

Programmatic and Voting Cohesion of European Political Groups in the 7th European Political Parliament

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Abstract

This study diagnoses whether European parties fulfill their function as the primary mechanism for European representation and delegation. The EU party system functions at two levels: national and supranational. At the European elections, EU citizens vote for a national party of their choice. After the elections, the national parties that have received enough votes enter the EP and join one of the transnational European political groups ("EP factions"). These groups are conglomerates of different national parties and form coalitions based on — what they claim to be — a shared ideology. This study examines 1) whether the EP factions are programmatically cohesive, and 2) whether programmatic cohesion, rather than intra-faction pressure, is what explains the high voting cohesion rates of EP factions. Discriminant analysis based on the programmatic profiles of national parties suggests that EP factions are programmatically cohesive units. Variation in the voting agreement rates, however, is mostly due to intra-faction pressure, more prominent in the mainstream pro-EU factions. This intensification of programmatic closeness to achieve voting discipline is familiar in the national context. The programmatic cohesion and voting efficacy of EP factions prove that EP elections and the legislative process are becoming increasingly European and decreasingly national.

Keywords: European Parliament, parties, elections, programmatic cohesion, voting cohesion, manifesto, voting

I. INTRODUCTION

I. Representation

REPRESENTATION is the "process in which one individual or groups (the representative) act on behalf of other individuals or groups (the represented) in making or influencing authoritative decisions, policies, or laws of a polity" (Thompson 2001, 11696). In established parliamentary democracies, parties are the central mechanism to make the constitutional process of representation and delegation work (Müller 2000, 309). As a result, the establishment and survival of parliamentary democracies depends on the parties' abilities to control their representatives, to maintain a cohesive ideological profile, to operate effectively in the legislation, and to constitute a stable basis for the political process (Hazan 2003, 1). According to Fuchs (1993, 126), the representation mechanism works in the following way: citizens have demands, parties turn demands in

political issues, parties "bundle" demands into political programs, these programs guide the decisions of their representatives in parliament and government, and, finally, these decisions are implemented via the administration. The outcomes of this process affect the lives of the citizens and — in their role as voters — they respond to these changes by modifying their demands at the next election.

II. The Responsible Party Model: Programmatic and Voting Cohesion

In this analysis, I mainly focus on a single element of this multi-level process of representation: I study how the parties' programmatic cohesion may affect their voting cohesion rates. Voters vote for one of the parties based on the political program, which is laid out in the party's election manifesto. Parties commit their MPs to vote in the parliament in accordance with the program, and this is how parties are essential for "making the

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democratic accountability of MPs meaningful" (Müller 2000, 311). This argument is derived from the responsible party model that assumes that parties should show high cohesion if it comes to a vote in parliament (APSA, Weßels 2007).

Although the study of party cohesion is central to the theory of democracy, it is relatively underdeveloped (Bowler et al. 1999). There are different ways to define and measure party cohesion. For the purposes of this analysis I focus on the impact of programmatic cohesion (independent variable) on voting cohesion (dependent variable). Programmatic cohesion means that the members of a political party support a unified political program. In addition to the single parties' being programmatically cohesive, the party system, on the other hand, also needs to offer a wide spectrum of cohesive programmatic profiles. In other words, parties need to be cohesive, but they also need to be different from each other. If the majority of parties in a particular party system fulfill these requirements, voters can easily differentiate between the parties and are supplied by a wide spectrum of choices in terms of different programmatic profiles. In addition to programmatic cohesion, I focus on the party's voting cohesion, which measures the unity of party members in different voting situations (Hix and Noury).

A parliamentary democracy can function properly when political parties are programmatically cohesive, and this cohesion translates into voting cohesion. As scholars have put it, "democracy works because parties with competing agendas and candidates organize to secure these goals" (Klingemann et al., 1994). It is plausible to assume that if a political party votes with a high cohesion rate, its members should also be cohesive programmatically. However, this is not always true. Political parties are not monolithic, and party members have a variety of positions in different policy areas. Voters often do not know their MPs and rely on parties to control and sanction their behavior if it deviates from the party's political program. Therefore, cohesive political parties reduce the cost for voters to observe the behavior of MPs and help to avoid the moral hazard problem (Müller 2000, 311). In addition to its importance for the legitimacy of the democratic process, voting cohesion is also important because it helps the party win the legislative battle and protect its "brand name" (Cox and McCubbins 1993, 124-5). The power of parties and their leadership could be seen as illegitimate control over the MP's decision-making. Without intra-party discipline, however, voters would not be able to exercise their power in the political process (Müller 2000, 311). In other words, efficiency rather than programmatic closeness could be what leads to

high voting cohesion rates.

III. Programmatic and Voting Cohesion in the European Parliament

In this study, I analyze the programmatic cohesion of national parties within each faction of the European Parliament and its effect on the voting cohesion rate of that specific national party. The factions in the European Parliament are composed of different national parties, which are supposed to be unified by a common programmatic orientation. The citizens of each member state elect their own MEPs for the European Parliament. These MEPs are affiliated both with their national party, and the faction of the European Parliament their party decides to enter as a member. The relationship between programmatic and voting cohesion is important in any party-dominated parliament. However, here the responsible party model meets a more complex situation, because the EU MEPs are not only members of the faction of the European Parliament, but also members of their national parties. This means that the representatives have the additional problem of accommodating the programmatic orientations of both the national party and the supra-national faction of the European Parliament.

This should not be a problem, if the parties within each faction of the European Parliament are cohesive in terms of their programs: in this case, the policy preferences of the national parties and those of their political factions in the European Parliament would to a large extent overlap. However, there have been doubts that the national parties within the factions of the European Parliament are programmatically cohesive. If they are not, the MEPs will often be in a difficult situation because they have to choose between their national party's program and their European faction's political agenda. In this case, the high voting cohesion rates of the EP factions can only be explained by high levels of intra-faction pressure.

This "multiple principals" problem is reflected in Lindstädt et al. (2012) study which investigates the "adaptive behavior" of MEP's in the European Parliament: MEP's need to accommodate both their national parties' preferences (since they control the MEP's electoral chances) and the European political groups' preferences (since they affect the MEP's careers in the European Parliament). The author argues that MEPs defect from their EU faction with a greater frequency if they come from a new EU member country, if they are new to the EP, or if their national party is ideologically different from their EP faction. At the same time, a greater support for EU integration of the national party means its MEPs will show greater solidarity with their Eu-

ropean faction.¹ These concerns about the "multiple principals" in the European party system are part of a broader debate about whether the EP is able to work according to democratic criteria (Lightfoot 2008, 290–1).

IV. Democratic Deficit and the European Parliament

The European Union, with its unique transnational party system, has attracted much attention from scholars. The European Parliament is the only directly elected institution of the EU and has been steadily gaining power through various treaties in the past years. Currently the EP "acts as a co-legislator on nearly all EU law."² As the power of the European Parliament has increased, the "democratic deficit" of the institution has sparked even more debate (Lightfoot 2008, 289). Even though members of the Parliament are democratically elected and the institution has an increasing weight in the decision-making process, low turnout rates have undermined its standing in public opinion. In addition, there is little connection between the executive and the legislative branch at the EU level. This means that the EP lacks effective control of the governing bodies in the EU. In contrast to national systems of representation, there is yet no European government that is democratically accountable to the EP and, thus, to the European citizens. Representation without an "intimate connection" to government is alien to a European tradition of political representation, and the lack of this connection is regarded as a source of the democratic deficit (Mair and Thomassen 2010, 23).

In the EP parties only have the representative function, whereas at the national level they have a double function: representation and government. This is particularly true for parliamentary systems. However, throughout the last century the balance between the two functions of national parties has eroded, and parties have increasingly become governing organizations rather than representational bodies. At the European level, parties do not govern, and some scholars argue that precisely because of that they have a much greater capacity to act as representatives (Mair and Thomassen 2010, 27).

This might change in the future, as there are more and more efforts to overcome the division between representation and government formation at the EU level. According to the Lisbon Treaty (2009), for example, during the upcoming elections in 2014 the EP shall elect the president of the European Commission on the basis

of a proposal made by the EU Council for the first time in the history of the EU. If the EP is to become "one of the most powerful legislative chambers in the world," one needs to make sure it is working right (Lightfoot 2008, 289).

V. The European Party System: National or European?

The lack of a functioning party system is seen as one of reasons for the democratic deficit in the EU. There has been much debate among scholars about the need and role of European political parties. Why are parties so important for a democracy to function? As discussed before, parties serve as a link between state and civil society (Hix et al. (under review) in Lightfoot 2008, 290). Very early in the development of the EP, David Marquand (1978) writes that the way to overcome the democratic deficit of the EP is to transform the basic structure of politics from "Europe des patries" (structured around national identities and government) to "Europe des partis" (structured through a transnational party system) (Hix et al. 2003, 310).

Skeptics have argued that European political parties are not "truly European" and remain tied to national politics. The problem of the European political parties reflects a much broader issue in the EU: the tension between EU-wide and national interests. A strong party system at the EU level promotes democracy, but at the same time national parties might not always be willing to cede power to the EU (Lightfoot 2008, 290). European elections are said to be "national" since candidate selection, issues, and campaigns are under the control of national rather than European parties. Therefore, the European elections have also been called "second-order national elections": European citizens consider these elections to be not that important and therefore do not show up at election time (Reif and Schmitt 1980).

On the other hand, Hix, Noury, and Roland (2005), provide evidence that voting in the EP has become increasingly "partisan" and less "nationalist" or "inter-governmental". They argue that the trend towards a greater transnational and party political, rather than intergovernmental competition, is a positive development in terms of the democratic accountability in the EU. This trend to vote along transnational rather than national party lines has continued even after the Central and Eastern-European enlargement (Hix and Noury 2009). However, if the policy preference of the EU faction and the national party are in conflict, the MEP is

¹These findings are supported by Hix and Noury (2009) who show that MEPs from Central and Eastern European tend to vote slightly more along national lines, and the voting cohesion is slightly lower in the first few months of any European Parliament.

²<http://www.europarl.europa.eu/aboutparliament/en/007c895f4c/Powers-and-procedures.html>

still more likely to choose the national party's position. According to Hix (2008, 1261), this is due to the "upside-down nature of office hierarchy in the EU." Offices at the national level are more desirable and playing the national card enhances the probability to reach such an office. Mair and Thomassen (2010, 29) argue that even if European elections are fought over national issues, "the aggregation of these national systems of political representation at the European level can still prove effective in representing the will of the European people." This can only happen under two conditions: 1) the party systems across the EU are congruent 2) EU citizens vote for similar reasons for similar parties that belong to a particular party family (Mair and Thomassen 2010, 29). Despite this complexity of the European Parliament, the European Parliament seems to be organized like any other legislative body: along the classical left-right ideological dimension (Hix et al. 2006). For example, the coalition behavior of European party groups is determined by left-right policy distances between party groups, rather than size of the party groups (Hix et al. 2005). The two biggest EP factions tend to vote together on EU-institutional issues (thus confirming that they share similar views in terms of EU integration), but they tend to be more split when it comes to socioeconomic issues that are key elements of the left-right dimension (Hix et al. 2003, 327).

The universality of the left-right dimension across party systems and the creation of distinct and cohesive European party groups based on the left-right ideological dimension seem to at least partially fulfill Mair and Thomassen's two conditions needed for an effective European party system: (1) party systems across Europe should be congruent and (2) voters should vote for parties based on the left-right dimension (2010). Marsh and Hix (2011, 12–3) argue that a genuinely European election might not be the one where citizens are motivated by their attitudes towards the European Union, but rather a contest where European citizens respond to current policy concerns in similar ways.

In support of the European nature of the EP, Hix (2001) finds out that in the majority of the cases, national parties vote in unison with their European counterparts. This makes sense since one would expect that by joining a party faction in the European Parliament, national parties want to overcome collective action problems to achieve their policy goals (Hix et al. 2003, 314). Therefore, their membership in a transnational political group should be based on programmatic proximity, which should translate in voting cohesion. Indeed, empirical research seems to show that the factions of the European Parliament have managed to achieve high voting cohesion rates (Bailer 2008). But is this agree-

ment in voting due to programmatic agreement? Some scholars see the growing voting cohesion of factions as a result of the increased power of the Parliament and the importance of the European political parties (Hix et al. 2005). This argument is related to a theory, which sees voting in parliament as being governed by two motives: communication and decision (Picketty 2000).

First, policy preferences have to be communicated. Second, decisions are needed to obtain a majority (Picketty 2000). Hix et al. (2005, 212–3) suggest that as EP's power increases, more is at stake and as a result the decision motive is stronger. Therefore, the effectiveness of transnational party groups must also be regarded a key determinant of their voting cohesion. Thus, effectiveness is a rival hypothesis to explain levels of voting cohesion. According to the authors it is hard to separate the effect of an effective party organization from the effect of the legislators' programmatic preferences on voting cohesion. At the same time, they have found that ideological heterogeneity has little effect on voting cohesion rates, since it is buffered by the discipline of the transnational group. This result is supported by the observation that larger EP factions seem to have higher voting cohesion rates.

II. RESEARCH QUESTION

This study examines the dimensions of the European Parliament's political space: 1) whether there is a programmatic cohesion within the factions of the European Parliament and 2) whether programmatic cohesion affects voting cohesion. I hypothesize that high programmatic cohesion of a national party with the rest of the EP faction should result in a high voting cohesion rate of that specific national party. The programmatic cohesion of a national party is defined as the congruence of the political program of that national party with the rest of the member parties of the same EP faction. That intra-faction pressure, rather than programmatic cohesion, affects voting cohesion rates is tested as the alternative hypothesis. Pressure within the EP faction could be inducing MEPs to vote together on different issues regardless of the programmatic preferences of their national parties. In order to test this alternative explanation, I hypothesize that 1) membership in a larger EP faction will have a positive effect on voting cohesion 2) membership in a mainstream — pro-EU faction will have positive effect on voting cohesion.

To measure programmatic cohesion, I needed a programmatic description of each national party entering the EP. Such information could come from a variety of sources (e.g., speeches, expert opinions, MP surveys), but the most detailed and systematic attempt to de-

scribe the programs of national parties in the EP can be found in the dataset generated by the 2009 Euro-manifestos Project. This project was conducted by the Mannheim Centre for European Social Research (MZES) with the aim of collecting and performing text analysis of the Euro manifestos of national parties and of the European political groups for the elections of the 7th European Parliament in 2009. For the Euromanifestos project, the MZES uses the classification scheme developed by the Social Science Research Centre Berlin (WZB) in the context of its Comparative Manifestos Project (CMP). The original classification scheme used for the CMP text analysis was developed by David Robertson (1976) to analyze the policy preferences of parties in the UK. The scheme was later modified by the "Manifesto Research Group" (MRG)³ to include a variety of countries and to make in-depth European-specific analysis possible. Trained coders in each country use the modified CMP coding framework to perform textual analysis of the manifestos issued by national parties entering the EP. The database provides comprehensive information about the programmatic Euro-profiles of the different national parties (EES).

Even though the importance of manifestos as political documents is disputed, empirical research has shown its relevance for political decision-making (Rallings 1987; Klingemann et al. 1994). Party manifestos lay out a wide range of political issues and the party's solutions to these problems as of the moment of the election. The manifestos of parties are usually ratified at party conventions. Therefore, these manifestos are an authoritative expression of the political parties programs. In our case, both the national political parties and the European political groupings have issued manifestos before the 2009 elections to the European Parliament. One would expect the manifesto of a national party to show a high level of cohesion with the manifestos of the other national parties members of its EP faction. However, we consider this an open question that will be subjected to empirical research.

In the first part of this study, discriminant analysis is applied to classify the national member parties in the different factions of the European Parliament. I will then use the probabilities derived by discriminant analysis as an indicator for of programmatic cohesion. This technique has already been applied in earlier studies of the classification of national parties in the EP (Klingemann et al. 2006). Subsequently, I will determine whether programmatic cohesion affects voting cohesion rates of national parties in the European Parliament. Voting cohesion rates (overall and in a specific

policy area) as well as voting records and other statistics are available from the VoteWatch.eu website. Finally, I will test whether intra-faction pressure, rather than programmatic closeness, explains the variation in voting cohesion. I will use two proxies for intra-faction pressure: size of the EP faction and whether it is mainstream or not. Presumably, larger EP factions will exert stronger pressure on their members. Mainstream factions, as being more traditional in their voting discipline, are also more likely to have a positive effect on voting agreement. This analysis not only sheds light on the party-based representation model, but also contributes to the understanding of the emergence of a Europe-wide party system.

III. METHODOLOGY

In the discriminant analysis, I will follow the strategy used by Klingemann in his work on comparing and classifying Eastern European and Western European parties based on Comparative Manifesto Project data (Klingemann et al. 2006). The method of discriminant analysis determines which variables discriminate between two or more groups. The discriminant analysis will 1) generate indicators measuring degrees of difference between the factions and 2) help to interpret these differences in terms of the categories of the classification scheme.

I will use the factions of the 7th European Parliament as the group variable. For the national parties I have the same set of policy characteristics to describe the election programs. This allows inspecting the discriminating power of these characteristics between the programmatic profile of a known faction and the rest of the programs. Discriminant analysis provides the probability of each national election program to belong to a certain faction (Klecka 1980). I will measure programmatic cohesion as the likelihood of a national party belonging to its proper faction.

In the second part of the study, I will use the results from the discriminant analysis as an indicator of the programmatic cohesion of the national parties in the European Parliament. The relation between voting cohesion and programmatic cohesion will be inspected by regression analysis. The voting cohesion rates are expressed by an "Agreement Index" and calculated for each vote using the following formula:

$$A_i = \frac{\max(Y, N, A) - (0.5((Y + N + A) - \max(Y, N, A)))}{Y + N + A} \quad (1)$$

³The MRG was created as a research group within the European Consortium for Political Research (ECPR) by scholars interested in using in a content-analytic approach to study policy preferences of parties in a comparative framework (European Election Studies).

where Y = number of votes "FOR", N = number of votes "AGAINST", and A = number of "ABSTENTIONS." Thus, the cohesion rate is the arithmetical average of the sum of the scores of the Agreement Index (Hix and Noury, VoteWatch.eu). In the last part of my analysis, I will test two models that presume that intra-party pressure rather than programmatic cohesion explains variation in voting cohesion rates. In the first model, regression analysis will test the relationship between the size of the EP faction and voting cohesion rates. In the second model, I will use the left-right and EU positions of EP factions to determine whether a party is mainstream. I will then run regression analysis to find out whether mainstream parties are more likely to have high voting cohesion rates.

I. Classification Scheme Used for the Discriminant Analysis

To perform discriminant analysis we need a set of variables that describe the content of the party election programs. A comprehensive classification had been developed for the Euromanifesto project. The argument was defined as the coding unit. In most cases one sentence contained only one argument; if there were more than one argument in a sentence, the sentence was subdivided into "quasi" sentences.

Table 1: Coding Procedure

Step 1. Category of the classification scheme	Step 2. The party's position towards the argument	Step 3. The regional scope of the argument
Environmental Protection	Positive	National European Global Undefined
	Negative	National European Global Undefined

In a first step, arguments are mapped into the categories of the classification scheme (e.g. "Environmental Protection"). In a second step, each argument is further classified by the party's position towards the argument (positive or negative). Finally, in a third step, the regional scope of the argument is determined (National, European, Global, or Undefined) (Braun et al. 2010). For example, the sentence, "We want to reduce urban pollution in the EU," is classified as "Environmental

Protection," "Positive," and "European." A schematic representation of the classification process is given in Table 1.

Table 2: Revised Classification Scheme

Main Policy Domains	Categories
External Relations	Peace Military Anti-Imperialism Internationalism Europe USA
Freedom and Human Rights	Freedom Human Rights Democracy
Political System (in general)	Political Authority Executive and Administrative Efficiency Decentralization Political Corruption
Political System of the European Union	Competence of European Institutions EU Complexity EU Enlargement
Economic Structure	Free Enterprise Regulated Economy Socialist Economy
Economic Policies and Goals	Economic Orthodoxy Economic Growth Employment and Infrastructure
Welfare and Quality of Life	Welfare State Environmentalism
Fabric of Society	Law and Order Traditional Morality Multiculturalism
Social Groups	Middle Class Labor Groups Farmers

The initial data set that was generated by the Euromanifesto project contained about 1400 different variables, which described the party elections programs in a very detailed manner. This high degree of differentiation does not lend itself to a meaningful statistical analysis. Categories are either thinly populated or display a highly skewed distribution.

To overcome these difficulties I have, first, collapsed categories by (a) including lower level categories of the same concept and (b) adjacent categories of similar concepts. As shown in Table 2, this effort resulted

in a much more manageable scheme that is reduced to 32 categories that can be grouped by 9 main policy domains. Each argument is classified as positive or negative (e.g. positive or negative towards "Environmental Protection").

To generate the final score for each category the negative proportion of mentions for a particular category is subtracted from the positive proportion for the very same argument. This means that the indicators for the programmatic profile of the parties' election programs will be differences reflecting the parties' relative position towards a certain policy (as defined by the category of the classification scheme). Second, I have summarized the parties' use of positive and negative arguments by creating three separate variables: (a) the sum of the positive arguments, (b) the sum of the negative arguments, and (c) the difference between positive and negative arguments. Third, and finally, four variables indicate the different regional scope of the arguments: (a) National, (b) European, (c) Global, and (d) Undefined. In the process of reordering the initial classification scheme of the Euromanifesto group I used exploratory analyses as well as intense consultations with recognized experts of quantitative.

The revised classification scheme allows us to describe the programmatic profiles of the parties of the various factions in the EP in adequate detail that goes well above the level of scales that are in much use, such as the left-right scale or different versions of pro-anti-EU scales.

IV. RESULTS

I. The European Parliament Political Space

Including the Independents, the 7th European Parliament has formed the following eight factions (from now on the above abbreviations are used in the text):

1. Greens — Group of the Greens/European Free Alliance
2. GUE-NGL — Confederal Group of the European United Left — Nordic Green Left
3. PES — Group of the Progressive Alliance of Socialists and Democrats in the European Parliament
4. ALDE — Group of the Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe
5. EPPED — Group of the European People's Party (Christian Democrats)

6. ECR — European Conservatives and Reformists Group

7. EFD — Europe of Freedom and Democracy Group

8. Independents — non-attached Members (not belonging to any EP faction)

Table 3 provides a brief overview of the programmatic profiles of the European Parliament or how the EP factions score on the characteristics of their political programs. The scores for each EP faction are calculated as the weighted mean of the scores of the national party members of that faction.

II. The EU in the Political Election Programs

The first three columns show a measure of the factions' overall attitudes towards the European Union.⁴ On average, the EP factions devote about 11 percent of their political platforms to positive statements about the EU, and 5 percent to negative EU statements. The majority of the EP factions are positive about the EU, which is also reflected in an average EU attitude of +6.1 on a -100 to +100 scale. The "EU" column shows that the four smallest political groups (GUE-NGL, ECR, EFD and the Independents) are relatively anti-EU or eurosceptic, whereas the more mainstream parties (Greens, PES, ALDE, and EPPED) are more pro-EU. This division between mainstream — pro-EU and Eurosceptic — anti-EU parties can also be seen in how much space parties devote in their election programs to talk about EU issues. For each faction the columns L1 through L4 represent the percentage of the manifesto that is devoted to national (L1), EU (L2), Global (L3), and General (Undefined) (L4) issues. EFD, ECR and the Independents, which are the factions most negative towards the EU, also use significantly more space to discuss national issues (37.2 percent versus 14.6 percent for the other parties), and less space to mention EU issues (52.0 percent versus 71.0 percent for the other parties). On the average, however, about two thirds of the political programs are devoted to EU issues (67.7 percent), and a little less than one fifth (18.5 percent) — to national issues. This makes sense because, after all, the manifestos were prepared for the EU elections.

⁴ EU_{pos}/EU_{neg} = percentage of the manifesto occupied with positive/negative EU statements; $netsumEU = EU_{pos} - EU_{neg}$

Table 3: General political positions and regional scope of the arguments: A Portrait of the 7th European Parliament

Factions	EU(+)	EU(-)	EU	L1	L2	L3	L4	pos	neg	l-r
Greens	6.5	1.4	5.1	10.8	76.1	4.9	7.6	6.4	93.0	-10.7
GUE-NGL	3.5	7.2	-3.7	15.0	67.1	8.0	8.7	20.2	78.5	-23.4
PES	9.5	1.0	8.5	14.5	71.4	3.8	9.9	5.5	94.1	-9.9
ALDE	13.2	2.7	10.6	15.2	72.2	4.8	6.4	9.1	89.5	-2.2
EPPED	14.6	1.8	12.8	17.4	68.1	5.3	8.0	5.8	93.1	-0.3
ECR	12.2	14.6	-2.4	27.8	56.8	4.1	9.9	28.0	70.7	1.0
EFD	3.8	30.9	-27.1	35.3	54.8	6.2	2.8	57.2	41.9	0.2
Indep.	4.1	24.6	-20.6	48.4	44.3	5.7	1.1	38.2	61.3	-7.4
Total	11.1	4.9	6.1	18.5	67.7	4.9	8.0	11.8	87.3	-4.9

Figure 1: The Use of Positive and Negative Arguments

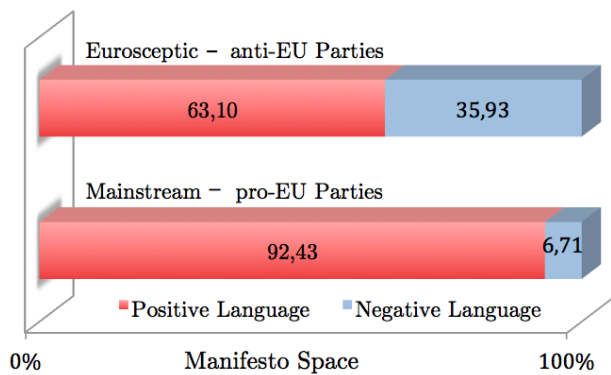
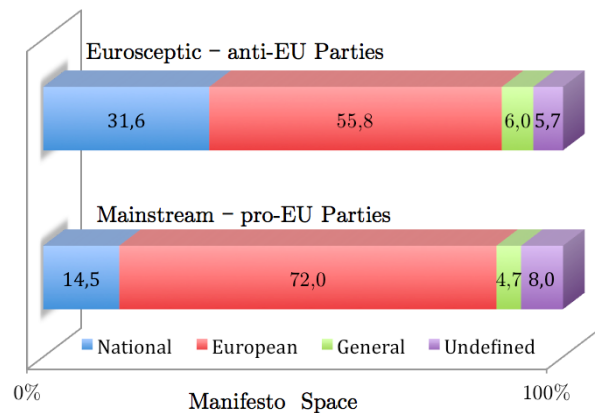


Figure 2: The regional scope of the arguments presented in the manifestos



III. Negative vs. Positive Arguments

The above-mentioned distinction between Eurosceptic — anti-EU and mainstream — pro-EU parties is once again visible in the two columns labeled “neg” and

“pos.” These two columns present the percentage of the average manifesto that is framed in negative statements (“We are against the war on Iraq”) in contrast to positive statements (“We support peace”). As one can see from these examples, the negative-positive measure is not about the policy reference of the argument: it is a measure of how parties evaluate particular issues. A quick look at Table 3 shows that the Eurosceptic — anti-EU parties (GUE-NGL, ECR, EFD, and the Independents) present a much larger proportion of their manifestos in negative language as compared to the mainstream — pro-EU parties (36.0 percent versus 6.7 percent).

IV. Left-Right Score

The last column of this table shows a left-right score, which measures a party’s ideological position on a -100 (left) to +100 (right) scale. This score has been calculated by the MARPOR team considering different policy positions that can be related to the left-right cleavage 7. We use this indicator also in our analyses. According to this scale, the average “left-right” score of the EP is -4.7, which is slightly to the left. Almost all EP factions are below the midpoint of this scale, with the exception of ECR (0.99) and EFD (0.20), which are slightly to the right. I present two graphs comparing the differences between the Eurosceptic — anti-EU parties and the mainstream — pro-EU parties. Figure 1 compares the factions of these two political camps in terms of their use of positive-negative language, and figure 2 shows the differences in the regional scope of the arguments made (National vs. EU vs. Global vs. General issues).

V. Political Map of the EP

Figures 3 and 4 represent the space occupied by the EP factions based on their position towards the EU

Figure 3: Locating the EP factions on the left-right dimension and the pro-anti-EU dimension (scale scores -100 left/anti-EU to +100 right/pro-EU)

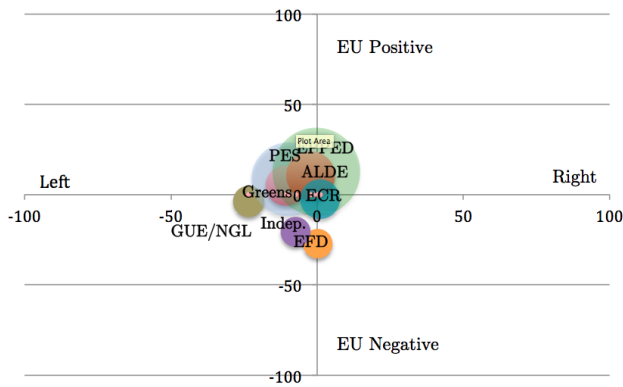
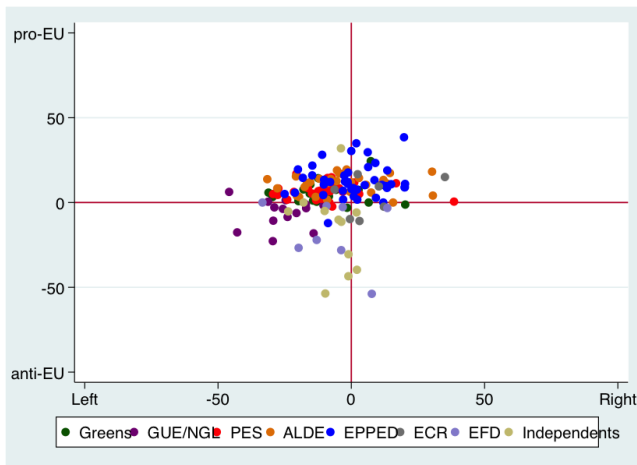


Figure 4: Distribution of the national parties in the EP on the left-right and the pro-anti-EU dimensions



(netsumEU) and their left-right position. Figure 3 shows the average position of each EP faction on these two dimensions. The circle around each faction is proportional to its size. Figure 4 keeps the two dimensions; the different dots represent the individual national parties within each EP faction (different colors represent member parties of the different factions). The graph shows that most national parties are clustered in the upper left quadrant, which means that the majority of them are leaning to the "left" and support a "pro-EU" position. Fewer parties are "anti-EU" and to the right (mostly from EPPED). The main message of this two-dimensional map is that the mainstream — pro-EU

parties have overlapping programmatic profiles (especially PES with the Greens and EPPED with ALDE). This means that more characteristics are needed to arrive at a finer and more meaningful distinction between the different EP factions.

In Table 4, I present a differentiated portrayal of the programmatic profiles of the seven factions based on the revised classification scheme that has been described above. Cell entries consist of the factions' position towards a political issue as defined by the classification scheme. The scores are calculated as the difference between the proportions of the positive and negative mentions of a particular category. Thus, they have a theoretical range from -100 to +100. The score is -100 when there is no positive mention in the election program of that specific category of the classification scheme and +100 when there is no negative mention of that category at all. The score for each EP faction is calculated as the weighted ⁵ average of the scores of its national party members. Thus by looking at each column we can extract a programmatic portrait of each EP faction. To make this large table easier to read I have marked each faction's three highest scores (plus scores above 5.0) in green and the three lowest scores (plus scores below -2.0) in red. The emboldened scores represent the minimum (in red) and maximum (in green) scores for each policy attitude.

VI. EP Political Groups and Policy

First of all, there is a general clustering of the parties around the issues of "Welfare State," "Environmental Protection," "Employment and Infrastructure," and "Regulated Economy." These attitudes combined with a predominant negative attitude towards "Economic Growth" ⁶ suggest that the majority of the parties of the EP support "bigger" government that provides extensive social services, protects the environment, creates jobs, invests in infrastructure, and regulates the economy. These policy positions confirm that the European Parliament is "on the left" in terms of its overall programmatic orientation. However, they also specify what "left" in this context means. In order to find out which issues are mostly debated between the factions, I suggest a measure that subtracts the minimum score from the maximum score for each category. As a result, we can single out policy areas where a large "gap" exists between the minimum and the maximum score signaling that this issue area may cause disagreement among the factions.

⁵Weights are based on the number of MEPs from each national party within the EP faction.

⁶A negative attitude towards "Economic Growth" is defined as "favorable mentions of anti-growth politics and steady state economy; ecologism; 'Green politics.'"

Table 4: *The programmatic profiles of the EP factions. Mean values with standard deviations above 3.0 are italicized*

factions	Greens	GUE-NGL	PES	ALDE	EPPED	ECR	EFD	Indep.	Average
Peace	1.16	1.53	1.58	1.07	1.22	0.27	0.21	0.21	1.15
Military	-0.65	-3.19	0.19	1.09	1.29	1.13	-0.03	-0.55	0.51
Anti-Imperialism	0.27	2.31	0.23	0.02	0.14	1.28	0.31	0.56	0.36
Internationalism	4.24	3.88	4.82	4.55	4.12	4.10	-0.40	-1.30	3.96
Europe	2.19	-2.09	4.48	4.95	6.90	3.64	-8.30	-7.80	3.91
USA	0.10	0.80	-0.36	-0.07	-0.55	-0.34	-0.03	0.10	-0.28
Freedom	1.11	0.39	0.81	2.63	0.98	0.52	0.59	0.05	1.03
Human Rights	4.37	2.76	1.77	2.82	1.27	1.86	0.40	0.87	1.86
Democracy	3.22	5.47	2.40	3.30	1.58	4.10	1.59	4.44	2.57
Political Authority	2.16	5.33	4.62	1.56	3.99	1.83	-1.26	2.79	3.37
Executive & Adm. Effic.	1.02	-0.52	1.52	3.21	2.01	-5.95	-8.95	-3.67	0.58
Decentralization	1.47	1.09	0.44	1.37	1.13	0.35	5.32	0.49	1.10
Political Corruption	1.373	0.12	0.29	1.68	0.16	2.05	0.17	3.69	0.65
Competence of the EU									
Institutions	3.62	-1.88	2.95	4.78	4.98	1.98	-18.43	-0.77	2.62
EU Complexity	0.05	0.06	0.27	-0.08	0.39	-0.75	0.16	0.02	0.16
EU Enlargement	0.56	0.02	0.66	0.71	-0.05	2.85	-1.88	-5.70	0.20
Free Enterprise	-0.57	-2.10	-0.53	1.07	0.58	1.69	-0.08	-0.22	0.18
Regulated Economy	4.86	5.02	7.04	5.17	7.15	-2.27	1.46	2.81	5.54
Social Economy	0.40	6.21	0.16	0.16	0.01	0.03	-0.04	0.71	0.40
Economic Orthodoxy	0.62	-1.19	-0.80	-0.24	1.44	0.51	0.02	1.14	0.37
Economic Growth	-15.04	-0.92	-1.63	-0.36	-1.09	-0.02	-0.41	-0.18	-2.01
Employment & Infrastructure	4.68	0.25	7.79	9.71	9.80	8.72	3.81	-0.02	7.80
Welfare State	12.68	13.76	16.25	7.79	9.82	2.21	5.04	6.90	10.71
Environmental Protection	13.50	6.19	8.83	9.72	7.10	6.04	2.21	1.19	7.76
Law & Order	0.31	-0.28	3.54	4.68	4.41	1.18	3.55	3.53	3.40
Traditional Morality	0.40	0.87	2.42	1.35	4.39	2.90	2.95	4.91	2.94
Multiculturalism	1.64	0.65	0.66	1.16	0.89	0.17	-4.10	-3.88	0.47
Middle Class	0.02	0.19	0.20	0.16	0.27	0.00	0.07	0.04	0.18
Labor Groups	1.60	3.59	3.46	1.84	1.00	0.41	0.33	1.10	1.81
Farmers	0.43	0.49	1.58	1.91	3.09	0.62	0.34	2.40	1.94
Underprivileged Groups	2.57	1.75	1.94	1.48	1.54	0.20	0.32	0.52	1.53
Demographic Groups	3.10	3.36	3.56	1.69	2.78	0.81	1.37	1.73	2.65

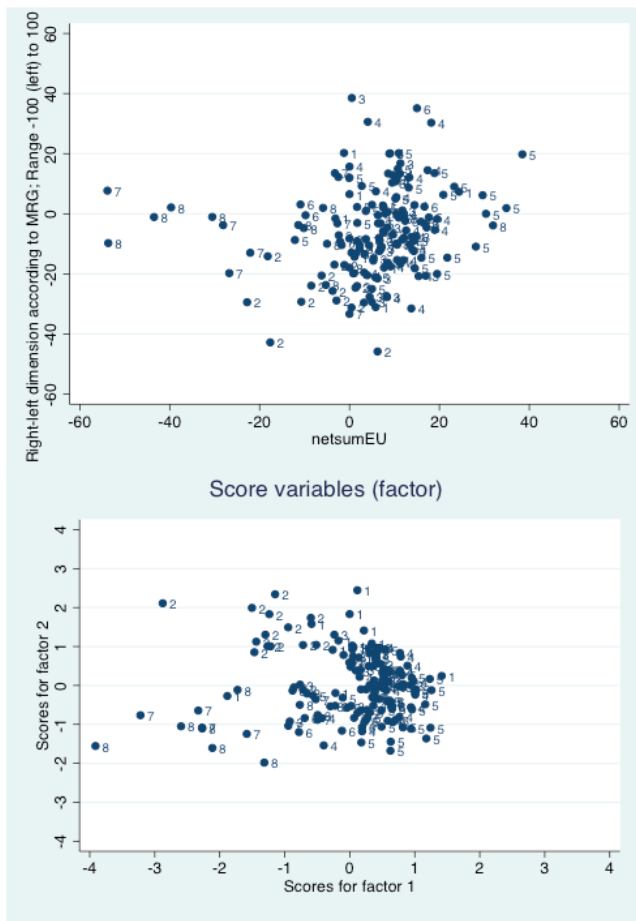
Measured this way, I identify the following most polarized issues: "Europe," "Executive and Administrative Efficiency," "Competence of the EU Institutions," "Economic Growth," "Welfare State," and "Environmental Protection." Even though there is general agreement on the last three issues (pro-"Environmental Protection", pro-"Welfare State" and anti-"Economic Growth"), there seems to be a wide range of positions on how to tackle them. The proper role of the EU is another issue that sparks debate.

VII. Policy Dimensions in the EU

The table presented above is useful for a detailed comparison of the factions. However, in order to arrive at a

more general view of the cleavages among the parties, I submit the variables described to a factor analysis. The factor analysis can suggest what linear combinations of policy positions may underlie the cleavages in the EP. The scatter plot of the first two factors is very similar to the scatter plot of the pro-anti EU and the left-right dimensions (Figure 5). High correlation coefficients between the pro-anti EU scores and the first factor ($r = 0.88$), and the second factor and the left-right dimension ($r = 0.56$) support the credibility of the pro-anti EU and left-right dimensions. Indeed, the first factor positively correlated with "Europe," "Competence of EU Institutions," "Executive and Administrative Efficiency," and "Multiculturalism," whereas the second factor is defined

Figure 5: A scatterplot of the pro-anti EU and left-right dimensions (above) and a scatterplot of the two factors with highest eigenvalue (below)



Dots represent national parties Legend: 1 = Greens; 2 = GUE-NGL; 3 = PES; 4 = ALDE; 5 = EPPED; 6 = ECR; 7 = EFD; 8 = Independents Factor 1: + Europe, Comp. EU Institutions, Efficiency, Multiculturalism (EU Enlargement, Employment and Infrastructure, Military, Free Enterprise, Regulated Economy, Internationalism) - (Democracy, USA); Factor 2: + Human Rights, Environmentalism, Peace, USA, Internationalism, Labor Groups, EU Enlargement) - (Military, Free Enterprise, Traditional Morality, Economic Orthodoxy)

by "Human Rights," "Environmentalism," "Peace," and "Labor Groups," and negatively correlated with "Military," "Free Enterprise," "Traditional Morality," and "Economic Orthodoxy." Since these first two factors account for almost half of the variation between the factions, this means that the left-right and the pro-anti EU dimensions are the two most important cleavages in the European Parliament. It should be noted that this factor analysis displays the pro-EU — anti-EU dimension as the most important cleavage. This can be regarded as an indicator that national parties may increasingly be

guided by EU considerations.

VIII. Predicting Membership of National Parties in European Factions

In the next step of the analysis, I test whether national parties have allocated themselves to the EP faction that provides the strongest programmatic fit for them. In this and the next section I test four hypotheses. The first one is about national parties' joining EP factions, and the following three about the relation of programmatic and voting cohesion.

H₁: National parties join the EP factions that provide the best programmatic fit for them.

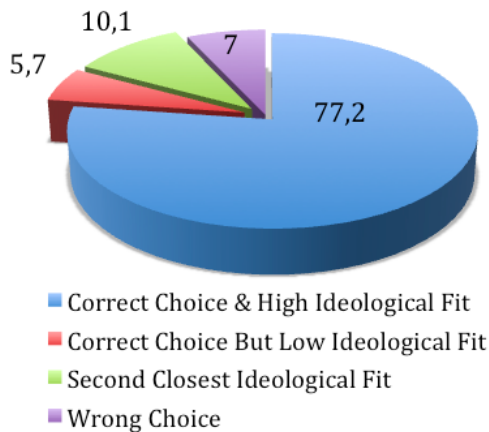
The first hypothesis will test whether the multinational EP factions are cohesive as far as their programmatic profile is concerned. I use discriminant analysis to test this expectation. Discriminant analysis assumes a set of characteristics — as in our case a set of characteristics of party election programs — to separate election programs of parties that belong, for example, to the Socialist International, from those parties' election programs that do not belong to the Socialist International. I apply this logic to classify national member parties of the various factions of the EP. Thus, in our case, the policy positions are the "classifiers" that are used to differentiate between the different EP factions. National parties are classified as belonging to the EP faction that provides the best programmatic fit. In the following table, I present the results of the discriminant analysis, which shows how the actual (or "true") members from each EU faction are allocated according to their programmatic profile. The successful predictions can be seen in the diagonal: the discriminant analysis classified these parties "correctly" to their actual EP faction. The percentage of correctly allocated parties is rather high across the EP factions (highest in the EFD (87.5 percent) and lowest in ECR (71.4 percent)). The classification scheme works astonishingly well, by predicting correctly the allocation of 83 percent (131/158) of the national parties to the respective EU factions. However, this percentage is reduced to 77 percent (122/158) if we take out the parties that are allocated to the "correct" EP faction with a probability of less than 0.5. Although the first measure (83 percent) proves the classification scheme to be comprehensive and predict the allocation of parties correctly, more important for my research question of programmatic cohesion is this second measure (77 percent) that not only looks at the relative correct allocation, but also at the level of the programmatic fit (probability of 50 percent and higher).

Table 5: *Members of EU factions classified according to their programmatic profiles*

True factions	Classified								Total
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	
1	16 84.21	0 0.00	1 5.26	2 10.53	0 0.00	0 0.00	0 0.00	0 0.00	19 100.00
2	1 7.14	12 85.71	0 0.00	0 0.00	0 0.00	0 0.00	1 7.14	0 0.00	14 100.00
3	1 3.57	0 0.00	24 85.71	0 0.00	3 10.71	0 0.00	0 0.00	0 0.00	28 100.00
4	0 0.00	0 0.00	3 10.34	22 75.86	4 13.79	0 0.00	0 0.00	0 0.00	29 100.00
5	0 0.00	0 0.00	1 2.38	3 7.14	36 85.71	2 4.76	0 0.00	0 0.00	42 100.00
6	0 0.00	0 0.00	0 0.00	0 0.00	1 14.29	5 71.43	1 14.29	0 0.00	7 100.00
7	0 0.00	0 0.00	0 0.00	1 12.50	0 0.00	0 0.00	7 87.50	0 0.00	8 100.00
8	0 0.00	0 0.00	0 0.00	0 0.00	1 9.09	1 9.09	0 0.00	9 81.82	11 100.00
Total	18 11.39	12 7.59	29 18.35	28 17.72	45 28.48	8 5.06	9 5.70	9 5.70	158 100.00
Priors	0.1203	0.0886	0.1772	0.1835	0.2658	0.0443	0.0506	0.0696	

1 = Greens; 2 = GUE-NGL; 3 = PES; 4 = ALDE; 5 = EPPED; 6 = ECR; 7 = EFD; 8 = Independents; prior probabilities are proportional to the size of the EP faction

Figure 6: *Allocation of national parties to EP factions according to their programs*



Seventy-seven percent of the national parties have chosen the EP faction that is programmatically closest to them and they show a probability of more than 50 per-

cent of a programmatic fit with this faction. 5.7 percent (9 parties) do not show a large programmatic fit with their EP factions, but they have nevertheless chosen the EP faction that is their closest programmatic option. 10.1 percent (16 parties) have chosen the programmatic profile of their EP faction as a second preference. 7.0 percent (11 parties) have not only chosen the "wrong" EP faction program, but they have also chosen a faction's program that is incompatible. Therefore, we can conclude that more than three quarters of the national parties show a strong programmatic fit with their EP factions.

IX. The Relationship between Programmatic Cohesion and Voting Cohesion Rates

In the first part of the analysis, I established that EP factions are programmatically cohesive and organized along two major political dimensions (EU integration and left-right). In a functioning political system, parties not only need to be programmatically cohesive, but they are also expected to translate this programmatic

Table 6: *The Relationship between Programmatic and Voting Cohesion Rates*

	All Factions	All Factions	Mainstream	Mainstream	Extremist	Extremist
VARIABLES	votcoh2010	votcoh2013	votcoh2010	votcoh2013	votcoh2010	votcoh2013
programcoh	0.02 (0.02)	0.02 (0.02)	0.0335*** (0.01)	0.0399** (0.02)	-0.04 (0.08)	-0.04 (0.08)
mpes	0.00153** (0.00)	0.00203*** (0.00)	0.00106*** (0.00)	0.00112*** (0.00)	0.01 (0.00)	0.00735*** (0.00)
eupos	0.00468*** 0.00	0.00526*** 0.00	0.000834* (0.00)	0.00154*** (0.00)	0.00573*** (0.00)	0.00535*** (0.00)
Constant	0.887*** (0.02)	0.861*** (0.02)	0.927*** (0.01)	0.903*** (0.02)	0.885*** (0.07)	0.841*** (0.07)
Observations	139	144	112	114	27	30
R-squared	0.404	0.398	0.122	0.125	0.4	0.351

Robust standard errors in parentheses, *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

agreement into voting cohesion. Only in this way can parties effectively participate in the legislative process. High voting cohesion rates from roll call data show that EP factions are successful at organizing their MPEs to vote together on different issues. What I will test next is whether high voting cohesion rates are due to the high programmatic cohesion of the EP factions.

H₂: Stronger programmatic fit of the national party with the rest of the EP faction should lead to a higher voting cohesion rate of that national party.

I use regression analysis to determine the relationship first for all factions, and then separately for the group of mainstream — pro-EU parties and eurosceptic — anti-EU parties for two points of time (2010 and 2013). I also control for the position of the national party towards the EU (eupos) and the number of its MPEs (mpes) in the EP faction.⁷ This hypothesis can be tested with the following equation:

$$VotingCoh_i = \beta_0 + \beta_1 programcoh_i + \beta_2 mpes_i + \beta_3 eupos_i + e_i \quad (2)$$

The beta coefficient for programmatic fit of the mainstream — pro-EU parties is low but statistically significant in 2010 and 2013. However, there is no such relationship between the variables in the case of the eurosceptic — anti-EU parties or when we look at the EP as a whole. This finding suggests that programmatic cohesion has a small positive effect on voting cohesion,

and this is only in the case of the mainstream — pro-EU parties.

It seems as if programmatic cohesion could explain only a small portion of the variation in voting cohesion rates among the national parties. In order to answer the question why some national parties vote together with their EP factions at a higher rate, I test two alternative hypotheses, which rest on the assumption that efficiency (rather than programmatic) considerations explain the variation in voting cohesion rates. The fact that programmatic cohesion matters only in the case of the mainstream — pro-EU parties suggests that the explanation for the differences in voting cohesion could be related to membership in the mainstream — pro-EU parties:

H₃: Membership in a mainstream — pro-EU faction will result in a higher voting cohesion rate.

In order to test this expectation I specify two models, one including a dummy for membership in a mainstream — pro-EU faction and another one looking at the interaction between membership in a mainstream — pro-EU faction and programmatic fit.

$$VotingCoh_i = \beta_0 + \beta_1 programcoh_i + \beta_2 mainst_i + \beta_4 eupos_i + e_i \quad (3)$$

$$VotingCoh_i = \beta_0 + \beta_1 programcoh_i + \beta_2 mainst_i + \beta_3 (programcoh_i * mainst_i) + \beta_4 mpes_i + \beta_5 eupos_i + e_i \quad (4)$$

⁷A national party with more representatives in an EP faction has more power to negotiate and swing the voting position in its advantage. Therefore, a national party with more representatives in an EP faction is likely to show a higher voting cohesion rate. I also expect a positive position towards the EU to lead to more loyalty to the EP faction, and therefore, result in a higher voting cohesion score.

Table 7: Explaining variation in voting cohesion rates

VARIABLES	Programmatic Coh.	EP Size	Mainstream	Mainstream Interaction	Membership
programcoh	0.020 (0.022)	0.026 (0.022)	0.030 (0.022)	-0.037 (0.065)	0.0349** (0.017)
greensefa					0.217*** (0.017)
guengl					0.136*** (0.022)
pes					0.220*** (0.012)
alde					0.205*** (0.013)
epped					0.211*** (0.016)
ecr					0.181*** (0.020)
efd					-0.0777** (0.037)
mpes	0.00203*** (0.001)	0.00152* (0.001)	0.00174** (0.001)	0.00192** (0.001)	0.00136*** (0.001)
eupos	0.00526*** (0.001)	0.00470*** (0.001)	0.00326*** (0.001)	0.00318*** (0.001)	0.00174*** (0.001)
mainst			0.101*** (0.025)	0.032 (0.063)	
(programcoh *mainst)				0.085 (0.067)	
factionsize		0.000165** (0.000)			
Constant	0.861*** (0.020)	0.839*** (0.024)	0.789*** (0.031)	0.845*** (0.061)	0.690*** (0.017)
Observations	144	144	144	144	144
R-squared	0.398	0.417	0.509	0.519	0.72

Robust standard errors in parentheses. *** $p < 0.01$, ** $p < 0.05$, * $p < 0.1$

In addition, I test the same hypotheses about the effects of membership in the mainstream — pro-EU factions, but this time by including dummy variables for each EP faction with the Independents as the reference category.⁸ In this way, I can observe in more detail how membership in each EP faction affects voting cohesion rates:

$$\begin{aligned} \text{VotingCoh}_i = & \beta_0 + \beta_1 \text{programcoh}_i + \beta_2 \text{greensefa}_i \\ & + \beta_3 \text{guengl}_i + \beta_4 \text{pes}_i + \beta_5 \text{alde}_i + \beta_6 \text{epped}_i \\ & + \beta_7 \text{ecr}_i + \beta_8 \text{efd}_i + \beta_9 \text{mpes}_i + \beta_{10} \text{eupos}_i + e_i \end{aligned} \quad (5)$$

Finally, I test a second hypothesis that relies on the efficiency factor to explain the differences in voting cohesion rates. A larger EP faction should have a greater pressuring power that leads to an increase in voting cohesion among its national member parties:

H₄: Membership in a larger EP faction should result in a higher voting cohesion rate.

In order to test this proposition, I regress voting cohesion on size of the EP faction:

⁸The Independents are used as a reference category. Since the parties in the group are not formal members of any faction, it is assumed that they provide an appropriate benchmark for looking at the effect of membership on voting cohesion.

$$\text{VotingCoh}_i = \beta_0 + \beta_1 \text{programcoh}_i + \beta_2 \text{factionsize}_i + \beta_3 \text{mpes}_i + \beta_4 \text{eupos}_i + e_i \quad (6)$$

Table 7 presents the regression results. EP size has a statistically significant, but weak effect on voting cohesion rates. However, membership in a mainstream — pro-EU party increases voting cohesion rates by about 10 percent. The model which tests for interaction between membership in a mainstream — pro-EU faction and programmatic fit does not provide any statistically significant results, which means that membership in mainstream — pro-EU factions affects voting cohesion rates regardless of programmatic cohesion.

Finally, the last model in this table shows that membership in most of the EP factions is positively correlated with higher voting cohesion rates. The results suggest that membership in the mainstream — pro-EU factions has the strongest effect on voting cohesion: stronger for the factions on the left (21.7 percent for the Greens and 22.0 percent for PES), and slightly weaker for the factions on the right (20.5 percent for ALDE and 21.1 percent for EPPED). Membership in the right ECR also has a relatively strong effect on voting cohesion (18.1 percent), however, membership in the extreme left GUE-NGL only increases voting cohesion by 13.6 percent. Finally, membership in the extreme right EFD has a negative effect on voting cohesion (-7.8 percent). The beta coefficient for programmatic cohesion is statistically significant once we control for membership in the different factions. The control variables of size of the national party and the party's position towards the EU have a low, but statistically significant positive effect on voting cohesion. As a result of this analysis, we can conclude that when it comes to voting cohesion, membership in a mainstream — pro-EU faction is the most important factor. Membership in a Eurosceptic anti-EU EP faction is associated with lower and even negative effects on voting cohesion. Programmatic cohesion and size of the EP faction have positive but limited effects on voting cohesion.

V. DISCUSSION

I. Dimensionality of the EP Space

The analysis has shown that there are two main dimensions that describe the EP political space: the first dimension strongly correlates with the parties' position towards the EU, whereas the second one correlates with the classic left-right dimension. This is consistent with the findings of previous research (e.g. Hix 1999; Noury

2002). Hix (2001: 665) argues that the two dimensions of the EP political space cannot be collapsed into a single dimension of politics, since they are "inherently contradictory": the left-right dimension is about "the allocation of resources and values between functional groups," and the EU integration dimension involves "the allocation of resources and values between territorial groups." My findings not only support the importance of the EU dimension, they also suggest that the question of EU integration has become a more important source of division in the EP than the classical left-right dimension. Proksch and Slapin (2009) draw a similar conclusion from their analysis of speeches of EU parliamentarians, a finding that contrasts with previous research based on legislative behaviour that emphasizes the centrality of the left-right dimension. The increased importance of the EU dimension suggests a change in the EP political space. One potential explanation may be the increased level of opposition towards European integration. With the growing support of anti-EU political parties, saliency of the integration issue is also likely to grow and contribute to a higher degree of polarization.

Previous research has suggested that EP factions occupy distinct regions of the left-right dimension (McElroy and Benoit, 2011: 156). My analysis, however, suggests that the majority of the EP factions cluster on the left, especially when it comes to welfare issues. This could be due to the frequent formation of a "grand coalition" between PES and EPP (Lane et al. 1995; Hosli 1997; Nurmi 1997; Corbett et al. 2000 in Hix 2001: 667) or the fact that party election programs are full of pre-election promises, which mostly have to do with issues such as creating jobs, building infrastructure, protecting the environment (coded as "leftist" policies). In any case, the left-right blurring by the EP factions raises the question whether EU voters have a wide spectrum of ideological options when they vote at the EP elections. The discriminant analysis presented in this paper proves that the EP factions do have distinct programmatic identities. However, in order to distinguish among the EP factions we need finer-grained descriptions than the ones the classical left-right dimension can provide. The blurring of the left-right dimension and the increased saliency of the EU dimension suggests that the European Union is becoming an arena to discuss problems about the role of the EU, rather than the economy or welfare issues. The emergence of the two factions on the more eurosceptic anti-EU right (ECR, EFD) seems to be a reaction to the majority's pro-integrationist, rather than leftist position.

The inverted U-shaped graph of the EP two-dimensional space (Figure 4) is familiar from previous

research (e.g. Hix 2007; McElroy and Benoit, 2011)). According to Hix (2007: 136) the reason for this constellation is that voters and parties on the extreme left and extreme right are more likely to be Eurosceptic than are centrist voters and parties. Hix uses a rational choice, institutionalist perspective to conclude that extremist parties are strongly anti-European "partly as a function of protest politics," but mainly because of the realization that EU integration "generally locks in moderate policy outcomes that are hard to change" (Hix 2007: 146). He argues that the central question to understand Euroscepticism is whether a certain party gets the policies it wants from further centralization or decentralization (Hix 2007: 148). This rationalist approach can be disputed because of the growing importance of the EU dimension in determining the conflict between the EP factions. Is the controversy over the position towards the EU simply a result of strategic positioning to gain votes or is it a matter of value orientation?

II. The EU in the manifestos

The EP as a whole is largely pro-EU with the mainstream parties forming a pro-EU camp, and the more extreme parties forming an anti-EU camp. This separation in "camps" is consistent with Proksch and Lo's work (2012: 329), who argue that party preference measures of European integration are largely bimodal, with a large pro-integration mode (about two thirds of the parties) and a smaller Eurosceptic mode (about one third of the parties). No matter on which side of the dispute they are, national parties discuss the majority of issues as related to the EU context (on average 67 percent of the party election programs). This finding suggests that national parties are increasingly thinking and talking in a more EU-centric and less nation-centric way.

The emergence of Euroscepticism is of major importance. The creation of the anti-EU ECR and EFD can be regarded as a result of the growth in Euroscepticism in the EP, which deepens the gap between the mainstream pro-EU parties and the nationalistic anti-EU parties. By now this tendency has also reached the British Conservative party, which no longer fits in the pro-EU EPP, and therefore switched to the eurosceptic ECR (McElroy and Benoit 2010: 395). The emergence of ECR and EFD can be seen as a confirmation that value orientation is the main driving force of the politics of the EP. However, a rationalist might still argue that the growing importance of this new dimension simply is a way for the new parties to differentiate themselves from the governing majority to gain votes (De Vries and Hobolt 2012). By employing the rhetoric of Euroscepticism

national parties engage in political entrepreneurship or "the attempt to restructure political competition by taking an extreme stance on a previously non-salient issue in order to gain votes" (Proksch and Lo 2012, 319).

A strategic differentiation of the new Eurosceptic — anti-EU parties from the old mainstream — pro-EU ones is also reflected in the higher percentage of negative connotations in the manifestos of the eurosceptic anti-EU parties. Empirical research on issue framing suggests that negative frameworks are more powerful than positive frameworks (Vreese et al. 2011). More specifically, Bizer and Petty (2005) argue that simply framing issues in a negative way might enhance attitude strength regardless of the content of the statement. Bizer et al. (2011) also suggest that people are more certain of attitudes framed as opposition rather than support. This line of research reaffirms that Eurosceptic — anti-EU EP factions strategically engage in negative framing as part of a more aggressive vote-seeking campaign. Whether strategically — or ideologically — motivated, the emergence of Euroscepticism in the EP might change the nature of the EP, which is generally seen as more integrationist than the EU Council (Hix and Høyland 2013: 174).

III. Programmatic Cohesion of the EP Factions

Already at the first meeting of the European Assembly in 1952, the members of the assembly chose to sit by ideology rather than by nationality (Haas 1958 in Hix and Høyland 2013: 178). Despite the dynamic developments within the EP party system, the EP factions have become increasingly cohesive and powerful in their legislative behavior over time (Hix et al. 2007; Raunio 1997 in McElroy and Benoit 2011: 152). My analysis based on Manifesto data has allocated correctly 82.9 percent of the national parties to their corresponding European factions. This means that the vast majority of national parties choose a European faction based on policy congruence. This finding supports previous research by Bressanelli, who used manifesto data but a different method to correctly classify 71.4 percent of the parties (2012: 749) and by McElroy and Benoit (2010: 377), who used expert surveys to correctly classify 79 percent percent of the national parties.

Bressanelli (2012: 751) suggests that the reason for the "incorrect guesses" or misfits might be domestic politics (to achieve better image joining a certain EP faction) or measurement error due to the shorter manifestos of some national parties. McElroy and Benoit (2010) also predict that the misfits are going to switch EP factions in the future in order to maximize programmatic prox-

imity with their EP faction. According to my data, most of the programmatic misfits happen among the four mainstream factions (Greens, PES, ALDE, EPPED). Most of these misfits are probably due to the fact that new national parties in the EP (who have had no previous membership in EP factions) have a hard time to get accepted if there is already another national party in that organization. On the other hand, some of these "misfits" could also be due to the blur between left and right, which I discussed earlier. Only 6 out of the 27 misfits (approximately one-fifth) happen between the pro-/anti-EU camps, i.e. the majority of the misfits happens along the left-right dimension. This observation suggests that it is more important (or at least easier) for national parties to choose the correct EU camp rather than the correct left/right camp.

If national parties choose the closest programmatic faction in the EP, voting on the basis of national party at the European elections "is not a bad informational shortcut" for voters (McElroy and Benoit 2010: 378). This also means that from the perspective of decision-making and coalition building, EP factions have the advantage of programmatic cohesion. In other words, the democratic deficit in the EP might not be as dire as it seems: the high voting cohesion of the EP factions is at least partially an expression of the programmatic cohesion of the EP factions.

IV. Does Programmatic Cohesion Affect Voting Cohesion?

The EP is supposed to provide a connection between the public's preferences and the legislative behaviour of the elected officials. Arnold and Sapir's (2013:1304) findings show that indeed there is a certain level of congruence between the legislative behaviour of the 6th EP and the demands of the national electorates and national political leaders. A high level of congruence occurs especially when it comes to issues that are salient (2013: 1304). Noury's (2002) findings based on roll-call voting data suggest that ideology or programmatic cohesion rather than nationality is the main factor in explaining the voting behavior of the MEPs. These findings support the emergence of a EU-wide political system, which is accountable to the EU citizens and where the main political actors are EP factions that are programmatically united, rather than nationally oriented (Noury 2002:33).

My analysis only partially supports these findings: there is a statistically significant, but weak correlation between programmatic and voting cohesion, and this is only true when it comes to mainstream pro-EU factions. This finding suggests that even though programmatic

orientation is the leading factor for parties to choose an EP faction, once parties are members of EP factions, a closer programmatic fit with that EP faction has only a weak positive effect on voting cohesion. In addition, parties that have a poor programmatic fit with their EP factions do not show significantly lower voting cohesion rates (the majority of the parties for which the programmatic fit probability is below 0.6 still vote with the rest of their EP faction in more than 90 percent of the cases). As Hix, Noury, and Roland (2005, 231) have reported, left-right heterogeneity has little effect on voting cohesion rates, since it is buffered by the discipline of the supranational group. My findings support this claim, but this time based on the multidimensionality of programmatic profiles. Previous research also suggests that voting cohesion (extracted from left-right position from roll-call votes) is more strongly clustered than the programmatic cohesion of EP factions would suggest (Hix 2002a, McElroy and Benoit 2010 in Hix and Høyland 2013: 181). In other words, the EP factions vote in a more cohesive way than their members' manifestos or expert survey might imply. This means that the high voting cohesion rates are still due to some sort of strategic behavior that does not have to do with programmatic profiles.

Membership in a more mainstream — pro-EU EP faction is likely to result in higher voting cohesion rates among its national party members. Additional factors that affect voting cohesion rates are the size of the EP faction, as well as the size of the national party and its position towards the EU. Although programmatic cohesion still has a positive effect on voting cohesion, most of the variation in voting agreement rates is due to membership in a mainstream — pro-EU faction. Therefore, programmatic orientation seems to be the predominant factor when it comes to membership in the EP factions, but variation in voting cohesion is mostly the result of intra-faction pressure, which is stronger in mainstream — pro-EU factions. The strategic behavior in the EP is likely to increase as the EP becomes more powerful and "more is at stake" (Hix, Noury and Roland 2005, 232). It is interesting that membership in a mainstream faction rather than its size proves to be a more important factor in determining voting cohesion. This means that voting discipline is not simply a matter of intra-faction pressure, but rather the result of a certain type of intra-faction culture, which is only present in mainstream — pro-EP factions. It could be that members of the three Eurosceptic — anti-EU factions are often on the losing side, and, therefore, have less incentive to vote together. Or it could also be that these factions are conglomerates of parties that have joined forces only because of their Eurosceptic position, but when it come to other issues,

they simply disagree and do not vote together. The answer to why mainstream pro-EU factions are better at achieving voting discipline remains open to further investigation.

VI. CONCLUSION

The quality of parliamentary democracy depends on the parties' abilities to control their representatives, to maintain a cohesive programmatic image, to operate effectively in the legislation, and to provide a stable basis for the political process (Hazan 2003). The findings of this study suggest that the emerging party system of the European Union that is reflected in the factions of the European Parliament is well on the road to meet these characteristics. The vast majority of national parties across the EU choose to join EP factions that are closest to them in terms of their programmatic profiles. As a result, the EP factions composed of these national parties show a high degree of programmatic cohesion, which is needed to effectively steer the decisions of the party's representatives in parliament and government (Fuchs 1993).

Once parties are programmatically cohesive, they need to be able to organize themselves in parliament and vote cohesively in order to secure their goals. EP factions have been increasingly successful to achieve high voting cohesion rates. This is another indicator that EU voters can rely on the representatives to secure the promises they were given in party election programs. Thus, EP factions are successful in maintaining cohesion at both the programmatic and the voting level. However, does this also mean that higher programmatic cohesion translates into higher voting cohesion? The results of this analysis show that programmatic cohesion does increase voting cohesion. However, variations in voting cohesion are also — and to a higher degree — related to intra-faction pressure, which is stronger in mainstream, pro-EU factions.

The EP factions are composed of national parties that are highly cohesive in terms of their programs. In addition, intra-faction organization functions as a tool to make sure that the members of an EP faction vote cohesively in the vast majority of the cases. This combination of programmatic cohesion and the effective organization of the vote in parliament is familiar from the national context. It is also evident in the European Parliament although it is more difficult to achieve because of the supra-national composition and the large size of the EP factions. The combination of programmatic cohesion and voting cohesion, due to organizational effectiveness of the EU factions, is advantageous to the EU citizens, because it reduces the cost to observe the

behavior of individual MEPs. The increase in voting cohesion rates and the increase in saliency of the European integration issue indicate that the EP elections and the legislative process in the European Parliament are becoming increasingly European.

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VII. APPENDIX