

Whipping in the European Parliament

AN ANALYSIS OF THE EFFECTS OF PARTY GROUP DISCIPLINARY MEASURES
ON PARTY UNITY IN POLITICAL PARTY GROUPS IN THE EUROPEAN
PARLIAMENT

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Preface

Those who know me, know very well how much I have put into this thesis. It has been a long and tiresome road and I have explored and done many things along the way. I have read and studied the literature in various places in the world. I did most of my research alternating between Canada and the Netherlands. I have been inspired by many friends, colleagues, and my supervisor Mr. Haverland. Most of all, I have been supported by my friends and family who made it all possible for me to do this in the first place.

When I first read about whipping in the European Parliament, I automatically thought of the then brand new series in the United States, namely House of Cards. Obviously this fictionalized perspective on party discipline could not be present in the European Parliament? But, yet, I read about it in one of the courses in IMP and could not help but wonder if more research had been done on it. Thus, I stumbled upon research which proclaimed there was. In fact, it gave a resounding confirmation of this mysterious practice called ‘whipping’. However, what I could not find was the extent and depth which the practice took shape in for the European Parliament.

My mind automatically wondered off to House of Cards. Who was the ‘Frank Underwood’ of the EP? What types of deals and tricks were played in the European Parliament? I wanted to know this extent, the measures which were used by the party leadership, these possible ‘Frank Underwoods’ of the EP. And thus, my journey began.

As I am now nearing the end of the road, as this product is the end product of the masters for public administration, I can’t help but liken the experience to Hegel’s imagery of the Owl of Minerva, which spreads its wings with the falling of dusk. Now that the dusk of public administration is upon me, I realize everything it brought and how it shaped me into the person I am and will become. I now know it couldn’t have been any other way.

Abstract

Party whipping is a well-documented practice in the UK and the US, however the European Parliament has not nearly had the attention on this practice. Recently, there has been more and more research on this practice, such as Hix, Noury and Roland's works concerning the collection and interpretation of Roll Call vote data. The aim of this research was to further supplement this indirect indication of whipping with first-hand experiences of the MEPs who have to deal with the party whipping mechanisms on a daily basis. This has been done through interviews with these MEPs and an outsider, to describe these practices in more detail and further confirm or disconfirm their presence in the European Parliament. The main findings indicate that party whipping can in fact be confirmed for one of the two political party groups researched, in this thesis, in the European Parliament. However, this does not mean that all political party groups do so, as the other party group involved in this research showcased a significant lack in political party group whipping. However, party whipping is not the sole producer of party unity as ideological congruence has been found to play a significant role for party unity as well.

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Chapter I: Introduction

Political parties have been the object of research for many years. Some important questions that have been written about are, for instance, why the parties exist at all, but also, how are these parties organized? The subject of this thesis paper is linked to one of these questions, namely: what is the role of the party leadership within the party structure. More specific, the subject is: what is the party leadership role in enforcing the party line amongst the members of parliament in the political group? This subject has been widely discussed by scholars such as Ripley (1964) and Crowe (1986), but they have done so with respect to the U.S. congress and the U.K. parliament. Another big contribution has been made by Meltz (1973), who studied the legislative workings of the U.S. party system in great detail. Over the past decades the European Parliament (EP) has gained more and more powers and has ever growing coverage of their activities. Furthermore, the EP has grown within an ever growing European Union (EU), which is also gaining more and more prominence and authority. The EP has political party groups, which are bundles of national parties from the member states who joined up in the EP in order to gain some influence. This is very different from the national parliaments in the European Union and the parliaments studied by Ripley (1964) and Crowe (1986). According to research by Hix, Noury & Roland (2005) it greatly diminishes national parties' influence when not part of these political groups. Non-affiliated parties lack the political clout of an organized group, as well as other benefits such as more speaking time, more money, etc., thus making the joining of a political party group very profitable. However, the EP's political groups are in a unique situation. They have their own leadership structure, but are also influenced by the leadership structure of the national parties as those parties put the candidates on the political party group list. In short, the EP provides for a very unique and interesting setting. Hix, Noury and Roland (2005;2009) used a specific angle in some of their works, namely that of the roll call votes, the procedure where the voting of the MEP is recorded by name. This concept of roll call voting will play a big role in this thesis as well. Hix and Hoyland (2011) derive partly from this study that there has to be a whipping system, indicating that the party leadership, given the importance of an issue, pushes through its main preferences with regards to the political group members. This whipping in itself however, has not been researched directly. How does this 'whipping' in fact take place? And what capacities does the party leadership have to whip? Even though whipping has its negative connotations attached to it, it is not necessarily a bad thing. In fact, the very root of parties has to do with their 'legislative role to structure the behavior of their Members [of the European Parliament (MEP)]' (Aldrich in Hoyland, 2010: p. 598). One of the

core reasons why parties exist in the first place is to reduce transaction costs and help overcome dilemmas of collective action (Muller, 2000). Incohesive parties would arguably counteract the advantages of having parties in the first place. Clearly, a possible whipping system is of importance and so is further insight into this mechanism.

Chapter 2: Research Question

As discussed in the introduction, this thesis paper mainly concerns itself with the party leaderships ability to keep their Member of the European Parliament (MEPs) in line. Muller (2000) describes several methods for parties to ensure discipline. For instance, the job seeking aspect for politicians could function as important leverage. If they want to move up in the party group, then they need to align with the party when voting on the subjects at hand. This good behavior can then be rewarded by the party group with a promotion within the ranks of the party group. However, this is just one and perhaps the most basic instrument the political party group leadership has to promote the majority line. In the theoretical framework, more of these instruments and their workings will be explained.

Before this paper goes into depth about those mechanisms, it is important to understand the general question. The main concern of this paper is the shape and influence of the party whipping system in the EP that is presumably used by the political party groups. As mentioned before, there have been studies that suggest that there is such a mechanism. But, there is very little research on these party mechanisms. For instance, the allocation of the role of rapporteur is considered through various studies to be of importance for enforcing unity (Lindberg, Rasmussen & Wartjen, 2013). But, there might be much more going on, especially given the research cited earlier. Therefore, the ambitious goal of my research is to examine what the framework for whipping is in the EP and what influence it has on the unity of the political party groups. This leads to the following main question:

What is the effect of the party group's disciplinary measures on party unity in the European Parliament?

The main question can seem daunting to the very least, therefore the answer will be built up in several small steps. The first being a showing of the literature situating the research and theory in this thesis. The second step is forming the theoretical framework, the exact theory used in this thesis. Next, variables will be distilled from the theoretical framework, namely the dependent variable, party unity, and the established independent variables. Each of the independent variables will be linked to the dependent variable through a hypothesis on the relation between the variables. Then the variables will be operationalized, namely concretely linking the more abstract concept with observable indicators. Next, the research design and the methods of selecting, collecting and processing the data on the variables will be described. The next step is the analysis of the gathered data, which will lead to an answer to the hypotheses.

Finally, the main question will be answered in the conclusion of the paper, which will also treat some of the limitations, broader implications, and finally recommendations for further research.

Relevance.

The societal relevance of this research knows many shapes, but first and foremost it is lifting the veil on the role of the political party group for voters. Currently, it is unknown to voters whether MEPs vote more aligned with their national party or the political party group, which can lead to an unnecessary discrepancy in the expectation of the voter and the eventual acting of the MEP. It will become more transparent to the voter that the affiliation to a political party group does in fact influence the decisions made by the MEP in question. Now that MEPs are elected directly, the actions of MEPs become more important. European civilians now vote for someone, thus clarity in the legislative actions and motivations of MEPs is important for the people. This research should provide the voters with a more accurate representation of what they vote for. Perhaps it may, for example, shift the balance more towards the political party groups, thus entailing that they might have to shift their focus from MEP to political party group when voting. For the political parties itself it gives more insight in how to judge their own representatives as they desire certain things in ideological terms, but also in influence terms. When their MEP is whipped into place they might be able to go easy on accounting him or her on the ideological shift. Therefore, it helps parties assess the performance of their MEPs and perhaps even give more insight in the European Political Party group's workings, which is useful to them in order to re-evaluate priorities in the EP.

It is theoretically relevant as most studies on the voting behavior and party behavior in the European Parliament have been based on data from before 2009 and before the institutional changes in the European Parliament that have arisen in the Lisbon treaty, which has granted even more powers to the European Parliament and changed the election and selection processes. This might amount to a shift towards more unity, because the priority of voting alignment becomes higher, the more salient the EP is. Also next to the timeframe being relevant, a case study research design going into the institutionalization of a possible party whipping system in the EP has not been done before as the studies so far have had an indirect approach to party whipping, deriving it from high party unity when comparing different roll call votes. A description of how and to what extent the party groups have a whipping system in place can be of great added value to the already existing body of literature.

Chapter 3: Literature Review

Before the theoretical framework is provided, it is useful to examine the theoretical context in which the main concept takes place. As ‘whipping’ or more formally disciplinary power is the main concept, it is useful for a further understanding of this concept to examine the terminology, the political parties in which the whipping occurs, who would theoretically whip, who would be whipped, and what other possible powers can be expected to influence those whipped? There is, fortunately, an extensive amount of research on the European Parliament, its powers, and the legislative processes, but the European Parliament is not the only Parliament from which research can be used. In this chapter I will use an analytical approach by first of all clarifying on the terminology of disciplinary power, and then showing what this concept entails, and finally looking at other possible forces which are in play, perhaps pulling in different ways than the disciplining does.

Terminology

Before we go into more detail on the concepts in this thesis in the theoretical framework, there is need for clarification. In the modern body of work on party unity there seems to be a mix up of terms such as party unity, -loyalty, -discipline, and –cohesion, which are all used intertwined, but from a theoretical point of view it is useful to separate the terms as will be maintained throughout this thesis paper. Sieberer (2006) separates the terms and provides foundation for their separate use, establishing unity as the observable agreement, which can be caused by cohesion, the level of ideological congruence between the MEP’s and the party group, and discipline, the level of whipping used in order to create unity. Party unity is effectively just the observable unity, which is simply displayed by their voting behavior. In other words, how united the MEPs vote within their parties. The main interest however, in this thesis paper, is determining the disciplining of the MEPs by the leadership, or what will be determined as the party groups’ disciplinary power. In other words, parties or political groups often enjoy an intra-party majority to which the rest, or minority of the party, needs to conform. The extent to which this can be realized by measures of the party leadership establishes the party groups’ disciplinary power (Owens, 2003).

Thus, party unity is the most relevant concept for this thesis and perhaps the most comprehensive research on party unity in the European Parliament has been done by Hix, Noury and Roland (2005). In their article they gathered and analyzed the roll call data of the political party groups from 1979 till 2001. One of their main conclusions is that there is a rise in unity

even amongst ‘growing internal national and ideological diversity within the European party groups’ as the powers of the parliament have increased and therefore also the importance of the party groups has grown (Hix, Noury and Roland, 2005). The party unity is measured by the roll call votes in Parliaments. The roll call votes are the individual votes registered in the minutes and are used in a variety of subjects and can also be requested by any political group. Most of the research on party unity use either an Agreement Index or the Rice index, even though not considered perfect (Hix, Noury & Roland, 2005; Depauw & Martin, 2010; Owens, 2003). These indices usually capture a basic essence of unity, establishing the unity independent of the party line and independent of the causes. It is done with the simple formula, which is:

$$AI_i = \frac{|Y_i - N_i|}{Y_i + N_i}$$

Y_i denotes here the number of yes votes of the group on a single issue vote and N_i is the number of no votes. The outcomes vary from 1, complete unity on the issue, to 0, complete division in the party (Hix, Roland & Roland, 2005). This, however, is a primitive index. The index used in this thesis, as developed by Votewatch, will be explained later on in the chapter on operationalizing (chapter 6).

However, the concept of unity as expressed above entails several necessary conditions, namely a political party, a party leadership, and a majority line (to which one can be whipped). I will go into these further now.

Parties, the leadership, and the majority line

The essential unit of research, the institution within which this research takes place, is the political party group. It is no surprise that the theoretical review should start here. There is no single explanation for why political parties are such an essential institution in today’s legislative system, but Chhibber and Kollman (2009) recognize that party systems can be reflections of social cleavages, solutions to collective action problems, and reflections of institutional rules. Each of these approaches take up several factors within the party system and outside the system trying to explain why there are at all political parties. The European Parliament is a somewhat different system as it can be regarded as a mix of systems in the member countries and an aggregation of the parties that are active within the member countries culminating in Political Party Groups, which developed legislative power over a fairly extensive period of time (Hix & Hoyland, 2011).

However, no different from national political parties, these political party groups also have their own structure, with party leadership, committees, etc. (Hix & Hoyland, 2011). Although not much literature can be found on the exact power and politics within the political party groups, Hix & Hoyland (2011) assume that the party leadership in fact employ a whipping system, similar to those found in the UK and the US. The key explanation for these party whipping systems for Hix and Hoyland (2011) is not necessarily direct evidence, but based on a more indirect line, namely that of party unity. There is much research on the phenomenon of party unity, which they call 'cohesion' in the European Parliament. Researchers such as Kreppel (2002), Raunio (2000), and Hix, Noury and Roland (2005), Noury and Roland (2002) all did extensive research on the party systems, the political party groups and most importantly the party unity. And their conclusions on party unity are all supportive of each other; There has to be a whipping system as unity cannot be explained otherwise. For instance, Noury & Roland (2002) argue that the party unity grows, when the salience of the issue grows, thus indicating that the party leadership, when faced with an important issue, puts more pressure on their MEPs to vote a certain way. Furthermore, they come to the conclusion that the majority party line (or the party leadership line) is followed so strictly that just by knowing the party group to which an MEP belongs allows one to predict the vote of the MEP with around 90% accuracy.

Party unity on a whole, according to Hix, Noury and Roland (2005), can mainly be explained by measures of ideological closeness, effectiveness of party group organization, and power of the parliament within the European Union. However, Hix, Noury and Roland, in their follow up research in 2009, quickly establish that the diversity within and between the parties has risen concerning ideological congruence and that the power of the parliament has increased over time. Therefore, partially, they conclude that the high party unity is ground to infer that there is indeed a whipping system and even a party whip position, but this does not mean that there is much research on the actual shape or form the whipping system takes and what the role of the party whip (if there is one) in fact is. Luckily the European Parliament is not the only parliament and there has indeed been much research on the role of party organization and leadership on party unity in for instance the American and British parliaments. Crowe (1986) put forth a comprehensive article on what he calls the web of authority and the different forces at play in party unity, within the grasp of the party leadership, but also outside of it. But not all research has focused on a hard whipping line. Some also conclude that there is a sort of soft whipping or socialization (Norton, 2003; Crowe, 1986). Burden & Frisby (2004) focus on the U.S. House of representatives and tried to establish the amount of whipping by examining the turnover

rates, comparing earlier member's positions with their actual roll call votes. They then try to discover how many of the parliament members have been turned by the party leadership. But the American research goes way back as Ripley (Ripley, 1964; Ripley & Froman, 1965), as early as 1964, provides conditions under which party leadership is stronger and weaker. Ripley & Froman describe six major conditions, which are '(1) Leadership commitment, knowledge, and activity, (2) Issue type (procedural vs. substantive), (3) Visibility of the issue, (4) Visibility of the action, (5) Constituency pressures, and (6) activity of state delegations' (Ripley & Froman, 1965: p. 63). Other studies have adequately described the role and responsibilities of the leadership, such as Thomas' (1982) study of the Canadian House of Commons, which provides yet another piece of the puzzle that is the party leadership. Kam (2009) in his comprehensive study of Westminster parliaments recognizes three approaches to parliamentary behavior, namely: [1] the preference-driven approach, where the outcome of the legislative body is simply a matter of aggregating MP preferences, thus making predicting the outcome of parliament behavior 'easy', [2] the institutional approach, where the institutional embedding of the MP's serve as mediation between MP preferences and their votes (such as agenda-setting, internal party rules, electoral system, etc.), and [3] the sociological approach, the backbencher follows the party line due to internalized norms (Kam, 2009). These approaches give clues as to which factors need to where research on party whipping needs to start.

One of the essential elements in this research is the majority party line. This concept can be made clearer by zooming out a bit and looking at how coalition formation and policy making between parties is organized. The current theory on this, the mandate theory, views parties as offering different policy programs to electors (Macdonald & Budge, 2005). Therefore, it is essential to parties that they act in unison in order to present a clear program to the voters. Closely linked to this context is the principal-agent mandate that the members of parliament get from their parties as well (Kassim & Menon, 2003). Therefore, it already becomes clear that various lines of principal-agent and mandates run along the position of MEP. Which is why I will now explore some of these principal-agent lines and other possible forces acting upon the MEPs.

Voting conscience and other principals

A high degree of unity within a party can also be explained by the ideological congruence or coherence of the MEPs within the political party group. This has been dubbed party cohesion by Sieberer (2006). However, the notion of ideological congruence can lead to some confusion.

The concept is mostly used in the study of overlapping ideology between political parties or political party members and the voters or constituency. This is illustrated in the research done by Belchior (2010; 2012; Belchior & Freire, 2013), in which she looks at the congruence between parliament members and the voters by examining the preferences of both the groups. However, the concept of ideological congruence or coherence has been stretched to also include coherence between party members and the party group itself. This has been given various names such as Party coherence (Sieberer, 2006), a form of internalization or basic agreement by Crowe (1986), shared policy preferences and party coherence by Owens (2003), but they all refer to the same idea of inherent shared policy beliefs that overlap when a voting comes up, independent of the leadership heavily interfering to steer the preferences. I think therefore we must see this as something like voting your conscience as an MEP, which then, partly accidental perhaps, lines up with the other MEPs. The Westminster system has enjoyed much more attention concerning this type of research and a notable researcher on this subject is Kam. Kam (2001) acknowledges that party unity's center debate has been focusing on, what he calls, parties vs. preferences. In his extensive comparative research of Canada, United Kingdom, New Zealand and Australia, he comes to the conclusion that ideological congruence plays a big role, but does not account for the total unity and therefore, there must be some involvement by leadership (Kam, 2009). Furthermore, Kam (2009) distinguishes the ideological or preference-driven approach as one of the three major approaches to legislative behavior, as mentioned before. Sjoblom (1968) makes a distinction between party identification, program identification, group identification and person identification, but the outcome remains the same. The MP votes in line with the party out of personal conviction whether it be on an emotional level or intellectual level. However, the voting behavior in the European Parliament cannot be merely explained by a vote for conscience or the party, mainly because there is an extra layer in European politics, namely the national politics, which could be the national government, or the home-front national party. When regarding the MEP as an agent, it has in fact three principals, the European political party group, the national government, and the (home-front) national party (Roland, 2009). McElroy and Benoit (in Heller & Mershon, 2009) even argue that the national level is the predominant level and basis for the European political party groups, which would mean that unity is a matter of the national parties agreeing. The political party groups fundamentally remain conglomerations of national level parties (Kreppel in Heller & Mershon, 2009: p. 147). However, it is also stated that party switching, MPs going from one national party to another in the UK parliament, also occurs on a regular basis, meaning that

loyalty and ideology still play a part and an MP is not just a machine that is put in position and has no further say in his behavior. The choice of party is dubbed the ‘calculus of candidacy’, namely the choice for a party by a representative on the basis of motivations such as career advancement or ideology, and for any MEP there are essentially two choices on the individual level, namely at the national level and in the EP (Heller & Mershon, 2009). However, it is established by research of McElroy and Benoit that national parties pick political party groups on the basis of corresponding policy or ideology, which effectively limits the diverging demands from principals (Heller & Mershon, 2009).

Chapter 4: The Institutional Setting

Before I can further elaborate on the variables identified in the literature review in this thesis, it is necessary to understand the unique institutional setting of the European Parliament. Therefore, in this chapter, several aspects of the European Parliament, such as its electoral process and the structure of the European political party groups, will come to pass. This will hopefully leave no ambiguity on the assumed relationships covered in the theoretical framework and the accompanying hypotheses.

The internal vs. the external setting

The dependent variable is the concept of Party unity, which is used here effectively as simply the observable unity, observable in voting behavior. I will go on more about how this unity is measured and constituted in the operationalization. However, for now it is necessary to say that this unity stands for how united, or grouped, the political party group, signified by its members, is on issues, in this case measured and constituted by their voting behavior. Party unity is influenced by two institutions. On the one hand the external, ‘the structure of relations between the parliament and the executive’, and on the other hand the internal, ‘the structure of incentives inside the legislature’ (Hix, Noury & Roland, 2005). The European Union is a separated powers system. The executive branch does not need the continued endorsement of the majority of the European Parliament, like is required in the parliamentary democracy system in most member states of the EU. Party unity is therefore less strict as it is in the fused powers parliamentary democracy, because the loyalty to the leaders of the political groups is less important since ‘the lack of discipline does not threaten the survival of the executive’ (Hix, Noury, & Roland, 2005). Another external or system effect on unity is established through the type of competition that exists between the parties (Hix, Noury & Roland, 2005 – Power to the Politics 2). Next to the relation with the executive, I have identified two other factors in the ‘external’ setting, namely: the party group make-up, and the more importantly, the electoral process.

European political party groups

European political party groups are not the same as the national parties in shape, size or process, but they do share functions. In fact, perhaps some of the main functions we can ascribe to the party groups as being similar to the national party are some that are of central importance to these thesis, namely the structuring of the electoral process, ensuring voting cohesion, and distributing positions in the legislature and the executive. One thing that is significantly different than the national parties, is the formation of the parties themselves. They actually are

instated after the election cycle, where national delegations decide, every single election cycle, whether or not they want to cooperate in a European political party group. This creates a multi-layered party, consisting of many national delegations. However, obviously there is some ‘path-dependency’. National delegations can shift from one political party group to another, but the main party groups have existed for several years and have done so with a core of parties which together comprise the heart of the political party group.

As mentioned briefly in the literature review, the stability of the legislative decision-making process is codependent on the party unity in voting. The unity also has direct effects for the accountability of the parties and the legislative system. Thus, “only if the majority party or the majority coalition in the legislature is able to display cohesive¹ voting can legislation be passed and voters identify the actors responsible for the policy innovation” (Lindberg, Rasmussen & Wartjen, 2013: p. 2). However, the European political system differs vastly from the national systems it incorporates. One of these differences is the lack of recruitment of the commission from the parliament (Lindberg, Rasmussen & Wartjen). But, most relevant to this thesis is the lack of nomination on a European level. This is done through the national parties. Thus, it will serve the clarity of the thesis to give a closer look of the electoral process.

The electoral process

First off there is an outline given by the European Union, as proscribed in some of the articles of the Treaty of the Functioning of the European Union (or TFEU). In this treaty, the legal basis for the common rules, arrangements, and the role of the European Parliament is laid out (European Parliament, 2016). However, this does not mean that the procedure is regulated to great detail. In fact, the member states have high autonomy in conducting the elections and have to adhere to few principles, one of which is basing the elections on a proportional representation and use of “either the list system or the single transferable vote system” (European Parliament, 2016: p.2). Even something as fundamental as who is able to put forth nominations is in fact regulated by the member states themselves. Some countries, like the Netherlands require parties to nominate candidates for the EP, but in countries like Portugal anybody who have the required number of signatures or electors can be endorsed as a candidate.

If we zoom in on the electoral process for the Netherlands for instance, we come across several characteristics that are handled on a member state basis. For instance, the national political

¹ The term ‘cohesive’ here is used in the way that unity is used in this thesis.

parties control and compile a list of candidates. Any voter may indicate only one preference. There is only one single constituency that comprises the entire electorate. Persons who are 18 years and older are entitled to vote and are eligible for election. And finally, there isn't an electoral threshold but there is a quota (European Parliament, 2009).

However, what is very important to establish is that the European political party groups do not compile the list of candidates for the parliament, which puts them in a significantly different institutional context than their national counterparts. Furthermore, this entails that the political party groups are composed 'after the fact'. Namely, after the voting has been done, thus what these political party groups lack is the power to put candidates on the voting list, signifying a loss in their disciplinary power.

Internal setting

This thesis will focus on the internal incentives as the external incentives are similar for the Political Groups because they all inhabit the same political structure, and this is not a cross system comparison. The internal incentives encompass several incentives ranging from personal ideological congruency (consent) to use of sanctions (coercion) (Crowe, 1986: p. 161). Crowe (1986: p.162) argues that there are three forces that determine the compliance, or conformity to the party norms, of MPs, thus forming party unity or party loyalty. These three forces are (1) Compliance Mechanisms (2) Identification and (3) Internalization. However, this is not a complete nor perfect account of the forces that the party leadership can use to drive party loyalty up. The force identification can be split up into a sense of duty or role awareness of the MP, which can be appealed to by the leadership, and on the other hand leading by example, which means that backbenchers can identify with and copy the behavior of the frontbenchers.

An important indicator for how the party is able to whip the MPs that are connected to the party is the institutionalization of their 'whipping system' (Heller & Mershon, 2009). The institutionalization can refer to the actual position of a party whip, but also to the establishment of a majority line in general and the communications of that line. Furthermore, it has been indicated that this is different for parties depending on their age and existing structure (Heller & Mershon, 2009). Next to these institutional factors, there are several other factors in play which will be covered in the following theoretical framework.

Chapter 5: Theoretical Framework

This theoretical framework will further distil three main independent variables that seem to play a big role in the dependent variable's outcome, namely: [1] Party Leadership Disciplinary Measures or in other words whipping power. The power the political party group leadership has to 'whip' other members of the party into place and thus ensure party discipline. [2] Ideological Congruence, the cohesion or natural congruence between the MEPs own ideals and conscience and the party line. [3] Influence of other Principals, the influence of leaderships, parties and governments, outside of the political party group leadership that act on the MEP. I will further elaborate on these factors, which will later be translated into the three hypotheses.

Party groups' disciplinary power

The disciplinary power, or the capacities for disciplinary measures, has been largely unidentified for the EP political party groups. There is no one definition at hand, as many researchers use their concepts in slightly different manner. However, in this paper I will maintain a clear definition of what the party groups' disciplinary power is. The party groups' disciplinary power refers to all the capacities a party leadership has to influence or control the behavior of other MEPs of that party group. In order to structure these capacities, as there are many shapes and forms, the first level distinction used is hard and soft power (Wilson, 2008). This distinction serves as a good starting point, but it remains too vague. Thus, I will further explicate the mechanisms within these groups, according to the literature.

Hard power mechanisms

The Hard Power Mechanisms can take many forms and can have many agents. The Mechanisms refer to the hard power that a principal has to enforce their preferences, while the target, the agent, possibly has different interests. Especially in the case of the European Parliament Members there are interesting extra principals in the national governments and national parties that might pull on the MEPs. This type of measure has an explicit, hard, character to it. They are forms of reward and punishment and mostly very apparent.

Negative inducements (Coercing)

Hard Power Mechanisms can roughly be divided into two forms. On the one hand there are negative inducements, which Sjoblom (1968) calls the Coercive power. These inducements mainly encompass punishment of unwanted behavior or misaligned preferences. Two types of hard negative inducements can be distinguished but both have to do with blocking off the party

resources, one of the very reasons parties are useful to MPs, for that specific MP. This can either be done by (1) expulsion or through (2) withdrawal of the party whip (Crowe, 1986: p.162). By expulsion it is meant that an MP is placed out of the party and has to move on as an independent. Withdrawal of the party whip means that the party breaks all communicative ties with the MP, who cannot attend meetings or contact other party members, therefore effectively being cut off from the party while still a member. Crowe (1986: p. 162) notes that these strong negative inducements are a last resort for they can lead to rebellion as these types of measures will not be met with much cooperation when used too often.

Positive inducements (Rewarding)

On the other hand, there are the positive inducements, which Sjoblom (1968) calls Reward power. These positive inducements are rewards for good behavior of an MP. Crowe (1986: p.162) speaks of two rewards, (1) promotion of an MP, and (2) Patronage. For the first reward the Party leadership takes into account the record of compliance of an MP when he/she is up for promotion, which the office seekers know and therefore they know that compliance leads to rewards. A position higher up the party leadership ladder, such as the whip itself or vice-presidents or president in the party group could give the MEP a myriad of benefits, such as influence, money, status, etc. The second reward, patronage, includes the appointment to various commissions within the parliament or even overseas delegations or special commissions. Ripley (1964: p. 575) provides even more possible rewards as the party leadership is the main bargain carrier and can therefore help with attaining (3) packages of policies MPs would personally like to pursue. The Party whip in particular is argued to work as the 'framework for channeling the information' (Ripley, 1964: p. 575).

Soft power mechanisms

The following mechanisms at the disposal of the party leadership or party group are not as explicit as the former measures and can therefore be dubbed the soft power mechanisms. The measures have a very implicit character that appeal to the senses of MEPs or even subconsciously affect their behavior.

Identification - Leading by example

Crowe (1986: p.163) determines that compliance measures aren't the only forces that drive an MP to be loyal to his party. There is also a tendency for more 'soft powers' (Wilson, 2008). The leadership universally informs the backbenchers of their voting preferences (Ripley, 1964: p. 575). The argument is that when the party leadership acts in a certain way, the backbenchers

can identify with this behavior and pick this up. The leadership will act as a reference group to the backbenchers (Crowe, 1986: p.164). ‘Their goals and expectations form the behavior of the backbenchers’ (Crowe, 1986: p. 164). Sjoblom (1968) calls this the Referent Power. This can go through all forms of identification and can ultimately mean an appeal to solidarity, but otherwise also a threat of resignation by the leadership, which because of person identification or party identification want to prevent.

Role awareness – Appeal to duty

Attached to the former argument about passive leading by example is a more active appeal to the sense of duty of an MP. This presumes that there is indeed a role awareness of an MP knowing that his duty as an MP is to support his party, which would otherwise be left powerless if nobody felt that sense of duty. Crowe (1986: p. 164) argues that the MP ‘is an instrument of party; he has obligations to his leaders and to its supporters in the mass electorate’. This sense of making MPs do what MPs ought to do is also described as legitimacy or legitimate power (Sjoblom, 1968).

Internalized support – Socializing

That the party leadership does not always have to use hard power, such as the compliance measures they can take, is best exemplified in the capability to socialize the MPs. The process of socializing on the part of the leadership means that the party leadership tries, through interaction and discourse, to influence the behavior of the MP in favor of compliance or coherence. In other words, ‘[soft power is] the capacity to persuade others to do what one wants’ (Wilson, 2008: p. 114). This effectively leads to (1) a basic agreement with the party leadership’s preferences and (2) a feeling of loyalty to the party leadership. When these MPs internalize the ideas and preferences of the leadership as their own, then the leadership can even ensure party loyalty without an element of consciousness present with the MPs. The MPs loyalty can become ‘self-directed’ as a result of ‘effective socialization’ (Blau in Crowe, 1986: p. 165).

Personal support – Authorizing

Closely linked to socializing but a slightly different aspect that the party leadership can apply to its MPs is a certain authority over matters as they can be better informed or sometimes have more weight on matters than the MPs. This authority can come from extensive knowledge on certain subjects or more experience with the internal workings of the political system. For instance, certain MPs or MEPs have certain backgrounds in education or societal careers. Thus,

when they preside over certain subjects within the party, they can claim support on their authority over the matter. This is even more true of the party leadership, which can usually claim authority through their seniority in the political system. Sjoblom (1968) describes this as the Expert Power. Linked to this is a component of trust, especially in the European Parliament, given the vast amount of issues and backgrounds the MEPs must consider. The other MEPs must trust the MEP who is coordinating their stances on certain issues and the MEP will have the task of explaining the position of the party, but ultimately will be trusted by the other MEPs to represent the values of the party best, given the expertise of the MEP.

Individual ideology and conscience

As stated before the use of measures by the political party group leadership is not the only way that unity is formed. Another possibly important factor is the ideological congruency between the party leadership and the backbenchers. This is defined as the ideological level of agreement of the backbenchers with the frontbenchers, otherwise also known as the cohesion in the party. Basically, this cohesion comes from the natural unity between the MEP's personal belief, his individual ideology, and the political party group program. This means that by being faithful to his own ideology the MEP is faithful to his party as well. This congruence can be applied to any of the principals as it merely means that the MEP looks to his own beliefs and follows his own conscience. Any correlation with any other principal is thus coincidental. Therefore, I will not make a distinction between congruence with the political party group, national delegations and the home front national party, because it all implicitly means that the MEP put his own ideology and conscience first and merely let the other coincide with it. It is about the primacy of the personal beliefs. The concept of coherence is however not unproblematic. Objections can be made about the awareness of certain socialization and authorization processes, as well as the openness of MEPs on this point, which will be discussed more in the operationalization of the variables and will come back in the limitations of the research in this thesis.

Influence of other principals

This concept relates to the principal-agent theory. In this theory the member of parliament is seen as an agent, someone who has been delegated authority by a principal (Braun & Guston, 2003). However, in the European Parliament multiple principals can be identified. Next to the European political party group, we can identify: [1] National governments, and [2] National parties. There is a myriad of problems that can be overcome by the accurate use of this relationship (Kassim & Menon, 2003). However, the problem that arises in the EP is that there

seems to be a double mandate, otherwise known as the double principal-agent problem. Two distinct parties delegate their authority to the MEP. Thus, we have on the one hand the ‘normal’ principal-agent structure between the European political party group and the MEP, and on the other hand we have other principals with a specific pull on the MEPS. Their pull can differ significantly from the demands of the European political party group. The MEP then has a problematic stance when having to choose between two principals, who both rightfully delegated authority to him/her, but who have differing demands. In the case of the national party, this seems very unlikely, as they are usually based on similar ideals. But, it is not unthinkable that within the European political party group a different stance is negotiated between the member delegations than the national party upholds. In the case of national governments, this is more problematic as the national governments would call on the MEP to act in the national interest of their home country and not on the MEP’s political principles. This is especially the case when the national party the MEP is a member of is also in the government. In a coalition-government country like the Netherlands, this could mean that the eventual stance of the Dutch government differs from the party interests and thus also the political stance of the European political party group. Concluding, the MEPs voting behavior can be heavily influenced by the pull of either of the two other principals.

Chapter 6: Hypotheses and Conceptual Model

Now, considering the literature review, the institutional setting of the European parliament, and the theoretical framework, three hypotheses are formulated on the three independent variables as described in the theoretical framework. This thus concerns the [1] party leadership disciplinary measures (or whipping), [2] the ideological congruence, and the [3] other principals. All these hypotheses are in relation to the dependent variable, the voting behavior of the party group, the party unity.

Hypothesis 1

The more present and use of the party leadership disciplinary measures, the higher the party unity.

This first hypothesis is based on the supposed influence of the party leadership on the MPs that are members of the specific political party group. The reasoning is that high unity mainly occurs because the party leadership presses its priorities onto the backbenchers in order to gain policy outcomes. It seems very implausible that MPs agree on whatever is being presented by the party leadership as the party line on sheer ideology. Therefore, the party leadership must be using very intrusive tactics to secure a majority party line within the party. But it is also implausible to say that this is the only factor in play.

Hypothesis 2

The more ideological congruence between the party and the members, the higher the party unity.

The second hypothesis takes up the argument that high unity is primarily achieved by an ideological congruence of the members with the political party group. This argument however finds the basis in that MPs choose a specific party because they feel ideologically close to that party. The problem here is that MEPs do not necessarily choose the political party group that they will belong to in the EP, as we have seen in the previous chapter on the institutional context. Their national party, which they did choose and feel ideologically close to, makes the alliance with the political party group. Therefore, this argument might prove to have a solid basis.

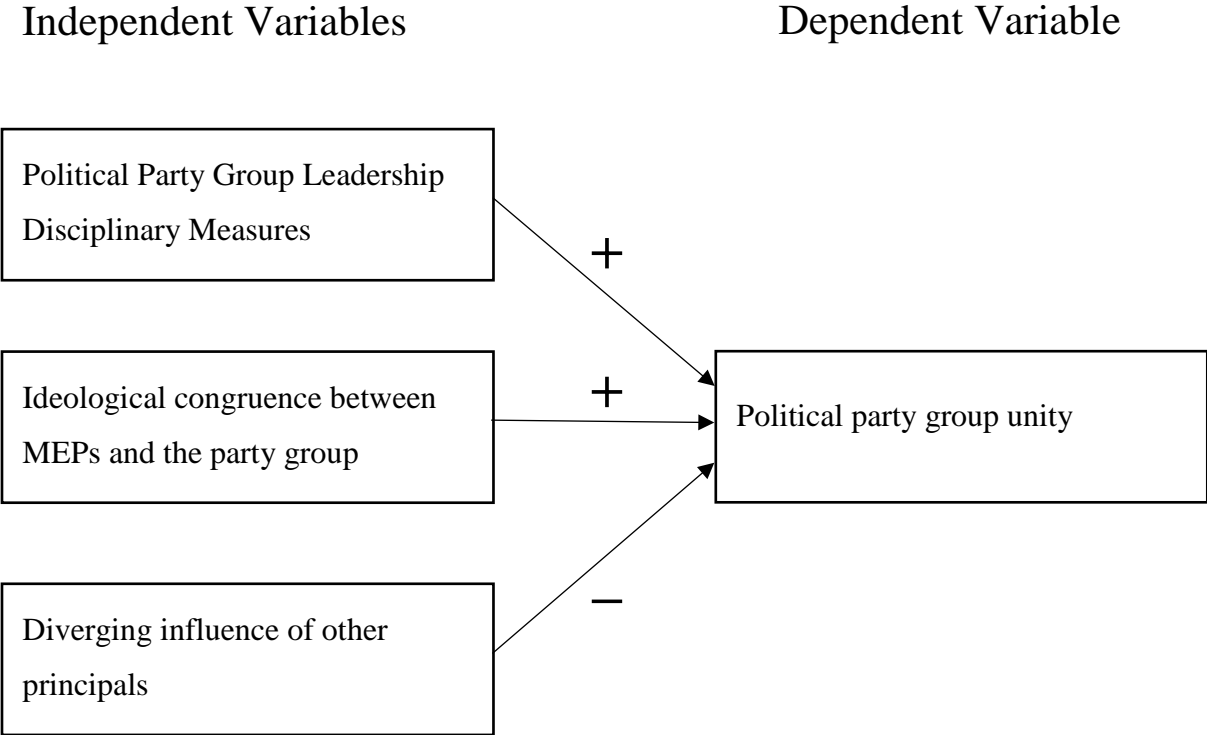
Hypothesis 3

The less demanding of different policy other principals are, the higher the party unity.

The third hypothesis follows the reasoning that party unity in the European Parliament is primarily affected by whether or not the different principals of the MPs follow the same line or require something different from the political party group. In this sense the more demanding of certain policy paths the government or the national party is, the more likely MPs will diverge from the party line and seek to satisfy these other principals.

Conceptual model

If we translate the concepts that we have identified and elaborated upon in the literature review and the theoretical framework into a model, we come up with the model below. For the sake of clarity this model shows all the variables in play and their relation to one another by either a plus, signifying a positive relation, or a minus, signifying a negative relation. These relations are represented by the hypotheses stated above.



Chapter 7: Operationalization

In this chapter the concepts introduced before in the theoretical framework will be made operational. This means that the abstract concepts will be defined and indicators will be attached to them that link towards the concept. This will be done for the independent variables, but also the dependent variable.

The dependent variable: Party unity

The most common and clear cut indicator for party unity is establishing it through the roll call votes of the MEPs. There are two major procedures for the calling of votes. On the one hand there is the show of hands by MEPs. If there is a clear-cut majority for a certain outcome, then the session president will call the outcome without counting the exact amounts in favor or against the outcome. However, sometimes the vote is ‘tight’ and either an MEP or the President can call for an electronic vote, which is the Roll Call Vote. This allows for all the votes to be registered and counted so that the procedure, whether it be absolute or qualified majority, will be unquestionable. A first concern with the use of this indicator then, is that it only looks at those cases where the voting of MEPs is not clearly formed around a majority. The whipping that might occur surrounding issues that have clear majorities is not taken into account in this thesis, thus either the completely successful whipping of most of the parliament or completely coherent stances of most of the parliament cannot be fully taken into account. However, I do not consider this problem devastating for the research.

An important tool in this aspect has been VoteWatch Europe since 2009. Votewatch has been gathering the data concerning roll call votes through various publications as well as a direct publication link with the secretariat of the Parliament and are therefore a very practical and credible source for the votes. Furthermore, they have been able to already organize the voting data as well, while previously this has been a tedious time-consuming task, now this has been made public and easily accessible.

Dependent Variable	Subdivision	Type	indicator	value	Method
Party Unity	Level of agreement	Roll Call Votes	VoteWatch Agreement Index	Ratio	Content analysis

Table 1 Party unity measurement

The Unity is calculated using an Agreement Index developed by Hix, Noury and Roland (2005). The Index accounts for the three options in the voting system Yes (Y), No (N) and Abstain (A). The formula is as follows:

$$AI_i = \frac{\max \{Y_i \times N_i \times A_i\} - \frac{1}{2} [(Y_i \times N_i \times A_i) - \max \{Y_i \times N_i \times A_i\}]}{(Y_i \times N_i \times A_i)}$$

The subscript i stands for the specific party in question. The outcome is a value between 0 and 1. Where 0 establishes total division in the party and 1 total unity. To illustrate, a situation where 0 is the outcome is when the party is split between the three options. In a party with 30 MEPs it would be that each option has ten MEPs backing it. A situation with the outcome of 1 would arise when all 30 MEPs support one option.

This is done for each vote; however, VoteWatch Europe takes it even one step further. They aggregate the unity scores per vote and come up with the average which represents the level of unity of the party itself (VoteWatch Europe, n.d.).

The independent variables

There are three independent variables that will be operationalized. First there is the party group disciplinary measures, second there is the ideological congruence between the MEP and the political party group and third there is the influence of other principals.

All three of these variables are difficult to single out and create distinct indicators for without being either too indirect or too vague concerning the variable that is sought after. The most promising indicator for the three variables is in fact the perception of the MEP itself on what motivates him or her to behave in a certain way and what pressures are felt from the outside or inside. Therefore, the chosen operationalization intends to capture the perception of the MEPs. This is not without risk to the validity of the indicators that will be presented. The perception of an MEP can be influenced by the outside pressure of certain principals and also the process of socialization has been described where external principals apply stealthy pressure to influence the thought patterns of the MEPs, thus almost creating an atmosphere where the MEP feels like it was his own conclusion or conscious choice to act a certain way, but it would not have been, if it wasn't for that influence. To this, one could argue that it does not matter for the concept. If the MEP feels as if it was his own voluntary action to vote a certain way, then this would be enough. On the other hand, the fact that multiple backbenchers of the same party will be interviewed might expose such tactics as surely not all MEPs are influenced in the same way

and thus other MEPs might be abler to take a step back and become more conscious of the socialization process. Moreover, many of the aspects sought after are not perceivable through harder indicators and thus it seems appropriate to resort to softer indicators such as the sense or feelings of MEPs.

Party group disciplinary measures

The first independent variable that requires operationalization is the party group disciplinary measures. There are various aspects to this concept and therefore it will not suffice to end up with one single indicator.

The first indicator for the party group disciplinary measures is the [1] *institutional capacity* they have and use for it. On face value it seems that an institutionalized whipping system is more present than an informal whipping system, but it does not necessarily say much about the effectiveness of the system. This indicator will be given a value on the basis of the political party groups institutional design and whether or not they have a position for the whipping of MEPs. Often this is attached to having a political party group wide leadership at all.

The first aspect of the actual measures is the [2] *Hard Power mechanisms*. We find within this aspect two distinct indicators. First, the use of rewards is examined. As explained before, this indicator examines whether members get distinct rewards for their voting along the party line. Second, the use of coercion is examined, meaning that whether a member who strays from the party line actually gets reprimanded in any form.

The second aspect of actual measures are the [3] *Soft Power mechanisms*. These mechanisms are represented in four indicators, namely: Identification, Socializing, Authorizing and Appeal to Duty. Each of these are slightly different than the others, but they all belong to soft power. These indicators are best measured through the feelings of the MEPs themselves, although it can be said that some of the measures that are spoken off in this section might have been applied so expertly that the MEPs do not even experience it.

Individual ideology and conscience

The ideological congruence of the MEP with the party line or other MEPs within the political party group is also best measured through the experiences or identification of the MEP with the party itself. This experience has been broken up into three parts, starting with [1] *self-proclaimed identification* with the party, concerning mostly statements about the personal relation of one's own beliefs and the correlation with the party beliefs. Next is the [2] *the*

precedence of personal beliefs, signifying a starting point with one's own beliefs and viewing any later correlation not as causal, but coincidental. This is different from the first indicator because it allows for an MEP to not necessarily identify with the party he or she is in, but nevertheless could vote ideologically congruent by following his or her own conscious, which then 'coincidentally' aligns. This has been built in as an extra point as I do not want to conflate party identification with voting aligned. Lastly, I identify [3] *cases of (dis)agreement*, which, like the first point, regard the experiences with agreement and disagreement between the belief system of the MEP and the party, but now not aimed at merely personal experiences but observed experiences within the party, which can sometimes be an easier point to address given it does not concern one's own loyalty.

Influence of other principals

Finally, the influence of other principals is a very important element as well. This entails the pressure of other principals, which have been classified as [1] *Home front national government*, the possibility of national governments successfully influencing MEPs in their votes in order to recruit for the national agenda, [2] *Home front national party*, the national party in the national parliament with the national party structure who tries to influence the MEPs in order for them to vote along the national party line.

Overview of the Variables

To avoid confusing about the variables, the indicators, and the method of analysis, I present in this chapter a short overview, in tables, of the variables in play in this thesis.

Dependent variable

Concept	Aspect	Indicator	Explication	Method
Party Unity	Level of agreement	Roll Call Votes	VoteWatch Agreement Index	Content Analysis

Table 2 Dependent variable

Independent variables

Concept	Aspect	Indicator	Explication	Method	
Party leadership disciplinary measures	Institutional setting	Task division	Presence of group wide party whip position	Interviews	
			Presence of a national delegation wide Whip position	Interviews	
	Hard power mechanisms	Rewarding	Vote Indication	Presence of a party group wide voting indication	Interviews
				Presence of a national delegation wide voting indication	Interviews
		Coercing		known use reward mechanisms with subject (concerning either personal gain through office seeking or policy seeking).	Interviews
				Known use punitive mechanisms with subject	Interviews
Soft power mechanisms	Identification (with leadership)		Sense of personal identification with party leadership of the MEPs	Interviews	

Socializing	The internalization of political positions by the MEPs through discursive persuasion of the leadership.	Interviews
Authorizing	Either overruling by higher figure or trust building by more knowledgeable figure	Interviews
Appealing (to duty)	Sense of appeal (to duty as MEP) MEP	Interviews

Table 3 Independent variable 1: Party leadership disciplinary measures

Concept	Indicator	Explication	Method
Ideological congruence	Identification with party program	Self-proclaimed identification (or harmony) with party	Interviews
	Personal Belief Precedence	Self-proclaimed precedence of personal beliefs	Interviews
	Cases of (Dis)agreement	Instances of disagreement in European Parliament between MEPs (either national delegation or group wide)	Interviews

Table 4 Ideological congruence

Concept	Indicator	Explication	Method
Influence of other Principals	Home front Government Demands	MEPs sense of National government diverging demands and influence	Interviews
	Home front National party influence	MEPs sense of National party diverging demands and influence	Interviews

Table 5 Influence of other principals

Chapter 8: Research Design

One of the most important aspects of this research design is the selection of the cases. This research is focused on the unity within a political group. Therefore, the parties need to be treated as separate units or cases, within which the unity is measured and also the independent factors such as the extent of the party disciplinary measures, ideological congruence and influence from other parties. The result is that the research entails a small N comparative case study, in which, as Blatter and Haverland (2012) mention, random selection can lead to serious problems. However, a deliberate selection of cases, in order for it to counteract possible problems that come with random case selection, should comply with two rules. First, the cases must vary, as much as possible, on the dependent variable of interest, which is the party unity. Second, the cases must be as similar as possible on all other traits except for the independent variable of interest, such as the size of the party, the number of different nationalities, etc. These traits are treated as circumstances, which need to be controlled for in the selection of the cases, other variables such as the influence of other parties and ideological congruence will be taken on as independent variables to control for within the research itself.

This particular method of case selection allows for the drawing of causal inference based on observed co-variation between the presence and extent of the party's disciplinary measures and the level of party unity (Blatter & Haverland, 2012). To induce the effects of the co-variation in the variables, the second canon of Mill, also known as Mill's method of difference, will be used. Mill described the ideal situation that "If an instance in which the phenomenon under investigation occurs, and an instance in which it does not occur, have every circumstance save one in common, that one occurring only in the former; the circumstance in which alone the two instances differ, is the effect, or cause, or a necessary part of the cause, of the phenomenon" (Mill, 1843: p.463).

Given the need for selecting cases and the choice for Mill's method of difference, it is obvious that the resulting research method will be a Most Similar Systems Design (MSSD), which is a variant of the comparative method (Lijphart, 1971: p. 682-683). This design as shown before is based on the inference of causation because of concomitant variation. The choice for this design follows from first of all the fact that the leading concept in this design is the independent variable party group disciplinary measures and therefore we are looking at an 'how does X affect Y?'. This type of question needs to isolate the independent variable in question, which is done through the selection of cases on the basis of a varying dependent variable, which is

established with a first investigation of the possible sample base, and similarities between the other independent variables, as shown before. This is paired with the idea that the research follows the form of deduction and therefore also heavily leans on and combines already existing bodies of theory, because of the theoretical point of departure (Anckar, 2008).

Case selection

Blatter and Haverland (2012) argue that the way to select cases is a two-step process. The cases with the most varying outcomes on the dependent variable of interest must be selected first. Second, the variables you want to control for need to be around the same value for the cases selected.

As a first investigation, the unity of the all the political party groups during the first year of the 7th parliament has been measured (see table 6). Following this measurement, the parties that will serve as this research’s cases have been selected, they are the Greens-EFA (Greens-European Free Alliance) and the EFD (Europe of Freedom and Democracy)

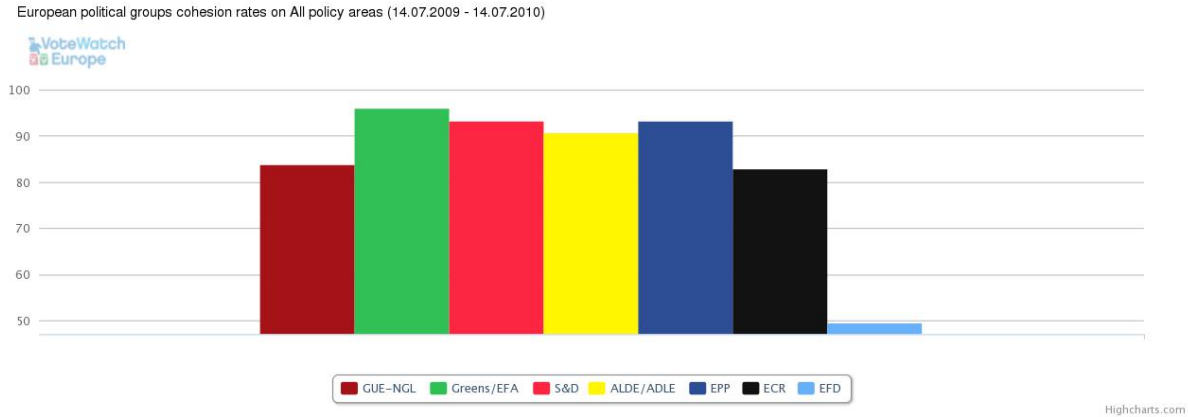


Table 6: First investigation of Party Unity

Now that the first step of Blatter and Haverland (2012) has been completed, the focus turns to the second step. Now, other factors need to be examined and explored. In order for the parties to be suitable for comparison, they cannot differ too much on these other factors of importance, which do not necessarily have a theoretical importance, but even practical differences can mean something for the unity of the parties, so controlling for them is necessary. There are a number of main aspects of the parties taken up in the table below, which compare the parties. Obviously there are more factors in play, but these are the ones deemed necessary to look at.

Control Variable	Greens-EFA	EFD
Amount of Members	58	31
Number of Nationalities	15	12
Number of big country enclaves	2	2
Average participation in Roll-Call Votes	86.87%	78.60%
Center position in spatial model (pivotal player)	No	No
Presence of a majority line	Yes	Yes

Table 7 Overview of control variables

The factors displayed above are of differing importance. The party size, for instance, could influence the party leadership's efforts either because the party is too big to manage or because the big parties have a much clearer structure as the size required it. Even though the parties aren't completely in the same range, the EFD is the smallest and the Greens-EFA is a midsize party, it can still be assumed that the influences of their size is not too different. The number of nationalities is important as one of the main variables is the pull a national party has on their MEP; therefore, it is important for the unity to establish how many parties are in the political group. If it were only a few parties, from a handful of countries, this could mean that the political party group is much more an extension of the national parties than in a political group where much more compromises have to be made in order to establish a general political party group program. It must be noted that between the two parties the amount of nationalities is very similar. To follow up on this the composition of the party is important as well. For instance, if, out of the 31 members, 16 were part of one national party, they could very well dominate the party and the party line, which would tamper with the comparison. The parties have, luckily, a very similar composition as both have two bigger parties surrounded by various members of other parties. For the EFD, the Italian and the British enclaves are the biggest with 8 seats each. For the Greens-EFA, the French and German enclaves are the biggest with 16 and 14 seats. Even though the numbers aren't exactly the same, the situation can be regarded as quite similar.

Another interesting aspect is the participation of the members of the political party groups. This is an aggregated percentage of the individual members and on how many of the votes they weighed in. It is taken from the archives of the VoteWatch site, where they simply took the total amount of votes cast by the members of a party group and compared it to the total amount

of possible votes the members of the specific party group had. It shows a margin of less ten percent for the two parties, but it has to be mentioned that this in regard to the other parties could be perceived as fairly big difference as the Greens-EFA have the highest percentage and the EFD one of the lowest percentages. However, within the research design, this cannot be seen as a very significant difference and even though on the spectrum the parties differ a lot, it can be assumed that the percentages are just fairly comparable for the parties as some of their members are more active in voting than others and this seems to be valid for all the parties in the European Parliament.

Furthermore, a big factor of importance could be whether or not the political party is a frequent pivotal player, namely playing an important connecting role in the establishment of majorities in the Parliament. Thus, this might force the party to whip its backbenchers into place more in order for these vital majorities to remain. This is loosely linked to whether or not the party is a center party and is therefore needed in many coalitions to achieve majorities. However, apart from the fact that both parties are relatively distant from being a pivotal player, Hix, Noury, and Roland (2009) have determined that being a pivotal player or the spatial position on the ideological scale do not significantly affect party unity.

Finally, a prerequisite of whipping is having an established majority party line to whip dissenting MEPs in line with. It is necessary for both of the parties to have a form of a majority line. It is almost common knowledge that every party has a majority line or leadership around which the party program is formed as it is required institutionally by the European Parliament that a group party has a leadership and an accord on which they function. In order to control for this variable, the presence of a party policy program on the website has been used as an indicator for a majority line. Deriving from their website, it can be assumed that both parties have a clear majority line. The EFD group has an outlining charter for their party program and both parties have policy papers containing general, but sometimes more specific ideas they pursue.² Unfortunately, the EFD group is now defunct.³

² See for the primary subjects that the Greens/EFA establish policy lines on: Greens/EFA, Policy papers, <http://www.greens-efa.eu/documents/69-policy-papers.html>

³ However, there are still sources explaining their main party line and presidency, for instance: IndemGroup, EU-Critical Group in European Parliament launches, http://web.archive.org/web/20090907202723/http://indemgroup.eu/32/news/556/?tx_ttnews%5BbackPid%5D=1&cHash=913b16272c

Deconstructing the selected cases: Multi-layered groups

Another difficult aspect is the notion that these party groups are literally party groups. They have very sophisticated structures. For instance, the Greens/EFA group has two basic, pre-grouped, lines, namely: The European Greens, and the European Free Alliance. Next to those two groups there were two independent national parties, not pre-grouped, but in the Greens/EFA group and also two independent politicians who joined the group. The mechanics with these groups are very difficult to oversee. Their influence and structures might become apparent after the collected empirical data, but so far there is not much to suggest that these power structures actually influence the decisions as some parties that were with the EFA, decided to align with other party groups in the past. However, it is too important not to mention this anywhere as it might play a role nonetheless.

Validity and reliability

The chosen design has certain stronger and weaker points. A stronger point is that the internal validity is more secured, because of the selection of cases where, as many as possible, intruding factors have been eliminated. However, the external validity is quite low. This specific design does not produce generalizations easily, but it can provide analytically generalizable concepts for the other parties. It can do so because of the similar institutional setting and capabilities of the other political party groups. This means that this research has a certain extended application property towards the other parties in the European Parliament and political parties in general, as it shows the workings of several theoretical concepts under certain circumstances.

The reliability of the independent variable, namely the roll call voting in the European Parliament is high. Upon reproduction of this research this should always yield the same results. However, this cannot be easily said of the qualitative part of the research, namely the interviews. The results of the interviews are always a product of numerous factors, which makes the reproductive aspect all the more difficult. Two measures have been taken to gain more reliability. First, concerning a more reliable outcome in general, multiple subjects, MEPs, have been interviewed concerning the same party. as well as an outsider who could corroborate the statements made by the MEPs. Second, to gain more reliable outcomes within the interviews,

an interview structure has been set up, in which several questions correspond to single factors, thus making issues of internal consistency clear.⁴

Data collection methods

The data collecting methods used are: interviews and archival records (Yin, 2003). Both methods have their own strengths. The interviews are used to explore factors as well as to collect more ‘soft’ data, such as perspectives. Archival records have been used to look at the votes of the members of parliament, as is done with the records collected by VoteWatch. Furthermore, Yin (2003) mentions another important aspect in relation to data and research, which is the chain of evidence. A clear path has been followed from research question to data collection and interpretation to conclusions which allowed for more reliability of the research as it helps external observers to trace the process.

The archival records

One of the primary data collection methods is the use of archival records, albeit indirectly. The organization VoteWatch has collected the minutes, the archived votes, of MEPs when it comes to Roll Call Voting in the European Parliament. These archives are then indirectly used through VoteWatch in this research and therefore it deserves some attention as to what the advantages and disadvantages of this data and data collection is. In principal, the data set that is transposed by VoteWatch is based on the public archival records of the European Parliament, which tracks the minutes. The big advantage of this method is its unobtrusive nature. Unlike, for instance, interviews, where the interviewer can lead on a respondent or disturb the natural behavior or perception of the respondent, the calling on archival records is very clear, unchangeable and unobtrusive. The information is therefore very reliable.

One of the disadvantages of the hard indicator of roll call voting, is that it doesn’t cover every aspect of the MEPs voting behavior. The roll call is a measure that is only used when the voting is ‘tight’, namely where there isn’t a clear majority in the Parliament. Therefore, this somewhat skews the indicator. However, it is still the ‘hardest’ indicator out there, namely every single MEP is forced to vote by name and every single vote is recorded, making this the preferred indicator.

⁴ See part on interviewing structure and questions on page 40 and 41 for more details on the measures taken to insure reliability.

Structure and questions of interviewing

The independent variables are of a specific nature in their demands. Namely, the core of the indicators is to understand where the motivation for MEP behavior comes from exemplified in their voting behavior. In the operationalization section it has already been shown that the best way, at least the starting point, to understand the influences on the MEP is to inquire into the perception of the MEP on outside or inside motivation. The best way to establish perceptions is through the use of interviews (Berg, 2007).

Interviews can come in various degrees of structure. Roughly, they can be categorized in structured, semi-structured and open interviews (Berg, 2007). Very structured interviews prove very reliable and can easily be compared to each other, but they leave no room for improvisation and therefore some concepts might not be taken into account. On the other hand, open interviews have not enough structure to compare them well, and therefore are more likely used to explore certain subjects, rather than test certain concepts amongst groups of people. The best way then, it seems, is to establish a semi-structured interview for the purpose of being able to compare the notes on the several concepts already used at hand, but also leave room for open questions where the interviewer or interviewee can place remarks or establish new subjects that might be relevant to the research. Furthermore, a semi-structured interview leaves more room for going on about a certain subject, when the answer is not completely clear or perhaps could use more body. Complimentary to this is the room it leaves for new concepts that appear to be probed and further explored, which will be very useful, especially when looking at possible disciplinary measures and other influences. Another element that comes up in interviews is the directness of the questions and openness of the interviewee. The problem could be that the questions steer the answer or the questions might have negative connotations that need to be avoided. In this research the structure takes up a more general first approach to ease in the interviewee and to establish an atmosphere or trying to find out about certain phenomena instead of starting with personal direct questions which might set a tone of attack and defend, which will steer the answer of interviewee towards underplaying the phenomena at hand to defend themselves and the parties they represent. A good way to circumvent this is to talk in general or about other parties with regards to the phenomena first as to establish the character of the conversation and then moving on to more personal experiences.

Another aspect to consider is the access or getting in (Berg, 2007). The amount of MEPs necessary for research depends on how many are needed in order for the outcome to be comparable, but also on the access to the persons and the amount of time needed for the

interviews itself. The sample size for the research as a whole is clear. Two of the parties, the outliers on the dependent variable are taken as cases for comparison, however the sample size also plays a role for the independent variables, where the party is represented by the MEPs it has. This sample size is thus dependent on the level of access and the amount necessary for reliable representation and generalization. The object of the interviews with the MEPs is to aggregate their indications for their party level and therefore it is desirable to speak to as many MEPs from each party as possible, however achieving full compliance of all the party members might be practically unachievable given the space and time constraints. I have spoken to three MEPs from the EFD-Group and four MEPs from the Greens-EFA group, as well as an outsider, namely from VoteWatch Europe. The countries the MEPs hail from are Sweden, The Netherlands, the United Kingdom, Austria, and Denmark. Thus, there have been eight interviews in total. Primarily the goal was to get a mixed group of respondents, but practicalities, such as language, location, and availability, bound the research to a select group of people from which as many as possible have been approached. This effectively meant that only MEPs with a good command of English were able to participate, but within this group the aim was to gain perspectives from different countries. Given the fact that the make-up of the EFD-group was much less diverse and especially the command of English was less widespread over the group, this severely limited the options for interviewees. For the Greens-EFA there were more options and thus also the composition of the respondents was more diverse. For privacy reasons, the group of respondents has been anonymized in this research, but the personal data can be made available upon request. Therefore, the direct ties between the respondents, their countries and their parties has been left aside. The outsider is Mr. Frantescu, the director of VoteWatch Europe, who can thus give an account from a different perspective, but is nonetheless close to the action and well-informed. He has been approached to give a secondary experience to check and clarify certain aspects that came up in the interviews. All this means that on the scale of validity, the instrument doesn't rate as high as one might wish for. Validity should, however, not be regarded as a dichotomous value. Even though some perspectives might be lost in the instrument and through the practical strains, this research is of an exploratory nature and thus mixing up the respondents by not having them all come from the same country or linguistic background, makes for a more diverse pallet of respondents better able to capture what this instrument is after, namely party whipping. Furthermore, the interviews held with the respondents are of a semi-open nature, thereby not excluding concepts not in view beforehand.

The method of interviewing itself is preferred to be face to face, however as Berg (2007) mentions this can be tricky with time and place, so another option might be to interview through messaging, mailing or on the phone. However, all of these methods seem to lose value, either through other modes of communication, such as facial expression, or through reaction speeds (Berg, 2007). Therefore, another alternative is considered, namely a video call or -conference interview. This type of interview retains the responsiveness of a face to face interview and other modes of communication. But, practical restraints do sometimes call for imperfect solutions and therefore, even though not preferred, the phone call has been used to do some interviews, following the golden rule of rather having a phone interview, than not having an interview at all.

On a more operational level the structuring of the questions itself is very important. As Berg states “garbage in is garbage out” (2007: p. 76). The questions need to be clear to the respondent, but they also should not lead the respondents on to give desired answers, so it is of importance to create questions around the themes in this research without being too direct and without being too vague. One way to make it a bit clearer and not compromise the leading on is to make it theme based and mark theme switches. This way the respondent knows the subject matter that is being discussed and in what context the question is being asked. Furthermore, it will also help to analyze the answer by theme as it will be easier to overcome problems of “double barreled” questions. “Double barreled” questions typically entail answers that be easily analyzed as the answer can be significant for multiple concepts. Other problems occur when the question is too direct or too negative and sometimes when they are too complex. Finally, the structuring of the questions itself is of importance. A respondent will not be lead into the heavy questions right away. At first, the questions will be ‘warm-up’ questions, moving on in difficulty and ending per theme with confirming and recapitulating questions. In short, the aim of the questions is for them to be clear, one-dimensional, formed around the specific concepts and structured to support the narrative and the comfort of the respondent. This way the measurements can be regarded as of a higher quality to the research and possible problems of hidden researcher interpretation can be limited as much as possible.

Data processing methods

Another important part of the research design is the manner of processing the collected data. The two main used methods for collection are the interviews and documents/archival records. Especially the interview method requires a coding scheme to make the process more transparent

and thus more reliable and valid. In order to encode and decode the transcripts of interviews and documents used, a coding scheme has to be devised. This coding scheme acts as a key for the coding. The concepts and indicators devised in the operationalization will be coded and these codes will be ascribed to passages within the transcripts or documents to relate them to the concept that they are interpreted to (Berg, 2007).

The coding scheme can be found in the appendices. It follows the operationalized concepts and assigns a color and code to a certain aspect in order to make clear, at face value, how certain passages were interpreted. Furthermore, it is important to note that, to avoid confusion and overuse of marking, leaving out a code or color marking means the passages can be ascribed to a zero code. This zero code will show the passages which were deemed unrelated to the research.

Finally, it is useful to mention that because of the structure of the interviews and the expectation that the framework is not complete in its concepts and indicators beforehand, there has been made use of back and forth coding. This way new concepts or not yet identified measures can be given a new code and taken in, in the research. It would be a waste of the material if some valuable measure cannot be taken in to the research because the coding scheme was locked in, besides the obvious impairment to the validity and reliability of the conclusions.

Overview of the variables

For the purpose of oversight, the following table is presented which shows all the factors that are in play for this research. This shows the dependent variable first, through the outcome of the investigative testing, which determined the case selection. Then, the control variables, which have been described in the case selection section of this chapter. These factors should be the most similar as in this design they can only contaminate the outcome of the research with their possibly varying presence. I have shown that either they are similar or their mild dissimilarity doesn't have any effects on the research. Finally, the table shows the independent variables which are without any scores as they will be discussed in the following chapter in the analysis.

MSSD		Greens- EFA	EFD
DV	Party Unity	Highest	Lowest
CV 1	Amount of Members	Midsize	Small
CV 2	Number of Nationalities	Average	Average
CV 3	Number of big country enclaves	Low	Low
CV 4	Average participation in Roll-Call Votes	High	Low
CV 5	Politically ideological center position in spatial model (Pivotal Player)	No	No
IV 1	Party group disciplinary measures	TBD ⁵	TBD*
IV 2	Ideological Congruence	TBD*	TBD*
IV 3	Influence of other principals	TBD*	TBD*

Table 8 Overview MSSD variables before input

⁵ TBD: To Be Determined in the analysis part of the research paper.

Chapter 9: Analysis

In this chapter the data collected will be analyzed accordingly. This analysis consists of a per variable description of the acquired data and, following the independent variables, a return to the hypotheses formulated around these variables. In displaying the data, the accounts have been anonymized. Meaning that great effort has been put in to keep the accounts anonymous to readers with possible malicious intent, however the interview transcripts of the MEPs spoken to for this thesis can be requested. Furthermore, I will refer to the MEPs through a coded system, namely: (interview [MEP code], page number: [variable code]). This way, the statements, shown or corroborated, by MEPs can be checked simply through following the system. However, before we take to the independent variables, the data of the dependent variable will be displayed and described.

Party unity

For the dependent variable the data has already been collected and transposed by VoteWatch Europe, which makes this task all the easier. In the table below, it is made visible how the unity rates (VoteWatch uses cohesion for unity) compare to the other parties.

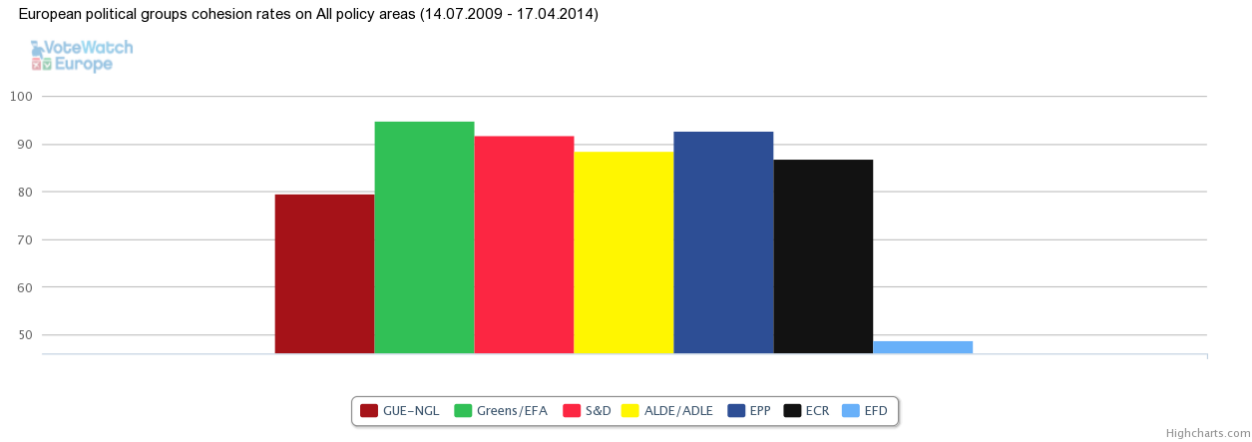


Table 9 Party unity

The first noticeable element is that the EFD (light blue, on the right hand side) has by far the lowest unity amongst the EP’s political party groups. The second noticeable thing is that the Greens/EFA has the highest unity. This coincides with the first investigation of the parties based on the first year. Given the full five years of the parliament the numbers show that in fact the Greens-EFA have the highest unity rate and the EFD have the lowest unity rate. If we single out the parties and show their respective percentages in a table, it will look like the following table.

	Greens-EFA	EFD
Unity rate (percentage)	94.68	48.59

Table 10 Party unity values

European political party group disciplinary power

Now we move onto the first of the independent variables, starting with the disciplinary power of the party leadership, otherwise mentioned as the whipping power. The disciplinary power of the political party group will be shown according to the operationalisation of this variable. So firstly, the institutional capacity will be discussed for both party groups, then the hard power mechanisms, and finally the soft power mechanisms. Each description of the data is followed by a testing of the hypothesis, a conclusion, and an overview table to make the analysis insightful.

General comments on the institutional capacity

The first indicator for a whipping structure is whether or not the party has a whipping position or some form of a party leadership. The party leadership consists of an outward focused party leader (or party leaders, plural, as with the Greens-EFA and the EFD-group) and several vice-presidents. Concerning the EFD-group it was practical for them to have two party leaders as they had two major national delegations with the UKIP, Nigel Farage, and the Italian Lega Nord, Francesco Speroni, however for the Greens-EFA it was not this logical, because both the party leaders come from the Green group within the Greens/EFA. These party leaders are, as said before, mostly focused on representing the political group in certain settings and are not as much concerned with the internal workings of the party group, which is mostly set out to the Vice-presidents of the groups, to which I will come later. However, even though there is some sort of 'layered-ness' within the party group, this doesn't seem to have been very noticeable, or at least on the surface doesn't really seem to play a big role in the workings of the party and the adoption of specific stances or not. In none of the interviews did an MEP ever talk about the difficulty of the specific subgroups to come to an alignment. It seems therefore that whether or not an MEP or a group of MEPs is connected to one of the subgroups, between a national party and the European political party group, does not directly influence the outcome of the European political party group's positions, for instance in the Greens/EFA we deal with the Greens and the European Free Alliance, each having their own meetings and subparty structure, but neither at tension with each other. The national delegations might be influenced by this structure. On the one hand a delegation on the fringe of the political party group is much less likely to set the party line or as one MEP from the Greens-EFA put it: "we are a focus party, so we didn't have an opinion on every issue" (Interview G1, p.2). While a national delegation that fronts a 'subparty' sets the majority line, or at least has much more influence in doing so.

[1] Institutional capacity: Party whips and voting indications.

When the MEPs were asked if there was such a thing as an official party whip the answer was a clear no. There is no actual whip in place like in national parliaments such as the UK and the US, according to the MEPs. However, the question itself is not that simple. Even though there isn't a single whip in place that will enforce the majority party line, there can be a network amongst most parties along which certain majority positions can be pushed. Next to the party whips there is the mechanism of vote indications. A vote indication can be a mark by the national delegation in the political party group to vote a certain way, in order to steer the MEP a certain way. The presence or absence of such an indicator is a sign of possible further party whipping.

EFD-group.

In the EFD-group there was a clear signal that there is no party whip, nor any political party group whipping structure (interview E2, p.1: Code A1.1.1). The EFD-group MEPs even said that they did not actively seek coordination within the group. The major national delegations have their own whips and structures, but when it comes to cross national delegation coordination within the group, the coordination is kept to a minimum (interview E3, p.1: Code A1.1.2). Concerning the fact that there are in fact no political party group wide whips (Interview E3, p.1-2: Code A1.1.1; Interview E2, p.1: Code A1.1.1), one MEP described it like this: "we don't seek to impose. We just recognize live and let live. They do it one way and we do it another way and we don't have a problem with that" (Interview E2, p.1). The recognition of 'live and let live' can be marked exemplary for the stance of the MEPs in the EFD-group. One MEP even mentioned that in the five years he was affiliated to the group, never once was he told to vote a certain way (interview E1, p.5). There are however national delegation wide whips whose main function it is to get the MEPs of that national delegation to vote in line with the national delegation's stance on the subject matter (Interview E3, p.2: Code A1.1.2). The cross national delegation coordination only amounts to a few meetings between the parties a month and no actual coordination before votes (interview E3, p.2). These meetings are mostly a discussion on their positions and have in no further manner any real leverage over the MEPs. Basically these discussions function as platforms for the parties to let each other know what positions they are aiming to take up concerning upcoming legislations.

Greens-EFA group.

For the Greens-EFA the MEPs also denied the existence of a single party whip position (interview G1, p.1: Code A1.1.1; interview G2, p.1: A1.1.1). With one MEP saying it is more of a title, meaning there is no one person occupying this position (interview G4, p.2: Code A1.1.1). However, this does not mean that there is in fact no whipping. In fact, what ensued was an elaborate explanation by some of the MEPs of what I will call a whipping network. It became clear that the Greens/EFA seek alignment through their vice-presidents, who each preside over a working group of several MEPs within the party who are coordinators on certain issues. These vice-presidents get fed by the respective coordinators on the specific issues, who have a seat in the parliamentary committees on these issues. They signal the vice-presidents on upcoming issues and convey with the respective vice-president and the advisors on that specific topic to form a general position, a party line. It is the task of the high-ranked vice-presidents to have other MEPs conform to the party line (Interview G1, p.1: Code A1.1.1; Interview G3, p.3: Code A1.1.1; Interview G4, p. 2: Code A1.1.1). Unsurprisingly, the voting indications for the party came from the whipping networks. The respective coordinator or rapporteur even, in counsel with the vice-presidents and the advisors, formulated the party voting indication on the specific issue. This was clearly a party group-wide voting indication (interview G1, p.1: Code A1.2.1). One MEP even mentioned that when a certain minority would opt for a second option there would be a second voting indication on the voting list (interview G4, p.3 & 5: A1.2.1). This network of whipping and voting indications was seconded by the account of Mr. Frantescu. He further explained the pivotal role of the coordinators as relaying the position of the parliamentary committee that they serve in, as well as establishing the political party group party line, finding its second to final reflection in the vote indication, the final being the actual vote (interview Frantescu, p.1: Code A1.1.1 & A1.2.1).

Whipping mechanisms

[2] The whipping system: Hard power whipping mechanisms.

We now move on to discussing the hard power whipping mechanisms. These are the mechanisms which have been labelled as either coercing or rewarding. Both parties MEPs seemed very reluctant to acknowledge either of these mechanisms really going on in the European political party groups.

EFD-Group.

As mentioned before the EFD-group has no political party group whipping network and some MEPs state to not even seek group wide unity. It also became very clear that there is no leverage, no basis, for any sort of negative hard whipping, for coercing [Interview E1, p.3: Code A1.1.1; Interview E2, p.1: Code A1.1.1; Interview E3, p.2: Code A1.1.1]. For instance, one MEP said that there is no possibility to deny someone a post or something of the sorts [Interview E3, p.2: Code A3). This lack of a whipping structure automatically entails that there isn't much leverage for rewarding either. Given the fact that there aren't any posts of power available for an MEP to advance to within the political party group. Due to the apparent symbolic nature, as described above, of the 'power' positions within the national parties within a political party group, there isn't much rewarding going on within this political party group. Another one of the MEPs spoke of the possibility called 'withdrawing the whip', which, according to him, is something that could be done in other parliaments such as the UK or US. This means that the party leadership will stop communicating with the backbencher and stop supporting his or her efforts. This also has to do with the possibility of getting re-elected and how tied this is to the European party. A withdrawal of the whip could mean trouble for the re-election campaign. However, according to this MEP that has never come up during the time he was an MEP for that party (interview E2, p.3: Code A3). Another MEP talked about the lack of patronage they had in the European parliament which would make rewarding or coercing all the more difficult, he mentioned: "[there are] no sanctions on anyone. We can't say to MEPs: 'well, if you keep voting against the whip, you will never become a minister'. Because we don't have that level of patronage". In sum, partially given the absence of a party wide whip and the lack of handouts, there seems to be little hard whipping going on in the EFD-group.

Greens/EFA-group.

Concerning the rewarding and coercing in the Greens/EFA group the MEPs were clear about the absence of coercing. One MEP put it like this: "[...] in national party systems [...] there is a party whip and in the national party they have a credible threat. Then they can say to a member who is not willing to cooperate that if they do not cooperate they will be cut off from the party and perhaps they will never work in politics again. In the European Parliament this threat doesn't work." (interview G1, p.1: A3). The MEP went on to elaborate that the party leadership who might come from a different country would not have the political pull required to kill off

the political career of an MEP hailing from a different country, and the killing off of an MEP's political career in a different country would have no effect (interview G1, p.1). None of the other MEPs even spoke of such measures when asked about possible measures of influence. When subject G3 was asked directly if other measures, clearly referring to possible coercive measures, were maybe in play, the MEP referred to the soft power measures which we will discuss later (interview G3, p.5). However, coercive measures are only one half of the hard power measures, the second being the rewarding, either in policy or office. This came up with two of the MEPs for the Greens/EFA, both especially responding to the policy seeking aspects of this type of co-operation. In fact, MEP G1 explained the position of his national delegation which negotiated a policy trade-off on certain aspects for their top issues, saying: "our policies mostly concern information policy and the Greens/EFA generally agreed with our positions. They didn't always have as much focus on the information policies as we would have liked them to, but they were happy to go along with us and the co-operation worked excellently" (interview G1, p.1: A2). Later going on saying: "we met with the leadership of the Greens/EFA and we presented our plans and policies and how we intended on working together and they were equally happy with the extra votes, support, on the already existing policy programmes and happy about getting a party that was really interested in the information policies area" (interview G1, p.2: A2). This seems to be corroborated by another MEP, who acknowledged that the group also feels a certain 'pressure' to vote together in order to give their policies more weight in the parliament, thus signaling a sort of rewarding structure where there is a trade-off in support (interview G2, p.1: A2). This corresponds with what Ripley (1964: p. 575) provides as an explanation for possible rewards as the party leadership, or the party as a whole, can be the main bargain carrier and can therefore help with attaining packages MEPs would personally like to pursue. This was also backed by Mr. Fratescu, who explained a little more about the 'negotiating', saying: "they [coordinators] already know what is in the pipeline in the European Commission, they know what will come in three or six months' time and they start lobbying the political support of their colleagues. Negotiating, saying I will support your efforts, but when this report comes to the parliament, please support me to become a rapporteur for it" (interview Fratescu, p.4: Code A2).

[3] The whipping system: soft power mechanisms.

Now, for the final part of the party group disciplinary measures, we move on to the soft power mechanisms. These measures range from identification with the party leadership, authorizing, socializing, to appealing to duty. What these measures have in common is that they have a soft

approach, they do not directly present the carrot or the stick to the MEP, but rather are primarily based on forms of discussion.

EFD-group.

In the interviews with themes of the EFD-group it became clear that there were some things that correlate with indicators of soft power whipping. For instance, in the interview with MEP E3 it came up that there were sometimes meetings right before important voting cycles where the national delegation whip would spend time with MEPs and spoke to whom intended to dissent, which becomes clear because the voting intentions are sent to the whip in advance, who can then try to persuade the backbenchers one last time to vote in line with the national party, although this was indicated as not being a very long time (Interview E3, p. 2: Code A5). This falls in line with the soft power workings, socialization or even authorizing, where frequently discursive persuasion is used to get MEPs in line (Code A5 and A6 for socializing and authorizing). This corresponds with what has earlier been dubbed 'the capacity to persuade others to do what one wants' (Wilson, 2008: p. 114). Next to this It seems that the political party group has a group wide meeting at least twice a month where they discuss several important issues and state how they are intending to respond to it and they will try to seek some common grounds (interview E3, p.2: A5), but it has to be noted that the MEP also said that the leader states that: "This is a marriage of convenience, don't let us upset one another by arguing about these things" (Interview E3, p. 2). So, these meetings do not carry a heavy persuasive weight with them, but seem to be more loosely based on letting each other know what their preferences are. However, this is enough to be categorized under either socialization or authorizing. For instance, the preferences of the party leadership could weigh heavy on the MEPs or even just the stating of the preferences could project some level of conformism onto the MEPs. One of those instances came from one of the MEPs who recalled 'reluctantly abstaining' on a vote where he 'felt strongly to vote against the whole thing' (interview E2, p.2: Code A6). He eventually, after discussing with the party and the leadership, felt that dissenting would not be politically smart. So he trusted his fellow party members and party leadership and did not vote against it. On the basis of the national delegation there are more discussions as the MEP went on: "in the case of the delegation we do normally have a whips meeting as it is called, there is a separate whips meeting where they actually create the whip, but we then have an MEPs meeting where we look at the whip to discuss it and the chief whip and the advisors will explain why they are recommending certain votes and we will have a debate sometimes" (interview E2, p.2: Code A5). There is space for discussion according to this MEP, but this is

on a delegation basis. This is corroborated by a second MEP: “we have discussion before we start voting” (interview E3, p.2: A5). However, he also goes on to say that they can’t spend too long on trying to persuade fellow members of the national delegation because of time restrictions and also because they don’t pursue party unity that much (interview E3, p.2: A5).

Greens/EFA-group.

As for the Greens/EFA, they seem to display a much more intensive use of soft power mechanisms. Especially the authorizing and socializing of positions amongst the MEPs and the leadership. Multiple MEPs explained that there are extensive plenary sessions with the whole group in which a lot of the soft power whipping came into play. They declared that the plenary sessions are there to discuss the topics at hand and try to form a sustainable party line, with which most of the MEPs can agree. Furthermore, this is not a one-time event or just one discussion attempted by the party and its leadership. Long before the plenary sessions, the coordinators can already flag the leadership what kind of legislation is in the pipeline and what kind of stance or position is most defensible and in line with the party and the MEPs and their constituencies. It is a long process that depends on the experience and success of the MEPs at hand, the coordinator and the Vice-president presiding over the corresponding work group, to already have a general idea of whether or not legislation will become a problem and to work on socializing and internalizing the positions (interview G1, p.2: A5; interview G2, p.1: A5; interview G4, p.2 & 5: A5). This in effect means that the primary tasks of the leadership and the coordinators is to sell the positions to the other MEPs through arguments, language use, and taking away issues that MEPs flag up. However, something that really came up which has only somewhat been accounted for in the theoretical model with authorizing was the matter of trust. This played a big role for the Greens-EFA especially, but it has been backed up by the interviews with the parliament watchers that other groups experience the same phenomenon. It was opted that no one MEP can manage to be an expert on all the policy areas, so in turn for every party group to have a workable relationship and cooperate, there has to be a good basis of trust between the MEPs (interview G1, p. 1: Code A6; interview G3, p.5: Code A6; interview G4, p.4: Code A6). As one MEP explained: “within the committees you have to specialize yourself and you have to be highly competent on the level of facts and figures. And if, for example, one of the colleagues tries to argue on a topic on which I don’t know too much about and would tell me his or her position and argue for it with facts or information, I was convinced. It was especially in those fields where I would rely on the expertise of a colleague” (interview G4, p.4: Code A6). The MEPs declared that often times you have to trust the arguments and

narrative that a coordinator, the expert in the political group on a certain issue, has and it serves no purpose to try and challenge them on these issues, unless there is a personal or national connection to the legislature. This was backed by Mr. Fratescu who mentioned that: “it is very hard for an MEP to know what is going on in every department. [...] you have to rely on someone else and it is a matter of trust” (interview Fratescu, p.8: Code A6).

Testing Hypothesis I

After having analyzed the first variable of this thesis, we can now return to the hypothesis formulated surrounding this variable. This hypothesis was:

The more present and use of the party leaderships disciplinary measures, the higher the party unity.

This hypothesis is confirmed. The whipping network of the Greens/EFA is much more extensive and on a higher level than the whipping done in the EFD-group. The Greens/EFA have a thorough system, comprised of the Vice-presidents, the coordinators and advisors, in place through which the common position is prescribed and discussed and furthermore they do this on the level of the political party group. The EFD-group does not have an elaborate whipping network. In fact, they claim to have only whipping positions on the levels of the national delegations, therefore lacking significant party leadership influence over the group as a whole.

Even though MEPs from both sides rejected possible instances of hard whipping, some rewarding was going on in the Greens/EFA party, where there seemed to be some policy backing trade-offs going on. However, the more telling story was the use of soft power measures. The EFD-group MEPs cited a mild use of socializing concerning the political party group as they only really convened on two to three occasions with the party group as a whole per month. This was wildly different for the Greens/EFA group. They convened on a regular basis and concerning all issues, deploying a system of authorizing and socializing, where they tried to convince others through discussions to trust their opinions and make them see the logic of what they try to present.

The higher presence of soft whipping explicitly and the whipping on a political party group level gave the Greens/EFA a significantly more present and used whipping network over the EFD-group, which shows in the party unity numbers. Deducible from the data is the idea of concomitant variables, namely given the variance between the party groups in the dependent

variable, party unity, and a corresponding variance in the independent variable, party group's disciplinary measures, a relation can be deduced. Therefore, this hypothesis is confirmed.

Ideological congruence

Now that we have discussed the party group measures, we can move onto the second independent variable in this thesis, namely the ideological congruence. This has been measured through personal statements on their ideological precedence. I will first discuss the alignment between the personal ideologies and the parties and then the possible precedence of conscience over the party ideology. This will be laced with mentions of instances of (dis)agreement.

Congruent ideologies

EFD-group.

One of the MEPs in the EFD-group stated that the ideological alignment between him and the party was logical. He mentioned searching and choosing a political party group which was the best fit for the ideological points he, with his national party, set up as primary points of concern in Europe. He said that the EFD-group simply gave him, the MEP, the most space to go after his own points of concern, mentioning the 'live and let live' mentality that was displayed by the EFD (interview E1, p.3: Code B1). Another MEP put this in a broader perspective, saying: "we are together because of certain core issues" (interview E2, p.4: Code B1). He meant by this that the ideological alignment of the MEPs in a political party group is practical, precisely because they are in a political party group. However, he went on to explain what these core issues are exactly that they agree on, saying: "our [country] colleagues want to get [country] out of the eurocurrency [...], as we want a referendum to get out of the European Union entirely" (interview E2, p.4: Code B1 & B3). The political party group supports each other in those particular efforts.

However, the MEP went on to mention that these efforts are basically the only issues they are aligned on ideologically, saying: "equally, I mean, you take green issues, nuclear, wind farms, all those things, we're just fundamentally opposed to each other, but we are perfectly happy to agree to differ" (interview E2, p.4: Code B1 & B3). Another MEP further mentioned that he would completely vote according to his own personal beliefs, not what the party leadership of the political party group would establish as the party line, saying: "that was the deal" (translated by Jamie van der Klaauw; interview E1, p.3: Code B2). One of the consequences of this attitude is that you would have to present amendments on a personal note, according to that MEP

(interview E1, p.3). Another MEP corroborated this attitude and even mentioned that this was the overall intention of the political party group, stating: “if an individual member has a view on a particular issue that he feels strongly and very differently about, then nobody will be too upset about it” (interview E2, p.2: Code B2). Another MEP mentioned the ‘explanation of vote’ option as something to help MEPs understand why some voted differently from what would be the party line, even on a delegation basis (interview E3, p.2: Code B3). Furthermore, these MEPs were talking about divergence on a national delegation level, let alone in the European political party group level. As mentioned before, there isn’t even much coordination on that level.

Greens/EFA-group.

In the Greens-EFA there is a clear alignment through the ideological backgrounds of the MEPs. As one MEP for the Greens-EFA said: “I think the differences of opinion are very limited, if you look at the French Greens then they do not differ that much from the Swedish Greens. We all have a somewhat similar outlook on the world, on how we think there can be a better world” (translated by Jamie van der Klaauw; Interview G2, p. 1-2: Code B3). This quote exemplifies a certain ideological bond that at least occurs within the ‘subparty’ of the Greens that crosses country boundaries and creates a united position by default. Another MEP corroborated this, saying: “because we are in agreement, it works like a real party” (w G3, p.1: Code B1). When another was asked if here personal ideology coincided with the party group’s stance, the MEP responded with: “it mostly did” (interview G4, p.4: Code B1). This notion of ideological alignment was backed by Mr. Fratescu, who mentioned: “the classical way of explaining it, is that the socialist from Hungary is more likely to vote as the socialist from Spain, than a conservative from Hungary. You can clearly see ideological alignments, the scale of values that each person in each part has is more important than the nationality among the MEPs” (interview Fratescu, p.2: Code B3).

However, even though the MEPs claimed that their personal ideologies mostly coincided with the political party group’s ideology, this didn’t mean that they therefore automatically put the party group’s ideology first. In fact, the Greens/EFA MEPs, almost in unison, claimed that their personal ideology, their conscience so to speak, was the most important. As one MEP said: “I always did so [vote in line with my personal conviction] and if it wasn’t it line with the party position in the group or the national party, I explained my position to everybody and it is also the freedom of the MEP, it’s the responsibility of the MEP” (interview G4, p.3: B2). That same

MEP commented on voting against the party line that it “is only the case when it is a really strong conviction, when it is close to your heart” (interview G4, p.4: Code B2). Furthermore, saying: “in my time in the European Parliament, about ten years, this only happened once or twice” (interview G4, p.4: Code B3). The MEP recalled a debate on an issue where, according to this MEP, multiple stances were deemed acceptable and: “some members of the group voted differently on this” (interview G4, p.4: Code B3). Another MEP mentioned not remembering even having been in such a situation, saying: “if there was a conflict I told them [the party leadership] I would be voting against or I would abstain. It is accepted” (interview G3, p.4: Code B2).

It became clear through the interviews that in the Greens-EFA, the MEPs felt that there were very few cases where there were actual disagreements between the members, however they did occur sometimes, as another MEP recalled a situation on copyright reform, where “in the end a few MEPs voted the other and there were no hard feelings on anybody’s account” (interview G1, p.2: Code B3).

Testing Hypothesis 2

We have now analyzed the second independent variable and again we return to the hypothesis concerning this variable, which was:

The more ideological congruence between the party and the members, the higher the party unity.

The second hypothesis is confirmed. The parties seem to have a significantly different outlook on a possible ideological alignment on the party group level. In sum, MEPs from both parties seem to feel strongly about their personal beliefs when it clashes with possible party ideology. However, firstly the level on which there might be clashing is different. MEPs from the EFD-group who spoke of divergence from a party line were doing so on the level of national delegations, and even then there was a high tolerance for possible divergence. Furthermore, MEPs who discussed cross national delegation talks stressed their independence as fractions or MEPs to vote their own way, as one MEP said that it was part of the deal. There was however alignment on an issue for the MEPs from the EFD-group and that was Euroscepticism, as mentioned by several MEPs. Other than that, they simply didn’t have an ideological standpoint.

This was very different for the Greens/EFA, who have a similar view on possible divergence from the party line, namely being open to other stances, but then party group wide and not just

on the delegation basis and furthermore having a much wider pallet of issues on which they agreed. By no means were the Greens/EFA a single issue party like the EFD-group. This also did not mean that there were no instances of disagreement. The MEPs on the Greens/EFA side clearly mentioned, although sparse, instances of disagreement between them, citing several different issues over the years.

The apparent interest of the EFD-group in an alignment on solely Euroscepticism, which is cited as their primary and only connection in the political party group, seems to lead to a lack of any further plans or ideas for their place in the European Parliament. There quite simply cannot be any further plan, when the one issue you strive for is leaving the EU or retracting certain affiliations with the EU, the very platform you use to further ideas or plans. This would explain why the EFD-group doesn't find any further basis for ideological alignment, there is quite simply no relation possible in the European Parliament after a possible exit. This however, is very different for the Greens/EFA who in fact have more issues they take up jointly. They do have plans for an ongoing European collaboration, thereby automatically, forcibly, increasing the amount of ideological congruence that has to have been reached in order to work together in a political party group at all. Thereby creating a multi-issue political party group platform to which MEPs and their national delegations can identify with, seemingly the primary reason for joining the group. In stark contrast with the single issue party group of the EFD, this ideological congruence seems to have its impact on the party unity as well. Therefore, we can once again speak of concomitant variables, confirming the hypothesis.

Influence of other principals

In this final part, the influence of other principals, the third independent variable, is discussed. This variable mainly entails the influence that other principals, such as the national governments, or the national political parties have on the MEPs. This has been explored by asking the MEPs about their experience with possible influence from these different principals.

Home-front governmental influence

EFD-group.

First off, it has to be noted that none of the MEPs within this political party group had any connection to a possible government party, meaning that already this creates more distance between the MEPs and possible national government demands. This is a dynamic that was also cited by Mr. Frantescu, who said: “the EFD-group is not in government anywhere, so it is much

easier for them to criticize legislation” (interview Frantescu, p.8: Code C1). However, one of the MEPs declared that there was in fact input from the national governments. The MEP went on, saying: “certainly the [national] government sends us their advice. We sometimes read it, because it is interesting to know what they think. Of course in no way do we let it influence our position” (interview E2, p.1: Code C1). When asked about such occasions more, the MEP said: “we have voted in accordance with their advice, but we wouldn’t have done unless we wanted to do it anyway” (interview E2, p.2: Code C1). However, the other MEPs didn’t even mention governmental influence when asked about other influences.

Greens/EFA-group.

Also in the Greens/EFA-group there were not many allied national parties in their respective governments, so the same relation of distance applies here as well. As Mr. Frantescu mentioned about this: “for many of the Greens-EFA [...] they don’t have any context with their governments at all” (interview Frantescu, p.9: C1), further saying that “it is clear that governments lobby their MEPs to vote according to their positions, but that only works with the MEPs that belong to their governments. There is little chance that MEPs from opposition parties will be successfully lobbied” (interview Frantescu, p.2: Code C1). One of the MEPs corroborated this and mentioned that “for the [national delegation] it hasn’t been a problem, we certainly never have been in any [country] government” (interview G1, p.2: Code C1). Another MEP went on to mention that there was a special occasion on which they received advice from the government and that the MEP refused to adhere to this call for a certain vote, declaring: “there was a note from the government, because one of the parties put so much prestige in not having it. Of course I am voting for the [issue] here, although my party wanted to vote against, because of the national party” (interview G3, p.4: Code C1). Furthermore, the MEP declared that: “we couldn’t work if a party’s government could direct their members here, forget about it.” (interview G3, p.4: Code C1).

Home-front national party

EFD-group.

The EFD-group is an interesting case when it comes to home-front national parties. One of the major parties, namely the UKIP, does not actually have seats in the national parliament of the UK. Obviously this means that any influence from backers or constituencies does not come from any national political structure but from the national delegation structure and its backing (Interview E3, p.2: Code C2). Thus, we can say that this structure is not as politically tied down

as party structures that do have a presence in a national parliament. The UKIP directly gets votes from their constituencies, these constituencies may in fact play a big part in their role as MEP (Interview E2, p.1; interview E3, p.1). But, its hard to see how this would count as an ‘other principal’ and not just part of the role of the MEP as a representative. Some of the MEPs do have a national party presence and this same MEPs response to the question where his/her loyalty lies, he/she answered clearly that he/she operates within the framework of his national party (Interview E1, p.1: C2). In fact, when asked about national party influence, the MEP responded saying: “we are being political. You will get coordination then. During the entire financial crisis, we had close contact with the [party] fraction in the House” (translated by Jamie van der Klaauw; interview E1, p.4: Code C2).

Greens/EFA-group.

Within the Greens-EFA group there was an MEP who mentioned that there were intensive talks and much contact between the MEPs in the EP and the home front national party, both to keep in touch with the other’s viewpoints and to relay information, however it was stated that it wasn’t felt like the home front national party actually tried to influence the party, there was a relative freedom (Interview G2, p.2: Code C5). All in all, the MEP felt like it was good to exchange and relay several different positions and takes on things, mostly from a European perspective which could add hugely to the national party’s position and provide much information, nonetheless there was no talk of any demands by the national party as such (interview G2, p.2: Code C2). However, other MEPs cited that it “depends on [...] the national parties” (interview G4, p.3: Code C2). Furthermore, saying that: “there is not a strong party line coming from the national states. Only on certain topics it was the case” (interview G4, p.3: Code C2). The MEP mentioned that this relationship to the national party is highly dependent on the MEP, who establishes the extent of this relationship and bears responsibility for it (interview G4, p.3: Code C2).

Testing Hypothesis 3

Finally, the third variable has been analyzed and we return to its corresponding hypothesis, which is:

The less demanding of different policy other principals are, the higher the party unity.

This hypothesis is disconfirmed. For both of the political party groups, the influence from demands from other principals is very low. Partly, due to the fact that neither party groups have

an influential party within a national government, which automatically creates a distance between the party groups and the governments, but not just this. The MEPs themselves clearly stated that government influence does not correspond well with the mandate that the MEP gets in the European Parliament. Furthermore, concerning the national party influence, this depended heavily on the MEP at hand. Some of the MEPs did not even have a corresponding national party, while others, perhaps due to their otherwise limited resources, took heavily to coordinating with their national parties. However, this coordinating with the national party did not seem to mean an adhering to their diverging demands, but rather a sharing of services and information. This hypothesis cannot be confirmed as both party groups seem to have a low influence from other principals, while their unity was wildly different.

Conclusion

So, if we now fill in the results of the analysis, we get the following table.

MSSD		Greens-EFA	EFD
DV	Party Unity	Highest	Lowest
CV 1	Amount of Members	Midsized	Small
CV 2	Number of Nationalities	Average	Average
CV 3	Number of big country enclaves	Low	Low
CV 4	Average participation in Roll-Call Votes	High	Low
CV 5	Politically ideological center position in spatial model (Pivotal Player)	No	No
IV 1	Party group disciplinary measures	Whipping Network	Delegation Whips
IV 2	Ideological Congruence	Multiple Issues	One issue
IV 3	Influence of other principals	Low	Low

Table 11 Overview MSSD completed

Chapter 10: Conclusion

Whipping in the United Kingdom house of commons or in the United States congress is well documented. And through the popularized spinoff of this documentation, such as House of Cards, it is well known too. The process remains bewildering, especially in those institutions. This research has not lead to the possible conclusion of a similarly infamous style of whipping going on in the EFD and Greens/EFA political party groups in the European Parliament. In this thesis I have attempted to use the documentation concerning the well-known whipping in certain parliamentary institutions and applied this to the European Parliament on the basis of a most similar systems design. Two political party groups, with wildly different rates of party unity, have been researched in order to find a possible correlation between their style of whipping and those party unity rates. These variables, together with ideological congruence and influence from other principals, were operationalised, hypothesis were made about the relation between party unity and the other variables, and finally the variables were made subject of conversation through interviews with several MEPs from both political party groups and an observer of the institution. These interviews have been analysed accordingly and applied to form a response to the beforehand formulated hypotheses. In this chapter the main findings will be presented, which will lead up to an answer to the original research question, and finally the implications of these results will be discussed together with an indication for possible further research on this very subject.

Main findings: answer to the research question

Concerning the political party group's disciplinary measures, the results were very telling. The extent and use of whipping seems to have its impact on the party unity. Whereas the Greens/EFA had a significant network of whips, of coordinators who acted as establishers of the party line, on a political party group level, the EFD-group only worked on delegation based whips, which were only really in play for the bigger national delegations. The network deployed by the Greens/EFA was also very active, mainly through the use of soft whipping mechanisms, such as socializing and authorizing. They were in constant conversation on the political party line and gave much space to their coordinators and vice-presidents to establish party lines, and quite frankly enforce it. Strikingly, especially authorizing seemed a frequently cited and logical whipping technique. Given the apparent inability to specialize in all issues, the political party group has a division of labour concerning the issues at play and forges a system of trust between these MEPs to back each other on the issues they cover. The EFD-group did not seek this type

of unity on a political party group level and simply forged a structure best suited to their diverging needs.

As diverging as their other needs were, as aligning was their interest in Euroscepticism. Concerning ideological congruence, there was clear congruence for the EFD-group, solely on Euroscepticism and the possible retraction from any sort of relation to the EU, thereby ending their cohabitation of the European Parliament. This blocked further alignment in the political party group, as there was no future sought after in that institution. This was very different for the Greens/EFA as they had an established pallet of issues on which they agreed to a high extent, namely not that of Euroscepticism but of what can be dubbed the Leftist Green ideology.

This did not reflect in an interest in other principals per se. MEPs from both parties cited their own personal beliefs as primary and national delegation or party group trust as the most important factors for their unity. Neither the MEPs from the EFD-group, or the Greens/EFA-group had any real dealings with national governments, only receiving advice from their respective national governments on some occasions. Neither did any of the MEPs cite their home-front national party as lobbying heavily concerning their votes, however depending on the MEP, some did work more closely with their home-front national parties than others.

This leads us back to the original question with which this thesis began, namely:

What is the effect of the party group's disciplinary measures on party unity in the European Parliament?

I found that the intensive use of a political party group's disciplinary measures contributes substantively to a higher party unity in the political party group. For as much as this most similar systems design allows, namely by inference of absence or presence of a factor, we can interpret the presence of political party group whipping leading to a higher degree of party unity in the case of the Greens-EFA and correspondingly a lack of political party group whipping leading to a low degree of party unity for the EFD-group. However, as cited before, this conclusion is not without its limitations, as will be discussed later.

Implications: broader conclusions

1. Political party groups are not like 'billiard balls on the billiard table'.

Perhaps the primary implication of this thesis is the finding that, despite the institutional similarity, we shouldn't treat these political party groups as if they were 'billiard balls', namely

same in weight, size, and kinetic effect. Even though the balls are all in the same game, namely 'billiards' it seems some opt for a leaner, more kinetic design, while other groups lean towards a more coherent design. This means that when researching the European Parliament and its party groups, it is always necessary to address these political party groups individually, or be very careful when applying any conclusion to the European Parliament as a whole. Apparently, political party groups can react very differently to the same institutional setting.

2. MEPs have very different outlooks on the political party group.

In the case of the EFD-group, there is a clear mechanistic outlook on the formation and the unity of the group. The very formation of the group has been accredited not to an ideological or united front idea, but rather on the benefits and 'perks' of having a political party group within which you have leadership positions. Throughout the interviews with the MEPs it became clear that the MEPs in the EFD-group clearly saw the group as more of a vehicle towards untangling their country with the European institutions, for the Greens/EFA the political party seemingly was not just a vehicle for policy seeking, but rather something of a goal in itself. The platform had a profoundly different status with them. Seemingly caring about the institutions itself, as they perhaps reflect the very values they seek after through their policy seeking.

3. Trust and expertise as the building block of the party.

One of the striking findings in this research has been the role trust plays for the MEPs. Trust, especially based on the fact that an MEP cannot possibly master all the issues and dossiers that are being treated in the Parliament and its committees. Thus, basic for every political party group and its MEPs is a certain reliability on each other, an interdependence. Together, the MEPs can form opinions and make informed decisions about most of the issues that are in play, something that could have never been achieved if the MEP would work alone. This seemingly falls in the authorizing category. However, whereas the authorizing category means an override of one MEPs opinion by a more knowledgeable one, or one higher up in the party leadership, the trust relation seems different. Trust is namely not an override, or at least not always, but also a form of delegation or specialization. This means that MEPs do not even aim to form an opinion which is then later contested and overridden by a more knowledgeable MEP. Rather, a fellow MEP of the same party forms an opinion for you, simply because an MEP is aware that it cannot possibly form an informed opinion on all the issues. My inclination is thus to not treat trust as equal to authorizing, but, in the future, treat it as a separate power.

Limitations and recommendations: further research

One of the limitations as mentioned before in this thesis is the fact that the research design only allows for two parties in the European Parliament to be studied. In order to get a better grasp of the whipping systems in play in the European Parliament and to further investigate the effect of these systems on the party unity, it seems only logical to research all of the parties in the European Parliament. This thesis marks a decent beginning in further exploring the whipping systems next to the inferred whipping as proclaimed by Hix, Noury & Roland, it certainly should not mark its end.

Furthermore, two specific reservations have to be restated. First of all, there are concerns regarding the soft power approaches of the Party Leadership. The current indicators cannot account fully for an effect, namely the problem that soft power and personal development can be very much interlinked. One might argue that this means that the soft power approaches cannot be separated from the personal convictions of MEPs. Therefore, it is not implausible to neglect some aspects of the long term soft power approaches of the party leadership. An MEP, even though he/she might not have come to those conclusions when not exposed to the effect, is not aware of this effect and seems to be consenting to the ideas, thereby effectively making it their own ideas.

Second, there is also a mask of unity concerning the indicator for party unity. Next to the effect of the soft power approaches, the leadership can also influence the agenda beforehand and renegotiate, before voting, before party line establishment, the positions of the party and the MEPs. Therefore, what initially might be regarded as dissent, which needs whipping, is ultimately resolved before it even comes to a vote. This might mean that in packages the votes have been traded off, or the party line position was merely adapted. Through the generation of a party line, there can already be whipping, but this is hard to examine because whipping is usually addressed in a party line vs. MP party member line. To weaken this concern somewhat, one might again question whether or not the adaptation of the party line to an MEP is indeed masking, or merely actual unity, as the effect is the same. If the party line is in fact changed in favour of getting certain MEPs to vote with it, then the case can be made to simply call this conforming to a dynamic party line. However, in this case I would personally make a case for calling this aspect whipping, as it could take on the form of a trade off, maybe seen as a reward, for voting a certain way. Since this is impossible to infer from the current indicators in this thesis paper, I must refrain from saying anything about this, except for making reservations

concerning the conclusions. Future research might do well to investigate the generation of the majority party line to map this early whipping.

Finally, something has to be said about the double position of the national delegation. On the one hand the national delegation could be a great force for cohesion. In the case of the UKIP party for instance the political party group itself does not have a very clear line and dissenting of the national delegation party line is basically dissenting in the group as a whole. This means that because the national delegation figuratively gets bumped up to a political party group leading role, they have a more cohesive force in them for the political party group. That's why the instances where the national delegation actually works as a cohesive force for the political party group can be dubbed as a political party group 'leadership' voting indication, even though it is not technically so. The distinction has to be made with a second situation within which, for instance, the smaller national delegations of the Greens/EFA work. In those cases, we can say that a national delegation could actually be more often a force for dissent. The national delegation might therefore be labelled and analysed as an 'other principal influence'. In these cases, there will be a political party group wide statement made by the leadership, and the national delegation leadership, or whips, would in fact give out a diverging voting advice and steer towards dissent amongst its delegation members. That is to say that at these crossroads it becomes clear where the loyalty of the members truly lies, although the third factor, namely personal ideological conviction might play a decisive role. It was impossible to control for this problem, perhaps due to the nature of the national delegations and the European Parliament, but it is up to further research to analyse this double role for the national delegation and whether or not they are more of a force for unity or dissent.

Appendix I Interview guide

As stated before the interview guide is for a semi-structured interview, this means that the interviewer has some freedom to go on about certain subjects and to open up the interview more, but in principal he is guided by set questions. The interview will start off with an easy welcome and some opening questions about:

- travelling
- background (nationality, etc.)
- etc.

This is done just to relax the respondent and open up the atmosphere. When the interviewer feels like it is time to dive into the matter the opening questions, of an open nature so that the respondent does not feel like there is a desired answer, will be asked:

- As an MEP what do you feel like is the primary role of an MEP?
- What roles do the national parties and the European parties play for the MEP?
- What is the relationship between the European Party, the National Party and the MEP?
- Do you know of any cases where a European Party sanctioned or whipped a MEP in place?
- Do you feel like this occurs a lot in the European Parliament?
- What can of measures does a European Political Party have to discipline an MEP (question of possibilities)?

The interviewer will now bridge to the first theme and specifically make this clear. The general questions address the role of the MEP and the relationship with the National Party and the European Party. It seems logical from a narrative perspective to move into the Theme of European Party Influence as it follows from the general questions that it is about the party leadership, because the bridge can be made gently, but logically and without too many connotations. After this it seems reasonable to contrast it somewhat with the personal believes, to see whether or not the interviewee feels he has enough space, gathering from what he/she said on the first theme, for his or her own views. Then, the interview can lead into the remaining factor of the third party, namely: The National Party. This theme will be discussed as the previous two. Finally, a comparison theme will be made where it feels necessary to, if it comes out of the interview, we try and establish what interviewees hold as a more maintainable line to follow if they clash.

Theme 1: European political party group influence.

- To what extent does the European Political Party Group Leadership play a role in your role as an MEP?
- Does the European Political Party Group Leadership try to influence the voting behaviour of the party's MEPs?
- Is there an assigned (un)official 'party whip' position?
- In what manner do they use their position as whip?
Suggesting a few types discussed in literature: Rewarding, Coercing, Socializing, Authorizing, etc.
- how frequent does this happen?
- Do you have any personal experience with 'whipping'?

Theme 2: Ideological Congruence.

- To what extent does your personal conviction relate to your role as an MEP in Roll Call Voting?
- Is your personal conviction leading in your voting behaviour?
- Are there limitations to your personal conviction within your role as MEP (within your parties)?

Theme 3: National party influence.

- To what extent does the National Party Leadership play a role in your role as an MEP?
- Does the National Party Leadership try to influence the voting behaviour of the party's MEPs?
- Is there an assigned (un)official 'party whip [for the MEPs]' position?
- In what manner do they and
Suggesting a few types discussed in literature: Rewarding, Coercing, Socializing, Authorizing, etc.
- how frequent does this happen?
Possibly suggesting a five-point Lickert scale: not at all, a bit, average, often, a lot
- Do you have any personal experience with 'whipping'?

Comparing Themes:

- What factor is deciding when two or more of the factors discussed diverge in a certain voting decision?

- Which of the three factors have you found to be the most influencing of your voting behaviour?
- Have you ever been in the position where you ideologically (personally) wanted to vote differently from your national party or European party group demands?

Concluding.

To end the interview, some of the important answers will be summed up and the respondent will have an opportunity to further elaborate if felt necessary, and it will also act as a confirmation of the answers given and whether or not the message is received accurately by the interviewer.

Note to interview:

After a few consecutive interviews the questions as set by this interview guide became a bit redundant and lacked the precision power that was needed in order to get further information. Therefore, in later interviews the format became much more open, but always with this interview guide in mind. Some of the interviews could be described as more open and reliant on the interviewer's knowledge of the subject, but it is my personal opinion that this is exactly the strength of those interviews.

Appendix II Coding Scheme

Concept	Aspect	Explication	Indicator	Code
Party leadership influence	Institutional setting	Task division	Presence of group wide party whip position (Network)	A1.1.1
			Presence of a national delegation wide Whip position (Network)	A1.1.2
		Vote Indication	Presence of a party group wide voting indication	A1.2.1
			Presence of a national delegation wide voting indication	A1.2.2
	Hard power mechanisms	Rewarding	known use reward mechanisms with subject (concerning either personal gain through office seeking or policy seeking).	A2
		Coercing	Known use punitive mechanisms with subject	A3
	Soft power mechanisms	Identification (with leadership)	Sense of personal identification with party leadership of the MEPs	A4
			Socializing	The internalization of political positions by the MEPs through discursive persuasion of the leadership.
		Authorizing	Either overruling by higher figure or trust building by more knowledgeable figure	A6
		Appealing (to duty)	Sense of appeal (to duty as MEP) MEP	A7
Congruence	Identification	Identification with party program	Self-proclaimed identification (or harmony) with party	B1.1

		Observed ideological alignment	B1.2	
	Personal Belief Precedence	Self-proclaimed precedence of personal beliefs	B2	
	Cases of (Dis)agreement	Knowledge of (Personal) deviation of party program	Instances of disagreement in European Parliament between MEPs (either national delegation or group wide)	B3
Influence of other principals	Home front Government Demands	MEPs sense of National government diverging demands and influence	C1	
	Home front National party influence	MEPs sense of National party diverging demands and influence	C2	

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