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National Party Politics and Supranational Politics in the European Union: New Evidence from the European Parliament

Clifford J. Carrubba
Matthew Gabel
Lacey Murrah
Ryan Clough
Elizabeth Montgomery
Rebecca Schambach

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Abstract

Political parties play an important role in structuring political competition at different levels of governance in the European Union (EU). The political parties that contest national elections also participate in the EU legislative institutions, with the governing parties at the national level participating in the Council of Ministers and a broad range of national parties represented in the European Parliament (EP). Recent research indicates that national parties in the EP have formed ideological coalitions—party groups—that represent transnational political interests. These party groups appear to manage legislative behavior such that national interests—which dominate the Council of Ministers—are subjugated to ideological conflict. In this paper, we demonstrate that the roll-call vote evidence for the impact of party groups in the EP is misleading. Because party groups have incentives to select votes for roll call so as to hide or feature particular voting patterns, the true character of political conflict is never revealed in roll calls.

Clifford J. Carrubba
Emory University
Department of Political Science
327 Tarbutton Hall
1555 Dickey Drive
Atlanta, GA 30322
clifford.carrubba@emory.edu

Lacey Murrah
Emory University
Department of Political Science
327 Tarbutton Hall
1555 Dickey Drive
Atlanta, GA 30322

Elizabeth Montgomery
Emory University
Department of Political Science
327 Tarbutton Hall
1555 Dickey Drive
Atlanta, GA 30322

Matthew Gabel*
University of Kentucky
Department of Political Science
1637 Patterson Office Tower
Lexington, KY 40506-0027
mjgabel@uky.edu

Ryan Clough
Emory University
Department of Political Science
327 Tarbutton Hall
1555 Dickey Drive
Atlanta, GA 30322

Rebecca Schambach
Emory University
Department of Political Science
327 Tarbutton Hall
1555 Dickey Drive
Atlanta, GA 30322

*Corresponding author

Political conflict in the European Union (EU) is primarily resolved through legislative institutions. An important longstanding question about European integration has been whether the EU simply manages international relations—where nations compete for policy—or whether ideological political interests, articulated by political parties, provide a voice for transnational political interests. Clearly, national political parties play a significant role in the EU legislative process. The Council of Ministers consists of national representatives of the governing party(ies) in each member-state. The European Parliament (EP) is composed of legislators chosen in national elections contested by national political parties. Thus, we might consider EU governance simply an aggregation of national partisan politics, with the governing parties participating in both the EP and the Council. Recent research indicates, however, that transnational party groups in the EP appear to dominate nationality in shaping legislative behavior. Party groups consist of ideologically related parties (e.g., socialist parties) from different countries. Thus, they can represent transnational interests in legislative deliberations. To the extent this is true, national interests as articulated by national parties must contend with transnational political concerns in EU legislative politics. This would clearly be a serious divergence from a typical international organization or standard international bargaining between states.   In this paper, we review the literature on party groups and voting behavior in the EP. We show that the common conclusion that party groups are a strong influence on legislative behavior is based on faulty evidence. The simple reason is that roll-call votes, which are the basis of most empirical analyses of legislative behavior in the EP, are not a random sample of votes. Indeed, party group leaders call the vast majority of roll calls and have clear incentives to misrepresent the actual conflict in the EP.

This paper also speaks to the broader literature on roll-call vote analysis. The study of legislative behavior in democracies relies fundamentally on the analysis of recorded, or roll call, votes.[1] Most prominently, scholars of the United States Congress have used roll call votes (RCVs) to explore how parties organize and influence legislative behavior, test theories of internal legislative organization, and characterize the dimensionality of the U.S. legislative policy space.[2] These tools of RCV analysis are increasingly applied in other legislative settings, be they other national assemblies or subnational legislatures.[3]

However, the value of traditional RCV analysis outside the U.S. Congress is dubious. The contemporary US Congress differs from many other legislatures in that almost all legislative votes are by roll-call. For example, the French National Assembly, German Bundestag, Dutch Parliament, the Swiss National Council, Brazilian Chamber of Deputies, Argentine Chamber of Deputies, and various U.S. state legislatures decide only a fraction of legislation by RCVs.[4] In these contexts, the quality of our inferences about voting behavior depends crucially on the sampling properties of RCVs. If roll calls are not a random sample of legislative votes, we would need to account explicitly for the selection process before drawing accurate inferences about legislative behavior.

Why might the selection of votes for roll call be non-random? For one, it is widely argued that political party leaders, who normally control the selection of RCVs, choose roll calls based on their expectations regarding the level of party cohesiveness and the character of political conflict that vote will present.[5] If this is true, then the selection of RCVs would be endogenous to two of the most commonly studied aspects of legislative behavior: party cohesion and the dimensionality of legislative competition. This potential sampling problem has long

been recognized.[6] However, subsequent studies have generally ignored the issue and no study has yet examined or addressed it.[7]

The purpose of this study is to answer three questions: 1) is there evidence that RCVs are requested strategically?; 2) if so, what is the substantive effect?; and 3) is this effect consequential for our conclusions about legislative voting behavior? To answer these questions, we focus on a single legislative chamber: the European Parliament (EP). We examine the EP for three reasons. Less than a third of all votes are by roll call. There is reason to believe that the legislative parties – called "party groups" – are using RCVs in a fashion that would introduce selection bias into the RCV sample. And, a large and growing literature uses RCVs to study legislative behavior in the EP. Thus, the EP is a chamber in which RCVs may be a biased sample of votes, and we will be able to evaluate the substantive significance of this bias by re-examining a well-developed body of literature. Furthermore, the EP is very similar to many other parliaments in terms of the methods of voting and the prevalence of RCVs.[8] Thus, lessons learned from the EP should provide insight into problems common to other legislatures.

1. Voting Behavior, Party Group Cohesion, and Party Group Competition

A long research tradition in comparative legislative behavior has focused on evaluating the importance of parties to legislative behavior. Specifically, scholars used summary statistics of the similarity of voting patterns among members of parties to evaluate party cohesion and the dissimilarity of voting patterns across legislative parties to define the character of inter-party policy conflict.[9] EU scholars have applied this analytic approach to the study of transnational coalitions of national party delegations in the EP, known as party groups (PGs).

In many regards, these PGs resemble national legislative parties. They are generally organized according to traditional party families – e.g. national Socialist party delegations comprise the Party of European Socialists. They are considered important to the internal organization of the legislative chamber – e.g. speaking time, committee assignments, and other valuable roles and resources in the EP are distributed via PGs. And, they often instruct their membership on how to vote on particular issues. Consequently, many scholars have been interested in evaluating the importance of PG to the legislative behavior of their members..

These studies of voting behavior by members of the EP (MEPs) have generally converged on two conclusions. First, PG cohesion is higher than cohesion by nationality, is objectively high for the major PGs, and has generally increased over time.[10] Studies based on more recent and comprehensive data confirm these findings.[11]

Second, legislative politics in the EP is competitive along one main ideological dimension that reflects the traditional left-right political conflict found at the domestic level. This conclusion is based on several analyses of vote patterns among MEPs across a variety of issue areas.[12] More recent studies using NOMINATE to estimate the political space generally support the same finding.[13]

2.1 Reconsidering RCVs

If RCVs are a random sample of the universe of legislative votes cast in the EP, these studies and their conclusions are unproblematic. However, there is good reason to believe that RCVs are not a random sample, because there is good reason to believe that RCVs are not randomly requested.

A vote in the EP is designated for roll call if any party group or a group of thirty-two members of the EP request it prior to the day of the vote.[14] In practice, PGs request the vast majority of roll calls. Scholars have identified two primary motivations for why PG leaders request RCVs: disciplining and signaling. The disciplining argument claims that PGs may use RCVs to influence legislative outcomes. PG leaders have the ability to reward or punish their membership through a variety of means.[15] However, PG leaders cannot exercise party discipline without some way of monitoring their membership. Thus, PG leaders have an incentive to request RCVs when they want to enforce party discipline. The signaling argument posits that PGs use RCVs to signal their or other groups' policy positions to a third party, such as a national electorate or another EU institution.[16] In particular, a PG may want to publicize its policy agenda, to embarrass a rival PG by revealing its low cohesion on a particular policy, or to distinguish themselves publicly from other PGs on particular policies they deem significant.

If these arguments are right, RCV data should be biased in ways that directly relate to the literature's two core issues: party group cohesion and the dimensionality of policy conflict. The decision to request is endogenous to the expected level of cohesion if PG leaders request RCVs to induce party discipline. And, if PG leaders request RCVs in order to signal their positions on specific issues, the decision to request is endogenous to the policy area of the vote. As a result, the revealed dimensionality of conflict might tell us more about the areas of conflict parties want to highlight than the true dimensions of conflict in the legislature.

2.2 Research Design

To address this issue, we evaluate the sampling properties of RCVs with respect to three vote characteristics: 1) the identity of the RCV requesting party group, 2) the issue area of the

vote, and 3) the legislative importance of the vote. The first characteristic provides a direct test

of strategic behavior. The more we observe certain party groups tending to make RCV requests,

the stronger the evidence that PGs are making conscious choices over the decision to call RCVs.

The second two characteristics allow us to test whether strategic PG behavior is biasing

the data in two substantively important ways. Examining votes by their issue area provides direct

evidence over whether there is bias in how RCVs characterize the dimensions of policy conflict.

The more RCVs tend to over-represent certain issue areas, the more likely RCVs are incorrectly

characterizing that dimensionality. Examining votes by their legislative importance provides

direct evidence over whether RCV samples accurately represent legislatively consequential

behavior. Since most literature is interested in the legislative consequences of voting behavior,

this characteristic of the data is particularly important to the findings of past research. [17]

2.3 Data

To evaluate these three characteristics of RCVs, we collected and analyzed a novel

dataset including all votes in the EP plenary sessions from July 1999 to June 2000—the first year

of the fifth directly elected EP.[18] This year allows comparison with previous RCV analyses.[19]

Here we focus on four attributes of these votes: 1) the **method of vote**; 2) the **requesting**

group for each RCV; 3) the **responsible committee** for each legislative motion; and 4) the **type**

of motion. The **method of vote** indicates whether the vote was by roll call or not.[20] The

requesting group indicates which EP party group(s), if any, requested the RCV. The

responsible committee indicates the name of the committee responsible for reporting the motion

to the floor. And, the **type of motion** indicates whether the vote was on a Resolution or a

legislative proposal, which we distinguish according to legislative procedure: Assent, Consultation, or Codecision (round I, II, or III).

Each of these attributes represents one of the three vote characteristics discussed above. First, requesting group obviously allows us to evaluate which groups tend to request RCVs. Second, each responsible committee in the EP has jurisdiction over specific sets of policy areas. Thus, examining which responsible committees' legislative texts are voted on by roll call provides one reasonable standard by which to evaluate whether some issue areas tend to be over or under-represented in RCVs.

Finally, the type of motion allows us to evaluate whether the vote is legislatively consequential. The EP makes decisions using several different legislative procedures, some of which allow for multiple rounds of votes. Resolutions and Consultation votes are primarily symbolic. Resolutions are EP motions not directly associated with any piece of legislation, while Consultation votes are non-binding opinions on legislative proposals. In contrast, votes under the Assent and Co-decision procedures can have a direct and substantial impact on legislative outcomes. Under the Assent procedure, the EP can veto the motion under consideration. Under the Codecision procedure, the effect of an EP vote depends on the round. Codecision I is similar to the Consultation procedure in that the EP issues an opinion. However, if the EP and Council of Ministers do not reach an agreement, a second round of deliberation occurs. At that point, the EP can amend or reject the Council's common position. If agreement is still not reached, then Codecision III begins with the bill being referred to a Conciliation Committee. If the EP rejects the resulting proposal, the text fails. Thus, Assent and Codecision III votes are clearly consequential. Codecision I and II votes may be consequential.

2.3 Methodology

The critical inferential question is whether RCVs represent an unbiased sample of EP votes. We address this issue mainly through standard statistical tests of significance for differences between the sample of votes—the roll call votes—and the population of votes. The null hypothesis throughout the ensuing analysis is that any deviation in the distribution of RCVs across the relevant categories (e.g., the type of motion) from that of the population of votes is due to chance. In other words, the null hypothesis is the assumption, sometimes implicit, justifying past RCV analyses.

Note that most of our analysis does not distinguish between votes on amendments and final votes. This is the norm in the literature on RCV analysis in the EP.[21] But the main conclusions from our analysis hold if one focuses exclusively on final votes.

3.1.a Analysis: Requesting Group

Table 1 presents the first set of results.[22] Clearly, RCVs are not being requested by any reasonable standard of proportionality, which is a prominent justification for RCV analysis in the EP.[23] RCVs are not randomly distributed across party groups, whether we consider party groups of equal status or we weight them by the size of their membership.[24] This is true whether we consider just final votes, amendments, or both.[25] Further, it is apparent that different party groups use RCVs for different purposes. The PPE tend to request RCVs on final votes and they are the source of the bulk of the RCVs on final votes. In comparison, the Verts/ALE, the TDI, and the ELDR primarily request RCVs on amendments, and those votes are the majority of the RCVs on amendments. Thus, these findings provide initial evidence that party groups appear to request RCVs strategically.

[Table 1 here]

3.1.b Analysis: Responsible Committee

Table 2 presents the distribution of RCVs by responsible committee.[26] The table reports

the number and proportion of votes on legislative texts referred out of each of these committees

for RCVs and for all votes. As the Chi-squared statistic indicates, the null hypothesis that the

sample is representative is easily rejected. More specifically, we see that a majority of RCVs

originate in just a few committees. The committees for Citizens' Freedoms and Rights, Home

Affairs, Constitutional Affairs, and Economic and Monetary Affairs have a high proportion of

their votes by roll call (approximately 33%, 97%, and 67%, respectively). Consequently, their

votes account for only 28.35% of all votes, but 63.88% of all RCVs. That is, their percent of

RCVs is *more than 100%* higher than their percent of all votes. Furthermore, we observe very

few RCVs on legislation from some committees. For example, there were fifty votes on texts

from the committee on Women's Rights and Equal Opportunities, but *none* by roll call.

3.1.c Analysis: Type of Motion

Finally, consider the sampling properties of RCVs by type of motion. Table 3 presents

the distribution between resolutions and legislative votes and table 4 presents the distribution

among legislative votes. As table 3 demonstrates, Resolutions make up a much larger proportion

of RCVs than they do of all votes. Table 4 shows that Consultation votes and Codecision I votes

comprise a larger percentage of RCVs than they do of all votes, while Codecision II, III and

Assent votes comprise a much smaller percentage of RCVs than they do of all votes.

[Tables 3 and 4 here]

Once again, this evidence is consistent with the argument that strategic behavior is biasing RCV samples. However, more importantly, this evidence also demonstrates that the bias massively under-samples the most legislatively consequential votes – Codecision II, III, and Assent. Out of a total of 646 Codecision II, III and Assent votes, only five (or 0.77%) were by roll call. Thus, the PGs are systematically hiding exactly the voting behavior we are interested in studying.

In sum, this evidence demonstrates that the RCV sample is biased, that this bias is quite severe, and that it is associated with three substantively important characteristics. Thus, this evidence suggests that we should proceed with great caution in interpreting roll-call evidence. Next we consider the substantive impact of this bias on the two main findings in the EP voting behavior literature.

3.2.a. Implications for Measuring Intra-Party Cohesion

Recall that the extant literature on EP legislative behavior concludes that intra-party cohesion is objectively high, is high relative to national cohesion, and has steadily increased over time. These findings rely upon two critical assumptions: that RCV estimates of PG cohesion are *unbiased* and that these estimates are sufficiently *precise* to make meaningful comparisons over time and across PGs. In fact, neither of these assumptions is valid for the RCV sample.

Consider precision first. Because RCVs are a sample, traditional measures of party cohesion (e.g., average vote agreement scores) must be treated as sample statistics, which is why we normally report standard errors around such estimates. But when the sample is non-random, statistical theory does not provide guidance in calculating sampling error. Indeed, the sampling error associated with nonrandom samples is potentially much higher than that for random

samples. This is a fundamental problem for studying party cohesion in the EP, since we cannot appraise the precision of our estimates of cohesion based on RCVs.

To make matters worse, the evidence suggests that RCVs samples are biased towards significantly over-estimating inter-party group cohesion. First, recall that most previous studies pooled RCVs on legislation and on resolutions to calculate PG cohesion or agreement scores. Second, note that the composition of PGs on Resolution votes is systematically different from the composition of PGs on legislative votes. MEP attendance increases with the legislative import of the motion, meaning we see low attendance on Resolutions.[27] Third, we have good reasons to believe those MEPs who are most likely to be absent on Resolution votes are the least likely to vote with the PG majority on legislation. Those MEPs holding or seeking PG leadership positions should be more inclined to attend and more likely to vote with the PG majority. If so, then the subset of PG members attending votes should become smaller and more cohesive as the importance of the vote declines. And, since we are interested in inferring the level of PG cohesion on important legislative votes, the pooling of legislative votes with a large number of Resolution votes would generate an over-estimation of the level of PG cohesion on legislative votes.

If the above story is accurate, we would expect that the MEP absenteeism would be positively related to the frequency of defection from PG majority positions. And, more specifically, the more often the MEP is absent on Resolution votes, the more likely the MEP is to defect from the PG majority position on legislative votes. Evidence from the two largest party groups in the chamber, the PES and the EPP, support this claim. For the RCVs in our dataset, we estimated the correlation between the percent of votes the MEP voted against the PG majority (i.e., the rate of defection) on all RCVs and the number of absences on all RCVs.[28] The

correlations were .35 for the PES and .51 for the EPP, with both significant at the .01 level. We

also estimated the correlation between absences on Resolution votes and frequency of defection

from the PG majority on legislative votes only. The correlation was 0.17 for the PES and 0.46

for the EPP, with both coefficients significant at the .02 level. Thus, the MEPs from the PES and

EPP who most frequently toe the PG line are the least likely to be absent on Resolution votes.

We suspect this leads to substantial bias. Recall that *86%* of RCVs in our dataset were on

Resolutions. And the fraction of MEPs absent on Resolutions is far from trivial, amounting to

almost a third of the chamber on average. Had these Resolution votes truly been legislative

votes, we would have expected higher attendance and therefore lower PG cohesion than

observed on these resolutions. Thus, the compositional differences in PGs across types of

motions due to absences serve to inflate cohesion scores.

3.2.b. Characterizing Policy Conflict

RCV studies have found that policy conflict in the EP is characterized by four

dimensions, but with the left-right ideological dimension accounting for the lion's share of the

votes.[29] Our findings indicate this conclusion is dubious; RCV studies are most likely incorrectly

characterizing the policy space and missing at least one relevant dimension of policy conflict.

First, recall that RCVs are not a representative sample by issue area. This sample will

miss or de-emphasize a dimension of conflict if those under-sampled issue areas include policies

that engender legislative conflict orthogonal to the dimensions revealed by RCVs. We can show

that the selection bias in RCV requests likely has exactly this consequence. A recent study

assessed the congruence between the dimensionality of MEP attitudes regarding different

policies, as reported in surveys, and MEP voting behavior, as indicated by RCVs.[30] The findings

indicate that MEP policy attitudes are structured by three orthogonal issue domains: integration-independence, socio-economic left-right, and libertarian-traditional. Their RCV analysis, however, found a dominant left-right dimension, three other dimensions that provide comparatively little explanatory power,[31] and no libertarian-traditional dimension.

Our analysis provides an explanation for these inconsistent findings. To see why, recall that only the survey data uncovered a libertarian-traditional dimension. One of the key issues that defined this dimension was women's rights—specifically, a woman's freedom to decide on abortion. Now, looking at table 2, we see that none of the 50 votes on legislation associated with the Women's Rights and Equal Opportunity Committee were by roll call. Consequently, the RCV sample is very likely biased away from finding this type of libertarian-traditional dimension. But, given that the survey of MEPs revealed such a dimension, we might well expect that, had these 50 votes been recorded, an analysis of RCVs would reveal that dimension. The selection bias in RCV requests simply hides it from view.

Second, the attendance finding discussed in the previous section also suggests that policy dimensions are being under-weighted or even omitted entirely. Techniques, such as NOMINATE, identify dimensions of policy conflict based upon the observed voting cleavages in the data. The greater the number of different voting cleavages in the data, the greater the number of policy dimensions. Thus, since the inclusion of Resolution votes likely under-estimates *intra*-party group conflict, RCVs likely under-estimate or even miss policy dimensions that are orthogonal to the observed dimension of *inter*-party group conflict.

4. Conclusions and Future Research

In sum, this study provides evidence of strategic behavior in the decision to request roll call votes, demonstrates that this behavior biases the data in substantively important ways and to a very substantial degree, and casts serious doubt on existing findings in the EP voting behavior literature. Importantly, however, the implications of these findings apply to the many legislatures around the world where RCVs are only a fraction of legislative votes, which includes a large number of legislatures in Europe.[32] It is also true of many legislatures outside Europe: e.g., the Chilean Senate, the Argentine Chamber of Deputies, and the Brazilian Chamber of Deputies.[33]

Notably, we do not conclude from our study that RCVs are a fatally flawed source of information about legislative behavior. Rather, this study highlights the need to understand the process that generates RCVs before trying to analyze them. Doing so requires serious theoretical work. While existing substantive work on the EP and other legislatures has already identified two broad motivations for parties to request RCVs, party discipline and signaling, we lack theory to precisely explain the conditions under which these motivations would lead to RCVs.[34] Only with discriminating predictions over how observable characteristics of a bill should relate to the decision to request a RCV, if that motivation truly is driving the decision to request a RCV, can we identify the causes of RCVs. For example, a model based on a party discipline motivation would likely have clear implications about how the choice of votes for roll call depend on whether the party leadership considers discipline as crucial to deciding the legislative outcome and whether the party members would vote cohesively or not in the absence of discipline. With those predictions in hand, as well as measures of MEP preferences, we would be able to specify a test of that model. Assuming an equivalent elaboration of the signaling argument provides an alternative, discriminating set of predictions, we will then be able to test among these alterative explanations.

This test, once performed, will provide a much fuller understanding of the data generation process. With that knowledge, we could start to consider ways of accounting for the bias in inferring legislative behavior from RCVs. One option is to use a Heckman-like selection bias model. This approach has both pros and cons. While the standard Heckman model has the advantage of being relatively well-known, it is most easily applied to cases with a common unit of analysis in both parts of the two-step model (e.g., a vote). This is important since all the variables in the main model need to be in the selection model.[35] In the EP context, this is a problem. The selection step would involve predicting whether a vote is by roll-call or not, but many extant models of party group influence on voting behavior use a some aggregation of votes for a party group (e.g., the average vote agreement over a 6-month period).[36] Also, we are unaware of an obvious Heckman solution for scaling procedures like NOMINATE. Thus, a Heckman-like solution would require some econometric innovation beyond the standard model.

Other options exist as well. For example, for illustrative purposes, suppose that the party discipline theory predicts the use of RCVs extraordinarily well. We could then use the specified party discipline theory to generate the unobserved counterfactual; what would have happened if a roll call vote had been requested on a particular vote? Having uncovered the "full" record of how every legislator did or would have voted on every vote, analysis of voting behavior could proceed. While it is impossible to say what approach will prove most productive, we believe three things are clear; we must start to think hard about accounting for selection bias in RCV data, there are a number of plausible avenues to pursue in order to redress this problem, and in fact the problem provides some interesting and fertile ground for new research.

Table 1. RCV Requesting Groups on Final Votes and Amendments

RCV Requesting Group	Party Group Size # of Members Column%[a]	Final Votes Raw Numbers Row %[b] Column %[c]	Amendments Raw Numbers Row %[b] Column %[c]	Total Votes Raw Numbers Row %[b] Column %[c]
Europe of Democracies and Diversity (EDD)	**16** - 2.56	**4** 7.69 2.33	**48** 92.31 6.81	**52** 100 5.88
European Liberal Democratic and Reform Parties (ELDR)	**53** - 8.47	**17** 17.00 9.50	**83** 83.00 11.77	**100** 100 11.31
Communists (GUE/NGL)	**50** - 7.99	**10** 15.38 5.59	**55** 84.62 7.80	**65** 100 7.35
Party of European Socialists (PSE)	**175** - 27.95	**29** 29.59 16.20	**69** 70.41 9.79	**98** 100 11.09
Technical Group of Independent Members (TDI)	**32** - 5.11	**6** 6.19 3.35	**91** 93.81 12.91	**97** 100 10.97
Union for a Europe of Nations (UEN)	**22** - 3.51	**4** 5.48 2.23	**69** 94.52 9.79	**73** 100 8.26
Greens (Verts/ALE)	**45** - 7.19	**21** 9.95 11.73	**190** 90.05 26.95	**211** 100 23.87
European Peoples' Party (PPE/DE)	**233** - 37.22	**85** 54.84 47.49	**70** 45.61 9.93	**155** 100 17.53
President	**-** - -	**2** 100 1.12	**0** 0 0	**2** 100 .23
MEPs	**-** - -	**2** 10.53 1.12	**17** 21.52 2.41	**19** 100 2.15
Not Available	**-** - -	**0** 0 0	**13** 100 1.84	**13** 100 1.47
Raw Total	**626**	**179**	**705**	**884**
Column % Total	100	100	100	100
Chi-Squared Statistic		110	9907	10030

[a] Party group percent of chamber. [b] The percent of that party group's RCVs that were in that category of votes. [c] The percent of RCVs in that category requested by that party group.

Table 2. Responsible committee by all votes and RCVs (Final Votes and Amendments)			
	All Non-RCVs	**All RCVs**	**All Votes**
	Row %[b]	*Row %*[b]	
Committee	Column %[a]	Column %[a]	Column %[a]
Agriculture and Rural Development	**147**	**65**	**212**
	69.34	*30.66*	-
	6.11	5.99	5.26
Budgetary Control	**53**	**42**	**95**
	55.79	*44.21*	-
	1.80	3.87	2.36
Budgets	**361**	**74**	**435**
	82.99	*17.01*	-
	12.25	6.82	10.79
Citizens' Freedoms and Rights, Justice and Home Affairs	**359**	**174**	**533**
	67.35	*32.65*	-
	12.18	16.04	13.22
Parliament's delegation to the Conciliation Committee	**10**	**1**	**11**
	90.91	*9.09*	-
	.34	0.09	0.27
Conference of Presidents	**8**	**0**	**8**
	100	*0*	-
	.27	0.00	0.20
Constitutional Affairs	**13**	**358**	**371**
	3.5	*96.50*	-
	.44	33.00	9.20
Culture, Youth, Education, the Media and Sport	**87**	**0**	**87**
	100	*0*	-
	2.95	0.00	2.16
Development and Cooperation	**61**	**1**	**62**
	98.39	*1.61*	-
	2.07	0.09	1.54
Economic and Monetary Affairs	**78**	**161**	**239**
	32.64	*67.36*	-
	2.65	14.84	5.93
Employment and Social Affairs	**88**	**16**	**104**
	84.62	*15.38*	-
	2.99	1.47	2.58
Environment, Public Health and Consumer Policy	**761**	**6**	**767**
	99.22	*.78*	-
	25.81	0.55	19.02
Fisheries	**118**	**30**	**148**
	79.73	*20.27*	-
	4.00	2.76	3.67
Foreign Affairs, Human Rights, Common Security and Defence Policy	**161**	**30**	**191**
	84.29	*15.71*	-
	5.46	2.76	4.74
Industry, External Trade, Research and Energy	**295**	**63**	**358**
	82.4	*17.60*	-
	10.01	5.81	8.87
Legal Affairs and the Internal Market	**148**	**38**	**186**
	79.57	*20.43*	-
	5.02	3.50	4.61
Regional Policy, Transport and Tourism	**150**	**26**	**176**
	85.23	*14.77*	-
	5.09	2.40	4.36
Women's Rights and Equal Opportunities	**50**	**0**	**50**
	100	*0*	-
	1.70	0.00	1.24
Total	**2948**	**1085**	**4033**
Chi-Squared Statistic		**1147.5 (p < .001)**	

[a] Percent in that category from that committee. [b] Percent from that committee (not) roll-called.

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Table 3. Percent and Number of votes and RCVs by type of Motion

Type of Motion	All Non-RCVs *Row %*[b] Column %[a]	All RCVs Row %[b] Column %[a]	All Votes Column %[a]
Legislation	**2232** *92.81* 66.21	**173** *7.19* 13.34	**2405** - 51.52
Resolutions	**1139** *50.00* 33.79	**1124** *50.00* 86.66	**2263** - 48.48
Total	**3371**	**1297**	**4668**
Chi-Square Statistic		756.3 (p < .001)	

[a] Percent in that category that are of that type of proposal. [b] Percent of that type of proposal (not) roll-called.

Type of Motion	All Non-RCVs Row %[b] Column %[a]	All RCVs Row %[b] Column %[a]	All Votes Column %[a]
Consultation	**985** *90.53* 44.13	**103** *9.47* 59.54	**1088** - 45.24
Assent	**15** *93.75* .67	**1** *6.25* 0.58	**16** - 0.67
Codecision I	**606** *90.31* 27.15	**65** *9.69* 37.57	**671** - 27.90
Codecision II	**616** *99.52* 27.60	**3** *.48* 1.73	**619** - 25.74
Codecision III	**10** *90.91* .45	**1** *9.09* 0.58	**11** - 0.46
Codecision II, III, and Assent	**641** *99.23* 42.16	**5** *.77* 3.9	**646** - 26.9
Total	**2232**	**173**	**2405**
Chi-Square Statistic		88.57 (p < .001)	

[a] Percent in that category that are of that type of proposal. [b] Percent of that type of proposal (not) roll-called.

[1] Collie, Melissa, 'Voting Behavior in Legislatures' in Lowenberg, Gerhard, Samuel Patterson and Malcolm Jewell. *Handbook of Legislative Research* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1985).

[2] For the use of RCVs to examine how parties organize and influence legislative behavior, see Snyder, James and Tim Groseclose, 'Estimating Party Influence on Congressional Roll-Call Voting'; *American Journal of Political Science,* 44 (2000), 193-211. For the use of RCVs to test theories of internal legislative organization, see Krehbiel, Keith, Information *and Legislative Organization* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1991). For the use of RCVs to characterize the dimensionality of the U.S. legislative policy space, see Poole, Keith T. and Howard Rosenthal, *Congress: A Political-Economic History of Roll Call Voting* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997).

[3] e.g., Wright, Gerald C. and Brian F. Schaffner, 'The Influence of Party: Evidence from the State Legislatures'; *American Political Science Review,* 96(2002), 367-79; Haspel, Moshe, Thomas Remmington, and Steven Smith, 'Electoral Institutions and Party Cohesion in the Russian Duma'; *Journal of Politics,* 60(1998), 417-39; Desposato, Scott, 'Legislative Politics in Authoritarian Brazil'; *Legislative Studies Quarterly,* 26 (May 2001), 287-318; Carey, John, 'Getting Their Way or Getting in the Way?: Presidents and Party Unity in Legislative Voting'; Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Political Science Association, August 2002, Boston, MA;

[4] Saalfeld, Thomas, 'On Dogs and Whips: Recorded Votes', in H. Döring, ed, *Parliaments and Majority Rule in Western Europe* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1995), 528-65; Carey, John, 'Discipline, Accountability, and Legislative Voting in Latin America'; *Comparative Politics,* 35(2003).

[5] Saalfeld, 'On Dogs and Whips: Recorded Votes'.

[6] Greenstein, Fred and Elton Jackson, 'A Second Look at the Validity of Roll-Call Analysis'; *Midwest Journal of Political Science,* 7(1963), 156-66.

[7] However, several studies have recognized the selection bias problem (e.g., Lanfranchi, Prisca and Ruth Lüthi, 'Cohesion of Party Groups and Interparty Conflict in the Swiss Parliament: Roll Call Voting in the National Council', in Shaun Bowler, David Farrell and Richard Katz, eds, *Party Discipline and Parliamentary Government* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1999), pp. 106; Thomassen, Jacques, Abdul Noury, and Erik Voeten, 'Political Competition in the European Parliament: Evidence from Roll Call and Survey Analyses', in Marks, Gary and Marco Steunbergen, eds. *Dimensions of Contestation in the European Union* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004); Bardi, Luciano, 'Transitional Trends: The Evolution of the European Party System', in

Bernard Steunenberg and Jacques Thomassen, eds. *The European Parliament: Moving Toward Democracy in the EU* (Oxford: Rowan and Littlefield, 2002); Hix, Simon, 'Legislative Behaviour and Party Competition in the European Parliament: An Application of Nominate to the EU'; *Journal of Common Market Studies,* 39(2001), 663-88; Hix, Simon, 'Parliamentary Behavior with Two Principals: Legislator Preferences, Parties and Voting in the European Parliament'*; American Journal of Political Science,* 46(2002),688-98; Hix, Simon, Abdul Noury, and Gerald Roland, 'Power to the Parties: Cohesion and Competition in the European Parliament 1979-2001' *British Journal of Political Science,* 35(2002), 203-34).

[8] Saalfeld, 'On Dogs and Whips: Recorded Votes.'

[9] Collie, 'Voting Behavior in Legislatures' p. 475.

[10] Attina, Fulvio, 'The Voting Behavior of the European Parliament Members and the Problem of the Europarties'; *European Journal of Political Research,* 18(1990), 557-79; Raunio, Tapio, 'Aggregating Interests Within and Between Party Groups in the European Parliament: MEP Voting Behaviour, 1989-1994'; *The European Perspective: The Transnational Party Groups in the 1989-1994 European Parliament* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1997); Kreppel, Amie and George Tsebelis, 'Coalition Formation in the European Parliament'; *Comparative Political Studies,* 32 (1999), 933-66.

[11] Noury, Abdul, 'Ideology, Nationality, and Euro-Parliamentarians'; *European Union Politics,* 3(2002), 33-58; Thomassen, et al, 'Political Competition in the European Parliament: Evidence from Roll Call and Survey Analyses'; Hix, et al, 'Power to the Parties: Cohesion and Competition in the European Parliament 1979-2001'.

[12] Raunio, 'Aggregating Interests Within and Between Party Groups in the European Parliament: MEP Voting Behaviour, 1989-1994'; Kreppel and Tsebelis, 'Coalition Formation in the European Parliament'; Kreppel, Amie, 'Rules, Ideology and Coalition Formation in the European Parliament: Past, Present and Future'; *European Union Politics,* 1(2000), 340-62.

[13] Some scholars identify four dimensions to competition in the EP, but show that the dominant dimension is left-right, e.g. Noury, 'Ideology, Nationality and Euro-Parliamentarians'; Thomassen, et al, 'Political Competition in the European Parliament: Evidence from Roll Call and Survey Analyses'. Other scholars show that inter-PG competition in the EP has been along a single left-ride ideological dimension. See Hix, 'Legislative Behaviour and Party Competition in the European Parliament', and Hix, et al, Power to the Parties: Cohesion and Competition in the European Parliament 1979-2001'. See Mattila, Mikko, 'Contested Decisions: Empirical Analysis of Voting in

the European Union Council of Ministers'; *European Journal of Political Research*, 43(2004), 29-50 for similar

results using recorded votes for the European Council of Ministers (but see Selk, Torsten J, 'On the Dimensionality

of European Union Legislative Decision-making'; *Journal of Theoretical Politics*, 16(2004), 203-222 for findings of

multi-dimensionality). The voting records of the Council are also only a sample of the votes cast.

[14] A small number of votes require a RCV. The thirty-two member minimum was true for the period of our study,

but has been modified more recently to accommodate enlargement, among other things.

[15] See Kreppel, Amie, *The European Parliament and Supranational Party System* (Cambridge: Cambridge

University Press, 2002).

[16] Kreppel, *The European Parliament and Supranational Party System*, pp. 128.

[17] These three RCV attributes closely map to the three characteristics that Hix, Noury, and Roland, 'Power to the

Parties: Cohesion and Competition in the European Parliament 1979-2001' use to justify their RCVs analysis. They

assume that RCVs are requested proportionately among party groups; cover the most important legislative decisions;

and cover the full range of issues.

[18] See 'Minutes of the Proceedings of Plenary Sessions', *Europarl: The European Union On-Line*

(www.europarl.eu.int/plenary/default_en.htm).

[19] Hix, 'Legislative Behaviour and Party Competition in the European Parliament: An Application of Nominate to

the EU'; Hix, 'Parliamentary Behaviour with Two Principals: Legislator Preferences, Parties and Voting in the

European Parliament'.

[20] The EP uses four voting methods: 1) voice; 2) hand; 3) electronic; or 4) roll call.

[21] Hix, 'Legislative Behaviour and Party Competition in the European Parliament: An Application of Nominate to

the EU'; Kreppel and Tsebelis, 'Coalition Formation in the European Parliament'; Raunio, 'Aggregating Interests

Within and Between Party Groups in the European Parliament: MEP Voting Behaviour, 1989-1994'.

[22] Multiple groups can request the same RCV.

[23] Hix, Noury, and Roland, 'Power to the Parties: Cohesion and Competition in the European Parliament 1979-

2001.'

[24] A chi-squared test easily rejects the proportionality hypothesis.

[25] These results do not necessarily imply that RCVs are a poor sample of all votes. Party groups can propose amendments and resolutions, and thus we would like to compare these rates of requests with the rates of proposals for amendments and resolutions by party group. This information is not systematically reported in the *Minutes of Proceedings* of the EP. However, because party groups cannot initiate legislation, the pattern of roll call requests on final votes for legislation is immune to the above concerns. The pattern of these requests supports our general conclusion. Of the 73 RCVs on final votes on legislation, 52 (71%) were requested by the PPE. This is dramatically disproportionate to the size of the PPE. Given that we are primarily concerned with voting behavior on legislation, this evidence of request bias is impressive.

[26] Only votes on legislation are assigned to a responsible committee.

[27] See Scully, Roger, 'Policy Influence and Participation in the European Parliament'; *Legislative Studies Quarterly,* 22 (1997), 233-52.

[28] Data publicly available at http://personal.lse.ac.uk/hix/HixNouryRolandEPdata.htm. We deleted from the analysis any MEP who did not serve the complete year. The rate of defection was based only on votes attended.

[29] e.g., Noury, 'Ideology, Nationality, and Euro-Parliamentarians'.

[30] Thomassen, et al, 'Political Competition in the European Parliament: Evidence from Roll Call and Survey Analyses'.

[31] This dimensionality is consistent with other RCV studies.

[32] See Saalfeld, 'On Dogs and Whips: Recorded Votes'.

[33] For the case of the Chilean Senate, see Londregan, John, 'Appointment, Reelection, and Autonomy in the Senate of Chile,' in Scott Morgenstern and Benito Nacif, eds, *Legislative Politics in Latin America* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002). For the case of the Argentine Chamber of Deputies, see Jones, Mark and Wonjae Hwang, 'Party Government in Presidential Democracies: Extending Cartel Theory Beyond the U.S. Congress*'; American Journal of Political Science* 49 (2005), 267-282. For the case of the Brazilian Chamber of Deputies, see Ames, Barry, 'Party Discipline in the Chamber of Deputies,' in Scott Morgenstern and Benito Nacif, eds, *Legislative Politics in Latin America* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002).

[34] For discussion of party discipline and signaling as motivations for parties to seek RCVs, see Saalfeld, 'On Dogs and Whips: Recorded Votes'.

[35] See Wooldridge, Jeffrey, *Introductory Econometrics* (Mason, Ohio: Thomson, 2003).

[36] For extant models of party group influence, see Hix, et al, 'Power to the Parties: Cohesion and Competition in the European Parliament 1979-2001'.

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