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Input Democracy in the European Union: Political Representation in Inputs to EU Executives

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Dissertation
Presented to the
University of Dublin, Trinity College
in fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

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Acknowledgements

I would like to thank my supervisor, Professor Gail McElroy, for being an extraordinary supervisor and mentor. I would also like to thank Professor Kenneth Benoit, Dr. Constantine Boussalis and the participants to the department's seminar sessions for their help and thorough comments on my work. A big thank you also goes to Michele Crepaz, Andres Hinrichsen, Lisa Keenan and Gavin Morrison for contributing to the content analysis in Chapter 2 and for their precious insights on the thesis overall; to Lukas Kuld for his support with the computer programming phases of this enterprise; to Dr.Tara Mitchell for her comments on formal modelling; and to Sophie Jacobs for her comments on the final draft of the dissertation.

I would like to acknowledge the financial support offered by the Irish Research Council, without which this dissertation would have been incomplete at best. I also would like to thank the funders of the ICPSR's Miller Scholarship for allowing me to participate in the ICPSR Summer School and thus refine the technical skills necessary to complete this work.

This endeavour would have been impossible without the constant support and dedication of my friends. In particular, I have been blessed to have Michele, Andres and Gavin as course mates and I will be forever indebted to them: no one could wish for better friends and colleagues. I am also extremely grateful to Sara Mitchell for her precious friendship, for all her suggestions on the thesis and for making my office days exhilarating.

Last but not least, I would like to thank Fabrizio: my best friend, my partner, and my chief motivator. This is for you, as is everything I do.

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Summary

The dissertation examines the economic left-right congruence between national parties serving in the 7th term of the European Parliament (2009-2014) and their 2009 voters. It represents an assessment of promissory input representation by national parties serving in the European Parliament.

A key innovation of the study is the use of written parliamentary questions to retrieve national parties' preferences in economic policy. The study uses original datasets on MEPs' legislative activities and on written questions' contents, establishing a corpus of over 55,000 texts. Chapter 2 is devoted to the study of written questions' functions in the European Parliament: comparison of rules of procedures and a negative binomial regression analysis of authorship patterns are triangulated with quantitative text classification analysis via the Naïve Bayes algorithm and complemented with a survey of Commission civil servants and of Members of the European Parliament.

Chapter 3 introduces the state-of-the-art content analytic method to scale written questions ideologically: crowd-sourcing. It explains the procedure adopted to scale party representatives and party voters in economic policy. It also presents descriptive results of representation patterns in the European Parliament by means of bivariate regression analysis, the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test of equality of distributions, scatterplot and cumulative distribution function analysis.

Chapter 4 uses game theory to exemplify two models of political representation: the selection/prospective and the sanction/retrospective model. Log-level fixed effects regression models explore the association of key variables of the selection and sanction model with political parties' legislative congruence scores.

Chapter One

Introduction

Motivation

47% of Europeans surveyed in the 2014 European Election Study believed the European Parliament (EP) did not voice their preferences, and 44% claimed not to trust the institutions of the European Union (EES 2014). Popular support for the European Union has been in free fall since the 1990s, when the age of 'permissive consensus' ended, following the establishment of the internal market. Since then, the European Union has gained competences over redistributive policies, but its institutions do not have sufficient democratic legitimacy to take on those competences (Hix, 2008). Not surprisingly, on the 23rd of June 2016 British voters decided that the UK should exit the European Union, amid, among other things, perceptions of not being represented by EU policy-makers. UK voters are determined to 'take back control' from a distant and unrepresentative European polity, as tenaciously recited by the Leave campaigners.

Given that the EU is in now charge of redistributive policies, it is all the more important to assess whether voters get represented by the parties they send to the European Parliament. The study will investigate political representation in the EP by examining 'input democracy', the democratic quality of national parties' agenda-setting activities. In particular, the study will investigate the extent to which written parliamentary questions addressed by national parties to the Commission or the Council in the 2009-2014 period are aligned to their 2009 voters' preferences. Written questions are legislative activities whose authorship is broadly representative of key Members of the European Parliament's (MEPs') characteristics. They give to individual MEPs unlimited access to the EU Commission and the Council. Most written questions are addressed to the Commission, which is the formal agenda-setter of the Union. Because of these characteristics, written parliamentary questions are deemed a quintessential 'input' activity. The study will establish whether popular fears over a democratic deficit of the EU are justified, by examining the policy messages that national parties send to the Commission.

Because of its usage of written questions, the dissertation is an assessment of EU input democracy, i.e. the extent to which voters' preferences are voiced during the early stages

of the policy cycle (Dahl, 1989, Goodin, 2003: Chapter 8). Dahl (1989) introduced the notion of 'input democracy' and downplayed policy output-oriented assessments of representative democracy. Evaluating whether representative democracy works during the input stage of policy-making – e.g. the agenda-setting stage of the policy cycle – is crucial, according to Dahl, because for the majoritarian outputs of representative democracies to be accepted as legitimate, voters need to know their policy preferences managed at the very least to access the policy-making stage. In other words, policy outputs may not always represent everybody – because of majority voting – but this would not matter if the input phase represents all. When voters can trust that their voice always has the chance of accessing the decision-making stage, Dahl states, a political system can be legitimated as democratic.

This study contributes to the literature on EU representation and the democratic deficit by investigating legislative – as opposed to electoral – congruence and by focusing on 'input' legislative congruence or input responsiveness. Electoral congruence studies monopolise the existing literature on representation in the European Union. Few studies attempt to study legislative congruence but stop at the relationship between the *number* of EU policy outputs and public opinion on the EU, thus matching raw policy numbers – without ideological directionality – to popular euroscepticism. This study will measure political representation by investigating parties' activities happening *during* the policy cycle and by recording their ideological leanings.

The project also contributes to the general literature on political representation, by testing explanations of political representation. While the first contribution consists of examining the democratic deficit of the EU 'substantively', by looking at legislative congruence instead of electoral congruence, the second contribution rests on indicating what reforms are needed to contain the EU's democratic deficit and democratic deficits in representative democracies in general. The study will pit the 'selection' and the 'sanction' models of representation against each other, and test them through variables capturing prospective or retrospective voting behaviour.

These objectives will be met by using original datasets of MEPs legislative activity and the entire corpus of written parliamentary questions submitted during the EP's 7th term (EP7), which contains over 55,000 documents. This research project will investigate the status of 'substantive' (legislative congruence) representation in the European Parliament by

ideological scaling of MEPs written parliamentary questions. Political parties are usually scaled through candidate surveys, content analysis of party manifestoes and speeches or comparisons of voting records (Benoit and Laver, 2006, Miller and Stokes, 1963, Poole, 2005). These have been deemed naïve but adequate measures (Dahl et al., 2003), in that legislators' ideal points are fundamentally unobservable (Benoit and Laver, 2006:15). Survey answers are however *public* preferences, expected to be somewhat removed from legislators' *true* preferences. Roll call votes and speeches are highly strategic activities, heavily influenced by party leaderships and – in the context of the European Parliament – not a random selection of the total votes taken in the chamber (Hug, 2009). Roll call votes do not refer to inputs but to the adoption stage of the policy-making cycle. Focusing on a low-constraint legislative activity is expected to approximate more closely a party's true policy positions, instead of the party leaderships' ones. Written questions are predominantly addressed to the Commission – the formal agenda-setter of the EU polity – by members with low access to Commissioners: given their highly ideological contents, they represent an important instrument for national parties to access the agenda-setting stage of the EU policy-cycle, and represent an invaluable instrument to investigate how voters' inputs are processed in the EU political system.

The Democratic Deficit Controversy

This study connects to the controversy over the EU democratic deficit. In particular, it will investigate the impact of EU second-order elections on political representation. Eurosceptics regularly vent concerns about the EU's democratic failures. 'Identitarian' eurosceptics – typical of extreme right ideological fringes (De Vries and Edwards, 2009, Vasilopoulou, 2016) – view supranational democracy as a chimera, in that democracy can only work at the national level, where closer and frequent contact with citizens ensure representatives' responsiveness to voters' policy preferences. Supranational representatives, according to identitarian eurosceptics, cannot, by definition, be representative. Nigel Farage, ex leader of the eurosceptic UKIP party, frequently criticises MEPs for being lavish, unknown to their constituents, and reluctant to do constituency work at home.[1] This, according to him, makes them unfit to represent voters.

According to the 'participatory' or leftist critique to liberal representative democracy, the EU is undemocratic in that its representative institutional design will lead to inevitable

[1] Nigel Farage speech, Strasbourg, 6 May 2009 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tsVZ4VepQdg

domination by the elite and the unelected 'technocrats'. Their concerns over representative democracy are influenced by the early twentieth century works of Robert Michels, Gaetano Mosca and Vilfredo Pareto on oligarchies and by normative works on direct and participatory democracy (Morel, 2012). This position is tenaciously held by the members of the Italian Five Star Movement, members, together with Farage's UKIP, of the eurosceptic EFDD party group in the European Parliament. At the Five Star Movement founding rally, the V-day, representative democracy was described as a mechanism to cheat poor people (though they put it more 'colourfully' than that).[2]

Far from being confined to eurosceptic rhetoric, concerns about the EU democratic deficit first appeared in academic circles (Leconte, 2010). The academic critiques levelled at the EU fall into six general categories: 1) the EU has an opaque institutional design and ends up being dominated by technocrats; 2) the EU has led to 'deparliamentarisation'; 3) the EP does not have sufficient influence; 4) there is no European 'demos' and hence no European democracy is possible; 5) EU elections are 'second-order'; and 6) the EU does not represent its citizens in that it has a pro-capital bias. The first four classes of arguments have been diminished by empirical research; the issue of insufficient political contestation over the EU's policy agenda during EP elections and the substantive problem of voter representation both need further analysis. This study contributes to the latter two academic debates by describing and explaining patterns of legislative congruence in agenda-setting activities of national parties serving in the EP7 (2009-2014). The study will examine the quality of representation in the EP and assess whether second-order voting behaviour, simple exposure to EU news, or information-processing capacities matter for representation at EU level. It will also examine whether voters of left-wing political parties are at a disadvantage over voters of right-wing political parties, as hypothesised by the sixth academic critique to the EU (also known as the 'social-democratic' critique).

As far as the first argument is concerned, a review of the empirical literature on the various institutions of the EU highlights that EU institutions are not entirely different from institutions in representative democracies. The ECB and ECJ seem to work as normal central banks and constitutional courts elsewhere in Europe (Majone, 2010, De Haan and Eijffinger, 2000, Stone Sweet and Brunell, 1998, Mancini and Keeling, 1994); the Commission's agenda-setting power is almost entirely subject to the influence of elected

[2] Massimo Fini at the V-day: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mcpmzZSdDNU

representatives in the EP and Council (Rasmussen, 2007, Ponzano et al., 2011, Hix and Høyland, 2011: Chapter 3, Peterson and Shackleton, 2012: Chapters 5 & 8, Wonka, 2008, Thomson, 2011: Chapter 4); and Council' working groups and COREPER decisions are all sanctioned by Council ministers (Hage, 2008). All EU documents are uploaded in a publicly accessible online register and all documents can be accessed by anyone by means of a written request (Hix, 2008). With the exception of the norm of consensus, which clouds Council decision-making in secrecy (Naurin and Wallace, 2008, Novak, 2011), the EU is more transparent than most representative democracies and it does not seem to operate differently than other democracies, in terms of the roles and power of its bureaucratic branches.

Research on the second democratic deficit argument equally indicates that the accusation of deparliamentarisation and EU-driven executive empowerment is overstated and even unfounded. Over time, national parliaments have adapted and all of them have now instituted European Affairs Committees (EACs): though there is variation in their strength across countries, they provide important avenues to monitor ministers' decision-making in the Council (Maurer and Wessels, 2001, O'Brennan and Raunio, 2007, Raunio, 2009, Raunio, 2005, Winzen, 2012, Winzen, 2013). Further, the Lisbon Treaty, entered into force in December 2009, sanctions the possibility for national legislatures to flag Commission proposals as infringements to the subsidiarity principle through a procedure called the Early Warning System (EWS) (TEU, 2009: Protocol 2). The usage of the EWS is rare, but there is evidence it affects EU decision-making both pre-emptively and as a veto (Cooper, 2013, Raunio, 2010).

Argument three of the EU democratic deficit thesis states that the EP, although created to boost the democratic credentials of the EU, is still too weak. The EP is not a co-equal legislator with the Council in international agreements, competition law, Union enlargement and withdrawals; [3] it cannot observe Council deliberations, while the Council has full information on the EP's proceedings; and it cannot elect the EU executive. Some scholars call into question the seriousness of the EP's incapacity to elect the EU executive, claiming that separation between the legislative and the executive branch can actually reduce government-opposition legislative behaviour and thus increase policy-seeking behaviour of legislators (Mair and Thomassen, 2010). In the vast majority of policy areas

[3] See: http://www.europarl.europa.eu/aboutparliament/en/20150201PVL00004/Legislative-powers

the EP is now a fully equal legislator with the Council of Ministers. In addition, its organisation in a system of specialised informational committees signals that the EP is a strong professionalised legislature (McElroy, 2006, Bowler and Farrell, 1995, Ringe, 2010). As such, the argument that the EP is too weak appears inflated.

The fourth democratic deficit argument states that democracy cannot exist in a polity that does not share common customs, language, or history. Early democratic theorists often required the *demos* to be part of a homogeneous community or, at most, a nation (Held, 1992, Held, 2006). More contemporary democratic theorists are now claiming that the notion of nationality-based demos is not necessary for democracy. Democracy can be extended to international settings as it was extended to national ones (Dahl, 1989, Held, 1992). Even though language and political systems differ, common history and willingness to be part of a polity should be enough to justify the existence of a European demos (Scheuer, 1999). Cheneval and Schimmelfenning (2013) argue that a democratic regime can still be applied to multiple 'demoi' settings, and that multilevel institutions be created to accommodate this multiplicity. The European Union is precisely built on a multilevel design. Normatively, it is therefore unclear why the absence of a common cultural community in Europe should necessarily be an impediment to democracy in the EU.

The fifth democratic deficit argument highlights the inadequacy of European elections in ensuring that citizens cast their votes under full information. Since the first election in 1979, scholars have found that EP elections have lower turnouts than domestic elections, their campaigning is mostly about domestic issues, and voting behaviour is dominated by government approval: opposition and fringe parties tend to do well in European elections, used by voters more to send signals to the domestic elite than to punish/reward MEPs for their past performances (Reif and Schmitt, 1980, LeDuc, 2007, Hix and Marsh, 2010, Marsh, 1998, Clark, 2012). McElroy and Kritzinger (2012) in their study of 2009 EP elections found that European voters did not know how to place parties in the European integration policy domain, and had difficulties even in the traditional left-right domain, although to a lesser extent. EP voters do not know where the parties stand, especially when European elections are far from domestic ones: this calls into question the relevance of the rational-choice voting behaviour model for European elections. A study on 2009 campaign leaflets also demonstrated the lack of policy substance concerning issues dealt with at EU level: while 55 percent of leaflets talked about the EU, only 19 percent discussed European substantive policies (Davidson-Schmich and Vladescu, 2012). Furthermore, De Vreese

(2012) demonstrated that in the EU some media systems are more 'Europeanised' than others and that a European public sphere is still missing. More recent studies question the second-order nature of European elections, since European issue-based voting seems evident at the individual level (Hobolt and Spoon, 2012, Hobolt and Wittrock, 2011, De Vries et al., 2011). Similarly, Banducci et al. (2011) find that political parties that talked less in the media about European politics received fewer votes. The shortcomings in European electoral competition are hypothesized to generate shortcomings in political representation in that incentives to be responsive to voters can be diminished in second-order elections. Hix and Follesdal (2006) call the lack of political contestation on European issues the major anti-democratic flaw of European institutions, a flaw that even Moravcsik (2008), the staunchest abjurer of the democratic deficit, recognises as dangerous. If voters are unaware of issues decided at EU level and the position taken by EU actors on such issues, they will vote incorrectly or on the basis of national politics, a pattern that was recorded since the first EP elections of 1979. This study will determine whether patterns of voting on the basis of national politics or voting with low knowledge of EU issues are associated with representation deficits.

The sixth argument claims that the EU has a democratic deficit because it has a representation deficit. This is often called the 'social democratic critique'; since it asserts that leftist preferences are underrepresented in the EU, depicted as a pro-capital political system (Hix, 2008). In the words of Philippe Schmitter (2000:9) "[t]he EU is indeed surrounded by representatives, but these are hardly representative of the citizenry as a whole. At the functional level, they are overwhelmingly skewed to favour business interests". Hix asserts that the hypothesised skew in favour of capital is unlikely to hold: given the strong consensual institutional framework of the EU, policy outcomes are expected to be centrist and close to the median European voter (Hix, 2008:75). Moravcsik (2008) also concedes that EU institutions still can – and do, according to his study on the Council – manage to be substantively representative of the median voter. However, research on representation deficits still has to examine the issue. Studies on representation deficits, in fact, have mainly measured representation as electoral congruence (Belchior, 2013, Costello et al., 2012, Walczak and Van der Brug, 2013, Vasilopoulou and Gattermann, 2013, Dalton, 2015) or as the association of number of laws passed and public support of the EU (Arnold et al., 2013, Toshkov, 2011). These studies conclude that the EU does not have a representation deficit, especially when economic or typical left-right

policy domains are considered. There is some incongruence on the European integration dimension, with more pro-integration elites than voters. The current research on political representation in the EU finds therefore no representation deficit especially in the core policy domain of the EU: economic policy. However, the studies do not assess the EU policy-cycle: the study of policy outputs is incomplete, and the analysis of policy inputs is entirely missing. The pro-business bias might be present in concrete legislative activities and absent in survey responses or manifestos. The existence of bias will be thus tested here on EU 'input' legislative activities..

Measuring representation as the congruence between voters' survey answers and candidates' survey answers does not acknowledge that the attitudes of party candidates may be different from the actual behaviour of political parties during decision-making. Survey respondents face social desirability biases: party candidates may feel compelled to recite political positions they know to be similar to those of their voting base. The strand of research that maps the raw number of secondary legislation passed and public support does not take into account that EU legislation and euroscepticism may go hand in hand because legislation slowed down post-Maastricht, and public support decreased at the same time, both phenomena being linked to the increased salience of EU legislation (Hix, 2008). A better design would scale EU policies ideologically, and more precisely map public opinion to policy outputs. The question of whether there is a substantive democratic deficit in the EU therefore needs additional evidence. Despite the importance of examining decision-making in assessing democratic deficits, the gathering of performance-based evidence on the EU democratic deficit is still in its infancy. This study attempts to contribute to the emerging literature on representation performances by investigating the responsiveness of EU legislators to voters' policy preferences in the input – or 'early' – stages of the policy cycle.

Implications

This research project will investigate the status of political representation in policy inputs to the European Council and Commission. It will establish whether political representation functions fundamentally differently in this 'second-order' system and whether there is a pro-capital bias in inputs to the EU Commission. The findings, in addition to contributing to our understanding of the EU democratic deficit, have implications for the survival of the EU political system. Representation quality has been found to matter for regime support

and legitimacy (Rohrschneider, 2002, Newton, 2006). Furthermore, studies on political support demonstrate that low trust in political institutions – or low 'diffuse support', to use David Easton's (1975) concept – lead to more anti-system political behaviour (such as fights with the police, unofficial protesting, government overthrow and refusal to pay taxes) and higher acceptability of law non-compliance (Muller et al., 1982, Marien and Hooghe, 2011). Compliance with the law and pro-system behaviour thus depend on political support which depends on good representation: unresponsiveness has clear consequences for the effectiveness and survival of political regimes. Studies have highlighted the way in which euroscepticism has already transformed European institutions and practices, which have become increasingly intergovernmental (Leconte, 2010: Chapter 1). Low input responsiveness may further fuel popular eurosceptic tendencies and reinforce eurosceptic campaigns, leading, in the extreme, to the dissolution of the European project.

This research project will describe the extent to which popular perceptions of the EU's democracy are justified by the actual legislative behaviour of national parties in the EP and will determine the factors leading political parties to misrepresent their voting base. The project thus not only contributes to better understanding of the broader phenomenon of the EU democratic deficit, by advancing EP-specific representation studies, but also of representative behaviour in general. The EP offers wide institutional, party-organisational and voter-type variation on which to test theories of representation. It will determine whether prospective voting, – i.e. focusing on ensuring good selection at election time, – or retrospective voting, – i.e. focusing on sanctioning parties' past behaviours, is key to ensuring successful representation.

Outline of the thesis

Chapter 2 analyses the instrument used to ideologically scale national parties' policy inputs: written parliamentary questions. Written questions are chosen, among the host of 'input' legislative activities, for their lower leadership domination, their higher representativeness of the EP chamber and their overwhelmingly ideological contents. They are thus most appropriate to measure the average policy position of national party representatives than other 'input' activities available to MEPs. Chapter 2 investigates the degree of leadership domination of written questions by comparing these with other input-stage legislative activities at MEP disposal. The comparison is done by investigating rules of procedures and, more quantitatively, by exploring patterns in authorship. The chapter

further investigates whether written parliamentary questions are indeed overwhelmingly ideological. Being relatively costless activities, there is a concern that they might be exploited for constituency work. The study employs quantitative classification analysis of the entire corpus of EP7 written questions to gauge the extent to which left-right statements are present in the texts as opposed to pure oversight statements or pure constituency ones. The analysis is complemented by a survey of Commission civil servants and EP8 MEPs. Chapter 2 finds that written parliamentary questions are mostly used to express the individual policy positions of MEPs, that they are tabled by frontbenchers and backbenchers alike and that they tend to be avoided by committee chairs. They appear to serve an executive access function, since members with high access to the Commission table fewer questions. In addition, MEPs face low constraints when writing questions, and they mostly used them to communicate their individual, unconstrained policy preferences to Commissioners.

Chapter 3 examines the quality of representation in economic policy inputs during the 7th legislative term of the European Parliament. It successfully applies crowdsourcing, a state-of-the-art content analysis method relying on online coders, to scale political parties in ideological dimensions. Crowdsourced ideal points of national parties are then compared to voters' policy positions retrieved from the 2009 European Election Survey. Voters and parties are compared by both central-tendency measures of congruence and distribution-based ones. The chapter finds that the median voter theorem applies in the European Parliament, notwithstanding its second-order elections. Political parties of the right tend to move towards the middle of the ideological distribution and position themselves to the left of their voters, while leftist parties move to the right of their voters to place themselves close to the centre. The data does highlight a pro-business bias of EP7 parties, but that may be entirely consistent with the under-sampling of centre-right parties in the study. The social-democratic hypothesis thus cannot be confidently supported. The study highlights that the EP7 has high input responsiveness to the median voter but low pluralism, i.e. responsiveness of political parties to their own median party voters is generally low. Policy preferences of party voters that are away from the median do not get proportionate access to EU executives. Thus, although representative on average, the EP scores low in pluralism, fundamental at the input stages of democratic political systems' policy-making (Dahl, 1989).

Chapter 4 weighs in on the selection/prospective vs. sanction/retrospective controversy in representation theory and has implications for the liberal vs. participatory controversy in democratic theory. The chapter quantitatively tests the association between legislative incongruence and key independent variables capturing campaign attention and engagement or the capacity to appropriately sanction/reward representatives' actions. It explores whether reforms of representative democracies aimed at improving elections are adequate to ensure good representation. A formal model of political representation is also presented, which models political representation as a signalling game. The chapter finds that the recent calls for reforming representative democracies by promoting campaign attention and engagement may be unwarranted. Similarly, the degree of contact between party representatives and voters is not a key explanation of representation performance, nor is second-order voting behaviour. Increasing voters' retrospective voting capacities may be a better option; at least as far as EU decision-making is concerned. This result may well be a product of weak political contestation in EU elections, which could require high educated citizens to work. However, the effect of education on representation holds when controlling for campaign information, participation and engagement and was also found in the Netherlands (Aaldering, 2016), whose elections are not second-order.

Chapter Two

Functions of EP Written Parliamentary Questions: Instruments for Ideological Scaling?

Abstract

What is the purpose of written parliamentary questions in the European Parliament? Who tables them and to what end? Research to date has not extensively investigated written parliamentary questions' functions and whether they contain parties' policy preferences. This chapter will use data on MEPs' publicly available legislative activities and the entire corpus of written questions tabled during the 7th legislative term. The analysis finds that, compared with other agenda-setting activities, written questions are the least constrained and the least dominated by party leaders or influential members. All members seem to table them, irrespective of their office, vote or policy status. Quantitative text analysis via the Naïve Bayes classifier additionally finds that the majority of questions tabled during the EP7 contained legislators' left-right policy preferences. A survey of Commission's civil servants and MEPs further highlight that written questions are policy-seeking activities. Research on legislative voting has demonstrated roll-call votes' inadequacy as measures of legislators' policy preferences in European contexts, where party cohesion is extremely high. This is even more the case in the EP, where roll call votes are not a random sample of all legislative votes. The study thus points to a possible alternative instrument with which EU representatives could be ideologically scaled.

Introduction

What functions do written parliamentary questions serve in the European Parliament (EP)? Do they predominantly contain substantive left-right positions or are they symbolic, i.e. used to advance special or constituency interests? The current research on written questions in the European Parliament consists of merely two studies (Raunio, 1996, Proksch and Slapin, 2010), where written questions are used to gauge the degree to which the EP is an informational legislature, focused on specialisation and information-acquisition. No study to date has looked at whether EP written parliamentary questions are 'symbolic' or 'substantive'. The parliamentary questioning literature is equally limited as studies of legislative activities tend to focus on roll call votes or speeches.

This chapter will compare written questions to motions, written declarations, oral questions, questions for question time and debates/one-minute speeches: the comparative design is an innovation with respect to the existing literature, which mostly looks at parliamentary questioning in isolation. In addition, the chapter's originality lies in the methodology adopted to investigate written questions' functions: the comparison of rules

of procedure and the quantitative study comparing authorship patterns will in fact be complemented with quantitative content analysis of written questions' contents. The content analysis consists of text classification via the Naïve Bayes classifier, a supervised machine learning algorithm that determines the class of a new document on the basis of word distributions in the training set. These analyses are accompanied by the results of a questionnaire distributed between December 2016-January 2017 to Commission civil servants and MEPs.

The chapter relies on a new comprehensive dataset covering more than 55,000 written questions, along with data on oral questions, questions for question time, speeches and motions submitted by all MEPs serving during the 7th European Parliament. The study finds that written parliamentary questions are not monopolised by party leaders or by prominent members of national parties, which use them with the same frequency of backbenchers. In addition, content analysis reveals that the vast majority of written questions contain left-right policy preferences.

Analysing the functions of the European Parliament's written questions is significant for two reasons: a) it contributes to the academic literature on political representation, by highlighting an agenda-setting activity appropriate for ideological scaling of EP national parties or even individual MEPs; and b) it contributes to legislative studies by investigating the nature of questioning behaviour of MEPs. Given that not all roll call votes in the EP are recorded, and that requests to record a vote are non-random and usually strategic (Hug 2009), the literature on legislative congruence in the EP needs to investigate earlier phases of the policy cycle, and thus needs an alternative instrument for the retrieval of EP parties' ideal points.

During the EP7 (2009-2014) each MEP tabled an average of 80 written questions, while they averaged 2 opinions and reports, 33 motions, 180 between debates and one-minute speeches, 1 written declaration, 1 question for question time and 9 oral questions. Only 19 MEPs in the EP7 did not submit any written questions and, of these, many served for less than 6 months. The processing of written questions now entails 'considerable administrative costs' (OJ-C-81-E, 2014) on the part of the Commission, which is obliged to answer each of them. Identifying which functions written questions serve will shed light on the priorities of EP representatives and determine whether taxpayer costs in

administrative processing are borne out to voice ideological agendas or to serve geographical constituencies or special interests.

The chapter will proceed as follows: the legislative behaviour theory will be presented first; secondly, empirical studies on legislative activities and written questions will be briefly described; thirdly, the chapter will empirically investigate the functions of written questions in the EP7. The empirical analysis will be carried out in four stages: a qualitative one, which compares EP's rules of procedure surrounding the selected legislative activities; a quantitative one which investigates their patterns of authorship; a content analytic one which looks at the contents of written parliamentary questions submitted during the EP7; and, finally a survey-based one, where the results from the questionnaire to Commission's officials and EP8 MEPs will be presented.

Legislative Behaviour Theory: Symbol vs. Substance and the Role of Party Leaders

Representatives use legislative activities to further their three core goals, i.e. vote-seeking, office-seeking and policy-seeking (Mayhew, 1974 [2004]). Vote-seeking motivations are common to all legislators, in that without pursuing votes, office and policy influence cannot be achieved (Schlesinger, 1975, Downs, 1957). Because vote-seeking is the fundamental goal, legislative activities are often coloured by symbolism: i.e. pork-barrelling, credit-claiming and self-advertising (Mayhew, 1974 [2004]). Thus, legislative activities are often classified into symbolic ('vote-seeking') or substantive ('policy-seeking') activities (Blidook, 2010, Strøm, 1990).

To determine whether a legislative activity is symbolic or substantive, one approach is investigating rules of procedure. This method assumes that different procedural characteristics generate different incentives to use each legislative activity for vote, office or policy-seeking. Mayhew (1974 [2004]) and Fenno (1973) are the principal exponents of this school of thought and present compelling evidence on how the individualistic nature of US institutions incentivises 'pork-barrelling' and constituency-work. Similarly, rules of procedure may incentivise leadership control, increasing the likelihood of symbolic and insincere behaviour. Investigating party leaders' – the 'show horses' – involvement in legislative activities is indeed another method to determine whether a legislative activity is serving vote-seeking/electoral purposes or substantive, i.e. policy, ones (Hall, 1996:29).

Activities mostly undertaken by party leaders are expected to be primarily devoted to vote-seeking. This is because the main job description of frontbenchers is the management of the party's electoral fortunes (Hall, 1996). As a result, party leaders tend to value party cohesion highly and are entrusted with supervising and advertising the party brand. This leads to a predominance of heavily scripted policy positions in their public activities (Strøm, 1990). Because of their focus on enhancing electoral support, party leaders may also tend to have different preferences from their party colleagues. Scholars have indeed found that they often differ from the party base in having more moderate, centripetal policy preferences (Stokes, 1999, Strøm, 1990, Ware, 1992). An activity that disproportionately contains leadership statements is likely to misrepresent both the variation of parties' preferences and the mean position of the party as a whole. Further, activities chosen or delegated to frontbenchers may predominantly contain negative campaign-style messaging against opponents rather than substantive policy preference information (Morris, 2001, Blidook, 2010). Party leaderships are tasked with guaranteeing the electoral success of the party, and there is evidence that symbolic, image-based behaviour is beneficial in electoral campaigns (Popkin, 1991, Lau and Redlawsk, 2006). 'Selective' activities, i.e. those being undertaken by agents with superior expertise and political capital, might therefore be highly symbolic. By serving politically strategic functions – such as to signal party cohesion – these activities might misrepresent the mean revealed preferences of a party, or artificially reduce their standard deviation. If members with leadership positions or with superior information are disproportionally engaged in an activity, said activity is hypothesised to have lower substantive contents (Hall, 1996:Chapter 4). To sum up, selective legislative activities are hypothesized to contain less left-right statements or to contain left-right statements mostly representative of the party leadership. Leadership-domination can thus inform on whether an activity is adequate for the ideological scaling of political parties or members of parliament.

More directly, text analysis can be used to determine the symbolic vs. substantive nature of a legislative activity (Morris, 2001, Martin, 2011, Proksch and Slapin, 2010). The aim of the text analysis is the retrieval of legislators' goals when authoring a particular legislative activity. Semantic content analysis – mostly used in existing legislative behaviour studies – is inappropriate for this aim. Recording the frequency of a linguistic feature selected a priori by the researcher – for example, the mention of a constituency – is, in fact, not sufficient to conclude that a legislative text is of the 'constituency-work' type. A legislator

may mention a constituency while also being strongly ideological. Selecting specific linguistic features is thus not a particularly fruitful way to determine the communicative content of legislative activities. The retrieval of legislative activities' functions requires *pragmatic* content analysis, which is focused on the inference of authors' communicative goals rather than on the description of authors' most frequently used concepts. The symbolic vs. substantive dichotomy is one of communicative goals, and cannot be approximated by the occurrence of words selected a priori by the researcher. Text classifiers, based on the comparison of word-distributions of known texts, can provide information on the relative frequency of symbolic language versus more substantive language in legislative activities. The Naïve Bayes classification algorithm (Manning et al., 2008) will be adopted here to determine which communicative function predominates in the European Parliament written questions' corpus.

This chapter will investigate the degree of 'symbolism' of written parliamentary questions in the European Parliament by triangulating information on rules of procedure with authorship patterns, with the classification of written questions into ideological, oversight or constituency texts and with the results from a short questionnaire to EP8 MEPs and Commission's civil servants.

Literature Review

The literature on legislative activities has mostly focused on legislative voting and on speeches. These activities are high-visibility and 'high-stakes' activities having strong electoral consequences. Their procedural characteristics already point to a likely leader-centred usage. The literature demonstrates that legislative votes have traditionally been strategically managed by the party leadership (Snyder and Groseclose, 2000, Cox and Poole, 2002, Harris, 2005, Austen-Smith, 1990). This also holds true in the European Parliament, which has the additional problem of unrepresentativeness in the sample of its recorded roll call votes (Hug, 2009, Carrubba et al., 2006, Finke, 2014). As far as the literature on speeches is concerned, studies on the US Congress, the UK and Germany have revealed that they are mostly party coordinated and delivered by frontbenchers (Binder and Smith, 1997, Morris, 2001, Harris, 2005, Pearson and Dancey, 2011, Proksch and Slapin, 2012). European Parliament speeches were also found to be controlled by the national party leaderships, with 'rebel' MEPs getting less speaking time (Slapin and Proksch, 2010). Because of their 'selectiveness', we might expect parliamentary speeches

to contain policy-irrelevant information. Morris (2001), for example, found that over 38% of speeches in the US Congress contain evaluations of one's own party or of the opposing party, instead of discussing policy preferences.

The studies of parliamentary questions to date do not investigate the extent of leadership control and of their 'symbolic' contents. This chapter aims at redressing these gaps. The existing studies on parliamentary questioning can be grouped into three categories: procedural studies, authorship studies and content-analytic studies. These all try to determine the main functions of parliamentary questions but do not look at the effect of party-leaderships and their content analyses are based on arbitrary selection of discriminant words. In addition, they are not comparative in design: at most they compare oral questions with written questions.

'Procedural' studies rely on the description and comparison of parliamentary rules of procedure or on elite interviews. The general conclusion from these studies is that parliamentary questioning is multifunctional, serving, on paper, either policy, advertising, and constituency-work functions. The latter are found to be prevalent in oral questioning (Franklin and Norton, 1993, Wiberg, 1995, Rozenberg and Martin, 2011, Rush and Giddings, 2011, Russo and Wiberg, 2010). These studies do not precisely determine which function is prevalent, and, thus, whether written questions can be used to infer parties' policy preferences.

'Authorship' studies examine the association between the number of parliamentary questions and institutional constraints on legislators that indicate policy, office or vote-seeking tendencies. According to this specific literature, which follows the insights of Kaare Strøm (1990, 1999) on party behaviour, when a legislative activity is mostly authored by vote-seeking members as opposed to policy-seeking members it must mean that said activity is used for electoral purposes, as opposed to policy ones. Bowler (2010:491) neatly describes this logic in his study of private member bills in the House of Commons:

> "If policy concerns were the main driver for proposing bills then there should be no electoral connection: MPs from safe seats should be just as likely as ones from marginal seats to have policy concerns and so make proposals".

According to these scholars, policy-seeking tendencies in legislators are revealed by variables such as minority/disadvantaged status in the legislature, being excluded from

government, and belonging to a 'niche' party (Rasch, 2011, Dandoy, 2011, Bailer, 2011, Lazardeux, 2005). Vote-seeking attitudes can be revealed, instead, by variables such as margins of victory, distance from an election or candidate status (Soroka et al., 2009, Rasch, 2011, Lazardeux, 2005, Dandoy, 2011). The role of party leadership is understudied, but can also proxy vote-seeking goals (Rasch, 2011). Authorship studies demonstrate that written questions are mostly tabled by policy-seekers. In Western democracies, written questions have been found to be associated with policy-seeking and not with vote-seeking behaviour (Lazardeux, 2005, Dandoy, 2011). Oral questioning is instead associated with vote-seeking legislators and only to a lesser extent with policy-seeking legislators (Soroka et al., 2009, Rasch, 2011).

Similar studies have been carried out in the European Parliament, but instead of 'raw' numbers of questions, the numbers of question by topic have been used as the dependent variable. The research question of these studies was not aimed at recovering the predominant function of parliamentary questions but at detecting the degree to which the European Parliament is organised so as to prioritise information rather than distributional aims. Tapio Raunio (1996) found that written questions are mainly used by EP committee members to gather information on the relevant committee's policy area. Proksch & Slapin (2010) find that national parties in opposition tend to ask more questions because they are disproportionally suffering from information asymmetries. The chapter's units of analysis are MEP-Commissioner dyads: this confirmed Raunio's finding that EP committee members tend to table questions to the Commissioner most relevant to the policy area of their committee. Bowler and Farrell (1995) studied oral questions by topic and found each topic to be asked by members who have relevant committee responsibilities and relevant interest group membership. In addition, they find that members whose constituencies have a vested interest in the policy domain ask more questions. Because of this, one could infer that oral questions in the EP seem somewhat more subservient to special interests. However, oral and written questions are studied and modelled differently in the various studies, and a direct comparison of their functions is therefore impossible.

Content analytic studies found that written questions are mostly used to solicit information from the executive and to represent voters. Oral questions have been found to be predominantly blaming or 'theatrical' questions (Hazama et al., 2011, Bailer, 2011). Written questions seem to be used for constituency representation (Hazama et al., 2011): 44% of written questions contained such references in Ireland (Martin, 2011) and 33% in

Italy (Russo, 2011). Although the mere mentioning of a constituency is not sufficient to exclude oversight and ideological representation, there is some evidence that the linkage function cannot be excluded from written questions' functions. The only content-analytic study of EP written questions is the one by Jensen et al. (2013). They demonstrated that 40% of written parliamentary questions in the EP6 (2004-2009) were oversight/technical questions dealing with infringement cases. However, the feature selected for classification was arbitrary (mention of directive/regulation or law) and does not a priori exclude that those texts have no ideological or distributive aims. Existing content-analytic studies on parliamentary questions rely on specific words selected a priori and do not compare word distributions of various communicative classes – i.e. ideological, oversight/information, and constituency.

The studies reviewed here lead to the conclusion that written questions attract policy-seekers and mainly have policy-relevant contents. However, studies on parliamentary questioning in the EP are rare and not primarily devoted to the investigation of their functions. Current studies do not look at the 'selectiveness' of parliamentary questioning, and this is especially true in studies of the European Parliament. More extensive comparisons of rules of procedure, contents and selectiveness of various parliamentary activities are required, since questioning is often examined in isolation in the literature. A fully comparative approach modelling various activities simultaneously is better suited to the investigation of parliamentary activity functions. This chapter aims to address these gaps.

Analysis

Qualitative Analysis: Rules of Procedure in the EP7

MEPs are faced with a set of activities that they need to perform: they need to participate in committee meetings and in plenaries and need to vote on legislative and non-legislative – or 'own initiative' – proposals. Some hold rapporteurships or draftmanships and hence have increased duties in specific policy areas. Other than these 'ordinary', and heavily strategic, activities, MEPs can choose to devote some of their time to additional ones such as questions, speeches, motions and declarations (Corbett et al., 2011, Hix and Høyland, 2011). These activities may differ in the degree to which they incentivise MEPs to participate: the window of opportunity that each activity bestows on individual MEPs can be assessed by the constraints they impose (Hall, 1996: Chapter 4).

The right of assembly members to question the European executive branch has been protected since the Treaty of Rome (Art 140). There are three types of parliamentary questions that MEPs can table: questions for oral answer, questions for written answer and questions for question time (EU, 2010: Title IV Chapter 3). The latter types are the most regulated and are asked during plenary, which is televised as plenary meetings are formally public (Corbett et al., 2011:191). Oral questions and questions for question time, moreover, have constraints on number and length, are subject to notice periods and the final decision on whether they will be answered or not is made by the President (question time) or by the President together with the Conference of Presidents (questions for oral answer).

Questions for oral answer can only be tabled by a committee, an EP party group or at least 40 MEPs. They have no secure time slot during plenary and hence they are accompanied by a request to be included in the plenary agenda. If the request is not accommodated within 3 months the question will simply lapse. The Commission will be notified one week in advance, while the notice to be given to the Council is three weeks. Oral questions lead to a debate and possibly to joint motions for resolutions if a committee, a party group or 40 MEPs wish to draft one (EU, 2010: Rules 110, 115).

Questions for question time can be tabled by an individual MEP but need formal approval by the EP President to be scheduled. They are answered during the 90-minutes time slot reserved for question time in the plenary. Each MEP can only table one question for question time per month for each institution and the notice to be given to the Commission or the Council is one week. The relevant European executive body is then required to answer the questions during the QT slot in the plenary. Question answers can be bundled up when the topic is similar. If the questioner is absent, the question shall lapse and receive no answer. If time is not sufficient, the question will be answered in writing (EU, 2010: Rule 116 and Annex II).

Questions for written answer have comparably fewer constraints for MEPs than oral questions and questions for question time. They can be tabled by individual MEPs who can draft as many as needed, and do not require notice periods. The responsibility for their contents lies with the individual MEP; the President has the mere administrative function of delivering them to the appropriate Commission's Directorate General (DG) or Council configuration. The Commission and the Council shall answer within 21 days, further extendable to 42. Should this period lapse, the question will be answered in the relevant

committee's meeting (EU, 2010: Rule 117). They are published online but are not televised, and hence are relatively less visible.

Additional legislative activities are one-minute speeches, accommodated during the catch-the-eye slot set aside by the President in the plenary, motions for resolutions and written declarations.

One minute speeches are delivered by an MEP whose request for the floor to the EP President has been successful. The President is required to ensure ideological and nationality-based proportionality when allowing such requests. Other than time limits, this type of activity has slight topic constraints as the one-minute speech must relate to the topics dealt with in the sitting in question (EU, 2010: Rule 149, Corbett et al., 2011:191-203). These are not the only form of speech allowed in the European Parliament: debates are the other type of speech and, although subject to different rules of procedure, the two forms are paired together in the EP official website and cannot be disentangled in the analyses below.

Debates include legislative and non-legislative debates which originate from the relevant committee reports, after these are presented in the plenary or from oral questioning procedures and EU executive statements. Speaking time is limited and allocated to political groups proportionally to their size, after a 'baseline' equal amount of speaking time has been granted to every group. The speaking time agenda for each debate is drafted by the President and the Conference of Presidents and approved by the plenary. Members selected to speak cannot depart from the subject (EU, 2010: Rule 149). The amount of group speaking time to be used by each MEP is decided by their group. Usually groups devolve all their allocated time to the relevant spokespersons but others also try to set aside time to other members after spokespersons have been given the floor (Corbett et al., 2011: 197-198, 214-315).

Motions for resolution can be tabled by individual members. There is no limit on how many can be tabled but they must not exceed 200 words. A motion is then forwarded to the committee responsible which can decide whether to ignore it, include it in a relevant report or use it to initiate a non-legislative, 'own-initiative' report. Motions can also be requested after a debate. In that case, they need to be tabled by a committee, 40 MEPs or a political group and they are called 'joint motions for resolution' (EU, 2010: Rules 115, 120).

Written declarations can be tabled by individual MEPs up to a maximum of 5 MEPs. There are no limits on the number that an individual can submit but they must not exceed 200 words or deal with issues that are subject to an on-going legislative process. They need the approval of the President to be placed in the register, where they are recorded in order to gather signatories. If the majority of MEPs does not sign, a declaration will lapse. If it gains sufficient signatures it is published in the minutes as an adopted text and forwarded to the EU executives (EU, 2010: Rule 123, Groffen and Lehmann, 2011).

Comparison of MEPs Activities Constraints (EP7)

	Written Q	Oral Q	Q Time	Motions	Declarations	Speeches/Debates
Constraints						
Group Activity	-	✓	-	-/✓	-	-
Televised	-	✓	✓	-	-	✓
Number	-	-	✓	-	-	-
Length	-	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Topic	-	-	-	-	✓	✓
Notice Period	-	✓	✓	-	-	-
Authorisation	-	✓	✓	-	✓	✓
Total	0	5	5	1.5	3	4

Table 2.1 EP Legislative Activities' Rules of Procedure
Source: EP 7 Rules of Procedure.

***Note*:**

- = not applicable
✓ = applicable

Table 2.1 compares the procedural constraints of the selected parliamentary activities. Written parliamentary questions are among the least visible activities and the least constrained in topic, number, length and authorisation procedures. At the procedural level, therefore, they seem to differ from all other activities available to legislators in the EP in that they do not require the same institutional resources or carry the same electoral weight. Written questions leave more window of opportunity to individual initiative than all other activities analysed. Although on public record, they are less formal than all other activities and, therefore, expected to be less selective (Hall, 1996 : 30 , 52 & Chapter 4).

Quantitative Analysis: Frontbenchers vs. Backbenchers

This section will examine which legislative activities are mostly dominated by the 'show-horses' – i.e. the party leadership. A dataset of each MEP's legislative records during the 2009-2014 period will be used to determine frontbencher involvement for each activity type.

The total number of written questions, oral questions, questions for question time, one-minute speeches/debates, motions and written declarations submitted by each MEP during the 2009-2014 legislative period has been collected from the official website of the European Parliament. Questions for question time and written declarations were excluded from the following analysis because of their low variation. 493 MEPs out of 842 in the dataset tabled at least 1 declaration and only 9 MEPs submitted more than 10. Only 178 MEPs in the EP7 tabled questions for question time and only 25 MEPs submitted more than 10. By way of contrast, 818 MEPs submitted at least 1 written question and 648 MEPs submitted more than 10. Similar distributions are found for motions, oral questions and debates.

The activity count for each EP7 MEP is the dependent variable, which is over-dispersed. Therefore, a negative binomial (NB) regression model is applied here to model the over-dispersed count data. A control variable capturing the log number of months served by each MEP during the EP7 – the *exposure* – has been added. This allows us to account for members that were incoming or outgoing, which in the EP 7 were 186 in total (13% of seats in the EP7 were substituted). A multilevel modelling approach was adopted because of the hierarchical nature of the data. MEPs (k) are in fact clustered by party (j) and member state (i). It is necessary to control for possible un-modelled country and party effects. The following formula summarises the full multiple regression model:

$$\text{MEP}activity\text{count}_{ijk} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 Frontbencher_{ijk} + \beta_2 Committee\ Chair_{ijk} + \beta_3 Seniority_{ijk} + \beta_4 Female_{ijk} + \beta_5 \#Assistants_{ijk} + \beta_6 Europhilia_{ij} + \beta_7 NationalDelegationSize(Weighted)_{ij} + \beta_8 2009ElectionsDM_{i} + \beta_9 DomesticProceduralFamiliarity_{i}$$

The key independent variable is *Frontbencher*. The variable measures whether the MEP was a member of the leadership (1) or not (0) at any time during the 2009-2014 term. Activities disproportionately undertaken by frontbenchers are deemed to be selective and thus likely to contain credit-claiming, advertising and party-label enhancing, scripted positions to a higher extent (Proksch and Slapin, 2012, Harris, 2005, Morris, 2001, Rasch, 2011, Pearson and Dancey, 2011, Bräuninger et al., 2012). Party leaders in the EP are usually members of the European Party Group (EPG) bureau. The leaderships are variously composed of national party leaders, EPG chairs, vice-chairs and spokespersons (or group coordinators). While national parties are undoubtedly the most important principal of MEPs, being the gatekeepers of candidatures to European elections (Reif and Schmitt, 1980, Marsh, 1998) and the key drivers of EP party groups' strong discipline as well as party switching among MEPs (Hix et al., 2007, McElroy and Benoit, 2010, Ringe, 2010), the fact that they act in cooperation with other national parties within EPG has to be taken into account. Measuring frontbencher status only taking into account national party leaders is too restrictive. The variable has been operationalized as a dichotomised additive index of EP party group chairmanship, vice-chairmanship, spokesperson responsibilities and national party leadership. Given the difficulties in retrieving all national party heads for the EP7, a binary variable was considered the best option as role overlaps could not be measured with accuracy. The data was collected from EPGs' official websites and secretariats, combined with information from the EP official website and from Corbett et al. (2011). 36% of MEPs in the dataset were party leaders.

Committee chair measures whether the MEP chaired an EP committee (1) or not (0) at any time during the 2009-2014 term. This is the second key independent variable of the model,

and is designed to provide further evidence on the selective nature of a parliamentary activity. Committee chairmanships are decided by EP party groups and it is unlikely that a rebel will be selected as chair, since party loyalty plays a significant role in EP committee assignments (McElroy, 2001). Moreover, relevant policy expertise/knowledge is an important requirement to be nominated as a chair (Corbett et al., 2011:147-151). Committee chairs have, therefore, a great deal of policy information, given their expertise and frequent contact with European executives (Corbett et al., 2011:142, 241, 350) and their influential status within the EP (Hausemer, 2006). An activity disproportionally undertaken by committee chairs may have high information and transaction costs and may impede universal representation of the Chamber (Hall, 1996: Chapter 4). Legislators occupying these posts may also be party leadership loyalists and it is thus likely that their over-representation in an activity would make said activity unrepresentative of the population of EP legislators. The data was collected from the personal pages of MEPs scraped in April 2014 from the EP official website. 4% of MEPs were committee chairs.

Control variables include authors' characteristics that could impact both activity volumes and the likelihood of being a frontbencher or a committee chair. Party level and member-state level covariates are also added to account for possible party or country institutional characteristics that might impact activity counts. The control variables are *Seniority, Gender, Number of Assistants, National Party Size (Weighted)*, *Party Europhilia*, *District Magnitude,* and *Domestic Procedural Familiarity.*

Seniority is measured as the number of months the MEP has worked in the EP from its establishment date in 1979. The variable theoretically ranges from a minimum of 1 month to a maximum of 420 months. Data on MEPs' seniority was collected from the personal pages of MEPs, scraped from the EP official website in April 2014, before the EP website change after the May 2014 elections.

Female is a dummy variable, taking the value 0 when the MEP is male and 1 when the MEP is female. Data on MEPs' gender was collected from the personal pages of MEPs, scraped from the EP official website in April 2014, before the EP website change after the May 2014 elections.

Number of Assistants captures the absolute number of both local and Brussels-based assistants working for the MEP. Data on MEPs' assistants was collected from the personal

pages of MEPs, scraped from the EP official website in April 2014, before the EP website change after the May 2014 elections.

National Party Size (Weighted) is measured by weighting the number of EP7 seats won by the MEPs' national party with the proportion of EP7 seats won by his/her EPG. Theoretically, the variable ranges from 0 to 99, since 99 is the maximum number of seats a national party could win and 1 represents the totality of EP7 seats. The data was collected from the EP official website section 'In the Past'[4].

Party Europhilia is measured as the sum of pro-European quasi-sentences minus the sum of anti-European quasi-sentences in the party 2009 EP elections manifesto. The variable was collected from the EES 2009 Manifesto Study (variable *pro_anti_EU*). It theoretically ranges from -100 (extreme eurosceptic) to +100 (extreme europhile).

Party Extremism is measured as the MEPs' party distance from the average ideological score of political parties competing in the 2009 EP elections. The ideological score for each party was retrieved from the 2009 EES Manifesto study (variable *rile_mrg*) and it is the sum of rightist quasi-sentences minus the sum of leftist quasi-sentences in the party 2009 EP election manifesto. The variable theoretically ranges from 0 (centrist) to 100 (extremist).

District Magnitude is the ratio between the number of districts imposed by the electoral rule and the total number of EP seats allocated to the member state. The data comes from various reports and factsheets published by the European Parliament and the European Elections Database (Lehmann, 2008, Strauch and Pogorelis, 2011, Lehmann, 2009, EED, 2013). Data on the Bulgarian and Romanian electoral rules has been retrieved from the Electoral System Change historical country reports (ESCE, 2014).

Domestic Procedural Familiarity measures the extent to which national parliaments are familiar with/facilitate written questions, oral questions and debates/speeches. The IPU 2007 "Tools for Parliamentary Oversight" dataset was used to construct the variables capturing the domestic constraints imposed on various forms of legislative activity. Higher values indicate stronger provisions in domestic legislatures for written or oral

[4] Url: http://www.europarl.europa.eu/aboutparliament/en/009cd2034d/In-the-past.html

parliamentary activities. Table 2.2 below displays the results for each activity analysed. Coefficients are presented as incidence rate ratios.

	Frontbenchers' Patterns of Authorship			
	WQ	**OQ**	**Motions**	**Speech**
Frontbencher	1.003	1.518***	1.894***	1.155+
	(0.0867)	(0.117)	(0.225)	(0.0890)
Committee Chair	0.668*	2.858***	1.171	0.673*
	(0.123)	(0.443)	(0.293)	(0.111)
Seniority	0.999	1.000	1.003**	1.001
	(0.0006)	(0.0006)	(0.000901)	(0.0006)
Female	1.111	1.289***	1.089	1.106
	(0.0890)	(0.0942)	(0.126)	(0.0789)
# Assistants	1.017	1.005	0.977	0.997
	(0.0164)	(0.0129)	(0.0194)	(0.0130)
Europhilia	0.994	1.030***	1.040***	0.999
	(0.00564)	(0.00516)	(0.00681)	(0.00412)
Extremism	0.998	1.016	1.013	1.002
	(0.0109)	(0.00843)	(0.0121)	(0.00810)
Nat. Pty Size (Weighted)	0.983	0.960	0.936+	1.016
	(0.0362)	(0.0284)	(0.0361)	(0.0263)
DM 2009	0.997	1.003	1.002	0.992
	(0.00950)	(0.00350)	(0.00567)	(0.00535)
Dom. Familiarity	1.126	0.974	1.025	1.073
	(0.0866)	(0.0316)	(0.0520)	(0.0540)
Exposure	2.466***	4.740***	5.176***	2.630***
	(0.280)	(0.699)	(0.999)	(0.279)
Intercept	0.73	0.007	0.013***	2.54*
	(0.49)	(0.004)	(0.011)	(1.15)
Alpha	-0.180***	-0.630***	0.448***	-0.353***
	(0.0545)	(0.0769)	(0.0550)	(0.0514)
Member States (Var)	0.703**	0.00148	0.111	0.189*
	(0.253)	(0.0395)	(0.128)	(0.0868)
National Pties (Var)	0.586***	0.389***	0.597***	0.269***
	(0.123)	(0.0987)	(0.180)	(0.0625)
N	753	753	753	753
Log-likelihood	-3771.08	-2198.48	-3057.7425	-4442.85
Wald χ^2	74.09	250.14	200.35	120.91
p-value	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000

Standard errors in parentheses

$^{+}p < 0.1$ $^{*}p < 0.05$, $^{**}p < 0.01$, $^{***}p < 0.001$

Table 2.2 Multilevel Regression Models of Authorship Patterns. Coefficients are incidence rate ratios. R^2 unavailable for multilevel modelling and hence not reported (Gelman and Hill, 2007:Chapter 21).

The findings clearly point to written questions as an agenda-setting activity: frontbenchers are as likely as backbenchers to submit a written question. However, committee chairs, who are already in contact with Commissioners, submit fewer questions. It is important to note that frontbenchers do engage in written questions: these activities may thus serve some important legislative function. They are, however, not *monopolised* by them: this signals that their main function is not electoral. The fact that committee chairs, MEPs in constant contact with Commissioners, submit 34% less written questions signals that written questions' predominant role is giving individual MEPs access to the Commission's decision-making, primarily concerned with the EU policy agenda. One prerogative of committee chairs is their privileged access to the agenda-setter of the EU: that members having regular interactions with Commissioners end up not using written questions as much as their colleagues indicates that these activities may have an important agenda access function.

The analysis further reveals that all other activities examined here are instead monopolised by frontbenchers. In particular, frontbenchers author roughly 52 percent more oral questions, 89 percent more motions and 16 percent more speeches. This is not surprising, given that the procedural analysis highlighted oral questions and speeches as highly visible and constrained activities. The finding is somewhat surprising for motions: in contrast with the qualitative analysis, motions are flagged here as a costly activity, being monopolised by MEPs with privileged positions. Speeches, oral questions and motions are thus likely to be staged supplementary activities, and to misrepresent the position of the party as a whole, were they used as instruments for legislators' ideal points. They are expected predominantly to contain negative campaign-style messaging rather than substantive policy preferences.

As far as committee chairmanship is concerned, oral questions seem to be monopolised by committee chairs, motions are equally tabled by chairs and non-chairs while speeches are less likely to be tabled by chairs. Committee chairs tabled almost 3 times more oral questions than non-chairs, highlighting the fact that oral questions may be primarily 'oversight' activities of the theatrical/public-confrontation type. This further proves that oral questions are highly selective parliamentary activities in the European Parliament: they are not expected to serve the agenda-setting needs of legislators since they are disproportionately tabled by highly influential members with frequent contact with EU executives. Committee chairs, instead, engage in 33 percent fewer speeches. The finding of

chairs' underrepresentation in speeches may seem unusual, given the findings by Proksch and Slapin (2010), and by the wider literature on speeches. Proksch and Slapin, however, looked at specific debates surrounding high-profile legislation while here, unfortunately, all types of speeches are collapsed together. Because the EP official website records one-minute speeches and debates together, it was impossible to test the model on debates and one-minute speeches separately.

Concerning all other covariates, written questions do not appear to over- or under-represent any MEPs' key characteristics. Seniors and non-seniors, men and women, extremists and centrists, eurosceptics and europhiles table written questions at similar rates. Written questions are therefore representative of the EP chamber as a whole. In contrast, oral questions tend to over-represent women and Europhiles; motions tend to over-represent senior MEPs and Europhiles and under-represent bigger national parties. In particular, each additional unit in Europhilia, as gauged from the party manifesto, is associated with authorship of 3 percent more oral questions and 4 percent more motions, which is a substantial effect. This means that eurosceptic parties have a harder time forming coalitions with other MEPs in order to table an oral question/motion and/or are less successful in having their oral questions authorised. This is evidence that oral questions and motions censor the expression of certain societal interests and cannot be used to scale political parties. Female MEPs author 29 percent more oral questions, which points to the fact that oral questions may serve important visibility functions, given the electoral bias against women in the political arena (Fulton, 2012). Each additional month served in the European Parliament increases the number of motions tabled by 0.3 percent. An MEP who has served an additional term in the EP is expected to produce 18 percent more motions than a new-entry. This may indicate that motions require a lot of political and institutional knowledge as institutionalised MEPs choose them at higher rates.

More visible and constrained activities are less representative of the legislative chamber and tend to be monopolised by frontbenchers or by influential members. Written parliamentary questions are both the least visible, least constrained and least unrepresentative activities. They tend to be broadly representative of the EP legislative chamber. They are equally tabled by frontbenchers and backbenchers, demonstrating that they are considered important by MEPs. They are less used by committee chairs, demonstrating that they may serve some agenda access function. The section below will

quantitatively classify written parliamentary questions to investigate their functions more directly. Unlike content analytic studies of legislative activities to date, this analysis will code legislative texts by considering all functions that a legislative activity could serve.

Quantitative Content Analysis: The Naïve Bayes Algorithm

Additional and more direct evidence on whether written questions are 'symbolic' or 'substantive' activities is presented here. This section will investigate the proportion of policy-change, oversight, and constituency contents (mirroring the three main goals identified by the legislative behaviour literature) in the entire corpus of written questions tabled during the 2009-2014 legislative period. Although the analyses above have demonstrated that written questions are not monopolised by party leaders, there is still the possibility that they do not contain sufficient ideological contents to enable ideological scaling.

To determine which legislative function predominates in EP7 written questions, the study quantitatively classifies the entire corpus via the Naïve Bayes (NB) algorithm. Quantitative classification analysis of texts works by first identifying categories of interest (legislative goals, in this specific case), and, secondly, in quantitatively associating words to each category, i.e. retrieving class discriminant words by using texts whose class is known a priori. Texts whose class is already known (the training set) are usually retrieved through a 'gold standard' corpus or by human coding of a random selection from the corpus. The NB classification algorithm works by 'learning' words proportions from the valid (human coded or gold standard) training set. In a second stage, it assigns a class to the remainder of the corpus – i.e. to the virgin – or test – texts. Class assignment to virgin texts is done on the basis of the class' likelihood given the distribution of words in the test documents.

Each word in the sample of documents has a class probability assigned to it. The algorithm multiplies the probabilities of the document words to yield the posterior probability for each class. The multiplication strategy makes Naïve Bayes very suitable for classification, as it yields values close to either 0 or 1 (Manning et al., 2008: Chapter 13). Laplace smoothing is used to counteract the effect of words that appear in the test set but are absent in the training set. More formally, class is retrieved on the basis of the following function:

$$C_{M.A.P.} = \arg\max_{c \in C} P(c \mid d)$$

$$\text{where: } P(c \mid d) = \frac{P(d \mid c)P(c)}{P(d)}$$

The parameters of interest are P(d|c), i.e. the class (c) likelihood given the 'virgin' document (d) distribution; the class probability P(c) – or the prior – and the document probability P(d) . The prior and the class-specific word distributions are learned from a pre-given set of texts whose class membership is known (the training set). The word distributions of the new – or 'virgin' – documents will be compared with the training set distributions. Each new document will be assigned the class that has the highest posterior probability – p(c|d) – , calculated from the virgin document's words distribution.

The categories, or classes, used to label the EP7 written questions' corpus are 'ideological', 'oversight' and 'constituency'. The ideological class includes all the texts that contain left-right statements, indicating that the author is requesting policy-changes and communicating a clear policy direction. The oversight class contains all written questions that have no ideological statement and that request clarifications/information or expose EU executives' actions. The constituency class contains written questions that have no ideological statement and require some form of help to a geographical constituency, specific businesses or individuals. Examples of all three classes from the EP7 corpus are presented below.

A written question by Monika Flašíková Beňová, MEP from Slovakia, demonstrates how written questions can act as powerful policy-change instruments, filled with strong ideological statements:

> *"The financial crisis cannot be a reason to suppress the economic and social rights of residents of the European Union. The ambition of Member States to tackle extreme poverty and inequality is waning and the austerity measures being implemented as an instrument to combat the financial crisis are having a disproportionate effect on the poorest citizens. Universal healthcare, social services and fair wages, which were in the past taken as a given, are becoming more and more of a privilege. States can in no case, however, abandon their obligation to respect the human rights and fundamental freedoms of their citizens, including the economic and social rights guaranteed by the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union. The financial resources to cover the operation of social policy, taxes*

and transfers are quantitative indicators of the extent of social solidarity and the effects of their redistribution are being reflected in the living conditions of EU citizens, such as income and pension support, growth and security for their savings, and also the way in which free or subsidised social services are used. Does the Commission intend to issue a recommendation with respect to tax redistribution policy as part of the European Unions struggle against the financial crisis?" (Flašíková Beňová, M: 2011-10894)

The text below, instead, is an example of purely inquisitive contents: it appears contrary to a recent decision by the ECJ and primarily aims at drawing out the Commission and exposing its opinion on the matter. No direction of possible policy change is discussed.

"Can the Commission state its views on the latest judgments on health and patients handed down by the Court of Justice and say which national practice and rules it considers to be contrary to the case-law of the Court of Justice in regard to the internal market in health services and patients' rights? In the Commission's view, are there any parts of the health sector which are not affected by EU rules and the judgments of the Court of Justice?" (Søndergaard, S. B. : 2009-4139)

Finally, an example of the constituency class is offered. No interest on substantive policy change is evident from the text below. The question is a pure and simple request for funding to help a town.

"A comprehensive school in the municipality of Reichshof/Eckenhagen is planning to redesign its schoolyard. Can this school in the district of Cologne, North Rhine-Westphalia, apply for EU funding for this project? If so, which body should the school contact in order to seek advice and submit an application?"(Reul, H: 2009-3792)

What is the distribution of each of these classes in the entire corpus? Answering this question is important to determine whether written questions can be used to measure the ideological preferences of political parties. In addition, classifying the entire corpus is also useful to filter out non-ideological texts when proceeding to the ideological scaling of political parties. To answer the question, a valid training set has to be created first. Secondly, the entire corpus has to be classified by means of the NB algorithm.

The first phase, i.e. the creation of the training set, required the design of a classification codebook and the random selection of texts from the entire EP7 written question corpus. A 'gold standard' training set – a group of texts whose class membership is pre-given – would have been the best-case scenario, but gold standard text sets of pragmatic linguistic

functions of EP written parliamentary questions were unavailable. If such a 'gold-standard' existed, the present study would have been unnecessary. Human coders were asked to classify a randomly selected sub-set of the corpus. Following content analysis recommendations (Neuendorf, 2002), 345 texts were randomly sampled from the corpus. The corpus consists of ca. 56,000 EP7 written questions scraped from the EP official website. Tables 2.3 and 2.4 below present the training set and corpus statistics:

Training Set Summary Statistics	
Total # Cases	345
Total # Words	105,236
Total # Types (Unique Words)	5,039

Table 2.3 Training Set Summary Statistics.

Corpus Summary Statistics	
Total # Cases	55,623
Total # Words	17,398,912
Total # Types (Unique Words)	68,000 ca.

Table 2.4 Corpus Summary Statistics

Each sampled text, stripped of author's name, title and political party affiliation, was coded by 3 coders (author plus 2 other coders). Coders were all political science PhD students. The coders were given a codebook, refined after two pilot studies. The first codebook was too generic and was substituted with one where policy domains were described at length and where left-right statements were presented for each policy domain separately. Examples of ideological, oversight and constituency classes were also added. In the final codebook, coders were first asked to determine the policy area of the text and whether left or right statements were present in the text. If that was not the case, they were prompted to detect whether the text was a request for explanations, facts and figures (technical/oversight) or for funding/preferential treatment for a locality or individual (constituency/special interest). The flowchart of the coding procedure is depicted in figure 2.1 below:

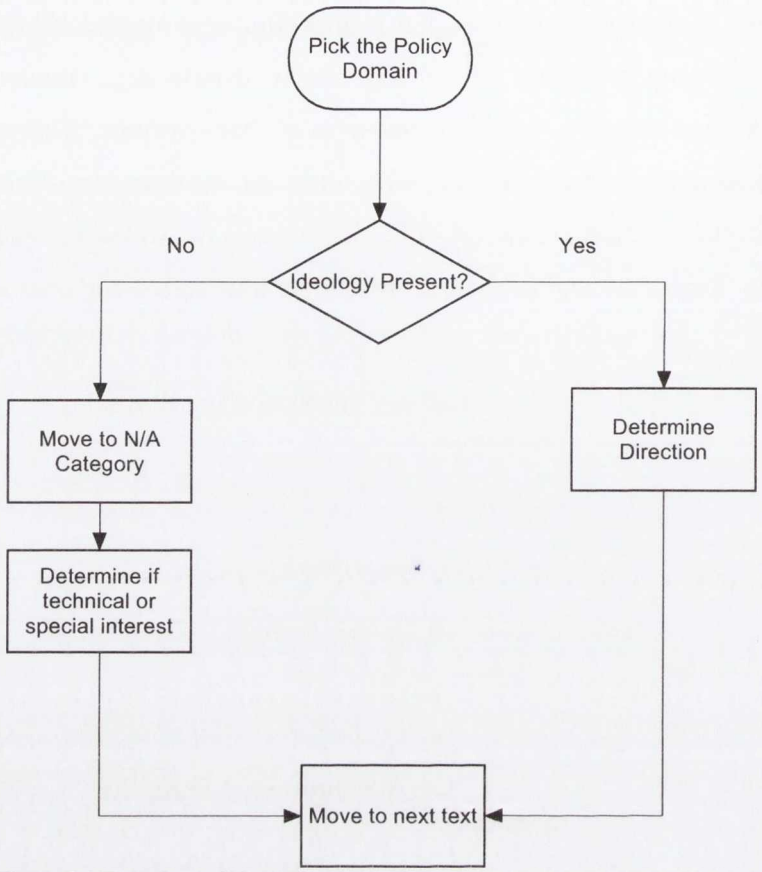


Figure 2.1 Flowchart of the coding procedure.

Requiring the identification of left and right statements may seem peculiar given that the research question does not require ideological scaling. It was adopted to ensure that the identification of ideological texts was systematic and not subjective. Left and right labels were aggregated into a single 'ideological' category only after coding, though coders were aware that the left/right codes were to be aggregated. Descriptions and examples of left and right statements were provided for each policy domain and for the technical and special interest classes. Left and right definitions were policy-specific, and followed Norberto Bobbio's (1996) conceptualisation of the left-right spectrum. The definitions were complemented by the domain-specific left-right scheme provided by Benoit and Laver (2006). The final codebook used by the coders to classify the training set can be found in the supplementary materials section at the end of the dissertation.

The timeline of the human coding project is given in figure 2.2 below, which also records Krippendorff's alpha measure of reliability (α). Krippendorff's alpha is the ratio of observed disagreement among coders over disagreement expected by chance, subtracted from 1. A high number indicates high reliability, with 0.67 being the threshold to consider text analysis reliable. It is evident that moving from the initial generic codebook to a

codebook with domain-specific left-right definitions made a big difference to reliability, increasing from 0.27 and 0.19 to 0.61/0.71 and 0.4/0.5, respectively. The class variable (identified as 'goal' below), however, was always below the required 0.67 threshold, notwithstanding the high overall agreement, with 68% of the 345 texts coded unanimously and only 2% presenting complete disagreement on pragmatic classes between coders.

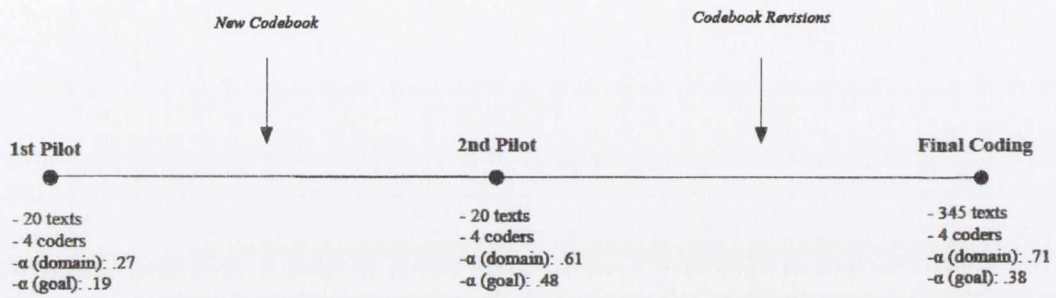


Figure 2.2 Content Analysis Pilots and Reliability Progress

This low reliability was due to the less frequent pragmatic classes (constituency and oversight) being those which presented fewer unanimous classifications. This low reliability made it thus impossible to use the author's own coding of the training set. The problem was solved by classifying the training set texts with the class agreed upon by at least two coders out of three and by generating a fourth class of 'ambiguous texts', where texts coded in complete disagreement were placed. The three principal classes – ideological; oversight and constituency – therefore only contain texts whose class was agreed upon by 2/3 of the coders. An assessment of the validity of this particular training set is done via inspection of the key discriminant features ($p<.05$) for each class. The word clouds of the discriminant words are presented in figures 2.3-5 below. A preliminary assessment of the word clouds reveals that each communicative goal is associated with a reasonable class-specific vocabulary.

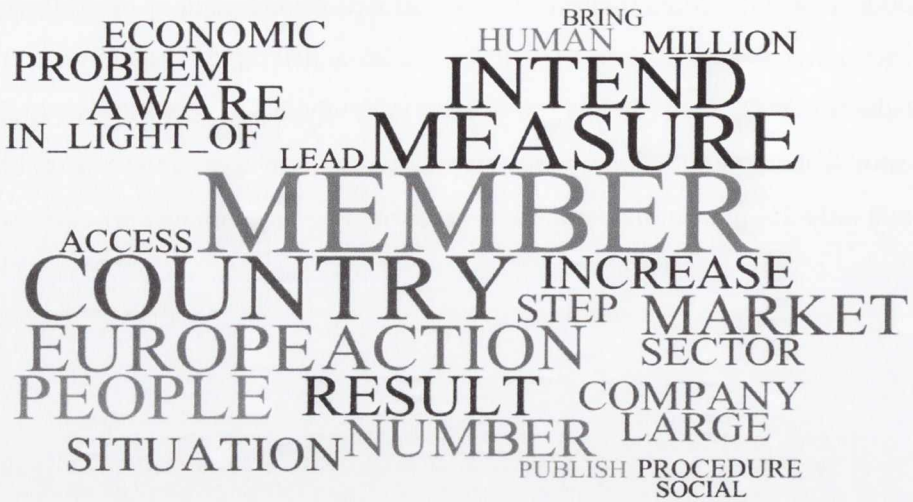


Figure 2.3 Wordle Word cloud of ideological/policy class discriminant features.
***Note*: Each discriminant feature is weighted by the number of training set documents in which it appears. Bigger items are items that appear in the particular communicative goal class more often.**

The word cloud in figure 2.3 summarises all the discriminant features that characterise ideological texts in the training set. Verbs such as *intend* and *increase*; nouns such as *problem*, *measure*, *situation, action, step*; and adjectives such as *aware* feature prominently in the ideological class. These expressions clearly denote a desire to influence EU executives' policy agendas by pointing at problems and calling for future action. Discussion of salient policies is evident through words such as *market*, *social, economic, sector, company.*

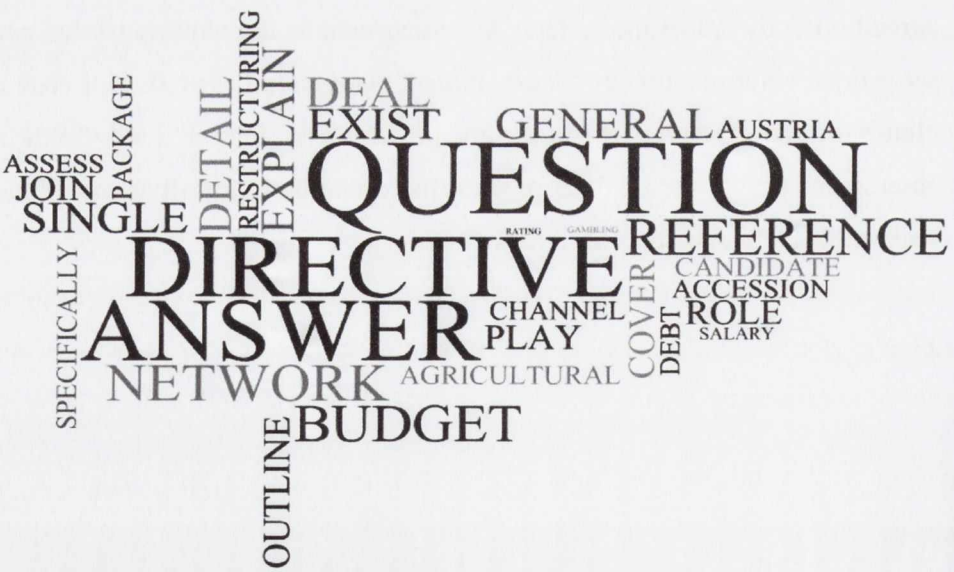


Figure 2.4 Wordle Word cloud of oversight class discriminant features.
***Note:* Each discriminant feature is weighted by the number of training set documents in which it appears. Bigger items are items that appear in the particular communicative goal class more often.**

The second word cloud (figure 2.4) summarises key linguistic features of technical/oversight texts. From these words, the texts seem predominantly to discuss administrative issues and to ask for explanations from EU executives. This highlights that technical questions focus on the internal administration of the EU and predominantly ask for details.

Figure 2.5 Wordle Word cloud of constituency class discriminant features.
Note: **Each discriminant feature is weighted by the number of training set documents in which it appears. Bigger items are items that appear in the particular communicative goal class more often.**

The final word cloud (figure 2.5) refers to special interest texts. The goals of the authors of these questions are mainly related to obtaining funds or projects for geographically-circumscribed communities. The discriminant features of this class are in fact words such as *community, constituent, fund/funding*, *account* and *project*. Words relevant to the transport domain (*port*, *passenger*, *ship*, *airport*) are also preponderant in the special interest class. This policy domain seems predominantly framed in constituency-work terms in the corpus, maybe because of the inherently local nature of transport issues. Since there exist reasonable discriminant words that carry very different proportions in the various classes, the training set is assumed to be valid. The Naïve Bayes classifier is expected to lead to meaningful results.

Once the valid training set was established, the second phase in the quantitative classification of texts was the application of the Naïve Bayes classification algorithm. The corpus' texts were pre-processed by stemming the words to reduce them to their root, and by removing stop words. The software used to perform the content analysis is WordStat/QDA Miner: its English lemmatizer was applied to the corpus, to reduce words

to their root, and so was its English stop word dictionary – where EP-specific stop words were added. Diagnostics were carried out to determine which version of the Naïve Bayes algorithm performed best – i.e. maximised the F-measure. The Bernoulli Naïve Bayes (BNB) classifier, based on 100 discriminant features weighted by their inverse document frequency, was the best performing NB version and was applied to the entire corpus. BNB relies on recording dichotomously the presence or absence of each linguistic feature in each class and assessing whether case occurrences of the feature are statistically significantly bigger in one class over the others (Manning et al., 2008). BNB is appropriate in short texts, and, since written parliamentary questions in the EP are on average 200 words long, the diagnostics have sensibly identified BNB as the best-performing algorithm version.

The classifier learned the word distributions of the various communicative function classes and classified the virgin texts on the basis of their word distributions. Each 'virgin' text was assigned probabilities for each class in the training set; texts were assigned to the class whose posterior probability was >0.5.

Naïve Bayes Corpus Classification Results		
	Frequency	**Relative Frequency**
Ideological	44,985	81%
Inquisitive/Oversight	7,737	14%
Constituency	1,913	3%
Ambiguous	988	2%
Total	**55,623**	**100%**

Table 2.5. Frequency of communicative goal classes in the corpus of EP7 written questions.

The results (table 2.5) show that the classifier classified 81% of the corpus as belonging to the ideological class – i.e. containing language exhorting to policy change. This finding indicates that EP written questions predominantly discuss policy preferences, and, given that the main addressee is the Commission, they are primarily aimed at influencing the EU agenda. 14% of the corpus was classified as predominantly 'inquisitive' (or oversight) and 3% as purely containing constituency-work contents.

The classification diagnostics (table 2.6) assess the performance of the BNB classifier.

Confusion Matrix BNB Classifier						
		Predicted Class				
		AM	**CNS**	**IDE**	**OV**	*N*
Actual Class	**AM**	**2** [40.00] (22.22)	2 [40.00] (20.00)	1 [20.00] (0.37)	0 [0.00] (0.00)	5 1.45
	CNS	4 [66.67] (44.44)	**0** [0.00] (0.00)	2 [33.33] (0.75)	0 [0.00] (0.00)	6 1.74
	IDE	2 [0.72] (22.22)	8 [2.88] (80.00)	**239** [85.97] (89.51)	29 [10.43] (49.15)	278 80.58
	OV	1 [1.79] (11.11)	0 [0.00] (0.00)	25 [44.64] (9.36)	**30** [53.57] (50.85)	56 16.23
	N	9 2.61	10 2.90	267 77.39	59 17.10	**345** **100.00**

Table 2.6. Training set Confusion Matrix, BNB Classifier. Row totals in square brackets; column totals in round brackets.

Note:

AM = ambiguous texts class;
CNS = constituency/special interest class;
OV = oversight class;
IDE = ideological class.

Classification analysis requires an estimation of the error rate by means of the 'confusion matrix' with texts' true classes in the rows and predicted classes in the columns. The frequencies are obtained by partitioning the training set via the 'leave one out' method: the classifier learns word distributions from 344 texts and then predicts the 'left out' text. It does this iteratively leaving out and predicting all the texts in the training set one by one. Then it compares the predictions with the actual classes. The confusion matrix above (table 6) summarises this information and reveals that the BNB classifier's overall expected accuracy is 79 percent, given that 271 of the 345 training set texts were correctly classified (elements in the diagonal). This means, however, that 21 percent of the texts are expected to be classified in error. What is more, accuracy varies by class, with the ideological class mostly predicted correctly (86 percent of true ideological texts were predicted as ideological). The technical/oversight and special interest classes lag substantially behind with only a minority of texts being correctly classified. This may be due to the scarcity of technical/oversight and special interest texts in the training set. A purposive selection of texts would have ensured a more balanced training set, but given the absence of valid 'gold standards' – which was the reason to investigate the issue in the first place – a random selection was the only possible choice. The confusion matrix in table 5 shows the percentage of correct and incorrect predictions in square brackets.

Table 2.6 further indicates the prediction error rates that we can expect for each class (column totals). For example, it is expected that 44 percent of corpus texts classified as ambiguous will actually be constituency texts, 22 percent will actually be ideological texts and 11 percent will actually be oversight texts. Moving to the constituency class, 20 percent are expected actually to be ambiguous texts, 80 percent actually to be ideological. For the ideological class, 0.4 percent and 0.75 percent are expected actually to be ambiguous and constituency texts, respectively. 9 percent are expected to be oversight texts. 49 percent of texts predicted as oversight by the algorithm are expected to be ideological. From this, it is possible to calculate error-corrected class frequencies.

The error-corrected corpus statistics are given in table 2.7 below:

Error-Corrected Class Frequencies		
Pragmatic Category	**Number of Texts**	**Percentage of Texts**
Ideological	45819	82%
Inquisitive/Oversight	8259	15%
Constituency	776	1.4%
Ambiguous	769	1.4%
Total	**55,623**	**100%**

Table 2.7. Frequency of communicative goal classes after error-correction.

In conclusion, we expect between 45,000 and 46,000 written questions to be primarily devoted to the discussion of policy preferences, 7,000-8,000 to be oversight questions and between 800 to around 2,000 to be purely constituency-work texts. The results match the findings from classic content analysis by the human coders, who also found an overwhelming scarcity of written questions that were purely constituency-oriented or oversight-oriented. The least constrained and leadership dominated activity indeed appears largely to discuss left-right preferences.

Commission and EP8 Questionnaire

A questionnaire was sent to Commissioners and Commission civil servants from all the Commission Directorate Generals (DGs) and to all MEPs serving the 8th European Parliament term (2014-2019). The questionnaire was completed (as of January 2017) by 11 MEPs and 19 Commission civil servants. This is a preliminary survey, given the low response rates. But triangulated with the analyses above, it offers confirmation of the findings from the quantitative analysis of authorship patterns and the quantitative content

analysis. The two questionnaires are reproduced in the supplementary materials at the end of this dissertation.

Respondents – both in the EP and the Commission questionnaire – were asked to identify the main objectives of written parliamentary questions and, secondly, to assess their impact on the Commission's work. Concerning the identification of the reasons to table written questions, 4 MEPs out of 11 (36%) stated that they table written questions mostly for policy reasons: either to propose policies to help their constituents, to propose policies that would help European citizens in general or to put their policy positions on record. 3 MEPs out of 11 (27%) said instead that they primarily table them to request explanations of actions/statement/choices made by Commissioners. Other reasons included: a) signalling non-compliance; and b) purely demonstrate to voters that the MEP is active. No respondent admitted to use written questions to solicit funds for constituencies. In addition, the majority of MEPs admit that written questions are sometimes and often sent to voters via email or published in their websites (81%). They also deny categorically that they are written under the request of party leaderships (45%). MEPs report that written questions are an instrument where they can very often (73%) and often (27%) freely express their own opinions. Commission civil servants have a very different view of why written questions are tabled: 84% of respondents (16) believe they are primarily asked to request explanations of actions/statement/choices by Commissioners. The remaining 16% believed they are mostly used to vent constituency-based grievances while no civil servant in the Commission believes written questions are primarily tabled to propose policy solutions. The European Commission views written questions as primarily an oversight activity, while MEPs see in them the potential to advance policy proposals.

As far as the second main aim of the questionnaire, i.e. detecting the impact written questions have on the Commission's work, Commission officials seem to agree that written questions are taken seriously by the Commission and they have an impact on the policy proposals Commission DGs produce. While the majority (53%) of Commission's civil servants believe written questions are rarely perceived as valuable and useful within the Commission, a wide majority of them also states that they are used by DGs to gauge the prevalent opinion in the EP on a proposal, either sometimes or often/very often (67%), and that they influence DGs' work on policy drafts, either sometimes or often/very often (67%). Even if Commission respondents do not accept that the primary aim of written

questions is to propose policy solutions, they are ready to admit that they find them useful to gauge the policy predispositions of MEPs and also to guide the drafting of policy proposals. And while mostly it is civil servants that read them (very often: 68%), Commissioners also often (32%) read them directly. MEPs are reluctant to admit Commissioners act on their written questions, probably for the same reasons Commissioners are reluctant to admit MEPs are policy-seekers. Institutional conflict might lead Commission civil servants and MEPs to have little common understanding of their respective activities. 27% of EP respondents admit that written questions sometimes lead to the Commission starting an infringement proceeding, while 18% only are willing to admit Commissioners' sometimes act on policy proposals MEPs. However, their claim to use written questions to express their policy-positions betrays their belief that to do so could make a difference on policy proposals drafted at the Commission level, as the usage of written questions by DGs to gauge the prevalent opinion in the EP and to influence the drafting of policy proposals betrayed the fact that MEPs are 'policy-seekers' when tabling written questions, even if Commission officials were reluctant to admit it.

Conclusion

The chapter examined EP written parliamentary questions to investigate their functions. It did so by comparing their rules of procedures, their authorship patterns, by examining their contents via quantitative text classification analysis and by a survey of Commission civil servants and MEPs. These empirical analyses were carried out on original datasets established by the author on publicly available legislative activities undertaken by EP7 MEPs, and on written questions' contents. The analysis entailed a mix of methodologies ranging from qualitative comparison of EP rules of procedures; a negative binomial model trying to determine which legislator profile tabled more of each parliamentary activity; the application of the Naïve Bayes classifier to the corpus of over 55,000 written questions tabled during the 2009-2014 legislative period; and a questionnaire to Commission officials and EP8 MEPs. The comparative approach – investigating questioning alongside speeches, motions and declarations – together with the two-stage approach to the analysis – first determining selectiveness and secondly looking at contents – is an innovation over the existing literature on parliamentary questioning which studies questioning in isolation and contents separately from authorship patterns.

The chapter discovered that, among early stage parliamentary activities, written questions are the least leadership-dominated and constrained by authorisation and content rules. MEPs feel free to express their personal opinions and do not table them in response to leadership pressures. Further, they overwhelmingly contain ideological statements. They can thus be used to retrieve legislators' ideal points, and can be useful in studies of representation in the early stages of the policy cycle. The more traditional instrument to scale political parties on the basis of their decision-making is legislative voting. Not all roll call votes, however, are recorded in the European Parliament: those that are, are not a random sample of the roll call votes population and often called by EPGs strategically to induce cohesion or expose party disunity in other EPGs (Hug, 2009, Carrubba et al., 2006). The high party-cohesion of European democracies (Thomassen, 1994) also makes roll call votes unusable as instruments of legislators' ideal points in the EU context. Because of all this, other legislative activities are needed to ideologically scale national parties in European contexts. The other publicly available legislative activities of the EP are mostly tabled by the 'show-horses'. Given the electoral focus of party leaderships and their role in ensuring party unity, measuring political parties' ideological preferences with leadership-dominated instruments is not ideal. The analysis of written questions' texts demonstrates that, notwithstanding their low transaction costs, they are not overwhelmingly used for constituency or self-advertising purposes. They mostly contain left-right policy positions.

Given the low usage of written questions by committee chairs, given the predominance of ideological language in their contents, and given that they are mostly addressed to the Commission, it is suspected that they represent an important avenue for individual MEPs to influence the Commission's work, i.e. the EU agenda. A survey of Commission civil servants demonstrate that Commission DGs use written questions to gauge the prevalent policy preference in the EP or to shape their policy proposals. Written questions are thus appropriate for the evaluation of 'input democracy' – i.e. the representative quality of the EU policy cycle's input stage. The study also confirms the notion that non-selective and non-visible activities mostly serve policy-seeking goals. These findings further show that the increasing administrative costs to process written questions and the increasing time MEPs devote to table them are borne out to increase individual legislators' influence on EU decision-making. The recent growth in written questions' usage indicates that MEPs value the opportunity to access the EU agenda-setter directly by communicating ideological preferences.

Chapter Three

Pluralism of Inputs to the EU Agenda: Winners and Losers in the Political Representation of Economic Preferences

Abstract

Do national parties serving in European Parliament (EP) voice voters' economic preferences in their dialogue with EU agenda-setters? That national parties serving in the EP should be responsive to voters is often called into question, given the flaws in EU electoral contestation. Nonetheless, the literature on representation in the EU published to date finds that, on average, EP parties are representative of their voters. These studies, however, do not look at legislative behaviour but merely at the congruence between party voters' and candidates' opinions, congruence between voters' opinions and electoral manifestoes, or the link between the aggregate numbers of EU policies passed in a given year and public support for the EU. This study will use an original dataset, established by web scraping over 55,000 written parliamentary questions submitted by political parties during the EP7 (2009-2014). These legislative texts are ideologically scaled by means of text analysis and, in particular, through crowdsourcing which, by using human coders, improves the validity of results. The analysis finds that the median European voter is well represented – and even over-represented – in EP written questions, notwithstanding the second-order nature of EP elections. The analysis also highlights low pluralism, which is the standard to which the input stage of the policy cycle should conform. Large party and regional variation in representatives' performance are reported here. The study has implications for democratic politics within the European Parliament and for the EU democratic deficit in general.

Introduction

Do national parties serving in the EU legislature voice their voters' preferences in economic policy? Do various preferences of European citizens manage to at least access the EU decision-making arena through the input stages of the policy cycle? Studies on the health of representative democracy in the EU have either focused on institutional analysis and the comparison of EU institutions with those of established democracies; on the analysis of ideological congruence between parties and voters at election time; or on the analysis of EU-law volumes and median public opinion on EU integration. Whether European decision-making is informed by European voters' preferences is still unknown.

Analyses of the institutional set-up of the European Parliament (EP) reveal some procedural deficits: scholars call into question both the capacity of European citizens to select and monitor EP representatives due to the 'second-order' nature of European elections. First off, the probability of being re-elected to the EP is low: the EP has one of the highest turnovers in representative democracies (Hix and Høyland, 2013). This can

lead to 'lame duck' effects: i.e. low efficiency of future punishment and rewards. A relationship with a low probability of continuation needs substantial rewards/punishments to ensure cooperation from agents: but elections to the European Parliament are second-order, mostly focused on rewarding/punishing national government performance (Hix and Marsh, 2010). Campaigning mostly concerns national issues (Davidson-Schmich and Vladescu, 2012), and voters have low knowledge of party positioning (McElroy and Kritzinger, 2012). In sum, punishing political parties serving in the EP for shirking is very costly for the European voter. Rewarding them is also not credible, given the high turnover rates. As a result, the fact that citizens get what they want out of EP decision-making is often called into question by scholars: they do not expect national parties serving in the EP to be responsive at all to voters. The public is equally sceptic: 50 percent of EU citizens surveyed in 2014 did not believe their voice counted in the EU (EES, 2014). In contrast to these predictions, the current empirical literature on representation in the European Parliament finds that EU representatives, on average, respond to their voters (Costello et al., 2012, Dalton, 2015, Toshkov, 2011, Arnold et al., 2013).

According to Dahl (1989), however, evaluations of the input stage – or pluralism – are the crucial test of representative democracies. The current literature on political representation in the EU has limitations in that it mostly focuses on assessing electoral congruence or the congruence of number of EU laws passed and public opinion on EU integration. Electoral congruence studies do not examine representation during the policy cycle: they focus on comparing voters' attitudes to parties' electoral manifestoes or candidate surveys, which cannot be equated with substantive representation (Pitkin, 1967, Eulau and Karps, 1977). Studies of EU policy outputs, while ascribable to substantive representation, mainly look at the volumes of directives passed by EU institutions without examining their ideological direction. Studies of substantive representation in the EU are thus rare: the extent to which procedural democratic deficits translate into substantive democratic deficits is in need of investigation (Moravcsik 2008).

This study examines whether national parties serving in the European Parliament voice their voters' economic policy preferences in their written questions to EU executives. The analysis is the first of its kind in that it scales actual legislative activities instead of using manifestos or candidate surveys to measure the economic policy preferences of political parties in the EP. This study compares economic policy positions expressed by national party representatives in written parliamentary questions with voters' preferences on

economic policy, taken from the 2009 European Election Survey. Written questions are a channel of communication between individual MEPs and the Commission and they are increasingly popular among MEPs. In addition, they are authored by MEPs of any legislative role and demographic, and are thus representative of the whole EP chamber (see Chapter 2). Their texts overwhelmingly discuss left-right policy preferences (see Chapter 2). Thus, they are policy-seeking activities belonging to the early stages of the EU policy-cycle.

This study uses crowdsourcing to scale political parties. This state-of-the-art text analysis technique involves the coding of contents by an online anonymous crowd. Its advantages are full data reproducibility, rapid completion times and modest costs if compared to hand coding by experts. Further, crowdsourcing, by using human coders, does not sacrifice the validity of results (Benoit et al., 2016). The chapter adopts crowdsourcing to measure the economic preferences of political parties, thus offering an example of how this original scaling method can be applied to political real-world phenomena. This new content analytic method enables studying responsiveness more validly, cheaply and flexibly than before. It makes it possible to establish large datasets on policy positions of legislators *during* their legislative work. Using human coders, the text analysis is less time and context dependent than that achieved via purely automated methods. The application of crowdsourcing to the evaluation of representation performance makes the study of responsiveness (i.e. legislative congruence) easier: representatives' law-making activities can now be ideologically scaled both quickly, cheaply and in a fully reproducible way.

In contrast to EU electoral congruence and studies of EU policy volumes, the analysis finds that the EP is not representative of voters: the regression slope is far from the ideal 1:1 relationship and the distribution of political parties serving in the EP does not closely match the distribution of party voters. National parties tend to place themselves to the centre of the ideological distribution: the median voter theorem (Downs 1957) seems at work even in the EP 'second-order' context. Legislative incongruence is, however, not uniform: the study documents large party and regional variation in responsiveness to economic policy preferences. These findings have implications for the democratic deficit literature on the EU by highlighting a centrist bias in the comparatively lower stakes context of written questions to the Commission.

The chapter will firstly review the literature on representation. Secondly, the methodological section will describe the operationalisation of political representation and the procedure to scale EP7 political parties and their party voters on the economic policy dimension. Thirdly, the main descriptive findings on the quality of responsiveness in the European Parliament will be presented.

Representation Theory and Literature

The scale of modern nation states made the ideal of direct democracy ('government of the people') impractical, and the resurgence of democratic aspirations after the Enlightenment increasingly took, by necessity, a representative character (Dahl, 1989, Held, 2006). Conceptions over what it meant to be a representative, however, were varied and ranged from beliefs that representatives should bear a loose, autonomous relationship with voters' preferences ('government for the people'), to assertions of perfect and strict responsibility towards voters' preferences ('government by the people'). These two extremes have been expanded into several models of representation (Rehfeld, 2016), the most prominent of which are the trustee model, the delegate – or 'gyroscopic' – model, and the mandate model of representation.

The trustee model of representation is embedded in the elitist – or authoritarian (Dahl, 1989) – view of democracy. Prominent defenders of this model of representative rule are Edmund Burke and Joseph Schumpeter (Pitkin, 1967, Mansbridge, 2016). According to this model of representation, representatives are free agents who, once elected, should be autonomous in their decision-making. Elections may function as accountability mechanisms, to determine whether the representative has engaged in good or bad representation. The only way to assess representation deficits in this conception of political representation is, at most, through election results (Pitkin, 1967). Scholars have critiqued this model as capturing 'guardianship' (Dahl, 1989), 'elitist benevolence' (May, 1978), and even coercion (Pitkin, 1967). Hanna Pitkin (1967) argues that representation cannot be assessed by contract stipulations or terminations and that the trustee model merely captures authorisation, not representation, since representation entails clear attribution of decision-making to principals' wishes.

The delegate or 'gyroscopic' model of representation sees representatives as agents that represent voters naturally via some internal characteristic or via being correctly selected on the basis of their true preferences. Jane Mansbridge is a prominent scholar studying and

describing this additional representation model, although the distinction between an 'instructed delegate' – a delegate responding to a mandate – and an unconstrained delegate was already evident in the empirical work by Miller and Stokes (1963). Gyroscopic representatives – or delegates – are not instructed because their perfect alignment with their voters enables them to take responsible decisions independently (Mansbridge, 2003). The descriptive or 'proxy' (Pettit, 2010) model of representation is a sub-category of the gyroscopic model of representation (Mansbridge, 2003). The delegate model is critiqued for its focus on 'presentation' instead of 'representation' (Pitkin, 1967, Phillips, 1998). Some normative theorists, therefore, argue that similarity of identity or ideological opinion is no guarantee of representation. Whether a person shares your group membership or viewpoint is not considered, by these authors, proof of representation quality (Pitkin, 1967). Most dangerously, they claim, the highlighting of similarities can be strategic and might give rise to 'symbolic' representation. This undesirable branch of the delegate model consists of manufacturing a symbolic relationship with the representative, it is typical of the fascist theory of representation, and leads to the paradox of voters becoming the representatives of the representative (Pitkin, 1967).

The mandate model of representation – 'the politics of ideas' (Phillips, 1998), 'acting for' representation or 'responsiveness' (Pitkin, 1967) – is steeped in the liberal theory of democracy and postulates that what is to be represented takes precedence over agents' characteristics or contract stipulations. This model has been famously defended by Hanna Pitkin in her book *The Concept of Representation* (1967). The model requires agents closely to follow voters' mandates and obey voters' political preferences, which should work as guides for legislative action. To assess the standing of representative relationships in a democratic polity, one needs to evaluate *how well* a representative (the agent) *acts on behalf* of the represented (the principal). Any action that is contrary to the principals' preference is defined as a 'discrepancy' that needs justification, since the principal's actions "[...] must not normally conflict with [the agents'] wishes" (Pitkin, 1967:165). This model of representation is often considered to be the closest to democratic normative standards (Mansbridge, 2003, Mansbridge, 2016). May even defines democracy as the "[...] necessary correspondence between acts of governance and the wishes with respect to those acts of the persons who are affected" (May, 1978:1).

Empirical studies of the mandate model of representation – or 'substantive' representation – mostly investigate the US Congress, where extensive availability of roll call votes, and

the low impact of party whips in voting, enables the study of responsiveness or 'legislative congruence' (Miller and Stokes, 1963, Erikson, 1978, Erikson and Wright, 1980, Clinton, 2006, Thomassen, 1994). The European Union, instead, has mostly been evaluated on vote-seat congruence and electoral congruence (Dalton, 2015, Thomassen, 1994, Vasilopoulou and Gattermann, 2013, Costello et al., 2012, Walczak and Van der Brug, 2013, Belchior, 2013). Studies on representation in the EU have thus focused on delegate or gyroscopic representation to a higher extent. Some scholars warn us, however, that electoral fortunes, contract stipulation or stated ideological similarity are not accurate bases to assess representation, because they lie 'outside the activity of representing itself' (Pitkin, 1967: 59). The analysis below is thus the first to investigate the mandate model of representation in the context of the European Parliament.

Methodology

The analysis will compare 2009 European election voters with the behaviour of the national party they voted for during the 7th term of the EP. Proponents of the anticipatory model of representation might question the usage of policy preferences of previous election voters, in that legislative behaviour is often updated on the basis of changes in voters' wishes. However, the promissory model states that representatives should represent the wishes of voters as expressed in the previous electoral mandate. The anticipatory model can run the risk of allowing the representative to act as a free agent. Jane Mansbridge herself admits that the promissory model 'comes closest to the normative standard of direct democracy' (Mansbridge, 2003:526). This study will look at entire ideological dimensions ('core' policy preferences) instead of preferences on specific issues. These 'core' preferences are less prone to instability over time (Kulinsky and Segura, 1995) and thus make the promissory model appropriate.

The unit of analysis adopted here is thus the national party. Many studies have found that national parties – and not simply nationality or EP party groups (EPGs) – play a prominent role in the EP (Schmitt and Thomassen, 1999, McElroy and Benoit, 2010, Hix et al., 2007, Hix and Høyland, 2011, Thomson, 2011, Ringe, 2010). This is because the 'double-constituency' triggered by the second-order nature of EP elections makes national parties the gatekeepers of candidatures. As a result, it is not surprising that the main representational loyalty identified by MEPs is to the national party voter (Scully, 2005, Katz, 1997, Schmitt and Thomassen, 1999). Because of the proportional electoral rule

adopted in EP elections, party voters often have more than one representative in the EP (Strauch and Pogorelis, 2011). The appropriate model is therefore one of collective rather than dyadic representation (Thomassen and Andeweg, 2004). Voters and MEPs will be grouped by national party. Over 160 national parties served in the EP7, because of data availability, however, only 98 political parties are analysed here. These are:

List of Political Parties in the Sample

Austria

- The Greens
- Freedom Party of Austria
- Hans-Peter Martin's List
- Social Democratic Party of Austria
- Austrian People's Party

Belgium

- Humanist Democratic Centre
- New Flemish Alliance
- Socialist Party Different
- Ecolo
- Reformist Movement
- Flemish Interest
- Socialist Party
- Flemish Liberals and Democrats
- Christian Democratic and Flemish Party

Bulgaria

- Coalition for Bulgaria (BSP)
- National Union Attack (ATAKA)
- Movement for Rights and Freedoms (DPS)
- Citizens for European Development of Bulgaria (GERB)

Cyprus

- Movement for Social Democracy
- Progressive Party of Working People
- Democratic Rally

Czech Republic

- Christian and Democratic Union-Czechoslovak People's Party
- Czech Social Democratic Party
- Civic Democratic Party

Germany

- The Left
- Free Democratic Party
- Alliance '90/The Greens
- Social Democratic Party
- CDU/CSU

Denmark

- People's Movement against the EU
- Conservative People's Party
- Danish People's Party
- Socialist People's Party
- Liberal Party
- Social Democrats

Greece

- Ecologist Greens
- Popular Orthodox Rally
- New Democracy
- Panhellenic Socialist Movement
- Communist party

Spain

- Spanish Socialist Workers' Party
- People's Party

Finland

- Green League
- Social Democratic Party of Finland
- Centre Party
- National Coalition Party

France

- Democratic Movement (MoDem)
- Europe Écologie
- Socialist Party
- Union for a Popular Movement

Hungary

- Movement for a Better Hungary
- Hungarian Socialist Party
- Fidesz-Hungarian Civic Union

Ireland

- Labour Party
- Fianna Fail
- Fine Gael
- Sinn Fein

Italy

- Union of Christian and Centre Democrats
- Italy of Values
- North League
- Democratic Party
- The People of Freedom

Lithuania

- Order and Justice Party
- Lithuanian Social Democratic Party

Luxembourg

- Christian Social People's Party

Malta

- Nationalist Party
- Labour Party

Netherlands

- Socialist Party
- Green Left
- Democrats 66
- People's Party for Freedom and Democracy
- Labour Party
- Party for Freedom
- Christian Democratic Appeal

Poland

- Polish People's Party
- Election Coalition Committee of the Democratic Left Alliance (SLD)
- Law and Justice
- Civic Platform

Portugal

- Democratic and Social Center - Popular Party
- Left Bloc
- Socialist Party
- Social Democratic Party

Romania	***Sweden***
• National Liberal Party	• Green Party
• Democratic Liberal Party	• Moderate Party
• Social Democratic Party	• Social Democrats
Slovenia	***Slovakia***
• Social Democratic Party (SDS)	• Direction - Social Democracy
• Social Democrats (SD)	
United Kingdom	
• Scottish National Party	
• British National Party (BNP)	
• Green Party	
• Liberal Democrats	
• Labour	
• UK Independence Party (UKIP)	
• Conservatives	

Table 3.1 List of EP7 political parties included in the analysis.

All EPGs serving in the EP7 are represented in the dataset as well as 25 countries out of 27 (Estonia and Latvia are excluded from the analysis), from all European regions. Political parties gaining less than 4 seats in the EP7 were particularly affected by data availability issues in the EES survey or in the number of written questions. The analysis thus covers national parties that won more than 4 seats in the EP7, although these still vary on vote share and legislative size. The sample, unfortunately, underrepresents the EPP party group as most of the small parties excluded from the analysis were affiliated with the Christian Democrats: the results on the left-right direction of the EP incongruence thus have to be qualified in light of this issue. The sub-sections below will describe the procedure adopted to retrieve economic policy preferences of political parties in the EP7 and 2009 party voters.

Scaling political parties from legislative activities: crowdsourcing

Comparing parties' and voters' means/medians or ideological distributions requires ideological scaling to build parties' and voters' ideological scales. This particular section will describe the method used to assign ideological scores on economic policies to political parties serving during the 7th legislative term of the European Parliament. The ideological scaling of political parties has been carried out via text analysis of parties' legislative activities and, in particular, crowdsourcing of written parliamentary questions. Written

questions mostly contain left-right policy preferences and are the least visible and leadership-constrained activities available to EP parties (see Chapter 2): they are mostly addressed to the European Commission and help EP parties to access the EU agenda.

Crowdsourcing was adopted to scale the parliamentary questions ideologically. Text analytic scaling methods range from supervised methods to more heavily quantitative ones. Supervised text analysis entails human input that can range from substantial – e.g. hand-coding, typical of classic content analysis – to limited – e.g. selection of archetypal texts on which to train computer algorithms. Unsupervised methods, instead, rely entirely on computer algorithms and the 'bag-of-word' approach to compute measures of similarity among texts. The advantage of methods reliant on humans for content scaling is the superior validity of their results. Humans are the primary recipients of texts and can extrapolate information from a text's co-text and context which guarantees superior interpretive abilities. By way of contrast, the results of unsupervised methods are often interpreted by the researcher ex post and are hence prone to subjective interpretations. The advantage of unsupervised methods is however their very high reliability and their lower costs (Krippendorff, 2013, Neuendorf, 2002). Crowdsourcing is a supervised text analysis method that also has the advantages of unsupervised methods: it is comparable to classic hand coding procedures, such as the one adopted by the Comparative Manifesto Project, and, at the same time the 'average of averages' approach ensures reliability (Benoit et al., 2016). Similarly to classic content analysis, coders analyse and score a text on the basis of coding rules. The key difference between classic content analysis and crowdsourcing is that coding is not done by experts in political text analysis but by an online crowd. Benoit et al. (2016) found that text analysis by coders on the web highly correlates with analyses by experts and that this holds for both electoral manifesto and legislative texts. The method is therefore successful in approximating experts' hand-coding because it relies on multiple coders per text (the 'wisdom of the crowd' effect) and because the online platform used (Crowd Flower) allows the researcher to set a series of quality checks, such as initial quizzes and random administration of test questions throughout the job. The researcher, via these quality checks, can easily filter out 'spammers' (Berinsky et al., 2012, Benoit et al., 2016).

The method relies on an 'average of averages approach' because the final ideological score of a party (or legislator) is an 'average of averages' value: the ideological scores given by online coders to each textual unit are averaged to determine the text left-right (RILE)

position. The party RILE score is the average of the party texts' scores (see formulas (1) and (2) below). This 'average of averages' procedure yields more reliable estimates than party scores produced by a single expert coder (Benoit et al, 2016).

$$RILEtext_{ji} = \frac{1}{n}\sum_{k=1}^{n} RILEcoder_{jik} \quad (1)$$

$$RILEpty_{j} = \frac{1}{n}\sum_{i=1}^{n} RILEtext_{ji} \quad (2)$$

Crowdsourcing written parliamentary questions: procedure

The texts of 55,623 of the 55,731 EP 7 written questions were scraped from the EP official website through the *urllib* package in Python. Each text contained information on the author, the EP party group and the date of submission.[5] Information on authors, dates and political groups[6] was removed before uploading the data online. To reduce costs, the full corpus of EP7 written parliamentary questions was then reduced to contain only written questions that had a probability of over 0.59 of being on economic, environmental, social and foreign policy topics. In addition, texts with probability < 0.59 of being ideological were filtered out, through the ideological vs. non-ideological classifier described in Chapter 2.

To reduce the corpus to social or economic policy texts, the Naïve Bayes (NB) classification algorithm was trained on the basis of a 'gold standard' policy-domain training set. The training set for the classification of written questions into policy domains consisted of 250 randomly sampled texts whose policy domain was known by recording the Directorate General of the Commissioner who answered the relevant question. Commissioners with cognate policy responsibilities were grouped together, for a total of nine macro policy areas (table 3.2):

[5] Written questions authored by more than one MEP were assigned to the first MEP mentioned, assumed to be the main drafter. This assumption is justified by the non-alphabetical ordering of the drafters. There are 3,482 collective questions in total, representing 6% of the population of EP7 written questions.

[6] In text references to political parties could not be removed but a search and retrieve collocation (KWIC) analysis of the word 'party' showed that they represented only 1% of the final coded corpus and so are not expected to bias the results.

Classification of Training Set	
Class	***Answering Commissioner DGs***
Economy	• DG Competition • DG Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion • DG Internal Market and Services • DG Economic and Monetary Affairs • DG Consumer Policy • DG Industry & Entrepreneurship • DG Taxation, Customs and Anti-Fraud • DG Digital Agenda
Social & Security Policy	• DG Home Affairs • DG Justice, Fundamental Rights and Citizenship
Rural Policy	• DG Agriculture and Rural Development • DG Maritime Affairs and Fisheries • DG Regional Policy
Environment/Health	• DG Health • DG Climate Action • DG Energy • DG Environment
Foreign & Trade	• DG Foreign Affairs and Security Policy • DG International Cooperation, Aid and Crisis Response • DG Trade • DG Development
Education/Research	• DG Research Innovation and Science • DG Education, Culture, Multilingualism and Youth
Enlargement	• DG Enlargement and European Neighborhood Policy
Transport	• DG Transport
EU Institutions	• DG Inter-institutional relations and administration • DG Financial Programming and Budget • Commission President

Table 3.2. Grouping of Commission's Directorate Generals (DGs) into macro policy areas.

The diagnostics (table 3.3 below) reveal that the Bernoulli Naïve Bayes classifier using 200 discriminant words is the best performing classifier, with an F-measure of 0.55:

Naïve Bayes Classifier Policy Classifier Diagnostics								
Method		**No. of Features**	**Selection method**	**Nominal Accuracy**	**Ordinal Accuracy**	**Precision**	**Recall**	**F-ratio**
NB	Occur	200	Chi^2-O	0.68	0.81	0.59	0.52	0.55
NB	Occur * idf	200	Chi^2-O	0.68	0.81	0.58	0.52	0.55
NB	% W * idf	200	Max Chi^2-O	0.64	0.79	0.63	0.48	0.54
NB	Occur * idf	100	Chi^2-O	0.63	0.78	0.56	0.51	0.53
NB	Occur	200	Max Chi^2-O	0.64	0.79	0.56	0.50	0.53
NB	Occur	100	Chi^2-O	0.61	0.76	0.54	0.50	0.52
NB	Occur * idf	100	Max Chi^2-O	0.56	0.72	0.54	0.50	0.52
NB	Occur * idf	300	Chi^2-O	0.66	0.80	0.55	0.48	0.51
NB	Occur * idf	200	Max Chi^2-O	0.62	0.78	0.54	0.48	0.51
NB	% W * idf	300	Max Chi^2-O	0.62	0.79	0.57	0.46	0.51
NB	% W * idf	400	Max Chi^2-O	0.61	0.77	0.56	0.45	0.50

Table 3.3. Naïve Bayes Policy Classifier Diagnostics.

The discriminant words for each policy domain appear valid (table 3.4 below):

Class-discriminant Linguistic Features – Policy Domain Classifier		
Economy	*BANK**	*PAID*
	*BILLION**	*PENSION**
	BROADBAND	*PROPERTY*
	BUSINESS	*RATE**
	*COMPAN**	*RATING**
	COMPETITION	*SECTOR*
	CRISIS	*SERVICES*
	DEBT	*SOCIAL_PROTECTION*
	*ECONOM**	*SOCIAL_SECURITY*
	FINANCIAL	*SOCIAL_SPENDING*
	GLOBALISATION	*TAX*
	*GOOD**	*UNEMPLOY**
	INSURANCE	*VAT*
	*JOB**	*WORK**
	MARKET	
Social/Security	**MIGRANT*	*GENDER*
	ASYLUM	*INTERNET_USER**
	*CHILD**	*PERSONAL_DATA*
	DATA_PROTECTION	*PRIVACY*
	DRUG_TRAFFICKING	*RECEPTION_CAMP**
	*DRUG_USER**	*VIOLENCE*
	*FAMILY_REUNIFICATION**	*WOMAN*
Rural	*COHESION*	*NATURAL_DISASTER*
	*DIRECT_PAYMENT**	*SUGAR*
	EXPENDITURE	*TARIFF*
	*FISHER**	*WINE*
Environment & Health	*ANIMAL**	*MONITOR*
	DAMAGE	*NATURAL*
	*DISEASE**	*NOISE*
	ENERGY	*NUCLEAR*
	*ENVIRONMENT**	*PATIENT**
	*EMISSION**	*PLANT**
	FARMING	*SPECIES*
	FEED	*STUDY*
	FOOD	*STUDIES*
	GAS	*SUBSTANCE*
	HEALTH	*WASTE*
	*MEDIC**	*WATER*
Foreign & Trade	*ALLIED_FORCE**	*FOREIGN_POLIC**
	*ARMED_FORCE**	*HIGH_REPRESENTATIVE*
	*ATTACK**	*HUMAN_ORGAN**
	CAMP	*HUMAN_RIGHT**
	CAPITAL_PUNISHMENT	*HUMAN_TRAFFICKING*
	CONFLICT	*INTERNATIONAL_CONCERN**
	CONVENTION	*INTERNATIONAL_LAW*
	CORPORAL_PUNISHMENT	*INTERNATIONAL_ORGANISATION**
	*CRIMINAL_ACTIVIT**	*RELATIONS*
	DEVELOP	*SECURITY_FORCES*
	*DUMP**	*TORTURE*
	FORCED	*TRAFFICKING_WEAPON**
	*FOREIGN_AFFAIR**	*VICE-PRESIDENT*
	*FOREIGN_AGENT**	*USA*
Education	*ACADEMIC*	*HIGHER_EDUCATION*
	CATALAN	*RESEARCH*
	CULTURAL	*TECHNOLOGY*
Enlargement	*ACCESSION*	*JOIN_THE_EU*
	*APPLICANT_COUNTR**	*TURK**
	CYPRUS	
EU Institut.	*EUROPEAN_INSTITUTION**	
Transport	*RAILWAY*	*SHIP**
	*SAIL**	*TRANSPORT**

Table 3.4. Class-discriminant words of the policy-domain classifier.

The Bernoulli NB classifier, trained on the 250 known texts was applied to the full corpus of written questions. Over 2/3 of the corpus of EP7 written questions were classified as pertaining to economic policy or to the environment (environmental policy was included in the corpus subset as pertaining to the economic policy domain). Around 20% of the corpus dealt with social and security policy issues, i.e. related to foreign policy, justice and home affairs, human and civil rights (table 3.5). Texts that were not ideological were then filtered out from this subset.

Policy Domains of EP7 Written Questions		
Class	**Number of Questions**	**% of Corpus**
Economy	21,119	38
Environment	13,161	24
Rural Policy	5,661	10
Social and Security Policy	2,136	4
Foreign Policy and Trade	9,550	17
Education	1,479	3
Transport	1,280	2
Enlargement	1190	2
EU Institutions	47	0.1
TOTAL	55,623	100

Table 3.5 Classification of EP7 WQ corpus into policy domains.

The final 'socio-economic-ideological' subset of the corpus totalled 31,099 texts (14,248 economic, 8,782 environmental, 6,845 on foreign and trade policy and 1,224 on personal and civil rights), or 56% of the entire corpus. Although not relying on random selection, the size of the purposive sample is very large. This purposive sampling strategy was adopted to ensure that 'not applicable' answers by online coders be reduced to a minimum and thus to reduce costs. Always due to budget constraints, a maximum of 13 texts per MEP were then randomly sampled from the socio-economic ideological subset. This results in bigger political parties having more units of texts than smaller parties. This mimics the voter survey, in which big parties enjoy a higher number of respondents. The textual data uploaded online, and which online coders analysed, amounted to 6,940 units or 12.5% of the entire corpus.

As described in the previous section, crowdsourcing relies on a codebook on the basis of which online coders evaluate the political texts. The scaling codebook built for this job covers both economic and social policy areas, e.g. economic regulation, trade, foreign policy and security, individual rights, religion and immigration. Domain-specific ideological scales were built on the basis of Bobbio's (1996) theory on ideology and

Benoit and Laver's (2006) ideological scales. The left-right conceptualisation offered by Norberto Bobbio postulates a continuous ideological spectrum from rigid inequality to rigid equality beliefs (Bobbio, 1996). For example, in the case of trade, the extreme right option defended the absence of regulations and barriers, and the norm of the 'rule of the fittest', while the extreme left option favoured ethical trade: a heavily regulated system both on imports and exports to avoid worker and consumer exploitation. The terms 'left' and 'right' never appeared in the codebook, given their heavily loaded and context-dependent meanings (Benoit and Laver, 2006). The full crowdsourcing codebook (containing the job overview page and the policy domain and domain-specific ideological scales) is available in the supplementary materials at the end of this dissertation.

The job was designed so that the ideological scales appeared on the screen once the coder selected the appropriate policy domain: figure 3.1 below shows the screen that appeared to online coders for each task. The first paragraph contains the written question to be analysed, the second paragraph contains the first multiple choice question, asking the coder to identify the policy domain of the text. Not all possible policy domains are included and therefore no N/A option is offered, since the corpus uploaded online only consisted of pre-classified economic or social policy questions. The second multiple choice question asks the coder to identify which ideological position is closer to the text analysed. This question is domain specific and only appears on the screen after the coder answers the policy-domain question. Only coded questions that were flagged as economic/environment or trade by online coders were retained for this analysis.

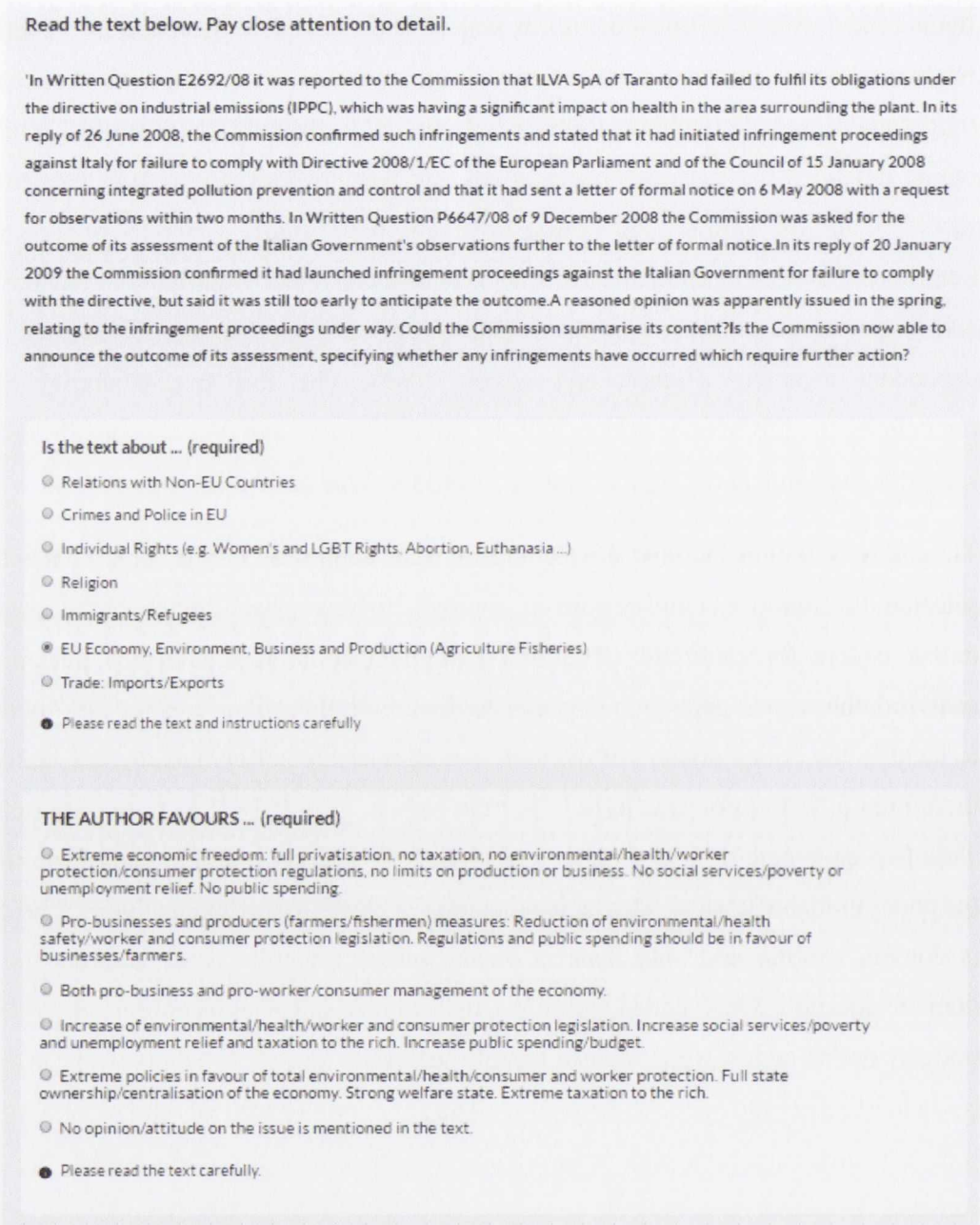


Figure 3.1 Crowdsourcing job task (environmental policy).

As evident from figure 3.1 above, each job task involved reading a written parliamentary question and answering a policy domain question and a relevant policy-specific ideological scaling question. Although sentences are preferred as units of analysis in manifesto scaling (Däubler et al., 2012), written parliamentary questions are so short (totalling 200 words each, on average) that they usually contain a single theme. To ensure scale equivalence of parties with voters, the ideological scales created for crowdsourcing closely follow the economic and social policy items of the European Election Survey 2009, and use a five-

point Likert scale. The analysis in this chapter only takes into account texts classified by online coders as economic or trade texts.

As mentioned above, an attractive feature of Crowd Flower as a platform for crowdsourcing is the possibility to filter out spammers by setting test questions that coders have to answer correctly both to be admitted to the job and to continue the job. Several quality checks were thus designed into the crowdsourced scaling of EP7 written questions. In particular, contributors were removed from the job if they failed to answer two thirds of test questions[7] correctly (both during the initial quiz and throughout); if they took less than 600 seconds to perform a page of work – i.e. less than 30 seconds to perform a single task; or if they picked the same answer from the multiple choice set between 95 and 100% of the time (this was only checked after 20 tasks were completed). The coders that passed all these quality checks were branded as 'trusted' by the system and their written question scaling was considered valid and kept on record. Contributors' statistics are presented in table 3.6 below:

Crowd Flower Contributors Statistics	
Total number of trusted contributors:	238
Total number of removed contributors (failed quality checks):	148
Average number of tasks per (trusted) contributor:	165
Maximum number of tasks completed by contributor:	560
Average time to complete a task (by trusted contributor)	60''

Table 3.6 Contributor Statistics, Crowd Flower.

As evident from table 3.7, the codebook uploaded for EP legislative text scaling was particularly difficult since 38 percent of online coders interested in participating failed the quiz and quality checks. The 'ease of job' was ranked at 2.3/5 by coders. The filtering reduced the 'crowd' to only those participants that understood the codebook well. This ensured that spammers did not bias the ideological scores associated with each text.

More than one coder per text is needed in text analysis to ensure reliability, and five or more are needed for the 'average of averages' method to work. Benoit et al. (2016: Figure 5) found that uncertainty over crowd estimates decreases after the addition of a fifth crowd-coder. The five-coder requirement led to a total of 34,700 tasks to be completed (6,940*5). Once the job was finalised, each written question in the sample had both a modal topic (economic or social, as judged by the coders in their answers to the first

[7] Test questions used in this job are available in the supplementary materials.

question) and an average ideological score. The score assigned to the text is the average of the coders' judgements. Each written question was assigned the average ideological score of coders who picked the modal topic. This average is the final ideal point of the written question. The party final ideological score, instead, is the median score from all the party's economic or social policy written questions. Though coders were asked to scale social policy questions, this particular analysis (as mentioned above) only takes into account parties' written questions in the *economic* policy domain.

Comparing the crowd-sourced economic policy scores of UK political parties will help exemplify the procedure and assess its validity. Figure 3.2 below plots the *median* ideological score in economic policy of each UK party serving in the EP7, since written questions' median economic scores are assigned as the final ideological score for each national party. A plot with means and confidence intervals is provided in the appendix to this chapter (figure 1), though deviations from normality make the usage of averages problematic here.

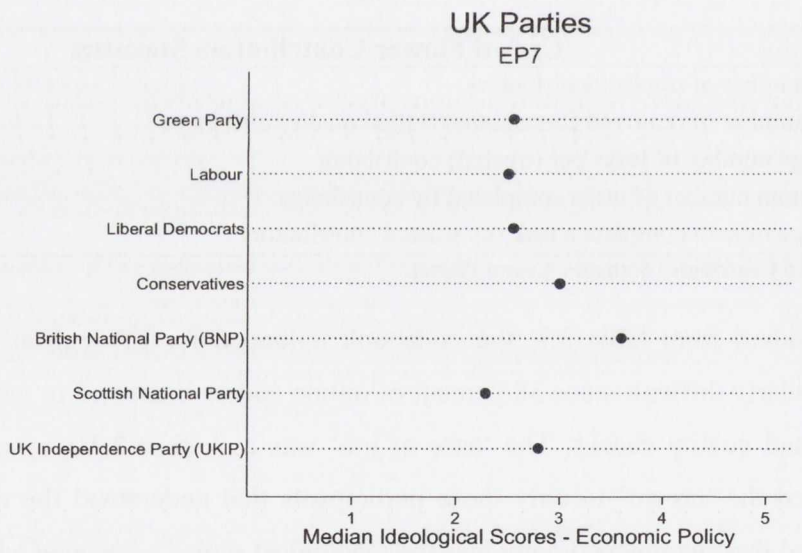


Figure 3.2 Dotplot of UK political parties median economic policy preference as retrieved from their EP7 written questions. 1 = extreme left; 5 = extreme right.

The Green, Labour, UKIP and Liberal Democratic parties are slightly left of centre, conservatives are slightly right of centre while the BNP has a clear right-wing economic ideology and the SNP a clear left-wing one. The crowd-sourced ideological scaling appears to be face-valid as its results correspond to the general knowledge on current UK political parties' comparative positions in the ideological space. The position of the Greens and Labour, being close to the centre-left and to the Liberal Democrats, is fully upheld by a

qualitative reading of the written questions Green, Liberal Democrat and Labour MEPs have submitted. The representatives of these three parties consistently flag similar consumer and environmental protection ideas, and here and there – from Green and Labour representatives – there are anti-regulation and pro-business statements, which bring them closer to the more centrist Liberal Democrats. Examples of deviations from leftist policy positions are written questions by Michael Cashman (Labour) condemning the taxation of second-homes or rejecting a pro-consumer regulation imposed on the food industry (written questions 007441/2012 and 005741/2011); and by Jean Lambert (Greens), who sharply criticised government-ownership of banks as damaging to shareholders (question 011226/2010). There were not enough of these right-wing questions in the case of Labour or the Greens to place them in the right-wing sector of the ideological spectrum, but their existence placed Labour and the Greens close to the Liberal Democrats nonetheless. Moreover, the fact that the Labour party moved towards the right is a well-established phenomenon (Fisher, 1996). While the UKIP is considered right-wing in social policy, the slight left of centre position in economic policy is justified by its frequent calls for protection of EU taxpayers, consumers and the environment in UKIP MEPs written questions (see for example questions 9378/2010, 9381/2010 and 011165/2011 by John Stuart Agnew or question 003603/2014 by Marta Andreasen). Their criticisms against public spending and business regulation (see for example question 011139/2012 by Nicole Sinclaire and question 002179/2011 by William Dartmouth) bring the UKIP score closer to the centre of the ideological spectrum. For the text of all abovementioned questions, see the appendix to this chapter, table 1.

To further assess the validity of crowdsourced party positions, crowdsourced party scores were correlated with expert survey data from Benoit and Laver (2006). Only expert evaluations relevant to economic policy were retained. The crowdsourced measures based on 2009-2014 EP written questions show a correlation coefficient with the expert survey data of 0.45 (see appendix, Figure 2). Though differences exist, as is to be expected, the positive and moderate correlation between the two measures is evidence of satisfactory correlational validity. Given the different time periods, political contexts and instruments used in the two datasets, the two measures are not expected to correlate perfectly: political parties ideological positions are often flexible over time, and experts might be overly concerned with party leaderships instead of evaluating the entire group of party representatives, as was done with the crowdsourced data here. Moreover, the flawed

electoral competition in EP elections might give national parties more of an incentive to move away from the ideological positions they adopt domestically. Given all these differences between the two measures, a positive correlation of such magnitude is satisfactory evidence that the crowdsourced party positions are valid.

Scaling party voters: procedure

As a second step, measuring political representation requires ideological scaling of party voters. Voters' policy preferences have often been proxied by simulation via demographic indicators, by voting behaviour, by using legislators' perceptions, or by aggregate survey data (Stone, 1979). Simulation of public opinion via demographic characteristics or voting behaviour is used to counteract the lack of survey data at the state or district level (Seidman, 1975, Erikson, 1978, Shapiro et al., 1990, Levendusky et al., 2008). However, simulations are an indirect and subpar instrument of public opinion (Seidman, 1975). Using legislators' perceptions is also inadequate in representation studies, given that misperceptions are common, and that this instrument cannot fully discriminate between delegate and mandate models of representation (Miller and Stokes, 1963). Voter surveys are preferred as a means to uncover voters' policy attitudes because they are the most direct instrument available to measure voters' preferences (Clinton, 2006). Party voters were scaled using the European Election Study (EES) of 2009.

The variables needed to scale voters in the economic policy domain are of two types: behavioural and attitudinal. The behavioural variable concerns party choice in the European Parliament election just passed. Four attitudinal survey items are of particular interest and specifically, the economic sub-items of the following question:

"Now I will read out some statements to you. For each of the following statements, please tell me to what degree you agree or disagree with each statement:

- *Private enterprise is the best way to solve [country name]'s economic problems*
- *Major public services and industries ought to be in state ownership*
- *Politics should abstain from intervening in the economy*
- *Income and wealth should be redistributed towards ordinary people"*

The items are all measured in a Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly agree) to 5 (strongly disagree). The first and third items are tapping on right-wing sentiments while the second

and fourth on left-wing sentiments. The four economic items were re-coded to ensure that higher values were associated with conservative attitudes.

To match the ideological scaling of parties, voters were scaled using an aggregate index of economic policy attitudes. Content analysis of party's legislative texts, in fact, aggregated all economic aspects in one attitudinal score, and an aggregate index is necessary in the case of voters as well. Aggregate indices of voters' policy attitudes are favoured in the public opinion literature in that 'core', or macro, attitudes are more likely to be exogenous, i.e. less prone to media and elite bias (Kulinsky and Segura, 1995, Hill and Hurley, 1999, Stone, 1979). An index of the four survey items was, however, unviable. The inter-item correlation among the four recoded items, tested via Cronbach's alpha, was low, at 0.25 (see table 3.7). This means that only 25 percent of the latent construct (attitudes on general economic policy) is explained by the correlations among the questions (Rasinski, 2008).

Inter-item Correlations – Economic Policy Survey Items

Survey item	Obs	Sign	Item-test correlation
Public Services	25792	+	0.62
Private Enterprise	25130	+	0.40
Political Intervention	25699	-	0.49
Redistribution	25670	+	0.53
Internal Consistency (α)			**0.25**

Table 3.7 Internal consistency of the Economic Attitude Index. EES Voter 2009.

Exploratory factor analysis and principal component analysis also confirm that that there is no simple structure underlying the four economic survey items. The four items load on two to three different dimensions or latent constructs. The survey items on redistribution and on public services are correlated with each other and have the highest loadings in the first factor and principal component (see figure 3.3), assumed to proxy economic policy attitudes, given the prominence of redistribution and state-ownership concerns in economic policy.

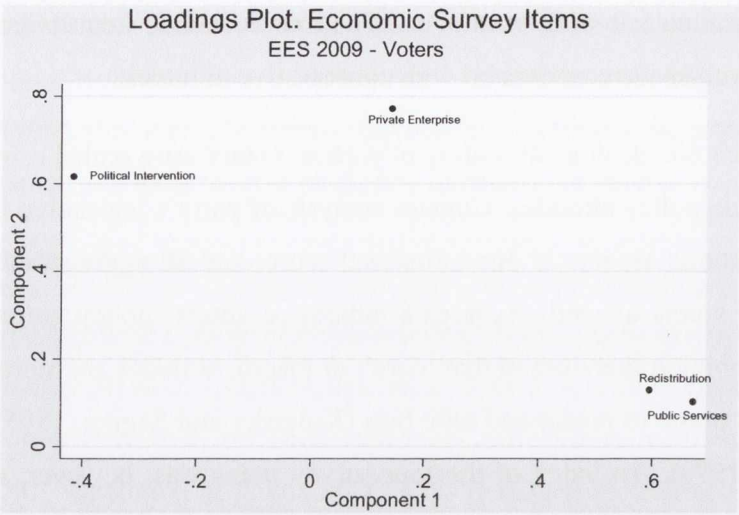


Figure 3.3 Component Loadings Plot. Principal Component Analysis of EES 2009 Economic Items.

The questions on public services and redistribution are therefore averaged here to scale each voter in the economic policy domain. Using two survey items leads to less detailed ideological scales: including more policy-specific and avoiding abstract ideological questions in the EES survey would have been ideal – the EES 2014 has already moved in this direction. All parties examined here are however subject to this instrument-based measurement error: this error is systematic and uniform and, as such, it is not expected to bias the results.

To demonstrate how party voters were scaled, the UK party system is again taken as an example. Figure 3.4 below shows the distribution of ideological scores on the economic index of voters of UK parties. The graph highlights that UKIP, SNP and Conservative median voters are centrist, while the BNP, Liberal Democrats and Green median party voter are slightly left of centre. The Labour median voter is a clear left-winger. Median party voters' positions yield different results than parties' median positions: in particular, no clear right-wing median voter is present while, in the case of political parties, right-wing positions are expressed by EP members of both the BNP and the Conservative parties. The BNP seems to be particularly far from its median voter towards the right. The SNP, instead, moved to the left of its voters in its EP7 written questions. Taking the example of the UK Labour party, the written questions by Michael Cashman (summarised in the previous section and reported in table 1 of the appendix) are not in line with the economic preferences of the UK Labour median voter, which is a clear left-winger. By asking for business protection or criticising taxation for second-homes, Cashman moved away from the Labour median voter in those particular questions. If a political party

presents a high proportion of such 'deviating' questions, the distance between the median party score and the median 2009 party voter would increase.

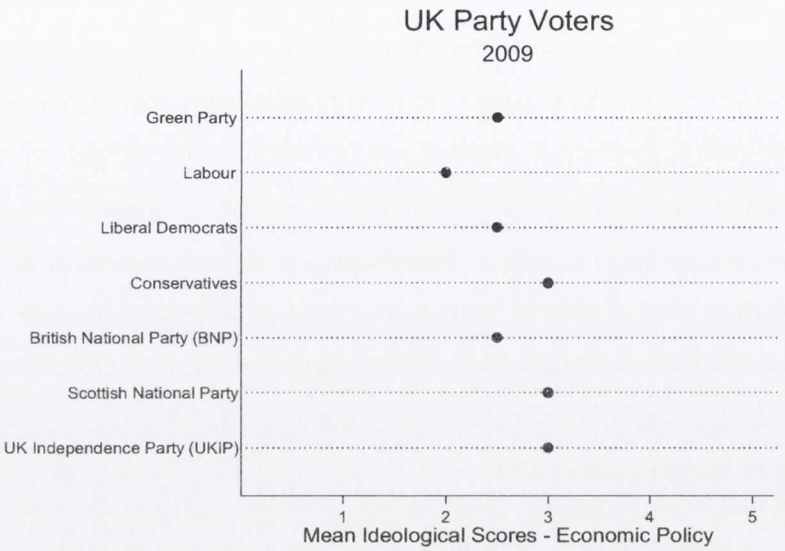


Figure 3.4 Dotplot of UK political parties' median voters as retrieved from the EES 2009 economic attitudes index.

Measuring Political Representation

The operationalization of legislative congruence relies on finding measures of distance between preferences expressed in legislative activities and voters' policy preferences. Two main types of measures are adopted in the literature: distance measures based on central tendency and distance measures taking into account distribution spread (Achen, 1978, Golder and Stramsky, 2010). Political representation can be evaluated at three levels: 1) at the individual representative level, where the ideological score of a single political representative is compared to his/her constituency ideological scores (*dyadic representation*); 2) at the party level, where the ideological score of a political party is compared to its constituency ideological scores (*collective representation*); 3) at the legislature or institutional level, which assesses the average performance of parties and representatives (*legislative/institutional representation*).

Distance – or 'congruence' – measures based on central tendency values usually compare: a) the voter mean/median with the party mean/ median (*collective representation*); b) the voter mean/median with the individual score of the representative (*dyadic representation*); c) the mean/median country voter with the median legislator/institution member (*legislative/institutional representation*). These comparisons are either carried out through simple mean differences or, in the case of legislative/institutional representation, by

regression slopes. Central tendency-based measures are the most common measures adopted in the empirical literature on representation and they are particularly attractive in that they give information on whether representatives are moving to the left or to the right of the mean/median voter. This operationalization strategy, however, assumes indicator equivalence – i.e. that voters' and representatives' ideological scales are comparable (Achen, 1978). Indicator equivalence is difficult to defend in studies of legislative congruence, this one included. In studies of legislative congruence, in fact, public opinion surveys are compared with a fundamentally different instrument: legislative activities (Matsusaka, 2001). Without some form of indicator equivalence the size of the OLS slope used to evaluate legislature-wide responsiveness is hard to interpret: in this study the same measurement level found in the voter survey will be thus imposed on the ideological scaling of legislative activities.

Central tendency-based measures present an additional challenge: they treat deviations from the median voter equally in the case where the voting base is homogeneous and in the case where it is heterogeneous. Not discounting deviations from heterogeneous constituencies might be unfair on political representatives who are trying to grapple with a diverse voting base. This is why a different measure of congruence, which takes into account the spread of ideological distributions as well as the mean or median, is often used in the literature. Distance measures based on ideological distributions compare: a) the absolute sum of deviations of each voter from the mean/median voter with the absolute sum of deviations of each voter from the mean/median party member (*collective representation*); b) the absolute sum of deviations of each voter from the mean/median voter with the absolute sum of deviations of each voter from the individual representative score (*dyadic representation*); c) the distribution of parties in the legislature with the distribution of party voters (*legislative representation*). Centrism is the difference between the cumulative distribution functions (CDF) of voters' and representatives' ideological preferences. It is calculated via the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test of equality of distributions (Golder and Stramsky, 2010). These measures help in not overly penalising parties, legislatures or representatives that face a heterogeneous voting base. They are metric free and as such cannot inform on the left/right direction of the discrepancy (if any) between voters and representatives. Table 3.8 below summarises the various measures adopted in the literature on political representation.

	Central-tendency Congruence	Distributional Congruence
Dyadic	$r_j - \overline{v}_j$	$1 - \frac{\sum \lvert \overline{v}_j - v_{ji} \rvert}{\sum \lvert r_j - v_{ji} \rvert}$
Collective	$\overline{p}_j - \overline{v}_j$	$1 - \frac{\sum \lvert \overline{v}_j - v_{ji} \rvert}{\sum \lvert \overline{p}_j - v_{ji} \rvert}$
Institutional	$\overline{p_j} = \alpha + \beta \overline{v}_j$	$\sum \lvert cdf_r - cdf_v \rvert$ or $\sum \lvert cdf_p - cdf_v \rvert$

Table 3.8 Measures of Political Representation.

Note:

***p* = party(ies)**

***r*= representative(s)**

***v* = voters**

Central-tendency based and distribution-based measures will be applied in this study to the European Parliament. To evaluate entire legislatures, regression slopes are used to capture mean legislative congruence, while the 'centrism' measure proposed by Golder and Stramsky (2010) is used to capture distributional legislative congruence. Centrism, being a distributional measure of representation, is metric free, but distribution plots can help to visualise the direction of non-representation. The retrieval of the regression slope and the difference in cumulative distribution functions will give a comprehensive description of representation during the 7th EP term. In addition, the scatterplot and distribution plot analyses will inform on the party-level patterns of legislative incongruence in the EP7.

The analysis below will extend the comparison of parties' and voters' economic policy preferences and present more systematic evidence on the distance between voters and parties in the 7th European Parliament.

Analysis

The chapter addresses two related questions: (1) whether the EP is on aggregate responsive to the median 2009 voter in economic and trade policy; and (2) whether individual national parties serving in the EP homogeneously voice their voters' economic preferences in their dialogue with EU agenda-setters. To measure input congruence at the aggregate level, the

OLS slope coefficient of the bivariate regression between party voters' and party representatives' median economic policy preferences is examined first. Secondly, parties and voters' ideological distributions difference (centrism score) will be calculated. To answer the second question, scatterplots and cumulative distribution functions will be analysed. The two ideological scales have been constrained to a Likert scale of 1 (extreme left) to 5 (extreme right). Because of indicator equivalence, a slope of 1 indicates perfect representation.

EP7 Parties' Input Responsiveness	
	National Parties' Economic Conservatism
Voters' Economic Conservatism	0.22***
	(0.06)
Intercept	2.15***
	(0.16)
R^2	0.13
N	98

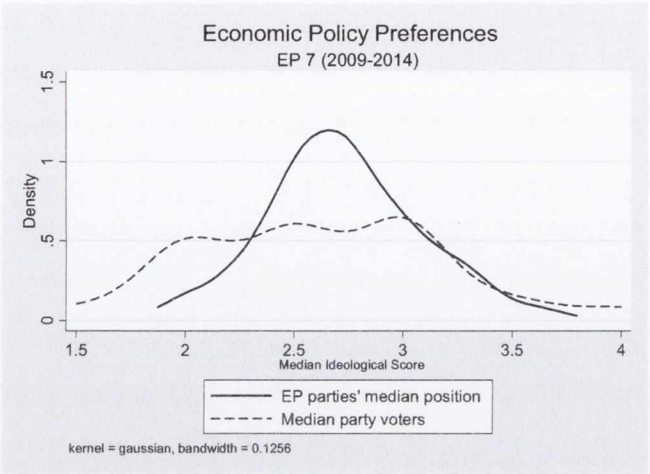
Standard errors in parentheses

$^{*}p < 0.05$, $^{**}p < 0.01$, $^{***}p < 0.001$

Table 3.9 OLS Regression of Parties' Median Economic Ideology on Voters' Median Economic Ideology.

The regression slope indicates that the relationship between 2009 voters and EP7 parties is statistically significantly different than zero and positive, meaning that EP political parties are not incongruent with voters, on average (table 3.9). However, the degree of congruence is far from the ideal 1:1 relationship. In particular, for each unit move to the right of voters, EP7 representatives only moved 0.22 of a Likert scale unit.

Figure 5 below presents the results from the distribution-based measure of legislative responsiveness. This measure captures the 'proximity' - or 'centrism' (Golder and Stramsky 2010) – of voters' and EP parties' ideological distributions. To test the significance of the difference between voters' and parties' cumulative distribution functions (CDFs), the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test was adopted (Golder and Stramsky, 2010).



Distributional Distance	0.26***

Figure 3.5 Distributions of party voters' (dashed line) and EP7 parties' (solid line) median ideology in economic policy.

Again, it is evident that the median European voter is well represented – and even over-represented – in the European Parliament. The European Parliament over-represents centrist economic attitudes. This result seems to point to a strategic move to the centre of political parties, presenting some confirmatory evidence of the median voter theorem. We can confidently say that institutional responsiveness in the EP is therefore satisfactory. Concerning the performance of individual national parties (question 2), the results are less reassuring. The two distributions are different in shape and show significant differences particularly in the leftist sections of the ideological scale. The distributional difference highlighted above is statistically significant. This finding, which results from examination of legislative activities used as inputs in the policy cycle, paints a different picture than that highlighted by studies of candidate attitudes: EP parties do not satisfactorily voice their voters' economic preferences, particularly if these preferences are to the left of the median European voter.

The scatterplot in figure 3.6 further highlights significant party variation in representation performances. The data points present a large scatter around the ideal 45° line, indicating that some parties were good performers – lying close to the ideal line – while others were particularly unresponsive, driving down aggregate performance. The scatterplot also highlights that the majority of 'outlying' parties are above the 45° line, again signalling a rightward bias of representatives.

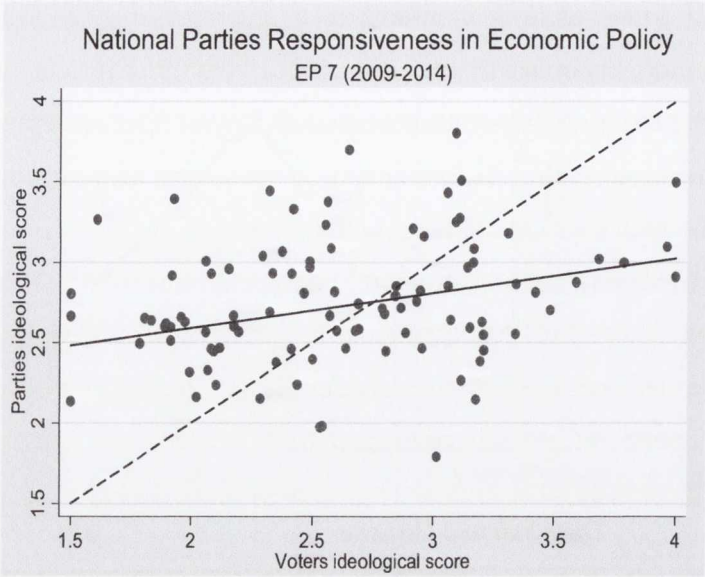


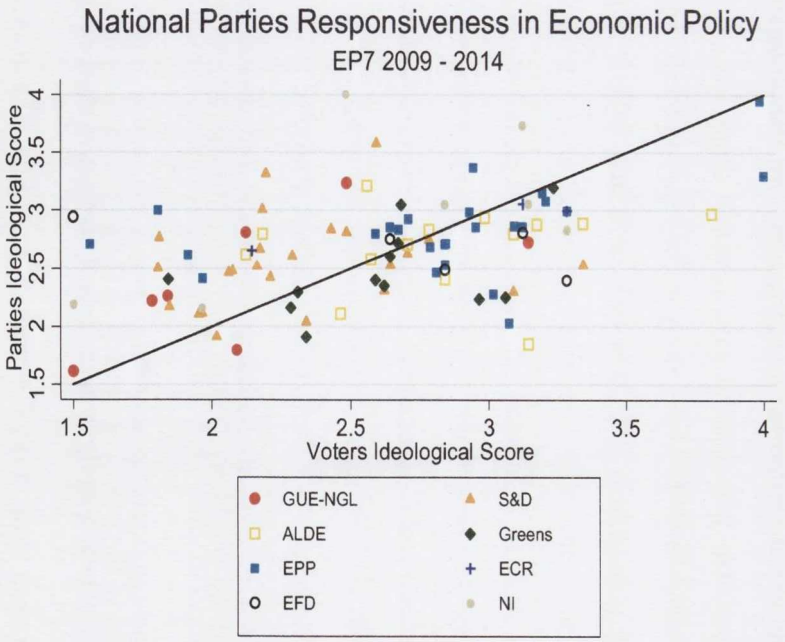
Figure 3.6 Scatterplot of Parties Median Economic Ideology on Voters' Median Economic Ideology (jittering applied). The dashed line is the ideal 1:1 line. The solid line is the OLS regression line.

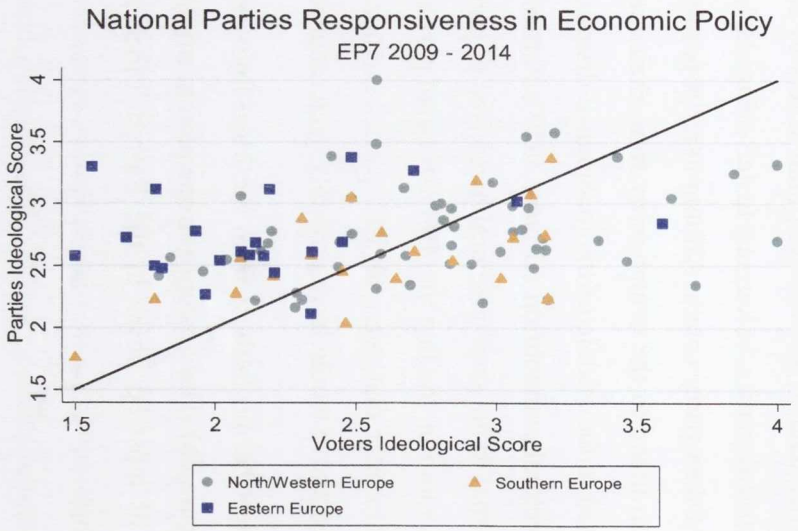
Given the scatter around the 1:1 line and the statistically significant difference between parties' and party voters' ideological distributions, the EP7 shows low pluralism in its written questions to the Commission. The distribution graph, as well as the distribution of points in the scatterplot, highlight in addition that the EP7 significantly under-represented left and extreme-left preferences for redistribution and public ownership. The distribution plot also shows some discrepancies towards the extreme-right end of the ideological distribution. Extreme right policy preferences of voters appear not to receive proportionate mentions in written questions; however, this discrepancy is marginal if compared to the low representation that leftist and extreme leftist voters suffer. To the extent that political parties move to the centre to exploit the beneficial electoral returns of moving closer to the median voter, they appear to do so at the expense of left-wing voters, confirming the social-democratic critique of EU democracy. This finding is in keeping with recent findings on US Congress representatives, 'captured' by the preferences of the economic elites and deaf to policy preferences favouring low income earners (Bartels, 2008, Gilens and Page, 2014), but has to be qualified in light of the underrepresentation of EPP-affiliated parties in the sample: given that right-wing or centre-right EPGs tend to move to the left of their voters (see figure 7a), underrepresenting centre-right parties might be what is driving the right-wing bias found at the aggregate level.

The colour-coded scatterplots in figures 3.7a-b below describes legislative congruence by different EP Party Groups (EPGs). The graph reveals that political parties from EPGs

linked to right-wing party families tend to misrepresent their voters by moving to the left of their party voters, while political parties belonging to left-wing party families have a tendency to move to the right of their party voters. All non-centrist parties – both from the left and from the right – tend to move to the centre away from their median party voter. That political parties are attracted to the middle of the ideological distribution is explained by the incentives placed by electoral competition (Downs 1957). Parties in the European Parliament appear thus to be partial to the same electoral incentives of parties competing in first-order electoral systems. In addition, the fact that EPP-affiliated parties tend to move to the left of their voters leads us to infer that, were all EP7 parties included in the analysis, the pro-business bias highlighted above would have probably been reduced.

Further, we see that most parties that lie farthest from the ideal line seem to come from Eastern European countries (figure 7b). The Eastern Europe pattern might have to do with the recent totalitarian history of most countries in the Eastern block and the resultant fragility of their party systems.





Figures 3.7a & 3.7b. Colour-coded Scatterplot of Parties' Median Economic Ideology on Voters' Median Economic Ideology (jittering applied). The line is the ideal 1:1 line.

Figure 3.8 below reveals that the biggest offenders are political parties that are associated with the populist or protest party tradition, such as Hungary's Fidesz, Lithuania's Order and Justice Party, Netherland's Party for Freedom, Belgium's Vlaams Belang and the Danish People's Party (Mudde, 2015). Voters of these parties might focus on the anti-elitist and protest rhetoric instead of focusing on the economic policy platforms of the party and thus the ideological link between these parties and their voters may be poorer.

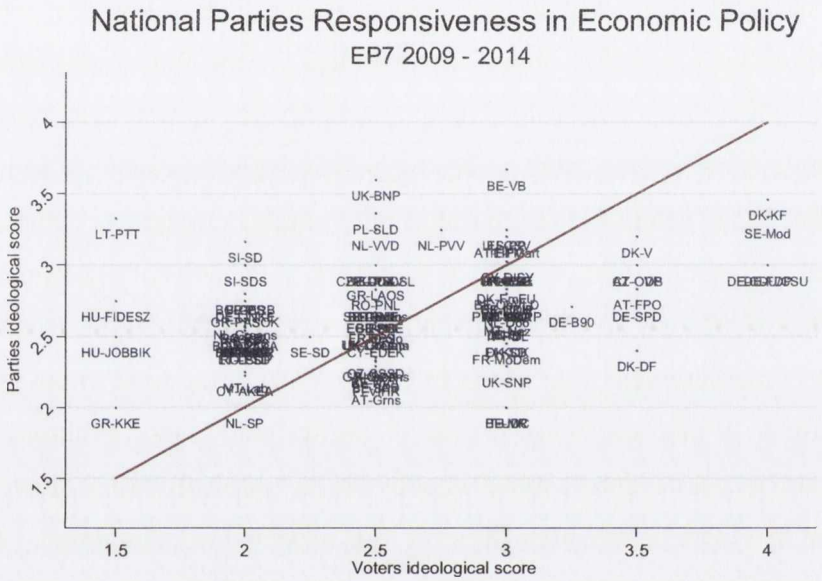


Figure 3.8 Scatterplot of Parties' Median Economic Ideology on Voters' Median Economic Ideology by political party (jittering applied). The line is the ideal 1:1 line.

Justifying indicator equivalence

The empirical literature on representation, and studies of the mandate model in particular, cannot guarantee perfect indicator equivalence (Stone, 1979, Clinton, 2006). Issues in indicator equivalence are the reason that matching voters and representatives by using an identical survey on policy preferences is very common in empirical studies of representation, which led researchers to focus overly on electoral congruence while neglecting assessments of representatives' concrete, i.e. 'substantive', behaviour. An interesting study by Bafumi and Herron (2007) bypassed the problem by designing a voter survey which presented citizens with concrete roll call situations likely to come up in the next US legislative period. The survey answers could then be mapped to legislators' voting behaviour on comparable votes. This strategy, while interesting, is very costly to implement. In addition, the different choice situation facing voters and legislators might

invalidate even Bafumi and Herron's notable bridging attempt (Lewis and Tausanovitch, 2015). It might be argued therefore that 1) the size of the coefficient is uninformative; 2) the differences between voters' and party representatives' scales are uninformative. This would mean that the findings outlined above might be the product of different scale usage by parties and voters.

In this analysis, voters and representatives do not face identical choice situations: voters are evaluated on the basis of survey responses while party representatives are evaluated on the basis of their written parliamentary questions. However, written parliamentary questions are low-stakes 'input' activities that are the closest legislative activity to putting policy preferences on record in a questionnaire. Lewis and Tausanovich (2015) for example warn against using a very high-stake legislative activity as bridging will be least feasible and defensible in those highly strategic contexts. Ensuring similar choice situations, together with ensuring equivalence in the units of measurement, is often deemed satisfactory (Lewis and Tausanovitch, 2015, Matsusaka, 2001). In this analysis, the same units of measurement used in the EES2009 Voter study were imposed on the text analysis of parties' written questions. Moreover, parties' and voters' positions were retrieved via a standardised procedure applied equally to all political parties (Laver, 2001:16). To the extent that there is measurement-error, it is expected to be unbiased, i.e. distributed equally to all parties in the analysis. Furthermore, each political party was coded on the basis of 13 texts from each party MEP. Given the widespread tabling of written questions among MEPs (see Chapter 2), and given this uniform sampling rule, it is not expected that a sub-set of political party members would skew the party median ideological score. Adopting the median and not the mean crowdsourced score was also a precaution against outliers skewing the final party score. Other solutions to indicator equivalence problems include the aggregation of survey answers and legislative behaviour into 'core' policy domains, which are more stable across time and contexts (Stone, 1979). This particular precaution was also adopted here. All in all, it is believed that party and voters' ideological positions are meaningful and comparable. Because of the rigorous application of text coding rules, any difference in scale usage between party and voters is assumed to be uniformly distributed across the sample, and thus not to bias the results.

One additional solutions to indicator non-equivalence mentioned (though marginally) in some empirical study of political representation is the re-scaling of voters and legislators' scores. This would be done by means of either rank-transformation or standardisation

within, respectively, the voter and legislative population (Thomassen, 1994, Clinton, 2006). This solution was not adopted here since the transformed ideological scores would scale political parties in relation with each other and not in their absolute ideological positions. The unavailability of the population of EP7 parties would make the standardised ideological score particularly dependent on the sample, whereas the 'raw' crowdsourced ideological scores are anchored on a standardised codebook of left-right policy positions.

The study adopted several key precautions recommended in the literature on political representation and, in particular: core preferences on economic policy for both voters and parties, relatively similar choice situations, and the same metric used in the 2009 European Election Voter Study. It can be therefore concluded that the basic requirements of metric equivalence and choice situation equivalence were satisfactorily approximated here.

Conclusion

This chapter has described the state of party-voter congruence in the dialogue of EP7 parties with the EU formal agenda-setter. The study finds satisfactory representation performance at the institutional level, but low collective representation (or 'pluralism'). Not all party voters, in fact, can expect their preferences to be represented in inputs to the EU political system. Large variation is present in representation performances and non-centrist party voters are particularly affected.

The empirical analysis was based on ideological scaling of EP7 political parties and their 2009 party voters. The study is an innovation over previous studies in the area given its focus on legislative activities instead of manifesto statements or candidate survey responses. The investigation of representation during the policy-cycle was facilitated by the introduction of crowdsourcing as a method of political text analysis. The chapter applies this new, flexible and cheap procedure of text analysis to a real-world political problem, establishing a procedure that can be easily replicated to assess representatives worldwide. The economic policy preferences expressed by parties in written questions and by voters in the election survey were compared both via central-tendency and distribution-based measures.

Given the flaws of electoral contestation at the EU level, it is not immediately apparent that political parties serving in the European Parliament should have the same incentives to voice voters' preferences as parties in traditional representative democracies. This study

aimed to discover whether substantive representation deficits materialise in the European Parliament and, if so, whether there is variation or uniformity in unresponsiveness. While studies of electoral congruence conclude that there are no discrepancies in economic policy preferences between party representatives and party voters at the aggregate level, the analysis of legislative congruence presented here paints a slightly less optimistic picture. The assessment of representation during decision-making – i.e. legislative congruence – unveiled good representation at the aggregate, institutional level but also substantial variation in parties' representative performance. It for example found that parties of the 7th European Parliament, when deviating, did so at the expense of leftist party voters (thus potentially highlighting access inequality of the economically disadvantaged in the EU's agenda-setting stage), though this result might be conditional on the under-sampling of EPP parties. Were all right-wing EP7 parties represented, the move to the centre of these parties might have meant that right-wing voters would be as unrepresented as left-wing voters.

This finding highlights that not all European voters were hurt by the second-order nature of EP elections, as claims by identitarian eurosceptics and by the literature on the democratic deficit would suggest, but that some parties failed to voice their voters' economic preferences in an effort to move to the centre. It appears that parties voted by both left and right-wingers were affected, though parties on the left were penalised to a higher extent. This result however might be contingent on the under-sampling of EPP parties. The EP thus appears strikingly similar to 'non-second-order' representative democracies. The next chapter will investigate predictors of unresponsiveness, in an attempt to explain the variation highlighted in this study.

Appendix – Chapter 3

FIGURE 1

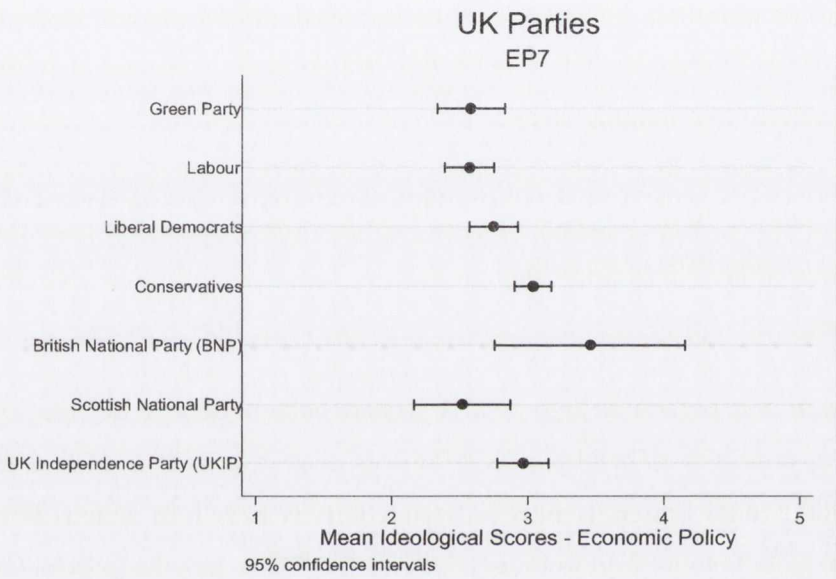


Figure 1. Confidence Interval Plot of UK political parties mean economic policy preference as retrieved from their EP7 written questions.

TABLE 1

Michael Cashman (Labour) – Question 007441/2012

"We have been contacted by a number of constituents who own second homes in France and are concerned about the French Government's recent taxation proposals, which will result in a substantial increase in income tax and capitals gains tax affecting British and other 'non-resident' second-home owners in France.

It has been announced that, with the imposition of the 'social charge' element of French taxes on those living outside the country, capital gains tax will increase from 19 % to 34.5 %, while the tax on rental income will rise from 20 % to 35.5 % . The former change will come into force at the end of this month, while the latter will be retrospective and backdated to 1 January 2012.

Many of our constituents believe that the effects of this increase could prove disastrous, given the current economic climate and the difficulties many homeowners already face in maintaining their properties.

1. Can the Commission confirm whether this tax increase breaks any EC laws, particularly as the French Government is discriminating on the basis of nationality by imposing a 'social charge' on foreign-owned second homes, despite the fact that the homeowners affected will not gain all the benefits to which such a charge should entitle them?

2. What action, if any, does the Commission intend to take against the French Government if this tax increase is found to contravene EC law?"

Michael Cashman (Labour) – Question 005741/2011

"Denmark and the Danish Food and Veterinary Administration are banning Marmite from the country because of 2004 legislation prohibiting the sale of foods with added vitamins or minerals.

Would such a ban violate any EU legislation? What effect does the Commission expect this to have on the producer, which is located in Burton in the West Midlands?"

Jean Lambert (Greens) – Question 011226/2010

"In Malta, the Controlled Companies Act (1995) gives legal immunity to a government-appointed liquidator (the Controller) and retrospectively applies this immunity from the date of the controller's appointment. This has prevented shareholders of the BICAL bank, which was placed under government administration in 1973, from taking court action against the Controller's administration of their assets, which he is to sell to pay off creditors and bank depositors before returning the bank to the shareholders. The BICAL shareholders claim improper administration of their assets on the part of the Controller.

The Constitutional Court has ruled that such court action can only be taken in cases where it can be proven that there is 'gross negligence' and 'bad faith' on the part of the Controller. Given that immunity in Malta is sparingly conceded (parliamentary and diplomatic immunity, the judiciary and the highest government officials), does the Commission find such qualified immunity of a liquidator — whose actions should be

rightfully called to account — contrary to the fundamental human rights of the shareholders, whose assets are under the total control of the Controller?"

John Stuart Agnew (UKIP) - question 9378/2010

"Does the Commission consider that there are likely to be any increases in mercury pollution arising from making compact fluorescent lightbulbs which use mercury vapour compulsory from 2012?"

John Stuart Agnew (UKIP) - question 9381/2010

"Does the Commission agree with the description that mercury is 'the most toxic non-radioactive metal on earth'?"

John Stuart Agnew (UKIP) - question 011165/2011

"Given the widespread decline in European pollinators, as revealed by the Sixth Framework Programme project ALARM (Assessing Large-scale environmental Risks for biodiversity with tested Methods), can the Commission state what research, if any, is being undertaken under the Seventh Framework Programme with a view to better understanding the causes of the decline in wild pollinators and how it can be remedied?"

Marta Andreasen (UKIP) - question 003603/2014

"Will the Commission make a statement regarding its position on mandatory fuel charging, which is the practice whereby car rental companies unexpectedly make an additional charge to customers for a full tank of fuel upon collection of the rental vehicle, despite these charges not being explained at the time the booking is made?

Does the Commission agree that this practice is unethical and unfair for consumers, who are forced to pay a mandatory charge for a product they do not need or want and which was not explained to them at the time of booking? Will the Commission express an opinion on whether this practice is in conflict with the Unfair Commercial Practices Directive (2005/29/EC)?"

Nicole Sinclaire (UKIP) – question 011139/2012

"My attention has been drawn to complaints made by several municipalities in Latvia that the Cabinet of Ministers in Latvia is not respecting the principles of good governance laid down in the European Regional Development Fund Regulation. An alliance of several municipalities in Latvia is contesting the discriminatory manner in which projects have been selected for the allocation of funds from the budget, showing contempt for consultation with regional and local authorities, and blatantly allocating project funds to three preferred cities on the basis of political favour and not in accordance with the merits of individual project proposals from other regions of the country. In these times of economic austerity, Europe simply cannot afford loose budget supervision giving way to political cronyism and lining the pockets of the party faithful. These funds must be used properly and administered fairly to create jobs and achieve economic growth.

Can the Commission, as a matter of urgency, state what steps it is taking to supervise ERDF spending in Latvia to ensure that projects there are selected by a thorough process that ensures better and more effective spending to promote growth and jobs?

Can the Commission also clarify what powers it has to intervene at a pre-selection stage where corrective action would prevent taxpayers' money being spent in a manner that runs

counter to the criteria and objectives of the European Regional Development Fund?"

William Dartmouth (UKIP) – question 002179

"Does the Commission appreciate that actuarial calculation is based on precise mathematics and that the concept of applying so-called anti-discrimination law is therefore not enlightened social policy but the undermining of science?"

Table 1. Sample of written questions from Labour, Green and UKIP MEPs. Taken from the socio-economic subsample of the EP7 written question corpus.

FIGURE 2

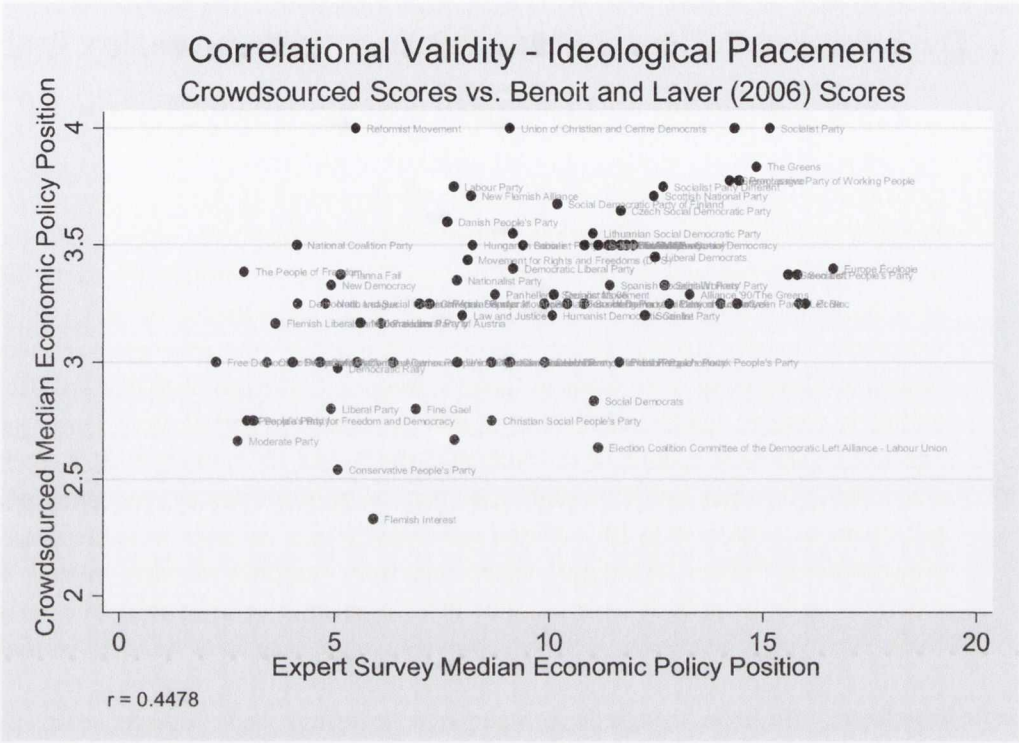


Figure 2. Scatterplot of Benoit and Laver (2006) economic policy ideological scores and Crowdsourced economic policy ideological scores from the corpus of 2009-2014 EP written questions.

Chapter Four

The European Parliament has a Representative Inequality Problem: Voter Education and Legislative Responsiveness in the EP7

Abstract

Political representation works when irresponsible representatives are not allowed to access the decision-making arena, by being 'filtered out' through elections. Good selection is thus fundamental to avoid moral hazard – the situation in which political representatives (the agents) fail to represent their voters (the principals). However, academics disagree on what leads to 'good selection'. Some postulate that prospective voting is enough; while others believe that retrospective voting only curbs moral hazards. Under what conditions do national parties in the EP7 represent their voters in economic policy-making? This study uses data on political parties' economic policy statements as expressed in EP7 written questions, whose contents were analysed via crowdsourcing. These ideological statements were matched to party voters' self-reported economic preferences from the 2009 European Election Study. The analysis finds that voter education – which proxies voters' capacity to use verifiable, retrospective information – is the only robust predictor of the responsiveness of EP legislators. Electoral congruence, campaign exposure and contacts with party candidates are not associated with representation. Intra-party democracy is also found statistically significantly to reduce legislative unresponsiveness. The finding that superior information processing capacities – as captured by educational achievements – increase responsiveness of legislators has implications for the literature on voting behaviour, by casting a shadow over the effectiveness of heuristic-based, prospective voting. The literature on representation has consistently found variation in representation performances of politicians, and, most recently, class disparities in representation were documented in established democracies. The analysis suggests that this might be due to the different levels of political competence of these societal groups.

Introduction

Since its inception, representative democracy has been portrayed as being biased towards the rich (Thaa, 2016). Studies on Western democracies have consistently found evidence of 'disparities' in representation, whereby the upper classes have their preferences represented while the lower classes suffer from non-representation (Bartels, 2008, Adams and Ezrow, 2009, Gilens and Page, 2014, Aaldering, 2016). Representation inequalities are a serious problem: when representation fails in such predictable patterns, support and legitimacy of political systems dwindles (Rohrschneider, 2002) and apathy, abstentionism, non-compliance and support for populist parties rise (Bühlmann and Fivaz, 2016:2).

The political agency literature suggests that political representatives, to be compliant with voters' preferences, need incentives in the form of rewards/sanctions (Besley, 2006:Chapter 3). The upper-class bias might be the result of asymmetrical costs in gathering and organising the necessary political information to apply rewards and sanctions appropriately. Other scholars argue that assessing representatives' actions is costly and unnecessary to make good electoral decisions. They postulate that heuristic-based voting on the basis of campaign cues mainly 'works' in yielding representative legislators (Lupia et al., 2000) and that the costs of retrospective voting are too high for the marginal benefits they yield. Cues, however, still need to be tested for their reliability (Aidt, 2000). Kahnemann (2011), for example, finds that experts adopt shortcuts more accurately than non-experts. Is unresponsiveness associated with low capacity to reward/sanction representatives for their actions while in office?

This chapter investigates determinants of political representation by studying responsiveness, or legislative congruence – i.e. the match between voters' policy positions and the legislative positions of political parties as expressed in their parliamentary questioning. A key innovation of the study is the scaling of political parties on the basis of their legislative activities, thus overcoming the limits of looking at self-reported ideologies in candidate surveys. Crowdsourcing was adopted to analyse parliamentary texts' contents and retrieve parties' ideological positions in economic policy. A random sample of economic written questions submitted by MEPs in the 2009-2014 legislative term was coded by online coders – the 'crowd' – on the basis of a pilot-tested ideological codebook. Voters' policy positions have been retrieved from the 2009 European Election Study. Studying legislative congruence is an innovation in EP representation studies, which mostly focus on electoral, or ideological, congruence which does not, however, capture voters' control over decision-making (Pitkin, 1967).

Theories of representation have stressed either the importance of 'ex ante' or 'ex post' screening of political candidates. The two theories of representation – the selection and the sanction model, respectively – depend on differing assumptions about voting behaviour. The selection model of representation assumes prospective selection: according to this school of thought, it is more realistic to recognise that candidate quality can be predicted on the basis of campaign heuristics. Using representatives' past behaviour to make predictions – which is cognitively costlier – is thus considered inefficient. The principals – i.e. voters – according to these scholars, can manage to ensure compliance pre-emptively,

by focusing on present information, deemed a reliable cue to guess the self-motivation of agents. According to the voting behaviour literature prospective selection is ubiquitous: voters are subject to recency effects, framing and priming and rely mostly on election campaign news and candidate personal attributes to make their choices (Lupia et al., 2000, Popkin, 1991). According to this school of thought, congruence between voters and representatives can result from simple campaign exposure (Lupia et al., 2000). This theory justifies democratic reforms focusing on incentivising participation and deliberation, referendums, and the reduction of legislative terms. Additional reforms suggested are mainly focused on campaign signals: e.g. the proposal to introduce penalties for lying and to increase transparency in campaign funding (Lupia et al., 2000).

The sanction model of representation, instead, believes that the selection of candidates has to be based on their past record. According to this school of thought, retrospective voting, or the capacity for 'ex post' control of agents, is the only way to predict candidate quality, to infer the unobservable internal motivations of agents. These scholars assume that it is not costly to punish parties for their past performances (Fiorina, 1981) and that correct representation by agents results from the credible threat of future evaluation. Basing vote choice on verifiable signals – i.e. legislative actions – thus helps in securing correct representation. These two theories will be illustrated through a formal model of political representation, where political representation is modelled as an incomplete information game of signalling.

In addition, the chapter will contribute to the prospective vs. retrospective controversy by empirically testing the association of legislative congruence with voters' campaign attention and with voters' cognitive capacities. The selection – or 'prospective' – model has been found to perform well when tested on electoral congruence. But, as stated above, electoral congruence does not capture voters' control over decision-making and here a more direct measure of representation – i.e. the match between voters' preferences and parties' legislative activities – will be tested instead. Explanations of political representation mainly focus on the effect of electoral rules or party systems and do not directly and simultaneously look at voters' campaign participation and information processing skills. Additionally, voter type predictors of representation are generally understudied (Adams and Ezrow, 2009): by studying the impact of voters' prospective or retrospective capacities, this study will add to the study of voter predictors of representation. The present study will thus simultaneously test ex ante and ex post types of

delegation constraints: this constitutes an innovation over studies of representation predictors, which mostly test predictors in isolation. The two theories will be tested in the understudied contexts of the European Parliament, which is an interesting case given its multinational composition and the variety of political parties that take part in its activities.

The analysis finds that voters' education is statistically significantly associated with parties' responsiveness, even when controlling for ideological congruence, amount of information at selection, participation capacity, and party organisational features. Therefore, the highly educated achieve superior representation through something in addition to their superior information at selection time, their participation patterns, deliberative capacities and patterns of party choice. The chapter argues, with the help of findings from the cognitive psychology literature, that the highly educated are more likely to detect and use retrospective, verifiable information, which makes them better able to sort committed from uncommitted parties. Perfect information – i.e. information on past actions of representatives – is the only verifiable cue on representatives' payoffs in the representation game. Voters that are able to retrieve information on political parties' past actions induce their political representatives to cooperate, as they successfully manage to filter-out uncooperative ones. In conclusion, the European Union – and representative democracies in general – should consider reforms to mandatory school curricula that would improve the political information processing skills of future voters. More expensive reforms, such as continuous referendums or parallel deliberative institutions, may not be necessary.

The chapter proceeds as follows: first, studies on political representation in general and on EU-specific representation are reviewed. Secondly, the two theories of representation are presented with the help of formal modelling. Thirdly, the empirical methodology adopted to investigate predictors of responsiveness is described. Finally, findings are presented and discussed.

Literature Review

The literature on political representation can be classified into descriptive and explanatory studies. Within these broad categories, there are studies that operationalise political representation by comparing *voters' preferences* with *representatives' preferences* (ideological or electoral congruence studies) and studies that operationalise political representation by comparing *voters' preferences* with representatives' *legislative*

behaviour or with *policy outputs* (responsiveness or legislative/executive congruence studies).

Ideological/Electoral Congruence Studies

The vast majority of studies on representation in Europe or the European Parliament describe and explain electoral congruence. Electoral congruence is the ideological similarity between parties and their voters at election time, where parties' policy preferences are measured via candidate surveys or party manifestos. These studies find that voters are less represented in foreign policy and tend to be better represented in social and economic policy (Thomassen, 1994, Dalton, 2015, Costello et al., 2012). Where discrepancies exist, they tend to be mostly to the left of the political spectrum, meaning that representatives' declare more liberal preferences than voters (Thomassen, 1994, Belchior, 2013).

The explanations of electoral congruence mostly focus on electoral institutions or party organisational features. In particular, the majority of studies are interested in determining the effect of majoritarian systems on the electoral congruence of parties and voters (Huber and Powell, 1994, Blais and Bodet, 2006, Powell, 2009, Golder and Stramsky, 2010, Dalton, 2015, Belchior, 2013, Walczak and Van der Brug, 2013, Vasilopoulou and Gattermann, 2013). Few studies focus on voter type and while one finds no effect of voter type on electoral congruence (Belchior, 2013), others find a statistically significant association between voter education, quantity of information at election time, and political engagement with electoral congruence (Walczak and Van der Brug, 2013, Adams and Ezrow, 2009). Electoral congruence, however, does not fully capture 'rule by the people' since there is no guarantee that representatives' announcements and declarations (usually captured via elite surveys) actually get translated into legislative activities. Hence, electoral congruence is an imperfect measure of political representation. It captures, instead, voters' attention to campaign statements, since it measures the closeness of party candidates' electoral policy *claims* with party voters' preferences. It will be adopted here as a predictor of political representation instead, functioning as the key predictor of the selection model of representation (Mansbridge, 2016).

Responsiveness/Legislative Congruence Studies

Studies of responsiveness – or legislative congruence – can be further divided into studies of the match between voters and legislative activities ('input' responsiveness/legislative congruence), and studies of the match between voters and final policy outputs ('output' responsiveness/executive congruence). The literature on legislative congruence is mainly descriptive due to the data collection efforts it entails. This study represents one of only a few studies that investigate determinants of legislative congruence in a European setting. This literature is, in fact, predominantly centred on the US: the non-individualistic nature of European legislatures, which translates to strict party discipline, makes roll call vote analysis not particularly useful in European democracies (Thomassen, 1994). The pioneering study by Miller and Stokes (1963), found differences in legislative congruence according to policy domain: Congressmen tended to represent voters on socio-economic issues while representation failed in foreign affairs. These findings were contested by Erikson (Erikson, 1978) who found high legislative congruence of Congressmen to their district's median voter overall. In general, findings point to good legislative congruence of representatives to popular wishes (Page and Shapiro, 1983, Bartels, 1991, Erikson, 1978, Brooks and Manza, 2006, Clinton, 2006), although recently representation inequalities have been documented in the US, where representatives seem to follow the interests of top income earners while disregarding the interests of the economically disadvantaged (Gilens and Page, 2014, Bartels, 2008). This was also observed in the European Parliament (Chapter 3) where preferences for economic and trade regulation, strong public social services and poverty relief were underrepresented. While a leftist bias was noticed in electoral congruence, legislative congruence studies point instead to a rightist bias.

Explanations of legislative/executive congruence have mostly focused on the closeness or competitiveness of elections (Bullock and Brady, 1983, Shapiro et al., 1990, Bartels, 1991, Hobolt and Klemmensen, 2008). Findings are mixed, but in the main legislators facing re-election or whose seat is marginal tend to be more responsive, for fear of electoral repercussions. The literature on legislative congruence seems thus to prefer the sanction model as an explanation of representation, since increased political competition is thought to redress information asymmetries over politicians' actions (Ferejohn, 1986, Besley, 2006: Chapter3).

This chapter contributes to the literature on legislative congruence by testing the selection and sanction models simultaneously. In addition, the chapter tests party-type and voter-type predictors of responsiveness, under-studied in the representation scholarship.

Theories of Representation

Political representation thus works when irresponsible representatives are not allowed to access the decision-making arena, by being 'filtered out' through elections. There are two main ways through which this can be achieved: by voting on the basis of electoral campaigns (prospective/selection model), or by conditioning your vote on representatives' past actions (retrospective/sanction model). While both models are interested in selecting the most competent and well-meaning agents – i.e. 'committed' agents – proponents of the prospective model focus on information relevant to the election period, i.e. time t (Mansbridge, 2016). Proponents of the retrospective model focus instead on information relevant to time t_{-1}. Descriptive representation, mandating that representatives' share the same socio-demographic characteristics of the represented (Pitkin, 1967), is compatible with the prospective model in that it does not require assessment of past actions but postulates that personal characteristics reveal the true nature of the descriptive representative. Personal demographics are easily retrieved via campaign exposure at time t, and so descriptive representation is taken as an example of the prospective model of representation. Both the prospective and the retrospective model focus on mitigating moral hazards by picking 'intrinsically good' representatives (Besley, 2006:106). Prospective voting focuses on limiting adverse selection while retrospective voting is concerned with curbing moral hazard. The signals that prospective and retrospective voters deem acceptable to infer the unobservable self-motivations of agents (or agent types) are thus different. I argue below that exposure to electoral signals (prospective voting behaviour) may not be sufficient to 'filter out' bad candidates. This is because campaign signalling is less costly and leads both committed and uncommitted candidates to adopt similar signalling strategies. Electoral campaigning is thus fundamentally unreliable. To demonstrate this, the two types of party selection strategies are illustrated by means of signalling games, which is the typical modelling choice for games of electoral competition (Banks, 1991).

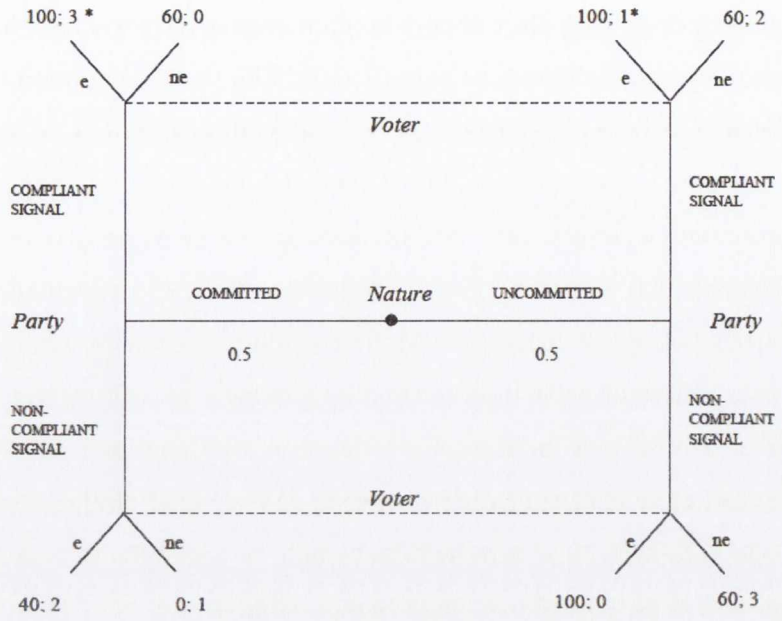


Figure 4.1 Costless signalling (cheap talk) voting game. Outcomes of pooling equilibrium marked by the asterisks.

The game is composed of two players, the political party and the voter. Voters have the choice to either elect – 'e' – or not – 'ne' – a particular party. Parties move first and can either send a 'compliant' or 'non-compliant' signal, i.e. a claim or behaviour exemplifying their ideological closeness to/distance from the voters. Parties know which type they are – whether uncommitted to voters' policy preferences or committed – but voters cannot observe the political party intrinsic motivations: they can only infer them from signals. The voters' payoff describes voters as most preferring the election of committed parties and non-election of uncommitted ones. The actual payoff that voters get by electing or not electing depends on party type, the variable that is unobservable.

In the 'cheap talk' game exemplified in figure 4.1 above, committed parties have a clear dominant strategy of signalling representation of voters, while uncommitted parties are indifferent between signalling alignment with voters or not. Uncommitted parties get some utility from representing other preferences than those of voters – e.g. lobbies. Though still valuing election, they do not exclusively get their benefits from democratic representation. Election by voters always gains political parties 40 utility units, in keeping with the assumption that political parties are vote-seekers (Downs 1957). While a committed party has the dominant strategy of signalling representation (its payoffs from signalling representation are always higher than its payoffs from unrepresentative signals), an uncommitted party does not have a dominant strategy. Voters also do not have dominant

strategies over signals. They always prefer a committed party over an uncommitted one but they can base their strategy on signals only. The fact that committed parties would never send unrepresentative signals, however, leads political parties of each type to pool at the same signal: i.e. the representation signal. The uncommitted party knows that if it signals unrepresentativeness the voter will immediately know its party type, and thus refrains from ever sending that signal. Each party type, therefore, ends up sending an identical signal. The cheap talk game leads to a pooling equilibrium where voters have the incentive to elect irrespective of party type and end up gaining a payoff of three 50% of the time and a payoff of one 50% of the time, for a long-run total expected payoff of two. Clearly, the situation where voters can expect always to gain a payoff of three (by electing a committed party and sacking an uncommitted one) would be ideal: but in contexts of costless signals, exemplified in the case above, this is not possible.

To be able to separate committed from uncommitted parties, costlier signals are necessary. Verifiable information is a type of costly signal that conditions signals on the sender's type. Legislative activities of political parties can be thought of as costlier and, thus, verifiable, signals, being related to the policy-cycle. Campaign claims or behaviours are less intimately dependent on party type because they have low impact on parties' payoffs. The signalling model below introduces costly signalling and depicts a verifiable information game.

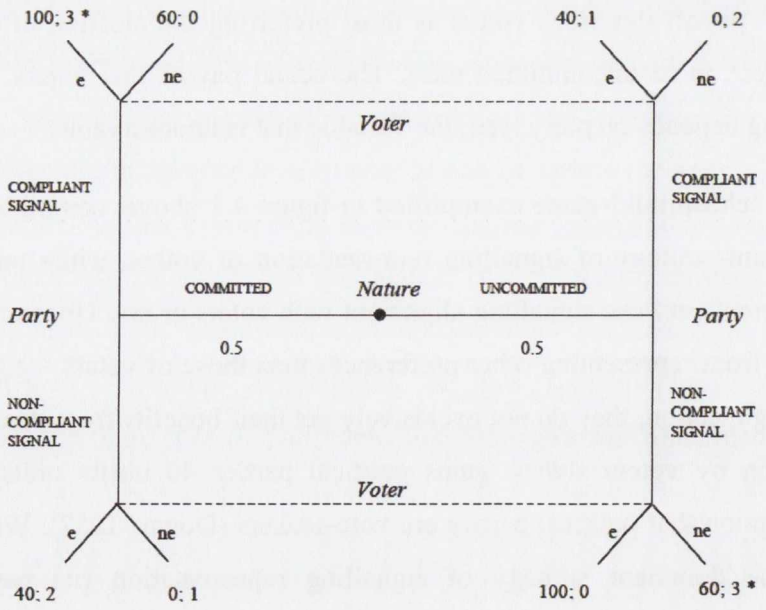


Figure 4.2 Costly signalling (verifiable information) voting game. Outcomes of separating equilibrium marked by the asterisks.

Voters' payoff functions remain unchanged, since they depend on party type. Voters continue most to prefer the election of committed parties and the non-election of uncommitted ones. The payoffs associated with political parties, and uncommitted parties in particular, however, change in a game of verifiable information. Producing a legislative signal that is contrary to one's type can now, in fact, carry costs for the uncommitted party as well. Lobbies might be furious and refuse to give the party any benefit: sending a compliant signal now hurts the uncommitted political party. The additional principals that a legislator might have beside voters (i.e. lobbies) usually want to influence decision-making: if the party fails to represent their preferences in legislative activities, for example, these 'extra' principals might decide to stop rewarding the party. The result is that if the uncommitted party sends a voter representation signal, it now loses the benefits accrued from the other principal. The uncommitted party will always prefer to send an unrepresentative signal in this case and earn 60, rather than send a representative one and earn 40 at most. Now the two types end up sending different signals, and the voter selects an action on the basis of full information. Voters thus end up always electing committed parties and not electing uncommitted ones, for a long run expected payoff of three. Uncommitted parties will exit the political system and, in the long term, responsiveness will ensue. The outcomes marked with the asterisk in figure 4.2 highlight the outcomes deriving from the separating equilibrium generated by the verifiable information game.

The weakness in the prospective model of representation, therefore, is the low credibility and relevance for political representation of electoral cues. Game theory has demonstrated how communication and contacts among players can of course induce cooperation, but warned against the problem of 'cheap talk', i.e. of costless signalling (Romp, 1997, Williams, 2013). If a player's cost for signalling is very low, both good and bad players can claim to be one thing – in this case, representative – when in fact they are not. If beliefs are inaccurately formed and manipulated, re-election will not be contingent on actual party behaviour. Parties can thus ensure re-election even when shirking and uncommitted agents will not exit the policy-making arena. Game theorists suggest that 'belief updating' via 'Bayesian learning' helps to form accurate beliefs in that this strategy is more isolated from credibility problems. Bayesian learning is thus hypothesised better to ensure that player 2 actions be conditional on player 1 cooperation (Williams, 2013:Chapter 10, Romp, 1997: Chapter 3). Proponents of the retrospective model of representation, focusing on this logic of 'belief updating' via past actions, correctly

conclude that the capacity to select relevant cues – e.g. parties' past records – is the only systematic way to gauge party type. In other words, when particular groups of voters update their beliefs on the basis of information over parties' past actions they will systematically select better performing parties. When information on past actions cannot be retrieved, non-cooperative behaviour is not punished and uncommitted parties gain access to the decision-making arena. To sum up, perfect information is often necessary to ensure cooperation in games of incomplete information: perfect information results in the systematic sorting of parties by type while electoral signalling, likely to have the same costs for both defecting and cooperative players, does not. As evidence of this, recent experimental and observational studies on the impact of reports and audits on voting behaviour indeed demonstrate that relevant information leads to the systematic removal of corrupt and bad performing politicians (Banerjee et al., 2011, Ferraz and Finan, 2008, Pande, 2011).

To secure responsiveness, voters need to shy away from cheap talk games and prefer costly signals instead. But which voters are able to distinguish separating signals from cheap ones? The costs of retrospective voting (Healy and Malhotra, 2013) may be lower for voters with superior problem-solving and information processing skills, i.e. university educated voters. Whether retrospective voting skills ensure the filtering of uncommitted, unresponsive political parties will be tested by assessing the statistical association between party voters' educational achievements at time t and legislative incongruence at time t_{+1}. Are voters relying on electoral information able to filter out uncommitted parties or can only voters capable of detecting and analysing past actions command compliance? Proponents of the selection model argue for the importance of voter information during campaigns (Mansbridge, 2016, Lupia et al., 2000). Whether prospective voting strategies can work to filter out uncommitted parties will be thus tested by assessing the relationship between electoral congruence at election time and legislative incongruence at time t_{+1}.

This leads to the following hypotheses:

> **H1** (*sanction model*): The higher the information-processing skills of voters, the lower the legislative incongruence of the party.
>
> **H2** (*selection model*): The higher the party-voter electoral incongruence, the higher the legislative incongruence.

Analysis

The dependent variable, *legislative incongruence*, is operationalised as the absolute distance between 2009 party median voters' preferences in economic policy and the median legislative positions of national parties during the EP 7th legislative term. The economic policy preferences of voters have been collected from the EES 2009 Voter survey, while the economic policy positions of national parties have been retrieved from crowd-sourced text analysis of a random sample of EP7 written parliamentary questions from each party. The unit of analysis is the national party, clustered by country. The dependent variable, ranging from 0 to 1.83, is left-skewed (see figure 4.3 below). A log-level fixed effects regression model will be therefore adopted to model the relationships.

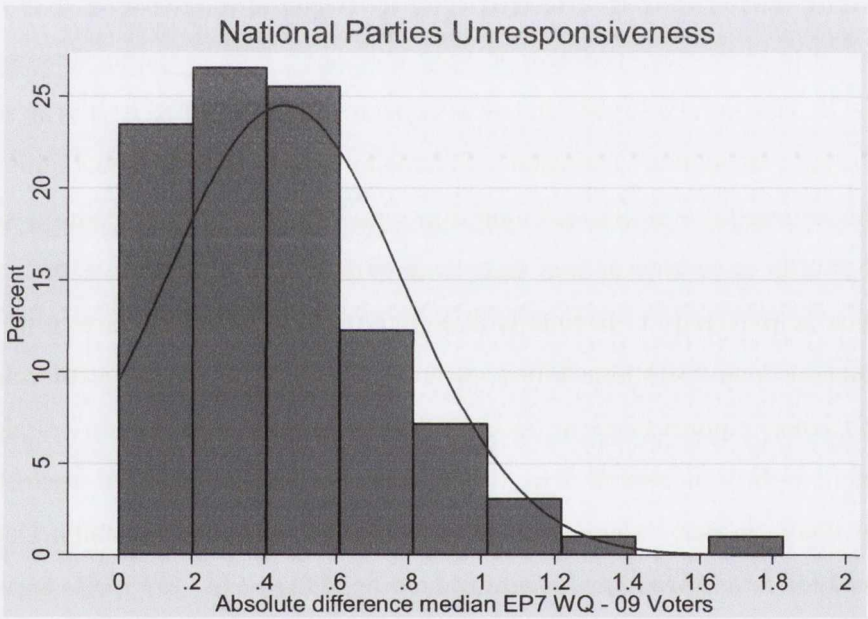


Figure 4.3 Distribution of EP7 national parties' legislative incongruence.

The capacity of voters to use past information to evaluate political parties has been proxied by the proportion of University educated voters in each party. Studies found that highly educated voters are indeed much more likely to look at parties' historical records (retrospective voting) to make decisions (Schmidt et al., 1996, Whitby and Bledsoe, 1986, Aidt, 2000). Highly educated voters have also been found to rely less on party cues and be better able to place themselves in the political party spectrum and retrieve relevant performance information (Shively, 1979, Uslaner, 1989, Huber et al., 2005, Aidt, 2000). In short, education captures superior cognitive skills as the costs to collect and organise relevant information is lower for the highly educated (Shively 1979). The highly educated have been found to rely less on campaign heuristics (Lau and Redlawsk, 2006), which

were shown by the model to be prone to manipulation and, by virtue of competition for votes, were found to be inherently uninformative (Meyer and Wagner, 2016). Education proxies what Kahnemann (2011) calls 'cognitive control': i.e. the capacity for critical and analytical thinking. This leads highly educated people to recognise that information on past behaviour is a more efficient way to be represented by aligned agents than professed ideology or commitments, or 'cheap talk', by representatives.

Academic education exposes individuals to political stimuli, being Universities socialisation and political participation hubs (Glaeser et al., 2007). In addition, critical thinking is a key learning objective of higher education institutions: logic and communication skills are central to their curricula. The core aim of university education is training students to be 'effective citizens' (Chan et al., 2014:1). It is not by chance that critical-thinking and problem-solving are part of the generic skill assessment that the OECD uses to rank higher education systems and is defined as a central learning outcome of higher education institutions (Tremblay et al., 2012). The highly educated, having superior cognitive skills, will tend to use past records when selecting candidates. Given the superiority of retrospective signals in 'filtering out' uncommitted parties, the highly educated will tend to systematically select political parties that are going to respond to their preferences in their legislative activities. Their superior usage of reliable and relevant (verifiable) signals leads to accurate and systematic de-selection of uncommitted parties, which, in turn, is expected to lead to party responsiveness. The variable *education* is the percentage of party voters that declare having graduated university. Data on party voters' education attainments has been retrieved from the EES 2009 Voter survey (EES, 2009). It ranges from 6.7% to 81.6% with an average of 42.3%.

Voter attention to, and engagement with, campaign signals is proxied by the degree of electoral incongruence between a party and its voters. *Electoral incongruence* is measured by the absolute difference between median economic self-reported preference (Likert scale units) of party candidates during the 2009 election campaign and the median preference of party voters, retrieved from the EES 2009 Voter survey. Party delegations self-reported preferences have been measured via an index of two economic survey items from the 2009 European Election Candidate Study. Party voters' preferences have been measured with an index of the same two economic survey items from the 2009 European Election Voter Study. The variable ranges from 0 to 2.75. The average is 0.6. Electoral incongruence, as explained in the literature review section, is substantively different to the dependent

variable (legislative incongruence). Legislative incongruence is the distance between voters' preferences and party preferences as expressed in legislative activities, while electoral incongruence is the distance between voters' preferences and party preferences as expressed in candidate surveys (or party manifestoes) at election time. Candidate surveys contain campaign *claims* while written questions capture concrete *behaviour* by political parties during policy-making. The selection model of representation asserts that voters only need to parse campaign signals to have complete information and, hence, for representation to occur (Mansbridge, 2016). Electoral incongruence is thereby chosen here as the proxy for usage of electoral signals.

Relevant control variables consist of party characteristics that could be disproportionately preferred by the highly educated and have an effect on legislative incongruence such as party age, party size and whether the party is a niche party (Ezrow, 2010, Dalton, 2015). Data on party establishment year has been collected from the European Election Database and cross-checked with party official websites. Data on party size has been proxied by national electoral results, collected from the Inter Parliamentary Union website. Data on niche parties has been collected via the party family variable in the EES 2009 Candidate Study: following Ezrow (2010:4) niche parties are those belonging to the communist, green, right-wing nationalist and ethnic party families. For more detailed information on the control variables, please see the appendix at the end of the chapter.

Results: Correct Selection vs. Potential for Sanction.

Absolute Distance EP7 Party Median – 2009 Median Party Voter					
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Electoral incongruence	-0.07	--	0.004	-0.33	-0.23
	(0.215)		(0.217)	(0.26)	(0.243)
Education	--	-0.014*	-0.016*	--	-0.028**
		(0.00634)	(0.00716)		(0.0088)
2009-13 electoral support	--	--	-0.011	--	-0.013
			(0.0115)		(0.014)
Niche party	--	--	-0.36	--	-0.22
			(0.257)		(0.33)
Party founding year	--	--	0.004	--	0.004
			(0.00247)		(0.0031)
Intercept	-0.967***	-0.353	-7.858	-0.810***	-6.443
	(0.148)	(0.277)	(4.766)	(0.173)	(6.094)
N	85	92	85	51	51
R^2	0.002	0.07	0.12	0.05	0.35
p (F test)	1.000	0	0.08	0.115	0.005

Standard errors in parentheses

$^{+}p < 0.10$, $^{*}p < 0.05$, $^{**}p < 0.01$, $^{***}p < 0.001$

Table 4.1. Log-linear OLS regression with country-fixed effects. Unresponsiveness of national parties has been regressed on predictors from the selection and the sanction models of representation.

The results from the country fixed effects log-level OLS regression support hypothesis 1 and disconfirm hypothesis 2. There is a statistically significant relationship (at the 0.05 level) between education and legislative incongruence. The regression analysis shows that the higher the percentage of party voters who graduated from University, the lower the legislative incongruence of the EP7 national party. In particular, each additional percent of graduates in the party base leads to a decrease of roughly 2 percent in incongruence. This is a substantial effect which holds in the bivariate as well as in the full model.

Hypothesis 2 is not supported by the EP7 data in that electoral incongruence between EP7 national parties and their voters does not have a statistically significant relationship with parties' legislative incongruence. This runs counter to the expectations of the prospective model of representation. Selecting an electorally (in)congruent party is, in fact, unrelated to the legislative (in)congruence of party representatives. Electoral congruence does not guarantee representation during legislation. Campaign heuristics thus appear irrelevant to political representation. Models 4 and 5 restrict the analysis to those political parties that

had 4 or more respondents in the EES candidate survey. The results strengthen the inference on education, and are unchanged concerning electoral congruence.

As an additional robustness test, data was collected from the Manifesto Study of the 2009 European Election Studies. The Manifesto study records the percentage of a party's manifesto arguments devoted to favourable mentions of planned economy and public ownership – the variable *planeco* – and the percentage of manifesto arguments devoted to favourable mentions of welfare and poverty relief programmes – the variable *welfare*. These two variables were summed to build parties' economic policy preferences: higher values thus indicate higher leftism of a political party. Metric equivalence is not guaranteed, since the voter economic index is measured in Likert scale units while the party positions are measured in percentages. Therefore, the two scales were rescaled and expressed in standard deviations from their respective means. The absolute difference between standardised party voters' leftism scores and the standardised party manifesto leftism score constitute the new measure of electoral congruence.

Absolute Distance EP7 Party Median – 2009 Median Party Voter		
	(1)	(2)
Electoral incongruence (Manifesto)	0.18	0.18
	(0.12)	(0.128)
Education	--	-0.014*
		(0.00662)
2009-13 electoral support	--	-0.016
		(0.0105)
Niche party	--	-0.404+
		(0.232)
Party founding year	--	0.004+
		(0.00229)
Intercept	-1.155***	-8.774+
	(0.139)	(4.461)
N	90	90
R^2	0.03	0.16
p (F test)	0.007	0.004

Standard errors in parentheses
$^{+}p < 0.10$, $^{*}p < 0.05$, $^{**}p < 0.01$, $^{***}p < 0.001$

Table 4.2 Log-linear OLS regression with country-fixed effects. Unresponsiveness of national parties has been regressed on predictors from the selection and the sanction models of representation.

The results remain unchanged even when operationalizing electoral congruence using

different data sources. Electoral congruence still appears unrelated to representative performance during legislative work. The percentage of highly educated voters still statistically significantly reduces unresponsiveness: each additional percent in university educated voters decreases legislative incongruence by approximately 1.5 percent. Interesting results emerge concerning niche parties and new parties. Niche parties are statistically significantly negatively associated with legislative incongruence: a niche party is 40 percent less incongruent than a non-niche one. Older parties are statistically significantly associated with lower legislative incongruence, since each additional year in the party's establishment date increases legislative incongruence by 0.4 percent. These additional results are only significant at the 0.1 level, however.

The capacity to vote retrospectively, proxied by education achievement of voters, is associated with significantly lower levels of shirking on the part of party representatives, even after controlling for correct selection at time *t*. On the contrary, electoral congruence at selection is not linked to representation performances. These results empirically demonstrate the conclusions drawn from the formal models presented in the theoretical section and confirm the claims of retrospective voting scholars. Relying on 'cheap talk' is not an efficient way to induce representation: voters are more successful at commanding representation when they have the capacity to monitor past behavior. These results are alarming, in light of studies on voting behavior which demonstrate the paramount usage of heuristics when deciding who to vote for (Lupia et al., 2000, Popkin, 1991). The criticism of inefficiency moved at the sanction model of representation by Mansbridge (2016) is not a reason to accept voting to be driven by campaign-based heuristics.

Sensitivity Analysis: Participatory and Deliberative Practice vs. Potential for Sanction.

Theorists of the prospective model posit that parties' representational roles (Disch, 2016), degree of contact with voters (Mansbridge, 2016), and campaign exposure of voters can lead voters to accurately select committed agents since these variables capture the amount of information and engagement of voters during the electoral stage (Mansbridge, 2016). The analysis presented in table 4 below further tests the performance of the prospective model by using different proxies for the capacity to select self-motivated agents.

The first proxy is *representational roles*, i.e. the average importance attributed by party representatives to the representation of party voters. It is measured as the average response

by party to a survey item in the EES 2009 Candidate survey asking how important it was to represent party voters. The variable ranges from 1 to 7, with 7 denoting 'great importance of representing party voters'. The variable's average is 5.8.

The second proxy, *contact with the party base* measures how much time per week was devoted to meeting party members by parties contesting the 2009 elections. The variable is measured in hours and ranges from 0 to 386. The average in the dataset is 15 hours. The data was collected from the EES 2009 Candidate study.

The third proxy, *election news volume,* is the average party voter response to an index of three survey items asking how often voters watched EP election programmes in TV, read about the EP elections in newspapers and accessed the election website. The survey items were measured in Likert scale units. The data was collected from the 2009 European Election Voter Study. The index ranges from 3.8 to 6.4 and its average is 5.4.

The fourth proxy, *campaign deliberation*, is the average party voter response to an index of two survey items asking how often voters talked to friends/family about the election or participated in election rallies. The survey items were measured in Likert scale units. The data was collected from the 2009 European Election Voter Study. The index ranges from 2.8 to 3.8 and its average is 3.3.

The fifth proxy, *government party 2009,* measures whether the party was in national government (1) or not (0) during the 2009 EP election. Data was collected from the Inter Parliamentary Union and cross-checked with the Election Resources database. The literature on EP elections has demonstrated a consistent 'second-order' model of voting behaviour, whereby opposition parties are chosen to punish governing parties for domestic decisions and not out of similar policy preferences (Hix and Marsh, 2010). Opposition parties receive some share of their votes out of conscious disregard for electoral cues: if bad prospective voting leads to higher unresponsiveness by opposition parties then second-order elections are problematic, and this feature of the EU political system would need to be addressed.

The sixth proxy, *selection by leadership,* measures intra-party democracy. The variable captures the degree of party 'oligarchy' – i.e. the reported average importance of national party officials in candidate selection. It consists in the average party candidates' response to a survey item asking how important the national party leadership was in the selection of

party candidates. The data was collected from the 2009 European Election Candidate Study. The variable is measured in Likert scale units and ranges from 1 to 5, with 5 denoting 'great importance' of leaderships in candidate selection. The average is 4. This variable has often been associated with participatory and deliberative models of democracy, and defended by participatory/deliberative democrats as a way to empower citizens directly in determining the direction of the party (Katz, 2001). In an internally democratic party, candidates are pre-screened by party members: the variable thus exemplifies 'ex ante' control. Candidates are screened before they can even compete in the election. Internally democratic parties also foster close contact and familiarity between individual party candidates and voters. The variable could however be compatible with the retrospective model as well: having the opportunity to screen individual candidates offering the same ideological cues could incentivise the usage of past records to 'filter out' bad candidates before elections. Though not clearly exemplary of either the prospective or the retrospective model, intra-party democracy is a fundamental party-organisational feature, and its consequences for representation need to be taken into account. This also helps to check whether the effect of university education is not due to specific party characteristics that might attract highly educated voters, such as intra-party democracy, for the participatory opportunities it offers.

Absolute Distance EP7 Party Median – 2009 Median Party Voter						
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Party Voter Representation Role	-0.03	--	--	--	--	--
	(0.0947)					
Contacts with Party Base	--	0.002	--	--	--	--
		(0.002)				
Election News Volume	--	--	0.39	--	--	--
			(0.374)			
Campaign Deliberation	--	--	--	0.13	--	--
				(0.588)		
Government Party 09	--	--	--	--	0.06	--
					(0.16)	
Selection by Leadership	--	--	--	--	--	0.290*
						(0.116)
Education	-0.017*	-0.017*	-0.018**	-0.016*	-0.016*	-0.012+
	(0.00719)	(0.007)	(0.00654)	(0.00642)	(0.006)	(0.00711)
2009-13 electoral support	-0.012	-0.012	-0.012	-0.013	-0.013	-0.0143
	(0.0115)	(0.012)	(0.0102)	(0.0102)	(0.0102)	(0.0110)
Niche party	-0.29	-0.28	-0.35	-0.40+	-0.40+	-0.326
	(0.277)	(0.27)	(0.235)	(0.237)	(0.233)	(0.250)
Party founding year	0.003	0.004	0.004+	0.004+	0.004*	0.00367
	(0.00254)	(0.0026)	(0.00222)	(0.00227)	(0.0022)	(0.00244)
Intercept	-6.663	-7.048	-9.611*	-8.586+	-8.64*	-8.431+
	(5.052)	(4.953)	(4.369)	(4.322)	(4.29)	(4.748)
N	84	83	92	92	92	83
R^2	0.13	0.13	0.16	0.15	0.15	0.22
p (F test)	0.07	0.055	0.001	0.005	0.006	0.0003

Standard errors in parentheses

$^{+}p < 0.10$, $^{*}p < 0.05$, $^{**}p < 0.01$, $^{***}p < 0.001$

Table 4.3 Log-linear OLS regression with country-fixed effects. Unresponsiveness of national parties has been regressed on predictors from the selection and the sanction models of representation.

From the regression analysis in table 4.3 it appears once again that the selection model is not confirmed in the EP7 context, except for model 6. Representation by European Parliament representatives crucially depends on overall levels of voter education, rather than exposure to campaigns or electoral representative claims. Again, higher levels of

education are statistically significantly associated with better representation: each percentage increase in University graduates among party voters leads to a decrease in legislative incongruence of around 2 percent. This finding is robust to all model specifications. It can be confidently concluded that the economic preferences of the highly skilled were better represented in the European Parliament.

Variations on hypothesis 2 are not supported by the data, with the exception of the role of intra-party democracy. This is an interesting finding which supports Lehrer's (2012) results on the role of intra-party democracy in inducing responsiveness. Each Likert-scale unit increase in the importance of party leaderships in candidate selection is in fact statistically significantly associated with an increase of roughly 30 percent in legislative incongruence. Less oligarchic candidate selection within the party thus helps in inducing responsiveness. This result holds even when controlling for ideology (see appendix, table 4).

The regression models in table 4 above also highlight once again that older parties tend to represent their voters better, though the result is not robust to different model specifications. The more recent the party, the less the party responds to the economic preferences of its voters. In particular, for each additional year in the establishment date, legislative incongruence increases by around 0.4 percent. 10 additional years in the establishment date lead to an increase of 4 percent in legislative incongruence. This effect may further confirm the sanction model of representation. Seasoned parties have established political records and therefore voters' uncertainty concerning their past behaviour may be reduced. They are less able to manipulate voters in the short term as their campaign cues can be more easily verified by the high educated and low educated alike (Huber et al., 2005). In addition, those parties might have superior information on party voters' preferences. In contexts of high uncertainty and low information-processing skills, established parties might ease information retrieval on past actions.

Another interesting finding from model 5 in table 2 concerns the effect of second-order elections on representative behaviour. The second-order nature of European elections seems not to have an impact on national parties' representation performance. Opposition parties display similar amounts of ideological ties with voters as government parties, despite having attracted more protest voters, according to the second-order model. This finding might also support the hypothesis, however, that voting in the 2009 European

elections might have been more ideologically driven, and not of the protest/'second order' type (Hobolt and De Vries, 2016, Hobolt and Spoon, 2012).

All models described above have been also analysed by using 'proximity' as an alternative operationalization of legislative incongruence. Proximity is an alternative measure of representation which takes into account the spread of voters in order to penalise more strongly deviations from homogeneous constituencies than deviations from heterogeneous ones (see Chapter 3). Proximity is the ratio between deviations from the party median and deviations from the median voter, subtracted from 1 so that higher numbers denote higher legislative incongruence (Golder and Stramsky, 2010). The results do not change significantly from those described above (see appendix, table 1). In particular, education robustly significantly reduces unresponsiveness while ideological congruence is insignificant. Education, therefore, is still associated with a reduction in unresponsiveness even when party voters' ideological inconsistencies are factored away: education is thus capturing something in addition to ideological clarity at selection time.

Further, all models described above have been tested by adding *party extremism* as a control (see appendix to this chapter, tables 2 and 3). The results remained robust to this model specification as well. *Party Extremism* was measured as the MEPs' party distance from the average ideological score of political parties competing in the 2009 EP elections. The ideological score for each party was retrieved from the 2009 EES Manifesto study (variable *rile_mrg*) and it is the sum of rightist quasi-sentences minus the sum of leftist quasi-sentences in the party 2009 EP election manifesto. The variable theoretically ranges from 0 (centrist) to 100 (extremist). The variable was added to check whether the education effect was due to the highly educated voting for centrist parties. Controlling for the left-right ideological extremism of political parties, the proportion of University-educated voters was still the most robust predictor of legislative responsiveness. Voting for centrist parties does not explain the effect University-education has on legislative responsiveness.

Discussion

The chapter demonstrates that ideological congruence, campaign participation and engagement, contact with candidates and selecting parties valuing voter representation do not necessarily lead to better political representation. However, it highlights how information-processing skills make a difference for responsiveness. The analysis finds that

education is a statistically significant predictor of responsiveness even after controlling for electoral congruence, campaign exposure and contact patterns with representatives. While the highly educated have been found to have more political information and to participate more (Highton, 2009), the effect of education is still significant after controlling for participation patterns, contacts with representatives and news exposure. Voters' education captures something in addition to their political information, engagement and ideological clarity.

The chapter argues that the mechanism by which education affects responsiveness is political competence, or what Kahnemann (2011) calls 'cognitive control': i.e. the capacity for critical thinking. Cognitive control, according to cognitive psychology, is developed through repeated exposure to a stimulus, i.e. practice, and is boosted by the innate intelligence of individuals (Kahnemann, 2011). University education enhances cognitive control in political matters given that academic education socialises individuals to political participation, citizen duties, problem-solving and logical decision-making (Glaeser et al., 2007, Chan et al., 2014:1, Tremblay et al., 2012). The study's findings lead to the inference that the highly educated are possibly more sceptical of agent campaign signalling – such as party manifestoes, news conferences, campaign ads and rallies – being capable and willing to evaluate these signals against reliable cues, such as past party performances. Highly educated voters are in fact much more likely to look at parties' historical records (retrospective voting) to make decisions (Schmidt et al., 1996, Whitby and Bledsoe, 1986). Due to their superior capacity for critically evaluating representatives' signals, the highly educated manage to reward and sanction representatives more systematically and correctly; this, in turn, leads to the systematic de-selection of uncommitted parties by the highly educated. Being able to better select, they will be represented by highly responsive political parties, who will voice their voters' policy preferences in each legislative activity they undertake, even relatively 'cheap' ones. The retrospective model of representation is confirmed from the data, since citizens who are potentially able to apply sanctions consistently actually command higher compliance from their agents. EP national parties are not responsive to people with a lot of information at selection time or with whom they have contact during electoral campaign: they are responsive to the highly skilled.

Scholars of voting behaviour recently started to dismiss the rational-choice model of voting, accused of setting the unrealistic goal of full information and clarity of preferences on the part of voters. These scholars postulate that the requirements of retrospective voting

are time consuming and inefficient, since the costs of retrieving perfect information outweigh the benefits of making a correct voting decision. Studies have empirically demonstrated that voters indeed adopt cue-based, peripheral information processing when deciding which party or candidate deserves their vote (Lupia et al., 2000, Lau and Redlawsk, 2006). While adopting central information processing for every vote choice is certainly inefficient and unusual, this study nonetheless shows that cue-based decision making needs to be backed by high levels of schooling to lead to optimal outcomes. In other words, peripheral information processing is not without pitfalls. It may be effective on average, but in practice the outcomes of decisions made this way are highly variable and, as it turns out, unequal. This is explained by the fact that peripheral information processing only leads to optimal decisions for experts (Kahnemann, 2011): non-experts will on average use the wrong cues which will lead to inappropriate choices. Every voter may need to engage their central information processing on political matters at least initially, if they want to be subsequently able to engage in optimal cue-based decision-making.

Further studies are however necessary to establish with more certainty the causal mechanism linking education and representation and, in particular, further studies on education and retrospective voting behaviour are needed (Healy and Malhotra, 2013). It could be argued that the role of family socio-economic background might explain both education achievements of voters and elite willingness to represent the policy preferences of the highly educated. The chapter's findings could be arguably entirely consistent with a selection model of representation, in which descriptive representation captures self-motivation. MEPs of the EP7 were predominantly University-educated political professionals (Corbett et al., 2011): they thus share their socio-economic backgrounds with highly educated voters. This may be the reason why EP7 political parties are responsive to the highly educated in economic policy and unresponsive to the low educated. Representatives might be inclined to give more importance to the needs of the social class they belong to and be inclined to ignore the preferences of voters from different social classes, even when they constitute the majority of their party base. In other words, the residual effect captured by education after controlling for political information and engagement may not be superior cognitive control but shared socio-economic identity.

A test of the descriptive representation thesis could entail the investigation of issue salience: university educated voters, by virtue of their social status, place more salience on

economic issues and pay selective attention to political parties that focus on economic policy. The parties' percentage of university-educated voters and the percentage of its 2009 manifesto dedicated to discussion of economic issues are indeed positively correlated (0.27). This means that highly educated voters have a tendency to select parties that discuss economic platforms in more detail. The regression analysis in the appendix (table 5) demonstrates that political parties who dedicated more space to economic policy discussion in the 2009 campaign manifesto were less likely to be incongruent with their voters. However, the effect of economic policy salience disappears once voters' education is controlled for (appendix, table 5). University education must be capturing something beyond social class interest in economic policy. In addition, table 2 and 3 in the appendix demonstrate that the education effect is robust to the addition of the party extremism variable. This means that better legislative congruence is not obtained because the highly educated tend to select centrist political parties. The 'social-class' interest thesis assumes that class and ideology are intimately related. If the causal mechanism linking university education and legislative congruence in economic policy was social class, then the assumed 'monolithic' voting of the university educated for economically centrist parties should have obscured the effect of education. But this has not been found to be the case. That said, further studies may be necessary to have a deeper sense of whether descriptive representation or the capacity for retrospective voting is driving the education effect.

This study's importance lies in empirically demonstrating that reforming democracies to help voters select prospectively is not necessary for legislative responsiveness: whether the prospective model can work might thus, at most, depend on descriptive representation. Calls for participatory democratic reforms may be unwarranted: more efficient reforms would consist of either ensuring that representatives are a random sample of the population or of ensuring more homogeneous cognitive skills in the voting population.

In addition, and related to the above, further studies on retrospective information processing are needed (Healy and Malhotra, 2013). In particular, such studies should investigate further whether the highly educated tend to look at past actions as a basis of political decision-making more often than the low educated, and whether they adopt perfect information as a proxy for representatives' payoffs more often. The voting behaviour literature has made substantial progress in unveiling the cue-based information retrieval processes used by voters and established different decision-making patterns between the high and the low educated (Lupia et al., 2000, Popkin, 1991, Lau and

Redlawsk, 2006). However, further investigation of the role of perfect information as a proxy for complete information in voting behaviour is needed.

Conclusion

Determinants of representation tested by the literature so far have included institutional, party and only recently (Adams and Ezrow, 2009) voter characteristics. This study contributes to the literature on political representation by testing voter-type and party-type explanations of legislative incongruence. Legislative incongruence has been operationalized as the absolute distance between party voters' and parties' policy preferences in economic policy. A key innovation of the study is the focus on legislative activities, and the resulting measurement of parties' policy preferences via their written parliamentary questions, whose ideological scaling was carried out via crowdsourcing. A random sample of the entire corpus of written questions submitted by MEPs in the 2009-2014 legislative period was coded by online coders on the basis of a pilot-tested ideological codebook (see Chapter 3). Analyses of legislative congruence in the EU context are rare, and especially studies on EU legislative activities. The chapter contributes to the representation literature by weighing in the prospective vs. retrospective controversy, by testing voter type determinants and by evaluating legislative congruence in the context of the European Parliament.

A formal model has been adopted to exemplify the superiority of retrospective voting behaviour in systematically 'filtering out' uncommitted parties. Subsequently, the analysis has investigated various determinants of legislative congruence linked to either the sanction/prospective model or the sanction/retrospective model of representation. The study demonstrates that electoral congruence is not tantamount to flawless representation, thus confirming the theory that 'congruence is neither a necessary nor sufficient condition for responsiveness' (Eulau and Karps, 1977: 242). A legislator's performance is enhanced when his/her voting base is capable of going beyond electoral information and using the past as a cue to decision-making. In contexts of unequal information-processing skills, representative democracy is biased towards the interests of the upper classes since opportunities to be educated in critical-thinking and information processing are unequally distributed. As a result some voters will not be able to reward/sanction representatives on the basis of their record and thus will be over-reliant on prospective information (such as electoral congruence) which has been found to be unrelated to representative performance.

'Bad' legislators thus manage to access the political system, to the detriment of their voters. The disregard of the economic preferences of the disadvantaged may not be necessarily due to the involvement of lobbies in electoral contributions: it might have to do with education asymmetries (Besley 2006: Chapter 3). Moreover, the variable capturing the impact of second-order elections on representation is not significant, further suggesting that EP procedural deficits are not causing the substantive democratic deficits detected by the study. A further interesting implication of the chapter concerns party organisation: intra-party democracy should be promoted since leadership-centred candidate selection harms voter representation. This finding is in line with Lehrer's (2012) study.

Dahl's puzzle (Dahl, 1971:3) has been answered: it appears that representative democracy cannot work 'amid inequality of resources'. Representative democracies should work towards reducing these inequalities, and in particular, the inequality in information processing capacities. Scholars of voting behaviour have emphasized the role of institutions in helping voters to make correct or optimal choices, and proposed institutions such as transparent campaign contributions and penalties for lying (Lupia et al., 2000), or institutions aimed at restricting delegation to political representatives, such as mini-publics and increased citizen consultations (Smith and Wales, 2000, Goodin and Dryzek, 2006). Incentivising participation without addressing the disparities in time and resources will however not produce the hoped-for results. University education is here hypothesised to enhance the cognitive control of individuals on political matters. This chapter suggests that reforming the education system, by consistently introducing civic education (in the form of analytic and decision-making skills) in compulsory education curricula, would be a better solution.

Appendix – Chapter Four

Control Variables Description

2009-13 electoral support: Average % of votes gained in national election contests held between 2009 and 2013 (only national parliamentary elections counted and from the main house). If the party after 2009 merged into a different party or run in coalitions and was the main partner the party was assigned the full % of votes gained in the subsequent elections. If the party was not the main partner, it was assigned an even split of the vote. Data was collected from the Inter Parliamentary Union and cross-checked with the Election Resources database. The variable ranges from 1.88 to 54.88 %. The average is 19%.

Niche party: Whether the party is of the green, communist, ethnic or nationalist party family (Ezrow, 2010). Data on party families has been collected from the EES 2009. The variable ranges from 0 to 1.

Party founding year: Year of establishment of the political party. Data collected from the European Election Database and political parties' official websites (history sections). When a party is the ideological successor of a former party, the former party establishment date is used. This was done to account for situations like in Belgium, where the Spa and PS split from the Belgian Worker Party for linguistic/territorial reasons. Splinter parties or parties founded by expelled personalities did not receive their former party foundation year. The variable ranges from 1846 to 2009.

TABLE 1

Sanction vs. Selection with Proximity Scores as Dependent Variable

	Proximity Score 2009 Voters – EP7 Parties						
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)
Ideological incong. (Manifesto)	0.047	--	--	--	--	--	--
	(0.20)						
Party Voter Representation Role	--	-0.31*	--	--	--	--	--
		(0.14)					
Contacts with Party Base	--	--	0.0002	--	--	--	--
			(0.003)				
Election News Volume	--	--	--	0.68	--	--	--
				(0.58)			
Campaign Deliberation	--	--	--	--	-0.049	--	--
					(0.93)		
Government Party 09	--	--	--	--	--	-0.38	--
						(0.25)	
Selection by Leadership	--	--	--	--	--	--	0.541**
							(0.183)
Education	-0.026*	-0.028*	-0.026*	-0.028**	-0.025*	-0.026*	-0.016
	(0.011)	(0.011)	(0.012)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.011)
2009-13 electoral support	-0.012	-0.008	-0.01	-0.011	-0.013	-0.010	-0.014
	(0.017)	(0.017)	(0.018)	(0.016)	(0.016)	(0.016)	(0.017)
Niche party	-0.13	0.25	-0.035	-0.057	-0.16	-0.26	-0.058
	(0.37)	(0.42)	(0.42)	(0.37)	(0.37)	(0.36)	(0.38)
Party founding year	0.003	0.0006	0.002	0.002	0.0031	0.0023	0.0023
	(0.004)	(0.004)	(0.004)	(0.0035)	(0.0036)	(0.0034)	(0.0038)
Intercept	-6.88	-0.67	-5.148	-9.32	-7.13	-5.44	-8.28
	(7.133)	(7.67)	(7.89)	(6.85)	(6.78)	(6.652)	(7.37)
N	89	83	82	91	91	91	82
R^2	0.10	0.16	0.09	0.12	0.10	0.13	0.22
p (F test)	0.15	0.01	0.42	0.04	0.14	0.02	0

Standard errors in parentheses

$^{+}p < 0.10$, $^{*}p < 0.05$, $^{**}p < 0.01$, $^{***}p < 0.001$

Table 1. Log-linear OLS regression with country-fixed effects. Unresponsiveness of national parties has been regressed on predictors from the selection and the sanction models of representation.

TABLE 2

Absolute Distance EP7 Party Median – 2009 Median Party Voter		
	(1)	(2)
Electoral incongruence (Candidate)	0.0215	--
	(0.224)	
Electoral incongruence (Manifesto)	--	0.166
		(0.137)
Education	-0.0175*	-0.0150*
	(0.00752)	(0.00706)
2009-13 electoral support	-0.00188	-0.00548
	(0.0101)	(0.00927)
Extremism	0.00106	-0.00237
	(0.0133)	(0.0126)
Party founding year	0.00226	0.00233
	(0.00230)	(0.00213)
Intercept	-4.666	-4.944
	(4.555)	(4.230)
N	83	88
R^2	0.104	0.128
p (F test)	0.25	0.04

Standard errors in parentheses

$^{+}p < 0.10$, $^{*}p < 0.05$, $^{**}p < 0.01$, $^{***}p < 0.001$

Table 2. Log-linear OLS regression with country-fixed effects. Unresponsiveness of national parties has been regressed on predictors from the selection and the sanction models of representation with party extremism added as a control.

TABLE 3

Absolute Distance EP7 Party Median – 2009 Median Party Voter						
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Party Voter Representation Role	-0.0642	--	--	--	--	--
	(0.0915)					
Contacts with Party Base	--	0.00193	--	--	--	--
		(0.00201)				
Election News Volume	--	--	0.489	--	--	--
			(0.387)			
Campaign Deliberation	--	--	--	0.557	--	--
				(0.603)		
Government Party 09	--	--	--	--	0.0785	--
					(0.170)	
Selection by Leadership	--	--	--	--	--	0.283*
						(0.123)
Education	-0.0191*	-0.0190*	-0.0190**	-0.0173*	-0.0173*	-0.0133+
	(0.00749)	(0.00751)	(0.00692)	(0.00684)	(0.00688)	(0.00759)
2009-13 electoral support	-0.00541	-0.00494	-0.00348	-0.00365	-0.00391	-0.00718
	(0.0102)	(0.0101)	(0.00902)	(0.00910)	(0.00940)	(0.00980)
Extremism	-0.003	-0.002	-0.001	0.000722	0.000574	-0.00662
	(0.0135)	(0.0135)	(0.0124)	(0.0123)	(0.0124)	(0.0131)
Party founding year	0.00194	0.00206	0.00166	0.00148	0.00218	0.00190
	(0.00228)	(0.00235)	(0.00211)	(0.00217)	(0.00220)	(0.00225)
Intercept	-3.468	-4.108	-6.000	-4.916	-4.476	-5.065
	(4.587)	(4.670)	(4.450)	(4.300)	(4.341)	(4.506)
N	82	81	88	88	88	81
R^2	0.124	0.132	0.130	0.119	0.109	0.199
p (F test)	0.11	0.09	0.04	0.07	0.12	0.002

Standard errors in parentheses

$^{+}p < 0.10$, $^{*}p < 0.05$, $^{**}p < 0.01$, $^{***}p < 0.001$

Table 3. Log-linear OLS regression with country-fixed effects. Unresponsiveness of national parties has been regressed on predictors from the selection and the sanction models of representation with party extremism added as a control.

TABLE 4

	Absolute Distance EP7 Party Median – 2009 Median Party Voter
Selection by Leadership	0.332*
	(0.124)
2009-13 electoral support	-0.0100
	(0.0121)
Party founding year	0.002
	(0.00317)
S&D	-0.16
	(0.240)
ALDE	-0.34
	(0.295)
Greens-EFA	-0.50
	(0.340)
ECR	0.073
	(0.649)
GUE-NGL	-0.17
	(0.457)
EFD	0.13
	(0.530)
NI	0.03
	(0.385)
Intercept	-5.406
	(6.188)
N	83
R^2	0.227
p (F test)	0.137

Table 4. Log-linear OLS regression with country-fixed effects. Unresponsiveness of national parties has been regressed on intra-party democracy, controlling for party family. The effect of intra-party democracy still holds when party families are taken into account.

TABLE 5

Absolute Distance EP7 Party Median – 2009 Median Party Voter			
	(1)	(2)	(3)
Manifesto % Economic Statements	-0.0113^{+}	-0.0110^{+}	-0.00502
	(0.00588)	(0.00642)	(0.00688)
Education	--	--	-0.0154*
			(0.00739)
2009-13 electoral support	--	-0.00998	-0.0123
		(0.0107)	(0.0105)
Niche party	--	-0.331	-0.361
		(0.243)	(0.237)
Party founding year	--	0.00159	0.00280
		(0.00253)	(0.00253)
Intercept	-0.490	-3.325	-5.248
	(0.266)	(5.033)	(4.982)
N	88	88	88
R^2	0.06	0.09	0.15
p (F test)	0.00001	0.14	0.01

Standard errors in parentheses

$^{+}p < 0.10$, $^{*}p < 0.05$, $^{**}p < 0.01$, $^{***}p < 0.001$

Table 5. Log-linear OLS regression with country-fixed effects. Unresponsiveness of national parties has been regressed on economic policy issue salience and education.

Chapter Five

Conclusion

The dissertation aimed at investigating the alleged democratic deficit of the European Union by using performance-based measures of political representation in the European Parliament. The study in fact compares voters' economic policy positions with party positions extracted from legislative activities. The analysis focused on three main research questions:

1. Do national parties serving in European Parliament (EP) voice voters' economic preferences in their dialogue with EU agenda-setters?
2. Does voter involvement with electoral campaigns increase national parties' responsiveness?
3. Does voter sanctioning (or retrospective voting) capacity increase national parties' responsiveness?

Dahl (1989) claimed that the extent to which a polity voices all societal interests (pluralism) during the input stage of the policy-cycle is the most important evaluative benchmark of a democracy. Other theorists have equally rejected output-based assessments of representative democracy (Bellamy, 2010). This study attempts to investigate substantive representation in the EU by looking at a low-stakes 'input' legislative activity: written parliamentary questions. Written questions are used by EP parties to communicate their policy preferences to the formal agenda-setter of the EU and thus belong to the input stages of the EU policy cycle. Written questions give MEPs a direct line of communication with the EU executive branches and with the Council of Ministers (although they were mostly addressed to the Commission). Chapter 2 aimed at describing their functions and contents. To that end, it compares written parliamentary questions' rules of procedure and authorship patterns with those of other possible 'input' legislative activities: speeches, motions, declarations, oral questions and questions for question-time. In addition, a survey of Commission officials and EP8 MEPs inquired about the functions of written parliamentary questions. Further, the Naïve Bayes algorithm was used to classify the contents of written questions into a) left-right preferences texts; b) purely oversight texts; c) purely constituency-work texts. Chapter 3 described the procedure used to scale political parties on the basis of written parliamentary questions and to scale voters on the basis of

electoral surveys. It also described and applied the various measures of congruence to the EP7 data, thus comparing parties and their voters in their positions on the economic policy ideological scales. Chapter 4 used the absolute difference between voters and representatives' ideological scores (i.e. legislative incongruence) to test party and voter-type predictors of political representation.

The dissertation finds that written questions are the least procedurally constrained activities (among publicly available EP activities), that they are tabled by frontbenchers and backbenchers in equal numbers, and that they mostly contain the policy preferences of their authors. The results from the survey and content-analysis point to a strong 'policy-seeking' function of EP written questions. Chapter 2 thus concludes that written questions are part of the input stage of the EU political system and that they are appropriate instruments to measure political parties' policy preferences. Chapter 3 finds that, while there is a positive statistically significant relationship between 2009 party voters and their EP7 parties, political parties of conservative party families tend to be to the left of their voters, while political parties of left-wing party families tend to be to the right of their median supporter. This leads to over-representation of centrist economic policy positions and it is evidence that the median voter theorem is at work even in the 'second-order' EU legislative arena. The scatterplot analyses further reveals that Eastern European parties and populist/protest parties are the biggest outliers, presenting the largest representational discrepancies with their voters on economic policy. The comparison of parties' and voters' distributions highlight in addition that the 'move to the centre' disproportionally affects left-wing voters, though this result might be due to the under-sampling of EPP parties. Chapter 4 analyses the party variation in legislative congruence more systematically and it finds that University educated party voters have superior legislative congruence with their party than voters with no college education. Intra-party democracy also appears to be statistically significantly associated with superior legislative congruence.

The project improves our understanding of the democratic deficit of the EU and of factors conditioning political representation. The dissertation has attempted to determine whether prospective or retrospective voting is the key driver of political representation and studied the role of voter or party characteristics in legislative congruence, contributing to a literature mostly focused on electoral congruence and on the role of electoral institutions or campaign regulations. The dissertation draws significant implications on the role of voting behaviour for political representation. The analysis suggests that voting on the basis of

campaign-based heuristics is insufficient to ensure EP representation. In fact, selecting representatives on the basis of ideological congruence at election time, or representatives claiming to be committed to represent voters, or representatives frequently in touch with the base, is not statistically significantly associated with representation performance, nor is voter involvement in the campaign: reading election news or participating in rallies and campaign events is not associated with higher legislative congruence. Most importantly, electoral congruence is not associated with representation deficits. Voters that 'correctly' chose political parties on the basis of congruent campaign manifesto/survey claims did not necessarily command higher legislative congruence. In fact, electoral congruence and legislative congruence appear completely unrelated. This further indicates that electoral congruence and legislative congruence are different phenomena, and confirms that electoral congruence may be swayed by social desirability concerns of legislators when answering survey questions or producing electoral manifestos. What matters for political representation seems to be the percentage of University-educated voters in the party voting base. Controlling for electoral congruence, commitment to represent voters, contacts with the base, election news consumption, and campaign participation, education is statistically significantly and positively associated with legislative responsiveness. The dissertation argues that other than superior participation and engagement, education is capturing superior analytical skills – or cognitive control – of voters. This is because problem-solving, logic and communication skills are central characteristics distinguishing third-level education from other educational levels. University education, by proxying problem-solving skills, is hypothesised to capture the degree to which voters are able to use verifiable signals instead of cheap ones, and thus to recognise that retrospective voting is the most efficient way to ensure that legislators comply with one's own wishes.

The dissertation, in addition, draws several important conclusions concerning the fifth and sixth democratic deficit critiques moved to the EU. First of all, the median European voter was well represented in written parliamentary questions, and even over-represented. Hix's (2008) and Moravcsik's (2008) hypothesis that the EU does manage to represent the median voter is confirmed by the data. Secondly, shortcomings of the EU electoral contestation do not seem to be associated with representation deficits. The study did not find significantly worse representation performances by opposition parties, who tend to capture protest voters in second-order elections. Equally, parties with a voting base less informed on EP election news are not associated with worse representation performances.

The EP's second order elections, therefore, do not seem to be responsible for the representation deficits found. The wide variation in legislative incongruence and the move towards the median voter of EP7 parties suggest that the representation deficits documented here conform to patterns found in other representative democracies, and thus are a general feature of political representation and electoral competition. The identitarian Eurosceptic belief that EU institutions are fundamentally wasteful and inherently unable to represent citizens is not upheld by the data.

This is not to say that the input stage of the EU policy cycle is perfectly representative, only that it is at the institutional level. In particular, the non-University educated are disempowered and the input stage is consequently not pluralistic. The policy preferences of the non-University educated are systematically ignored. This might be because the non-University educated might be less capable to grapple with the complexities of EU decision-making. To the extent that the inadequacy of EU-level electoral contestation matters for substantive representation, it does so in raising the bar of the cognitive capabilities required of voters. The theory that representative institutions in general should be reformed by focusing on electoral campaigns (the selection stage) is however not upheld by the data. The analysis suggests, in fact, that information and participation during selection of representatives is not so important a factor in ensuring that one's policy preferences reach the EU decision-making arena. The thesis has clear policy implications: it suggests that instead of focusing on participatory reforms to political institutions, introducing and reforming analytical skills and comparative politics modules in compulsory schooling might be a better alternative. There is a need for research on aspects of education that ameliorate the link between voters and representatives. If we neglect this area of research, we are bound to keep witnessing the exclusion of economic preferences of specific sections of the population from the public arena, and the consequent drop in legitimacy and popular support.

The dissertation also draws important conclusions on the sixth academic critique to the EU: the social-democratic critique. Wolfgang Streeck (1995) and Philippe Schmitter (2000) have famously theorised that the constitutional structure of the EU necessarily leads to economic policy that is biased in favour of business interests. The interests of wage-earners, pensioners, unemployed and the young are, according to these theorists, systematically disregarded in the EU. This is because, they argue, national governments fought to maintain full constitutional legitimacy to pass social policies. As a result, the EU

can, at most, concern itself with 'market creation' policies, i.e. deregulatory policies to allow the removal of market barriers, e.g. tariffs and/or barriers to movement of people and capital. The fragmented or 'diplomatic-style' institutional framework of the EU is thus more suited to topics such as deregulation and inflation than to policies aimed at 'market correction' or the creation of welfare systems. This study finds that non-University educated voters are less represented in inputs to the EU political system and that there appears to be a systematic disregard of left-wing voters' preferences. The right-wing bias finding, however, has to be qualified in light of the under sampling of smaller national parties, which led to the under sampling of the European Peoples' Party group. Given the move to the left of EPP members, had the study sampled all EPP parties, the right-wing bias might have disappeared entirely. The social-democratic critique argues that specific policies have higher likelihood to succeed in the EU. This study robustly finds that a certain section of the population has a higher likelihood of success, but cannot claim with equal degree of certainty that a 'market creation' or 'deregulation' bias exists. The left-wing critique of representative democracy has some bearing in the empirical evidence presented here, if anything because of the education-based representation inequalities found.

The study has some limitations. First off, either due to missing values in the EES 2009 Voter Study and/or to insufficiency of written questions (delegations with less than 10 texts were removed from the analyses), only roughly 60 percent of national parties sitting in the EP7 were part of this study. As a result, statements on the representativeness of the entire chamber might be over or understated. The parties that had to be excluded are however very small parties, 94% of which won four or fewer seats in EP7. All the main national parties in the EP7 were thus analysed. The fact that the 98 parties analysed preserve substantial variation in the covariates offers some reassurance about the inferences made here. The conclusions drawn at the EP-level may still need to be taken with a grain of salt, however.

Secondly, this study only investigated one policy domain, economic and trade policy. It does not assess legislative congruence in full by investigating all policy domains. Economic policy was, however, the most salient policy for 2009 voters: the EES 2009 survey shows that economic issues were clearly top priorities. To the question 'what is the top priority in your country today', 69 percent of respondents answered with an economic issue, 9 percent with a social policy issue. The remaining 22 percent of respondents

claimed miscellaneous issues, which covered topics as diverse as decentralisation, institutional authority and EU administration and institutional issues as their top priorities. As economic policy is the main policy domain dealt with in EU decision-making, with 61% of Commission DGs and 48% of EP committees dedicated to economic policy domains, the assessment of legislative incongruence with voters' economic policy preferences is clearly fundamental. Notwithstanding this, the study could not test whether political parties that were unresponsive in economic policy were responsive in other policy areas or whether legislative congruence varies according to which policy domain a particular political party deems salient. That the salience attached to a policy area by the party has something to do with representation performance is demonstrated by the fact that parties who focused on economic policy in their manifesto tended to be more legislatively congruent to their voters in economic policy than parties that talked less about their economic platforms, although the effect disappeared once voter education was controlled for (see Chapter 4). While an aggregate (EP-level) representation deficit is disconfirmed in the case of economic policy, it might not be if we look at different policy areas.

Thirdly, the dissertation examined policy inputs only. Democratic deficits in policy outputs remain thus unexplored. The case for an EU representation deficit is therefore still not closed, and future studies need to evaluate whether EU policy outputs suffer from representation deficits.

Fourthly, the dissertation is limited to the 2009-2014 period. This legislative term is peculiar, as it followed the 2008 economic and financial crisis. The findings might therefore not be easily generalizable. As recent studies have demonstrated (Otjes and van der Veer, 2016, Blumenau and Lauderdale, 2015), legislative behaviour in economic policy changed in the EP7,in response to the 2008 crisis. In particular, left-right voting patterns diminished in the economic policy domain, while the pro/anti EU dimension of political contestation gained salience. This is explained with the widening of the window of opportunity for the pro-integration agenda-setter of the EU – the Commission – which started proposing a more pro-active role of EU institutions to solve the financial crisis. This widening of discretion to pro-integration actors was facilitated by the changing attitudes of MEPs towards the economic status quo: eager to solve the dismal economic conditions of member states, MEPs started giving less salience to their differences on the left-right domain, and ended up voting on the basis of their attitudes towards the EU instead. This study found that national parties moved towards the centre of the left-right

distribution: this finding might be a feature of this legislative term only, plagued by the necessity to react to an economic shock. Political representatives in the EP, in other words, might have felt a responsibility to put aside strong ideological differences on the left-right domain in the face of an unprecedented crisis. The 'move to the centre' might have been less conspicuous if other time periods were analysed: the trend, therefore, may not be entirely the result of the median voter theorem being at work in the EP. However, written parliamentary questions are not legislative votes: they are part of legislative inputs and MEPs are free to – and overwhelmingly claim to – express their unconstrained individual positions in written parliamentary questions. Being less consequential and more 'personal' than legislative votes, MEPs should not – in theory – be overly concerned about written questions' effects on the economy. However, the possibility that this 'freer' legislative activity was impacted by the Eurozone crisis cannot be discounted. While future research needs to investigate additional legislative terms, it could be argued that assessing political representation after an economic crisis is even more vital. It is especially in testing times that political inputs should guarantee pluralism. This 'crucial' test failed in the EP, where national parties disregarded their median party voters to coalesce around the European median voter.

Fifthly, indicator equivalence is not fully guaranteed here, since studies of policy-making congruence, by their nature, have to compare two different choice situations and instruments: legislative activities against survey answers. As political representatives were scaled via text analysis and voters via survey answers, the question arises as to whether the two scales are comparable. The analysis adopts several precautions to ensure that basic metric and indicator equivalence are met. In particular, it scales parties and voters on the basis of a standardised codebook and questionnaire. Secondly, the same units of measurement of the voter survey were imposed on the text analysis codebook. Thirdly, a relatively 'low-stakes' legislative activity was used, which could be argued approximates the choice situation faced by respondents when putting their policy preferences on record on a survey. Fourthly, scores were the result of aggregation of multiple indicators of economic policy preferences. To the extent that parties' and voters' scales are used differently, these differences are spread uniformly across parties. Any possible indicator 'non-equivalence', can be treated as a case of instrument error: being the same instrument applied to all parties, the conclusions drawn by cross-comparisons remain valid.

Finally, the finding of a positive significant association between University education and legislative congruence may not necessarily indicate that the sanction/retrospective model of representation is driving political representation. University education, in fact, might also capture social class and, hence, descriptive representation: MEPs of the EP7 were mostly University educated themselves and thus may be automatically more responsive to the economic interest of members of the same socio-economic class. If descriptive representation is driving the representation effect, this thesis' findings might be entirely consistent with the selection model of representation. However, the robustness of the education effect even after controlling for ideological extremism signals that common belonging to the 'upper' class does not mean monolithic policy preferences. In other words, it is not being ideologically centrist that leads the university educated to be better represented.

Future research should investigate additional policy areas, to explore the role of issue salience and extend the analysis to other EP parliamentary terms or to domestic legislatures. In addition, it should tackle the policy-making proceedings of other EU institutions, as well as the congruence of EU final policy outputs to the European median voter. While for some democratic theorists examining the early phases of policy-making is necessary and sufficient (Dahl, 1989, Goodin, 2003), the study of outputs' responsiveness to median voters is equally important. These further studies would be important to establish the generalizability of this study's findings, to investigate more comprehensively the EU *substantive* democratic deficit and to further test the selection and sanction models of political representation. Further, future studies should focus on studying more closely the causal mechanism linking voter education to legislative responsiveness. As argued in chapter 3, it is still possible that this variable is capturing the similarity between the socio-economic background of University-educated voters and the backgrounds of MEPs, disproportionately coming from the wealthy and highly educated. Therefore, future research could compare university and non-university educated legislators in their legislative behaviour, or highly educated and low educated voters in their retrospective voting behaviour. Electoral surveys could also consider including a survey item on the decision-making process of voters during elections.

Supplementary Materials

Chapter 1: Commission and EP8 Survey

Commission Survey

This survey is part of the Irish Research Council sponsored project 'Input Democracy in the European Union' carried out in Trinity College Dublin.

The purpose of the project is to improve academic and popular understanding of how democracy works in the European Union. The questionnaire will take about 5 minutes of your time. Your contribution will be essential, as the project would greatly benefit from your expertise. If you can take 5 minutes of your time it would be greatly appreciated!

Confidentiality will be respected. Your answers will not be associated with an ID and are completely anonymous.

Thank you so much for your time and your contribution to make EU democracy more transparent!

1. Members of the European Parliament are given the opportunity to table written parliamentary questions which are mostly directed at the Commission's DGs. In your experience, would you say these questions mostly: (select only 1 option)

   - ☐ Alert the Commission to problems experienced by the MEP's constituents.
   - ☐ Propose policy preferences and ideas to the Commission
   - ☐ Request explanations of actions/statements/choices made by Commissioners
   - ☐ Other (please specify): _____

2. Please indicate the occurrence of each of the following, on the basis of your experience serving in the Commission:

	Very often	*Often*	*Sometimes*	*Rarely*	*Never*	*Don't know*
a) Commissioners read written parliamentary questions	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
b) Civil servants of the DGs read written parliamentary questions	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
c) Suggestions made in written parliamentary questions are taken into account when the Commission drafts policy proposals, they influence DGs' work on policy proposals.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
d) Suggestions made in written parliamentary questions are taken	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

	into account/ influence DGs in starting investigations on Member States' or individuals' compliance with EU law.						
e)	Suggestions made in written parliamentary questions are taken into account/influence DGs in the release of funds to support constituencies/individuals/specific projects.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
f)	Written parliamentary questions are perceived as valuable and useful within the Commission.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
g)	The Commission uses written parliamentary questions to gauge the prevalent opinion of the European Parliament on a policy domain.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

3. How many years have you served in the Commission in your lifetime?
   - ☐ 0-2
   - ☐ 3-5
   - ☐ 6-10
   - ☐ 10+

4. Currently you work in the Commission as:
   - ☐ Commissioner
   - ☐ Civil Servant/Researcher/Assistant/Administrative Staff/Trainee
   - ☐ Not currently working in the Commission but worked in the Commission in the past
   - ☐ Other (please specify):_____

5. Your role entails the processing of written parliamentary questions (e.g. reading, reporting/summarising)
   - ☐ Yes
   - ☐ No

6. Please indicate in which DG or Service you currently work.

EP8 Survey

This survey is part of the Irish Research Council sponsored project 'Input Democracy in the European Union' carried out in Trinity College Dublin.

The purpose of the project is to improve academic and popular understanding of how democracy works in the European Union. The questionnaire will take about 5 minutes of your time. Your contribution will be essential, as the project would greatly benefit from your expertise. If you can take 5 minutes of your time it would be greatly appreciated!

Confidentiality will be respected. Your answers will not be associated with an ID and are completely anonymous.

Thank you so much for your time and your contribution to make EU democracy more transparent!

1. Members of the European Parliament are given the opportunity to table written parliamentary questions. Would you say you table them PRIMARILY to: (select only 1 option)
   - ☐ Ask the Commission/Council to release funds to solve problems experienced by individuals or businesses in your constituency
   - ☐ Ask the Commission/Council to advance policies that would solve specific problems experienced by individuals or businesses in your constituency
   - ☐ Ask the Commission/Council to advance policies to the Commission/Council that you feel would benefit European citizens in general
   - ☐ Put your policy preferences and ideas on record for voters to see
   - ☐ Request explanations of actions/statements/choices made by Commissioners or Council members
   - ☐ Demonstrate to the European public/voters that you work hard
   - ☐ Alert the Commission/Council to non-compliance with EU law by Member States, individuals or businesses
   - ☐ Other (please specify): _____

2. Please indicate how often each of the following situations occur, on the basis of your experience serving in the EP:

	Very often	*Often*	*Sometimes*	*Rarely*	*Never*	*Don't know*
a) Citizens are informed of your written questions (e.g. you show them in your website or mention them in emails to your voters)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
b) Written questions are tabled after a request by the party leadership	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

c)	The Commission initiates infringement proceedings after being alerted of non-compliance by a written parliamentary question	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
d)	The Commission acts on policy proposals expressed in written parliamentary questions	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
e)	I am free to express my own views/priority/opinions in written parliamentary questions	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
f)	Written questions are tabled after a request by individual citizens/constituents	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
g)	Written questions are tabled after a request by interest groups	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

3. How many years have you served in the European Parliament as MEP in your lifetime?
   - ☐ 0-2
   - ☐ 3-5
   - ☐ 6-10
   - ☐ 10+

4. Are you:
   - ☐ Male
   - ☐ Female

5. What is your age?
   - ☐ 18 to 24
   - ☐ 25 to 34
   - ☐ 35 to 44
   - ☐ 45 to 54
   - ☐ 55 to 64
   - ☐ 65 to 74
   - ☐ 75+

6. Are you a member of:
   - ☐ PPE
   - ☐ S&D
   - ☐ ALDE
   - ☐ Verts/ALE
   - ☐ ECR

- ☐ GUE/NGL
- ☐ EFDD
- ☐ Non-attached

7. What member state do you represent in the EP?

Chapter 2: Classification Codebook

Picking the Policy Domain

First, you are to code each text as a whole on the basis of the topic categories below. One and only one category can be chosen. Some texts might contain terms relevant to more than one domain. Read the text as a whole at first and determine what the main issue of contention is. The texts are really short and therefore monothematic. The policy domains to be identified are:

1. Economy and Trade
2. Regional Policy
3. Personal Rights and Equal Opportunities
4. Crime, Immigration, Security and Defence
5. International Cooperation, Aid and Crisis Response
6. Environment, Public Health and Animal Welfare
7. Citizen's Rights/Institutional Affairs
8. Other

The 'other' category should be used with parsimony. The categories are broad enough to be able to contain most policy issues. Specific legislative areas can be encompassed in the broad categories here. For example, some texts in the corpus are relevant to sports associations. There is no 'sports' category here. The political discourse on sports is often relevant to the economy as it frequently contains the public-private controversy, for example, or discusses sport organisation as businesses. Transport and tourism are often relevant to regional policy but they may also be relevant to the economy, depending on how the discussion is framed.

1) Economy and Trade

Texts pertaining to this domain discuss:

- Internal market
- Imports-exports, customs
- Taxation and tax fraud/evasion
- Public services/Welfare
- Industry and entrepreneurship
- Financial sector
- Monetary policy
- Competition
- Consumer protection: cartels, safety, financial frauds
- Employment
- Pensions
- Primary, secondary and university education
- Art and cultural events/institutions
- Scientific research and innovation

2) Regional Policy

Texts pertaining to this domain discuss:

- Disadvantaged/peripheral regions of Europe
- Rural development and rural interests
- EU Cohesion policy
- Agriculture
- Farming
- Maritime/fishing sector
- Transport (in its role for territorial cohesion)
- Tourism (in its role for regional development)

3) Personal Rights and Equal Opportunities

Texts pertaining to this domain discuss:

- Individual private sphere/identity
- Rights of minorities
- Abortion and family planning
- Maternity leave
- Gender inequality
- Sexual orientation

4) Crime, Immigration, Security and Defence

- Military, police forces, army
- Secret services
- Jail system
- Border control
- Terrorism (against/within Europe)
- Immigration
- Organised crime
- Drug use and distribution

5) International Cooperation, Aid and Crisis Response

Texts pertaining to this domain discuss:

- Diplomatic relations
- Conflicts/crisis response
- Humanitarian and development aid
- Applications for EU Membership

6) Environment and Public Health Policy

Texts pertaining to this domain discuss:

- Renewable energy and energy efficiency
- Climate change
- Waste disposal
- Pollution
- Public health and safety
- Animal welfare and health
- Medical and pharmaceutical industry and products
- Food safety

7) Citizen's Rights/Institutional Affairs

Texts pertaining to this domain discuss:

- Freedom of Information
- Freedom of Expression
- Democracy
- Corruption of governmental officials
- Inequalities in justice administration
- Lobbying
- EU Officials: salaries, conduct, expenses, appointments
- Inter-institutional relations

Ideological Texts

As a second step, you will be asked to judge whether the statements in the texts contain some policy preference (Ideology) or not (Not Applicable). Remember that if some ideology is evident, anywhere in the text, the Not Applicable category cannot be chosen. N/A options must be picked IF AND ONLY IF no ideology is present anywhere in the text. Do not focus only on the actual question; the entire text is to be considered.

The presence of ideological statements is usually signalled by connotative language, i.e. words that suggest a positive or a negative judgement. They are also typically signalled by calls for reform or change. Also, 'should' statements or verbs such as "combat", "redress", "urge", "recommend", "champion", "promote", "oppose" can indicate the presence of directionality. Once you recognise that text contains some policy preference, the exercise asks you to place it in a specific direction, either left or right. A definition of left and right will be given for each specific policy area in the following pages.

The general distinction between left and right revolves around the issue of equality (Bobbio, 1996). Keep in mind that broadly, texts that depict or assume inequalities – of any type: religious, economic, gender-based, species-based – to be unnatural are leftist. Right-wingers consider inequality the product of nature, and/or of specialisation and competence. Right-wingers do not feel the urge to redress inequalities and often discredit legislation that bothers with these by using economic or security arguments. Leftist texts call for state economic and regulatory intervention to abolish inequalities, no matter the cost. Rightist texts call for the protection of inequalities instead: they tend to sanction regulation when it is protective of authorities, traditions and ethnocentric economic interests.

ECONOMY and TRADE. What does "left" or "right" mean in economic/trade policy?

"Left" economic/trade texts:

- Public spending expansion. State support/guarantees. Aid/support for unemployed. Guarantees for employees. Employees' rights.
- More regulation of the market to stop financial speculation and tax evasion. Often denounce economic frauds and cartels by businesses.
- Protection of consumers. In favour of higher competition, free movement of goods and services and anti-trust measures.
- Scepticism on austerity measures.
- Public pensions.
- Abolishing barriers of access to knowledge. Legislation that makes knowledge and research available to all. Remove education from market considerations.
- Expand/support funding for culture, the arts and research. Promote all culture. Protect cultural diversity.
- Open and free trade, with an eye to avoid exploitation of trading country. E.g. critical of 'race-to-the-bottom-relocations'. Ethical trade.

"Right" economic/trade texts:

- Contraction of public spending. Pro budget-cuts. Sceptical of publicly provided services in general. Ending state aid/scepticism on its economic repercussions. Flat taxes/taxes depicted as a burden/harmful.
- Deregulation of the financial and internal market. State regulation conceived of as a burden on business.
- Pro-business and employer. Promotion of entrepreneurship/self-reliance. Prioritizing economic growth and innovation.
- Protection of private property/ownership rights.
- Private pensions.
- Funding to education institutions, culture, arts and research should be conditional on performance. Universities as enterprises. Education to be promoted for its value in the job market.
- Privatisation/liberalisation. Proposals include education vouchers directly invoiced to students. Foster competition in education/research/cultural institutions.
- Protectionism in trade. Trade only if advantageous to Europe. Imports described as harmful.

Examples – Economy and Trade

Example 1: Left

*"**Unemployment is one of the main problems** facing the European Union, and **tackling it is indispensable** if the goal of increasing employment to 75% is to be attained. At the same time, the fact that the average time spent outside the labour market is becoming longer increases the risk of poverty, cutting the jobless off from scientific and technological developments in their specialty or field of previous professional activity. In view of the above, will the **Commission** say: 1. Will it **take practical measures to promote actions** in the Member States **to convert unemployment benefit into an employment benefit with insurance rights through pro-active employment policies**? 2. Will it promote exchanges of best practices between Member States in this area in order to achieve the most efficient possible utilization of the resources required, given the very serious financial problems facing many Member States? 3. In the light of the EU's declared objective of **reducing poverty and social exclusion**, how does it evaluate the proposal **to extend the period of time during which unemployment benefit is paid** by means of a socially effective correlation with the average time spent unemployed?" (2011-002768)*

Example 2: Right

"In the summer of 2008 Italy introduced amendments to its tax legislation. The general aim of these amendments is to increase the ***tax burden on companies*** *active in markets* ***allegedly characterised by realising extra profits*** *by exploiting an out-of-the-ordinary market situation, such as the financial industry and the energy sector (so that the tax is also known as the 'Robin Hood tax'). The amendments consist (inter alia) of an amendment which limits the deduction of interest expenses incurred by banks and financial institutions which are active in Italy. Banks focused on interest margin business are more affected than others; because of their funding structure, on average foreign banks are substantially more affected than local banks. 1. Is the Commission aware of the existence of amendments to the tax law in Italy? 2. Is the Commission aware of the fact that* ***the Robin Hood tax creates distortions of competition*** *in the market, thereby penalising those players focused on interest margin business? 3. Does the Commission agree that the existence of such a law might result in two* ***banks competing in the deposit market suffering a different tax burden*** *depending on the model of business that they choose to operate? 4. Is it correct to conclude that this tax measure will favour a particular business model above others? If so, does the Commission agree that this is an undesirable outcome — including for consumers — of the amendments made to the law? 5. Does the Commission share the view that* ***a tax*** *which could effectively* ***lead to an amount which exceeds the level of profits*** *is* ***unjustified****?" (2010-4662)*

REGIONAL POLICY. What does "left" or "right" mean in regional policy?

"Left" regional policy texts:

- EU-wide applicable quotas/state aid.
- Guaranteed income/support to vulnerable groups/small producers.
- Special economic exemptions or facilitations for agricultural, fisheries or rural tourism sectors.
- Quality certifications.
- Protection of organic produces/biodiversity.
- Pro-cohesion policy: legislation to ensure compensation for damages/economic imbalances or disparities.

- Funds to improve transports in rural areas/peripheral regions.

"Right" regional policy texts:

- No state aid/quotas or compensatory payments.
- Withdrawal of funds/projects or – at most – conditional funding based on respect of specific regulations.
- Denounce the misuse of funds or anti-competitive consequences of existing aid.
- Request further evidence of benefits of state expenditure.
- Opposition/scepticism of cohesion policy.

Examples - Regional:

Example 1: Left

> *"The outermost regions are granted special status under the terms of Article 349 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, which* ***allows specific measures to be adopted in these regions,*** *taking into account their* ***special structural situation owing to their geographical constraints and permanent difficulties****. Over the years, specific measures for these EU regions have been created in a number of areas of European legislation, in order to* ***compensate the costs derived from their isolation and to promote their economic and social integration****. One such measure is the POSEI programme for agriculture. The* ***POSEI programme for agriculture in the outermost regions*** *has* ***undergone a number of assessments and revisions over the years, despite the fact that the legislation applied to it is separate from that regulating direct payments****, within the sphere of the Common Agriculture Policy, which is now under process of reform by the European institutions. Can the Commission say: 1. What has been the value and evolution of POSEI funding allocated to each of the outermost regions over the years? 2. In light of current trends, how does the Commission view the future of the POSEI agriculture programme in the outermost regions?" (2012-009657)*

Example 2: Right

*"The milk **quota** for Ireland and the threat of a super levy is **hampering significant growth opportunities** for the Irish agriculture sector, with **farmers now forced to destroy dairy cows owing to oversupply.** A number of EU countries will be below quota this year, and the EU as a whole will be well below quota. It is an unsustainable situation insofar as Irish dairy farmers can produce to meet the EU's overall quota, yet the inflexibility of the system means they will be penalised and also forced to send healthy cows for slaughter in order to avoid breaching the quota. In the current financial situation and in the context of the growth of agriculture and the dairy sector in particular as a strong and viable economic sector, **it does not make any sense for producers of a high-quality and in-demand product to be locked out of the global market**. 1. Would the Commission **consider introducing flexibility** into the system for dairy farmers or reallocating EU quotas? 2. What advice can the Commission give to Irish dairy farmers who have a product that is very much in demand and are being **prevented from taking advantage of a clear growth opportunity** for farmers and the agriculture sector?" (2011-008661)*

PERSONAL RIGHTS and EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES. What does "left" or "right" mean?

"Left" personal rights/equal opportunity texts:

- Favours protection of interests of a private person such as homosexual rights, abortion and euthanasia.
- Pro women's choice in abortion.
- Legislation or funding to initiatives aimed at eliminating gender inequality.
- Legislation or funding to initiatives aimed at eliminating discrimination on grounds of ethnicity or sexual orientation.

"Right" personal rights/equal opportunity policy texts:

- Opposes protection of interests of a private person. Protection of personal rights described as harmful for either economic reasons or public morality.
- Withdrawal of funds/scepticism towards anti-discrimination initiatives/activities.
- Supports religious principles in politics (especially Christian morality).
- Protection of the unborn.

Examples – Personal Rights/Equal Opportunities Policy:

Example 1: Left:

> *"In recent months, media sources have informed us of the increase in the number of* ***attacks against homosexuals*** *in Russia by far right groups. These groups have* ***managed to kidnap, torture and even kill people simply because they are gay*** *and, so far, the Russian Government has not taken measures to stop the activities of these far right groups and* ***ensure the safety of the LGBT community*** *in the country. Moreover, the Russian Government has recently approved a law against 'homosexual propaganda', and banned people of 'non-traditional sexual orientation' from adopting.* ***These reforms, which are very conservative measures, legitimise, through the laws, the discrimination this group is facing****. Following these events, several Members of the European Parliament sent a letter to the Union's main institutions on 4 September expressing their concern about these facts. The letter insists that in the negotiations that these institutions are holding with Russia during the G20 meeting in Saint Petersburg* ***there should be respect for the fundamental rights of LGBT people****. In what way does the Vice-President/High Represent* ***plan to establish a dialogue so that the Russian Government reverses its recent legislative reforms*** *against homosexuals in the country? What means does the Vice-President/High Representative intend to use*

*to **firmly insist that Russia puts an end to the attacks and harassment against the country's LGBT community**?" (2013-010150)*

Example 2: Right

*"British Prime Minister David Cameron said this week that he plans to question the UK's chief medical officer on the appalling practice of sex-selective abortions. **Any violation of the rights of unborn children is obviously something I strongly oppose**, and sex-selective abortion is a particularly worrying and sickening occurrence where **women are often pressured by their partners to kill an unborn child** purely because of misguided cultural attitudes which still favour a male over a female child. Paul Uppal MP raised the issue in The Independent, highlighting that it is a problem which is often hidden in some British Asian communities. What is the Commission doing at European level to help protect and safeguard women within all sections of society who **may come under pressure to abort a life for purely superficial reasons or under cultural pressure**?" (2014-003535)*

CRIME, IMMIGRATION, SECURITY AND DEFENCE. What does "left" or "right" mean?

"Left" crime, immigration/security policy texts:

- Promote protection of civil liberties even when this hampers efforts to fight crime.
- Prioritise the abolition of incentives to crime rather than strict punishment/promotion of law and order. In favour of addressing the socio-economic causes of crime.
- State funds for awareness/education to legality.
- Favours humane prison conditions. Prison as rehabilitation.
- State funds/policies for integration of immigrants or prisoners into society.

- Favours policies designed to help immigrants: e.g. facilitating asylum and family-reunifications.
- Measures against police brutality.
- Legislation ensuring unconditional protection of personal data and privacy.
- Soft approach to drug users. Awareness campaigns. War on drugs depicted as disastrous. Pro-decriminalisation.

"Right" crime, immigration/security policy texts:

- Prioritise/propose tough measures to fight crime and promote law and order, even when this means cutting civil liberties.
- Priority given to deportation of immigrants back to their home countries. Immigration as a danger.
- Curb freedom of movement, depicted as burdensome for economic and security reasons.
- Asylum/refugee rights conditional on social assistance system capacity. Priority to be always given to EU citizens over immigrants.
- Higher state funding for police/defence forces. Glorification of police forces.
- Data security and privacy concerns conditional on national security. In general, liberties conditioned on national security concerns.
- War on drugs.

Examples – Crime, Immigration, Security and Defence:

Example 1: Left

"In February 2006, the Spanish Supreme Court established a legal doctrine which, to avoid releasing prisoners who had been ***convicted of terrorism*** *and served out their sentences, allowed amendments to the Spanish Criminal Code to be applied retroactively,* ***negating the rehabilitating purpose of prison sentences****, as provided for in Article 25 of the Spanish Constitution. On 10 July 2012, the Strasbourg-based European Court of Human Rights ruled in favour of those affected by that decision and of the many lawyers who have spoken out against the* ***blatant violation*** *of core principles of the law. Spain lodged an appeal, on which a ruling will be given on 21 October. The Court is expected to confirm that the Parot doctrine, as it is called, is contrary to Article 5 and Article 7(1) of the European Convention on Human Rights. On 10 October, the Spanish Government announced that it would not abide by the final ruling of the Court of Human Rights on the 'Parot doctrine'. As laid down in Article 46 of the instrument of ratification of the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, Contracting Parties must undertake to 'abide by the final judgment of the Court in any case to which they are parties'. What is involved here is yet another symptom of the clear* ***politicisation of the Spanish judiciary*** *and poor separation of powers. The outcome has been that* ***newspapers have been closed down arbitrarily, citizens have been charged for speaking out against collective indictments, crimes of opinion have been severely punished, political leaders have been imprisoned, the right to demonstrate has been criminalised****, and the President and two members of the Bureau of the Basque Parliament — one a former Member of the European Parliament —*

have even been convicted on account of parliamentary activities proper. This was a case in which the Spanish Supreme Court ruled in favour of itself, following the two acquittals granted by other courts. Six years on, the case is still awaiting review by the Constitutional Court, which is presided over by a former People's Party (PP) activist. 1. Has the Commission been exchanging any form of information concerning the situation described above with the Office of the Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights? 2. If so, can it say what steps the Office will take to ***foster respect for human rights*** *in Spain and, specifically, ensure compliance with final rulings handed down by the Court of Human Rights?" (2013-011897).*

Example 2: Right

"The Turkish diaspora group Milli Görüş is active in several EU countries. However, the German authorities have banned the activity of the associated charity IHH due to concerns over links to Hamas. Given that ***there was sufficient cause to ban one organisation****, does the Council feel that Milli Görüş should face similar restrictions? The Council* ***should refer to Council Common Position of 27 December 2001 on the application of specific measures to combat terrorism*** *(2001/931/CFSP) which* ***clearly states that anyone even indirectly linked to terrorist acts could face sanction****" (2013-013792).*

OR

"In Italy and Veneto, cases of organised gangs from Romania and Eastern Europe are increasingly common. The gangs ***steal systematically*** *from shops or live off the proceeds of organised prostitution. The Romanian ambassador to Italy, San Marino and Malta, Dana Constantinescu and the Consul-General in Trieste, Cosmin Dumitrescu, have proposed to the mayor of Padua that* ***a Romanian police task force should work alongside the Italian forces of law and order, to carry out checks and arrests in the region. Many criminals from Eastern Europe go to Italy and other Member States to commit crimes****, because* ***the criminal legislation and prison conditions there are 'softer' than in their countries of origin****. In fulfilling their duties, Italian police officers face linguistic difficulties. The criminals often pass themselves off as EU citizens, when they are not. On the other hand,* ***the Romanian forces of law and order, though trained, have been struggling against these organised gangs in their districts for years****. Joint action between police forces would maximise the results of efforts to* ***counter these forms of crime****. 1. Is the Commission aware of the above facts? 2. Does it plan to intervene to put these exchanges between EU police forces into practice, to* ***counter the migration of criminals from one Member State to another****? 3. Does it plan to use its powers under the Lisbon Treaty, in the context of mutual assistance in judicial matters, to* ***amend the Community rules in this field,*** *so that* ***EU citizens who commit criminal offences in one Member State are automatically repatriated*** *to serve their sentences in their countries of origin? 4. How does it intend to act* ***to facilitate and implement this agreement****, proposed by the Romanian authorities?" (2014-005044)*

INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION, AID and CRISIS RESPONSE. What does "left" or "right" mean?

"Left" cooperation/aid policy texts:

- In favour of unconditional cooperation and of dispensing humanitarian/development aid to disadvantaged foreign countries.
- Balanced, reasoned approaches to military intervention to solve conflicts.
- Balanced assessment of rebels: may be freedom-fighters.
- Economic/diplomatic help to prospective applicants to EU accession.
- Distance from/scepticism of US foreign policy and Israel. Sceptical of NATO.

"Right" cooperation/aid policy texts:

- Against humanitarian cooperation: depicted as costly.

- At most, conditional dispensation of development aid/diplomatic negotiations: e.g. only if Islamic forces are not involved. Isolationism or military intervention favoured in crisis responses involving states with high percentage of Muslims.
- Sceptical of rebel forces.
- Fortress Europe. Opposition/doubts on further EU enlargement. Calls for denial of accession requests as accession too costly. Countries requesting accession strongly portrayed as not fit, especially for economic or cultural/religious reasons.
- Pro-US foreign policy and pro-Israel in Middle-Eastern issues. Supports closer relations with NATO.

Examples – Cooperation/Aid

Example 1: Left

"Following the devastation caused by Typhoon Haiyan in the Philippines, the United Nations has estimated that it will take USD 300 million to launch an action plan to provide food, healthcare, sanitation and shelter, to clear debris and to protect the most vulnerable. The European Union has ***shown its generosity*** *by releasing EUR 10 million* ***in emergency humanitarian aid*** *and EUR 10 million in additional aid for the rehabilitation and reconstruction of the affected areas. [...]. Granted, these national efforts are coordinated by the Community Civil Protection Mechanism — activated at the request of the Philippine authorities — but* ***the Union could do more, and could do it better. All too often, European emergency aid has come too late and has been inadequate****, scattered and relatively* ***hard to see on the ground****, as during management of the crisis in Haiti. [...] Following its recommendation in December 2010 on setting up a rapid response capability, Parliament will adopt its resolution on strengthening the Civil Protection Mechanism in December in Strasbourg, over a year after the report on this subject by the Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety was adopted. This delay is down to a lack of enthusiasm on the part of certain Member States during the negotiations.* ***The EU must play a greater role in managing international crises****, particularly environmental crises (natural disasters, effects of climate change). Creating a true European civil protection force based on pooling resources, as proposed by Michel Barnier in his 2006 report, remains without doubt the* ***most effective and cohesive solution****. [...]* ***Has the Commission abandoned the idea of proposing a true European civil protection force***

despite the declarations of Mr Barroso and Mr Van Rompuy in the aftermath of the earthquake in Haiti?"(2013-013161).

Example 2: Right

"1. Is the Commission aware of the report, 'Iraanse moeder wacht doodstraf door steniging wegens overspel'(1) [Iranian mother sentenced to death by stoning for adultery]? 2. Does the Commission intend to take any steps against the ***barbaric regime in Iran****? 3. Can the Commission provide a full list indicating how many people Iran has executed this year, for example by means of hanging and stoning, and what the precise reason for executing them was? If not, why not? 4.* ***Will the Commission immediately break off all diplomatic relations*** *with the* ***rogue state*** *Iran? If not, why not? 5. Does the Commission agree that a dictator like Ahmadinejad should immediately be* ***barred from entering European territory****? If not, why not? 6. How can the Commission reconcile itself to the fact that Turkey — a candidate country — is continuing to develop closer ties with Iran and still refers to Iran as 'Turkey's great friend'? 7. When will the Commission be prepared to state that Turkey, being a great friend and neighbour of Iran,* ***will never be able to join*** *the EU?" (2010-5525)*

OR

"The war has emptied Mogadishu, which has become a ghost city with hardly any jobs', a Somali businessman told an Italian daily newspaper. 'There is no authority in control of the area, and two thirds of ***the capital is occupied by rebel forces****. It has been hell over the last six months. All those who can are fleeing abroad. It costs an extra 30 % to bring in a container from Dubai, making goods uncompetitive compared with those from China,' he says. He paints a tragic and dire picture of the Somali capital in the wake of its* ***occupation by Islamic fundamentalists****, who overthrew the legitimate government painstakingly put in place with international backing after years of negotiations.* ***This is the result of talking to moderate Islamic forces*** *from the outset,* ***against the wishes of the former legitimate transitional government*** *headed by Abdullahi Yusuf Ahmed and the advice of so many, like ourselves, who called* ***instead for the transitional government to receive more support from the EU and its Member States****. In the face of this* ***disastrous situation****, would the Commission please indicate: 1. what the EU is doing to* ***help the stricken Somali population and the remnants of the government****? 2. whether it is able to engage in genuine* ***self-criticism*** *as regards the EU's attitude throughout the recent years of terrorist activity in Somalia and surrounding waters, some of which originates elsewhere? 3. how it envisages overcoming the* ***comprehensive failure*** *of the policy supported by the EU and the relevant Commissioner, which could have been foreseen? 4. whether it is taking steps to* ***guarantee crucial humanitarian aid****?" (2009-4603)*

ENVIRONMENT/HEALTH. What does "left" or "right" mean in environmental policy?

"Left" environment and health policy texts:

- Regulation protecting the environment and incentivising renewable energy.
- Proactive tackling of climate change/global warming.
- More regulation to protect safety.
- Protection of human and animal health above profit.
- Universal and affordable public health, state provision of health/medicines for everyone.
- Protective measures to prevent contact with harmful substances/food.

"Right" environment and health policy texts:

- Curbing environmental and health protection when it stifles innovation and harms businesses.
- Requirement of additional evidence on climate change/sustainability measures.
- Exposure of wrong-doings of public health services.
- Reduce amount of regulation on health and safety.
- Doubt/scepticism/ additional evidence required on effectiveness of public protective measures. Focus on individuals' choice.

Examples – Environment-Health:

Example 1: Left

"A recent report by Public Health England estimated that in London, ***3 389 deaths were linked to air pollution*** *and that there were 41 404 'life years' lost in 2010. Air pollution in London is at an all-time high, and this was exacerbated by the recent smog and resulted in a heightened state of alert and evacuations. At the same time, air pollution was high in south Belgium and Paris, but this prompted emergency measures including free public transport and car bans. However, no such actions were taken in the UK despite almost identical pollution concentrations. The Mayor has failed to keep up with cities like Berlin and scrapped the plan in his air quality strategy to tighten the existing low emission zone from 2015. Accordingly: 1.* ***What action is the Commission taking to ensure that all Member States make progress towards tackling pollution black spots?*** *2.* ***What action is the Commission taking to ensure that the UK and other Member States put measures in place to reduce the long-term exposure of urban citizens to air pollution?*** *3.* ***What steps will the Commission take to ensure that London and other EU cities take emergency measures when air pollution levels are dangerously high?*** *4. Will the Commission be following the progress and*

outcomes of the findings of the recently launched inquiry by the Commons Environmental Audit Committee?" (2014-005339).

Example 2: Right

"The Commission will be aware that this winter is now being described as one of the coldest in the past 100 years, confounding yet again the predictions of the British Met Office (which is one of the main sources of data for the IPCC and on whose 'expertise' the Commission relies). This is now the third winter of global cooling. 1. Bearing in mind the recent global cooling, along with the ***misrepresentations and blatant fraudulent conduct of warming advocates*** *(witness, inter alia, the behaviour taking place at the University of East Anglia, NASA's Goddard Institute and the National Institute of Water and Atmospheric Research (NIWA)), will the Commission admit that* ***it should debate the thesis of warming*** *more widely, and* ***carefully consult the thousands of eminent scientists who oppose the theory of anthropogenic global warming*** *(AGW)? 2.* ***The global warming thesis*** *will* ***cost ordinary British energy consumers GBP 18 billion per annum*** *until 2050 (source: UK Minister E.D. Balls on the cost of the Climate Change Act), and cost the average household GBP 5 000 per annum in energy bills.* ***This cost arises from the requirement to use 'green' forms of renewable energy, such as expensive and inefficient wind turbines.*** *In last year's cold winter, more than 30 000 pensioners in Britain died of cold because they could not afford to heat their homes. This year the number of deaths from hypothermia is expected to exceed 50 000. Does the Commission think that this is an acceptable price to pay for its policies,* ***predicated on the now-discredited AGW theory****? 3. Given the Commission's requirement for the UK to generate* ***expensive renewable energy****, will it acknowledge that without this requirement, which is based upon the* ***unproven theory that the globe is warming*** *because of 'greenhouse emissions', many more British pensioners would today be alive? 4. In an interview with L'Expansion (10 December 2009), geophysicist Vincent Courtillot, Director of the Paris Global Physics Institute, states that his team of scientists believe that it is, above all, the sun that is responsible for global warming (or cooling, as is now the case), and that* ***carbon dioxide is not responsible for the climate changes observed in the 20th century.*** *And he adds: 'I never said that we should not save oil and reduce greenhouse gas emissions; what I say is that* ***to do this in a way that ruins the global economy is unreasonable****.' If the Commission does not agree with this scientist, can it explain why?" (2010-0371)*

CITIZEN'S RIGHTS/INSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS. What does "left" or "right" mean?

"Left" citizen's rights/institutional affairs policy texts:

- More regulation of state – in this case EU – authorities to ensure equal treatment and access of citizens in decision-making. Request of public access to governmental information. Explicit call for more transparency and accountability.
- Denounces collusion of government/judiciary at the detriment of citizens.
- Legislation ensuring and promoting free speech and equal opportunities in access to free information.
- Legislation regulating lobbying.
- Legislation and closer monitoring/denunciation of corruption.
- Denounces high-spending to maintain officials/government.

- Calls for direct democracy, more involvement of citizenry in decisions.

"Right" citizen's rights/institutional affairs policy texts:

- Protection of institutional secret, importance of confidentiality in decision-making.
- Protection of officials' prerogatives.
- Freedom of information/content of mass media to be restricted in the public interest.
- Denounce allegations of wrongdoings by citizens as often frivolous and point out the costs of citizen monitoring or giving citizens the right to full information.

Examples – Citizen's Rights/Institutional Affairs:

Example 1: Left

> *"In my previous Question P-000361/2013 I had asked the Commission about the **lack of transparency** in relations between the Troika and consultancies and law firms in Greece. In particular, I had referred to a series of Greek press reports about regular contacts, over a period of many months, between Greek consultancies and law firms with the Troika, which includes the Commission. It had also been stressed that **these firms had succeeded in a number of instances in influencing the positions adopted by the Troika** in its negotiations with the Greek Government **for the benefit of the corporate interests they represent**. In this question I had asked the Commission, pursuant to Regulation (EC) No 1049/2001, to **disclose its list of contacts**, as a member of the Troika, with private institutions in Greece from May 2010 up to the date on which I had tabled the question. Instead of providing me with this list of contacts, as it should have done, the Commission answered this question (P-000361/2013) by stating that its representatives had no contacts with HRADF's technical, financial or legal advisors. In view of the above, and pursuant to Regulation (EC) No 1049/2001, I repeat my question: will the Commission disclose its list of contacts, as a member of the Troika, with private institutions in Greece since May 2010?" (2014-005418)*

Example 2: Right

"Many Internet services use web beacons, cookies, scripts, flash cookies, tag URIs, specific browser extensions, or other methods to monitor user behaviour or they allow outside providers to do so on their websites. The services in question, whether monitored by site operators or outside providers, are in many cases not based in the EU: they are consequently not covered by EU data protection directives and may on occasion be employed to assist non-EU governments or authorities. In the EU institutions the Internet is frequently used for research, translation, or other forms of support. What internal guidelines have been laid down in the EU institutions in general and within the Commission in particular to ***prevent Internet services from monitoring or analysing the Web navigation behaviour of EU staff****? Does the Commission recommend that staff of the EU institutions in general and its own staff in particular install protective browser extensions, use special browser versions, or take other steps to the same end? Is it thinking of recommending special browser versions to staff working for EU institutions or of supplying them directly? Or does it already do so* ***in order to protect employees' privacy and enable work-related Internet activities to remain confidential****? (2011-012391)*

Non-ideological texts

The presence of neutral verbs such as: "defines", "explain", "reveal" and of neutral language more generally, signals the impossibility of retrieving the personal preferences of the author. If – and only if! – no personal ideological leaning is present in the entire text, the 'Not Applicable' category must be chosen. The choice then will lead you to determine whether the text is a request for technical information or whether it is a plea to redress a specific problem of an individual, a firm/business, a specific project or a circumscribed locality. If the text was drafted with the primary aim of inspecting facts and figures or clarifying some legislative provision it must be coded as 'technical'. If the author is championing the interests of a specific locality, business, or an individual case, the text must be coded as 'special interest'. These 'special interest' cases usually do not refer back to the broader policy area, they are texts drafted for the sake of a specific person, locality or specific business/firm.

What are "Not Applicable – Technical" texts?

Texts pertaining to the domain 'Not applicable – Technical' objectively ask for:

- No ideology – Clarification/confirmation of statements/proposals/decisions.
- No ideology - Results of reports/assessments/studies.
- No ideology – Request of facts and figures.
- No ideology – Explanation/clarification of a law or directive.

Example:

FROM SOCIAL POLICY DOMAIN

*"Can the Council **explain the nature of the initiative announced** by its Presidency concerning the reinforcement of the European Crime Prevention Network set up in 2001? What concrete measures are proposed to that end, and **how will they operate**? Could the Commission state **when it expects the results** of its **assessment to be published**?" (2009-4078)*

What are "Not Applicable – Special Interest" texts?

- No ideology – Particularistic funding opportunities/economic exemptions for a specific small locality or individual businesses/people.
- No ideology – request concerning funding opportunities for funding's sake: no clear addressee/policy area specified.

Examples:

FROM EDUCATION/CULTURE DOMAIN

*"The international Latin study centre in **the Montefiascone seminary** in the Italian province of Viterbo is a project which seeks to preserve and enhance the Latin language and heritage. The study centre is inside **the Montefiascone Seminary**, which dates back to around 1 600. [...] the entire **complex needs renovating**, in particular a number of the seminary halls that are to be used for conferences and for studying and consulting ancient texts. Restoration work also needs to be done in*

the 20 seminarists' cells that are no longer in use, so that they can be used to accommodate scholars from all over Europe. In the light of the above: 1. Can the Commission ***say whether there is any funding available for the completion of the restoration work*** *that is necessary for this project? 2. Have any similar projects been financed by European funds? 3. Can the Commission give a general overview of the situation?" (2009-6220)*

FROM EDUCATION/CULTURE DOMAIN

"A ***constituent of mine*** *has been accepted to study veterinary medicine at University College Dublin. Since this will be his second degree and he was accepted on a graduate programme the fees are almost EUR 20000 per year for four years. He has managed to obtain a student loan from a bank of GBP 5000 per annum, leaving him an annual requirement of about EUR 13 000. As a result of this, he can raise funding for the first term of the first year but* ***is looking for funding*** *beyond this. My constituent is desperately chasing every angle to get student loans or grants and* ***wondered whether the Commission could offer any advice on EU grants or loans available*** *for students in his position?" (2009-4565)*

Chapter 3: Crowdsourcing Codebook

Overview

You will read texts about social policy (e.g. foreign relations, women and LGBT rights, immigration, religion, crime and justice) or about economic policy in the EU. (For a list of EU Member States, visit: http://europa.eu/about-eu/countries/member-countries/)

You will be asked to determine the author's opinion. The task involves answering two questions: a policy detail question and the question about the author's opinion.

Process

1. Read the text and instructions carefully.
2. Quickly determine the sub-domain that more closely defines the text's topic.

3. Determine the author's personal opinions/beliefs on the issue with the help of the domain-specific ideological scale. If no opinion is evident, click 'No opinion was given'. Do not overuse this option though, most texts have some form of belief expressed in them!

Step 3 asks you to place the author's opinion in-between extremes. Fine grained definitions of each possible opinion will be provided automatically. In general, the extremes for each issue are as following:

SOCIAL POLICY TEXTS

RELIGION

1. The author is in favour of Christian principles in politics and of preferential treatment towards Christian organisations.
2. The author would like to ban State support of religious organisations.

PERSONAL RIGHTS

1. The author is in favour of making homosexuality/abortion and euthanasia illegal. Favours women's role as mothers.
2. The author is in favour of full equality of rights for homosexuals and the individual right to abortion/euthanasia and career prospects.

CRIME/JUSTICE

1. The author is in favour of strong law enforcement/crime punishment, even at the expense of civil liberties.
2. The author is against law enforcement, surveillance systems and prisons and favours a 'softer' approach to crimes.

FOREIGN POLICY

1. The author believes in sanctions/breaking-off of all relations. At most, he/she proposes military intervention only. He/she sees peace-keeping, economic aid and democracy and human rights promotion initiatives as a waste of money.
2. The author is a pacifist and in favour of continuous international cooperation and constant generous economic aid to poor and war-stricken countries.

IMMIGRATION

1. The author thinks immigrants should get back to their country of origin as they are criminals and undeserving.
2. The author believes in universal citizenship and in incentivising migratory flows.

The option "No opinion was given by the author on the issue" is also given. Make sure you do not overuse it. Most texts will express some form of position on social issues.

General Examples:

RELIGION

"According to a study, the Catholic Church owns 1 253 properties in the city of Valencia (the estimated figure for Spain as a whole is in excess of 100 000), of which 160 are places of worship while the remainder are residential or commercial buildings. None of them are subject to the Property Tax; they are exempt under the Agreement concerning Economic Affairs between Spain and the Vatican (1979), which has the status of an international treaty. The Agreement contains an exemption for places of worship but this does not apply to other establishments based in the same premises. Consequently, according to estimates made by Spanish NGO Europa Laica (Lay Europe), Spain is currently providing around EUR 5 million a year in direct state aid to companies that have a client relationship with the Catholic Church. 1. In the Commission's view, is Spain complying with its international obligations? 2. Is this tax exemption a violation of Articles 87 and 88 TFEU on state aid, given that it benefits companies which have their offices in properties owned by the Catholic Church — to the detriment of other companies — in breach of the principle of free competition?" (2015-4921)

ANSWER: the author clearly opposes preferential treatment to religious denominations, in particular the Catholic Church. He/she is closer to extreme number 2.

PERSONAL RIGHTS

"The Italian Presidency of the Council has announced eight official events on the theme of 'gender' in the second half of 2014. The main topics to be covered include 'gender quotas for supervisory boards' and 'gendering cities', both to be dealt with at one-day events (information as at 19 June 2014). However, in its answer to Question P-006182/2013, the Commission noted that the word 'gender' does not appear in the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union and that there is therefore no legal basis for this as an element of Community policy. On what scientific definition of the word 'gender' is the Council Presidency basing its gender events? What legal basis in the Treaty on European Union is the Council Presidency taking as the justification for its gender events? How much budget funding is being allocated to each event (please list by title and budget heading)?" (2014-6401)

ANSWER: The author is clearly sceptical about initiatives to promote gender awareness and equality. She states that there is no legal basis for the term in EU policy and questions the justifications of the events. He/she is clearly closer to extreme 1 of the personal rights policy domain.

CRIME & JUSTICE

"On 31 March 2015, the reformed Spanish Criminal Code was adopted, together with the Law on Public Safety. The two laws join forces to undermine the fundamental rights of assembly and peaceful protest, enshrined in Articles 11 and 12 of the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights. The vague definitions of the new offences and the amendments of the Criminal Code on public order offences and resistance and disobedience to authority could mean that these definitions will be applied to conduct falling within the scope of the rights mentioned above. Furthermore, more serious penalties are introduced if the acts occur in the context of demonstrations, and a lack of respect for authority becomes a criminal offence. Likewise, the reformed Criminal Code violates Article 48 of the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights, by eliminating misdemeanours as a category of crime, and handling them through administrative channels. This not only leads to higher economic penalties, but these penalties are also imposed without due process. This means the loss

of all the guarantees associated with a criminal trial, first among which were the presumption of innocence and the right of defence. Has the Commission arranged to carry out any kind of action or communication in relation to these reforms?" (2015-6545)

ANSWER: author clearly opposes harsher penalties and would like civil liberties of associationism not to be so harshly penalised. He/she is closer to extreme number 2 of the crime and justice policy area.

FOREIGN POLICY

"The Italian company AgustaWestland has signed a contract for the supply of 160 helicopters to the Russian oil company Rosneft. Under Council Decision 2014/659/CFSP of 8 September 2014, Rosneft is subject to economic sanctions which are a direct consequence of Russia's aggressive policies. Under Annex I to Council Regulation (EC) No 428/2009, those sanctions include a ban on selling aviation technology to Rosneft. 1. Does the contract AgustaWestland has concluded with Rosneft, which is owned by the Russian Government and is an important source of funding for the Russian arms industry, breach the sanctions imposed by the EU on the Russian Federation? 2. Did AgustaWestland apply to the competent authorities for authorisation to sell dual-use items before it signed the contract with Rosneft? If so, and if it was granted authorisation, is that authorisation in keeping with Council Regulation (EC) No 428/2009 of 5 May 2009 setting up a Community regime for the control of exports, transfer, brokering and transit of dual-use items? 3. Has the Dual-Use Coordination Group discussed the contract between AgustaWestland and Rosneft? If so, what decisions did it take on the matter, and if not, will it discuss it at some point in the future?" (2015-9892)

ANSWER: The author is asking the EU Commission to make sure sanctions against Russia are enforced by EU firms. He/she clearly favours sanctions as a foreign relations mechanism instead of diplomacy, therefore the author is clearly closer to extreme 1 of the foreign policy issue.

IMMIGRATION

"A 15-year-old Danish teenage girl stabbed her mother after watching Islamic State videos of beheadings. She was radicalised and, together with her boyfriend, whom she met at a refugee centre, committed the murder and planned to join ISIS in Syria. 1. What effective measures and precautions has the Commission undertaken at refugee centres within the EU to prevent EU citizens from being influenced by radical Islamists? 2. What concrete steps will the Commission take in order to prevent radicalised Muslims staying in the EU, given the uncontrollable masses of immigrants coming daily to the EU, especially to Austria?" (2015-13325)

ANSWER: The author is clearly taking an extreme case of violence and linking it to masses of immigrants coming to the EU. The text leaves the impression that the author is distrustful of immigrants and would like their reduction. He/she is closer to extreme 1 of the immigration policy issue.

ECONOMIC POLICY TEXTS

TRADE

1. The author favours unregulated trade, multinationals and relocations.
2. The author opposes globalisation as harmful to local businesses and to poorer countries, exploited by multinationals and savage relocations. Only favours extremely regulated, ethical trade.

GENERAL ECONOMIC ISSUES

Here the extreme opinions can range from savage deregulation of the market to complete public ownership and strong welfare state. The table below illustrates the main extreme beliefs.

1. The author favours pro-business and pro-producer incentives.	1. The author favours workers' and consumers' rights.
2. The author favours liberalisations/privatisations and budget cuts/austerity measures.	2. The author favours public ownership, policies to increase demand (unemployment benefits, guaranteed income policy).
3. The author favours abolition of environmental regulations.	3. The author favours full protection of nature even at the cost of economic growth.
4. The author is in favour of tax cuts, especially to businesses/producers.	4. The author is in favour of income equality and high taxes on the rich.

The option "No opinion was given by the author on the issue" is also given. Make sure you do not overuse it. Most texts will express some form of position on the economy.

Examples:

TRADE

"The rate of solar installations in Europe has fallen by more than 50% over the past three years. Estimates by the International Energy Agency suggest that around 160 000 jobs have been lost in Europe, as trade barriers, such as the minimum import price, have contributed to making solar energy in Europe more expensive than in other regions in the world. Current investigations as regards the minimum import price mechanism and also into the circumvention allegations are increasing uncertainty for investors in the solar sector. What kind of solutions will the Commission propose to allow European companies and consumers to benefit from the falling cost of solar products, such as modules and cells? What steps will it take to end the MIP (Minimum Import Prices) and anti-dumping duties on modules and cells imported from China, as planned for December 2015?" (2015-11605)

ANSWER: The author is clearly blaming trade regulations, naming them 'barriers', for job losses and higher prices for consumers. He is against all types of regulation, even import barriers (such as

import tariffs and anti-dumping legislation). The text is clearly expressing the opinion at the 1st extreme of the trade issue.

"At present there is an exceptional increase in the import of Asian rice to the European Union. This trade is characterised by a supply price that is particularly low, to the extent that it is pricing European rice out of the market. Rice production in Piedmont and Lombardy is suffering in particular, since local producers are experiencing a serious crisis in sales, and accordingly in employment, precisely because of these imports of a product that is unregulated, grown without appropriate labour safeguards and using chemicals which have been banned for years in Italy and Europe. Europe seems to have opened the floodgates to speculation on paddy rice that is reaching the EU market at below EUR 200 per tonne — about half of what it costs to produce in Europe in compliance with health, food safety and environmental regulations, not to mention the social rights of workers. This also involves risks for consumers, because foreign products are being passed off as domestic ones. Does the Commission not agree that it would be reasonable and advisable to take appropriate anti-dumping measures and introduce urgent ad hoc rules in order to protect local products from uncontrolled Asian imports?" (2014-5771)

ANSWER: The author is clearly calling for one-sided regulations in favour of Europe (regulations of imports only). The author is not concerned with global exploitative practices, therefore he/she is closer to the first extreme in the trade issue, but is not an extreme text. The fine-grained multiple-choice questions in the tasks will cater for these 'moderate' cases.

ECONOMIC POLICY

"According to research published by the British Sociological Association, generous social welfare systems encourage people to work and do not encourage a culture of dependency. The survey questioned 18 000 people from 18 European countries and indicated that higher levels of welfare and investment in employment schemes led to greater enjoyment of work. In this regard, what kind of measures will the Commission implement to encourage Member States to take action and in addition to encourage Member States to operate a progressive and equitable social welfare system?"(2015-6544)

ANSWER: The author is clearly favourable to the welfare state and public spending for employment schemes. He/she is closer to the extreme opinions in the second column of the economic policy domain.

"Since the start of the economic crisis, European micro-, small- and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs) have been excluded from access to credit. This fact combined with austerity policies depressing final demand and increasing financial instability has drained MSMEs of liquidity, forcing many solvent firms to close their doors. The European economy has experienced a huge rise in unemployment, disproportionately affecting the young and the long-term unemployed. Considering that MSMEs provide more than two-thirds of total employment, their access to finance is crucial in overcoming the crisis and creating quality jobs in the EU. Notwithstanding the high levels of public aid received, the financial sector has systematically refused to provide credit to the European economy. Indeed, as a result of the financial crisis and European policies, this sector has become more oligopolistic and less concentrated in traditional banking activity, further increasing its detachment from the real economy and small businesses. The Capital Markets Union (CMU) will consolidate this trend, because it involves the financialisation of banking activities and of the overall economy, including MSMEs, by deregulating the financial sector and encouraging small

business to use increasingly opaque financial products and markets in order to finance their regular activity. But the evidence from the Member States shows that this is a red herring. MSMEs credit markets based on traditional banking practices and with a strong presence of regional and public institutions outperform more complex instruments in countries where MSMEs face less barriers to liquidity, like in Germany for example. 1. How does the Commission evaluate the risk of increased financial instability and volatile or stagnant growth affecting the flow of credit to MSMEs with the development of the CMU? 2. How does the Commission evaluate the risk of increased banking concentration, the non-separation of commercial and investment banking activity, and lower involvement in day-to-day credit activities on finance to MSMEs with the development of the CMU? 3. How does the Commission evaluate the transfer of risk from the financial sector to the SMEs in its proposal of the CMU?" (2015-130)

ANSWER:The author is clearly pro-business even though it is criticising banks. The author is calling for regulations of the market, BUT in favour of businesses. His/her opinions do not fully match the extreme positions in column 1 but are closer to that end than to the extremes in column 2. Again, the more fine-grained multiple-choice options provided in the tasks will allow you to discriminate between extreme and more moderate cases such as this one.

Domain-specific ideological scales

ECONOMIC POLICY:

THE AUTHOR FAVOURS ...

1. Extreme economic freedom: full privatisation, no taxation, no environmental/health/worker protection/consumer protection regulations, no limits on production or business. No social services/poverty or unemployment relief. No public spending.

2. Pro-businesses and producers (farmers/fishermen) measures: Reduction of environmental/health safety/worker and consumer protection legislation. Regulations and public spending should be in favour of businesses/farmers.

3. Both pro-business and pro-worker/consumer management of the economy.

4. Increase of environmental/health/worker and consumer protection legislation. Increase social services/poverty and unemployment relief and taxation to the rich. Increase public spending/budget.

5. Extreme policies in favour of total environmental/health/consumer and worker protection. Full state ownership/centralisation of the economy. Strong welfare state. Extreme taxation to the rich.

- No opinion/attitude on the issue is mentioned in the text.

TRADE POLICY

THE AUTHOR FAVOURS ...

1. No regulation of trade: imports and exports should be limitless/with no barriers.

2. Targeted regulation at the detriment of importers only: only concerned about impact on EU businesses and health.

3. Both free and regulated trade equally.

4. Regulation of both exports and imports to avoid exploitation of the needy/working classes worldwide.

5. Extreme regulation of both exports and imports to avoid exploitation of the needy/working classes worldwide.

- No opinion/attitude on the issue is mentioned in the text.

FOREIGN RELATIONS

THE AUTHOR FAVOURS ...

1. Extreme breaking off of all relations and strong sanctions (e.g. military intervention).

2. Reduction of cooperative relations: economic aid and humanitarian intervention depicted as costly.

3. Both sanctioning and humanitarian solutions.

4. Augmenting pacific/humanitarian cooperation and economic aid.

5. Extreme help/cooperation and pacifism at all costs.

- No opinion/attitude on the issue is mentioned in the text.

CRIME AND JUSTICE

THE AUTHOR FAVOURS ...

1. Extreme punishment/sentences and police investigation on citizens.

2. Increasing crime punishment and investigation and improving police, judicial and prisons discretion and respect.

3. Both strict and lenient solutions to crime.

4. The reduction of punishments for certain crimes and the reduction of police and prison brutality and privacy violations.

5. Extreme leniency/justification of criminals and policies that abolish investigative controls on citizens.

- No opinion/attitude on the issue is mentioned in the text.

INDIVIDUAL RIGHTS

THE AUTHOR FAVOURS ...

1. Extreme ban on homosexuality, restriction of women's choice and abortion/euthanasia bans.

2. Restriction of LGBT and gender equality agendas, restriction of abortion/euthanasia to limited cases.

3. Both restricting and increasing personal freedoms.

4. Increasing rights: e.g. women's and LGBT equality, facilitating availability of abortion/contraception and euthanasia.

5. Extreme protection of individual rights, full availability of abortion/contraception and euthanasia.

- No opinion/attitude on the issue is mentioned in the text.

RELIGION

THE AUTHOR FAVOURS ...

1. Extreme protection of Christianity and Christian organisations. Extreme anti-Islamic sentiments.

2. Protection of Christianity and Christian organisations. Negative attitude towards Islam.

3. Both differential and equal treatment of religions.

4. Protection of all religious denominations and organisations equally.

5. Extremely secular policies and banning of religion considerations from politics.

- No opinion/attitude on the issue is mentioned in the text.

IMMIGRATION

THE AUTHOR FAVOURS ...

1. Extreme criminalisation of immigrants and refugees and strict deportation measures.

2. Measures that curb immigration into Europe: deportation measures and strengthening of border controls.
3. Both anti-immigration and pro-immigration measures.
4. Measures that facilitate immigration and immigrants'/refugees' integration.
5. Extreme protection and facilitation of immigration.

- No opinion/attitude on the issue is mentioned in the text.

Chapter 3: Test Questions - Crowdsourcing

GOLD TASKS

	Test Texts	Correct Answer(s)
1.	Police forces and intelligence units need to be reinforced. Will the Commission issue a proposal on the matter?	JHA – right
2.	Criminal activities can be counteracted only by investigating and combating their socio-economic roots. Men are driven to crime by desperate conditions.	JHA – left
3.	Recent revelations by whistleblower Edward Snowden have revealed massive personal data-retention operations behind the US National Security Agency. This has led to public outcry and even reforms of phone-tapping procedures in European Member States. Will the Commission issue a statement on the matter? Should European Member States panic so much, given that in Europe phone-tapping services are specifically aimed at citizens suspected of felony?	JHA – right
4.	Recent studies have demonstrated the benefits of regularised immigration and, despite far-right propaganda, immigration success stories do exist. Will the Commission promote further	IM – centre

studies on the issue, that can promote a more nuanced immigration legislation with a better capacity to sort worthy immigrants from 'unworthy' ones?

5. There was much controversy surrounding the issue of the public displays of religious symbols in France. I fully support the idea that religion is a private matter and that all religious symbols should be hidden from public view. However, I am deeply concerned about the decision to remove the cross from State classrooms. I think that religion and historical traditions should be separated. What is the Commission's position on the matter? REL – centre-right

6. The Arab Spring and the events following it are causing a massive displacement of people. The European reaction is simply appalling, with countries such as the UK refusing to help and calling for further closing of borders. Will the Commission pass a proposal soon in relation to the plight of these refugees? Doesn't the Commission consider that setting up borders is a crime, given that the earth should be owned by every human being? IM - left

7. Euthanasia is still a controversial topic. The indecisiveness of public policy on this matter is causing enourmous suffering. Will the Commission plan to propose freedom of euthanasia for all that request it? Is the decision to end one's life not considered a human right? PERS - left

8. Does the Commission agree that naming streets after violent demonstrators is heinous and against public morality? What does naming public places after police murderers teach to our children? JHA - right

9. The recent corruption scandals concerning misuse of international aid by the Zimbabwean government is evidence of the fact that these countries cannot be trusted. We therefore ask the EU Commission to stop immediately any funding to non-EU countries, since the European taxpayer seems to be paying for dictators' luxuries and doing little for civilians on the ground. FOR - right

10. The war on drugs policy is not yielding the expected results. Though I fully agree that drug dealers should be seized, swiflty tried and confined in maximum security detention centres, I also now see that a distinction should be made between low-level and high-level dealers. Consumers should be deterred, but the current deterrence practices are possibly incentivising further crime. What is the Commission's view on the matter? Is a new proposal concerning drug trafficking in order? JHA – centre-left

11. Does the Commission confirm that the UK has spent nearly 50% more on health services since opening its borders to Eastern countries in 2004? Does the Commission agree that this is not fair to UK taxpayers? IM - right

12. Two days ago, a terrorist Islamic group massacred a Christian village in Nigeria. Will the Commission formally condemn the event and liaise with the Nigerian government to guarantee protection of the Christian minorities there? REL - right

13. The recent report of Amnesty International reveals massive human rights breaches in Zambia. Does the Commission not think it appropriate to liaise with the Zambian government and push for meaningful reforms? — FOR - left

14. European countries have very different views concerning the legalisation of abortion. As a result of EU freedom of movement policies, European women can decide to travel to a Member State more favourable to their cause. While I agree with Commissioner Kroes statement that women should be the final decision-makers concerning their bodies, I also believe that the foetus should have rights. Will the Commission issue a proposal concerning the harmonisation of abortion law? Does it think it appropriate that women in the EU should be subject to the same legislation to avoid situations such as these? — PERS - centre

15. Italy grants substantial tax exemptions to the Catholic clergy and religious organisations. Is this in line with the principle of religious non-discrimination promoted by EU law and the Charter on Human Rights? Does the Commission agree that each religious denomination should enjoy the same levels of State support or none at all? — REL - left

16. Recently a businessman in Bulgaria has been convicted on corruption and tax fraud charges. The trial was deeply flawed and not respectful of civil liberties, with the suspect being imprisoned well before the trial and the lawyer being denied private sessions with his client. Does the Commission think that penal codes in the European Union should be harmonised to ensure each EU citizen a fair trial? — JHA - left

17. Europe's borders are common borders. The Member States are depriving the European Union of the necessary means to act on the humanitarian stage. Is the Commission going to make changes to achieve an effective common immigration policy? What specific actions is it going to introduce to prevent and deal with immigration mafias in countries or origin? In connection with the previous question, does the Commission think it would be appropriate to use association agreements as a way of introducing clauses and combating illegal immigration and the mafias responsible for it in countries of origin? — IM – centre & centre-right

18. For all the recent increases, the Frontex budget clearly reflects the hypocrisy of the EU. The agency operates out of two shabby floors of a Warsaw skyscraper. One part of Frontex that is, however, being expanded is a system called Eurosur, which is cornering most of the investment in drones, helicopters, and satellites used to track down people who try to migrate in order to escape oppression and poverty in their home countries. In the face of the humanitarian tragedy being played out every day, does not the Commission think that it is time to make a radical change to its immigration policy by establishing a reception policy to accommodate and offer decent conditions to the thousands of human beings flocking to the gates of the EU, fleeing the war that the EU has helped and is helping to foment? — IM - left

19. The 1951 UN Convention on Refugees and subsequent 1967 Protocol places a responsibility on its signatories to offer refuge to those fleeing persecution. There is no obligation on signatories to naturalise or confer citizenship upon refugees. Can the Commission confirm that Member States are under no obligation to confer citizenshoip? Does it not consider it a danger and an unfair burden on European countries culture and economies? IM - right

20. In Niger, 80% of the population make a living from farming and stockbreeding. This leaves the countryâ€™s people very much at the mercy of any climate change that may occur. Situations such as storms, droughts or fires can represent a disaster for the majority of Niger's people. Niger is part of the African, Caribbean and Pacific Group of States (ACP). In view of the EU-ACP international cooperation and development agreements, can the Commission please answer the following questions: 1. How much development aid is the Commission sending to Niger? 2. Is the Commission considering increased development aid for ACP countries? FOR - left

21. On 10 March 2015 Parliament adopted, by a very large majority, the Tarabella report regarding progress on equality between women and men in the EU in 2013. In light of this, can the Commission indicate what measures and actions it plans to implement to: 1. Improve women's access to sexual and reproductive health services, and inform them more fully about their rights and the services available? 2. Make men aware of their responsibilities in sexual and reproductive matters? PERS - left

22. The Bishop of Alcala de Henares, Juan Antonio Reig Pla, is known for his constant verbal attacks on women and the feminist movement. He has on many occasions accused women of seeking radical power, and advocated the removal of their right to vote. He has even said that "ideological feminism is a step towards destruction of the individual". In light of Article 2 of the Treaty on European Union, which lists non-discrimination and equality between men and women alongside other common values, does the Commission believe that Spain should take steps of some kind? PERS - left

23. Parliament also called on the Commission to assist Member States in ensuring high-quality geographically appropriate and readily accessible services in the areas of sexual and reproductive rights and, moreover, safe and legal abortion and contraception, as well as general healthcare. From the legal point of view, how does the Commission intend to address the concept of associated rights in connection with sexual and reproductive health and the associated rights? According to the Commission's interpretation, is abortion included among those associated rights? Given that it has clearly made the point on two occasions that, by virtue of the subsidiarity principle, abortion is a matter to be dealt with solely by Member States, has Parliament, by adopting the above resolution, infringed that Treaty principle? PERS – N/A or centre-right

24. According to the German law which came into force on 1 January 2015, the minimum wage for an employee active in the territory of Germany cannot be less than EUR 8.50 per hour. The registration documents required from employers of this type have to be lodged EC - right

before the German authorities well in advance and exclusively via a Germany-based subsidiary company or by an official representative resident in Germany. This causes extra costs and administrative burden for employers from other Member States. Does the Commission consider this act to be in accordance with the acquis communautaire?

25. In view of the importance of protecting citizens, their health and air quality, together with consumer trust and confidence in the standards and type-approval mechanism used in Europe, it is essential that information be provided in order to assess whether European testing regimes have also been adversely affected by such manipulation. How will the Commission thoroughly investigate any potential manipulation "of the type discovered in the United States" of the approval process in respect of emissions limits by Volkswagen and other car manufacturers, whether for diesel- or petrol-powered vehicles? EC - left

26. The Commission has previously stated (in its answer to Written Question E-008200/2015) that the EU does not have competence with regard to the absolute right to strike. Nevertheless, the EU clearly does have competence for the setting of EU-wide regulations and standards relating to working conditions. I remain concerned that the UK Trade Union Bill may be incompatible with such wider EU standards for working conditions. Can the Commission confirm whether its representatives have met with the UK Government to discuss this or have corresponded with any minister on the topic? Secondly, in the Commission's opinion, is the bill compatible with EU regulations on working conditions? EC - left

27. Could you please tell me the criteria and the method used by the Commission in setting intervention prices for milk powder and butter in the European Union in 2003? EC – N/A

28. Small and medium-sized enterprises in Europe are heavily reliant on bank financing, although there is a huge scope for small businesses to tap into additional funding sources for loans, bonds and equities. A large number of smaller companies, especially in distant regions, are unaware of the possibilities offered by EU funds. It is therefore necessary to simplify the application process and to create user-friendly explanations on how to access finance, especially since most enterprises cannot afford consultancy services. In this regard: 1. How is the Commission planning to help those enterprises and turn the Euro funds into a natural business partner for Europe? EC – centre-right

29. Pulse trawling is a form of fishing with disastrous environmental impact, with adverse effects being seen on shark and ray, which are sensitive to electricity, but also on sole, sea dog, dab and, most seriously, on juveniles. 1. What is the scientific basis for the Commission's decision to continue to allow this practice, given that there has not been a progress report or even a study delivered by the International Council for the Exploration of the Sea (ICES)? EC – centre-left

30. Newspaper advertisement of flowers are paid with EU budget money. What justification do you make for spending tax payers EC - centre

money on the subject of roses? My constituent is naturally concerned that in an age of austerity, when Europe is in an economic crisis, as acknowledged by President Juncker and various heads of European governments, that taxpayers' money can be found to fund the advertising of the aesthetic qualities of flowers. Please enlighten us.

31. The economic crisis has led to increased levels of poverty throughout the EU. This is certainly a tragedy and, while the EU needs to intervene to help alleviate the plight of the less fortunate, it should also keep an eye on the misuse of these funds or illegal claims for social services. EC – centre-left

32. Can the Commission issue a proposal ensuring that small and medium sized enterprises are facilitated in loan requests? EC – centre-right

33. Would the Commission concur that unemployment benefits are a human right and that every citizen should be entitled to a minimum income by virtue of being a citizen? EC - left

34. Is it fair that the European budget should be used to save, yet again, the lazy Greeks? Does the Commission agree that any State intervention is paternalistic and will lead Greece into further economic debt down the line? EC – extreme right

35. Doesn't the Commission agree that milk quotas are harming free competition? Shouldn't we consider scrapping these regulations to facilitate the farming industry? Doesn't the Commission consider that consumer rights are better served by helping producers to supply their produces with no quotas or restrictions? Doesn't the Commission consider that these regulations are creating massive amounts of food waste? How is this ethical, considering world hunger? EC - right

36. As per EU regulations, tobacco products sold in Europe need to diplay information on their health risks for consumers. I welcome this policy but think that this is not enough to protect public health. Labelling is not a sufficient deterrent. Will the Commission consider a policy proposal increasing taxation of cigarettes? EC - left

37. In light of the recent promulgation of anti-dumping trade agreements, doesn't the Commission consider that such agreements disadvantage European consumers? Does the Commission agree that trade regulation goes against the consumer's interest, since said consumer is deprived of cheaper options when buying goods? TRD – extreme right

38. A recent law passed in Italy is aimed at reducing the political influence of trade unions. Though worker unionisation is a fundamental protection against exploitation and should be incentivised, economic growth is often inhibited by worker unionisation, with employers being incapacitated to punish lazy employees. Where does the Commission stand on this issue? Does it approve of the recent Italian law? EC - centre

39. Can the Commission provide conclusive evidence of global warming? Doesn't the Commission agree that imposing restrictions and quotas on businesses and production is unwarranted, if said EC - right

conclusive evidence is not found?

40. The economic crisis, and the consequent choice of austerity measures by governments, has led to extensive privatisations in all European countries. The recent case of a Greek citizen being denied a bus discount on grounds of income from the privately owned Athenian city bus service exemplifies where privatisations fail. The poor man had to pay the full rambler's price or forfeit his appointments at the hospital, where he's been treated for cancer. Doesn't the Commission agree that public transportation is a human right and that privatisations are infringing on these rights?	EC - left
41. Imported goods are all too often sold at prices below their European marketplace value, harming European producers and businesses. Doesn't the Commission think that imports should be more heavily taxed, to avoid these super competitive prices?	TR – centre-right
42. Imported goods often are misleadingly re-branded as Made in Italy. How does the Commission intend to regulate imports and food branding so that European consumers have full information?	TR – centre-right
43. Does the Commission agree that the only way to incentivise economic growth is to cut taxes to businesses/SMEs?	EC - right
44. EU regulations have made illegal the sale and production of specific goods on grounds of public health concerns. Doesn't the Commission agree that the responsibility for consumption lies on consumers? Isn't it an infringement on individual choice to impose what citizens can and cannot buy?	EC - right
45. EU regulations should tackle the issue of cartels and monopolies. European consumers are disadvantaged by these anti-competitive practices that need to stop.	EC - left
46. The EU should immediately stop all economic aid to third world countries. We can't save everyone.	FOR - right
47. The EU Commission should deploy more humanitarian organisations in Lybia. We have a moral duty to help.	FOR - left
48. Is the Commission planning on issuing sanctions to the USA for its spying on European leaders? Doesn't the Commission agree this is a clear sign of aggression on the EU?	FOR - right
49. It is a scandal that in the EU gay marriages are only allowed in a few Member States.	PERS - left
50. We desperately need a bill that will make abortion unlawful in all Member States.	PERS - right
51. Women are nowadays equal, I do not understand why the Commission is still bothering with proposing quotas and anti-discrimination legislation in favour of women.	PERS - right
52. People in possession of drugs need to be locked in prison for life.	JHA - right

53. Personal privacy should never be breached. Security concerns cannot infringe on citizens' private lives.	JHA or PERS - left
54. The justice system in Italy is corrupt, the EU needs to ensure fair trials in all its Member States.	JHA - left
55. The Islamic religion is criminal by nature. Will the Commission propose a legislation banning the teaching of Islamic principles?	REL - right
56. No religious symbols should appear in State buildings. Religion is a private matter.	REL - left
57. The flow of immigrants nowadays is disproportionate. We need stronger border controls.	IM - right
58. Refugees cannot enter the job market in most European states. Immigrants are a resource for our economies, we should facilitate their access to jobs instead of relegating them in refugee centres.	IM - left
59. Immigrants are at the receiving end of hate language after the terrorist attacks. Will the Commission fund an awareness initiative to educate citizens that immigrants are not terrorists?	IM -left
60. We need stronger protection for workers and higher unemployment benefits.	EC - left
61. Environmental regulation is harming economic growth.	EC - right
62. The health care system should be entirely private.	EC - right
63. Budget cuts and austerity measures have created more poverty: we should start to fund welfare services back again.	EC - left
64. Trade barriers are harmful to economic growth. Embargos are harming European consumers.	TRD – extreme right
65. Trade should be regulated to avoid harming the economies of poor countries.	TRD - left
66. Trade should be regulated to avoid harming European producers: China imports sub-standard goods that are harming our consumers and our businesses.	TRD – centre-right

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