both from drawing previous reports and from the policy area in question. He might have acquired some policy network from previous activities, and he is possibly known to the Council representatives.

The informational hypothesis_{b2} is in fact expressed by an ever stricter requirement of expertise as Parliament gains in power. This, it seems, is true both over time and across policy domains.

Not More Representative than Most Rapporteurs – Hypotheses_{a1-b1}

The trends found in the voting records of elite rapporteurs are more blurry, however. The ideological distance from the floor median comes out with a negative correlation in four out of six cases. Yet, it obtains statistical significance only once during the very last period. Conversely, distance from floor preferences was actually positively correlated with acquisition of reports during the 4th and the 5th period, and significantly so once.

In the analysis of report allocation among all MEPs correlations were positive during the 3rd and the 4th legislatures. The trends do, however, remain similar both in the hierarchy between rapporteurs and non-rapporteurs, as well as the hierarchy among rapporteurs themselves. Combining the result from the two regressions points towards at least somewhat stricter selection in policy areas where the EP has increased influence.

It is hard to distinguish a similar pattern across time, however. The correlation between floor distance and report allocation is high and negative in both analyses of the 6th period, yet not necessarily in the 3rd, 4th and 5th. Is this the beginning of a trend or simply a result of the 2004 and 2007 EU enlargements?

Consistent Partisan Selection – Hypothesis_{c1}

Party group voting discipline among those who are trusted with salient procedures is not consistently better than what is average among rapporteurs. During the 1st, 4th and the 6th period influential reports were trusted to MEPs with no better voting records than ordinary

rapporteurs. Caucuses in the 2nd, 3rd and 5th legislatures showed on the other hand preference for the more loyal group members. The consistently high and significant correlations during the previous analyses in figure 6.1 and 6.2 indicate, however, that party group selection is done in a strict fashion for *all* rapporteurs, whatever their influence. The selection is simply not consistently harsher yet for salient reports.

Yordanova finds much the same trend in the selection to six out of eleven influential committees during the 6th parliament. Her results fail to attain statistical significance, however. This leads her to conclude that “party group loyalty in voting does not explain assignment to the powerful EP committees.” (2009: 271, 274) Results from the present study might elucidate these findings by illustrating how party group selection is done on an early stage.

The more influent procedures require possibly more time than single readings, and should be distributed to MEPs who do not have other time-consuming responsibilities in the EP. From the second period and on, the position “group chair or vice-chair” is negatively correlated with the acquisition of salient reports. Those among transnational party group leaders who take on reports tend to obtain less salient drafts than their rank-and-file comrades. This is quite in line with a division of labor among group members in which individuals should devote their time on specialized tasks.

Insistence on Experience and Participation

Committee Chair Preferred to Committee Vice-Chairs.

As revealed from figure 6.3 committee chairmen continue to take on influent legislative work. The correlation is continuously positive and statistically significant, with the exception of the 4th parliament. This parallels the high rate of dossiers accumulated in the general distribution of reports. A disproportional number of these are in fact drafts falling under salient procedures.

The role of the committee vice-chairs seem to be somewhat different. Whereas the coefficients for vice-chairmen remain positive in all but the 4th period, none reaches statistical significance. Cross-examination of the two tables 6.2 and 6.3 suggests a division of labor between the committee chair and his vice-chairmen. Committee vice-chairs do take on

more reports than their share, but few of these reports are considered salient. The more influential drafts are in fact assumed by the chair himself.

Parliament prefers the more experienced politicians for the more challenging tasks.

Time-consuming Tasks for the Most Active Legislators

Participation rates during roll-calls are higher still among rapporteurs for the salient legislation. Figure 6.3 contains solely positive correlations between participation and the acquisition of attractive reports, with four periods attaining statistical significance. Salient dossiers also imply a possible increase in the work-load compared to legislative drafts subject to fewer readings.

Clearly, there is a large and continuous difference in the activity rates of MEPs: Most rapporteurs engage in more legislative work (other than drawing reports) than the average in the chamber. Yet, among rapporteurs there are also differences. The high coefficients of participation in figure 6.3 emphasize what was already observed during the analysis of all MEPs: The inclination to engage in legislative work in Parliament is extremely fluctuant. Only the most active among the MEPs obtain salient legislative drafts.

From the analysis of salient reports we can detect a continuous hierarchy among legislators. Representativeness both of the floor and of the political group is ensured among all MEPs who are trusted with a legislative draft, and only marginally better among the more influential parliamentarians. Demands for specialization and experience, on the other hand, increase with the impact of the draft legislation. When no other rapporteur is available, the committee chair- or vice-chairman is called upon, yet for the more important drafts, the senior representative is preferred.

In short, competition increases as Parliament gains in impact, both over time and across policy domains.

7 Does the Model Fit?

How well does the model fit the actual data? Significance levels especially in the first study of report allocations are quite impressive, much due to the exceptional extent of the data. Do the trends reflect any substantial organization of the EP, or are they simply secondary effects rendered visible by the right choice of statistical techniques and high quanta?

There are many ways to test the choice of models. The study has opted for three straightforward methods: The ultimate test of any fit should be the extent to which the model is able to predict a similar outcome as what is in fact observed (6.1). To what extent have the data been forced into the model by the manipulation of missing and unusual data (6.2)? Third, do any alternative statistical models yield substantially different results (6.3)?

7.1 Valid Predictions – Fitted Values vs. True Values

The intent of the present study has not been to predict the precise outcome of report distribution by adding up an unlimited number of indicators. The objective has rather been to reveal some of the organizational aspects of the European Parliament by a careful selection of indicators. The predicted outcomes of the model remain nonetheless an important means to assess whether major predictive aspects have been left out. This is all the more relevant as the study is done not on a selection of observations, but on all data. The true values of the response variable are in fact known and can be compared to the predictions of the model.

7.1.1 The Competition for Reports – Changing Importance of the Dependent Variables

Figure 7.1 expresses the predicted frequencies of reports written in all six legislative periods in the final fit of the negative binomial model from table 6.2. The bar plot is superposed by dots signifying the observed values of report allocation. As the bars convey rather intuitively, the model reproduces the distribution of reports pretty well. Both curves have generally speaking about the same form.

As was commented upon in the introduction to this study, the true distribution of reports is extremely long tailed. Some MEPs acquire a highly disproportional number of

reports. This is only to some extent captured by the model. Yet, the predictions of the 2nd, 3rd, 5th and 6th parliament include outcomes up to 15-20 reports by MEP. European legislative work is partially done by a few super-rapporteurs taking on an almost endless number of drafts.

Frequencies of the central values tend to be fitted higher than what is warranted for. This is especially the case for the 4th parliament, whereas the two first and the last legislatures are quite well behaved.

On the other hand, the report distribution being highly skewed, the model underestimates the high number of non-rapporteurs during all six periods. Until the indicators of legislative activity were integrated into the fit, the plot of predicted values tended towards a Gaussian distribution. In particular the coefficient of participation during roll-calls changed the curve of predicted values quite radically for the first four parliaments. The frequency of zero reports was up to this point extremely low, whereas one, two or three report acquisitions were predicted to be quite recurrent. Only the plot of the 6th parliament looked much like it does presently. This emphasizes the importance of a preliminary distinction between those MEPs who actually participate in the quest for legislative tasks, and those who do not. The notable fits of the 1st, 2nd and 3rd parliamentary periods are mainly effects of the measures of activity.

The trends which cause the fit in the 6th legislature are somewhat different, however. They preexisted to the integration of activity, and are to be found among the indicators derived from the informational and partisan theories. Typically, the participation coefficient lowered drastically after the 2004 election. If theories of legislative organization are able to predict well the distribution of committee work without preliminary distinctions, does this imply that the European Parliament is about to come to maturity?

Yet, the split between an overwhelming majority of MEPs who never engage in committee work, and those who draw a large number of drafts is starker than ever. Whereas 566 MEPs did not write any reports at all during the 6th legislature, Paolo Costa found the time to draw 50. Is this the consequence of a harder competition to obtain reports with a consequent higher degree of specialization?

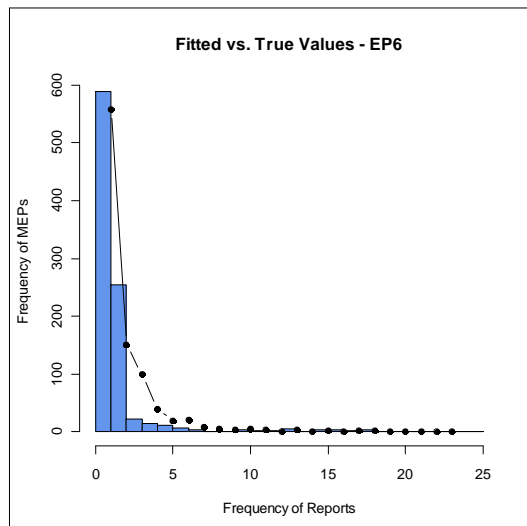
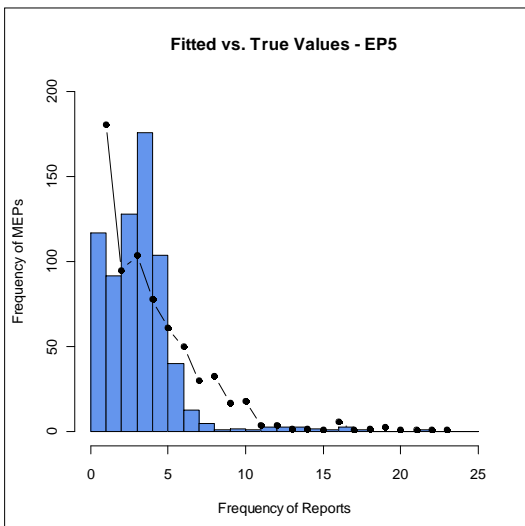
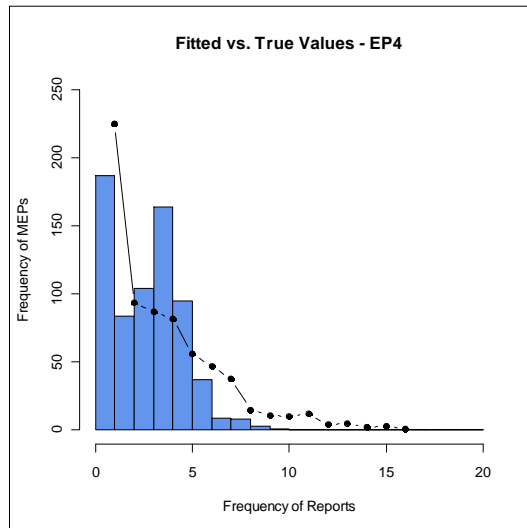
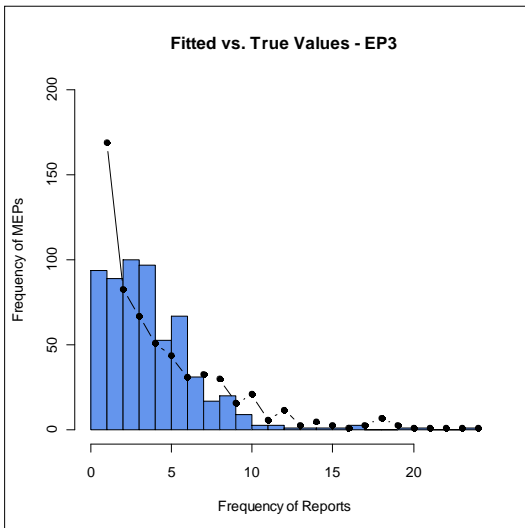
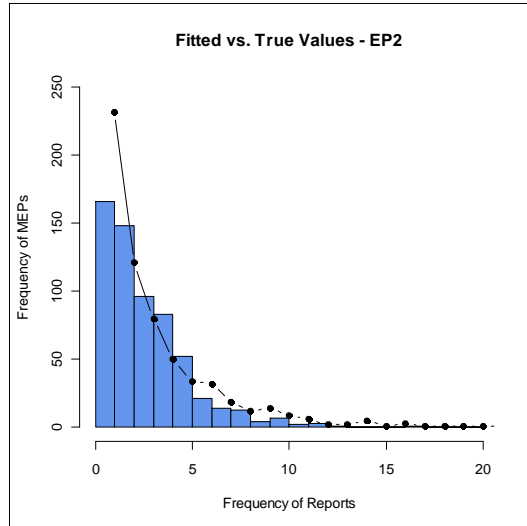
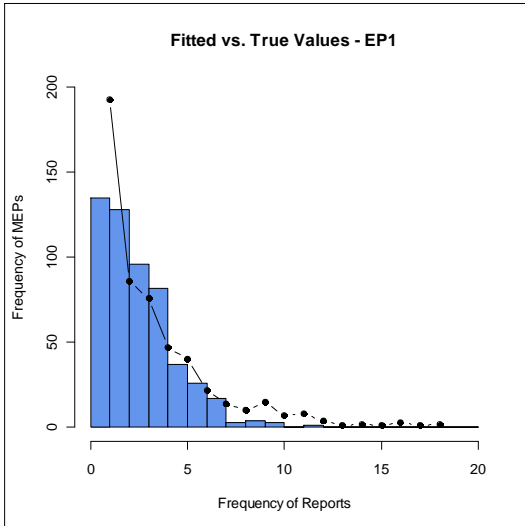


Figure 7.1: Fitted Values vs. Observed Values – General Report Allocation

The figure shows a bar plot of the predicted values of report allocation in model 6.2 superposed by the observed frequency.

Although frequencies of zero reports tend to be under estimated, the model captures well the general trends in the data.

The two consecutive EU enlargements in 2004 and 2007 might well have boosted the relative specialization among incumbent members, effectively reinforcing the trend. Only studies of subsequent periods will be able to reveal whether this is the start of an ongoing trend, or simply circumstantial.

All these distortions – the over estimation of central values, and the under estimation of zero counts and the long tail – are corollary to the use of central values in the estimation of regression coefficients. The general impression is, however, that the model captures well the essential traits of report distribution, though dimensions are weighted differently through time.

7.1.2 Further Competition for Salient Reports – Predictors Lacking?

The predicted outcomes from the second model (figure 7.2) on report salience are less precise than for the aggregated model of all MEPs. The deviances from the observed values are much the same, however more pronounced. Frequencies of zero acquisitions of salient reports are generally under-estimated, although the results are better on this point for the 4th and the 6th period. Predictions of one single salient report are, on the other hand, always highly over-estimated, whereas the long tailed distribution of the dependent variable is barely reproduced.

Anyhow, the fit lends some credit to the second model, as it still predicts more true outcomes than false. The deviances suggest, nonetheless, that there are other decisive factors in the selection to the most important legislative tasks. Few studies have been done previously on differential distribution according to legislative procedures, so that hardly any suggestions have been done. This is because data on report allocation and procedures previous to 1999 are not electronically available, and had to be collected by hand.

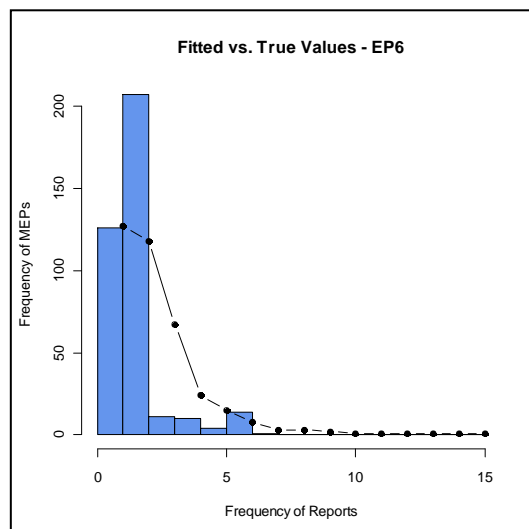
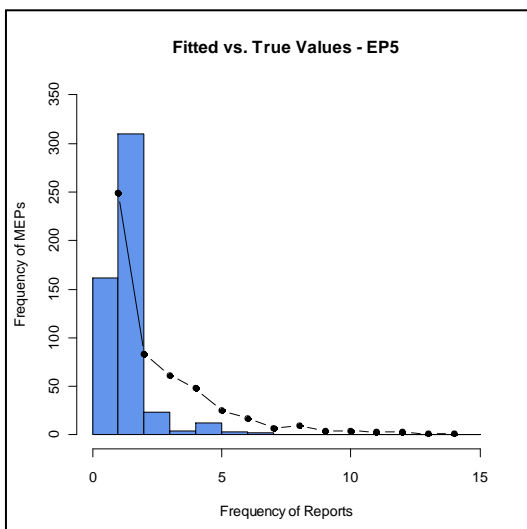
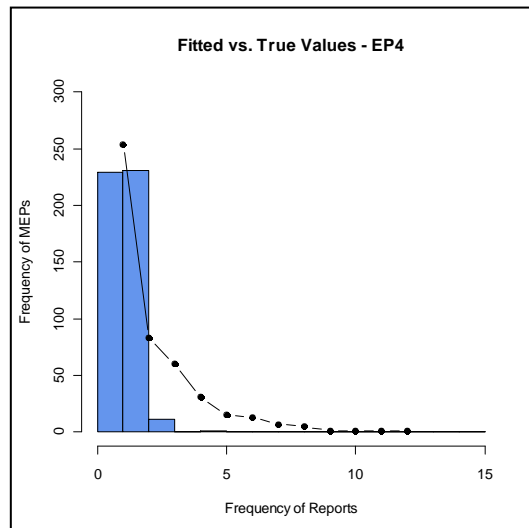
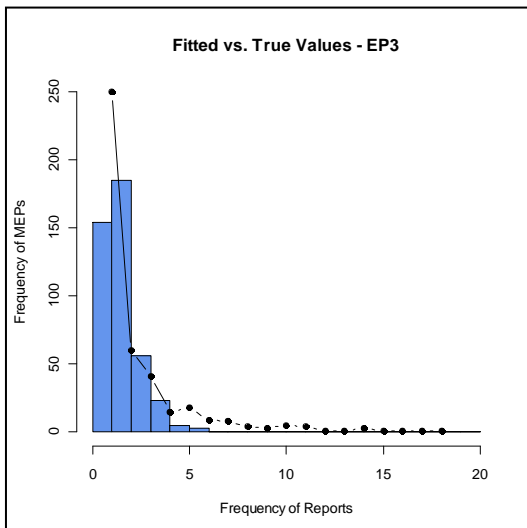
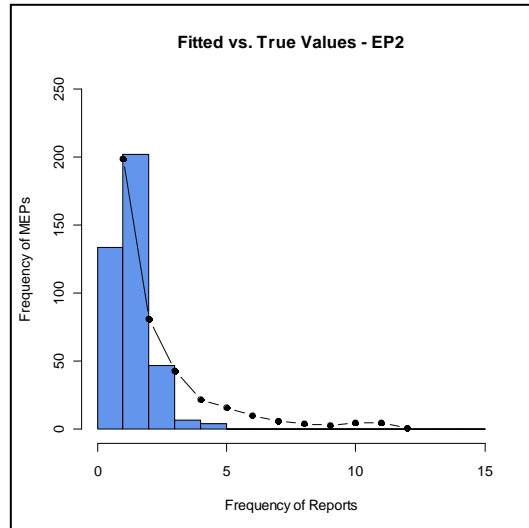
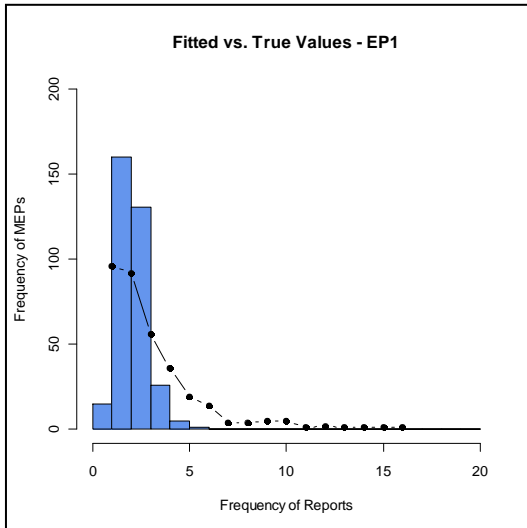


Figure 7.2: Fitted Values vs. True Values – Model of *Salient Report Allocation*

The figure shows a bar plot of the predicted values of report allocation in model 6.3 superposed by observed frequencies.

The already defined criteria for report allocation tend to grow in importance as the relative impact of legislative drafts increases. The deviances suggest however other conditions also are relevant during the selection of the most powerful rapporteurs.

One exception is the study of co-decision reports allocated to national party delegations by Høyland: Rapporteurs who are likely to meet with governmental party colleagues in Council obtain more reports than MEPs who come from opposition parties. (2006: 44-45) He assumes this to be due to the augmented informational advantage of governmental parties, though co-decision is not controlled against other procedures which imply less contact with Council.

From these results, further studies should look into broader measures of the expertise required for negotiations with Council, as this seems to be of increased importance.

7.2 Outliers and Missing Values

Because of the thorough documentation through minutes and list of members provided by Parliament itself, the data are of an exceptional quality. The extent of the observations makes furthermore statistical analyses robust to occasional outliers.

7.2.1 Exceptionally Few Missing Values

All the above mentioned data – the list of members, reports and roll-calls – have ultimately been provided from the EP itself, and should be considered to be as complete as they can possibly get. Yet, there are three sources of missing values:

For the first two time periods information sometimes lacks on party group affiliation which I have been unable to complete. Because this concerns less than 3,7% of the EP members in any given period, I have simply excluded the observations when needed.

The second source of missing information comes from the data derived from NOMINATE scores. Since the scores are calculated from MEPs' voting patterns during plenary sessions, these data are only possible to obtain for MEPs who have participated in a minimum number of roll-calls. These observations have to some extent been excluded from the final dataset simply because the statistical models are done with the exception of *all* MEPs who have stayed for less than 3 months in Parliament, considering this as the minimum of time needed to acquire, write and present a report. The proportion of missing NOMINATE values spans thereby from 7,7% in the 1st period to 1,4% in the 4th legislature. As one of the main points of Hix' study of voting patterns is how coherent political group vote, missing NOMINATE coordinates have simply been replaced by the mean value in his or her political group. Information on non-affiliated members is replaced by the chamber mean.

The general impression is that in the cases of missing information, the MEP does not distinguish himself as an ardent beholder of European reports. Rather the opposite. In five periods roughly 80%-100% of the MEPs with missing NOMINATE scores wrote no reports at all. The exclusion as well as the replacement by the group mean of these cases risk concealing to some degree the impact of certain characteristics. Yet, in the context of social science, these data are exceptionally complete.

The third source of missing values is related to legislative procedures. During the 30 years under study 4,2% of all reports lack procedural information (297 drafts out of 7092 observations). As is the case with the other data, missing values tend to decrease as time passes. No reports have been excluded, however. In the early years of this study minutes tend to give explicit information on reports written under the more influent procedures, without necessarily doing the same for less exceptional reports. Observations with missing information are rather coded as non-salient reports, thus making it harder to procure results in the expected direction. As revealed from table 6.3, missing observations have not prevented the model from corroborating the theoretical outline of the study.

7.2.2 Few Influential Outliers

Unusual data may be a sign that important characteristics of the data are let out of the model. Combinations of unusual values on different variables may gain leverage to effectively influence the estimation of coefficients so that the latter no longer reflects the

general trends in the data. Certainly, there are high-leverage observations which have little influence on the regression coefficients simply because the combination of independent variables is similar to the trends in the rest of the data. Such combinations do in fact increase the precision of estimation. Conversely, constellations of unusual values decrease the precision. Analyses of unusual data in the present study have relied upon the *covratio coefficient* which is an influence measure proposed by Belsley et al. (1980, quoted in Fox, 2008: 253; Fox, 2008: 241-253)

Up to five observations have been deleted in each period because of their outlying values. The exclusion of these values modified neither the tendencies, nor the shape of predictions dramatically. The trends in all models are robust to occasional unusual observations, thereby showing no signs that essential characteristics in the data are omitted.

7.3 Alternative Models – Robustness to Different Manipulations

Are the outcomes of the analyses above simply the result of lucky choices during the statistical manipulation? The same variables will be fitted to two alternative models. Because one of the main characteristics in the theoretical model is the assumption that some MEPs are simply not inclined to engage in committee work, both models are specifically constructed to account for the zero counts in the response variable (i.e. the high amount of non-rapporteurs).

7.3.1 Model Description – Accounting for High Levels of Zeros

The first model is a hurdle model which consists in two successive analyses with parameter values estimated by maximum likelihood: A preliminary hurdle component models the binary outcome of positive counts (non-zeros). It undertakes thereby a selection of MEPs which it expects to become rapporteurs at least once during their term. The regression may either be a binomial distribution or a censored count model. The present study employs a binomial manipulation to estimate the likelihood of becoming rapporteur at least once during the legislative period. From the selection of observations done by this preliminary zero hurdle model a second count regression is fitted to predict the number of reports

allocated to each MEP. The count model is usually a truncated Poisson or negative binomial regression with log link. In the present the results come from a negative binomial model. (“hurdle”, <http://pscl.stanford.edu/>, author Jackman)

The second alternative model consists in a zero-inflated regression analysis and is quite similar to the hurdle model. It is designed to account for excess zero counts in the dependent variable by the fitting of two different equations. It assumes zero counts to have two separate origins, one is derived from an unobserved state found in the point mass and one comes from the count model itself. The excess zero regression component consists in a binary model accounting for what is considered to be “excess” zeros in the observation (as compared to what is predicted by an ordinary count regression). The “true zeros” are then calculated in a count model. In the present the excess non-rapporteurs is modeled by a binomial model, whereas the distribution of reports is modeled by a poisson regression. The choice of a poisson model rather than the negative binomial analysis used previously is simply motivated by the wish to experiment to what extent the tendencies are robust to model choices. (“zeroinfl”, <http://pscl.stanford.edu/>, author Jackman)

In both the hurdle and the zero-inflated model the two equations do not have to contain the same indicators, and may in fact correspond to two entirely different logics. In a more elaborate study of why some MEPs do not wish to participate, it would be interesting to define and operationalize different variables for the two stages in order to capture the precise reasons for self-selection. The present choice of integrating *all* indicators from the second negative binomial fit at both stages allows on the contrary for a more explorative approach. As the study has concentrated on characteristics shared by rapporteurs rather than the traits non-rapporteurs have in common, the limits between the indicators of binary non-zero and multiple positive counts risk to be blurred.

7.3.2 Alternative Models Yield About the Same Results

All alternative models indicate about the same trends of specialization, floor preference of moderate MEPs and partisan implications. Naturally, significance levels vary. Their general trends are much the same, however.

Figure 7.3:

What Determines the Number of Reports MEPs Write?						
<i>Count Model - Negative Binomial Model with Loglink</i>						
	EP1	EP2	EP3	EP4	EP5	EP6
(Intercept)	-0,449	-0,968 **	-0,648 *	-1,058 **	-0,464	-2,978 ***
<i>Specialization:</i>						
Periods in EP	-	-0,835	0,085	0,024	0,003	-0,074
Incumbent Committee	-	0,980	0,061	0,134	0,198 †	0,524 *
<i>System Critics:</i>						
Eurosceptic	0,384	-0,319	0,226	0,083	0,039	0,199
<i>Partisan Expectations:</i>						
Ind.	0,050	-0,418	-0,295	-0,162	0,317	0,216
Distance from Group	0,681	-1,442 †	-1,069	0,518	-0,533	-10,84 **
Group Leader	0,005	-0,398 *	-0,216	-0,114	-0,119	-1,371 **
<i>European Specificities:</i>						
Large Group	-0,079	-0,407 **	-0,052	-0,034	-0,074	0,267
60+	-0,232 †	-0,145	-0,137	-0,226 †	-0,105	0,176
Committee Chair	0,508 *	0,943 ***	0,984 ***	0,418 **	1,281 ***	1,952 ***
Committee Vice-Chair	0,274 †	0,358 *	0,071	0,194 †	0,182 †	0,234
<i>Activity:</i>						
Participation	1,784 ***	1,441 ***	1,071 ***	0,912 ***	1,847 ***	1,164 †
Years in Term	0,180 *	0,414 ***	0,410 ***	0,420 ***	0,064	0,523 *
Log (theta)	0,423 *	0,212	0,503 ***	1,069 ***	1,053 ***	-0,449
<i>Zero Hurdle - Binomial Model</i>						
(Intercept)	-1,107 **	-1,337 ***	-1,067 **	-3,263 ***	-2,262 ***	-2,887 ***
<i>Specialization:</i>						
Periods in EP	-	-0,550	-0,139	0,280	-0,337 *	-0,119
Incumbent Committee	-	0,384	0,310	0,674 †	0,929 *	1,075 ***
<i>System Critics:</i>						
Eurosceptic	0,907 *	-0,437	-1,281 **	1,761 ***	-1,586 ***	-1,212 **
<i>Partisan Expectations:</i>						
Ind.	-1,046 *	0,124	-0,753 †	-1,606 ***	-2,348 ***	-1,815 ***
Distance from Group	-4,616 **	-0,855	-2,323	-1,879	-0,702	-1,400
Group Leader	-1,336 ***	-0,290	-0,492	-0,991 **	-0,349	-0,343
<i>European Specificities:</i>						
Large Group	-0,274	-0,376	-1,016 ***	-0,182	0,200	-0,179
60+	-0,442 †	-0,610 *	-1,140 ***	-0,854 **	-1,194 ***	-0,149
Committee Chair	1,260 †	1,512 *	0,964	1,707 *	16,271	18,917
Committee Vice-Chair	-0,131	0,600 †	0,447	1,261 *	1,358 **	18,902
<i>Activity:</i>						
Participation	3,721 ***	5,043 ***	6,476 ***	3,644 ***	2,252 ***	0,972
Years in Term	0,430 ***	0,227 *	0,317 **	0,660 ***	0,592 ***	0,476 ***
N. Observations	533	612	596	697	699	927

Figure 7.3: Hurdle Model of General Report Allocation

The figure shows the results of the hurdle model of the general report allocation.

The zero hurdle predicts MEPs who are likely to obtain at least one report, compared to those who never engage in legislative preparations. From this selection, the count model predicts the number of reports written by MEPs.

Significance levels: + 90%; * 95%; ** 99%; *** 99,9%

The two alternative models of general report allocation (figure 7.3 and 7.4) as well as the hurdle model for salient reports (figure 7.5) all show the same trends. Most interesting are the distribution of effects between the zero and count models.

Committee incumbency has high correlations in both model stages. In line with the results from model 6.3 on salient reports, policy expertise is closely related to increased impact whether this is measured by the number of all reports written or the accumulation of salient reports. Similarly are indicators of division of labor within the group continuous in nature.

Indicators of legislative activity tend to come out significant in both parts of the models. This is in line with results from the second model on report salience in which participation rates, time in office and committee chairs continued to be determinant during draft allocation falling under important procedures. This suggests how the degree of interest in legislative tasks is continuous rather than binary. This makes sense, as measures of activity are only pragmatic proxies constructed to capture free-riders.

Figure 7.4: Zero-inflated Model for General Report Allocation

The figure shows the results of the zero-inflated model of the general report allocation.

The zero model predicts MEPs who are likely to never engage in legislative preparations. Negative values in the zero model indicate therefore increasing likelihood to obtain reports. From this selection, the count model predicts the number of reports written by MEPs. Negative values in the count model therefore express decreasing likelihood of obtaining several reports.

Significance levels: + 90%; * 95%; ** 99%; *** 99,9%

What Determines the Number of Reports MEPs Write?						
<i>Count Model – Poisson Model with Loglink</i>						
	EP1	EP2	EP3	EP4	EP5	EP6
(Intercept)	0,069	-0,361	-0,375 †	-0,724 **	-0,001	-1,494 ***
<i>Specialization:</i>						
Periods in EP	-	-0,746	0,051	0,026	0,007	-0,096 *
Incumbent Committee	-	0,866 †	0,051	0,128 †	0,153 *	0,516 ***
<i>System Critics:</i>						
Eurosceptic	0,388 **	-0,303 *	0,176	0,053	0,042	-0,023
<i>Partisan Expectations:</i>						
Ind.	0,062	-0,296 *	-0,266	-0,193	0,306 †	-0,079
Distance from Group	0,477	-1,398 **	-1,261 **	0,359	-0,489	-4,213 ***
Group Leader	-0,101	-0,385 ***	-0,138 *	-0,091	-0,130	-0,792 **
<i>European Specificities:</i>						
Large Group	-0,077	-0,368 ***	0,018	-0,033	-0,064	0,123
60+	-0,176 **	-0,265 **	-0,128 †	-0,207 **	-0,088	0,296 ***
Committee Chair	0,444 ***	0,842 ***	0,813 ***	0,395 ***	1,137 ***	1,546 ***
Committee Vice-Chair	0,151 †	0,252 ***	0,084	0,187 **	0,163 **	0,256 **
<i>Activity:</i>						
Participation	1,332 ***	1,205 ***	0,663 ***	0,855 ***	1,643 ***	0,229
Years in Term	0,156 **	0,350 ***	0,419 ***	0,368 ***	0,011	0,481 ***
<i>Excess Zero Model – Binomial Model</i>						
(Intercept)	0,545	0,321	-0,273	2,374 ***	1,647 **	1,331 *
<i>Specialization:</i>						
Periods in EP	-	-0,328	0,151	-0,313	0,422 *	0,073
Incumbent Committee	-	0,609	-0,351	-0,636	-1,003 *	-0,841 **
<i>System Critics:</i>						
Eurosceptic	-0,719	0,315	1,540 **	-2,232 **	1,888 ***	1,373 **
<i>Partisan Expectations:</i>						
Ind.	1,213 *	-0,506	0,710	1,659 ***	2,778 ***	1,992 ***
Distance from Group	5,313 **	-0,790	1,619	2,572	0,446	-3,498
Group Leader	1,422 ***	0,064	0,390	1,059 **	0,307	-0,327
<i>European Specificities:</i>						
Large Group	0,303	0,120	1,274 ***	0,194	-0,404	0,284
60+	0,375	0,482	1,239 ***	0,784 *	1,426 ***	0,309
Committee Chair	-1,213	-0,925	-0,732	-1,498 †	-16,271	-18,917
Committee Vice-Chair	0,218	-0,547	-0,656	-1,216 *	-1,500 *	-18,902
<i>Activity:</i>						
Participation	-3,362 ***	-5,670 ***	-7,247 ***	-3,403 ***	-0,319	-1,011
Years in Term	-0,397 **	0,095	0,039	-0,524 ***	-0,875 ***	-0,163
N. Observations	533	612	596	697	699	927

On the other hand, some results tend to reach their highest correlations in the zero model. Simple long-termers without committee incumbency do not generally take on reports at all, illustrating once again the impact of nominations done by national parties. Some MEPs stay in Parliament for several terms without ever participating in legislative work. High age has an increased negative correlation to report allocation during the initial modeling of zeros, with a less pronounced impact in the count models. MEPs close to retirement do generally not engage in committee work at all.

The effect of eurosceptic groups and non-affiliated members appears more clearly during the initial model selection indicating that they generally don't participate in legislative preparations. Effects become less distinguishable in the second count model. If they have been deemed eligible once, group affiliation does not prove an obstacle for further acquisitions. This is especially the case among eurosceptics. The trend might imply the inclination among these members to avoid legislative activity by opting out, rather than the floor shunning their representation.

The joint analysis of the zero-inflated and hurdle models indicate the same hierarchical traits revealed by the comparison of general- and salient report allocation. Trends are quite robust to different manipulations.

Figure 7.5: Hurdle Model for Salient Reports

The figure shows the results of the hurdle model of the *salient* report allocation *among rapporteurs*.

The zero hurdle predicts MEPs who are likely to obtain at least one salient report, compared to those who have only written non-salient reports. From this selection, the count model predicts the number of influent reports written by MEPs.

Committee incumbency includes in this model only MEPs who wrote at least one report during the previous legislature. The indicator thereby includes both a policy specific element and some political know-how.

Significance levels: + 90%; * 95%; ** 99%; *** 99,9%

What Determines the Number of <i>Salient</i> Reports MEPs Write?						
<i>Count Model - Negative Binomial Model with loglink</i>						
	EP1	EP2	EP3	EP4	EP5	EP6
(Intercept)	-0,438	-0,404	-0,569	-0,408	0,324	-0,251
<i>Specialization:</i>						
Incumbent Committee		-0,032	0,594 **	0,500 **	0,289 *	0,553 **
<i>Representativeness</i>						
Distance from Floor	-0,408	-0,192	0,228	0,619	0,155	-3,458 **
<i>Partisan Expectations:</i>						
Distance from Group	1,500	-2,066 *	0,459	1,226	-0,629	-0,621
Group Leader	0,310	0,007	-0,607 †	-0,245	0,390 †	-1,056
<i>Activity:</i>						
Committee Chair	0,433	0,665	0,550	0,025	0,791 ***	1,599 ***
Committee Vice-Chair	0,069	0,274	0,477 †	-0,060	0,235	0,205
Participation	1,738 ***	1,924 ***	1,711 **	0,567	0,330	0,468
Log (theta)	-0,321	-0,098	-0,300	0,445	1,158 ***	0,586
<i>Zero Hurdle - Binomial Model</i>						
	EP1	EP2	EP3	EP4	EP5	EP6
(Intercept)	-0,048	-0,517 †	-0,773 *	-0,997 *	-1,978 ***	-0,088
<i>Specialization:</i>						
Incumbent Committee		0,102	0,264	0,498 *	0,093	0,800 **
<i>Representativeness</i>						
Distance from Floor	-0,474	-0,200	-0,187	0,847	0,203	0,253
<i>Partisan Expectations:</i>						
Distance from Group	0,561	-1,037 *	-2,826	1,811	-0,007	-1,473
Group Leader	-0,104	-0,726	-0,291	-0,056	-0,491	-0,681
<i>Activity:</i>						
Committee Chair	0,517	0,705	0,075	-0,635	1,363 **	0,528
Committee Vice-Chair	0,685 †	0,017	-0,552 *	0,011	0,365	-0,019
Participation	2,279 ***	1,428 **	1,354 *	0,366	2,028 ***	0,605
N. Observations	336	395	424	471	514	371

What Determines the Number of Salient Reports MEPs Write?						
<i>Count Model - Negative Binomial Model</i>						
	EP1	EP2	EP3	EP4	EP5	EP6
(Intercept)	-0,162	-0,359	-0,939 *	-0,387	0,280	-0,224
<i>Specialization:</i>						
Incumbent Committee	-	0,001	0,484 *	0,522 **	0,297 *	0,503 ***
<i>Representativeness</i>						
Distance from Floor	-0,266	-0,397	0,016	0,566	0,106	-1,617 *
<i>Partisan Expectations:</i>						
Distance from Group	0,987	-0,941	-0,170	1,016	-0,643	1,385
Group Leader	0,396	0,017	-0,472 †	-0,259	0,401 †	-0,533
<i>Activity:</i>						
Committee Chair	0,221 †	0,715 **	0,555	-0,002	0,798 ***	1,433 ***
Committee Vice-Chair	-	0,271	0,458	-0,032	0,243	0,121
Participation	1,692 ***	1,647 ***	2,232 ***	0,563	0,410	0,447
Log (theta)	0,402 **	-0,315 *	-0,804 ***	0,430	1,156 ***	1,190 ***
<i>Zero Model - Binomial Model</i>						
	EP1	EP2	EP3	EP4	EP5	EP6
(Intercept)	-277,350	-65,246	-7,316	-0,392	1,560 *	-12,619
<i>Specialization:</i>						
Incumbent Committee	-	-25,411	-0,839	-0,164	0,077	-1,200
<i>Representativeness</i>						
Distance from Floor	223,915	-163,558	-0,476	-0,860	-0,253	-16,887
<i>Partisan Expectations:</i>						
Distance from Group	109,954	415,124	9,224	-2,962	-0,417	29,978
Group Leader	150,870	222,254	1,152	-0,326	0,754 †	4,872
<i>Activity:</i>						
Committee Chair	-42,432	-57,527	2,732	0,972	-1,208 *	10,281
Committee Vice-Chair	-	122,330	4,255	-0,025	-0,283	6,698
Participation	35,728	-328,483	4,970	0,099	-2,098 **	3,570
N. Observations	336	395	424	471	514	371

The zero-inflated model for report salience (figure 7.6) is, on the other hand, hardly fit for these data. The unobserved secondary source of zeros which the model is made to detect are absent from the data which no longer includes non-rapporteurs. The model then turns to become a simple negative binomial model. This illustrates *a contrario* the potential of hurdles in future joint modeling of non-rapporteurs and rapporteurs alike. Further analyses which include more thorough indicators of non-rapporteurs should explore the possibilities offered by hurdle or zero-inflated equations to model simultaneously the theoretical characteristics of non-rapporteurs and rapporteurs.

Figure 7.6: Zero-Inflated Model for Salient Reports

The figure shows the results of the zero-inflated model of the *salient* report allocation among *rapporteurs*.

The zero hurdle predicts MEPs who are likely to obtain at least one salient report, compared to those who have only written non-salient reports. From this selection, the count model predicts the number of influential reports written by MEPs.

Committee vice-chairs are coded with committee chairs during the 1st period as the system would otherwise be computationally singular. As can be seen from the low levels of significance and the excessive correlation coefficients in the zero model, the two-level statistical modeling is hardly fit to data which do not include non-rapporteurs. There is no unobserved source of zeros for which zero-inflated models have been constructed to model.

Significance levels: + 90%; * 95%; ** 99%; *** 99,9%

From the testing done in this chapter, however, it is apparent that the statistical models of both the general report allocation and the distribution of salient reports are robust. Although the model of salient reports may profit from additional indicators of expertise – obtained either from previous experience or policy networks – both models of report allocation predict reasonably well the distributional outcome. The alternative models illustrate once more how organizational criteria increase with the level of influence. This influence has been measured both through the general accumulation of reports and through the buildup of salient legislative drafts. There is a hierarchy among MEPs, and the resulting distinctions are organized to profit the assembly as a whole.

8 Conclusion

Despite divergent ambitions among MEPs; Parliament has developed much of the organizational traits needed to assert its position.

Transnational Politics

The present study distinguishes itself from much of the previous literature by its slight insistence on the international aspects of the European Parliament. Transnational caucuses are the primary level of organization. Their principal role in the formal proceedings of report allocation is further corroborated by the higher degree of proportionality found among political groups. As was illustrated in the particular case of new member states, the relative handicap of national newcomers is to some degree palliated by transnational party groups which hold the experience new national delegations lack. They hold an integrationist role which is crucial to the political representativeness – and thereby the legitimacy – of the chamber.

This is not to deny the secondary role of nationality. Rather, instead of entering into the impasse of determining which one has the upper-hand in case of a conflict, we have in the present explored the general organizational trends in Parliament. Further research should do a comprehensive distinction of the points of influence of each source of preference – the national and the transnational – before resuming a more informed debate.

The review reveals however another transnational specificity which has largely been ignored in previous studies: The different personal ambitions of MEPs.

Despite Scarrow's early attempts to highlight the importance of career paths (1997), no previous study has gone to efforts to systematically discard MEPs who do not participate in the competition for reports. The study has successfully included two indicators to capture careerist intentions. Both the time spent in office and participation rates during voting point toward a serious chasm in the EP between MEPs who seek influence and those who do not.

The present study has disclosed how some EP long-termers are void of any European ambitions. In fact, because nomination much depends on national parties, reelection is frequently ensured for reasons completely foreign to the work accomplished in Parliament. Being a young institution the EP harbors an important fraction of system-critics who

generally avoid legislative work. The low participation rates of MEPs close to retirement age goes furthermore a long way in confirming Corbett's fears that national politicians are put out to grass in the EP.

Although the second order nature of European elections should weaken the incentives for MEPs to engage in legislative work, some parliamentarians distinguish themselves as highly active legislators. The system of rapporteurs allows parliamentarians to exchange influence in different policy domains, effectively spurring members to specialize.

Once free-riders on the European system are discarded from the analysis, classical theories of legislative organization apply surprisingly well.

Majority Discipline in View of Collective Gains

The European Parliament is in control of its policy expertise. The combination of the informational and partisan perspectives has proven rewarding. Legislative organization in the EP corresponds to a two-level game in which the chamber majority select party groups in a rather consensual manner – although policy outliers are not favored. Party groups then pick their representatives for legislative tasks much according to the same principles of policy expertise and representativeness.

Expertise to Challenge the Council and Commission

Expertise in specific policy areas is all the more valuable when legislation tends to be detailed, and because European parliamentarians are granted fewer resources than their counterparts in Council and Commission. In an assembly with careerist politicians much of the know-how is in fact acquired inside Parliament. This is also the case with the EP in which specialization is done through committee work.

Results from the present study corroborate the informational hypothesis_{b2} of a specialization among key-legislators. Rapporteurs have on average stayed longer on committees than their colleagues. The degree of expertise increases with the number of drafts written, indicating the propensity of MEPs to specialize in special policy domains. Specialization increases further when negotiations move to become inter-institutional. During the more influential procedures, policy expertise and political skills are imperative, as the rapporteur defends his propositions in face of the highly informed Council and

Commission. Consequently, party group leaders leave extensive dossiers to rank-and-file members with more time on their hands. When no one volunteers, the committee chair assumes responsibility for the more important drafts, not the vice-chair.

Despite the exchange of influence done among rapporteurs, however, specialization is not the result of self-selection. The chamber has kept control over its experts.

Majority Selection by the Floor

Floor selection of key-legislators is done on two stages. Report allocation is done on subject basis throughout the whole legislative period. Open rules ensures political outcomes are supported by the majority of the chamber. By way of consequence, the likelihood of being named rapporteur shrinks as an MEP moves away from the median floor preferences on the main political dimension.

The competitive report allocation is done within a consensual system negotiated at the beginning of each legislature, however. Whereas moderate MEPs have always been preferred in the preparation of individual pieces of legislation, the institutional bargain has changed. The assembly is on its way to obtain political maturity. Starting out as a consultative body, the European Parliament has gone quite systematically to the task of enhancing its influence. Some of the effects of these changes may be observed in the selection of rapporteurs. The 3rd legislature constitutes a turning point in this respect.

EP's budgetary role was enhanced from the beginning of the 3rd legislature by a series of pragmatic agreements. Since 1988 four inter-institutional agreements have been concluded between Parliament, Council and Commission which has committed all parties to a four year long financial perspective. This has opened for more initiatives with financial implications from Parliament. (Corbett, 2007: 248-250) The Maastricht treaty (1992) further enhanced what was already in preparation from the Single European Act (1989) and erected the EP to the role of a co-legislator to Council.

As both the budgetary and the legislative role of Parliament were improved, the politics of grand coalition were no longer as necessary. Hix' claims that left-right coalition politics peaked during the 3rd legislature (2009: 1-2) are in fact funded on the declining perception of an institutional battle.

“Parliament’s role has evolved and in a way that has reinforced the level of co-decision with the Council. The two institutions increasingly seek mutually acceptable outcomes based on a shared perception of each other’s role, rather than Parliament attempting to use the treaty articles to impose its will on the Council.” (Corbett, 2007: 250)

The consensual distribution of influence in Parliament is a prerequisite for institutional bargains. Instead of a grand coalition merely between the PES and PPE, the general report allocation reflects a broader consensus in the EP. From the first direct elections to the 3rd period included large party groups are by way of consequence under-represented among influential legislators to accommodate the smaller caucuses. The situation has since evolved. The two largest party groups are no longer significantly under-represented. Non-affiliated members are on the other hand increasingly overlooked during legislative preparations. As the institutional pressure diminishes, ideologically oriented caucuses become more important.

The 1989-94 legislature constitutes a first step towards normalization of the EP. The political class created after the 1979 elections is about to take form, and party group politics evolves in a more conventional political environment.

Partisan Selection

The EP has developed a legislative organization in which political groups are central pieces. The feeble presence of non-affiliated members shows they are odd elements in the institutional setting. Transnational parliamentarian groups provide a forum in which information circulates quite freely. Policy-makers are selected who can be expected to procure and manipulate information for the common benefits of the group. Rapporteurs thereby tend to reflect the median preferences of their group. The perception of a common purpose has furthermore led party group leaders to delegate legislative tasks to their more competent and loyal group members, rather than accumulating dossiers themselves.

Indicators of policy representativeness reveal nonetheless stronger correlations during the selection for all reports than for the most salient ones. This may be related to aptitudes needed in different stages of legislation: Any rapporteur has to act as a broker between party groups in order for his draft to win through during plenary. Because of the

delicate nature of coalition-building, the selection of loyal and moderate key-legislators is done on an early stage both by party group coordinators and the chamber majority. Policy expertise becomes, on the other hand, increasingly important as Parliament's position is defied.

These findings are quite in line with Bowler and Farrell's conclusions: The EP has developed both the specialization needed to assert its powers *and* the means to control and coordinate expertise. Parliament's leadership has developed mechanisms to maintain order in the chamber. This is especially the case for transnational groups which are responsible for the allotment of legislative tasks, providing them with the disciplinary tools to organize their members in an effective manner (1995: 241).

Further Normalization?

Quite a number of the results from the 6th legislature are somewhat different from previous tendencies. To what degree are they precursors of a further normalization of EP legislative organization?

The impact of measures of careerist ambitions diminishes after the 2004 election in both analyses of allocations of reports and salient drafts. MEPs close to retirement are no longer less active. Participation rates during roll-call sessions are still highly significant, yet its amplitude reaches a low. Contrary to previous periods, theoretically funded variables are able to predict the shape of report distribution. Is the group of uninterested, non-careerist MEPs on its way out?

Signs of an ordinary organization of the EP become more pronounced. Group loyalty has an increased impact, whereas group chairmen delegate more reports than ever. Likewise, policy-outliers are punished more scrupulously than before. Committee incumbency has furthermore greater impact during the 6th period in both regressions.

Remembering, however, the two consecutive EU enlargements this may simply be an effect of nationality. The positive change in the French, Italian and Portuguese representation in the bivariate analysis in combination with the decrease in rapporteurs from the UK and the Netherlands also indicate a major change during the 6th legislature. The arrival of 12 new member states might have made it necessary for the remaining core of MEPs to redouble their efforts. Committee chairmen and vice-chairmen were also widely

used during all types of legislative procedures, indicating either less capacity among MEPs to take on reports or a different inclination to engage in committee work. Only the study of future parliaments will be able to determine whether the proportion of non-ambitious MEPs has declined. The exceptionally skewed distribution of reports during the 6th legislature would in that case be the result of a harsher selection along conventional criteria.

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