

National or European Parliamentarians? Evidence from a New Survey of the Members of the European Parliament*

ROGER SCULLY¹, SIMON HIX² and DAVID M. FARRELL³

¹ Aberystwyth University. ² London School of Economics and Political Science. ³ University College Dublin

Abstract

This article presents findings from a new survey of Members of the European Parliament (MEPs), conducted in 2010. It explains the purpose of the survey, its content, the survey methodology and the potential limitations of the sample obtained. The article then presents results from the survey to explore the determinants of MEPs' policy preferences and, more specifically, whether MEPs from recent enlargement states continue to differ from those of longer-standing EU Member States. The findings here indicate that 'enlargement' MEPs remain somewhat farther to the right, but are no longer more cautious about integration. The results also reinforce the importance of ideology, even more than nationality, as a factor underpinning MEPs' political attitudes.

Introduction

Over the last quarter-century, the European Parliament (EP) has experienced more change than any other major EU institution. Following successive EU enlargements, the EP has become a larger and more diverse body; its internal organization has undergone substantial reform; and it has acquired a greatly enhanced role in EU law-making. However, the broader political environment facing the parliament has, in important respects, become more difficult. European publics are increasingly willing to express dissatisfaction with the EU. As the elected EU institution, the EP is central to a model of political representation that has failed to build effective links between the people and the Union (Farrell and Scully, 2007).

For all these reasons and more, it has never been more important to know about Europe's elected institution. Here, we seek to make two distinct contributions to knowledge about the EP. First, we introduce a major source of original data about the Parliament: a new survey of Members of the European Parliament (MEPs). We explain the purpose of the survey, its content, how the survey instrument was implemented, and consider any limitations of the survey results as a data source. Second, we draw on the data gathered to examine a specific question about the EP: what impact have recent EU enlargements had on the chamber?

The EP has in recent years had to cope with a significant exogenous 'shock'. EU enlargements in 2004 and 2007 greatly increased the size of the EP and the national and partisan diversity of the chamber. Enlargement brought MEPs from countries with very different political histories and political cultures to those of existing Member States. A 2006 survey of MEPs indicated that the 2004 enlargement had moved the ideological

* The survey was funded by a grant from the United Kingdom Economic and Social Research Council, RES-062-23-1983. See <<http://www2.lse.ac.uk/government/research/resgroups/EPRG/MEPsurveyData.aspx>>.

direction of the EP towards the right, and somewhat away from support for closer European integration. Several years further on, and after an additional EU enlargement to include Bulgaria and Romania, are the 2006 findings still true? Do differing political orientations of MEPs from new Member States persist; or, after several years' experience within the Union and its Parliament have they adopted more centrist and integrative norms? And how do any differences between new and older Member States compare with other influences on the attitudinal landscape of the EP?

I. A Changing (and Growing) Parliament

Probably the most significant change in the institutional structure of the EP over the past two decades has been its growing power (cf. Hix and Hoyland, 2011). Over the last 25 years, the EP has experienced greater change than any other major EU institution. Either the EP's legislative powers or its executive oversight powers, or both, have increased in every major EU Treaty reform since the mid-1980s. The cumulative effect has enhanced greatly the Parliament's role within European politics. For much of its life, the EP could justly be labelled a 'multilingual talking shop'. This is no longer the case: it is now one of the world's most powerful parliaments. It has for some years been a major player in EU legislative politics. And, as Señor Barroso discovered when attempting to appoint his new Commission in October 2004, the EP's powers of executive scrutiny can no longer be ignored either.¹

Following the growth in the power and influence of the EP has come a substantial development in scholarly work on the institution. However, the understanding of the EP developed by this work has been affected by the problems of analyzing the 'moving target' of an institution undergoing rapid reforms. EU enlargement poses a particularly stark challenge. The entry of ten new Member States to the Union in May 2004 made the chamber significantly larger and more heterogeneous in membership. And enlargement raised the question of whether the established structures and practices that had developed within the Parliament would prove sufficiently robust to withstand this substantial change.

A survey of MEPs conducted early in 2006 – less than two years after the May 2004 enlargement, and prior to the January 2007 entry of Bulgaria and Romania – suggested that enlargement had made some immediate and noticeable changes in the attitudinal and ideological landscape of the EP. On a direct measure of representatives' left–right self-placement, those from 2004 enlargement states were significantly further to the right (more than one point on a 1–10 scale).² There were also differences in enthusiasm for integration: on average, MEPs from new Member States scored more than half a point lower than others on a 1–10 scale of support for European

¹ Barroso's proposed team of Commissioners met with opposition from the parliament, particularly regarding the proposed Italian Commissioner, Rocco Buttiglione, who made some ill-chosen comments prior to and during his 'confirmation' hearing with an EP committee. After a stand-off, Barroso conceded to the parliament and removed Buttiglione from the Commission team.

² The question asked was: 'Where would you place yourself on the left-right spectrum?' Response options ranged from 1 (which was labelled 'Left') to 10 (which was labelled 'Right'). The average score for MEPs from the EU-15 states on this item was 4.82; the average for those from the enlargement states was 5.93.

unity.³ And when it came to questions relating directly to the EP itself, those from the enlargement states were notably less enthusiastic about empowering the chamber (Farrell *et al.*, 2006).⁴ Four years on, it is possible to test whether these and other potential differences between MEPs from ‘new’ and ‘old’ Europe persist – although, given the high turnover of MEPs in the 2009 elections, the MEPs from the new Member States in the most recent parliament might have different views from their counterparts in the previous parliament.

The distinctiveness of MEPs from enlargement states in 2006 was potentially consistent with two differing perspectives on the Parliament, EU institutions and integration. The first perspective could be said to encompass not only aspects of neofunctionalist understandings of European integration (for example, Haas, 1968), but also some important intellectual descendants of neofunctionalism, such as much of the social constructivist thought that has been applied to the EU (for example, Christiansen *et al.*, 2001). This perspective would suggest that MEPs from enlargement states were different in 2006 in part because of their very newness as members of the EP, and of their countries within the EU. We should not be surprised at the relative lack of enthusiasm of enlargement MEPs for integration and for the EP itself: this reflected a relative lack of the socialization experiences that come with more prolonged EU membership. After four years’ further experience, things should have begun to change amongst representatives from enlargement states. By 2010, some of their MEPs would themselves have served six years within the EP; even those newer to the chamber would be part of a national political elite that should be significantly more comfortable in, and committed to, the EU and its institutional structures. In short, according to this understanding, while the differences found in 2006 between MEPs from enlargement and other states are quite explicable, by 2010 we should expect these differences to be significantly attenuated, if not quite eliminated altogether.

An alternative perspective is one that would be more sceptical about the longer-term impact of socialization within EU institutions. This perspective would note the paucity of empirical evidence for substantial and significant individual-level socialization effects leading towards some of the attitudinal or behavioural changes that have sometimes been posited (Hooghe, 2001). And in the specific instance of MEPs, this perspective suggests that they mostly remain primarily national politicians in orientation – by background and political experience, as well as in depending on their national parties for (re-)election and future political career prospects (Scully, 2005). According to this perspective, attitudes among MEPs from any EU Member State can be expected to be a function of prevailing attitudes to the EU in that state, and the relative electoral success of different parties in elections to the EP. A convergence towards more centrist and pro-integration attitudes among MEPs from the enlargement states would be expected only if there had either been

³ The question asked here was: ‘Where would you place yourself on the question of European integration?’ Response options ranged from 1 (which was labelled ‘European integration has gone much too far’) to 10 (which was labelled ‘The EU should become a federal state immediately’). The average score for MEPs from the EU-15 states on this item was 6.49; the average for those from the enlargement states was 5.96.

⁴ Respondents were asked a series of six questions concerning the powers of the EP. Responses from these items were combined into a scale, which ran from 6 for those adopting the least supportive positions on all items to 30 for those supporting the greatest degree of EP empowerment on all items. The average score for MEPs from the EU-15 states on this item was 22.27; the average for those from the enlargement states was 21.00.

a general move in this direction across the political spectrum within those states over recent years, or if more centrist and pro-European parties had been more successful in the 2009 EP elections than they were in 2004.

To summarize, the EP has been subject to enormous changes over the past quarter-century. And the 2004 EU enlargement was perhaps the most dramatic change of all. The available evidence suggests that enlargement altered more than simply the size and diversity of the EP; it also shifted the political balance of the chamber in some significant respects. Testing whether these effects have persisted, some years later, might tell us not merely about any lasting impact on the EP of EU enlargement but also offer insights into broader processes of political change in the EU.

II. The Evidence: A New Survey of MEPs

The questions outlined above are among the many that can be studied with the aid of survey data on MEPs. Our survey is the latest in a series of such studies: one has been conducted on every directly elected EP (Bardi, 1989; Hrbek and Schweitzer, 1989; Bowler and Farrell, 1993; Westlake, 1994; Katz and Wessels, 1999; Schmitt and Thomassen, 1999; Hix, 2002; 2005; Farrell *et al.*, 2006). With substantial continuity between the teams conducting the current survey and those in 2006 and 2000, many questions from these earlier surveys were replicated.

As in 2006 (Farrell *et al.*, 2006), the 2010 survey was implemented via the Internet. This remains a relatively innovative method for the conduct of surveys, but its potential is increasingly being exploited both by commercial market research companies and academic surveys. The Internet potentially offers many advantages of computer-assisted interviewing (CAI), such as the ability to implement complex routing within the questionnaire, so that people only see questions relevant to them. Furthermore, CAI surveys obviate the need for data to be entered into a database separately after the survey is conducted: not only reducing coding errors but allowing data to be available more quickly and at lower cost. CAI also provides some of the advantages of postal surveys – notably the greater degree of anonymity offered respondents, which is something that many respondents value. By eliminating the interviewer, the potential impact on data consistency of interviewer variability is also eliminated. Related to this, the lack of an interviewer means that respondents are not under pressure to give answers, and thus may take more time to give questions greater thought. Furthermore, the costs associated with employing qualified interviewers are avoided. Of course, no survey method is perfect, and use of the Internet may introduce new problems. The absence of an interviewer might prompt some respondents to answer questions very quickly and with little thought. In the case of political elites, they might even assign the task of completing the survey to a staff member. On balance, however, the Internet seems to offer a flexible and economic means by which to conduct both mass and elite surveys.

Implementation of the survey (from April to November 2010) was conducted by Ipsos-MORI, in close consultation with the academic team. Ipsos-MORI designed the website where the survey was hosted. Each MEP was contacted personally by email (with the message translated into their mother tongue) and invited to participate. They were directed to the website, where the survey's purpose was explained and respondents asked

to give their password (initial contact letters contained a unique password for each MEP) before beginning. The survey was then presented on seven subsequent pages, each containing questions from one section. The seven sections were:

1. Personal Details (Member State, date first elected to EP, previous political experience, etc.)
2. Electoral Systems and Candidate Selection
3. Campaigning Aims and Activities in 2009 Elections
4. Attitudes/Behaviour to Representation
5. Committees and Voting Inside the Parliament
6. General Political Attitudes
7. Attitudes to EU Policies and Institutional Reform

The empirical evidence presented and analyzed below draws on the responses of the 270 MEPs who responded to the survey. Summary statistics on these respondents are presented in Appendix Table 1. Although it is impossible to be certain of the extent to which the sample might be biased by self-selection – by pro- or anti-integration MEPs being particularly inclined to complete the survey, say – it is reassuring that the ‘index of dissimilarity’ figures show our sample to be fairly representative of the EP as a whole by both nationality and party group. Crucially for the conduct of comparisons with earlier studies, the sample is also comparable to those obtained in 2000 and 2006.

III. Empirical Analysis: Predictors of MEP Policy Preferences

To compare MEPs from recent enlargement states with others, the survey included questions that asked MEPs to place themselves (and their national parties and EP groups) on a left–right scale (where 0 = left, and 10 = right) and an integration scale (where 0 = EU integration has gone too far, and 10 = EU should become a federal state). The survey also included a question on MEPs’ identity.

In addition to these questions, the available survey data also include responses to a battery of questions concerning MEPs’ positions on a range of issues. This battery covers the following topics: *EU regulatory policies*, such as whether an MEP prefers more or less EU-level regulation of labour markets, environmental standards, taxation and so on; *EU powers* (in the areas of justice and home affairs, and foreign policy), such as MEPs’ preferences on EU policies on asylum, police and judicial co-operation, EU relations with Nato and the United States, EU development aid and so on; and *EP powers*, which covers MEPs’ attitudes towards an EP right of legislative initiative, EP budgetary power, the appointment of the Commission, and whether plenary sessions should be in Brussels rather than Strasbourg.

Appendix Tables 2–4 show the aggregated responses of the MEPs to these policy issues. Broadly speaking, the attitudes of MEPs on policy questions suggest that, as was found in previous studies, in 2010 most (though certainly not all) MEPs continued to support enhanced powers for the EP and further integration in a range of policy areas.

What are the determinants of these policy positions? One key issue, as previously discussed, is whether differences persist between MEPs from the ‘old’ EU-15 states and

Table 1: Difference of Means Tests on Several Measures

| <i>Item</i> | <i>Mean: EU-15 MEPs</i> | <i>Mean: Accession MEPs</i> | <i>T statistic</i> | <i>Number of respondents</i> |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------------------|--------------------|----------------------------------|
| EU integration self-placement (0–10 scale; pro-integration = 10) | 7.06 | 7.39 | 0.93 | 179 |
| National/European identity (1–4 scale, more European = higher score) | 1.99 | 2.50 | 3.19** | 168 |
| Left–right self-placement (0–10 scale; right = 10) | 5.53 | 6.57 | 2.81** | 179 |
| Left–right issues (8–40 scale, right = high score) | 21.77 | 24.26 | 2.87** | 169 |
| EU regulation issues (7–35 scale; more regulation = high score) | 25.79 | 25.40 | 0.38 | 173 |
| EU powers issues (6–30 scale, more powers = high score) | 21.73 | 22.65 | 1.16 | 172 |
| EP powers issues (6–30 scale, more powers = high score) | 24.71 | 23.42 | 1.82 | 173 |

Source: 2010 MEP Survey.

Notes: * $\Pr(|T| < |t|) \leq 0.050$, ** $\Pr(|T| < |t|) \leq 0.010$. The issues scales are calculated by summing MEPs' responses to the questions relating to these scales.

the 'new' 12 accession states. We can test whether the attitudes of the MEPs from the 'Old-15' and the 'New-12' remain different to any significant extent through use of a series of difference-of-means tests. The results of these tests are presented in Table 1. For simplicity of interpretation we generated scales of MEPs' positions on each of these policy issues by simply adding together the responses of the MEPs to the questions in each section in a linear way.⁵ These results show that MEPs from the new Member States in the current EP are on average more right-wing than those MEPs from the old Member States, and MEPs from new Member States actually have a *stronger* European identity than MEPs from the EU-15. However, the two groups of MEPs have statistically indistinguishable opinions on EU regulation issues, EU powers and the powers of the EP.

What explains these MEP policy preferences? Are MEPs' positions on EU regulatory issues, the powers of the EU and the powers of the EP explained more by personal ideological preferences (that is, MEPs' left–right and EU integration positions), political group affiliation or nationality? With no prior knowledge of research on the behaviour or attitudes of MEPs, one might assume that the nationality of an MEP will be highly significant. For example, British MEPs may be less pro-European than Italian MEPs. However, research on voting behaviour in the EP shows that MEPs' left–right policy positions and EP group affiliations are stronger predictors of how MEPs behave in roll-call votes than their Member State affiliations (for example, Hix *et al.*, 2007). Left-wing MEPs from Britain are more likely to vote with left-wing MEPs from Italy than with right-wing MEPs from Britain.

⁵ So, for example, on EU regulatory issues, a response of 'a lot less' was coded 1, 'a little less' as 2, 'about the same' as 3, 'a little more' as 4 and 'a lot more' as 5. We also investigated using factor analysis to extract a single dimension of MEP attitudes across all issues. However, the results of the factor analysis were not significantly different from an additive scale, and we felt that additive scales are more intuitive to interpret.

Table 2 shows the results of multivariate regression analysis of MEPs' positions on the three policy scales in Table 1. Several findings are worth noting. First, MEPs' personal preferences on EU integration, as captured by the EU integration self-placement question in the survey, are significant predictors of MEP positions on all three sets of policy issues. Furthermore, these MEP ideological preferences are significant in all model specifications. In other words, within each EP political group and within the 'Old-15' and the 'New-12' Member States, pro-European MEPs are more likely to support more EU regulation and further EU and EP powers than less pro-European MEPs.

While this first finding might seem fairly obvious, a second finding is that MEPs' personal left–right positions are also relevant.⁶ More precisely: the further right an MEP, the more likely he or she will oppose more EU regulation, more EU powers, as well as more EP powers. Again, this variable is significant even when controlling for EP political group membership, except for issues relating to the powers of the EP, on which the left–right preferences of MEPs do not explain any variance in the attitudes of MEPs towards the EP's powers within the political groups. In other words, the effect of MEPs' individual left–right preferences on their attitudes is indistinguishable from the effect of the political groups' positions on these issues.

Third, and related to the second point, EP group membership is a good predictor of MEPs' policy positions on EU policy issues. In models 2, 5 and 8, the non-attached MEPs were dropped. However, the line-up of the groups varies according to the policy issue. The coefficients in model 2, for example, reveal a line-up of the groups on the question of more/less EU regulation as (from highest scores to lowest scores): G/EFA, S&D, EPP, ALDE, ECR, EUL/NGL and EFD. In contrast, on issues relating to the general powers of the EU, the political group line-up is EPP, ALDE, S&D, G/EFA, ECR, EFD and EUL/NGL. And on the powers of the EP, the line-up is G/EFA, EFD, EPP, S&D, ALDE, ECR and EUL/NGL.

Finally, as models 3, 6 and 9 show, once EP political group affiliation is controlled for, there is no statistical difference in the positions of MEPs from the new Member States and the old Member States on any of these sets of policy issues.

One problem with the set-up of the models in Table 2 is that it is difficult to identify the relative effects of individual MEP ideology, EP political group and nationality on MEP policy preferences. Table 3 consequently presents a pared-down model, where we combined (in a simple additive way) the scores of the MEPs in our three policy scales into a single 'combined policy score'. Here, the two individual MEP ideology measures are recoded between 0 and 1, and these two variables are set up against the average score of each EP political group and each national delegation of MEPs on the single combined policy scale, in a straightforward 'contest'. With this set-up, the beta coefficients give a rough estimate of the relative effects of the explanatory variables (for example, Levitt, 1996).

⁶ As robustness checks, we estimated all the models without the EU integration self-placement variable on the right-hand side and also adding a 'left–right extremism' variable (measured as the distance of an MEP from the mean left–right self-placement position of all MEPs). The results of these alternative specifications for all the other independent variables are the same as those presented here. The left–right extremism variable was only significant in the models of MEPs' preferences on EU powers in general, and not significant in the models of MEPs' preferences on EP powers or EU regulation. These other results are available on request from the authors.

Table 2: Predictors of MEPs' Policy Preferences

| Independent variable | EU Regulation Issues Scale | | | EU Powers Issues Scale | | | EP Powers Issues Scale | | |
|---------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------------|------------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------------|------------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| | (1) ideology | (2) +political group | (3) +new Member State | (4) ideology | (5) +political group | (6) +new Member State | (7) ideology | (8) +political group | (9) +new Member State |
| Constant | 24.810*** (1.762) | 29.045*** (2.733) | 29.058*** (2.742) | 17.007*** (1.463) | 23.983*** (2.217) | 24.023*** (2.220) | 23.399*** (1.484) | 26.791*** (2.372) | 26.707*** (2.366) |
| EU integration | 1.014*** (0.173) | 0.740*** (0.196) | 0.738*** (0.197) | 0.969*** (0.145) | 0.774*** (0.160) | 0.766*** (0.160) | 0.369*** (0.147) | 0.400*** (0.171) | 0.413*** (0.171) |
| Left-right self-placement | -1.080*** (0.167) | -0.898*** (0.257) | -0.903*** (0.260) | -0.326** (0.139) | -0.693*** (0.209) | -0.715*** (0.211) | -0.294** (0.140) | -0.265 (0.223) | -0.224 (0.224) |
| EPP group | | -3.060 (2.372) | -3.078 (2.381) | | -1.898 (1.923) | -1.956 (1.926) | | -3.835* (2.060) | -3.729* (2.056) |
| S&D group | | -2.553 (2.394) | -2.575 (2.403) | | -4.087** (1.941) | -4.150** (1.945) | | -4.172** (2.078) | -4.052** (2.074) |
| ALDE group | | -3.654 (2.465) | -3.664 (2.473) | | -2.612 (2.001) | -2.651 (2.004) | | -4.419** (2.144) | -4.349** (2.139) |
| G/EFA group | | -1.501 (2.605) | -1.480 (2.616) | | -5.242*** (2.113) | -5.167** (2.116) | | -1.381 (2.262) | -1.506 (2.258) |
| ECR group | | -7.202** (2.969) | -7.215** (3.978) | | -5.282** (2.408) | -5.332** (2.411) | | -5.234** (2.577) | -5.157** (2.571) |
| EUL/NGL group | | -7.685** (3.589) | -7.670** (3.600) | | -11.487*** (2.703) | -11.438*** (2.706) | | -6.396** (2.894) | -6.371** (2.886) |
| EFDD group | | -8.381*** (2.679) | -8.353*** (2.690) | | -5.802*** (2.172) | -5.717*** (2.176) | | -3.229 (2.326) | -3.387 (2.322) |
| New Member State | | | 0.083 (0.455) | | | 0.554 (0.672) | | | -0.981 (0.715) |
| N | 173 | 173 | 173 | 172 | 172 | 172 | 173 | 173 | 173 |
| Adjusted R ² | 0.347 | 0.390 | 0.386 | 0.244 | 0.341 | 0.339 | 0.060 | 0.087 | 0.092 |

Source: 2010 MEP Survey.

Notes: The dependent variable is the score of an MEP on our EU Regulation Issues Scale (see Table 1). The models were estimated with linear OLS regression. The baseline group in model 2 are the non-attached MEPs, and in model 3 are the non-attached and MEPs from the Old-15 states. Standard errors in parentheses. * $p \leq 0.10$; ** $p \leq 0.05$; *** $p \leq 0.01$. Abbreviations: S&D = Progressive Alliance of Socialists and Democrats, G/EFA = Greens/European Free Alliance, EPP = European People's Party, ALDE = Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe, ECR = European Conservatives and Reformers Group, EUL/NGL = European United Left/Nordic Green Left, EFDD = Europe of Freedom and Democracy Group.

Table 3: Explanatory Power of Key Predictors of MEPs' Policy Preferences

| | <i>Coefficient</i> | <i>Standard error</i> | <i>t</i> | <i>P > t </i> | <i>Beta</i> |
|----------------------------------|--------------------|-----------------------|----------|-------------------|-------------|
| EU integration self-placement | 0.188 | 0.040 | 4.76 | 0.000 | 0.287 |
| Left–right self-placement | –0.113 | 0.040 | –2.80 | 0.006 | –0.178 |
| Mean EP group combined score | 0.304 | 0.138 | 2.20 | 0.029 | 0.156 |
| Mean Member State combined score | 0.731 | 0.104 | 7.04 | 0.000 | 0.408 |
| Constant | –0.081 | 0.098 | –0.83 | 0.407 | |
| N | 171 | | | | |
| Adjusted R ² | 0.501 | | | | |

Source: 2010 MEP Survey.

Notes: The dependent variable is the combined score of an MEP on our three issue dimensions (see Table 1), re-scaled between 0 and 1. The two self-placement scales were re-scaled between 0 and 1. The models were estimated with linear OLS regression.

The result is surprising. The individual MEP ideological measures are both powerful predictors of MEPs' positions on EU policy issues. In fact, approximately 45 per cent of the variance in MEPs' policy positions (as expressed in our survey) can be explained by individual ideological preferences (in a two-dimensional left–right and EU integration space), 15 per cent can be explained by MEPs' EP political group affiliation, and almost 40 per cent can be explained by MEPs' nationality.

Conclusions

Given the EP's growing importance, and the significant changes it has experienced in recent times, it is important that students of the EU have regular, high-quality evidence on the attitudes of MEPs. Here we have introduced a survey, which is the latest in a series that attempts to provide such evidence. We have presented some of the findings of this survey, on attitudes to many aspects of EU politics, and explored the main factors underpinning those attitudes. We have shown that MEPs from the 'new' Member States are, on average, more right-wing than the remainder of the parliament's membership. Nevertheless, we also found that there are now no significant differences between the MEPs from the new Member States and the other MEPs in terms of general attitudes towards EU powers and EU policies.

Furthermore, we found that MEPs' personal ideological preferences (left–right and pro-/anti-Europe) and which Member State they come from are more powerful predictors of their attitudes towards EU policies than their EP political group affiliation. This result is not completely consistent with research on voting in the EP, which has shown that MEPs primarily vote along EP political group lines rather than national lines (for example, Hix *et al.*, 2007). Admittedly, individual MEP ideology correlates with EP political group membership. Nonetheless, the apparent gap between MEPs' attitudes and their voting behaviour needs to be further investigated.

When combined with evidence from previous surveys of MEPs, the data from this new survey offer the opportunity to researchers to develop substantially their knowledge of the EP, and to test prevailing theories of the political dynamics of the EU's only directly elected chamber. These data are now freely available to the scholarly community, both separately and in files which integrate the evidence from this survey with the data from our

previous two surveys (in 2006 and 2000). The data sets are available from the European Parliament Research Group website.⁷ The EPRG website is also now a repository for previous MEP surveys, such as the Bowler-Farrell survey of the members of the 1989–94 EP. We invite the scholarly community to draw upon this valuable new source of evidence and to also send us any data on the MEPs they wish to disseminate via the website.

Correspondence:

Simon Hix
Department of Government
London School of Economics and Political Science
Houghton Street
London WC2A 2AE
UK
email s.hix@lse.ac.uk

⁷ «<http://www2.lse.ac.uk/government/research/resgroups/EPRG/MEPsurveyData.aspx>».

Appendix Table 1: The 2000, 2006 and 2010 MEP Survey Samples Compared

| | 2000 Survey | | | 2006 Survey | | | 2010 Survey | | |
|-------------------------|-------------|-----|-------|-------------|-----|-------|-------------|-----|-------|
| | MEPs | N | % | MEPs | N | % | MEPs | N | % |
| <i>Member States</i> | | | | | | | | | |
| Austria | 21 | 2 | 3.4 | 18 | 7 | 2.5 | 17 | 5 | 2.3 |
| Belgium | 25 | 6 | 4.0 | 24 | 13 | 3.3 | 22 | 9 | 3.0 |
| Bulgaria | | | | | | | 17 | 7 | 2.3 |
| Cyprus | | | | 6 | 5 | 0.8 | 6 | 4 | 0.8 |
| Czech Republic | | | | 24 | 11 | 3.3 | 22 | 9 | 3.0 |
| Denmark | 16 | 7 | 2.6 | 14 | 6 | 1.9 | 13 | 8 | 1.8 |
| Estonia | | | | 6 | 3 | 0.8 | 6 | 2 | 0.8 |
| Finland | 16 | 7 | 2.6 | 14 | 5 | 1.9 | 13 | 7 | 1.8 |
| France | 87 | 22 | 13.9 | 78 | 23 | 10.7 | 72 | 24 | 9.8 |
| Germany | 99 | 27 | 15.8 | 99 | 34 | 13.5 | 99 | 33 | 13.5 |
| Greece | 25 | 8 | 4.0 | 24 | 8 | 3.3 | 22 | 6 | 3.0 |
| Hungary | | | | 24 | 2 | 3.3 | 22 | 4 | 3.0 |
| Ireland | 15 | 4 | 2.4 | 13 | 7 | 1.8 | 12 | 8 | 1.6 |
| Italy | 87 | 23 | 13.9 | 78 | 29 | 10.7 | 72 | 32 | 9.8 |
| Latvia | | | | 9 | 4 | 1.2 | 8 | 3 | 1.1 |
| Lithuania | | | | 13 | 6 | 1.8 | 12 | 3 | 1.6 |
| Luxembourg | 6 | 5 | 1.0 | 6 | 6 | 0.8 | 6 | 3 | 0.8 |
| Malta | | | | 5 | 1 | 0.7 | 5 | 3 | 0.7 |
| Netherlands | 31 | 15 | 5.0 | 27 | 9 | 3.7 | 25 | 7 | 3.4 |
| Poland | | | | 54 | 22 | 8.1 | 50 | 23 | 6.8 |
| Portugal | 25 | 11 | 4.0 | 24 | 9 | 3.3 | 22 | 6 | 3.0 |
| Romania | | | | 14 | 3 | 1.9 | 13 | 14 | 4.5 |
| Slovakia | | | | 7 | 5 | 1.0 | 7 | 6 | 1.8 |
| Slovenia | | | | 54 | 11 | 7.4 | 50 | 14 | 6.8 |
| Spain | 64 | 17 | 10.2 | 54 | 9 | 2.6 | 18 | 9 | 2.4 |
| Sweden | 22 | 10 | 3.5 | 19 | 3 | 2.6 | 18 | 9 | 2.4 |
| United Kingdom | 87 | 31 | 13.9 | 78 | 37 | 10.7 | 72 | 15 | 9.8 |
| Correlation | | | 0.940 | | | 0.940 | | | 0.927 |
| Index of dissimilarity | | | 0.117 | | | 0.110 | | | 0.128 |
| <i>Political groups</i> | | | | | | | | | |
| EPP | 232 | 72 | 37.1 | 263 | 95 | 35.9 | 265 | 100 | 36.0 |
| S&D (PES) | 180 | 61 | 28.8 | 201 | 73 | 27.5 | 184 | 64 | 25.0 |
| ALDE (ELDR) | 52 | 20 | 8.3 | 89 | 44 | 12.2 | 85 | 43 | 11.5 |
| G/EFA | 48 | 13 | 7.7 | 42 | 18 | 5.7 | 55 | 23 | 7.5 |
| EUL/NGL | 42 | 14 | 6.7 | 41 | 15 | 5.6 | 35 | 10 | 4.8 |
| UEN | 30 | 5 | 4.8 | 30 | 11 | 4.1 | | | |
| ECR | | | | | | | 54 | 12 | 7.3 |
| EFD (EDD/IND-DEM) | 16 | 5 | 2.6 | 29 | 8 | 4.0 | 30 | 10 | 4.1 |
| Na | 26 | 5 | 4.2 | 37 | 8 | 5.1 | 28 | 8 | 3.8 |
| Correlation | | | 0.994 | | | 0.989 | | | 0.985 |
| Index of dissimilarity | | | 0.050 | | | 0.051 | | | 0.065 |
| Totals | 626 | 195 | 100.0 | 732 | 272 | 100.0 | 736 | 270 | 100.0 |
| | | | 31.2 | | | 37.2 | | | 36.7 |

Source: 2010 MEP Survey.

Note: The (Duncan) Index of dissimilarity measures the relationship between the sample of MEPs who responded to the surveys and the population of MEPs at the time of the surveys. Lower values indicate greater similarity between the sample and the population (Duncan and Duncan, 1955).

Appendix Table 2: MEPs' Opinions (%) on EU Regulation

| <i>Do you think there should be more or less EU-wide regulation in the following areas?</i> | <i>A lot more</i> | <i>A little more</i> | <i>About the same</i> | <i>A little less</i> | <i>A lot less</i> | <i>Number of respondents</i> |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------|----------------------|-----------------------|----------------------|-------------------|------------------------------|
| Labour rights (for example, working time rules) | 23.1 | 32.4 | 26.6 | 11.6 | 6.4 | 173 |
| Discrimination (on the grounds of gender, race, religion, age, disability and sexual orientation) | 30.8 | 30.2 | 25.0 | 5.2 | 8.7 | 172 |
| Environmental protection standards | 32.6 | 40.1 | 20.3 | 3.5 | 3.5 | 172 |
| Food safety standards | 28.1 | 38.0 | 29.2 | 1.2 | 3.5 | 171 |
| Financial services | 39.5 | 40.7 | 13.4 | 1.7 | 4.7 | 172 |
| Corporation taxes | 22.1 | 29.1 | 27.3 | 10.5 | 11.0 | 172 |
| Personal income taxes | 11.1 | 24.0 | 35.7 | 14.0 | 15.2 | 171 |

Source: 2010 MEP Survey.

Appendix Table 3: MEPs' Opinions (%) on EU Powers in the Fields of Justice and Home Affairs and Foreign Policy

| <i>Item</i> | <i>Strongly agree</i> | <i>Agree</i> | <i>Neither agree nor disagree</i> | <i>Disagree</i> | <i>Strongly disagree</i> | <i>Number of respondents</i> |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------|--------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------|--------------------------|------------------------------|
| There should be a common EU policy on asylum burden-sharing | 22.8 | 46.2 | 18.7 | 6.4 | 5.8 | 171 |
| There should be a common EU policy on how to treat illegal migrants | 22.2 | 54.4 | 13.5 | 4.1 | 5.8 | 171 |
| For serious crimes, the police in each Member State should be able to issue arrest warrants which apply throughout the EU | 39.2 | 42.1 | 12.3 | 3.5 | 2.9 | 171 |
| The EU rather than Nato should be responsible for European defence | 14.0 | 33.1 | 29.1 | 18.0 | 5.8 | 171 |
| EU foreign policy should develop as a counterweight to the United States | 14.0 | 32.6 | 24.4 | 20.3 | 8.7 | 171 |
| The Member States should make every effort to adhere to the EU's security strategy | 19.9 | 50.3 | 20.5 | 3.5 | 5.8 | 171 |

Source: 2010 MEP Survey.

Appendix Table 4: MEPs' Opinions (%) on EP Powers

| <i>Item</i> | <i>Strongly agree</i> | <i>Agree</i> | <i>Neither agree nor disagree</i> | <i>Disagree</i> | <i>Strongly disagree</i> | <i>Number of respondents</i> |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------|--------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------|--------------------------|------------------------------|
| The EP should have more power to influence interest rates in the eurozone | 7.6 | 20.3 | 26.2 | 27.9 | 18.0 | 172 |
| The EP should have the right to initiate legislation | 44.2 | 32.0 | 12.8 | 8.7 | 2.3 | 172 |
| The EP should have equal power with the Council in all areas of law-making | 44.2 | 30.8 | 14.0 | 9.9 | 1.2 | 172 |
| The EP should have equal power with the Council to amend all areas of expenditure in the budget | 43.6 | 37.2 | 11.0 | 7.0 | 1.2 | 172 |
| The Commission President should be nominated by the EP, rather than the European Council | 30.8 | 27.9 | 29.1 | 10.5 | 1.7 | 172 |
| The EP should be able to remove individual Commissioners from office | 43.5 | 35.3 | 12.9 | 7.1 | 1.2 | 170 |
| The EP should be allowed to hold all its plenary sessions in Brussels | 52.3 | 18.0 | 16.3 | 7.6 | 5.8 | 172 |

Source: 2010 MEP Survey.

Note: For all items in this table, the survey question was worded 'To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements about the powers of the European Parliament?', except for the first item, where the relevant question was 'To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements about Economic and Monetary Union and EU monetary policies?'

References

- Bardi, L. (1989) *Il Parlamento della Comunità Europea* (Bologna: Il Mulino).
- Bowler, S. and Farrell, D. (1993) 'Legislator Shirking and Voter Monitoring: Impacts of European Parliament Electoral Systems upon Legislator-Voter Relationships'. *JCMS*, Vol. 31, No. 1, pp. 45-70.
- Christiansen, T., Jorgensen, K.E. and Wiener, A. (2001) *The Social Construction of Europe* (London: Sage).
- Duncan, O.B. and Duncan, B. (1955) 'A Methodological Analysis of Segregation Indexes'. *American Sociological Review*, Vol. 20, No. 2, pp. 210-17.
- Farrell, D. and Scully, R. (2007) *Representing Europe's Citizens? Electoral Institutions and the Failure of Parliamentary Representation in the European Union* (Oxford: Oxford University Press).
- Farrell, D., Hix, S., Johnston, M. and Scully, R. (2006) 'A Survey of MEPs in the 2004-09 European Parliament'. Paper presented to the Annual Conference of the American Political Science Association, Philadelphia, PA.
- Haas, E. (1968) *The Uniting of Europe* (London: Stevens).
- Hix, S. (2002) 'Parliamentary Behavior with Two Principals: Preferences, Parties and Voting in the European Parliament'. *American Journal of Political Science*, Vol. 46, No. 3, pp. 688-98.

- Hix, S. (2005) 'Neither a Preference-Outlier nor a Unitary Actor: Institutional Reform Preferences of the European Parliament'. *Comparative European Politics*, Vol. 3, No. 2, pp. 131–54.
- Hix, S. and Hoyland, B. (2011) *The Political System of the European Union* (3rd edition) (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan).
- Hix, S., Noury, A. and Roland, G. (2007) *Democratic Politics in the European Parliament* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press).
- Hooghe, L. (2001) *The European Commission and the Integration of Europe: Images of Governance* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press).
- Hrbek, R. and Schweitzer, C.-C. (1989) 'Die deutschen Europa-Parlamentarier: Ergebnisse einer Befragung der deutschen Mitglieder des Europäischen Parlaments'. *Aus Politik und Zeitgeschichte*, B 3/89, pp. 3–18.
- Katz, R. and Wessels, B. (eds) (1999) *The European Parliament, the National Parliaments and European Integration* (Oxford: Oxford University Press).
- Levitt, S.D. (1996) 'How do Senators Vote? Disentangling the Role of Voter Preferences, Party Affiliation and Senator Ideology'. *American Economic Review*, Vol. 86, No. 3, pp. 425–41.
- Schmitt, H. and Thomassen, J. (eds) (1999) *Political Representation and Legitimacy in the European Union* (Oxford: Oxford University Press).
- Scully, R. (2005) *Becoming Europeans? Attitudes, Behaviour and Socialisation in the European Parliament* (Oxford: Oxford University Press).
- Westlake, M. (1994) *Britain's Emerging Euro-elite? The British in the Directly-Elected European Parliament, 1979–1992* (Aldershot: Dartmouth).