

Territory or Ideology: Cooperation Between Members in the European Parliament Revisited

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ABSTRACT – What drives the decision of members of the European Parliament (MEPs) to work together, are they working together because they agree on policy principles (ideology) or do they work together because they are from the member state or region (geography)? This question is at the core of this paper. By employing a sophisticated and specifically for this paper crafted computer program analysing EP resolutions, I find that ideology becomes less of a factor in the decision to cosponsor a proposal and nationhood becomes more important. This creates difficult questions for European integration.

KEYWORDS – European Parliament, resolutions, cosponsorship, roll-call votes, ideology, nationality

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1 Introduction

The European Parliament (EP), directly elected by the European people since 1979, is a unique institution in multiple ways. It is a parliament that is at the same time powerful and powerless. Powerful because of the wide (and expanding) range of instruments available to its members, and powerless because of the low turnout among the citizens it is precisely set up to represent. As the house of the people, the Parliament is an arena where policy is fought out. Because of the multiple overlapping jurisdictions that shape the relations between the constituent parts of the European Union, however, it is by no means clear *who actually fights* – and for what reason. Are the members of the European Parliament (MEPs) ‘fighting’ in territorial or in ideological groups? The central question driving this research is *How do ideology and nationality translate into the legislative behaviour of members of the European Parliament?*

The existing literature suggests that the answer to this question is quite clear: it is ideology and European partygroups that determine who fights with and against whom. However, these partygroups are by no means just another form of party – one of the quintessential features of a party is that it is in one way or the other able to nominate candidates for office, yet the Europarties have to rely upon national parties to do so. This creates unclear loyalties for MEPs. At the one hand, they need the Europarties for positions of power within parliamentary committees or delegations, but at the other hand, they cannot do so without being elected, for which they need their national parties. To complicate matters even further, elections to the European Parliament are mostly second-order elections where national topics, priorities, and interests dominate the agenda of voters. At the very same time voters become more and more critical of European integration. This brings up the question of how it can be that national interests do not seem to translate into the parliamentary behaviour of MEPs, as the exist-

ing literature suggests.

My argument why nationality might be more important than what we know now is twofold. First, the existing research uses data and methodologies which might very well produce erroneous information. Second, because of a number of factors such as the ever-larger number of member states, the financial and economic crisis of 2008, and a renewed focus upon the nation states’ importance for democratic legitimacy, the nationality of a MEP becomes more important than his or her ideological position in cooperating with other MEPs. Exactly because most scholars argue that it is ideology that drives the legislative behaviour of MEPs, the EP is a hard case for my argument.

I will answer my research question by using data on the fifth, sixth and seventh terms of the EP (respectively from 1999 to 2004, 2004 to 2009, and 2009 up to halfway 2013) by examining who sponsors proposals with whom – a rather novel approach in political science. As Louwse and Otjes (2013, p. 2) put it: "the study of parliamentary behaviour should not only look at the final vote, but also at the question who tables proposals and, specifically, how MPs work together in tabling proposals". To test whether ideology or nationality influences the decision to work together, I will craft a number of hypotheses. These hypotheses will be put to the test by analysing dyadic data: all combinations of pairs of two MEPs, where I have coded the number of times the two MEPs have worked together (as a proportion of the total number of proposals signed by the first MEP), and a number of predictor variables. The huge resulting dataset, containing well over two million observations, is analysed through a logistic regression and a binomial linear regression.

The main findings are that ‘geography’ increasingly matters for the decision to work together. MEPs from the same country now sponsor together more than before (even when controlling for in- and decreases in the total number of proposals crafted), and that ideology, conversely, is becoming less important.

At the same time, cooperation between MEPs who share one or more committees increases drastically, suggesting that the EP might follow the same patterns of specialisation as some scholars find for other parliaments.

The structure of this paper is as follows: first, the current findings on cooperation in the Parliament will be discussed, followed by the limitations of these findings. Second, an overview of the method of cosponsorship analysis will be discussed, followed by the hypotheses, data, and research methods. The final two sections provide the results and a discussion thereof.

2 Explaining Cosponsorship in the European Parliament

European integration theorists, most notably Ernst B. Haas and Andrew Moravcsik, have divergent answers to the question of how ideology and nationality translate into the legislative behaviour of MEPs. Haas' (1958, p. 16) argument is that European integration creates "loyalties, expectations and political activities" that are shifted towards a "new centre" – in other words, the European Parliament and the partygroups demand (or just get) the loyalty of their members. If this is the case, however, these loyalties are duly tested by the loyalties towards national parties and more-critical national electorates. Moreover, crises like the economic and financial crisis put stress on the relations between member states – and therefore potentially also between the peoples of these member states and their MEPs who cooperate in partygroups. Moravcsik (1998, p. 18), by contrast, argues that it is not so much loyalties that drive integration, but "a series of rational choices made by national leaders". Changing one's choice seems much simpler than changing one's loyalty, thus when a crisis hits Europe, we could very well see a shift in loyalties away from Europe back to the member states.

Traditional explanations of the legislative behaviour of MEPs have focussed on two strands of research: first, that of socialisation and attitudes of MEPs (e.g., Farrell and Scully, 2007), and second, on the way MEPs vote (e.g., Hix, Noury, and Roland, 2007). The questions driving these research projects is that of alignment: how do MEPs align, is it according to national lines, or is it ideology? In other words: when we want to predict (voting) behaviour of members, should we then look at what country a member is from, or should we look at the member's partygroup? Overwhelmingly, the answer seems to be that, at least with regard to voting behaviour, ideology is what drives the decision to vote in a certain matter for or against a piece of legislation. Members vote like their partygroup peers, not like their compatriots.

A number of scholars, however, have noted serious problems with the approach of using voting data, mainly focussing on problems of data selection (Andeweg, 1995; Carrubba, Gabel, and Hug, 2009; Faas, 2003). While the approach relying on interviews and surveys of MEPs indeed paints a very rich picture, it lacks the possibility of a thorough analysis of who works with whom. It is simply impossible to ask all, or a representative sample of, MEPs with whom they have worked together; if only because of memory recall issues. A new way of investigating how and under what circumstances MEPs work together is therefore needed.

Parliamentarians have multiple instruments at their disposal to act through. Within the parliamentary arena, the main options available are voting, talking, and policy-making. The European Parliament is, in multiple ways, unique in its sort: voting works under a number of different rules of procedure: some votes are taken according to a roll-call of which the individual results might, or might not, end up in the official records; other votes are by showing of hands - which, obviously, are not recorded on the level of the individual member. Speeches in parliament are even more diverse, because of the plethora of languages. Finally, policy-making is complex

because of the shared, overlapping and distinct competences of each of the institutions in the EU. Drafting policy in the Union, from the perspective of the EP, works through resolutions. When adopted, the EP takes the stance as outlined in the resolution. Some of these resolutions are technical in nature, for example the proposing of a candidate for office or the instigation of a new committee, while other resolutions are drafted by one or more MEPs containing a policy stance. Examples of such resolutions are the EP adopting a position on what it regards as violations of human rights, on issues stemming from behaviour of members of the European Commission (EC), or any other issue within the jurisdiction of the European Union. In principle, these members can propose policy alone, or recruit others to act as cosignatories (though see the discussion on how free MEPs are in proposing resolutions, in the respective section down below). Since members are free to select cosponsors, looking at *who signs with whom* provides valuable information for scholars interested in understanding the (legislative) behaviour of parliamentarians. As Louwse and Otjes succinctly put it:

Most of what MPs vote on is proposed by their colleagues. In presidential systems, most bills are tabled by MPs and in parliamentary systems MPs propose motions, amendments, resolutions and legislative initiatives. Therefore, the study of parliamentary behaviour should not only look at the final vote, but also at the question who tables proposals and, specifically, how MPs work together in tabling proposals. (2013, p. 2)

Selecting one or more cosignatories tells us, somewhat obviously, two things: first, that the draftee wants to work together with the cosignatories, and second, that the cosignatory wants to work with the draftee (and any of the other signatories). Members can select cosignatories on a number of grounds: because they agree (e.g., because they are closely positioned together on a relevant policy dimension, such

as the left-right scale), because they are from the same partygroup or national political party, or because they are from the same member state. Other factors might include that the signatories are both in one or more committees together, or simply because they like each other. The main point here is that cosponsorship conveys meaningful information about the relation between different members.

The European Parliament is an especially interesting parliament for this type of research. Instead of a composition stemming from a single nation, it contains elected officials from an ever-increasing number of member states, at the moment of writing 28. Various anti-European integration parties are present within the EP itself as well as outside in the member states. For this reason and others it is counter-intuitive that cooperation is found to be almost exclusively along ideological lines, and not along national lines. Combining this intuition with the aforementioned warnings on the use of roll-call vote data stipulates the need to revisit the legislative behaviour of MEPs.

The remainder of this section will discuss the findings in the literature on legislative behaviour of MEPs in general, the method of cosponsorship analysis and its application so far, and outlines my theory by building several hypotheses.

2.1 Cooperation in the EP: what we know thus far

As noted in the previous section, two main strands of research on cooperation in the European Parliament exist: one which is based on qualitative or survey-based methods, and one which is based on quantitatively measuring parliamentary output. The latter approach can be found in, among others, the works of Brzinski (1995), Hix (2001, 0), Faas (2003), Hix, Noury, and Roland (2007), Carrubba, Gabel, and Hug (2008), Carrubba, Gabel, and Hug (2009), Hix and Noury (2009) and Hug (2012). Most of these

analyses concern an application of the NOMINATE procedure originally developed by Poole (2005); Poole and Rosenthal (1984), and further expanded by Carroll, Lewis, Lo, Poole, and Rosenthal (2009); Poole, Lewis, Lo, and Carroll (2011). Qualitative and/or survey based research use a much wider palette of methods and data sources, with as prime examples Scully (2005), McElroy and Benoit (2007, 1), Farrell and Scully (2007) and Costello and Thomson (2010).

2.2 Limitations of current research on roll-call votes

As Haas (1958, p. 16) famously lamented, "political integration is the process whereby political actors in several distinct national settings are persuaded to shift their loyalties, expectations and political activities towards a new centre". Did, however, such a shift occur? When contrasting the two bodies of literature (the roll-call analyses, and the qualitative/survey based analyses), one cannot forgo the feeling of being at crossroads: does nationality play an important role in the way in which MEPs operate or not? Hix (2001, p. 663) concludes that "legislative behaviour is mainly along left-right-lines", and that "transnational party group affiliation is more important than national affiliation for determining how MEPs vote". Yet, when asked directly, MEPs see representing their partygroup as second *least* important task, ranking slightly higher than the lowest ranking task, namely that of representing all the people in the EU (Farrell and Scully, 2007, p. 105). Representing the people of their respective member states is deemed much more important, as is representing the people who voted for their (national!) party. Unless the preferences of all national parties align perfectly within the EP's partygroups (which seems highly unlikely), something odd is at work. Why do we not see such patterns in the voting behaviour of MEPs, given their priorities of representing the peoples of their member states?

There are multiple responses to this question. It

could be that politicians preach their representative roles, but at the end of the day prioritise differently. It could also be that MEPs do actually give priority to representing their national parties' and member states' interests, but do so through other instruments than voting. A more far reaching response would be that the results found via the roll-call analyses is simply biased towards finding more unity within partygroups than in reality is the case. This conclusion is, however, far from new. Andeweg, writing back in 1995 (p. 64–5), suspects that the cohesion in party groups is "at least partly an artefact, caused by the selection of data." Roll-calls can be called by any party group or at least 32 MEPs (Faas, 2003, p. 831). These roll-calls are requested, among other reasons, to "keep a check on [partygroup] members' participation in a vote" by the partygroup leadership (Jacobs, Corbett, and Shackelton, 1992, p. 83–4). Thus, Andeweg concludes, "[a]ny such analysis of such roll-calls would seem to be biased to find party cohesion." Even Hix (2001, p. 668), who uses EP roll-call data extensively, writes that "the outcome of these votes may be systematically biased".

Roger Scully excellently describes the schism in which the European Parliament operates:

The European Union is the most far-reaching attempt to address the biggest problems that nationalism generates. At one and the same time, the EU upholds the centrality of nation-states within Europe, yet also partially subverts that dominance by establishing and developing institutions of governance at a level beyond the state. (2005, p. v)

and

In the case of the Parliament, whose members are elected on a national basis, in elections generally dominated by national parties and in which national issues dominate, and who once elected retain strong links with national politics and particularly their national party, the label *inter-*

national is surely more accurate than either of the conventional alternatives. (2005, p. 77)

Given the puzzle above, and that the EP is an institution "beyond the state", the obvious question that springs into mind is whether or not the EP is also beyond the *nation*? And does it thereby really subvert the dominance by the nation-states? Scully approaches this question from the angle of socialisation effects. He directly mentions roll-call analysis, arguing that, "at best, voting analysis can give us only limited insight into the intensity of individuals' views; with only a few voting options ... we cannot know whether an individual's endorsement means grudging support, modest enthusiasm or passionate conviction." (p. 15). This criticism seems valid enough for voting, with its limited options; yet does it hold for cosponsorship? Since picking cosponsors is a (moderately) free act, we can be more certain that the draftees, at the very least, are modestly enthusiastic about a bill. Such a new approach to discover how and when MEPs cooperate is thus more than welcome.

2.3 Cosponsorship in the literature

Looking at who proposes with whom is a somewhat new approach to investigate the networks in which parliamentarians, representatives and senators operate. The United States Congress has received the most attention, with a number of different studies on sponsorship (Fowler, 2006; Kessler and Krehbiel, 1996; Koger, 2003; Talbert and Potoski, 2002; Wilson and Young, 1997). Other countries include The Netherlands (Louwerse and Otjes, 2013), Argentina (Alemán, Calvo, Jones, and Kaplan, 2009), and Chile (Crisp, Kanthak, and Leijonhufvud, 2004).

The core finding of most of the aforementioned studies is that there is a high degree of overlap between with whom legislators propose and with how similar legislators vote, especially for "legislatures ... in

which parties are relatively weak" (Louwerse and Otjes, 2013, p. 2). In other words: if a legislator proposes with someone, these legislators are also more likely than those who do not, or less often, propose together, to vote both yea or both nay for any bill. This is ideal for our case. Roll-call votes cover about one-thirds of the total number of votes, and these roll calls might not be representative of the entire set of votes. If we have a second data source and method which provides similar results to roll-call analyses, yet covers a set of data which does not suffer from the same selection effects, we can then easily compare patterns of voting similarity with the patterns of proposing together.

2.4 Hypotheses

In this section, I will develop four sets of hypotheses. The first relate to ideological explanations of cosponsorship, the second relate to country-related (territorial) explanations, including hypotheses related to the financial and economic crisis of 2008, the third relate to mixed explanations such as party-group membership. The main hypotheses are focussed on ideological and territorial explanations of why a pair of MEPs work together. However, to truly test for ideological and territorial explanations, we should have more hypotheses on possible other factors such as partygroup and committee membership. It could be that some committees attract members from specific countries whilst not from others, and therefore without such a hypothesis we might draw wrong conclusions about the original relationship between territory and sponsoring together.¹

2.4.1 Ideology

The decision to sponsor together is obviously (at least in part) based on agreeing with what is actually in the proposal itself. Two MEPs who are on an

¹Do see Achen (2005) for prudent advice on the risks and prevention of garbage can models. I will come back to choosing the right regression analysis methods and link functions in methods section.

ideological ordering closer together should therefore be more likely to sponsor together. The basic assumption of most ideological orderings is that they are utility functions. This means that the further away a proposal (or another MEP) is from the position of a MEP, the lower the value (utility) is of sponsoring that proposal (see, for example, Poole, 2005, p. 48).

However, an ordering of parties or MEPs on one single dimension (such as the ubiquitous left-right) that subsumes all relevant and salient issues, is something that is hotly debated in the literature (e.g. Benoit and Laver, 2006; Budge, Robertson, and Hearl, 1987). A multidimensional ordering of MEPs seems especially welcome since some proposals are economic in nature (then an economic left-right ordering seems appropriate), while other topics might deal with more or less integration into the European Union (then a pro/anti Europe ordering seems appropriate). Therefore, when I speak about ideological distance, multiple dimensions will be considered.

Bringing this together gives us a single hypothesis on *Ideological Proximity*:

H1: Ideological Proximity Hypothesis: Two MEPs who are ideologically closer will be more likely to sponsor together more than two MEPs who are ideologically further apart.

2.4.2 Territorial Lines of Conflict

Hix, Noury, and Roland (2007, p. 4) find no important national dimension in terms of the voting behaviour of MEPs, something these authors ascribe to the European Union's system of devolution of powers in a federal-like structure which allows decision making relevant to the respective levels of government (national, European) to stay at that level of government. As noted in the section on limitations of roll-call analyses, however, this finding might be the result of a bias in the selection (and the availability) of

the data; especially when contrasting this argument with that of Farrell and Scully (2007, p. 105), suggesting that national electorates are seen by MEPs as more important than European partygroups. There are a number of reasons why MEPs might decide to 'go national' when picking cosponsors for resolutions. It could be that MEPs use cosponsorship as a signal towards voters, other MEPs or partygroups; however, a much simpler explanation would be that MEPs sponsor together with those colleagues that speak the same language or have a similar political style. For most MEPs, this means picking someone with the same nationality. This leads to the hypothesis *Nationality*:

H2: Nationality Hypothesis: Two MEPs who are from the same European member state will be more likely to sponsor together more than two MEPs who are not from the same member state.

Nationality is obviously not a magical device that makes MEPs operate in a certain way. As suggested above, it could be that it works through *simply knowing* your colleagues, or speaking the same (or a similar) language. The chances of knowing each other increase when the distance between the two member states of the MEPs decrease. These insights lead to the hypothesis *Geographical Distance*.

H3: Geographical Distance Hypothesis: Two MEPs that are from member states that are physically located closer by will be more likely to sponsor together than two MEPs who come from member states that are further apart.

Territory does not necessarily equate with national borders. MEPs from a specific group of countries might work together often, while not with countries outside that group. Groups can be drawn in the European Union in an almost infinite number of constellations.² One reason why MEPs might be work-

²Unfortunately, the limits posed upon this paper make it impossible to explore other groupings of countries, such as former-Communist countries versus non-Communist countries. In this paper I have tried to select those groups

ing together more frequently is because they have done so before. Countries that have been in the EU for a longer time might have created supporting networks of cooperation between member states. The founding EU 6 countries have known each other longest, so the chances of MEPs from those countries working together are highest. This leads to the hypothesis *Early Joiners*.

H4: Early Joiners Hypothesis: Two MEPs who are both from EU 6 countries will be more likely to sponsor together more than two MEPs who are not both from EU 6 countries.

The financial and economic crisis of 2008 weighs heavily on Europe. A number of European member states have been forced to cut down public spending, and, at the same time, the more affluent member states are asked to (partially) pay for the insolvable debts of the less-well-off member states. As a consequence, those latter states demand unprecedented powers over the national budgets of the former states, leading some scholars to argue that the nation-state is under "assault" (e.g. Baudet, 2012, p. 81). Therefore, politicians might very well opt for less cooperation in party families and more in national or regional groups: MEPs from one member-state voting as a block against MEPs of another member-state; or, of MEPs from more affluent European regions versus MEPs from the poorer regions. The academic literature seems to support this story: Claessens (2009, p. 263) speaks of "fiscal nationalism" when he describes state responses to the crisis. The economic crisis of 2008 hit Greece, Ireland, Italy, Portugal, and Spain hard, very derogatorily subsumed under the acronym PIIGS.³ This

that seem likely to have the highest chance of significantly sponsoring more together.

³See, however, Quiggin (2012, p. 229), writing about the PIIGS: "The real problem came when this analysis was extended to the rest of the heavily indebted periphery – commonly referred to in such accounts as the PIGS (Portugal, Italy, Greece, and Spain) group. Ireland was sometimes thrown in as a second 'I'. This was unfair and inaccurate, particularly as regards Spain and Ireland, which had been running budget surpluses in the years leading up to the crisis." [...THUS WE IGNORE QUIGGIN]

might create incentives for MEPs who are both from PIIGS countries to work together.

There are a number of possible causal explanations why MEPs from hard-hit countries would work together. They could simply try to form a block against the richer countries, either out of policy preferences (forming a block to prevent measures impeding their economies even further), or out of newfound solidarity. The crisis could thus prompt a culture of solidarity in which the MEPs work together, not necessarily because they agree on exact policy terms, but because they share the same problems. This leads to the hypothesis *Economic Crisis Solidarity*.

H5: 2008 Economic Crisis Solidarity Hypothesis: Two MEPs who both come from PIIGS countries (Greece, Ireland, Italy, Portugal, or Spain) will sponsor together more *after* the 2008 economic crisis than two MEPs from that same set of countries *before* the 2008 economic crisis.

Not only the hard-hit countries might see more (or less) cooperation, also all Eurozone countries might. The creation of a banking union and the mere consequences of the economic crisis stimulate MEPs from the Eurozone countries to work together more – more in comparison to non-Eurozone MEPs and more in comparison over time. This leads to the hypothesis *Both in Eurozone*.

H6: Both in Eurozone: Two MEPs who are both from countries in the Eurozone will sponsor together more than MEPs who are not both from Eurozone countries.

2.4.3 Mixed: principals & agents

Next to purely ideological and purely territorial lines of conflict, there are a number of mixed explanations of two MEPs sponsoring together. Consider MEPs that are more likely to sponsor together because they are in the same European party group: is this a case of ideology (they are often ideologically positioned

closer together than two MEPs who are not both from the same party), or of some other effect such as the partygroup exerting influence on two MEPs to sponsor together? Or, it could be that sponsoring together more while being in the same partygroup is a mixed effect of knowing each other *and* being ideologically close. The idea that partygroups act as principals towards its MEPs as agents is propagated by Hix (2002): he argues that MEPs are under the influence of (at least) two principals: the partygroup, for positions of power, and the national party for nomination at election time. Although the exact causal mechanism is something to investigate further, there are thus good reasons to assume that two MEPs from the same partygroup would sponsor together more often, than two MEPs who are in different partygroups. This leads to the hypothesis *Same Partygroup*.

H7: Same Partygroup Hypothesis: Two MEPs who share the same partygroup will sponsor together more than two MEPs who do not share the same partygroup.

A second mixed option is that of the same national party. National parties are important because they are necessary for nomination, without a national party, a MEP cannot be placed on the voting ballot. National parties might stimulate that their MEPs cooperate more - it might increase the bargaining power of the national party versus the European partygroup, or versus other national parties – within or outside of the partygroup. Another effect can be that which I noted earlier on in the discussion on territorial lines of conflict. Two MEPs from the same country share the same political culture (and the same political socialisation process), and will know each other for a longer time than most MEPs that are not nominated by the same national party; furthermore, since they are from the same national party, they are ideology-wise probably also closer by than two MEPs who are not from the same national party. This leads to the hypothesis *Same National Party*.

H8: Same National Party Hypothesis: Two MEPs who are both nominated by the same national parties will sponsor together more than MEPs who are nominated by different national parties.

A final mixed option is that of shared committees. With the number of parliamentarians, and the sheer amount of work coming at them across a wide range of topics, specialisation is key to making the work load manageable. This specialisation will therefore probably lead to two MEPs who share one or more committee to propose together more often. For the Dutch parliament, Louwse and Otjes (2013) find exactly this specialisation effect. At one end, committee-based cosponsoring can be seen as expressing an ideological position: partygroups are probably likely to select and to invest costly time in those committees that are relevant for their constituents. A green party will probably select those committees and invest a good deal of time in them, if they are about environmental issues. Since all partygroups will work on this basis, some ideological convergence will be happen in the selection of candidates for a particular committees – thus these MEPs, for ideological reasons, might cooperate more. However, since most partygroups send MEPs to most committees, this effect is probably small. This suggests that when MEPs cooperate because they share one or more committee, this truly is an effect of specialisation rather than ideology. This leads to the hypothesis *Sharing Committees*.

H9: Sharing Committees Hypothesis: Two MEPs who share more committees will sponsor together more than two MEPs who share less, or no, committees.

The next section will discuss the data sources and provide an overview of the statistics for all of the variables.

3 Data

The data used for the analysis of cosponsorship is that of all publicly available resolutions on the website of the European Parliament. The data ranges from 1999 (start fifth EP term) up to June 6, 2013 (midway seventh EP term). A special computer program has been developed, first, to extract all the resolutions from the Parliament's website, and second, to interpret the documents so that they are uniformly coded into a dataset. Finally, a third module extracts the sponsors from the raw text of the resolution. This module uses a coarse matching technique to allow for spelling differences (and mistakes on the part of the Parliament's archival service). To ensure coding reliability, the programme gives an indication of the expected number of sponsors (based on word counts), and gives a matching reliability score. This latter measure can be seen as a confidence interval for coding names which are not exactly match (e.g., "Michels" instead of "Mitchels"). All unreliable cases were hand-coded (around 90 names on about 40 proposals). A final check consisted of randomly selecting a sample of resolutions and comparing human interpretation with that of the computer.

The computer program used for the extraction of the data has specifically for this paper been developed by the author. It uses Perl-compatible regular expression ("preg") to extract information from the raw HTML files, which is then entered into a PostgreSQL database. The name-matching algorithms used are the Trigram and Unaccent modules ("pg_trgm", "unaccent"), and for distance calculation the database uses the extension Earth Distance (which uses the Great Circle Distance equations to calculate the distance between the capitals of the member states of any two MEPs; modules "cube" and "earthdistance"). The data will be released upon publication of this paper via the author's website, under a Creative Commons license.⁴

⁴See <http://www.harmon.net/>.

3.1 The selection of resolutions

The European Parliament operates under different rules of procedure (following, for example, treaty changes or the Union's enlargement). Some resolutions are inherently useless for cosponsorship analysis. Examples of such useless resolutions are technical resolutions forming a new committee, or resolutions which are proposed by a committee (without explicitly mentioning the names of MEPs). Such resolutions are not included in the creation of the dyadic cosponsorship dataset. Also, since the composition of the EP changes drastically after elections, the most relevant patterns will be found between MEPs in one single EP term.⁵

The resulting data sets are big. Since we are interested in patterns of cosponsorship (and not of sponsorship), the dataset (one for each EP term) consists of dyadic relationships. For each combination of two MEPs, the following data is available: the total number of proposals sponsored by the first MEP, the number of these proposals which are also sponsored by the second MEP, a collection of dummy variables (e.g., same country, same partygroup, same national party), and a number of interval-ratio independent variables (e.g., the distance between the left-right positions of the MEPs, the number of committees in which both MEPs take part).

3.2 Operationalisation of the dependent variable

The dependent variable for most analyses will be the proportion of resolutions of the first MEP that are also sponsored by the second MEP.⁶ The logistic re-

⁵Note, though, that an analysis of the persistence of cooperation between incumbent MEPs would also be interesting, for example to discover long-term socialisation effects (unfortunately, this is out of the scope of this paper).

⁶An example might be of help. Consider the following fictitious dyad: the first MEP is Mrs. Johnson (who has sponsored a total of 160 bills), the second MEP is Mr. Christian (who was on a bill together with Mrs. Johnson for 20 times). The proportion is thus 20/160, or 12.5%. It is important to understand that the (reverse) proportion, that of Mr. Christian to Mrs. Johnson, is not necessarily

Table 1: Overview of the dependent variables

| <i>Dependent variable</i> | <i>Statistic</i> | EP 5 | EP 6 | EP 7 * |
|--------------------------------|--------------------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| Count cosponsoring | mean | 0,1122 | 0,1572 | 0,0992 |
| | <i>standard deviation</i> | <i>(0,8384)</i> | <i>(1,4546)</i> | <i>(1,1766)</i> |
| | % of MEPs cosponsoring at least once | 5,30% | 5,32% | 4,10% |
| | mean when cosponsoring at least once | 2,1164 | 2,9531 | 2,4215 |
| | <i>standard deviation</i> | <i>(3,0027)</i> | <i>(5,6128)</i> | <i>(5,3072)</i> |
| Proportion cosponsoring | mean | 0,0090 | 0,0084 | 0,0122 |
| | <i>standard deviation</i> | <i>(0,0624)</i> | <i>(0,0608)</i> | <i>(0,0828)</i> |

For EP 7, the data on cosponsorship is up to June 7, 2013.

Table 2: Example of the dyadic data

| <i>Dyad (MEP 1 - MEP 2)</i> | <i>proportion cosponsoring</i> | <i>same country</i> | <i>same partygroup</i> | <i>L-R distance</i> |
|------------------------------|--------------------------------|---------------------|------------------------|---------------------|
| Brie - Adamou | 6 / 114 | no | yes | 1,22 |
| Brie - Alvaro | 3 / 114 | yes | no | 4,91 |
| Anastase - Zimmerling | 0 / 3 | no | yes | 0,86 |
| <i>(etc.)</i> | .. | .. | .. | .. |

The data are just for illustratory purposes. Proportion cosponsoring consists of the number of resolutions signed by both MEP 1 and MEP 2, divided by the total number of resolutions signed by MEP 1.

gression uses a dummy variable, which is coded as 1 when the two MEPs in the dyad have ever co-sponsored (one or more) proposals together. For the binomial regression analysis, the dependent variable is an odds ratio vector, consisting of the number of proposals sponsored together to the total number of proposals of the first MEP which are *not* sponsored by the second MEP. In the respective sections, I will discuss the dependent variables a bit more.

3.3 Operationalisation of the independent variables

For the independent variables, a combination of self-coding and external sources have been used. For the ideological distance, the positions for MEPs are coded as follows. First, the database created by Döring and Manow (2012) has been imported, by linking the MEPs national party's position on the left-right, state-market, liberty-authority, and pro-anti EU integration to the each MEP. This allows

the same. It could very well be that Mr. Christian has proposed much more than Mrs. Johnson – leading to a lower proportion. See table 2 for a more advanced example.

a comparatively fine-grained positioning of MEPs, even within one single European partygroup (obviously, however, not within each national party). The absolute difference between the position of the first and the second MEP is calculated, giving the closeness of the two MEPs. Because of the high number of (small) national parties, however, time-series data on the position of each party is not readily available. Therefore, the parties' ideological scores are taken from the year 2006 (or as close to this year as possible).⁷ The dummy variable same country, same partygroup, same national party, and same committee are based on my own calculations, using a number of sources: my own coding, the website of the European Parliament (EP 7 from mid-2012 onwards), the data of Hix, Noury, and Roland (2007) (some information for EP 6), Hoyland, Sircar, and Hix (2009) (information on EP 1-5, some information on EP 6 and 7). Table 3 provides an overview

⁷For parties established after 2006, the first year for which position data is available is selected. I realise that treating parties as having fixed positions is suboptimal. However, the results in practice will probably not be affected greatly: a move to the right by a right-wing party will be balanced by a move to the left by a left-wing party.

Table 3: Overview of independent indicators

| <i>hypothesis</i> | <i>operationalisation</i> | <i>data source</i> | <i>range</i> |
|------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------|--------------|
| Ideological proximity | left-right, state-market, liberty-authority, anti/pro EU | Döring and Manow (2012) | 1 - 10 |
| Nationality | names member states match | own comparison | 0 or 1 |
| Geographical distance | distance between capitals | own calculation | 0 - ∞ |
| Political culture | political-cultural region match | own assertion | 0 or 1 |
| Early joiners | Both in EU 6/9/10/12/15/25/27 | own comparison | 0 or 1 |
| Same partygroup | partygroups' unique IDs match | own comparison | 0 or 1 |
| Same national party | national parties' unique IDs match | own comparison | 0 or 1 |
| Committees shared | count committees' unique IDs shared | own calculation | 0 - ∞ |
| Economic crisis | both names member states is in PIIGS | own comparison | 0 or 1 |

of the dependent variables per hypothesis.

3.4 An overview of the data

Table 4 provides an interview of the data. What is immediately clear from this table is that a lot of MEPs have never sponsored together; only about five percent of all the combinations of two MEPs have ever (during the parliamentary term) sponsored a proposal together. Combining this information with table 4 on the number of resolutions, tells us that on average, each MEP sponsors about ten proposals. This leads us to expect that MEPs are very selective in the decision with whom to cosponsor (and it is my theory that this decision is far from random, as outlined in the section on the hypotheses). What is more is that the standard deviation of sponsoring at least once together is quite high, this is probably an effect of the fact that some MEPs hardly sponsor any proposals at all. This observation is backed up by the standard deviation of the average number of useful resolutions signed per MEP.

4 Methods

To answer the hypotheses stated in the preceding sections, two types of analyses will be carried out. Since about 95% of the MEPs, on average, have never worked together, predicting *when* MEPs work together is interesting. A dichotomous variable (has

worked together during EP term / has not worked together) allows for a logistic regression analysis. The central question here is *what are the predictors for cosponsoring a proposal?*

The data, however, is richer and thus allows for a more precise estimation. Linear regression analysis is the method of choice, yet ordinary least squares regression would yield unreliable results because of the type of and distribution of the data. The dyadic cosponsorship proportion (by definition) cannot be normally distributed; instead, the distribution approaches a (negative) binomial distribution. Therefore, I will employ regression analysis for such a distribution. The central question here is *why do some MEPs cooperate more than others?*

5 Results

This section provides the results of two separate analyses, answering two distinct questions. First, why do MEPs opt to work together in the first place? Is it because of ideological motivations (i.e., agreeing on policy), or is it because of national or regional motivations (e.g., because of knowing other MEPs from your member state, or because of defending your national interests)? Second, some MEPs work together often while others do so once or twice. What explains working together more?

Table 4: Overview of the data: general statistics

| <i>Category</i> | <i>Statistic</i> | EP 5 | EP 6 | EP 7 * |
|-------------------------|--------------------------------------------------|-------------|-------------|---------------|
| MEPs | total | 696 | 941 | 824 |
| Countries | total | 15 | 27 | 27 |
| Committees | total | 40 | 26 | 22 |
| | average # per MEP | 4.94 | 3.60 | 2.65 |
| | std. dev. | (2.34) | (1.48) | (.85) |
| Delegations | total | 73 | 49 | 40 |
| | average # per MEP | 3.41 | 3.30 | 2.56 |
| | std. dev. | (2.21) | (1.72) | (.85) |
| National parties | total | 167 | 227 | 232 |
| | average size in seats | 4.17 | 4.15 | 3.55 |
| | std. dev. | (6.51) | (5.96) | (5.0) |
| Partygroups | total | 10 | 10 | 8 |
| | average size in seats | 102.1 | 127.4 | 105.3 |
| | std. dev. | (97.2) | (118.8) | (95.2) |
| Resolutions | total | 1874 | 2769 | 2239 |
| | # useful for cosponsorship analysis | 1492 | 2375 | 1564 |
| | total signatories | 9201 | 13728 | 7995 |
| | # signatories for useful resolutions | 6824 | 12841 | 7429 |
| | avg. number of signatories per useful resolution | 4.57 | 5.41 | 4.75 |
| | | (4.48) | (5.9) | (5.01) |
| | avg. number of useful resolutions signed per MEP | 9.80 | 13.65 | 9.02 |
| | | (17.67) | (32.83) | (17.77) |
| Dyads | number of observations | 483720 | 884540 | 678152 |

For EP 7, the data on MEPs and resolutions is up to June 7, 2013; the data on committees and delegations is up to November 26, 2011.

5.1 Working together

The results of the logistic regression for the dependent variable *has worked together at least once* are shown in table 5. A number of things are interesting from this table: the pseudo- R^2 is rather low for the first two terms of the European Parliament, but suddenly increases in the last EP, apparently caused by the sudden influence of the variable *same party-group*. The R^2 should be interpreted with great care, if only because any R^2 is not too valuable in terms of the information it provides for the model fit, and in this particular case because this is not an OLS but a logistic regression, so we deal here with a pseudo- R^2 , complicating things even further. Garry King gives prudent advice:

A high R^2 is considered to be proof that the correct model has been specified or that the theory being tested is correct. A higher R^2 in one model is taken to mean that that model is better. All these interpretations are wrong. R^2 is a measure of the spread of points around a regression line, and it is a poor measure of even that (...) (1986, p. 676)

The next page contains table 5, showing the results for the logistic regression analysis.

5.1.1 The decline of ideology?

Even more interesting than the effect of being in the same partygroup is the role of ideology – or rather, the lack of the role of ideology. All three measures of ideological proximity (i.e., how close two MEPs are on an ideological ordering of the national parties that nominated them) are significant and pointing in the right direction in the first EP term under investigation (EP 5: 1999-2004): a one-point increase of the distance between two legislators translates into a 5 percent lower chance of ever sponsoring together. With the exception of the distance on the anti-pro European integration dimension, however, the effects become more sporadic in the latter two

parliamentary terms. The direction of the left-right distance indicator suddenly becomes positive: this means that the further apart two legislators are, the higher the chances of working together; the most likely explanation for this is a technical one, since ideological distance, same partygroup, and same national party are slightly correlated. Also, the left-right distance is no longer significant for the last EP term. A prediction simulation, in which a hypothetical pair of two MEPs who are at the same ideological point (with a distance of 0) on all three dimensions is compared with a pair of two MEPs who are in all respects albeit ideological distance the same (with a distance of the theoretical maximum of 10 points on all three ideology indicators), confirms this pattern.⁸ For the last EP, the mean chance of ever sponsoring together increases from 2.222 to 2.321 percent; however, this result is not significant (for $p < 0.05$). The effect of a pair of MEPs being theoretically furthest apart is significant for the fifth and sixth EP, with the chances of sponsoring together for the fifth EP lowering from 5.3 to 3.634%; and for the sixth EP, the chances of sponsoring together lower from 6.311 to 2.059%. These results are robust, even when controlling for within-country variance.⁹

The figures noted above paint an interesting picture for the role of ideology in the decision to cosponsor together. Ideology appears to be a rather large factor in the decision to cosponsor together, but only for the fifth and sixth EP terms. Ideology appears to become less relevant over the EP terms: the chances of working together are less or not affected for the sixth and seventh EP, in contrast to the fifth. My ideology hypothesis can thus simultaneously be confirmed for EP 5 and 6, but rejected for EP 7.

⁸Note that all simulation prediction runs were conducted in R 2.15.2 with the package *Zelig* (version 3.5.4). Attention is spent to make sure that the expected values, the first difference in expected values, and the risk plots take on the shape of a normal distribution.

⁹This means that the percentages, and more importantly, the changes therein, are about the same both when the pair of MEPs are from the same country, as for pairs of MEPs of two different countries.

5.1.2 Territorial lines matter (now more)

So far for the results when predicting working together through ideological proximity. Another, somewhat competing, set of explanatory factors relates to territory, or, in other words: *where you stand depends on where you sit*, to coin Miles' (1978) Law.

Judging from table 5, MEPs from the same country have a much higher chance of working together, and the further apart the two capitals of the member states of the MEPs are, the lower the chances of working together. Rather unexpectedly, MEPs who both come from the founding father countries of the EU (the 'EU 6'), have a lower chance of working together. Simulation prediction shows that the chances of working together when from the same country increase significantly for all EP terms: from 4.723 percent (when not from the same country) to 5.787 percent (when from the same country), for EP 5; from 4.667 to 6.868 percent, for EP 6; and finally, from 2.148 to 3.825 percent, for EP 7. The last few numbers can be summarised as: the country origins of MEPs matter, and increasingly do so – the hypothesis is therefore accepted. Note that I will discuss the relative changes down below.

The geographical distance hypothesis suggests that territory in the very literal sense of the word might matter. When MEPs are from countries that are geographically close, they should thus have a higher chance of working together. Note that in table 5 the effect sizes are rounded off. This does not mean that the effect is necessarily small: the small coefficients are mostly an effect of the measurement of geographical distance (in kilometres). A one-kilometre increase obviously does not affect the chances of cooperating highly; yet a three thousand kilometre increase might. Another set of prediction simulations was run, contrasting those who are geographically at the same point (distance of 0 kilometre)¹⁰ with

those who are at the empirical maximum distance of about 3300 kilometres.¹¹ That is, those latter groups are from MEPs that have capitals furthest apart. The results of the simulation collaborate this story, by showing significant results for all three EP terms: for EP 5, the chances of sponsoring together drop from 6.474 to 2.688 percent; for EP 6 from 5.45 to 3.817 percent; and finally for EP 7, from 2.317 to 2.095 percent. Apparently, geographical distance becomes less of a factor over different EP terms, yet we can accept the hypothesis.

The final hypothesis on territorial explanations of sponsoring together is the *Early Joiners Hypothesis*. I have argued that working together might be explained through being both in the founding EU countries. These countries, in all likelihood, have the strongest ties because of having worked together for a long time (and all having agreed to form something new, instead of 'just' joining the already existing institutions of the European Union). The negative coefficients, however, suggest otherwise – namely exactly the opposite effect. When MEPs both come from one of the EU 6 countries, they have a lower chance of working together. The prediction simulation turns out that this effect is significant for all three EP terms: from 4.943 to 4.514 percent for EP 5; from 4.943 to 4.052 percent, for EP 6; and for EP 7, from 2.27 to 2.032 percent. The hypothesis is thus rejected.

however, is not the case: the variable *same country* is kept constant by the simulation model. Simulations run with hypothetical cases, after all.

¹¹Note that the empirical maximum distance increases between EP 5 and EP 6 to about 3700 kilometres, because of the European Union's enlargement.

¹⁰One might think that because of setting a distance of 0 kilometres, I introduce a problem of comparing those who are from the same country with those who are not. This,

Table 5: Logistic regression: model & results

| <i>Predictor</i> | EP 5 | | | | EP 6 | | | | EP 7 * | | | |
|----------------------------------------------|-------------|--------|--------|-----|-------------|--------|--------|-----|---------------|--------|--------|-----|
| | B | SE | Exp(B) | | B | SE | Exp(B) | | B | SE | Exp(B) | |
| <i>(Intercept)</i> | -2.7310 | 0.0279 | 0.065 | *** | -3.0220 | 0.0187 | 0.049 | *** | -4.5090 | 0.0312 | 0.011 | *** |
| Left-right distance (0-10) | -0.0391 | 0.0066 | 0.962 | *** | 0.0100 | 0.0041 | 1.010 | * | 0.0084 | 0.0072 | 1.008 | |
| Liberty-authority distance (0-10) | -0.0550 | 0.0061 | 0.946 | *** | -0.0019 | 0.0034 | 0.998 | | 0.0173 | 0.0053 | 1.017 | ** |
| Anti-pro EU distance (0-10) | -0.0224 | 0.0036 | 0.978 | *** | -0.0476 | 0.0024 | 0.954 | *** | -0.0215 | 0.0042 | 0.979 | *** |
| Geographical distance (KM) | -0.0003 | 0.0000 | 1.000 | *** | -0.0001 | 0.0000 | 1.000 | *** | 0.0000 | 0.0000 | 1.000 | ** |
| Same country (no/yes) | 0.2163 | 0.0281 | 1.241 | *** | 0.4102 | 0.0227 | 1.507 | *** | 0.5943 | 0.0339 | 1.812 | *** |
| Both in Eurozone (no/yes) | 0.1997 | 0.0186 | 1.221 | *** | 0.2832 | 0.0129 | 1.327 | *** | -0.0449 | 0.0166 | 0.956 | ** |
| Both from EU 6 countries (no/yes) | -0.0944 | 0.0200 | 0.910 | *** | -0.2078 | 0.0174 | 0.812 | *** | -0.1137 | 0.0232 | 0.892 | *** |
| Both from same partygroup (no/yes) | 0.1653 | 0.0194 | 1.180 | *** | -0.0098 | 0.0142 | 0.990 | | 2.4670 | 0.0211 | 11.789 | *** |
| Both from same national party (no/yes) | -0.0078 | 0.0423 | 0.992 | | 0.1353 | 0.0387 | 1.145 | *** | 0.1218 | 0.0417 | 1.130 | ** |
| Number of committees shared | 0.2255 | 0.0052 | 1.253 | *** | 0.2891 | 0.0038 | 1.335 | *** | 0.5169 | 0.0089 | 1.677 | *** |
| <i>Adj. McFadden's Pseudo- R²</i> | 0.024 | | | | 0.023 | | | | 0.174 | | | |

*Significance: *** p < 0.001; ** p < 0.01; * p < 0.05. For EP 7, the data on cosponsorship is up to June 7, 2013.*

The 2008 financial and economic crisis: sudden solidarity?

The results for the Eurozone hypothesis indicate that working together between the MEPs from the Eurozone countries is lower for the last EP term in comparison with the two before. There are seemingly good reasons for MEPs to cooperate less: when your nation's political leader is portrayed as Hitler in demonstrations in another European country (as was the case for German Chancellor Angela Merkel in a demonstration in Portugal, see for example De Volkskrant, 2012), you might want to skip that country's MEPs when looking for cosponsors for your proposal.

However, the crisis of the Euro and in the Eurozone might also stimulate countries to work together. Especially MEPs from those countries that were hardest hit, needing emergency loans from the IMF or European institutions, might want to work together. Either out of sheer solidarity, or out of the need to form a block against other countries to prevent European policy that affects the hard-hit countries gravely. This, in short, is the *2008 Economic Crisis Solidarity Hypothesis*. To test this hypothesis, a second set of logistic regression analyses have been run with all the indicators of table 5, but now augmented with the variable *Both come from PIIGS countries*. The (all-significant) exponent-B figures range from 1.339 for EP 5, 1.079 for EP 6, to 0.851 for the last EP, suggesting that cooperation between these countries is on a steady decline in the period 1999-2013. The prediction simulation confirms this: chances of cooperating for EP 5 increase from 4.647 to 6.129 percent, for EP 6 from 4.771 to 5.125 percent, and for EP 7 down from 2.252 to 1.924 percent.

These results suggest that cooperation suffers under economic stress. Instead of solidarity, countries opt to work less together. This rejects my solidarity hypothesis.

5.1.3 Mixed predictors: partygroup membership

Four of the hypotheses are of a mixed type: not purely ideology, but also not purely territorial dividing lines. The *same partygroup hypothesis* expresses an element of ideology (because being in a partygroup together signals agreement on at least some basic political tenants of policy), yet a left-leaning Christian Democrat (EPP) might, on ideological terms, be much closer to a member of the European Socialist group (PES). Furthermore, being in a partygroup together *and* sponsoring together might just be an effect of knowing each other – hardly an ideological motivation. A minor element of territory is at work in some partygroups as well – broad and large groups such as the Socialists or Christian Democrats have members from most of the member states, while smaller groups such as the Greens have members from a lower number of member states (and those member states with Green MEPs are not randomly distributed over Europe: they are mainly in Western Europe). The *same national party* hypothesis is both ideological, territorial, and stemming from socialisation: to begin with the latter, MEPs from the same national party obviously have a good chance of knowing each other well. Being in the same national party means that you are from the member state; while the ideological spread between the national party's members should be lower than the spread among the more heterogeneous partygroups. The *sharing committees* hypothesis, as discussed in the previous section, has a minor element of ideology and no clear element of territory in it; yet working together more might just be the result of knowing each other, or of specialisation. Finally, the *both in Eurozone* hypothesis suggests that Eurozone members have a common interest because of sharing a currency.

First up is the same partygroup hypothesis. Looking at table 5 paints a somewhat hard-to-interpret picture. Whereas being together in a partygroup increases the chances of two MEPs to work together for the fifth (from 4.6232 to 5.408 percent) and sev-

enth EP (from 1.259 to 13.06 percent), it does not significantly do so in the sixth EP (down from 4.8 to 4.756 percent, still not significant). The enormous increase in the chances of working together is also the likely reason for the increase in the pseudo- R^2 of the logit model for the seventh EP. What explains this sudden increase is as of yet unknown: further research is needed to explain this big increase. The hypothesis is therefore accepted for the fifth and seventh EP, but rejected for the sixth.

The hypothesis on sharing the same national party does not significantly explain patterns of cosponsorship for the fifth EP, but does do so for the sixth and seventh EP. The chances of cooperation for the fifth EP decrease (from 4.821 to 4.779 percent, non-significant), and increase for the sixth EP (from 4.782 to 5.443 percent), as well as for the seventh EP (from 2.227 to 2.507 percent). This shows that sharing the same national party has an effect, but this effect is not significant for all three EP terms under investigation, nor can we speak of an increasing role over time of sharing the same national party for predicting cooperation in the Parliament. The hypothesis can thus be accepted for the last two EP terms, but not for the first.

Sharing committees has a significant effect in all three EP terms, and the increase in the exponent B values suggest that sharing committees increasingly heightens the chances of working together over time. A prediction simulation, comparing those who share no committees with those who share the lowest empirical maximum of all three EP terms, namely sharing nine committees, collaborates this story: where the chances of working together in the fifth EP increase from 4.051 to 24.323 percent, for the sixth EP from 4.053 to 36.242 percent, and for the seventh EP from 1.88 to 66.744 percent. These increases look very big (and they actually are), but do keep in mind that almost no pair of MEPs share nine committees: these percentages are the results from a simulation after all. See the interpretation of these figures in the concluding paragraph of this section for their meaning. In short, we can accept the hypothesis that

says that sharing committees has a positive effect on the chances of cooperating, and that over time the effect gets bigger: (sharing) committees appears to become more relevant for predicting cooperation in Parliament over time.

Table 5 suggests that two MEPs coming both from countries in the Eurozone have, significantly, a higher chance of working together for the fifth (from 4.278 to 5.172 percent) and sixth EP (from 4.334 to 5.674 percent), but actually have a lower chance of working together in the seventh EP (down from 2.274 to 2.175 percent). One could argue that this lowering in working together is a result of the strains put on countries during the economic crisis; leading to less cooperation. Yet, one could conversely argue that the strain put on these countries forces MEPs to work more together (since they have a clear common goal: saving the Eurozone or –at least– preventing economic turmoil as much as possible). I could have introduced these two explanations as hypotheses, however, I feel that more theoretical underpinning is necessary for this – which is out of the scope of this paper. *If* I had these hypotheses included, clearly, the former would win: namely that Eurozone MEPs now work less together. An interested scholar might want to work with these insights. One other explanation, namely that of the expansion of the Eurozone from the eleven initial countries in 1999 to seventeen in 2011, can on theoretical grounds be ruled out: if the expansion of the Eurozone with specific countries (for which cooperation with the existing members of the Eurozone might be lower for factors not directly related to the adoption of the Euro) were to be the explanatory factor, we would have seen the cooperation between Eurozone members drop in the sixth EP, compared with the fifth EP. This would be the case since most of these new adopts have adopted the Euro during the sixth EP term. There is no such drop, however. The hypothesis of cooperation because of shared membership in the Eurozone is therefore accepted for the fifth and sixth EP, but rejected for the seventh.

Table 6: Logistic regression: prediction simulation

| <i>Predictor</i> | EP 5 | | | EP 6 | | | EP 7 * | | |
|-------------------------|----------------|-------------|-------------|----------------|-------------|-------------|----------------|-------------|-------------|
| | <i>chances</i> | | | <i>chances</i> | | | <i>chances</i> | | |
| | <i>change</i> | <i>ref.</i> | <i>sim.</i> | <i>change</i> | <i>ref.</i> | <i>sim.</i> | <i>change</i> | <i>ref.</i> | <i>sim.</i> |
| Ideology prox.: 0/10 | -31% | 5.3 | 3.634 | -67% | 6.311 | 2.059 | +4% | 2.222 | 2.321 |
| D: Same country: 0/1 | +23% | 4.723 | 5.787 | +47% | 4.667 | 6.868 | +78% | 2.148 | 3.825 |
| Geogr. distance: 0/3300 | -58% | 6.474 | 2.688 | -30% | 5.45 | 3.817 | -10% | 2.317 | 2.095 |
| D: both EU6: 0/1 | -9% | 4.943 | 4.514 | -18% | 4.943 | 4.052 | -10% | 2.27 | 2.032 |
| D: same PG: 0/1 | +17% | 4.623 | 5.408 | -1% | 4.8 | 4.756 | +937% | 1.259 | 13.06 |
| D: same nat. party: 0/1 | -1% | 4.821 | 4.779 | +14% | 4.782 | 5.443 | +13% | 2.227 | 2.507 |
| Committees shared: 0/9 | +500% | 4.051 | 24.323 | +794% | 4.053 | 36.242 | +3450% | 1.88 | 66.744 |
| D: both Eurozone: 0/1 | +21% | 4.278 | 5.172 | +31% | 4.334 | 5.674 | -4% | 2.274 | 2.175 |
| D: both PIIGS: 0/1 | +32% | 4.647 | 6.129 | +7% | 4.771 | 5.125 | -15% | 2.252 | 1.924 |

The values after the indicators denote the values for the reference category and the test category, respectively. The column 'ref.' and 'sim.' give the chances of cosponsoring when, ceteris paribus, the independent variable listed is changed to the respective value; the column 'change' gives the percentage changes between the two. For EP 7, the data on cosponsorship is up to June 7, 2013.

5.1.4 Comparing changes in chances

If we want to say anything about the change over time of the impact for each of the independent variables, we should look at the change in chances. An example might help: say we want to know if the influence of ideology has changed between EP terms. What we know from the discussion in the preceding section is that for the fifth EP, the chances of working together are lower when the first MEP is as far apart from the second MEP as possible (i.e. they have an ideological distance of 10 points), when compared to two MEPs who are as close as possible as they can (i.e. an ideological distance of 0). The overall chance of working together drops from 5.3 to 3.6 percent. One could dismiss this as a small decrease (it is after all only 2.3 percentage points) – however, this equals a 31% lower chance of working together. The reason that the percentage point changes are so small is because cooperation is a rare act in Parliament. If we repeat the calculation trick for the sixth EP, we find that the chances decrease by 67%. This means that ideology now has a bigger effect on the average chance of working together than before.

Table 6 shows all the changes. It is important to understand that one can only compare horizontally (i.e. between EP terms for the same independent

variable, so not between independent variables – one should use table 5 for that). Furthermore, it is also important to understand that for all non-dummy variables, the simulation value is set to the theoretical or empirical maximum. Thus, for the variable *committees shared* for EP 7, the chances of working together increase enormously (by 3450 percent) – but this is only because the empirical maximum number of committees shared is nine. In practice, almost nobody shares nine committees. For this reason (and others) one should not compare independent variables from this table. What one can conclude, however, is that the number of committees shared increases the chances of sponsoring together when comparing EP terms over time. In other words: committees become much more important in predicting working together.

The main conclusions we can draw from table 6 are the following:

1. Ideology: Ideological proximity is a good explanatory factor for cooperation in the fifth and even more so in the sixth EP, yet does not explain significantly the cooperation in the seventh EP. This suggests that ideological has ceased to be an important factor in the decision to cosponsor together. When two or more au-

thors appear together on a resolution in the European Parliament, this is not because they are on ideological terms close to each other.

2. Territory: Territorial proximity significantly contributes to explaining patterns of cooperation in all of the investigated EP terms. Moreover, the chances of cooperating when from the same country increase quite considerably over time: apparently, MEPs revert to choosing a colleague from their same member states now more than before. At the same time, geographical distance explains less, meaning that if and when MEPs do cooperate across European borders, they do so irrespective of how far the country of the other MEP is located. The increase in the influence of sharing the same national party corroborates this story.
3. Partygroups: The pattern for cooperation with MEPs from the same partygroup is erratic. While the chances increase in EP 5, they decrease in EP 6; but only to increase very drastically in the seventh EP.
4. Committees: The influence of the number of shared committees becomes bigger over time. This suggests that, as Parliament gets bigger and/or it gets more tasks and responsibilities, MEPs specialise more.
5. Old Boys Network: Cooperation between the founding fathers of the EU, the original six countries that formed the Union's predecessor, is lower than between other EU 6 and non-EU 6 countries. If there is such a thing as a Europe of multiple speeds, there is apparently not one in which EU 6 countries form an inner group – or any group whatsoever.
6. Euro Crisis: The Eurocrisis appears to have a negative effect on cooperation across MEPs who are both from Eurozone countries. In the fifth and sixth EP, in essence those before the Eurocrisis of 2008, cooperation is on the increase; yet after the onset of the crisis, there actually

is less cooperation. The idea that there is a kind of solidarity between "PIIGS" countries, whether because out of pure solidarity or shared policy preferences, seems untenable. Chances of cooperation between MEPs of these five countries is positive, meaning that MEPs cooperate more, but this cooperation is on the decline and for the seventh EP, the chances of cooperation lower quite remarkably with 15 percent.

5.2 Why do some MEPs work *more* together?

The decision to cosponsor together at least once can be because of a relatively random factor, such as running into each other in the elevator. Such events are hard to capture in a (regression) model. Therefore, a more fine-grained analysis helps to uncover what factors influence the decision to cosponsor together more than once. If the same strong effects are found as in the previous logistic regression analyses, then this strengthens the arguments posed in the hypotheses. Predicting the number of occurrences of proposals sponsored together seems like a job for a simple ordinary least squares regression, however, such a model does not incorporate a number of problems when using the dyadic data. An OLS regression might predict values of less than zero (so that not only two MEPs have not worked together, but they have negatively worked together – nice in theory, impossible in practice), or values higher than one (so that the two MEPs have sponsored more proposals together than they have put signatures under all of their proposals, evidently also impossible). Furthermore, the inherent heteroskedastic nature of proportional data invalidates the assumptions on which OLS models rely.¹² A generalised linear binomial regression model, on the other hand, is specifically designed to work with this type of data (see for an excellent discussion of using binomial regression Crawley, 2007, pp. 569-91); since such a model uses a

¹²This is true because the variance near the two asymptotes (0;1) necessarily approximates, and at the extremes equals, zero.

Table 7: Binomial regression: changes in the number of resolutions cosponsored

| <i>predictor</i> | <i>range</i> | EP 5 | EP 6 | EP 7 * |
|-------------------------------|--------------|-------------|-------------|---------------|
| <i>(Intercept)</i> | 0 - 1 | -99% | -99% | -100% |
| Left-right distance | 0 - 10 | -3% | -1% | +1.76% |
| Liberty-authority distance | 0 - 10 | -5% | -1% | +.75% |
| Anti-pro EU distance | 0 - 10 | -2% | -4% | +1.60% |
| Geographical distance | 0 - ~3700 KM | -% | -% | -% |
| Same country | no/yes | +35.84% | +36.86% | +41.22% |
| Both in Eurozone | no/yes | +26.26% | +15.93% | (+1.96%) |
| Both from EU 6 countries | no/yes | -15% | -15% | -19% |
| Both from same partygroup | no/yes | +219.62% | +119.46% | +2952.50% |
| Both from same national party | no/yes | -21% | +45.71% | +70.64% |
| Number of committees shared | 0 - ~16 | +28.00% | +35.70% | +72.09% |

* For EP 7, the data is up to June 7, 2013.

The percentages denote the increase of the dependent variable for a one-unite increase of the independent variable. A value between brackets is not significant ($p < .05$).

logit link, the predictor estimates are in terms of the log of the dependent variable. The dependent variable is alike an odds ratio: the number of times two MEPs have cosponsored to the number of times they have not.¹³ Interpreting the unlogged estimators is in terms of the number of proposals cosponsored: the model automatically takes care of the variance in the total number of resolutions signed.

What can we conclude from table 8? For easy interpretation, I have provided table 7, in which the percentages are given: the percentages express the percent of resolutions cosponsored when the independent variable increases with one unit; for a dummy variable that equals to being from the same partygroup, country, etcetera. The conclusions drawn in the previous section (on the incidence of cosponsoring) more or less hold. A higher ideological distance significantly lowers the number of proposals sponsored together for MEPs in the fifth EP; but this effect flattens out in the sixth EP, and actually reverses in the seventh EP, in MEPs with a higher

ideological distance sponsor together more. One interesting observation is that the distance on the anti-pro European integration dimension for the sixth EP influences the number of proposals sponsored together quite strongly. This might be the result of the uprising of new populist parties just before and during this EP term (2004-2009). Being both from the same country still significantly and highly heightens the number of proposals sponsored together, while cooperation between MEPs from Eurozone member countries decreases steadily, and cooperation between MEPs from the founding EU 6 countries is quite steadily negatively affecting the number of proposals sponsored together. The most spectacular figures are for MEPs from the same partygroup: when two MEPs are from the same partygroup, they sponsor more together – a lot more. Also, the number of committees shared between the two MEPs steadily increases the number of proposals sponsored together. This, as noted in the previous section, seems to hint at the increasing importance of committees and thus specialisation.

¹³Another example might be of help. Consider the same fictitious dyad as before: the first MEP is Mrs. Johnson (who has sponsored a total of 160 bills), the second MEP is Mr. Christian (who was on a bill together with Mrs. Johnson for 20 times). The odds ratio is thus 20 to (160-20=140), or 1 to 7. In other words, for the twenty proposals cosponsored, the first MEP has 140 proposals written which are not sponsored by the second MEP.

Table 8: Binomial regression: model & results

| <i>Predictor</i> | EP 5 | | | | EP 6 | | | | EP 7 * | | | |
|----------------------------------------|-------------|--------|--------|-----|-------------|--------|--------|-----|---------------|--------|--------|------|
| | B | SE | Exp(B) | | B | SE | Exp(B) | | B | SE | Exp(B) | |
| Left-right distance (0-10) | -0.0337 | 0.0045 | 0.967 | *** | -0.0112 | 0.0024 | 0.989 | *** | 0.0175 | 0.0049 | 1.018 | *** |
| Liberty-authority distance (0-10) | -0.0489 | 0.0040 | 0.952 | *** | -0.0136 | 0.0021 | 0.986 | *** | 0.0075 | 0.0035 | 1.008 | * |
| Anti-pro EU distance (0-10) | -0.0249 | 0.0027 | 0.975 | *** | -0.0396 | 0.0016 | 0.961 | *** | 0.0159 | 0.0028 | 1.016 | *** |
| Geographical distance (KM) | -0.0002 | 0.0000 | 1.000 | *** | -0.0001 | 0.0000 | 1.000 | *** | -0.0001 | 0.0000 | 1.000 | *** |
| Same country (no/yes) | 0.3063 | 0.0196 | 1.358 | *** | 0.3138 | 0.0135 | 1.369 | *** | 0.3451 | 0.0213 | 1.412 | *** |
| Both in Eurozone (no/yes) | 0.2332 | 0.0130 | 1.263 | *** | 0.1478 | 0.0077 | 1.159 | *** | 0.0194 | 0.0108 | 1.020 | n.s. |
| Both from EU 6 countries (no/yes) | -0.1679 | 0.0135 | 0.845 | *** | -0.1656 | 0.0102 | 0.847 | *** | -0.2059 | 0.0149 | 0.814 | *** |
| Both from same partygroup (no/yes) | 1.1620 | 0.0123 | 3.196 | *** | 0.7860 | 0.0078 | 2.195 | *** | 3.4185 | 0.0154 | 30.525 | *** |
| Both from same national party (no/yes) | -0.2305 | 0.0276 | 0.794 | *** | 0.3764 | 0.0192 | 1.457 | *** | 0.5344 | 0.0239 | 1.706 | *** |
| Number of committees shared | 0.2469 | 0.0034 | 1.280 | *** | 0.3053 | 0.0020 | 1.357 | *** | 0.5428 | 0.0054 | 1.721 | *** |

*Significance: *** $p < 0.001$; ** $p < 0.01$; * $p < 0.05$. For EP 7, the data on cosponsorship is up to June 7, 2013.*

5.3 Between incidence and structural cooperation

It is important to grasp the difference between the two sets of analyses carried out. The first set consists of logistic regression analyses, predicting *any cosponsoring*, while the second set consists of binomial regression analyses, predicting the *number of proposals cosponsored*. A very large share of MEPs never cosponsor, and a second share sponsors only once; at the same time, when MEPs sponsor together, they do so a lot more than once. This suggests that there might be different mechanisms at work in the decision to cosponsor. For example, a partygroup might stimulate cosponsoring between its members – these members might do so once to satisfy their partygroup leadership, but decline to do so more often for various reasons (such as not being from the same member state, ideological distance, not sharing any committees). Such considerations validate the need for comparing two separate analyses.

In general, the differences between the incidence and the structural cooperation seem small. Some of the interesting differences can be found for the dummy variable *same country*. Whereas the logistic regression found quite a higher chance of cooperating, and this chance increases over the three EP terms under investigation, the effects for the structural cooperation are more stable. Yes, the number of proposals sponsored together is quite much higher when two MEPs are from the same country, but the increase in the importance of being from the same country increases much less. This suggests that MEPs incidentally sponsor together with their fellow countrymen more, but there are smaller changes over time as it comes to structural cooperation. The reverse holds for cooperation between two MEPs who share the same national party: they do not cooperate often, but when they do, they do so together now more often than before.

6 Discussion & Conclusions

Does cooperation between members of the European Parliament follow ideological or territorial lines? As always, a simple answer to this question does not exist. This paper has identified a number of interesting patterns and trends. It is most certainly not purely ideology that drives the decision to work together: "I agree with him thus I work with him" does not hold. "I am from the same country as she" appears to be an increasing factor in determining with whom a MEP cosponsors a resolution; at the same time geographical distance becomes less important. This seems contradictory but it does not have to be: although cooperation is now more across MEPs from the same country, when MEPs do cooperate across borders, it is less relevant that the MEP is from an adjacent country. To summarise: nationhood becomes more important, and ideology less so.

The most striking differences between when comparing MEPs across the last three EP terms is that committees, and even more so, partygroups, matter. Coming from the same partygroup greatly increases the chances and the number of times MEPs cooperate. At the same time, there is no evidence that there is such a thing as an inner group of countries (consisting of the group of founding EU 6 countries), moreover, the cooperation between MEPs from these countries is actually lower than between other MEPs.

The Eurocrisis appears to have an effect on how and with whom MEPs cooperate with each other. The countries hard hit by the financial and economic crisis of 2008 and onwards now cooperate (much) less than before the crisis; as is the case for cooperation within the Eurozone at large. European integration theorists, such as Haas (1958) argue that integration itself creates a new self-supporting core which attracts allegiance from its component members. My research suggests that this allegiance is less enduring than Haas predicted. It could be that extreme exogenous shocks, such as the 2008 crisis, create serious

doubts on how solid the allegiance of MEPs toward the EU is.

Does it in itself matter that ideology becomes less important and national borders become more important? There are two levels at which this question can be answered. From a scientific point of view, the (renewed?) importance of nationhood brings about difficult questions for integration theorists working from a functionalist spill-over perspective. It could be that the Eurocrisis also brings about a new period of Euro sclerosis. Such an observation would stretch, if now surpass, the findings of this paper – however, this paper does point out to some important problems of true European integration. The second level at which this question can be answered – albeit without an answer in this paper: is it good that the European Parliament appears to operate along national borders, instead of along a single European border?

The European Union now more than ever has to deal with serious challenges. The financial and economic crisis is one of them; a number of scholars observe a renewed surge of nationalism in the way that member states deal with economic hardship. Bernitz and Ringe (2010), for example, discuss and warn for the nationalistic economic policies which are designed to favour national economies, rather than the (or an) European economy. Such policies traverse through the legislative institutions of the European Union, as this paper has demonstrated. Since economic integration is at the core of the European project, a return to national policies will be a threat for the entire project, as Bernitz and Ringe, among others such as Claessens (2009), observe. Schiek (2012) sees the crisis as a critical juncture for European integration. This paper provides some (admittedly: provisional) evidence for this theory. The way in which MEPs operate indeed has changed remarkably. However, Europe underwent multiple crises – and has survived by integrating even further as Kühnhardt (2011) observes in his discussion on the effects of major crises on European integration (a solution also proposed by a number of other economists, such as Nowotny,

Mooslechner, and Ritzberger-Grünwald, 2011). One only has to think of the Empty Chair crisis in 1965, the British rebate in 1984, the economic crisis of the late 1980s, and more recent, the crises invoked by the rejection of the European Constitution mid-2000 by popular referenda in France and The Netherlands. Yet, the European project is still here, so the question is how serious a threat the current economic crisis is. A path for further research on this project is to investigate how MEPs behaved before, during, and after the other crises mentioned. Is a decrease of ideology and an increase of national lines of conflict a common reaction to crises, to surge at a point and to reverse after the end of a crisis? If it is not, then the return to national lines of conflict might signal important problems for Europe as a union. As Kühnhardt (2011) argues, the common response to European crises is more integration, which is a challenge for politicians considering the rise of Euroscepticism among the electorates (Arató and Kaniok, 2009; Hooghe and Marks, 2007). Furthermore, if not even those who are strongly socialised in European institutions (cf. Haas, 1958) promote integration and behave in unison, then who would?

6.1 Further research

There are a number of points for further research. One obvious (and admittedly: somewhat cheap) suggestion is to increase the time span of this research by including all resolutions from the first EP term onwards. This allows for more variation over time and thus any pattern that is found that exists over all or a large share of EP terms becomes more solid. This allows for other (financial) crises, such as in the 1980s, to be included in the analysis; it could be that the patterns I have discovered are not new but happen on all influential crises in the EU.

Another point of departure is radically altering the strategy, without altering the core question of the paper: how do MEPs group? That is leaving theoretical expectations aside and just focussing upon

the data there is. What are the 'inner circles' of each MEP? Are they for some MEPs across nations while for others across ideological lines?

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